

A Season For Change

by Susan Webb

As autumn approaches, the leaves turn colors, the weather turns cooler, and flocks of birds begins heading south for the winter, we witness the metamorphosis of our environment. Though we treasure the warmth of summer days, there are indeed many characteristics of autumn that we value as well. The seasonal changes are not only aesthetically pleasing, but they accompany and occasionally prescribe different stages in our lives. Individuals cannot isolate themselves from their environment, from change.

Salem students have long known this to be true and thus have developed a reverence for Salem's traditions and opportunities. However, as Salem grows and

times change, the needs and desires of students differ. Salem, as a member of a dying breed of colleges, cannot afford to be impervious to desired changes, and in many cases its administration has demonstrated a respect for needed change.

Change, however, can be a scary word, perhaps, when students are perceived as attacking Salem traditions such as sit-down dinner or Fall Fest that have in many ways been synonymous with the college itself. Thus students are likely to run into stumbling blocks and red tape that slows down the processes of change, allowing more time for the changes to be thought out. Are students destroying a part of the heart of

Salem? This can strike fear into those who hold Salem so dear.

Change, however, needn't be destructive. Changes may simply alter or compromise present situations, establishing perhaps only a transient stage in our lives such as autumn represents. In reference to college traditions, look upon them as the trees in your backyards. From season to season, the leaves may change color, a new bloom may appear, a branch may break off, but they still stand. Traditions, like trees, can withstand alterations and may in time evolve into new traditions.

Changes can often be healthier than allowing traditions to die or systems to fail under the burden of resentment or

resistance. A few modifications can provide the added lift needed to strengthen the vitality of traditions, governing policies, and institutional programs. Change should not be feared in this respect.

The student body and its government have begun instigating changes that students feel they need. There definitely is a certain reluctance on the part of various committees, administrative or otherwise, to make decisions in favor of change. In the face of such proposals, you must first ask perhaps the most important question. Are there occasionally blooms on the trees in your backyards or are you living in a static environment that has ceased to grow with you?

Letter To The Editor: Sit Down Dinners Inconvenience Student Lives

Dear Editor,

Lately, Salem students have commenced another year of complaining about our current system of a seated evening meal. I am in complete agreement with the large faction of students against sit-down dinners for three primary reasons: time, money, and energy/effort. As a good friend of mine who wished to remain anonymous stated, "Sometimes traditions prevent progress and growth."

Sit-down dinners waste the valuable time of Salem students. Many students cannot be ready for dinner promptly at 6:00 p.m. due to classes, athletic team practice, work, or their activities in the community. Why should this large group of students be prevented from eating a meal for which they have pre-paid? A cafeteria-style option would at least provide these students with alternate dinner times to work into their schedules. Sit-down dinners also waste the valuable time of the Epicure employees. In addition to washing the serving utensils used for a sit-down dinner, they must also wash the serving plates and utensils. Proponents of sit-down dinners will invariably argue that one has to wait in line for a cafeteria style meal, therefore the issue of wasted student time is a moot one. I counter this with the notion that if dinner is available for a complete hour, students can spread out their dinner time, thus

allowing not only for a shorter wait, but also allowing more students the opportunity to eat. Another advantage of a cafeteria style meal is not having to rush into the refectory in order to procure a place at a table where food is available.

In financial terms, sit-down dinners do not appear to be very economical for Epicure, the students, and therefore the school. It takes more people to serve at a seated meal, thus incurring more costs in terms of payment to employees. Because many students cannot attend the sit-down dinners, there students are essentially wasting money because our meals at Salem are pre-paid. The extra energy expended in washing the implements used during sit-down dinners costs money. Overall, I believe students would get more out of our pre-paid, forced meal plan if we had cafeteria-style meals on weeknights.

In the past, when Salem students did not have many of the responsibilities and activities which they now have, sit-down dinners were a viable, respected option for dinner. Unfortunately, popular sentiment for the large part has shifted, and the mere mention of sit-down dinner often provokes heated discussion. Also, the subject of sit-down dinner has become a source of frustration in the

relationship between the students and Epicure. I believe it is important for the student body to realize that Epicure is contracted for their services, and the decision of whether or not to have sit-down dinners on a regular basis is not theirs. Epicure does many special things for Salem students, and we should be quite appreciative to them for their efforts. Having worked in several aspects of food service, I can personally appreciate their work.

It is important for me to state that I am not advocating the abolishment of all sit-down dinners. I believe that all Salem students look forward to the special sit-down meals such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Awards Dinner, and Sophomore-Senior, not to mention the fun events of

Halloween. The freshmen are in for a treat with these Salem traditions. I would like to see a Sunday sit-down lunch or even better, a brunch retained as a regular feature in the refectory. I feel that students have more time to relax over a Sunday mid-day meal than they have over a hectic, weeknight dinner.

Fortunately, our SGA is currently addressing the issue of student unrest over our meal situation. It is our personal responsibility to Salem College and to ourselves to let our opinions as students be known, so that the democratic process can work effectively for all of us.

Elizabeth Betts

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