

Isn't There Some Truth In Sarton's Accusation That Salem Is Bland?

Miss May Sarton, Rondthaler lecturer, was on campus on Dec. 8. She spoke in chapel that morning, and to a meeting that night. But Miss Sarton will probably be remembered on Salem campus more for an informal remark made to a small group of students at dinner. Miss Sarton stated that she had found Salem to be "charming—very charming—but very bland."

Salem exploded with justified criticism of Miss Sarton's rudeness and hasty judgment. After less than 24 hours on campus, we feel that Miss Sarton could not have known our campus well enough to have made a valid judgment—we are a bit more complex than she seemed to feel.

But in our criticism of Miss Sarton, we too often went over board in a defense of Salem. Salem suddenly became all good and holy as we defended it against the "outsider" who had criticized our school. We criticized rudeness and lack of a valid understanding but we ignored the basic question which she raised: "Is Salem bland?" And we who have known Salem for two, three or four years must truthfully admit that to too large an extent, Salem is bland.

No, we don't mean that everyone at Salem is a half alive ostrich who is trying to ignore the outside world. But we do mean that there is much room for improvement. There are disturbing signs of blandness, apathy, indifference, complacency—what ever you want to call it. There is too much blandness at Salem for every student

- who admits that she will graduate without really knowing anything except who Sally is dating and what Ann wore last week-end.
- who after four years at Salem and three years of marriage will not be able to discuss anything except how many teeth Junior has.
- who has not seriously questioned any of her basic beliefs, ideas or opinions, changed any opinions she brought with her to Salem.
- who has not been actively involved in any school organization (in this generalization we omit the freshmen who need a year to adjust to college life.)
- who have never taken a positive action such as writing a letter to the editor, seeing the person in authority, or contacted a Stee Gee member or dorm president about the student problems everyone gripes about.
- who has not attended lectures, recitals, concerts, or Pierrette productions because they didn't want to see or hear anything that wasn't light and gay.
- who has avoided taking courses that have the reputation of being hard and challenging in favor of crisp courses.
- who faithfully read "Around the Square" and ignore "Beyond" and editorials.
- who are working more for a degree than for an education—who are just trying to get by with the least possible effort.
- who don't read the newspapers well enough to know what is going on in Washington, the Congo, Laos, in race relations, medical care for the aged, federal aid for education.
- who do not read good books during the summer and who probably won't read anything more serious than a cook book after graduation.

Each student will have to judge for herself to what extent these conditions exist at Salem and in herself. We are all complacent to a certain degree.

It is evident that we are discussing here blandness, or apathy, on two levels. There is

indifference toward activities on campus which the head of every organization has had to deal with. And there is the more serious problem of indifference to things beyond our campus limits. Although five years from now it probably won't matter whether you were active in the WRA, Pierrettes or the **Salemite**, it will matter if you don't have the background information on what is happening now or the ideas and concept with which to meet future problems.

Well, what can be done about the apathy at Salem? Not much that we can think of. Better planning of programs in order to relate campus activities to the outside world could help somewhat. In the rush of term papers and tests we are too often inclined to fill the program time rather than take the extra thought, effort and time involved in planning worthwhile programs. The Y service projects are a wonderful example of what can be done with a little extra initiative and imagination. It has shown that good planning can bring good results. Salem students have shown a vital interest in local affairs in the community they are a part of for only four years.

Another recommendation that we would make is to deal with more vital controversial issues in chapel and club programs. The Y again sets us a pattern by its excellent dispassionate discussion on race relations last week. We would also like to see a regular formal debate on some controversial issue in chapel with no apologies made for taking one side or the other on for disagreeing with some one else. Too often we find that an overly delicate appreciation of the other point of view leads to a superficial skirting of the problems we are discussing. We should relate our programs with the vital issues beyond the square.

Another recommendation would be to use our foreign students, Oslo scholars and our American students living in foreign countries in programs to discuss controversial issues. While knowing of the dating customs in another country is interesting, wouldn't it also be interesting to hear their views on segregation, the American educational system and the advantages of socialism?

Perhaps if some of these things are done, Salem students won't be called bland by our future visitors.

Beware Impostors!

Dear Salem Students,

Well, Christmas is over now, and I'm back up here at the North Pole getting ready for next year. But I was rather disturbed about some reports that I've been getting from Winston-Salem.

It seems that some overly friendly men have been impersonating old Santa in the last couple of weeks. They hang out between Salem and the downtown shopping district. They start conversations with the girls, and some of the impersonators have even pretended to be giving away free bowling tickets. Better be careful girls, these fake Santas aren't really me.

Oh, you can't tell these despicable impersonators by the way they are dressed. They don't wear my holiday costume — they are neatly dressed and look innocent enough. Some of them even seem to be employees of Old Salem, Inc., but they are just another despicable brand of the impersonators.

Because these impostors are afraid of detection, they usually only talk to girls who are walking uptown alone. Mrs. Claus and I therefore recommend that you try to walk uptown by pairs or groups of three. If you must walk alone, be sure that you don't stop to talk to these impersonators. Anyone who would impersonate old Santa just isn't to be trusted.

Well, have a happy year and I'll see you next Christmas.

Sincerely,
Santa Claus



The Salemite

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY OF THE COLLEGE YEAR
BY THE STUDENT BODY OF SALEM COLLEGE

OFFICES—Basement of Lehman Hall — Downtown Office—414 Bank St., S.W.

EDITOR Mary Lu Nuckols

BUSINESS MANAGER Sara Lou Richardson

Printed by the Sun Printing Company

Subscription Price—\$3.50 a year

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Around The Square

By Louisa Freeman

Several weeks ago, when a noted authoress visited Salem, she made the statement that Salem girls are "charming, but bland". According to Mr. Webster, bland is "a drink of buttermilk and water;" how could anyone possessed of normal intelligence call a Salem girl a drink of buttermilk and water? Even if this were not exactly the connotation of bland that Miss Sarton had in mind, there is certainly no basis for the statement.

Look at Frances Bailey for instance. Could a "bland" student be inspired by Plato's **Phaedo** to write a biology term paper on that fascinating, non-Passerine old-European bird, the Hoopoe? At least Mr. McKinley has found a fellow bird-lover with whom he can share all his valuable prints and pamphlets.

Bland can mean "not stimulating" also. But who could be more stimulated than the eight seniors who came back from Christmas with diamonds, or Lorenda Hooks, who didn't come back at all? And now that Mr. Wendt has celebrated a certain birthday with all due festivity—coffee and cake during the day—he has just begun to live, too.

Of course there is a lot of interest and enthusiasm at Salem College. The Terrace Lounge Beauty Parlor, run by Miss Warren (Sheena), is a thriving business interest, with its latest under-the-dryer conversation being Mary Dabney Henderson's new pin, Ginny Kay Fortson's new pin (not a fraternity one, however), the four apparitions who invaded the salon Saturday night, and all the scandal that went on in Jacksonville over the holidays.

The education department occasions a lot of interest, also. Think of the hours these future members of the teaching profession (not job) spend on their time lines of eternal verities and on their bulletin boards! Foolish perhaps, but never bland.

And spaghetti enthusiasts enjoyed a dinner cooked by Linda Lee Rich combined with a kitchen shower, both in honor of Libba Lynch. Now really . . . no group of bland females would have bothered themselves by getting entangled in cooking a spaghetti dinner. Instead, they would have sent Libba a few magnetized potholders and guaranteed-not-to-rust egg-beaters and let it go at that.

Libba, Cathy Gilchrist, Page Bradham, Lindy Wimbish, and Sally Spangler won't be back second semester. The only use for Miss Sarton's famous "bland" might be found by those girls who are getting married—the use being in the

recipe, of course. Page will have little time to be bland and much time to be charming while she studies in Europe.

After examining all the evidences of activity, enthusiasm, and interest around the square, it is easy to see that only a person unfamiliar with what life really is could say that the school and its students are "charming, but bland".



Write, Rewrite, And Revise!

Dear Editor,

The Sands of Time are Running Out. In other words, the deadline for all articles, essays, short stories, art work, poems, critiques and Deep Thoughts which will be published in **The Archway**, Salem's Literary Magazine, at Easter, is fast approaching.

One week after second semester begins we must regretfully shake our heads and reject even the Masterpiece of the Twentieth Century. (Of course I don't think we would do that, but still, you get the general idea.)

So all you shy artists who are blooming unseen and wasting your sweetness on the desert air—

Well, anyhow, if you would like your work to be considered for **The Archway**, please turn it in to Ann Moore (203 Strong) not later than February 7th. (This date can easily be remembered as it is exactly one week before Valentine's Day. For those of us to whom Valentine's Day is simply A Day Like All Others, it is exactly two weeks and one day before Washington's birthday.)

This is still a new and experimental venture, and it needs the contributions of as many Salem students as possible if it is to be a success. Between semesters you will have nothing to do. So dig out those cherished, dog-eared manuscripts. Revise them. Turn them in. We do the rest.

As Ever,
Felicity Craig
Editor of **The Archway**