

Campus Colloquy INC



Is Motherhood All?

by Karen McCotter

The sanctity of motherhood in American life is one of its most sternly protected images. Considering that Mom and her apple pie rank only behind the country itself in importance, it is easy to understand why non-feminists and the majority of the male population scream sacrilege at those who deny that pregnancy is the most noble state any woman can hope to achieve.

This is a society in which every blushing, newly discovered mother-to-be is congratulated as if she had just bid seven no-trump and made it. (I use that analogy because bridge is one of the other more acceptable occupations for the female.) The reverers of motherhood ignore the fact that almost any female is capable of becoming pregnant.

This is also a society which looks askance at any young couple who, after two or three years, has not presented the U.S. Census Board with another diapered statistic. The only newly married couples who escape this scrutiny are those who are able to marry by virtue of their social security retirement checks.

Because the stock reaction of motherhood worshippers to any derogatory comments is aston-

ished indignation, it is extremely difficult to have a rational discussion with them. Once your position is known, you are written off as, if not positively warped, then at least very strange. It is quite simple to provoke this condemnation. For example, merely begin by admitting a dislike for children, and finish them off by refusing to get your teacher's certificate in college. This is particularly considered a mark of insanity as everyone knows that a woman should become a teacher because she then has the same vacations as her children. If this is the answer handed back to you, give up the effort because they obviously ignored your first remark on children.

If all your arguments prove ineffective, only remember that you are fighting against the tenets of one of the most solidly-structured societies in existence, barring the caste system. It will take more than words to change so many minds. It will take American women considering the decision to have children as seriously as the responsibilities and limitations of motherhood warrant; and it will certainly take some conscientious objectors to pregnancy.

Campus Colloquy is a young syndicate aimed at making available to college students essays written by world-renowned personalities. These essays cover a variety of topics and are slanted toward college readers - the Salemite has selected 17 essays which we will publish weekly till the end of the year.

The Case for Dissent by Walter Cronkite

(Mr. Cronkite is Managing Editor of the CBS Evening News. He has been a reporter for more than thirty years. In 1962, the George Foster Peabody Television News Award saluted, among other Cronkite achievements, his "Twentieth Century" broadcasts (1957-1966). In 1969, he received the Wm. Allen White Award for Journalistic Merit - never before given to a broadcast newsmen.)

After a few thousand years of so-called civilization, there are so many things wrong with the world that we have made. The mere fact that this species of ours has survived so far seems hardly adequate cause for self-applause nor can we indulge in self-congratulations for our civilization's considerable material and cultural development that has failed to guarantee survival or nurture the bodies and the spirit of all mankind.

If we are to wipe out not only the symptoms, but the causes, of injustice and decay, there must be change. There is scarcely any argument on that. But the question is the form of the change and, as in such critical times in our history, we find conflicts between the seeming intransigence of the established order and the impatience of youth. Each generation, when it is young, is anxious to get on with the obvious reforms that

the establishment of whatever era seems reluctant to institute. With the world's present potential for mass suicide with nuclear weapons, over-crowding, hunger, is there any wonder that the students of today rebel with an urgency unknown to earlier generations?

There ought to be a better way, and that, I submit, is what the students are saying - there ought to be a better way, not only to settle international dispute, but to provide for the world's underprivileged and to assure peace and well being for all.

Almost everyone agrees with those broad objectives. It is the manner of achieving them - primarily the dispatch with which we get the job done - that separates us, that brings us to this increasing and terrible polarization of our society. It is time that both sides look and listen. Don't stop, there isn't time to stop, but look and listen, one to the other.

As essential as is the need for listening to the other side's arguments, is the necessity for critical self-examination of one's own arguments. It would be helpful if each side recognized its own excesses of speech and action even as it condemns those of the opposition.

It cannot be expected that more fanatical leaders or their disciples are going to follow such rational behavior, nor are they likely to be tolerant of those who do. Fanatics seem to require total commitment and are not loathe to use bully tactics to get it. It also is the essence of their demagoguery that they preach only part of the lesson. Those who are hardened in their position practice and preach repression and their weapon is fear. To rationally examine our

alternatives, none of us can yield to fear.

Freedom of speech, press and peaceful assembly, which we all should hold dear, really compromise the freedom of free inquiry - the freedom to study our democratic institutions without fear of harassment by misguided patriots or heckling malcontents, freedom to advocate change without facing trial for heresy. Such study may require throwing off old concepts, shibboleths in the spirit of basic research. We must hear out the dissenters. We must seek out and make use of the original thinkers.

We have the future in our power. The twenty-first century is not going to burst upon us in full flower. As we move into the future, the possibilities open to mankind stagger the imagination. Man can mold the new century into anything he wants it to be. But to do that, we must know what we want and we must examine each of our institutions to determine whether they stand up to the challenge of the century ahead.

We of our generation may have to look no further than our own failure to plan for this future, to find the seeds for youth's discontent. Convinced that we are not doing the job, many of you have turned your backs upon us. Even as you should not reject that which is good of our institutions and that accumulated wisdom which we possess, perhaps solely by reason of age, we must not reject those among you who dissent. In youth's rebellion against any unsatisfactory status quo, we must assist - not resist. This does not mean either for youth or for us groveling to coercion, yielding to blackmail, or forgiving violence. It does not mean we can tolerate lawlessness, for the law is the foundation of our freedom.

It does mean that we must not let our revulsion to the transgressions of the militants blind us to the future.

Society is going to change. The only question is whether youth is going to help and, indeed, we need to communicate by word and deed to those coming behind us, the values that we know are constants - right or wrong, truth or falsehood, generosity or selfishness, dedication or cynicism, self-discipline or license.

This country has not lost its ability to respond to challenge. Though all the challenges of today seem frightening in their complexity, there should be no reason for despair. I do not despair that young people are taking a more concerned interest in our affairs than ever before in our history. God bless you all for that.

The more and the greater the challenge, the greater the heroism of thought and of deed and of the courage to surmount them. Just remember this. The more exciting, then, the prospects of the combat; oh, how much sweeter, then, the taste of victory.

Lifespan Center Plans Semester

Workshops for hall presidents (September and October, Joyce Aldret chairman). Placement office (Dean Johnson). Vocational Reading Room (Joyce Aldret):

- Open houses planned for Seniors - Nov. 13, 14 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
- Juniors - Nov. 14 5:00 - 6:00 and 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.
- Sophomores - Nov. 20 5:00 - 6:00 and 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.
- Freshmen - Nov. 21 5:00 - 6:00 and 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Lifespan Center plans for the remainder of this term include:

- "Six Became One" - Film concerned with female psychological development to be sponsored by Lifespan Center and Salem Forum to be shown November 16 at 12:45 in Fine Arts Center.
- "Job-Search Workshop" - how

to look for employment: resumes, interviews, etc.

Date: November 21  
Time: 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
For: Interested community women and students  
Leaders: Dianne High and Reid Raben

"Salem Sights" - a tour of the Salem Campus and introduction to January program faculty.

Date: Dec. 4 (tentative)  
Time: morning  
For: Potential special students during January term.

Leader: Mary Anne Goslen  
Conference on Continuing Education for Women programs - invitational meeting.

Date: Dec. 11 (tentative)  
Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For: Approximately a dozen leaders of CEW programs and counseling activities in other N.C. institutions of higher education.  
Leader: Jean Eason