

editorials

MHC Emphasis on Appalachia

Pro:

When Mars Hill first came into being in 1856, one of the major goals of the founding fathers was to provide opportunities for people from the area to obtain a higher education while staying within the region.

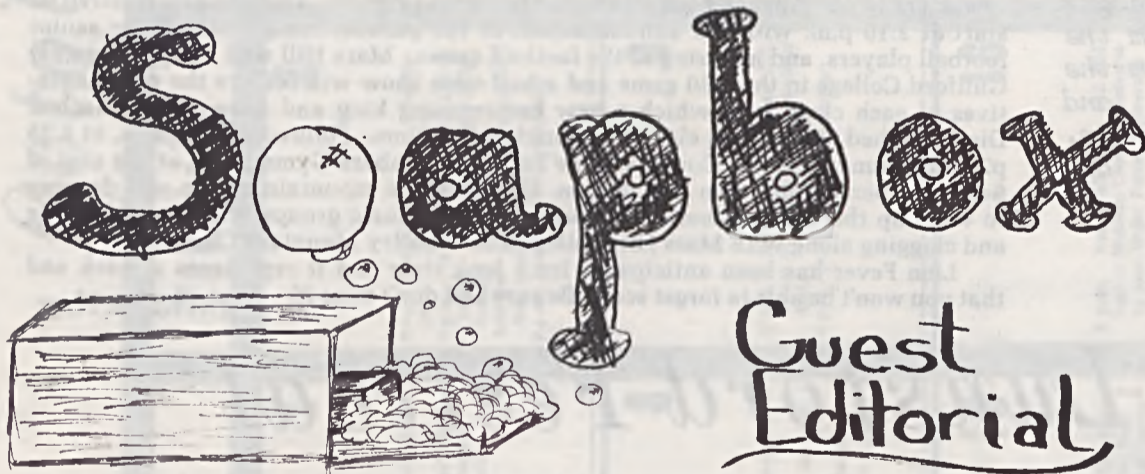
At that time it was virtually impossible for anyone from the mountains to further his or her own education and still remain there. This presented a very serious problem for the area. The brightest minds were being forced either to lie fallow because of lack of opportunity or to go to schools outside the region, usually up north, where they were taught things which, by and large, had nothing to do with their lives back home and which were taught by people whose backgrounds, heritages and value systems were drastically different from those of the student. To make matters worse, these cultural disparities weren't pointed out as being merely different from the student's own, but as superior to them. As a result, the Appalachian students were often made to feel ashamed of their heritage and would in many cases reject it.

Because of this attitude toward Appalachia that was fostered by schools outside the region, many of the students from the mountains didn't return to them after completing their education, or if they did return, it was with a completely different set of values than the one they left with. Appalachia has suffered for many years both economically and socially because of this exporting of their best minds.

In placing an emphasis on Appalachia, Mars Hill, and other schools like it has helped to reverse somewhat this trend of outmigration by making students from the area more aware of their culture and what it has to offer. Also, in teaching students from outside the region about mountain culture, Mars Hill has helped to erase some of their misconceptions about what things are like in the region while, at the same time, making them more aware of their own culture. Thus, after leaving Mars Hill and the Appalachian area, they will be better able to deal with problems that face their own community.

So in conclusion, I can't see how Mars Hill can do anything but place an emphasis on the Appalachian region. The college has a commitment to serve the people of the region, a commitment which is as real today as it was on that first day back in 1856.

Darryl Gossett



If one reads about the debates that are currently taking place in the U. S. Senate, the issues that jump to the forefront are the "alleged" Soviet troops in Cuba, the SALT II treaty, and the National Defense Budget. Although a large number of issues are being considered, the discussion seems to remain within a very narrow and very old framework. In 1945 we entered a new age, but our basic presuppositions involved in determining what is necessary for "national defense" has not changed. It appears necessary to review the real issues at hand and to reconsider the options when dealing with such important issues as the National Defense Budget and SALT II.

For the past thirty years, the USA and the USSR have been involved in a nuclear weapons strategy which calls for mutual assured destruction, or the MAD system. It is believed that this balance of terror will insure peace. Presently, to stay ahead of the Russians, in our MAD system, the US arsenal contains 35,000 nuclear warheads with three more being added each day; however, we could destroy 30% of the Soviet population and 70% of their industry with 200 of these warheads. Not including the damage from such a war to the ozone layer, the radiation would render much of the earth uninhabitable. How many warheads do we really need?

In addition, the economic destruction of the arms race is as horrible as the potential physical destruction to the population and land. Initially, President Carter requested 126 billion dollars for national defense, but passage of the SALT II treaty is now linked with a proposal to raise the budget 5% beyond inflation each year which,

Con:

The early pioneers of this area, and for any area for that matter, didn't concern themselves much with history. One finds a lack of nostalgia among pioneers anywhere. This is a major argument against progress — that there isn't any room for the preservation of the culture that lived before.

In the twentieth century, mankind finds himself with a pace and technology that leaves many of the old ways far behind; education is the vanguard of this invasion.

Mars Hill College has found itself at two diverging roads. One path leads to serving the mountain community of Western North Carolina, while the other goes to becoming an institution of higher education. Even though some may feel otherwise, I think that this college has chosen the latter road.

A few of the departments at Mars Hill have received wide recognition. Naturally, students from all over have come to Mars Hill because of this quality education. Since this is the case, the emphasis should be to continue to serve the needs and interests of students, regardless of their background.

One almost senses an air of elitism among students from this region. The emphasis on Appalachia can take a detrimental turn — if one concentrates all of his education on the mountain culture, what practical use does this have?

To be sure, Mars Hill, through its location and history, can be, and is, a center for the preservation of the Appalachian culture, but should the college want to serve the educational needs of any student, it needs to free itself of the superfluous emphasis of the region for the sake of some sense of duty to our forefathers.

David Bowerman

Equal Armaments: Insurance of Peace or War?

David Smith (as told to Larry Pritchett)

at the present rate of inflation, would increase the budget 15 to 17% annually. William Sloan Coffin, Jr. believes that "even if we avoid holocaust, the heavy infusion of government funds into the defense budget and away from human needs is killing our society slowly and painfully, day by day."

As Albert Einstein pondered the terrible consequences of nuclear arms, he wrote "Everything is changed, except our way of thinking." As Christians, Jesus introduced a new way of thinking which we have not adopted for the living of these days. He talked of feeding and loving one's enemies, not destroying them with military might; of trusting God, not weapons. The more the US and other countries trust in the false god of weaponry, the less the chance of finding real peace.

What can we do? The Christian, who claims to be a follower of the "Prince of Peace," should be best informed on these matters so that when senators seek public opinion, they will find concerned citizens, not citizens who are just interested in gas for their cars, as has been the case in the past. One could also get involved by writing your senator an intelligent letter on this subject, and possibly by suggesting the cutting of the defense budget by 10% and investing the money in human needs. This might develop stronger allies than our present policy of passing out tanks and planes.

Editor's Note: David Smith is currently the campus minister at Mars Hill College, and Larry Pritchett is a Sophomore Religion Major at Mars Hill.