

THE GUILFORDIAN

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The Editor

The editor, he sits around
 And wonders what to write;
 He's got to think up something good,
 But must not start a fight.
 The editor, he wants the dope,
 He wants the news and stuff;
 'Most any little jokes will do,
 Though it mustn't be too rough.

The editor, he wants to know
 When folks go for a frolic;
 'Bout marriages (or even dates!)
 Or a cure for baby's colic;
 Promotions, transfers and the like,
 And what's become of Jimmie,"
 And for anything original,
 Why, say, his name is "Gimme."

The editor, he sits around
 And wonders what to write;
 He looks for news the whole day long
 And prays for it at night.
 Well, let's all help the editor,
 Let's deluge him with newsy news
 Until he cries "Enough!"
 —Elkin Tribune.

LITERARY SOCIETIES

A Suggestion About a Form of Program That Might Be An Improvement

Literary societies at Guilford are either on the decline or are already dead—just according to what one considers the work of such an organization.

As a mild form of fraternity and sorority organization and the sponsors of practically the only aesthetic social functions of the college year, the societies have their place and have filled it well; but as far as the literary accomplishments and benefits to the average member, that is the question of dispute among the men. The present type of program that these organizations are rendering in the minds of at least three-fourths of the members is not worth the time involved. Others consider that the experience received from debating and the patience developed by having to listen to these debates is beneficial.

The average attendance at the

two men's societies is from one-third to half of the membership. After asking members of both societies why they did not attend regularly, we have arrived at the following explanation of the lack of interest.

Monotonous Programs

A question is selected for debate. Four men are drafted to debate. Four men wait until Thursday or Friday and then collect a little material. Four men stand up and argue in a mechanical, uninformed way some stock query. Four men sit down and their audience sighs and hopes that the traditional "second number" will be more entertaining. There are exceptions, we will grant, when a creditable debate is conducted, but this is the exception rather than the rule.

Why should a group of students be expected to attend society every Friday night and act as an audience for four men to practice upon? No one would expect this same group to attend a debate at Mem Hall every Friday. If listening to the speeches was educational it would be different, but even the regular attenders admit that only once in a long period occurs a creditable debate that is in the least informational.

A Suggestion

What we want to suggest for consideration is that both of the men's societies should change the type of program to one similar to the Di Senate at Chapel Hill. In this organization a question or bill is brought up before the body and a form of general discussion follows as in a legislative assembly. Anyone interested or informed on the question can speak.

The advantages that we see in this plan are numerous, but we will limit ourselves to the following points:

Advantages of Change

It would increase attendance by arousing interest through allowing anyone to speak. Questions of campus interest could be discussed and the meetings would be an interest-arousing melting pot for campus squabbles; the need is easily seen. With something of interest to everybody, there would be an incentive to participate, whereas under the present condition a meeting is expected to be more or less a bore and usually is due to lack of interest and preparation on the part of the debaters.

It would better accomplish the aims of the present system. As we understand it, the aim is to adapt a man better for thinking on his feet and speaking in public. But one of the most important aims, according to the constitutions of both societies, is to teach parliamentary procedure. We venture that not a single president of either society during this year knows more than that a motion requires a second under ordinary circumstances and that if another motion is being considered a second motion would be out of order. In fact, that seems to be firmly set; a privileged motion for adjournment is out of order if a question is being considered, according to current opinion of presidents. As for speaking in public and thinking on your feet, we contend that the new system would require more originality and the ability to think, not recite, on your feet would be absolutely necessary. It would give more experience to the average member because everyone interested could participate.

OPEN FORUM

Editor's Note—The GUILFORDIAN through the Open Forum column invites the student body to submit articles for publication. Realizing the need of a melting pot of campus squabbles, special attention will be given to future contributions. All articles must be signed by their author or authors and should be in the hands of the editor before 6 o'clock Sunday evening.

SOME SUGGESTIONS for More Interesting and Beneficial Literary Societies

At the beginning of each school year the students think there is nothing so great or wonderful as being a member of one of the literary societies. There is a great deal of enthusiasm on the part of the old men to secure new members from the freshman class. This great pep seems to be short-lived, for it soon dies out.

Today I'm safe in saying that the boys have little or no interest in society work. Each Friday night we find only a meager handful of members present. There is some excuse for a few of the absentees, but not for the most. The great majority lack interest. They have no desire to learn to express themselves in public, but figure that their superfluous supply will carry them through life.

If this crowd of non-attendants were asked why they did not attend society they would say: "Society work does not interest me, there is nothing to the society, or I don't enjoy it myself." It is doubtful whether these fellows mean what they say. Everyone knows that the more one participates in society work the better speaker he will become. The trouble is that these fellows don't know just what they want. They expect something from the society that it can not give them. They would like the society to be a place for fun and also to have it to turn into a playhouse.

To a certain extent the society should be interesting entertaining to all. It ought to be a place where folk could derive some benefit from being there.

Then comes the question, how can we carry on society work and interest all? How can we make the society really worth while? A solution lies in the program, I think, and it is this part of the society which needs a shaking up. We don't need a debate week after week. It grows tiresome. The boys want variety. As some suggestions would say, turn the program into an open forum discussion, introduce a short dialogue of some sort, put on humorous numbers, music goes good in the society. If we want to debate on a good, live issue, all well and good. In connection with debates especially the speakers should not wait until time for society to get up a speech. A mock trial is interesting as well as instructive. I think we ought to have more of them.

These are suggestions I would say to follow. These can be made interesting if the right person is put on the right task. If we make our programs more appealing to the boys our attendance is sure to increase. If we create an interest the boys will hate to miss rather than as now hate to go, and don't.

WILMER L. STEELE.

essary. It would give more experience to the average member because everyone interested could participate.

Why Not Try It?

The system has worked at Chapel Hill and even in preparatory schools, so why can't it be utilized at Guilford to restore two organizations to former importance? We say that it can be accomplished gradually by introducing more parliamentary procedure into the society meetings until the membership is possessed of rudimentary knowledge of "Roberts' Rules of Order."

There has been a marked decline in attendance and amount of interest shown in the literary societies this year. In years past the literary societies have wielded a powerful influence over the social and intellectual life of the undergraduate students at Guilford, but this is largely a thing of the past. Attendance at society is spasmodic and irregular, many society members attending just often enough to fulfill the requirements for membership while many other students have ceased to be affiliated with any society.

When such conditions confront us it is time to ask the question, "What is the matter with our literary societies?" The easiest answer, the answer requiring the least thought is: There are other things more interesting than society. This is the answer most of us give and we act according to it. The real answer is that the societies are not fulfilling their objective. Each society has as its object: to arouse interest in current questions, to improve the social, moral and intellectual faculties of its members and to give its members a thorough acquaintance with parliamentary procedure.

How are the societies attempting to do this? They present a series of monotonous cut and dried programs, in which four speakers with little or no preparation discuss the same old questions over and over and the rest of those present sit and suffer in silence. This gives little chance for intellectual development and the way the order of business is conducted gives no chance to learn the intricate process of parliamentary procedure.

There are probably several days to remedy the situation. I would like to suggest one that has been tried and found successful by the Di Senate at Carolina. Here, instead of a cut and dried debate and a minor second "fill in" number, a bill, relating to some important state, national or international policy is introduced as it would be in our State Assembly.

This system has many advantages over the present one. For one thing, there is a free discussion in which all may take part. This alone is an incentive for everyone to prepare himself on the subject. It gives those who are best informed a chance to express their views and a much better general knowledge of the subject is conveyed to every member present than by the present system. Then, too, it gives much better practice in quick thinking, organization of thought and clear, coherent expression of thought than a formal debate.

Finally, it does give true training in parliamentary procedure from every possible angle. In the discussion of a bill so introduced questions of parliamentary law are bound to arise, and to see these principles in operation impresses them clearly on the individual's mind. Then as the discussion ends and the bill is voted on, it gives one an understanding of our governmental system that cannot be obtained by our present type of program.

The present system is admittedly a failure. The proposed plan has possibilities of making the literary societies a vital factor in our college life. It has worked at Carolina and I believe is worthy of a trial.

EDWIN H. ROZELL.

You who are seeking success might well adopt the slogan of a noted man who once said: "I owe all of my success in life to having always arrived an half hour early."—F. H. S. Noice, Fairtax, Oklahoma.

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