

“Among the genres of literature, satire exerts a perennial fascination, the fascination of the forbidden. Often hostile, shocking, or destructive, satire tends to approach the thin end of cynicism and misanthropy, to frighten or disgust. But the positive purpose that impels the satirist neutralizes, justifies, and heals by his intention to correct and reform, by his essential moralism.” —Miriam Kosh Starkman

# A Modern Proposal

for

## Preventing the First Year Students of Clark University from Becoming a Nuisance to the Administration and Members of the Community, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Whole of the University

by Randy Mack

One can hardly pick up a newspaper or enter the University Center without being subjected to the most disturbing ruckus. I am referring to the gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair surrounding the newly-mandatory meal plan requirement for sophomores, or rather, next year's sophomores, on the precarious assumption that this year's crop acquire enough credits to advance in rank. The deplorable state of community relations can be felt in many a hallway, alleyway, and doorway, from the line of irate freshmen I was forced to step over on my way to receiving lunch last Wednesday, to the cross look on Mike Dennis's face as he trudges through campus in his ill-fitting suits with the tags sticking out of the back.

Truly this strife and bickering is bad for such a wholesome and august institution such as Clark University, yet scarce is the soul who steps forward with ideas on how to address this sorrowful dissension in the peas of Clark's pod. Undoubtedly a man whose proposal contains the ingredients and plans necessary to suture Clark's ailing student body would be considered a hero and community leader. Many a dark day has befallen this community before, but rarely has such a dilemma existed for so long without timely, adequate resolution from the fine men in the administration, and it is clearly time for all factions of the university to bring their ideas to light.

Verily, one could scarce learn the details of this cause of social friction without wondering what kind of solution could be appropriate. The Clark Administration made a deal with the new food service that Clark would guarantee them a certain level of income, no matter what. Now the food service says that their income will fall below that level—meaning Clark itself will have to give money to its food service, the expense of which will be later levied on student tuition—unless the administration takes steps. The steps they are taking, as the protesters know so well, is to make all of next year's sophomores required to pay a thousand or more dollars and eat Bon Appetit food.

Their upsettedness, justifiably, has inspired many of these rash and ideology-addled youths to gather their resources—friends, drugs, free copy paper from Student Council—and take to the streets with the greatest weapon our institute's educational provisions has taught them to use: petitions. This civil unrest would be bad enough, were it not for the violence of the beliefs of those who would refuse to be oppressed. For as if the petitions and upsettedness were not enough to distress even the most academic of community leaders, these gnashing young rogues organized in a most raucous of manners, assembling in the middle of our venerable Red Square and marching from the Office of Dick to the House of Dick, and accosting innocents and making a commotion and generally not heeding the time tested maxim that children should be seen and not heard.

Respected elders such as myself watched and wondered with alarm whence would it all end, and before the week was through, we found ourselves subject to more angst and turmoil, this time the source being our trusted weekly tabloid, a title of course inspired from their page size, in the

form of news that our earnest administrators knew about the sophomore requirement since before the arrival of good Bon Appetit, and that therefore their cry of "Bon Appetit is forcing us" is a phantasmagorical excuse to defer blame and make muddy the waters of student satisfaction, and a most raucous, rambling, and upsetted opinion piece from a defrocked member of the food service committee named Casey, who might be equally satisfied with helping to combat the problem in lieu of crying foul in the newspaper, and although he is a first-year, his frustration is palpable and his mind clearly representative of his peers and classmates; indeed, nothing could be more average.

As the situation now stands, the Administration has destroyed the frail wisps of its credibility with the student body; Bon Appetit has been forced to taste the fruits of its year-long descent into becoming what we feared most from their new appointment, a post-Daka Daka, spiced with the not terribly fair contempt heaped upon it by indignant first years not familiar with the standards of college food service providers; first years are disgusted with their new college, similarly for sophomores and the concerned upperclassmen for whom relevancy to their own lives is no major criteria for political involvement; the Dean of Students office, perpetually caught in the middle, is responsible for preventing even more students from transferring yet cannot in any practical fashion take steps to prevent the mass exodus likely to come to pass upon implementation of the new requirement, and is thus positioned exactly between a rock and a similar hard place; the new administration of Student Council has proven itself effectively ineffectual, just as the old administration of Student Council has proven itself apathetic and ultimately hypocritical in their lack of participation in a conflict that they were the forbearers of; and in general the whole of the community has fallen into a dismal and sullen state wholly unbefitting a prideful and rotund university such as our own.

Bon Appetit has pronounced, and such affirmation is confirmed by both good business acumen and the financial elements of the Clark Administration, that the extra revenue produced from the pockets of unhappy sophomores will in turn produce a higher quality food service, for the additional money will be expended on better ingredients, more skilled personnel, and napkins that do not tear the skin from one's face. This argument makes good sense, although such does not presuppose the mandatory requirement that is the cause of such strife in our community, and thus is not a good argument for the administration's solution, but it is sound none the same, albeit to more restricted implications.

Truly our community is up in arms, with the great pressure for reformation of the current policy coming from this year's, i.e. the current, freshmen class, the fabled Class of 2000, or UG00. A great many factions of this community could be rendered at ease, pacified, or generally made to relax and carry on with their duties in a peaceable and regular fashion if only the root of this problem could be addressed satisfactorily. This is why the absence of a solution is so vexing, and

why I am proposing to make the freshmen class, the root of all these troubles, truly, the prim and proper solution to this. One freshman, toward the end of his first term, and having presumably already accumulated the bulk of his "freshmen fifteen," will provide at least 45 pounds of perfectly serviceable meat, both delicacies of liver and other internals, and the hearty materials suitable for meatloaf and other staples of the collegiate diet.

Killing and eating the entire class of 2000 would reap several other benefits, if implemented in a sagacious and timely manner. Immediate benefits include the immediate pacification of Clark's most disgruntled and unruly special interest group, as well as the alleviation of stress among the student body, whom we all know to be at their most paradigmatic when passive and happy. And as mathematically established previous, Bon Appetit can reap the joys of the newly lowered costs of undergraduate victual supplies, without alienating their captive consumers.

The university would salvage its lagging credibility with the student body after a year of seemingly systematic and highly publicized infringements on their still-theoretical sovereignty, and in fact would retribute much of its poor image with the community in general, including the faculty, whose problems with administrative decision-making and policy choice are widespread and largely unrecognized, and the employees of Physical Plant, who are simply sick of being exploited, and who paid the author a generous sum to be mentioned.

The financial sense of this proposal is so strong as to nearly be unworthy of mention. As a general policy, if each year's freshmen class was killed, prepared, and served to the rest of the University, the University could withdraw its newly-determined emphasis on the "first-year experience," and Linda Connors, dozens of Peer Advisors, and the University Center summer staff could be spared the arduous duties of the ironically-titled "Orientation." Their salaries and wages could be cut accordingly. And this author is willing to wager a week's wages that the operating budget of Choices could be cut by nearly half.

Admissions can focus its attention on the millions of students who transfer from institutions like Clark, collecting them and admitting them as sophomores, all the while saving money on glossy four-color pamphlets of unusual size and proportion, and on trips to New England high schools.

It would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly over-run, being the principle breeders of the community, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay in their dorms on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave this university than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an idolatrous Episcopal curate.

And lest I exhaust my reader's attention, another modest but significant advantage could be wrought from this proposal, thus: the University Communications office could boast another innovative, first-in-the-nation strategic plan, such as the fifth-year-free Master's degree or the student center that students are routinely denied use of. Programs like this keep Clark cutting edge and competitive, and this new admissions strategy is destined to maintain Clark in the minds, hearts, and headlines of the college-oriented populace.

I sincerely hope this idea is taken as the sincere and earnest attempt to alleviate the stress and angst of this strife-torn campus that it is meant to be, and that when ideas are considered for rectifying the good community relations that are so important to the microcosmic existence of the constituents of this institute, each man's proposal be weighed equally according to the benefits unique to the proposed plan, for I am quite sure none can match the great advantages of the modest proposal contained herein.