



The Salemite

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Friday, February 25, 1977

Thomas Transformed to Twain in Three Hours

By Janet Jones

Jack Thomas spoke about Mark Twain on the morning of February 15. By 8:00 that night, he spoke as Mark Twain.

Thomas, an actor from West Virginia, came to campus to perform "Mark Twain on Stage" last Tuesday evening.

Earlier in the day he talked to a group of students and faculty members about some of the lesser-known aspects of Twain's life.

One of Thomas's main topics of discussion was Twain's courtship of Olivia Langdon, who became his wife. According to Thomas, Twain became involved with "Livvy" in an unusual fashion. Twain first met her brother Charles, who had an ivory image of his sister on a chain. When Twain saw the statue, "it was love at first sight," said Thomas. Twain vowed to meet the girl, and he did. He eventually won her by courting her through letters, according to Thomas.

After Olivia and Twain were married, Thomas continued, Olivia, who was a devout Christian, tried to ingrain her faith into her husband, who was not a willing convert. Twain, according to Thomas, refused to "lead a hypocritical life;" he believed that all religions have just as good a story to tell as does Christianity.

Thomas emphasized that Twain was an extremely wealthy and extravagant man during the height of his popularity. He built a house

that resembled a steamboat, and, according to Thomas, spent over \$100,000 a year entertaining guests at the house.

Later in the day a small group of students, reporters, and photographers watched Thomas transform himself into Twain for the evening performance. Thomas began applying make-up at 4:30 p.m. and completed the process about three hours later.

According to Thomas, the white suit he wears is a carefully tailored replica of the suit that the writer wore during his lifetime.

During the make-up demonstration Thomas said that he studied movies of elderly people in order to help him with movement in his impersonation of the 70-year-old Twain.

At approximately 8:05 p.m., Thomas shuffled onto the stage in Hanes Auditorium as Mark Twain. His set was a rocking chair, a rug and table; his props, a cigar, a kerosene lamp, and some books.

He began his raspy monologue with a confession: laziness had prevented him from performing here last year. Commenting on his first job, Thomas said, "I didn't want to work, so I became a schoolteacher."

Lapses of memory and a brief nap flavored his telling of a Twain tale, "The Old Ram." The lights dimmed for Thomas's rendition of "The Ghost Story." The audience flinched, then chuckled at the sudden conclusion of the story.

The remainder of Thomas's monologue covered such favorite Twain topics as politics, religion, smoking, and lying, as well as a section from Huckleberry Finn.

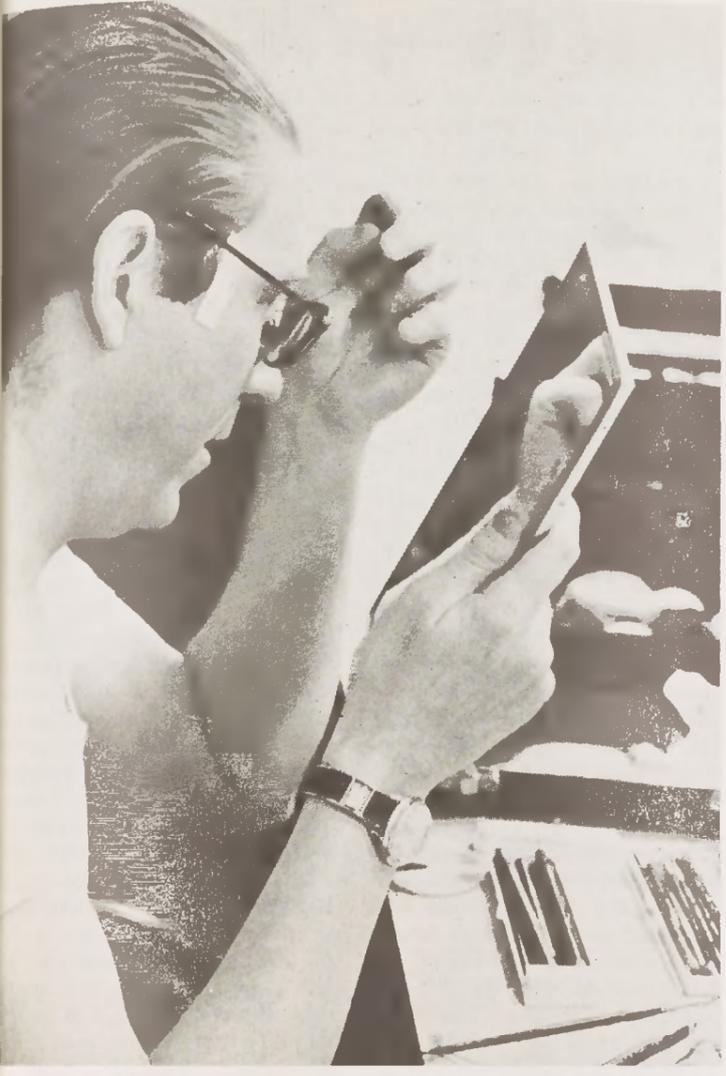
He said he used to lie, "but gave it up since the field was so overrun by amateurs." And, taking a shot at politicians, he continued, "The lie is man's truest friend . . . and will never perish from the earth as long as Congress remains in session."

But Twain's favorite topic for satire was "that curious invention the human race." "Man started a little lower than angels and has been getting lower ever since," said Thomas. "I sometimes wonder," he added, "if God didn't invent man because he was disappointed in the monkey," and, "Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to."

Thomas also inserted a rebuff to Franklin's epigram, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise": "the old folks have to get up early: they've done so many mean things in their lives, they can't sleep."

The script for "Mark Twain on Stage" is the result of years of study and research on Thomas's part. He has performed the show for almost six years at colleges and universities throughout the nation.

Thomas's visit was sponsored by and coordinated by the college Lecture-Assembly Committee, which is headed by Dr. Pubantz.



Dean Says Salem Is Student-oriented

By Linda Joynes

Dean Helmick, Salem's new Academic Dean, has been on campus for over a month. That month has done nothing to dampen her enthusiasm about Salem. Enthusiasm is the first thing I sensed when we began to talk, and to be sure, she likes to talk because she and Dr. Hill chatted away while I waited in her outer office and got a good start on my Spanish paper. She is easy to talk to; I think I talked more than I listened.

However, I discovered that Dean Helmick has gracefully settled into campus life, and her second impressions of Salem coincide with her first: "I am just so pleased with everything that has happened so far. It is a remarkable place to work," she said. Salem is remarkable, Dean Helmick believes, because the Faculty, and the Administration are student-oriented. They know Salem's purpose; they all strive for the same goal: to provide a strong liberal arts education for women.

Along with these general statements concerning Salem, Dean Helmick and Faculty are working on new academic programs. Piedmont Studies may be a new degree program consisting of local research into the Piedmont's rich culture, its music, art and literature, history and politics. The program would be an inter-departmental effort. Another new possibility is Economic Management, and yet another option may be a Home Economics Program geared to older returning students.

Touching momentarily on the Faculty Advising issue, Dean Helmick says that she wishes to talk with both faculty and students. She does not want the issue to become a "venting situation" but rather a constructive exchange of criticism and suggestions between both parties.

Our conversation ended with an open invitation. Dean Helmick says that her office is open all day, and if she is not busy, stop by anytime.

Oslo Summer Proves Valuable

By Lisa Jorgenson

At this time every year there appears in the refectory an announcement about something called the Oslo Scholarship. The normal reaction to this sign is "Does this mean we have to have Norwegian fish for dinner tonight?" . . . in other words, most people do not give the scholarship a second thought—but it can mean a lot. This scholarship is funded by L. Corrin Strong, former ambassador to Norway, and is open to all rising juniors and seniors. In past years, applicants have been asked to write a four-page paper concerning contemporary society—hardly a chore for a \$1,250 scholarship! After being a recipient of the scholarship, I can wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone.

You may have been to Europe

before, but going to summer school is totally different. You are given a unique opportunity to know firsthand both the Norwegian culture and the many other cultures represented by the foreign students (it's almost like visiting the U.N.). It is rather strange that in Norway I should learn more about the Iranian, Turkish, Israeli, and African cultures than I have in my four years of college. America has been called a "melting pot" of cultures in which personalities of different countries have blended to form a unique American character; and by meeting these other foreign students I can appreciate some of the strong cultural diversity that went into making this American character. The Norwegians, in contrast, are culturally, linguistically, religiously and racially homogeneous.

This uniformity creates great feelings of nationalism as well as a sense of community. It was comforting to see people identify with their king and to take such pride in their country. One of the highlights of my summer was exchanging greetings with King Olav—it's no wonder the people admire him so much! The entire summer school was invited to the king's summer palace for food and drinks but more impressive was his warm, personal welcome.

Being able to visit with relatives added yet another dimension to my summer in Norway . . . my equivalent to "Roots" I suppose! Since I was living in Oslo, which was much like many other cities, it was nice to travel to the country villages of my relatives (those scenic little towns which we all

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Parents' Weekend Update

By Ginger Harris

As you may know Parents' Weekend, March 4, 5, and 6, is just about two weeks away. Much progress has been made with plans for the weekend since the last "news bulletin" from the Parents' Weekend Committee.

"Those Were The Days" is the overall theme chosen for Parents' Weekend. This is why we need your cooperation in obtaining a "now" and "then" picture of your parents and yourself. The pictures should have your name written in pencil on the back, as

we plan to use them in the decorations for the dance.

Another question frequently asked is why do we need to charge \$20 per couple. This money is a lump sum to cover the various activities of the weekend instead of asking for \$2.00 here and \$5.00 there. The \$20.00 per couple registration fee includes Friday night activities (skits); Saturday coffee, lunch and tea; all Saturday activities such as the seminars and tennis, the Dance; and Sunday Brunch. We, the Parents' Weekend Com-

mittee, do not feel that this is too much to ask of our parents. The decision was discussed by the

Committee, several "higher-ups", and then voted on by the Committee and adopted.

PARENT'S WEEK-END SCHEDULE

Friday, March 4	
4:00-5:00	Registration, Main Hall
5:00-6:30	Buffet Supper, Refectory
8:00-9:00/9:30	Freshmen-Founder's Day Song; Soph.-Sr. Banquet Skit; Junior-Founder's Day Song; Senior-Founder's Day Skit; All-song "Are You Listening?"
Saturday, March 5	
9:00-10:30	Late Registration, Main Hall
9:30-11:15	Morning Coffee, the Cunnings' home
11:30-12:45	"Mini-Seminars" F.A.C. — 11:30-11:45—Welcome to Parents, Introductions, and General Information — Hanes
12:30-1:45	Buffet Lunch
2:00-5:00	Assorted Activities Tennis, Old Salem. Shopping in town, etc.
4:15-5:30	Babcock Tea. An opportunity for parents to meet the faculty
8:30-12:30	Formal Dance, Refectory, BYOB, Mixers provided, black tie optional, Special Occasion — band
Sunday, March 6	
11:30-1:00	Brunch