

Editorial: Commentary

READERS WRITE

TESTING: 1, 2, UGH!

We look with jaundiced eye on the business of exams. At the end of each semester, students undergo a trial by sleeplessness. Coffee is frequently called the think drink. In this case, it is more rightly labeled the "study stimulant." It is often the medium through which the scholar's message is fatigue and incoherence. Any teacher who knows the joy of discussions that say nothing in six pages of crabbed handwriting can attest to the fact.

Such performances do not give the instructor his just desserts. In many instances, he has endured a great deal and deserves a better fate. How would you like eighteen weeks of unread assignments and overdue papers? Red eyes and zombie postures should not always disturb the conscientious teacher. In weeks gone by, the maligned pedagogue has suffered an invisible but even more frightening presence. He has had a classroom of blotter minds, ready to soak up the contents of any given lecture. This state is reached without troubling to prepare for a lesson.

Certainly, it is hard to grade a sponge fairly. Therefore, the exam is a resort (and possibly a desperate one) to gauge scholastic achievement. All too often this academic barometer measures not half so high as the student's blood pressure. It's a remote possibility he may have brought ill health on himself. Steady application and foregoing pleasures such as five hours of bridge, six of tv, and other mild recreations might spare one the delight of learning a semester's work in eight hours. Actually, that sounds impossible and absurd, doesn't it?

We hope these eight hours are very intense ones. Rome wasn't built in a day we have frequently heard. But, the ambitious may attempt in an evening and early morning to reconstruct civilization from Adam to Henry VII. Usually by test time, "crammed" facts have deserted. Poor marks result. Should we then lay all blame at the students' doorstep?

No, it would be easy to do so. Yet, we don't wish accusations of toadying to the faculty. There is another viewpoint posited by those skeptical about testing. It is a frontal assault against all tests rather than just final exams. The position is interesting and bears consideration. The skeptics say: 1) tests are signs of distrust of the students' capacity to retain learning and 2) they are evidences of irrational, confounded, paranoid fear that no work has been done.

How sad! Both teachers and students share common ground in the area of final exams. Exams not only have to be taken. Someone has to grade them too. Therefore, many people lose sleep over these pearls of wisdom. Still, if sleep is regarded as a "little death" or as a "death wish," then exams definitely have a positive effect. When no one sleeps, this constitutes a deep desire for life.

Frank Parrish, Editor

Election Leftovers

Ecclesiastes (LeMay interpretation) - Weapons of war are better than wisdom.

Election Grammar? "Oh, I'm voting for the lesser of three evils."

Novel Presentation - Nude poster pictures Peter Abalafio, Presidential candidate of the Love party. Caption: "Vote for me. I have nothing to hide."

Dear Editor:

There is a policy on this campus that I feel needs questioning at this time. That is the policy of requiring church attendance on Sunday. I agree with the requirement of chapel attendance during the week so I see no need to comment on that here.

The idea of required church attendance should be disturbing to every open-minded person of this community. Making someone attend church certainly will not help to foster in him the proper outlook toward religion. Most people today like and want to make decisions for themselves. Since this decision is one of the most important in a person's life, I believe each individual should decide for himself whether to attend church or not.

Having attended a Presbyterian-supported college before coming to Montreat, I was associated with a "church" school that did not require church attendance on Sunday but still required chapel during the week. Even though they did not require church attendance, I am sure the whole school wasn't going to hell. Just because church was not required people did not stop going. The ones who went to church really wanted to go and felt a desire to go.

I would be interested in seeing a poll taken among the students and faculty and having the results announced. Since these are the people that are effected I believe they should have a say in this policy.

John Mullins

Dear Editor:

In reference to the eye-opening article in last week's "Cavalier," apparently, I and my friends have been living in the dark. We have been spending our leisure time at such "out" places as MacDonald's, Bell's, and Hardee's, just sitting around supping soft drinks and munching hamburgers. If we really want to raise some hell we usually go to the Giant Skyslide, the merry-go-round, and of course the terrifying bumper cars out at the West Gate Shopping Center.

I feel I have really been missing out on so much fun and excitement. But now that I have been let in on the "news" of "where to go" and specifically which places are preferred by all Montreat students, I plan to make up for lost time.

Thanks to the author of this article, whoever he is, for opening our eyes (and possibly the eyes of others) because most of us didn't know where to go.

Jim Watts

Dear Editor:

If you have had the fine experience of attending the Asheville Community Concerts, contact with some of the most distinguished people in the Southeast is inevitable.

A circular, placed in the October 17th program, stated the "Director" had received numerous complaints from certain concert goers. I would like to quote one of the pleas the directors felt necessary to address to our fine citizens of Asheville:

"The fact that some members leave before and during the encores is especially disturbing to others in an extreme discourtesy to the performing artist. Please remain seated until the house lights are turned on. If you must leave before the end, please sit in the rear of the auditorium."

It seems that the degree of "Southern Hospitality," which is characteristic of this region, has diminished from the scene of our more cultured society. Rather, it has been readily replaced by the importance of "missing the traffic so we can get home early."

My intention is not to degrade the Southern people, but simply to point out the unnecessary rudeness of a minority of Asheville citizens. Courtesy is a staple item in ethics and should not be evaded nor overlooked by anyone.

Tom Behrens

Dear Editor:

Upon applying for entrance into MAC, we are "asked" (did I say asked?) to sign a pledge stating on our honor that we would not lie, steal or cheat. Apparently the last of these standards was disregarded during the biology mid-term exam.

Some seem to think it would be easier to "fudge" just a little to make a better grade.

These people raised the curve just enough so that the people who did study, did not make what they should and some became very uprooted about it.

When it was asked what was to be done, the comment was made that the idea of people cheating was just "hearsay." This "hearsay" caused the grades of many people to drop.

To the people who cheated, the biology students, the class average, and I, thank you.

Walter McLean

