

# Letters To The Editor

Grimsley Senior High School  
Greensboro, North Carolina  
February 20, 1964

Editor, HIGH LIFE

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Greensboro, North Carolina

Your recent editorial "On the GAA" so astonished me that I cannot refrain from comment.

The original feature article "Nuisances Arise in GAA as Basketball Starts," although poorly written and in bad taste, can be defended on the grounds that student journalists are in the process of learning and therefore cannot avoid and rarely achieve professional calibre. In charity, one can assume, then, that the article was included through ignorance of what it implied, through failure to read it with understanding, or through simple oversight.

The editorial, however, chose to defend rather than retract. Failure to offer a straightforward, unqualified apology for having published false or misleading information is incompatible with honest journalism. HIGH LIFE has placed itself in the position of defending the indefensible; and as the editorial illustrates, such defense can only take refuge in fallacious argument and unseemly ridicule of one's critics.

Let us examine these fallacies and this ridicule:

1. The editorial refers to the "unwitting inaccuracy of the quotes which appeared in the story." Now unless the staff falsely assumed or wrongly believed that the quotes were true, *verbatim* accounts of actual statements, the inaccuracy was deliberate and purposeful, as fictionalized quotes necessarily are.

## Council Corner

**SUGGESTION 1:** "The traffic squad needs to be abolished or straightened out to help move the traffic. Generally they spend their time smoking under the walkways which is against the rules anyway. They are not setting an example and are not representing our school in an honorable fashion."

"I have yet to see a rainy day when the so-called traffic squad and socialites did not congregate around the South entrance of the main building. If they want to puff they should move where they don't form a bottleneck."

"Keep the smokers out of the entrance to the main building on rainy days."

**ANSWER:** These problems were brought up and discussed by the Student Council. Jerry Jernigan is going to talk to the members of the traffic squad and ask them not to smoke while directing traffic, and to keep people moving, especially on rainy days."

**SUGGESTION 2:** "At this school you have "Go Whirlies" and decals for cars. I think it would be a good idea if someone checked into the small replication of the Victory Flag to be flown on the radio antennas of cars. I think there would be a great demand for these flags."

**ANSWER:** This suggestion was proposed to the Projects Committee of the Student Council. However, another project has already been chosen. This is a good suggestion for a Service Club project for next year.

**SUGGESTION 3:** This suggestion was quite long so it will not be quoted, but it was concerned with the idea that our library was too small. The Student Council realized this was a very good point. However, at this time there is not much the Council can do about it. It is up to the administration.

2. The editorial states that HIGH LIFE cannot "be held accountable for an unintended slander," but under the law, one who slanders unintentionally may indeed be held accountable. Lack of malice may reduce the penalty one pays, but it does not erase the guilt.

3. The editorial claims that the article was intended to "expound on the foibles of girls in general" through reference to a "typical if fictitious girl's basketball team," yet the next paragraph implies that the GAA is a minority group, "sensitive to publicity." Is this not contradictory? How can a minority group *typify anything*?

4. The editorial emphasized that fictitious names were used in the article, conveniently ignoring the fact that Mrs. Lambert was mentioned by name, although the comments attributed to her were made up out of whole cloth.

The GAA is one of the most active organizations at GHS, and its members frequently represent us in other towns. Why should its members not protest an article which implies that its players are foolish incompetents and that its adviser is having difficulty coping with "nuisances"? High Life is the voice of GHS, and I assume it is sent to many other schools through newspaper exchange. Can we be proud to send this article and this editorial into the community and across the state? Do we really view every organization in the school as "a minority group," fair game when satire season opens?

Mrs. Carolyn L. Lithgo  
Former Editor of High Life

### EDITORIAL NOTE—

1. We were advised that the story was a true one and that students involved were aware of its being written. We made the mistake of not checking the story out further.
2. HIGH LIFE does not feel morally accountable because the staff thought the sketch was true and had no intention of degrading an organization with such a proven record. The idea that such an article could damage the GAA seems somewhat farfetched.
3. The story did not expand on the foibles of GAA, a minority; the editorial expounded on the foibles of girls in general, who are not a minority group but some of whom are members of GAA.
4. The fictitious names point to the fact that the article was, as explained in the editorial, of a general nature in its theme. The setting, using the GAA and the name of its advisor, served to orient the story to GHS. Again HIGH LIFE would like to apologize for misquoting Mrs. Lambert and for failing to fully check out the entire article. It goes without saying that had the article been investigated—and this is our mistake—the story would not have been printed.

## HIGH LIFE

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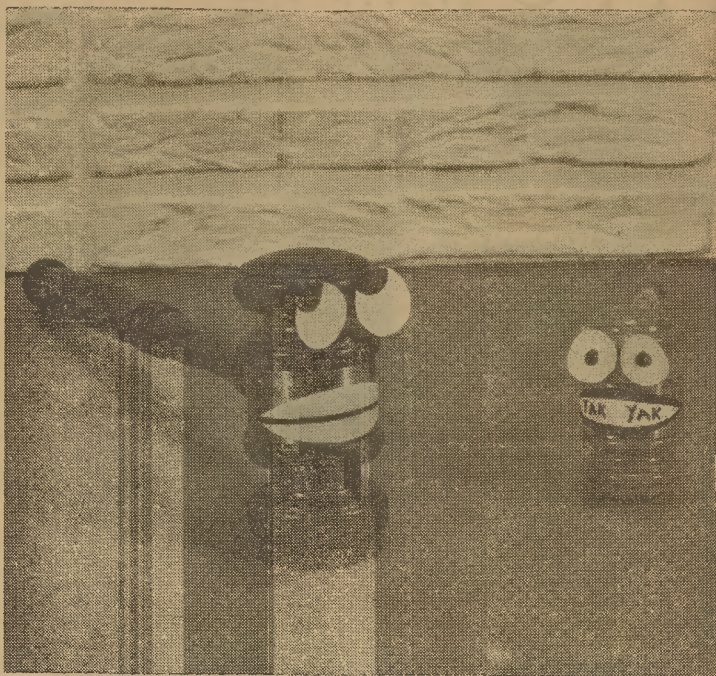


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## FORUM: YOUTH JURY

In past weeks there has been much discussion on the value or lack of value in the organization of a Youth Jury in Greensboro. To help students understand the program, its pros and cons, the Youth Jury is discussed below by Betty Pritchard, editor; Charlie Perry, sports editor; Jane Turpin, news editor; and Martin Hester, managing editor.

**CHARLIE:** Greensboro's Youth Jury is patterned after the one in Jacksonville, Florida. One type of punishment given to a boy convicted of drunken driving was to sweep uptown sidewalks while wearing a sign saying, "I am 16 and was drunk." I think punishment like that is cruel and inhuman. The person will be more bitter against the punishment than he will be concerned with the crime.

**MARTIN:** I agree. I think that kind of punishment is too embarrassing.

**BETTY:** No punishment is fun, and it shouldn't be. If a person was drunk, I don't think sweeping sidewalks would be too cruel for him. He should be embarrassed, not because of the punishment, but because of the crime. If this embarrassment helps correct the situation, it is good.

**JANE:** If the punishment is too cruel, which is very unlikely, the Judge can modify it. The punishment is based on the attitude and previous record of the guilty. Anyway, I don't think a person should be any more ashamed of picking up trash than sitting in a jail, as he might do otherwise.

**MARTIN:** The crime that was committed is between the defendant and the court officials, and I don't think it should concern the public.

**BETTY:** I think the crime does involve the public, because most misdemeanors, which are all the Youth Jury considers, are against the public, if only just one person.

**JANE:** Also, a person from 16 to 19 shouldn't be protected but should know that other people don't like what he has done.

**CHARLIE:** A reduction in crime would not be from education or respect for the law but from a terror of punishment. I think they should stiffen up the drivers' test instead.

**JANE:** Having or not having a Youth Jury will probably not change the reasons for commit-

ting a crime. A person either has respect for the law or he doesn't.

**BETTY:** In Jacksonville punishment would include writing themes. Sometimes a person would break down in the middle of writing one and would realize what is right. In this way he would gain a respect for the law and for what is right. Besides, if there was no fear of punishment, the crime rate would be tremendous.

**MARTIN:** The judge is much more qualified than any teenager. Why would he want an opinion? What good could immature teenagers do?

**BETTY:** The jurors would be as mature as the defendant and could see through a young person faster than a judge could. Teenagers could understand the defendant and would be able to tell if he was really sorry. The Jacksonville judge said that he would never have thought of some of the punishments given by the jury and that crimes had been reduced unbelievably. One of the major purposes of the Youth Jury is to help the judge, as well as to help reduce crimes.

**MARTIN:** If the main reason for the organization of the Youth Jury is to educate teenagers in court and penal procedure, why not have only classes in law and jury duty for teenagers, thus eliminating any possible influence on an older and more experienced judge.

**CHARLIE:** How can the jurors grasp the whole situation in one afternoon's work.

**BETTY:** First, classes wouldn't be as interesting as actual experience.

**JANE:** Also, adult jurors do not attend classes before serving on the jury.

**BETTY:** On one Saturday at the end of each month, all jurors for the next month do attend a class to prepare for duty. Anyone can observe any afternoon after school whenever he wants to. Teenagers will learn a lot more than adult jurors know and will be better prepared. The judge would not send in a jury that was not ready. Besides, one jury, of six people, would serve three days during one week.

I think the Youth Jury will become a very effective and a very important organization in Greensboro, and all students who participate will greatly benefit from the program.