

# Mark confides in the masses

# The Missing Pieces

by Mark Owens

I have two confessions to make.

They have nothing to do with carving "Led Zeppelin" on the men's room stall in the Reed Building (umm... real original, guys) and, on advice from my lawyer, I'm not supposed to say anything about the disappearance of cows from a neighboring farm. Instead, my confessions are of a more serious nature.

First, I am male.

Now I know that's hard to tell from the picture over there on the right, but I am. Being male means I do stupid male things, such as drinking out of orange juice containers, belching loudly in fancy restaurants and spending hours loudly discussing the merits of Ford or Chevy cars with other males.

In fact, because I am male, and not female, I automatically do very, very dumb things to a sizeable portion of the earth's population, such as leaving

toilet seats up.

But enough about being male. My other confession is equally serious: I am white.

Again, that may be tough to tell from the picture, but I am. And while there is nothing *wrong* with being white, there's nothing *great* about it either. Which leads me to why I'm confessing being male and white: I'm not happy being either.

You see, being a white male is a pretty unpopular thing these days; when someone brings up racism, sexism, discrimination or some other social problem, sooner or later someone will point a finger at white males. If you think I'm kidding, watch *Phil Donahue*. Well, maybe not. *The Jetsons* are more interesting.

My point is I'm getting a little weary of politically-correct stereotyping in order to get around calling people what they are. Me, I'd rather not be labeled a "young, middle-class white male." Rather, call me what I am: Mark Owens.

See, Mark Owens is a person (strange, mind you) who happens to be a white male. As a person, there are a lot of things that make me unique. For example:

I'm a picky eater. I can



**Mark Owens**  
eat tomato soup and ketchup, but I hate tomatoes themselves. I love grape

jelly, but I can't eat grapes. I drink strawberry-flavored milk by the gallon, but I despise strawberries. I rarely eat vegetables and healthy food, but gobble nasty things like Jolt Cola, Twinkies and Pop Tarts.

Then there's music.

In the same hour I can listen to Living Colour, Digital Underground, Billy Joel, The Pretenders and the Boston Philharmonic. I politely listen to, but don't like, The Doors, Led Zeppelin, The Beach Boys or The Eagles. I shoot people who listen to Barry Manilow.

If given the choice between reading *Mad Magazine* and *Newsweek*, *Mad* wins. The *New York Times* will lose out to *Rolling Stone*, but only because P.J. O'Rourke writes for them. Dave Barry is a god. David Letterman is a twit.

My point with all of this is to show that there's a lot more to people than their skin color, ethnic

background or gender. Each one of us has things about us -- hobbies, skills, beliefs, likes, dislikes -- that make us unique, special and easy to gossip to others about.

However, I'm not advocating completely abandoning ethnic, racial or gender differences, or pride in them for that matter. They too are the things that make us special. I just think in the past couple of years we've been so busy "celebrating" our diversity that we've grown farther apart than closer together.

Of course, "celebrating" ethnic diversity is a little more difficult for us unpopular white males. I, for example, have a tough time expressing my Norse heritage. What am I supposed to do, build a boat and plunder a nearby lakeshore village -- like, say, Lawrence Park? I can hear the crowd now: "Oh no, here comes that Owens hoard. Run for your lives, umm... yikes."

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Louanne Barton, our staff psychologist, offers a listening ear. Send in your letters with any personal issues that may be puzzling or troubling you - from "how to get a roommate to quit snoring" to "how to survive the loss of a love." Louanne will respond in her regular column each week in *The Collegian*.

You can write anonymously, but if you'd like Louanne to respond personally include your name and address. All precautions will be taken to protect the identity of students whose letters are printed.

Letters can be sent through campus mail or left in the Counseling Center, first floor Reed, addressed to Louanne Barton and marked "confidential."

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