

opinion & CAMPUS LIFE

OH, TO BE YOUNG AGAIN

By Sarah Servie
Contributing Writer

Lately a creeping and unnerving sense of doom has been following me everywhere I go and, until recently, I couldn't quite put my finger on what it was that was making me feel so strange: I am getting old.

While watching the MTV Video Music Awards a few weeks ago, as I do every year, I found myself wanting to fast forward through all of the performances. Musical guests such as Paramore, Rhianna, and Lil Wayne were included in this year's lineup. They were all terrible. I heard myself mutter phrases like "They call this music?" and "Kids today..." Meanwhile, the camera cut to pre-teen fans wildly jumping up and down, grinning excitedly as the strobe lights glinted off their braces. What happened to the old VMAs? I secretly kept waiting for Britney to burst onstage singing "I'm A Slave 4 U" with the green bikini, albino snake, and all. No such luck.

At the mall, a few days later, I

nearly tripped over myself and two small children in an effort to stop and stare at the new bedding collections at Pottery Barn. The display beds were set up beautifully with high thread count sheets and coordinating throw pillows. The lamps were arranged on either side of the beds casting a warm glow that seemed to pull me in out of the traffic of the mall. I imagined myself curled up on the covers with comfy PJ's and a good book. Suddenly I snapped out of my daze and realized that I had just had a serious moment with pillows and dust-ruffles. I aged fifteen years in the few moments that Pottery Barn became an appealing shopping destination.

Then, that night as I was getting ready for bed, I saw it. A gray hair. It was short and thin and perhaps it was just the way the light was shining on it, but it was there. In horror I grabbed it and ripped it out. After a good ten minutes of examining the rest of my head for other rogue

grays, I gave up and began to contemplate the weight of my findings. I am getting older and there are just certain things that I now have to accept about myself. With that, I sat down to make a list of the things that I am no longer young enough for. This list included, but was not limited to: house parties, keg beer, MTV in general, any friendships with sorority girls, jean shorts, midriff-baring tops, body jewelry, glitter in any form, 3 a.m. Cookout runs, lower back tattoos, and Facebook. With the removal of all of these things from my life, I must be just moments away from a convalescence center.

OK so maybe I'm not that old yet, but I do feel like my carefree college days are over. And I guess that is all right with me, since everyone has to grow up some time. But so help me if I find another gray hair I will slap on a pair of cutoff jean shorts and some roll-on glitter, and pretend to be 18 until I'm 35.

to editor

Dear Editor,

The front page article by Melissa Santos, "The Media's Skew on Today's Politics," is impressive and thoughtful. It made me think more deeply about politics and the media. I have been attentive (to a fault) to media coverage of the 2008 election and I agree that the coverage is "skewed." I am one of those who believes the future of America hangs in the balance and the media seems all about the latest sensation, be it Barack, Paris, Palin or metaphors. To me, the media distracts more than it informs. "Look at the shiny object," they seem to advise. Meanwhile, one side is attempting to put "lipstick on a pig," while the other side is struggling to avoid being viewed as a "celebrity," an "empty suit" or "just a speech." The media has made one thing clear, they often prefer distortions over truth as the "pig" is confused with the "Change we need."

Sincerely,

John Wilson
Raleigh, NC

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the times as they were defined in a small southern town, students in the 1950's were informed that they "had come a long way, baby" from when the rules that governed the former Female Baptist Academy were offered up for their review. Privileges at the time were based upon class ranking and a six-days-a-week class schedule, with the Sabbath as the only "free" day after church.

Entertainment was never to be taken for granted. Freshmen in 1924 were allowed to go to the movies only one afternoon a week, an activity that had been totally denied to all students just a few years earlier, provided that it was on their one weekly shopping day. In groups of two, juniors could shop three afternoons a week, sophomores two, and seniors could shop alone if they were in by 6:00 p.m. on the designated day. Seniors could eat out in town once a month if they were willing to trade that choice for one of their date nights. Even athletic

activities were governed. Seniors could attend ball games at night in groups of three, unchaperoned, if they were in by 10:00 p.m., again at the price of forfeiting one of their weekly date nights.

Gentleman callers, who were said to be treated like "rare and exotic hot house flowers" that were on exhibit in the glass encased parlors of the new campus on Hillsborough Street, had been granted an increase in visitation from two to three afternoons or evenings a week for seniors versus one visit a week for freshmen. Juniors could attend entertainments at night with a young man twice a semester if a chaperone was present and they agreed to the conservative curfew. The popular "fifteen-minute date" was also introduced during the academic year of 1924-25. This granted students permission to see out-of-town guests for a quarter of an hour any day except Sunday. This plan excluded fellow students from neighboring colleges in other

cities, however.

As antiquated as many of these regulations seem to the contemporary eyes of another generation, Meredith was one of the first colleges in the South to allow student participation in the disciplinary process. As early as 1905, student government was introduced that within a few years allowed formerly exclusive senior privileges, such as walking to church in groups with a designated student rather than faculty or an adult chaperone, to be extended to all students of good standing. With the establishment of a student Executive Committee the next year that governed the general oversight of student behavior, the seeds of the current Honor Code were sown. Only "incorrigible cases" were turned over to faculty. The 1906 Oak Leaves stated:

"The government is almost entirely in the hands of the students themselves, under a set of regulations submitted by the faculty and

adopted by the student body... This system tends to promote honor, self-reliance, self-restraint, personal responsibility, and reciprocal helpfulness...."

By the 1960's, a decade that mirrored so much of the social unrest of the 1920's throughout America, juniors and seniors could have "social engagements at their discretion," freshmen could go to six dances a year, and on weekends, most students who lived on campus could stay out until 1:00a.m. with prior permission and a completed destination card. Mentions of smoking and the use of alcohol replaced concern over the accompaniment of hats and chaperones as the campus became more mobile and the line blurred between the world within and without. College campuses, once an intentional oasis from reality, were becoming, however slowly, the incubators of free thought and independent spirits. ■