

## From the Editor's Desk

Caitlin Foreman

Dear *Whetstone* readers,

Following September's issue, I was informed that many of you were upset at the lack of diversity in the opinions about the new smoke-free policy. If you thought that, you were entirely justified. While it may not have been fair, I allowed it for several reasons. The first was that, while I solicited for it, I did not find anyone who supported the policy who was willing to write for us. After securing the two writers who did participate, I realized that I might be able to provoke some of you to at least write a letter to the Editor informing me that there are students who support the policy—which I am certain there are.

Naturally, when I caught wind of the displeasure with the cover article, I thought to myself "Aha, my brilliant plan has worked. Students will be e-mailing me in mass numbers wanting to share their opinions." Unfortunately, I was disappointed. The only people who felt strongly enough to write to me were two professors and Keri Boer herself (see page 4); for which I am grateful, but on the same token I am disappointed in you, the student readers.

This is *your* newspaper, your voice, your chance to make yourself heard. If you want something different from this newspaper, it's your responsibility to make that happen. I hear second-hand complaints all the time about the sports page, or Meet Montreat, but no one ever confronts or e-mails me or my staff about these complaints. My job is to make sure I am adequately representing the voice of the student body, but I cannot do that without hearing that voice. So the next time there's something in this paper you don't like, or you have a comment about a column or new idea for the paper, please tell me! Stop complaining and do something about it.

With that said, I hope some of you will notice a few changes in the paper this issue. Do you like them? Do you have another idea for something new and exciting we can include next issue? E-mail me, and we'll talk about it. I want your input. Please don't leave me in the dark about what you're thinking, and please don't make me hear it from someone else. We don't have a yearbook, so this publication is the only thing you will have to remember these years by. Let's make it as phenomenal as possible. Won't you please help me?

## Eulogy to a Magnificent Companion

Dr. Paul Owen

On Sunday, my wife Alice and I said goodbye to Muffin, our dear little Shih Tzu rescue who has become something of a legend around the Montreat campus. He has been in

poor health for the last couple of years, and extremely poor health these last few months. Though given his advanced age (around 16 years) we saw no point in doing an MRI, the vets narrowed down the cause of his symptoms to an advanced brain tumor or repeated strokes. This weekend was very bad, and it was clearly time to say goodbye.

God brought Muffin into our life through Pam Betker, our former Registrar. She sent out an email to the campus in September of 2001, just after 9/11, appealing for a family for this emaciated little dog she had found wandering the streets of Black Mountain. It is remarkable that only days

after the humanitarian catastrophe of the Twin Towers, there was still enough empathy left for helpless animals in this community for such an appeal. Pam's concern



the dignity and value of life which was put on display by the perpetrators of those terrorist acts. Something within me told me to respond to Pam's email, and within days I had brought home that little bag of fur, skin and bones. He was a skeleton, apparently blind, with a lame leg and a suspicion of people.

As the weeks passed, we saw Muffin's health improve drastically. Medical eye drops cleared up his eyes and restored his vision. Plentiful supplies of canned dog food, ridiculously overpriced dog treats, and abundant table scraps began to put flesh on his skeletal frame. And most of all, we saw his gradual awakening to the potential of human beings to be kind. Perhaps for the first time in his life, he found the world to be a place of empathy and love.

For seven years that little dog filled our lives with countless memories, which fill pages and pages of photo albums. He greeted us with enthusiasm as we came through the door every day, laid at our feet on cozy winter evenings, and accompanied us on road trips both long and short. One of our

most enduring memories will be watching him listen to the ocean waves in the evening, from the balcony of our hotel room at Nags Head beach.

Muffin made me a better teacher. I entertained our students with his visits as "guest lecturer," and sang to their delight the silly songs with which Muffin was entertained at home. The "Muffin Song" and the "Yum-Yum Song" are indelibly printed on the psyches of many of our esteemed alumni, I assure you. But most of all, I hope in some small measure, Muffin helped me to become a better person—more caring, more empathetic, more aware of the suffering which takes place around us, more appreciative of the little things in life that dogs seem to thrive on. He will be sorely missed. Though I have no biblical proof-text, I hope with a quiet confidence that when I leave this world and stand in the presence of our Lord, and hear that gracious invitation to "enter into the joy" (Mt. 25:23) of eternal life, that there will be a Shih Tzu dancing at my feet.

Give your dog, or someone, a hug today.



for Muffin made for a stark contrast with the disregard for

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