

editorials

Co-ed Dorms at MHC

Pro:

Co-ed dorms, as defined by a majority, means simply male and female housing in the same building, or even on the same floor. To another majority it means letting loose of the reins.

I remember my first impression of an open house at MHC: stereos thrashing out territorial disputes, people of both genders running up and down the hall 'til late, and general mayhem not conducive to scholarly endeavors. I noticed, though, that as the open dorm became more commonplace, things quieted down quite a bit, and wasn't so bad after all.

Co-ed living would probably make many people more careful of their conduct for the sake of making a good impression. It would be nice to be able to go to a friend's room and study without having to use the library or student union, especially when these facilities are closed or too crowded. Finally, housing arrangements of this kind would let students, many perhaps for the first time, get a taste of living in a "real world" situation.

If someone is old enough to live away from home, and is able to demonstrate this, why can't he or she be expected to conduct himself as a responsible adult. Eighteen year olds have the privileges of voting, buying alcoholic beverages, killing people and/or dying for their country, and going to prison for any crimes committed. Let's let the example of the Dickson-Palmer Apartments and the Townhouses be an indication that we students are responsible enough to live in the presence of the opposite sex.

David Bowerman

letters to the editors

Dear Editors:

If Mr. Barbour's reply to Mr. Knight's letter was intended as an exercise in vituperous tongue scathing, he has shown the extent of his talent. However, as a formal rebuttal, it sorely lacks the qualities which render a serious forensic suitable for public discussion and debate.

A rebuttal seeks to logically expose the falsity of a given argument. It is also a vehicle for expressing a contrary opinion. Neither of these objectives can be realized, either honorably or well, with remarks of petty slander.

Mr. Knight's letter on the subject of community is not insidious propaganda; it is merely the expression of a personal opinion. It is food for thought. If Mr. Barbour deems it meager fare, he is welcome to offer his own well-seasoned comments. Instead, he has published a letter of questionable taste.

Mr. Barbour labels Mr. Knight's letter "infectious", and states that it is, "... the apparent result of an infectious disorder." This is tantamount to labeling (and libeling) a personal opinion as a vile pestilence to be feared and avoided. Deductively, **The Hilltop** functions as the carrier of this dread pathogen. If this is the case, I would like to know what sort of inoculation program is being devised to protect our community from such a dire threat to its moral and spiritual well-being.

Furthermore, a sophistic argument may sometimes undermine itself. Through his use of the term "infectious", Mr. Barbour credits his opponent's argument with more influence than an opinion deserves. **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary** defines "infectious" as, "capable of being easily diffused or spread: readily communicated." Is Mr. Knight's case so devastatingly

powerful that not even the staunchest personal beliefs constitute a defense against it? Mr. Barbour creates a paradox by simultaneously railing his opponent for his "lack of enlightenment" and yet warning us that this is a man to be taken seriously.

Mr. Barbour states that Mr. Knight, "... affronts (sic) an issue that really is not an issue at all." Any point that can be contested is a potential issue. What must be remembered is that an issue needs to be well defined. This criterion is essential to produce a meaningful and intelligent debate. All great battles have at least one thing in common: They take place on the same battlefield.

I contend that Mr. Barbour does not respond to Mr. Knight's issue, but rather uses it as a springboard (or camouflage, if you will) for his own. If the purpose was not to deal with Mr. Knight's letter, why was his name mentioned at all? What end is served by making an attack on someone presumed to be a lost soul?

I chasten to criticize without offering an alternative. If Mr. Barbour's issue is faith, he is certainly entitled to submit a letter which constructively expounds his thoughts on the matter.

Finally, remember that the life of a community is dependent upon the interaction of its members. Sometimes this interaction takes the form of dissent and dialogue. Our protestant tradition has its roots in dissent against the universal authority of the Pope. At one time it was the heretic who preached justification by faith alone. Thus, is it not important to respect your neighbors right to disagree? Voltaire must have believed this when he said, "I disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

Sincerely certain,
John Stribling

Con:

Mars Hill College, or any college for that matter, hasn't the authority to decide if its students should live in a co-ed dorm situation. That decision should be and ultimately is, in the hands of the student body and the pocketbooks of the parents. If there is a general consensus by the students that co-ed dorms are needed and desired at Mars Hill, the administration will decide to implement them, not because they will suffer a sudden change of moral or ethical beliefs, but because they will suffer a sudden change, from black to red, of ink color in the budget when the enrollment drops. This has been demonstrated throughout the country during the last fifteen years. When the students at any given institution felt they were ready for a co-educational living environment and made such feelings known, in no uncertain terms, the college administration either complied or the college folded financially.

As Mars Hill students have not as yet taken the initiative to demand a co-ed housing system, it would seem evident, to me at least, that they are not emotionally ready for the pressures and responsibilities that such a living environment would place on them. Evidence of this assertion can be seen reflected in the animalistic behavior of students in the cafeteria, the childish immaturity displayed when they are confronted with sex at a campus movie, the lack of respect for both man and nature when they carpet the ground with beer bottles and paper, and the lack of interest in campus and community affairs. Surely such irresponsible individuals, these, who can hardly cope in a situation where virtually all major decisions made for them, cannot be expected to last more than a day in an environment where they shoulder some of the burdens themselves. And although there may be a few who would willingly do such, until they are in a majority, there is no point in attempting a co-ed housing system.

Maybe someday, years hence, there will be a group of students at Mars Hill that will be mature, self-directed, responsible, and respectful for other people. Maybe someday these students will discard their archaic sexual hangups and decide that men and women were **meant** to live together. And maybe, just maybe, all man will live in peace and harmony, and the world will ... naaah, forget it!

Darryl Gossett

Dear Editors:

Our periodical community meetings mirror the format of typical Baptist worship services. During the "meetings", concerns of the college are preached. They are decided upon by the Speaker Selection Committee, which probably meets on the third floor of Blackwell Hall in the Dean's Conference Room. These are not the student's issues, but the administration's attempt to tell us what we ought to be thinking about! Therefore, these are not meetings; they are planned events to hand down specific ideas to the lowly mass. They are, in a sense, coercive propaganda.

After spending over three years at this institution and several gruelling hours of reading and reflection, it is my judgement that "community meetings" are occurring for two major reasons. First, it is the last resort to bring a sense of togetherness between the students and staff at the college. But does this mean we are falling apart at the seams? Since the Wake Forest University disagreement with the Southern Baptist Convention, Mars Hill College has been placed in the limelight. The administration is feeling the pressure. Does this indicate past slip-ups and iniquities? Second, "community meetings" take place in the form of authoritative worship services, instead of democratic meetings, because the upper echelon (decision makers) fear the potential power of the students. We outnumber them at least 100 to 1. (However, there is only power in numbers which consent to be governed). Does the administration want to have its cake and eat it too? Does it want community without dissent? Ideas without discussion? Control without consent? Does it expect morality and honor cultivated by deceit and hidden agendas?

Joe Knight

Dear Editor:

The HILLTOP published in its last editions letters on community. Community is defined as "an interaction of different kinds of individuals constituting a society or association or simply an aggregation of mutually related individuals in a given location." This interaction is not realized at the Community Meetings.

As Mr. Knight stated, the objective of this gathering is the affirmation of members as important individuals and their beliefs as important." It is to each member to grow from his or her experience within this community (see the Statement of Community). Social interaction requires an awakening of conscious and purposive sharing. This entails freedom for discussion and criticism.

At present, one must agree with observations of Joe Knight as to the format of the community meetings. Those who attend the meeting are not upon by the speaker without having an opportunity to respond. It has allowed for dialogue. It has required an awakening of conscious. Yet, one must recognize Mr. Barbour's closing statement. Unfortunately, Peterson Conference Center has not the physical facilities to contain the population of Mars Hill Community (but that has little relevance).

Furthermore, it is pertinent to the mutually unifying bond of this community. One must be careful not to fuse the subsystems in this community with its mutually unifying bond. Education, not Christianity, is the integral subsystem of Mars Hill College and its historical heritage. But the deficiencies exist for overconformity to subsystem in the community, which leads to the disorganization of society.

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