



By Eric Mattison

I Was Just Thinking...

That most organizations at Clark essentially fulfill the same function - student entertainment.
 That the situation in Russia is SO much worse than here, no matter what people say about Worcester.
 That if I smoked and took beer showers, I would smell like a party all the time.
 That wheat bread is much better than white bread. Who eats that stuff anyway? I mean, you make a peanut butter sandwich, and that damn white bread sticks to the roof of your mouth like cement!
 That America has the highest living standard in the world, and yet I still think that Europe is a cooler place.
 That the French shouldn't worry about a newly united Germany invading France, Germany should worry about the French invading Germany and forcing Jerry Lewis down their throats.
 That Emily Sachs has very long, spindly fingers. How her fingers don't freeze off in the winter is beyond me.
 That Dick Traina could raise his presence on campus by having fireside chats in Tilton Hall. He could sit in a high backed chair next to a microphone and read stories to the students. This is actually done at other schools. The students there bring blankets and wear pajamas. We could call it "Hanging with Dick."
 That so much could be solved if things weren't where they are now. For example, imagine Clark existing in the wilds of Vermont. I'd go there. Now imagine that a giant Earth-mover that could pick up the land of Israel (sans Gaza strip, Golan Heights, and West Bank) and place it in a quiet spot in the Western Mediterranean. The Jewish Riviera.
 That Jim Samar does not know how to write well. And that he's wrong.
 That China should grant Tibet the independence it deserves. And that the Dalai Lama is a very nice man. (read *Freedom in Exile*.)
 That Hemingway and Teddy Roosevelt are probably hanging out in heaven hunting numerous wild animals, all the while glad that they lived in a time when animal rights lobbies were effectively non-existent.
 That Guanacos are so much cuter than Llamas.
 That I really have no attention span.

THAT'S HOW THEY GETCHA!

I've noticed a disconcerting trend when I discuss Clark's financial practices with my friends. They all have a story about a maze of red tape they had to go through in order to fix some bureaucratic practice that would have cost them their housing, their diploma, or large sums of cash. Clark never likes to give a student his or her money back, even if Clark acquired it by mistake.

Cheryl, a friend of mine, came to Clark as a freshman this year. She was given a room in Wright Hall. Fine, right? Wrong. After taking two years off to work, Cheryl was twenty years old. She'd already done all of the nitty, immature things that freshmen do in a freshman dorm and was tired of noise. When she went to housing to get a transfer to a different dorm, she was told there were no more spaces available for her. She asked if she could live off-campus. Because Clark's Housing policy states that freshmen can't live off-campus (how would housing take their money?) she, too, could not live off-campus. When she talked to another twenty-year-old freshman she began to get angry. He had filled out his admission form the same way she had, only he had written a note in a corner that said he wanted to live off-campus. Housing let him. Still, they wouldn't break Cheryl's housing contract so that she could do the same.

Another friend of mine has enough credits and has fulfilled his major a semester early. However, Student Records will not issue him his diploma until May, with the rest of the Class of '98. Amazingly, Records doesn't list him as an undergraduate student either. Furthermore, even though he will be taking the requisite number of courses next semester to qualify as a part-time Clark student, housing wants to kick him out of the suite in which he is living. Presumably this is so they can replace him with a full-time student paying full tuition.

Finally, we all know about Abou Fall's run-in with Clark's financial office. When the currency in Abou's home country crashed last year, Clark realized that the newly adjusted exchange rate meant that Abou could not pay for tuition this semester. Even in this highly unusual case, and even though Abou's visa prohibited him from working in the US, and even though Abou's academic record probably could have qualified him for a free ride at any other academic institution, Clark University could not bend. Only money from an outside, private source prevented Abou from not graduating, losing his status as a student here, and being shipped back home.

Each of these students I have mentioned are the cream of the crop here at Clark. They are all intelligent, diligent, and highly motivated. To beat a cliché to death, they are the future leaders of tomorrow. I can't wait until the Clark Fund calls them at their homes or offices and asks them for money. And make no mistake, with Clark's hubris, even after the torment Clark inflicted upon these students, Clark will still call for money.

If Clark University insists on behaving like a business, then it should start using modern business practices. Streamlining the bureaucracy would be a good start. So would intelligent decision-making. But most of all, I would like to impress upon Clark's administration the concept of goodwill: that fondness for Clark is an asset in itself. Clark's administration should invest in creating student goodwill. Perhaps this would pay off in later years, when current Clarkies are alumni, and considerably more well-off than they are now.

I am sure that, when you read about each of these examples, you also thought of someone here who is being shafted by Clark's financial policies. Indeed, if you are a freshman or a sophomore, you are being forced to pay for Bon Appetit for a meal plan you may or may not want. If you are a freshman, you are being forced to pay for a room on campus that you may or may not want. Clark, if it expects to reap greater rewards down the road, will have to abandon those old, stiff-necked policies, and devise newer, more flexible ones.



The 24-Hour TIMELINE continued...

- 12:43 pm, cont'd — genetic experiment gone horribly wrong. Mr. Frager continues to describe the benefits of vaginitis.
- 1:56 am — Flight of The Valkyries on ROCU. Oddly appropriate. Apocalypse Now!
- 1:58 am — C is for Cookie playing now. Cookie Monster was always cool.
- 2:14 am — Bill calls a big stranger a wuss. Wuss backs off and leaves.
- 2:25 am — Emily Sachs reports back for duty. Palladium mission accomplished but not without a hitch; she