

Editorial

Walking on the Wild Side

Meredith students are in to fitness! Around every corner you can find a young woman pacing around the campus, headphones plugged in to keep up a steady pace as she burns off those unwanted pounds. It's an accident waiting to happen.

It may come as a surprise to some that there is a speed limit of 20 miles per hour on Meredith campus roads. How many of us actually obey it? Granted, you almost have to put on the brakes and coast to maintain that speed. Yet here we all are, dashing around corners and curves at 35 - 40 mph in an attempt to arrive at class a few seconds earlier or leave just a smidgen sooner.

Around one of those corners you'll likely find a student walking or jogging on the road, plugged in and oblivious to your approaching vehicle. Do you want to hit her, even at 20 miles per hour?

Please take a moment to think about letting up on the gas pedal when you pass the gates onto our campus.

And about those oblivious walkers and joggers. What are you doing all over the road? Didn't Mom teach you to walk facing traffic? Are Meredith's roads your personal jogging track? How can you expect to be seen at night if you're wearing a black t-shirt and shorts?

Do the drivers a favor and step off the road when you see an approaching car - way off the road. Wear white or light colored clothing, even during the day, so drivers can see you. Better yet, put reflective tape on your Nikes. Take the headphones off so you can hear oncoming traffic - or at least turn down the volume.

It's frankly amazing that we haven't had a serious accident on this campus, what with drivers and pedestrians both trying to occupy the same space. Meredith does not have a pedestrian campus — yet (although commuter parking spaces have been so cannibalized, they might as well park at the State Fairgrounds and hike over to campus. But that's another editorial!).

In the meantime, let's all remember that the roads are for cars and the sidewalks and grass are for everyone else. With all the beautiful acreage that makes up our campus, it would seem likely that those who want to stay in shape could find somewhere else than a roadway to exercise.

What do you think - anyone support a jogging trail on campus?

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

The title of the editorial which appeared in the August 27th issue of the Meredith Herald — "Let's Call a Spade a Spade" — should have warned me of the banality and inappropriateness of the opinions that would follow. Foolishly, however, I read on. The writer displays both a contempt and flippancy — comfortable, thoughtless stances for those who seek to avoid rational debate and profound insight — with regard to the uses and abuses of women and language. She ridicules as nonsense what is, in fact, crucial to our perceptions of ourselves and our worth. She is tired — tired of thinking, wrestling with, and working to change offenses and habits so deeply buried in our psyches and souls that we are daily demeaned and diminished by them. She calls us "ladies," grows querulous about what she calls "all this fuss about equality," wishes to abandon small alterations in the language to produce dramatic transformations in our behavior and attitudes. She even bows out at the start, a brand new editor who declines to grapple with the simple editing tasks that would produce a non-sexist language.

I use shock to remind my students of the subtle influence of language in forming our opinions of ourselves. About the rule — 6b in the Harbrace College Handbook — I remind them that with the indefinite pronouns they have always been required to use the masculine pronoun, unless, of course, the gender of the group is clearly female. Now, students are obliged to use "everybody", "she/he" or "people/they." But I invite them to experiment. For example, they can write, "Everybody at the Tupperware party gleefully burped his plastic lettuce holder." And they can write, "Anybody who performs brain surgery must be sure to sterilize her scalpel." They laugh. They get the point. I hope this editor will

do the same.

More significant, however, than my personal objections to such an editorial are the misconceptions and outrage it produces among those who know little or nothing about Meredith College. The founders of Meredith dared to "make a fuss about equality"—and did so with a vengeance. They sought to provide women with educational opportunities equal to or exceeding those provided the "boys" at Wake Forest. Ours was a "university," designed to educate women in every competitive way. The editor would be wise to study Meredith's history and to learn the substantial and lofty expectations that inform our views of women and women's issues to this day.

A re-entry student in my English 111 class felt a thrill of apprehension as she read this editorial. Perhaps she had come to the wrong school. Perhaps Meredith was not the place she needed to be. I've been around Meredith long enough to know that she is, on the whole, "safe." She will encounter professors, students, and administrators who share her ongoing commitment both to the proper use of language and to the respectful treatment of women. But when this student's introduction to Meredith consists of reading such a careless, frivolous diatribe from the editor of our school newspaper, the student has a right to be a bit jittery. We expect our newspaper writers, editors, and reporters to be savvy, intelligent, compassionate, literate, and reasonable. I hate all the talk about public relations. Meredith is not, after all, a product to be marketed to some amorphous mass of consumers. But first impressions, as our mamas always told us, matter. And so do words. And so do women.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Britt
[English faculty member]

Letters to the Editor Policy Statement

Everyone in the Meredith community is invited to write a letter to the editor concerning any subject. The *Herald* welcomes your participation and any item discussed in a letter to the editor will be followed up by the *Herald* staff, where appropriate.

All published letters must be signed by the author, who may request that her name be withheld from publication.

Letters to the editor may be dropped in the *Herald* box beside the box office at Cate Center, sent through campus mail to Box X133, or delivered to the

office in person. Office hours will be posted outside the *Herald* office on the second floor of Cate Center.

Deadline for letters is Wednesday at noon. All letters received after that time will appear in the next edition of the *Herald*, which is published every Monday during the school year. When school holidays fall on Monday, the *Herald* will be distributed on the next full day of classes after the holiday.

Please put your letter in an envelope and address it to the *Herald* editor.

Thank you for your participation.

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