

# Identity Crisis?

by Katie Thomas

"We the sisters of the good earth hereby pledge to give up Del Monte products, and Benetton, (in moderation). We promise to: become informed, study (whatever) and join Amnesty International. Signed Moondrop, Raindrop, Starlight, and Twilight." Caught your attention, huh? We found this declaration a couple of days ago. It was written by me, and three of my friends who, out of the kindness of my heart, will remain nameless. We wrote this two years ago. I think we were all going through an identity crisis, and this was one phase when we decided that we were going to become peaceful protesters and change the world. Finding this ancient parchment starting me thinking. What is our identity?

An article in *Vogue* this month entitled "Twenty Something" describes college life in terms of what issues are important, and how students identify themselves, like what kind of clothes they wear, what music they listen to, etc. The conclusion of the article was that there is no central ideas or style of our generation. That really got me thinking. Reflecting on our own college campus, I wonder what we all have in common. What does our generation find important.

Remember in junior high when we all HAD to wear pink and green (how embarrassing)? We all had to have pocketbooks with four buttons (if you had the kind with three you were really out of it). And we knew the words to the Tab, Dr. Pepper, and Coke commercials. We also knew the contents of Big Mac ("Two all beef patties, special sauce...") Come on, you know the rest). And if you didn't wear your hair in wing-dingies you really could hand it up!

I look around campus, and I see all kinds of styles, no one way to wear your hair (thank goodness!) and a wide variety of music echoing from the windows. I wondered if maybe we have become more secure in our "upper college years" and the need to belong to a group to form our identity doesn't exist anymore. But talking to my brother, who is sixteen, possibly the most insecure age, I realize that even in high school they don't have that central style, joke, song, hairstyle, whatever.

As editor of the paper this year, one of my jobs is to figure out what issues people on this campus are most concerned about. That's harder than it sounds. One thing I have learned is that everyone is interested in different things. There is never a central issue that weighs heavy on the heart and minds of many. I think this is good. But it's also scary. How DO we identify ourselves? What is important to us as "tomorrow's future?" Got any suggestions?

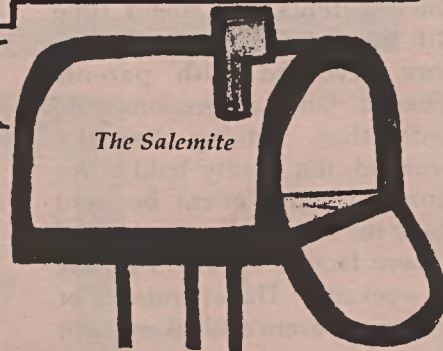
## P.O. BOX

I, Susie Salem, have been listening closely to the discussions on campus pertaining to alcohol consumption. I don't understand why this is a big issue all of a sudden. College students have been drinking beer since the creation of the first fraternity house. I find it hard to believe that this will ever change.

College is about growing up, learning responsibilities, and maybe even becoming an adult! No matter how hard you try to stay a freshmen, the inevitable always catches up with you and you find real life situations staring you in the face. Yeah, you make mistakes, but you pick yourself up, brush yourself off, smile, and start all over again! It's all part of that college experience.

What does all this have to do with alcohol? Well, I certainly have had my share of "good times," but I have also learned the responsibilities that come hand in hand with a good time.

The meeting to discuss the results of the PICA (Piedmont Independent College Association) study of alcohol and drug use on Salem's Campus was held on November 4, 1988. After reading the conclusions, I have come to some conclusions of my own. I find it demeaning to be told that Salem has a problem with alcohol abuse (not use, abuse).



Like I said before, college is college. Yes, we use alcohol in a social sort of way, but so does every other college and university. So why is this such a big deal all of a sudden? I'm not really sure.

Is it because there is a new emphasis on healthy students on this campus? No, I don't think so. Look at the new Infirmary hours. Is it because there is a new emphasis on conduct and setting good examples on this campus. No, I don't think so, Salem has a reputation for unique personalities and individual-ism. Is it because there is a need for a chapter of AA on this campus? No, I don't think so. I think a few people may actually abuse alcohol, but this is true in most every community or social setting.

I think some generalizations have been made here. Someone needs to look realistically at this issue on other campuses. I think they will find that college is college no matter what campus is visited.

# Alcoholic Busted

Dear Campus Alcoholics,

We've been busted! Yes, it's true-or so Dr. David S. Anderson, PICA consultant believes. On Tuesday, August 23, he assembled a group of students that he felt represented every variation of campus life. However, only 43 students met. These 43 students consisted of House Councils since there were no freshmen or upper classmen on Salem's campus at this time. By gaining insight into these 43 students' perceptions of alcohol use, Dr. Anderson feels as if his outside view into Salem's community allows him to give an institutional overview. In other words, he feels he has heard the true confessions of a majority of Salem students, when in fact he spoke with a small minority.

Due to the fact that Dr. Anderson's "ten page dissertation on the evils of Salem life" is long and complex, we feel we must present our argument in response to his assumptions.

1. Dr. A.: "Heavy drinking is not encountered by the students while they are on campus, however, it does appear that there is a relatively heavy alcohol use pattern. It is apparent that heavy drinking by the women of Salem College does occur and this can be viewed as binge drinking and/or sophisticated alcohol and drug use."

Us: The fact that this abuse does not occur on Salem's campus should speak for itself. Obviously, students respect the N.C. state law and Salem's drinking policy. Why should we be held accountable for abuse that occurs on other campuses when we have no means to control it. We do not deny the fact that drinking occurs off campus-it is more of an individual's own personal choice.

2. Dr. A.: "Even though students generally talk openly with one another, and have a good relationship with faculty and staff members they are reluctant to talk about their own alcohol and drug patterns."

Us: Based on personal experiences, we feel that Salem students do not and would not hesitate to discuss their problems with faculty and staff members. How Dr. Anderson could gain this magnitude of insight into the faculty-student relationships in such a limited amount of time amazes us.

3. Dr. A.: "The students come from families which apparently have a substantial amount of money."

Us: Apparently Dr. Anderson did not have the five minutes we had to check his facts. With minimal effort

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