

53 Years of Editorial Freedom

# The Daily Collegian

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## The Winner Names the Age

(The Daily Collegian last week printed an excerpt from novelist Lillian Smith's June commencement speech at Atlantic University. Much favorable comment was heard on the part we printed. We agree with the Progressive Magazine, which first reprinted it in full, that is a "supreb address." We have decided to reprint it in full in several installments. The first follows.)

Well, it is over now, isn't it? The easy part: the research, the thesis, the long hours in the library, the field work. In a sense, it was so safe and secure, hard but pleasant, this learning process; this easy, cloistered way of life when one makes a friend or two, grows a bit in mind and heart and imagination, and picks up so many useful and useless facts.

All this you have done in the front rooms of your mind.

But in the back room, somewhere inside you, in a secret corner, you have been painting a picture: a picture you began when you were a child, long before you knew words. You have not named that picture, as yet; perhaps you never will; we usually don't. Although most of us call it names—and I'm sure you, too, in your nasty moods, have plastered it with insults. But you have not decided yet what to name it.

For it is a picture of you: of your dreams and feelings, your sudden visions, your awareness, your hopes and despairs, a picture of all that this fabulous human experience has meant to you up to now—or failed to mean.

What your style is, I don't know. That is your secret. All I know is, that style is patterned on you: on your unique way of looking at your world. It may be gay and bold and strong in its brushwork, compassionate in its feeling, or it may be as full of terror and angry protest as Picasso's Guernica. You may have painted an abstraction; or it may be nonobjective; it may be blobs and dots, dribbles and improvisations, with, maybe, the bright colors, the startling accidents of a Pollock; or you may be slowly finding its form, and even now, it may be taking on a little of the strength and equilibrium of—shall we agree on Cezanne? Or if you dare not look beneath the surface of life, or above it, it is probably as literal as an amateur photographer.

But whatever it is, it is your picture of the human experience and you have painted it. And when you leave the campus, that picture will go with you, along with the facts and the theories, the methods, and all the rest of it you have learned here.

And you will keep on painting it. You may lay aside one canvas and start another but you'll keep at it, searching for a quality of truth that eludes you. Searching for the underside of meaning; searching for its poetry, its music, and its pain. Or maybe you won't. As the years go by, you may decide its colors are too harsh, its lines too broken, too jagged, and you may do that cruel thing: touch it up a little. You may finally say, I cannot bear the truth, even the small image of it I have made: I'll make it softer, prettier—and less true. I'll paint as a paper doll, or a marshmallow. A lot of us do that, too, you know.

Whatever you do to it, that image of your universe, of you and your experience of life, is yours. I could not change it if I wanted to. And I shall not try.

What I want to show you is something else. Not my picture of my experience of life: if you want to see a smidge of that, you can read my books. What I want to look at together, now, is a kind of rough, crude blueprint of this age of ours: of the common ordeals—full of danger and opportunities which we, regardless of private views or personal interests, must face together.

It is an age that has no name. Nor will it soon have one. It has often been called "the Age of Anxiety," but it will not. I think, be known in history as that. For the winners would not call it so: and the winners do the naming.

Sometimes we forget this. We forget that always an age is named for its triumphs, always for the big ideas that add stature to the human being. A brief glance at any great age, but let's make it the Eighteenth Century, will remind us how true this is. We call that century the Age of Reason, of Enlightenment, of the Rights of Man. And that is the way we think, today, of those troubled, terrible times. For the ideas of that century, the symbols that stirred the Western mind so deeply, the daring acts, were the winners who named the baby.

And yet, actually, the Age of Enlightenment was an age when most Western men could not read or write. The Age of the Rights of Man was a time when a new slavery was sending deep roots into American soil, and a new colonialism was beginning to lay its greedy paws on Asia and Africa.

Let me remind you of a few other things that were happening in this great Age of Reason. It was a time when educated Europeans were deeply concerned about ghosts. The Oxford University magazines were full of discussions of ghosts. Samuel Johnson took part, as you might know he would have, in this controversy—widespread in England. Witches, too, were still a hot topic. This Age of Reason was an age when the blind and crippled were persecuted and half starved; when the mentally ill were chained and some were whipped to death; when the epileptics were hidden away; when men looked on tuberculosis and cancer as punishments from God.

This great intellectual era that gave us Rousseau's and Locke's writings, Voltaire's bold, sharp, ironic questions, Thomas Paine's books, and Jefferson's words of liberty and human freedom, gave us also a curious best-seller which swept Europe like wildfire. It was translated into English, French, and German and was read by the intelligensia.

Parents were deeply impressed by it and sharpened their methods of child guidance on it: clergymen preached on the morality it implied; doctors based their therapies on it and continued to do so, some of them, until the Twentieth Century. You may not, perhaps have heard that book's name: It was called L'Onanisme and was written by a physician named Tissot. And it was concerned with the secret sins that children commit. According to this expert those sins caused most of the diseases known to man: from fits to diarrhea, from insanity to blindness, deafness, muteness, cerebral palsy, rheumatism, anemia, liver upsets, and the like.

This, all this, came out of the great Age of Reason.

Even so, even though the Eighteenth Century was chock-full of hysteria and superstition and irrationality we are right to call it the Age of Enlightenment. For the germinal ideas it brought to life, the vision of man's possibilities which is communicated to the future in impassioned words and symbolic acts, will never die. They are, today, a part of the human heritage. And will remain as long as men live on this earth.

There is always a dark underside to every age, a festering ill-smelling slum where man's enemies and errors breed. But an age is remembered not for its enemies and errors but for those qualities it dramatized which enlarge horizons and give a fine ambience to man, himself. Malraux was so right when he said, "Always, however brutal an age may actually have been, its stupe transmits its music only."

You and I can paint our picture but we cannot name our age; the winner will do that. What we can do is pick the winner.

(In the next installment, Miss Smith takes a look "at the conditions, the ordeals out of which the winning ideas, the triumphant attitudes and techniques will come. We are faced with three which men never had to deal with before. Each holds high potentials for good and evil, for life and death.")

## Little Man on Campus by Dick Bibler



"I have two books for my course. I get all my lectures from th' best one . . . th' lousy one is my required text."

### Interpreting the News

## Self-Apologies Fog UN Peace Plans

By J. M. ROBERTS  
Associated Press News Analyst

An atmosphere of apology has settled around the United Nations before the General Assembly can even get started.

There has been explanation after explanation of why the organization cannot make peace, cannot enforce its rulings, yet remains a necessity if there is to be any approach to world order.

Issues which have been on the agenda for years still remain without disposition, and without hope of disposition.

There's going to be a big debate on disarmament, despite the five months of conferences which ended in London recently with a zero for achievement.

This debate will have no concrete objective. It will merely be an effort by each side to pin on the other the responsibility for the zero. It will increase the despair of peoples everywhere over the prospects of settling the cold war or escaping the fear of hot war.

The United States will not make many new friends, and may lose some old ones in the debate over admission of Red China to membership.

The trouble of course is that there is only a truce in the undeclared war over Korea, that Red China still imprisons American nationals and carries the UN tag as an aggressor, and that Nationalist China is still America's baby.

Having condemned Russia and her puppet regime in Hungary, the Credentials Committee will have before it the question of the Hungarian delegation's right to sit. Since Wan Waitihayakon will not report on his efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people of Hungary until the session is far gone, the credentials matter is largely academic. At any rate, to oust the Hungarians while the Russian instigators of Hungary's troubles sit tight would be ironic.

The long and moldy list of other disputes before the UN, such as Kashmir and Algeria, will get its usual attention and, again, be put aside for future reference.

In this atmosphere, it is hardly surprising that the delegates were inclined to congratulate themselves on being able to elect a presiding officer without a dog-fight. This happened when Lebanon's eminent and popular DKR, Malik withdrew for the sake of unity.

Yet, in spite of all this stalemate on concrete action, the moral weight of the UN continues to grow.

Britain and France still hitch

under last year's UN intervention in the Suez matter, still proclaim a loss of faith. But their very submission testified to that moral weight.

The United States makes more and more of its international approaches through the UN.

An international police force now is at least a possibility, as a result of the UN Emergency Force's success in the Middle East.

If Russia continues to ignore public opinion as expressed through the great international form, at least her character is written upon its records for all to see.

Indeed the UN's defenders do have reason, even though the defense serves in one way to emphasize its shortcomings.

## TIM Council Opens Positions To Petitioners

Nomination petitions for 25 seats on the Town Independent Men council are available today at the Hetzel Union desk.

The petitions must be signed by 20 town independents. Members of TIM council last semester automatically will be placed on the ballot and incumbents will be noted on the ballot.

The last day to obtain petitions will be Sept. 30. Elections will be held on Oct. 1, 2 and 3.

Applications are also available at the HUB desk for town independent men or groups wishing to participate in football intramurals.

Groups interested in participating in the independent division of this year's Ugly Man contest should also submit their name to the HUB desk.

James Wambold, TIM president, has asked former TIM councilmen and others who have worked for TIM in the past to leave their new addresses and telephone numbers at the TIM office in the HUB. They will then be contacted for committee work.

## Gazette

Today  
ALPHA PHI OMEGA Rushing Smoker, 7:00 p.m., HUB dining room  
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE ORGANIZATION, 7 p.m., 212 Chapel  
FROTH, Advertising Staff, 8 p.m., office, HUB basement  
LANTERN Managing Board, 7 p.m., 216 HUB  
NEWS & VIEWS, Home Economics publication, staff and candidates, 6:30 p.m., 16 Home Economics

OUTING CLUB, 7 p.m., HUB auditorium  
PERSHING RIFLES RUSHING SMOKER, 7 p.m., Armory  
WRA SWIM CLUB members, 7:30 p.m., 3 White Hall  
UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, talk on "Dating on Campus" by the Rev. Earl Spencer, 6:30 p.m., Waring Lounge  
YOUNG DEMOCRATIC CLUB, 7 p.m., 218 HUB