

Student-Faculty Relation Do They Need Change?

Now that the talk about student-faculty relationships has died down, it may be time to bring it up again. The Curriculum Committee is still working on problems and ideas. Of course they still need student interest.

It seems that we all are agreed that the first meeting held was a step in the right direction, although not much was accomplished. The problem was that the students seemed to be hesitant to say anything in the presence of the faculty and the faculty members had some reservations about saying anything in the presence of the administration.

Why not have separate meetings of the students and faculty? It could be done without turning into a slander session. People might be more inclined to speak up if a report is to be made from a meeting rather than just one individual speaking out.

On the whole, our student-faculty relationships are very good. The close relationship has been one of the attractive features of Salem.

Yet now some people are finding faults that need to be and can be corrected. The greatest of these problems seems to be the question of the purpose of faculty advisors. Freshman advisors may not have any other association with their advisees. The freshmen may not feel close enough to their advisors to talk to them freely.

Maybe you feel that the relationship is fine as it stands now. Maybe you feel that it is a personal thing and that nothing can be done to solve any problems that may exist. But if you feel that there are things that can be done, please talk to people and come up with some ideas. The people on the Curriculum Committee are Mrs. Edwards, Dr. Hill, Dean Hixson, Mrs. Jacobowsky, Mrs. Scott, Mr. von Nicolai, Ann London, Cindy Babb and Mary C. Shimer. Talk to them. Tell them your ideas.

Shulman Book Tells Of Miracles, Discredits Sathya Sai Baba

Reviewed by Ethel Grodzins Romm

In a famous **Bhagavad-Gita** passage, Vishnu Krishna says, "When goodness grows weak, When evil increases, I make myself a body. In every age I come back, To deliver the holy . . ."

The age is evil enough everywhere to offer us numerous avatars, and nowhere does it seem less good than here among Americans burdened with Buddha biographies, Americans disaffected with lives of affluence and pointlessness and impotent in the face of suffering and injustice.

Such a distraught soul is Arnold Shulman, who writes highly-paid, nicely-received films like **Wild is the Wind, A Hole in the Head, and Love with a Proper Stranger**. He tells us that he had long since abandoned the faith of his fathers, Judaism, without finding another. He dabbled in Zen Buddhism for many years and one day found himself writing "Buddhist" on a form asking "Religion." He understood this to be his unconscious talking to him and so he gave up a \$150,000 movie deal (proving to himself the sincerity of his "search for . . . a holy man), and contracted to write a book (causing the reader to doubt his motives), a book about blue-eyed, Afro-haired Sathya Sai Baba, who is Hindu and not Buddhist, and went to India for six weeks to do his research.

Baba might have been a better book had Shulman not started it by declaring he was stalking a Spiritual Master. He has written a quick, unconsciously debunking, journalistic study of a 45-year old Brahmin who proclaimed at the age of 13 that he was the present incarnation of the god Vishnu, and who has been performing dozens of daily miracles ever since, feats of mind-reading, astral travel, curing the incurable, and materialization. Bit by bit, and wholly unwittingly, Shulman manages to discredit Baba, who is followed, he tells us, by millions in India, as are other avatars ad-vented to save us in this Kali Yuga, Iron Age of Quarrel.

Believing in every miracle, Shulman nevertheless does not become a disciple. Baba says it is because he, Baba, has not yet called him since the American is not ready. Baba had also not called his own villagers yet, Shulman learned, most of whom do not worship him.

With a screen-writer's eye for affecting the detail, Shulman (writing in the third person as if to detach himself from his Western ego) conveys some notion of rural Southern India, "a country he feared and despised" because it traveled on a different time track from his own path. He gives us the shimmering, illusory heat; the abject poverty—both spiritual and material—of Indian village life; the daily rhythm of existence, beginning with the communal defecating in the stenching parched fields every morning; the 4" long cockroaches crawling around one's sleeping bag; the mosquitoes and cobras and scorpions; the monotony of life around a fundamentalist ashram waiting for the guru; the endless rumors about the evangelist Saint; the innumerable legends of his occult powers.

Inevitably, a book about Baba (not to be confused with Mayer Baba, the Silent Saint who died recently) must be about miracles. Baba is famous for "materializing" things, that is to say, for creating things out of the air. These are a certain narrow range of items, mostly **vibhuthi**, holy ashes that cure people, but also an occasional **Gita** or framed picture of Baba himself. Shulman received a ring with the guru's picture. As if he had never seen or heard of a stage magician "materialize" a deck of cards, Shulman describes the performance that convinced him utterly of Baba's miraculous psychic powers. "First Baba had pushed the sleeve of his right arm up above the elbow, then he held out his empty hand, palm up. Slowly, casually, he turned his hand palm down and held it motionless for a few seconds. His fingers were apart. Nothing could possibly have been concealed between them . . . The writer was sitting a few inches from Baba's right hand . . ."

In six weeks, Shulman could do very little investigating, but he did talk to everyone who would converse with him. Their stories are pathetic, or up-lifting, tales to be picked up around Lourdes or any other faith-healing center. The placebo effect, we skeptics would say, is best triggered by faith. Or the disease, like arthritis or cancer, has a remission period when it mira-

culously heals itself for awhile, and sometimes forever. In the one case Shulman was able to trace, Baba failed, although Shulman records it breathlessly as another miracle. An upper-class Indian woman called Asha comes to Baba as a last hope. Her husband is dying. Baba, reading her mind, tells her why she has come, before she says a word. "I will cure your husband's cancer," he promises. "He made the rotating motion with his open palm and transferred a handful of **vibhuthi** from his hand to hers. At precisely the moment Baba gave her the ashes her husband sat up in bed, over 1100 miles away, and spoke for the first time in two weeks. 'I can hear.'"

Shulman's book ends abruptly with the anti-climax to this story: "Asha . . . gave her husband a pinch of **vibhuthi** in water once a day for three days. Within five weeks he was completely cured and back at his desk . . . Now, a year and a half later . . . Asha's husband has been hospitalized for cancer of the lungs. Asha did not go to Baba this time. Three months later her husband died."

When a faith-healed patient is not fully healed in the West, his faith is in doubt. In the case of orthodox Hindus, their **karma** is not pure enough and Baba has decided not to help them. He maintains a hospital of sorts at his Indian ashram for these unlucky souls.

So far, Shulman reports, Sai Baba has only one American center, an ashram in the nation's culture-front, Los Angeles. The forecast for a wide-spread movement is excellent: these are bull-market years for all cults in America. Baba will bring a unique ingredient to his sect, faith healing. His cult is pure **bhakti**, fundamentalist devotional, as are all cults presently making it here, from Jesus Freaks to the Hare Krishna movement. Good works, intellectual inquiry, moral character, citizenship, and the like are seldom stressed, merely devotion to a personal deity who has called one to his side and given one a quick-acting technique for reaching Self-Realization. Coupled with mental medicine, it is sure-fire formula for cultish success.

—College Review Service

Write A Letter To The Editor

Dr. Tim Pennell - Interesting Addition To Salem College

By Meredith Hardy

Duck season, trees blowing leaves—orange, gold and red—to earth; arranged by winds into paintings priceless and rare. Salem framed by campus lawns freshly raked, displaying a healthy glow of life once hid by a cover of yesterdays drifters and colorful cares. He walks by it all and wonders how he ended up with a painting like this hanging beside his diplomas from Wake Forest and Bowman Gray.

Dr. Tim Pennell played football his freshman year at Wake and today he is an enthusiast of fun and outdoors. He is an appreciator of finer things and an understander of almost everything. A member of the faculty at Bowman Gray he is a teacher, researcher, surgeon, and general practitioner. He could tell you how to transplant a pancreas

or how many med students he teaches. He offers advice and medicine to correct what ails you or equip you with knowledge to help a friend in trouble or need.

He extends more than just a skilled hand, he gives his reputation of excellence and respect, a charm to put you at ease, and a heart bigger than his feet filled with confidence and love. He is the father of three children: a head cheerleader at Reynolds High School, a nine year old son at Mount Tabor Elementary, and an eight month old baby. His biggest interest is young people and this is easily believable since he is a young man excited by young things—like football and fall paintings and duck season but most especially helping each of us.

The Salemite

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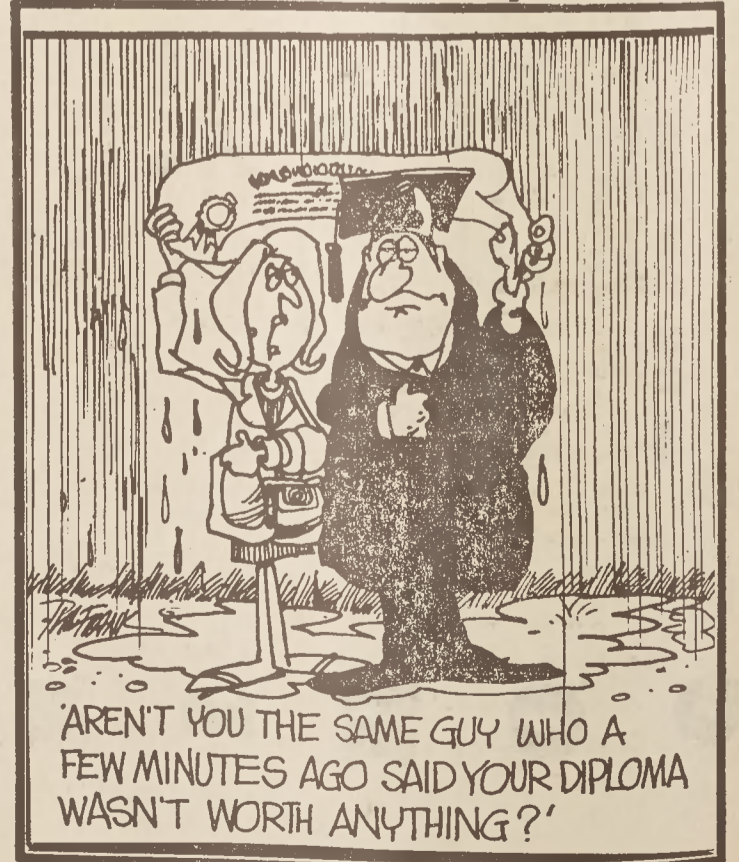
Help Spread The Word!

On Sunday a box will be placed in the reception room of each dormitory. If anyone is interested in contacting prospective Salem students when home during Thanksgiving vacation, please write your name and home town and state on a sheet of paper by Thursday, November 18 and drop it in the box.

You would be volunteering to contact by phone one or more of the prospective Salem students in your area. In doing so, you could answer any question the girl(s) might have. A dorm representative will then return to you a list of the girls in your area. If you have any questions, please contact Becky Eagles, 312 Gramley.

There will be a meeting for all those interested in attending National Model United Nations Monday, November 15 at 6:30 in the Student Center. Come and find out about it.

FRANKLY SPEAKING by Phil Frank



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