

Smoking halls need clearing

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Staff Writer

At Meredith College, several floors of the dorms are set aside as smoking halls. Ideally, this arrangement accommodates students who smoke while respecting the rights of non-smokers who live on non-smoking halls. However, this ideal is not the reality, and many non-smokers end up being placed on smoking halls against their wishes.

I am speaking from experience because this year my roommate, suitemates and I were forced to live on a smoking hall.

Last year when we went through the housing lottery, our names happened to be drawn nearly last, so we were forced to take what was left. Since we wanted to reserve a whole suite together rather than just one room, our options were limited.

In order for us to stay together as a suite, we were forced to live on third Poteat, a smoking hall. We were upset because one of our suitemates is allergic to smoke.

We went to see the rooms we had been assigned and talked to the students who were living in them last spring. They explained that they did not smoke either and that their end of the hall was mostly smoke free.

We were torn: we did not want to live on a smoking hall, but if we did not, we would have to break up our suite. Our parents were upset because they felt that for the price they are paying for us to attend Meredith we should expect the right to live in a healthy, smoke-free environment.

When we moved, we discovered that there were several other non-smokers on our hall as well.

However, at our first hall meeting our Resident Assistant said that she understood that there were several non-smokers placed on this hall by the lottery and that although she was sorry,

it was still a smoking hall, so she did not want to hear any complaints.

She did ask smokers to raise the window when they smoked, to keep their doors shut and to use air freshener.

I understand where the smokers are coming from, and it is not their fault that non-smokers were placed on a smoking hall. The fault lies in the system by which rooms are assigned.

I understand that the lottery seems like the fairest way to assign rooms; however, I think that students should specify whether they want a smoking or non-smoking hall, and the applications should be put in two separate piles so that smokers are placed on smoking halls and non-smokers are placed on non-smoking halls.

Second, priority for living on non-smoking halls should go to non-smokers. Under the present rules, many smokers choose non-smoking halls because they do not want to live in an environment where their clothes will smell like smoke.

This preference is understandable, but it is upsetting that smokers are allowed to live on a non-smoking hall, and non-smokers are forced to live on a smoking hall.

Considering the number of smokers I know who choose to live on a non-smoking hall and the number of non-smokers who are forced to live on a smoking hall, I believe that too many halls are set aside as smoking halls.

Perhaps residence life should require housing request forms to be turned in before the lottery, so they can evaluate how many students want to live on smoking halls. Then they can adjust the number of smoking halls to accommodate the number of smokers and not have more than they need set aside.

If the number does not come out evenly, perhaps they could find students who do not mind to live on a smoking hall. If there are not enough people willing to live on the smoking

halls, people will have to be assigned to them against their wishes. This is far from ideal, but smokers should be placed on the smoking halls before non-smokers.

I believe that everyone has the right to make her own decision about whether or not to smoke. Several of my friends smoke, and I think that they and most smokers are generally respectful of the rights of non-smokers.

However, the housing lottery system Meredith employs is not respectful of the rights of non-smokers.

Anyone who disagrees with this statement should ask my suitemate who wakes up most mornings sneezing with a runny nose and watery eyes irritated by cigarette smoke.

Take message from the Room

SARA PARSONS
Copy Editor

The recent New Line Cinema Movie release *The Boiler Room* may have hit theaters quietly, but the film proves to be far from forgettable for its audience. It is the story of Seth Davis, played by Giovanni Ribisi, seen previously as Phoebe's brother on *Friends*, a recent college drop-out who runs a small casino from his basement. However, his quest to get rich quick leads him to the investment firm named J.T. Marlin (sound familiar? i.e., J.P. Morgan, the robber baron from the late 1800s).

Davis soon gets deep enough in the firm to realize that something isn't right. Through some research and some after-hours snooping he found that, in addition to making sales at all cost, the firm was doing something much worse than his little illegal casino in the basement.

To complicate matters, Davis' father was a judge and was never satisfied with anything his son was doing and horrified at the possibility that his child could cost him his own job with his involvement in such crimes.

Ben Affleck and Tom Everett Scott play the respective roles of a high up broker and leader of this all-male firm. When the FBI start following Davis, the only question remaining is what will catch up with him first—his crime or his conscience?

The Boiler Room was an eye-opening look at the lengths one will go to make a buck and the consequences greedy and sometimes desperate actions may bring in the end. And, for anyone who plays the risky game of today's stock market, this movie will really make you think next time the phone rings and a broker is on the other end.

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Everyone in the Meredith community is invited and encouraged to write a letter to the editor. All published letters must be typewritten with a contact name, address, and telephone number. All letters must be signed by the author in order to be published. The *Herald* reserves the right to place any other article submissions on file until needed or to choose not to print them. The *Herald* also has the right to edit submissions for space restrictions, grammar and style. Opinions expressed in the letters to the editor do not represent the opinions of the editorial staff.

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