

Dare To Be Different!

Students of Rocky Mount Senior High School, like the majority of American teenagers, are misinformed and ignorant of the real qualities of individualism. To the average American youth, an individualist is someone with high-heeled boots, seven inches of hair, and no manners. This is no individualist; this is a slob, or to be extremely lenient, a non-conformist.

Non-conformity, being different for its own sake, is not only set apart from individualism, it is its antonym. While non-conformity remains largely physical, individuality is a state of mind—a way of thinking. Individuality is questioning before believing, thinking for oneself and accepting other's beliefs only after careful examination. The importance of this thinking process was summed up by a nineteenth century Frenchman when he said, "There can be no progress except in the individual and by the

individual himself." In short, the true individualist, though he may look like everyone else, is different because he explores, examines, and becomes a sort of scientist in his reasoning process.

Individuality, like all things, entails some responsibility: an individual may decide that society is wrong; therefore, he is not obliged to follow its ways. In deciding this, he must be willing to accept the consequences involved. As Alfred de Musset put it, "How glorious it is—and also how painful—to be an exception."

Here at Rocky Mount High, in our relatively small school, it seems that we have allowed "pea-in-podism" to reign supreme, allowing literally acres of uncultivated individualism to lie fallow. By unearthing this buried resource, we can tap potential previously not utilized. To quote George Herbert, "He is only bright that shines by himself."



It's Your Neck

A skinny little figure in a blood-red cloak reached out one bony hand to spin the wheel of fortune. Because it was especially crowded with 180 million names, the wheel eagerly gave up as many of them as it could to the hollow-eyed spinner. The figure?—death on the highways; the names given away?—one could be yours.

This past Labor Day weekend, almost 600 people were killed in automobile accidents. North Carolina outdid itself by setting a record of 27 deaths. These grisly figures speak for themselves. Fortunately for Rocky Mount Senior High School, none of these accidents involved its students; however, teenagers did not get off lightly.

For instance, a 19-year old Charlotte boy took his younger sister and three friends for a ride in a borrowed car. While driving through one of the city's fashionable suburbs, the youth lost control of the vehicle and slammed it into a tree. When the police pried the car loose, it was over 30 inches shorter and four of its passengers were dead, including the driver.

Is there any solution to this senseless slaughter by automobiles?

One North Carolinian seems to think that the best answer is "seeing is believing." Dr. W. M. Summerlin, the Coroner for Mecklenburg County, says that one long, hard look at some of the accidents he has

seen would cause anybody to think before putting his hand on a wheel again.

The tragedy of these accidents is that most of them can be prevented. "Most happen through plain carelessness," the coroner declares. "A certain percentage will come from mechanical failure. But most stem from plain carelessness."

Carelessness always involves risk. In an automobile, the risk is your future.



'Bird Wins Award At UNC Conference

Each year, journalism students from all over the state of North Carolina meet together to study and judge their works during the past year. Four students from RMHS were delegates to this meeting, the 24th annual North Carolina Scholastic Press Institute, held at UNC in Chapel Hill July 22-24.

David Williamson, editor of **THE BLACKBIRD**, Margarette Alford, business manager, Mary Fond Daughtride, **PARDIGN** editor, and Chuck Coley, page editor, attended the newspaper and yearbook assembly as representatives of **THE BLACKBIRD**.

Daily classes were held for different departments of newspaper work, including feature writing, editorial writing,

sports writing, and news writing. Movies and other recreation were provided for the students each night by the N. C. S. P. I.

At the banquet on Thursday night, awards were given to the best newspapers. Besides winning an honorable mention on editorials, Allan Gurganus won first place with his editorial entitled "Conversation or Chit Chat." Wanda Wise won second place in the feature category with her article, "World's Fair Baffles RM Students." A photography award was won by Charlie Killebrew, **THE BLACKBIRD** photographer.

David Williamson was nominated for the Vice-Presidency of the convention and Margarette Alford presided over an advertising meeting.

Life Is Woe To New Sophs

Chances are that Gabriel Derzhavin never associated high school sophomores with his statement, "First chaos, then existence," but somehow his words ring true the first few weeks of school.

With the annual exodus of junior-high students to RMHS come many questions about the proper behavior of "dumb sophomores." In order to clear up any such questions, several points of interest for sophomores follow.

First, and most encouraging, no student has ever been permanently lost in A, B, or C buildings. Usually, most bodies are recovered by the end of the year.

Next, sophomores should learn to kneel, particularly at the feet of seniors. There is no real physical danger involved in this practice, other than sore knees.

Also, unless sophomores are in exceptionally good health, they should never venture out on the famed "Senior Walk." They should be sure to remain in their seats in the auditorium until all seniors have left.

Although life at RMHS may seem hard at first, sophomores do learn to enjoy it in time. In fact, every spring several students decide that they like the life of an underclassman so much, they will stay behind for an extra year or two.

Letter From Colombo

We are now in the normal routine of our daily school work. Generally speaking, most students have settled down and decided to work hard this year. It is pleasing to note the air of seriousness among the students, because it tends to show character, and character is measured by conduct.

I would like to encourage all students to have a presence of purpose in their school life, because this characteristic is necessary in any excellent school. Students are encouraged to take time to plan not only for their work in the classroom, but plan for their future education and work, also. Try to find satisfaction in your school work, because most of your time is spent at school in class or extra-curricular activities. There is satisfaction in doing a job well, and with it, comes happiness. You do not find happiness; you make it.

I admonish students to accept the following personal objectives:

1. Develop a personal responsibility for your own actions and decisions.
2. Learn to take and follow directions.
3. Develop good work habits.
4. Have a sincere regard for the rights and privileges of other students and teachers.
5. Be prompt always.
6. Develop a sense of pride

in our school. I am convinced in the short time I have been here we have the students and faculty necessary to develop outstanding citizens and many scholars. We cannot all be scholars, but we can all be good citizens.

Those students who bring credit to our school are considered assets. Will you be an asset or a liability?

—V. J. Colombo

From The Desk Of The Editor

As I began to write this column, I searched for a phrase which I hoped would appeal to all students, a phrase that would inspire all to try to attempt the utmost in leadership, scholarship and school spirit during the coming year.

I studied many famous quotations over and over and was lost. Almost every phrase had the same meaning: Whatever you do now will determine what you are to receive later. After serious thought, I decided to leave you with these words in hopes that they would not discourage, but arouse personal thought and interest.

It is not always good to give up too much of youth in hopes of fame and fortune in later years. In spite of an early life of hard work and sacrifice they may never come.

The Blackbird

Member of Columbia Scholastic Press Association

Annual Subscriptions -- \$1.25
Separate Issues ----- \$.25

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Silhouette

Twilight, serene,
calm, spume,
Moonlight, shimmer,
stars, soon.

Romance, whisper,
love, strolling,
Lonely, shadow,
mists, hoping.

Waves, wind,
turbulent, roar,
Foam, gulls,
ceaseless, soar.

Sand, crabs,
fish, whimsical,
Ships, sails,
silent, nautical.

Dawn, aurora,
placid, murmur,
Hush, azure,
casual, summer.

—Jane Cousins