

Faculty forum

By Dr. Carl Frankel

If there is anything lacking in the atmosphere at Highacres it is what I'll call "serious fun." There is lots of seriousness (school, personal problems, parking, money, to name a few). There is lots of fun too, both on and off the record. Maybe it's because of the economy, the State, the times, and the University's 2001 rules for everything make the serious parts of our lives seem so overwhelming that we hanker for fun that is as silly and unproductive as possible. For myself, this has taken the form of watching *Lost in Space* re-runs on TV and "riding around" — the official local sport. For many students it involves ... well, you already know, if you don't, maybe you shouldn't.

My suggestion would be to organize activities which are both fun and productive. Sports qualify because they improve the participants' skills and fitness, but we don't do a lot for our mental or social skills and fitness, nor do we seem to be very concerned about the fitness of the

community, the world, or the environment, judging by the amount of time we devote to them. Yet there are many things we can do which are mainly for fun but also improve ourselves, or which are for good causes but also fun to do.

Examples: (1) — for political types — Don't just complain. Form an action group, distribute petitions, get involved in campaigns, sponsor debates on campus, phone Dennis Burke, leave anonymous, devastating leaflets on the seats at the Laurel Mall.

(2) — for engineers and business majors — Bring solar and/or wind power to Highacres. Organize an area-wide leg-powered vehicle race. Write a pamphlet listing 25 things to do with empty beer cans for fun and profit.

(3) — for artists — Organize an Eastern Commonwealth Campus arts and crafts competition. Take your skills into workshops in the community. Build a paint-what-you-want-to-plywood fence along Agony Hill.

The trouble with these

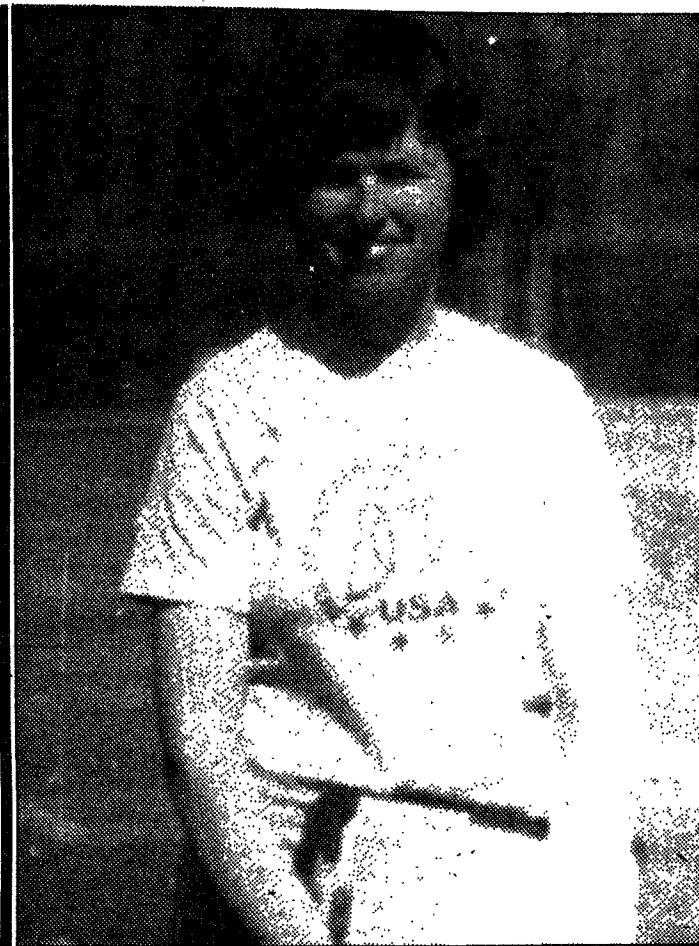
ideas is that they are mine, and off the top of my head at that. Initiative must come from the students themselves if the projects are to succeed. However, if I had the authority, I would encourage activities of this sort in several ways:

1) Make funds available on a grant basis to any group of students who can make a good case for them, rather than doling them out to clubs that often fold by mid-year.

2) Reward worthy activities by providing scholarships for students whose projects are judged most productive, most entertaining, most irreverent, etc.

3) Obtain academic credit for those projects which can qualify as the "special topics" or "independent research" credits offered by many departments.

After all, we are a university, and we university people are supposed to have a little more on the ball intellectually and creatively than many other people. Why take our examples for activities from Animal House and High School?



By Diedre Jago

There are a lot of changes that could make the atmosphere at our campus better than it is now, and it is very difficult to pinpoint one specific aspect that seems to be better than all others. I have asked a number of students this question, to see if they had any opinions, and these are some examples which they have come up with: more student parking spaces at the top of the hill (especially during the winter months), more dances and social events, an auditorium, a beautification program for the whole campus, and stabilized tuition for the next several years. I am sure that some of these changes could be accomplished and they could indeed have a big effect on improving the atmosphere of this campus.

In analyzing this question I have tried to take a good look at our situation and I realized that there are a lot of things that I really like about it. The facilities are better than a lot of the other campuses I have been to and the physical appearance of the campus is beautiful, especially at this time of the year. We have good programs academically and we seem to attract plenty of

students from all over. Of all the things that I could think of that would drastically change the overall atmosphere of the campus, I would like to see the faculty, staff, and students all become more involved with campus life outside of the classroom. We tend to sit around a lot and complain about the lack of cultural and social activities, yet when one looks at the people who do take advantage of the special events, it appears that the same people do everything. If you are one of the individuals who can find the time and energy to become involved, my hat is off to you. If you are one of the complainers, start spending your energy in a more fruitful and positive way. Your participation and involvement would not only give you satisfaction, but it would have a significant impact on enhancing the quality of participation that the others have.



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