

Letter unfair in portrayal Of race relations at Salem

by Lisa Findlay

As one could see by reading last month's editorial page, racism continues to be a dominant issue on Salem's campus that needs to be addressed. Unfortunately, however, people are going about the fight to rid our school of racism the wrong way. Rather than simply expressing anger, we need to offer solutions and work hard on them. We can not just sit back, complain, and expect race relations to improve.

First of all, last month's letter to the editor upset me in that it sought to expose different forms of racism going on at Salem and to make students examine their beliefs more closely, yet it elicited a response of anger from many students as it made racial statements itself. For example, the "you people" phrase is not only used by white students regarding the African-American students. It is used by the African-American students regarding the white students as well.

For example, the author of last month's letter said, "You run more of a risk hanging out with those damn 'Klu Klux Klan KA's' at Wake Forest University." Why couldn't she have said, "The white students run a risk...?" No, the white students were the "you people" here. See, it goes both ways. This statement also implies that *all* white students hang out with KA's and made assumptions about the fraternity that are not necessarily true today.

This leads to my main point. Rather than each race continuing to place the blame for racism on the other, we need to come up with solutions. Anger causes more anger and this will get us nowhere. I bet the points I made above made some people angry. Now, for those of you who are angry, didn't that make you angrier in general at the whole racial issue? See, racism is an endless circle with no solution if anger and assumptions continue to be thrown out in ignorance. If we meet people assuming they are *not* prejudiced rather than prejudiced everyone is given a chance to demonstrate *their* beliefs. All individuals are different and can not be lumped into one group based on the others who *are* unfortunately, extremely prejudiced.

In addition, rather than one race going over to meet the other to talk about our feelings, we need to meet half way. Neither the white students nor the African American students owe it to the other to try harder. We need to try equally. Unfortunately, some racism is inherent in *all* of us — we are all born into prejudices. We can not avoid this in our world today, but we can do our best to face it and seek a middle ground. I truly believe this is the first step.

The problem of racism will not be solved overnight, at Salem or anywhere and we first need to understand that. Salem is a microcosm of society and what we need to do now is meet halfway — find a middle ground. Here, the "we" refers to those of us who want to try hard — on peaceful terms. If we meet with the desire to lash out at one another for things the other race has done, now or in the past, we will accomplish nothing. With open minds and the willingness to try our best, we can take the first steps necessary to improve race relations here at Salem and ultimately, in our society as a whole.

A time for action...

by Cary Clayton

Salem. Ironically, the word means peace. In my four years here, Salem has been a place where voices can be raised and action taken. I think we have reached a point where there are many voices clamoring for attention. For a while, it may have seemed that some voices were ignored but they are no longer. Now is the time to move from making noise to reaching solutions. Feelings have been hurt, tension has risen, there are rips in the fabric of Salem. Now is the time to start mending the holes. We need to move from voicing complaints to seeking solutions.

Why not focus on the things that we share and how we benefit from this community? We are all women, seeking a sound education, and opportunities to grow and learn about ourselves. This is the only time in our lives when we will have this incredible opportunity. Where else can professors leave the room when students are taking a test or give us tests to take back to our rooms? Salem gives us these opportunities because she trusts her students. With this trust comes responsibility. "Honor" is more than refraining from cheating and stealing, it includes how we interact with each other. To honor each other is to respect others ideas, listen patiently to complaints, offer advice, learn to forgive, and then move on. If everyone concentrates only on what is best for them, then we will go nowhere. "FOR IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE." If we do not give of ourselves to Salem than what can we expect from her in return? We are the reason this institution exists and it is our responsibility to support her foundations of honor and academic excellence.

Every one of us chose Salem from among hundreds of other colleges. We were free to chose and we are free to leave. Salem is not for everyone and she is what you make of her. If students are not committed to the ideals she upholds, than she has little to offer. Salem welcomes her students to make changes but her walls are not strong enough to withstand constant bombardments of complaints when no action is taken to mend the holes. Now is the time to forgive each other for things that happened in the past and work together towards the common goal: Strengthening Salem so that all women will be proud to call her home.

Then sing we of Salem ever, as proudly her name we bear.
Long may our praise re-echo, far may our song ring clear.

Proper Response Requested Of Students, Faculty

The Salemite was founded as the "Uncensored voice of Salem College."

The key words in that phrase are "uncensored" and "voice." In layman's terms, that means that The Salemite has not just the right but the responsibility to represent to the best of our ability as many points of view as possible—to represent to the best of our ability what Salem students feel and think.

Many people were angered by the letters to the editor printed in the last two issues of the paper. Such a reaction is to be expected. The authors were very direct in their views and could, to some, be considered harsh. What wasn't expected and indeed shouldn't be happening is the negative response received by The Salemite itself. Since the printing of the editorials, staff members have heard

several complaints and have been the target of personal criticism relating to their content. Even worse, some of this has come from faculty and administration.

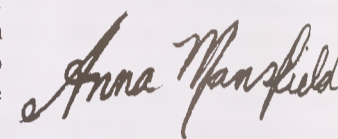
The letters printed were presented as written by the author on the Letters to the Editor column of the editorial page, a place reserved for the uncensored ideas of students. They may not have been fair, or truthful, or even well presented, but they are the views of students at Salem College.

The disclaimer at the bottom of the Editorial page makes very clear the fact that the staff of The Salemite does not necessarily agree with or support the author letters printed on the page. It is our job, however, to print all letters, whether we agree with them or not.

We ask, then, that students, fac-

ulty, and all others reading our newspaper reconsider who they wish to respond to and what the proper response is. As we welcomed the views of Amy Woodard and Yolanda Hairston, The Salemite welcomes and will print the views of anyone who wishes to respond in print on the editorial page. Please do not direct your anger at opinions expressed in this column at the editors—it may not be our opinion. Our job is to print the views of Salem as voiced by Salem, and we will continue to do so.

Anna Mansfield



Layout Editor

Cooperation Key to Racial Relations

I am still angry, but for many different reasons. Obviously, some people on Salem's campus are still mixed up on the receiving end of our communication problem.

In my previous letter to the Editor I pointed out that some students on Salem's campus are ruining our good name by spouting out racial remarks and sentiments. I'm sorry if some innocent people felt as if I included them in my chastization, but that really was not the case.

When I asked for us Salem women to check ourselves out and to really think about things, I did not intend for so many people to think and play upon their frustration only over the incident from last year. Too many stupid altercations have been the result, and the "let's be divided" approach is not the solution. I do realize that the door swings both ways, in all

aspects of our racial situations, but do you collectively, as Salem students, realize this too? I have two and half more years here, and I am not going to spend them putting up with this disharmonal b.s.

This letter is not an apology for my presentation of the first article, my language in it, or the feelings evoked from it. I want for us to approach solutions in a better manner than the first time. The high school games that we are playing with each other just aren't going to work. We all need to realize that we are the same, yet different and these differences make us special and are to be respected. I understand fully that some people will never change, but we all need to do our parts in seeing that their devilish deeds do not slip by. Freedom of speech and opinion exists, but not when you infringe on the rights of

others. Sticks and stones may break bones, but words can hurt worse than anything.

I also will state again that the wrong doings of students on this campus are not the fault of Honor Council or Interdorm. What can they possibly do when so many students can "get away with murder" before anything is ever brought to them, if indeed, it ever is brought to their attention? There is a big screw-up with our system, and although the fault lies with the scrupulous people who do bad things, some responsibility must be taken by our faculty who let these problems persist. And President Thrift can't do it all.

This time (and hopefully the last time) I sincerely ask—What's going on, and what the hell are we going to do about it?

-Yolanda M. Hairston

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It is the policy of The Salemite to print all editorials at the discretion of the editor. All works are welcome. Anyone wishing to write may place their letter in The Salemite box in Main Hall or give them to Anna Mansfield or Stephanie Peede.