

THE TWIG

MEREDITH COLLEGE



We need some good old fashioned politiking

Meredith College is, perhaps to its detriment, a homogeneous institution. Its election process reinforces this homogeneity. Our elections lack issues and our candidates do not really campaign. We have formal speeches and publicly displayed filing forms but no forum in which the candidates discuss or debate issues. The voters are, with our present elections system, unable to truly vote intelligently--they have no standards upon which to judge the candidates except their past performance in jobs often unrelated in terms of responsibility to the office being sought. We vote mainly on personalities and on the basis of the candidate's previous exposure, not upon anticipated performance. Past experience and human relations skills are important considerations, but more important is, the candidate's definition of her future role.

Now, if the student voter does not know the candidates personally she does not vote or she votes without knowledge. Our roughly 40 percent voter turnout for 1976-77 first slate elections indicates that many students do not vote.

Our election process needs to be more competitive and our candidates need to be more visible during their campaigning.

Meredith does have policy areas about which a divergence of opinion exists. We need to know our candidates' positions on these issues. What, for example, are our candidates' (or our elected officers') views on academic reform, cultural affairs on campus, student rights, student government reorganization, honor code reform or health care? These are important issues, more important than the mundane statements on filing form platforms of "I want to serve."

Under the present election system, each candidate chooses which topics she will stress on her filing form and in her SGA speech. The issues and focus of our elections should not evolve as they do now from the candidates, but from the electorate. The voters should make demands upon the students who will represent them; they should insist upon carefully thought out policy statements on issues of campus concern. Our candidates for SGA Executive Committee positions should be invited to publicly debate pertinent issues and to participate in question and answer sessions. Executive Committee, Legislative Board and Interdorm Board office seekers should submit campaign platforms to The TWIG before the elections.

Candidates for major non-SGA offices should also address the policy issues they will be concerned with upon elected. Students do not know, for example, whether the candidate (s) for Meredith Recreation Association (MRA) offices want to alter our intermural or inter-college athletic programs or whether they would like to see a modification of our academic requirements pertaining to the Physical Education program.

We do not know also whether our candidates for Meredith Christian Association (MCA) president intends to present single faith or interdenominational worship services. We do not know, either, how they would respond to the delegation of traditional MCA service projects from MCA to a special board or office.

Students do not know how candidates plan to implement changes that they hope to initiate. There are divergent views on the process as well as the actuality of change. These views need to be expressed before the elections.

This year, SGA has moved away from election reform. Last year, candidates for major offices were encouraged to submit campaign platforms to The TWIG. The Elections Board, however, voted this year not to provide for the publication of platforms. Thursday publication of platforms, they voted, would necessitate a Friday election and many students, they observed, leave campus early on Fridays. It would have been better to postpone elections until the following week than to sacrifice this one written public statement of candidate's promises. With published platforms, students would have a written reference on the candidates' positions on relevant campus concerns or a written statement which could be interpreted as an evasion of issues.

Students need a reference point upon which to evaluate their officers at the end of their terms. If we do not know the campaign promises, how do we know if they are kept.

This year's Elections Board and next year's should work to devise an election system which encourages active campaigning and beneficial controversy. Much benefit can come from our student leaders discussing issues and the resolution of problems.

This year's slate candidates as well as our elected first slate officers should themselves initiate the publication of their stands on issues. They are all encouraged to submit to The TWIG this week a written statement of their opinions on the issues previously stated and others of their choosing.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

AKV

I do hope that Dr. Parramore's book (see article page 5) is just an isolated example of the use at the college level of textbooks written for high school students.

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Letter to the editor

Dear Editor:

Thanks for the cooperation of many faculty and students, the Open Days arranged this year by the admissions office have been very successful. On these five special days for campus visitation by high school seniors we had 230 seniors and 111 parents to visit us. Their many expressions of appreciation for this kind of opportunity to get acquainted with Meredith have added a

qualitative means for measuring the success of this new program.

At this time the admissions staff would like to thank the faculty who opened their classes to the visiting students, the many student hostesses who escorted them to the classes, and the many students who served as guides for campus tours. Your assistance has reminded us anew that admissions is indeed a community effort.

We now turn our attention toward a late April Visitation Day for Juniors, which will have a different format from the Open Days, and another series of Open Days for 1976-77. For these too we shall be calling on you for help. While at the end of the first series of Open Days, however, we did want to take time to thank all of you for your assistance with them.

Mary Bland Josey
Director of Admissions

Pirsig studies values

Sarah, the stodgy college English teacher in her last year before retirement, bustles through the office of her junior colleague to fill her watering can. In a la-de-dah voice, she says, "I hope you are teaching Quality to your students."

The young colleague, identified as Phaedrus, replies somewhat huffily that of course he is teaching quality. But her remark triggers a massive analysis of the deficiencies of reason.

The analysis sends Phaedrus back to the battle between Socrates and the Sophists, to the conflict between Socratic Knowledge and the Sophist ideal that "man is the measure of all things." What Phaedrus discovered was that man, in search of truth by way of reason, had

lost Quality, or arete, the Greek ideal of excellence.

Phaedrus' hunt for quality is one of the three levels of Robert M. Pirsig's popular and monumental book, "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance," proclaimed by its publishers as "the most explosive book you will read this year." It is not about zen or motorcycles, and it just may be the most explosive book you will read in a lifetime.

A second level of Pirsig's book is a series of "Chautauquas", informal essays based on what Phaedrus discovered.

While Pirsig rambles in informal essays, a motorcycle trip is taking him, his son Chris, and two friends, from their home in the Midwest

through Montana and on to San Francisco.

The trip is the springboard for the Chautauquas. The friends' way of thinking is used as an example of the deficiencies of the modern mentality.

But it is also a means for Pirsig to help his son deal with a developing mental illness. Pirsig has a recurring dream in which he and his son are divided by a glass door. Chris tells him in the mornings that he has talked in his sleep and said, "I'll meet you at the top of the mountain," or "I'll meet you at the bottom of the ocean."

The goal, then, is for Pirsig to be united with his son. Before that can happen, he must come to terms with
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Sharon Ellis' Movie Review

Lucky Lady

Take three small-time con artists trying to run booze on the West Coast in the 1930's and you have the possibilities for a very funny movie. Cast Liza Minnelli, Burt Reynolds, and Gene Hackman in the parts, and you have a very funny movie, Lucky Lady.

The three met in Tijuana, Mexico where Claire (Liza Minnelli) is widow of a saloonkeeper and a wetback smuggler. Reynolds, as Walker, Claire's partner is smuggling and her lover, proves less successful at wetback smuggling than at loving.

And then Gene Hackman as Kibby appears - and the fun

begins. Kibby is an American of dubious character who's tired of being poor, so tired that he manages to weasel himself into a partnership (a partnership in more ways than one) with Claire and Walker.

These three are hardly as pure as newly driven snow, but a basic naivete about life remains. They are convinced that anything is possible, especially their getting rich. And so in indifference to the Coast Guard, the syndicate bootleggers, and the sea they set out on a trip smuggling rum into California.

Minnelli, Reynolds, and Hackman work well together.

Their personalities bounce off each other like big red rubber balls, and the result is hilarious. Reynolds is not his suave, cool self in Lucky Lady, and this comes as a relief. He's rather likeable as the bumbling, loveable Walker.

Hackman has none of the star quality of Reynolds. But he does have a good deal more talent. His performance is carefully controlled; he is Kibby, a n'er-do-well rascal who strikes it rich, whereas despite all Reynolds is first and foremost - Reynolds.

The real star is Minnelli herself. As Claire, the un-
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