11-12-1962

The Knothole, November 12, 1962

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry Student Body
IN RESPONSE TO "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN"

It was emphasized in last week's issue of The Knothole that there was need of a better grading system at our College. The editorial "To Whom it May Concern" supposedly stated the results of a discussion concerning grading systems taken up at the annual Student Leaders' Conference last month. Participating in the conference and the particular discussion in question, I would like to clarify (or correct) some of the statements made in this editorial.

The students at the conference were not "almost unanimously in favor of the adoption of the revised grading system..." The margin in favor of the new system was only slightly over one half, with seniors largely monopolizing the vote. I might add that I have talked with fellow classmen who feel as I; that, although the senior class has one or more added years of experience in this College and with its policies, this is an issue that should be decided primarily by those affected in the future.

There was one further statement made that should be corrected. It was that "most faculty members at the conference abstained from expressing an opinion." This was not at all the case; the issue being thoroughly discussed by the faculty and a separate vote taken by them. Although some of the faculty members did decline their vote, those who did participate were in the majority against the proposed system.

Garth Wilkes '64
TO THE EDITOR:

I'm writing this letter in answer to Mr. Riordan's article in last week's "Knothole" concerning the grading system.

I am not in favor of refining the grading system at our College. Instead, I would like to see the adoption of an experimental grading system which would utilize only satisfactory and unsatisfactory.

In arguing for refining the present system, Mr. Riordan expresses the opinion that it is unfair to classify a student with a 79 average with me who has only a 70 average. He feels that the student with the higher average deserves to be ranked above the 70 student because of his greater scholastic ability.

However, is this concern over a more refined grading system justified? I feel that it is not. The students and administration are placing too much emphasis on grades, and not enough on learning purely for the sake of learning.

Are we here simply to earn a good average, or are we here in search of knowledge?

Perhaps it is time we examined our values rather than the College grading system.

John Fisher '63

SUMMER EXPERIENCE

Every summer for the past several years students from the College of Forestry have worked in Europe through the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE). This year myself and two other students of this college were fortunate enough to be accepted by this organization as student-trainees in Germany.

The position offered me was located in the Bavarian town of Landsberg am Lech. The work consisted of making a 100 percent cruise of all timber over 80 years of age on this district. From these results we computed the total volume and the allowable cut for the next ten years. This work was interesting, but even so, a job similar to this could have been found in the United States. Why then go to Europe for work? My answer to this would be that there you may meet different people with an entirely different point of view.

In Europe a forestry student is brought face to face with a completely different kind of system. The forester there is one of the most respected men in the community and carries much influence in local affairs. This not only includes graduate foresters, but also sub-professionals similar to our Ranger School graduates. This comes not only from the fact that the forestry profession has been idolized by the populace for generations, but also results from the character of the people who enter this field. Most of these men are proud professionals whose fathers and grandfathers were foresters - men whose very stature and bearing command respect.

The hunting traditions of Germany are also quite different than here in the United States. The forester is required to do most of the hunting himself, whether he enjoys it or not, and the remaining hunting rights are leased to individuals of the neighboring communities. A definite quota of bucks, does, and fawns to be shot is set up each year by the district forester according to the optimal population figures, and the foresters of the district are then responsible for meeting this quota in their various units. Sitting in their high-seats overlooking the more popular feeding areas, the
foresters would first of all pick out the older and unhealthier individuals which are to be shot at the beginning of the summer. Later some of the younger deer are shot to fill the quota. The high-seats are also used for the hunt as a shooting platform, and once a kill has been made, tradition calls for the hunter to place one leafy oak twig into his hat and to insert another into the deer's mouth - the final meal for the animal.

There are of course many other aspects of forestry which could be discussed here, but they would probably be only of limited interest to a majority of the readers. Therefore, I would very much like to dwell on the subject of beer-drinking in Bavaria for a while.

Probably one of the best examples of Bavarian "gemutlichkeit" is a spirit of the people at the many beer-fests during the year. Usually you get served only in a large (1 liter) mug, while the brass band is playing a lively polka. After the waitress brings your round to the table, carrying as many as twelve of these foaming mugs at once, the group gives the salute, "Prost", and the evening begins with high spirits. Should the drinking enthusiasm decline during the evening, the band strikes up the song, "Ein Prosit" (A Toast), which ends up with everyone in the hall standing, waving their mugs, and taking a deep swallow. Even the church cannot be excluded from these activities. One monastery, for instance, which has a beer-garden capable of seating 1,000 people, brews some of the finest beer in Bavaria. In fact, their dark beer was so good (and strong) that the local police had to order them to discontinue serving this specialty on weekends - there were too many accidents on the small dirt road leading back into town.

The forests, the people, the culture, and the many other "discoveries" such as the scenery of the Swiss Alps and the beauty of the Rhine valley, all made profound and lasting impressions on me. That is why I believe that this summer was most rewarding and that I would urge anyone who could possibly manage it, to participate in this program.

Here are some of the basic particulars on the program:

1. There are job opportunities in Forestry, Wood Technology, Paper Making, and Brewing.

2. Participating countries include most of Europe and some from the Middle East, the Far East, and South America.

3. Speaking the native language is not a requirement, but always helps a little.

4. The charter flight from New York with KLM Airlines costs $300 round trip.

5. The firm which hires the trainees will pay him enough for living expenses.


7. The offers of training will be made during March, 1963.

Any upperclassmen who wish further information about this program or wish to apply, should see Dr. Farnsworth in the Silviculture office.

H. W.
THE GREAT WEST

Since a great deal of the wood industry is located in the West, it is reasonable to assume that a percentage of the readers of this paper will eventually be located in that section of the country.

When speaking of that portion of the United States which is situated west of the Mississippi River, many adjectives are applied which indicate the bigness, the magnitude and grandeur of the great West. People refer to the wide open spaces, the magnificent Rockies, the towering Sequoias.

Often we hear of the huge mills operated by push buttons which produce an enormous amount of board feet per man hour as compared with the peckerwood operations of the South and Northeast. Those who have been there tell of walking with awe beneath the lofty, king-size conifers. Others tell of the excitement of watching automatic mill equipment conquer the giants and reduce them to usable wood products.

The feeling of space and magnitude seems to affect the residents of the West, too. Everyone is very open and friendly. In a gas station, the attendants not only wash your windshield with a smile, they also clean the rear window and all the side windows. They'll even sweep your car floor, if you open your door. In restaurants and cafes, a second free cup of coffee is always provided. Even the Pepsi machines are generous. You get a 12-ounce bottle for a dime.

Everywhere you go, people are smiling and helpful. If you get stuck in the sand on one of the many unpaved roads, you'll have the assistance of every passing person.

There is but one pitfall in the wonderful West about which you should be warned. You may get bitten by the "bug". This "bug" is rarely fatal but it can be dangerous. It causes a type of split personality, and may be expensive.

We know of one case where a perfectly normal Easterner went to the West and a few weeks later, even his mother wouldn't have recognized him! His features were hidden by a brushy growth. His walk was definitely different, as a result of the high heeled boots he was wearing -- that's where the expense comes in. Even his speech was unrecognizable. His driving ambition was to ride in a rodeo. Although at this point his case seemed almost hopeless, we are glad to report that he has since partially recovered and the prognosis for complete recovery is good.

Since the "bug" is the only drawback, we heartily recommend the wide open spaces of the great West. Try it! You'll like it! Even if you catch the bug, it's worth it!

H. C.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MOOSEWOOD'S NOTEBOOK #9
THINK NOT OF MAN ALONE
BY DR. ALFRED G. ETTER
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

I am not much concerned that atomic and hydrogen bombs may destroy mankind. I owe allegiance to the whole world of life. The disappearance of a single species is of small importance when two billion years of creation hang in the balance. We must realize that unbridled use of atomic energy for peace and war threatens the future not only of Man, but of every living thing on this planet.
Destruction will not wait for exposure of each organism to a bomb or its dust. Devious natural methods are even now distributing the by-products of radiation to every hidden island and unsounded depth. The wind and rain and rivers are not the only forces to be feared. There is the circulation of atoms from living thing to living thing, and from dead thing to living thing. There is a food chain that builds a coon from a frog that fed on a butterfly that sucked juice from a flower and ate leaves as a worm. The chain does not cease with the coon. It may be complicated by a coyote or it may be simplified by a worm. A coon may die in many ways and his atoms may circulate in 1,000 directions and become a part of a million organisms within a few days. His destiny is not to be buried in a vault, but to be reborn in leaf and flower and butterfly and frog and coon and coyote and millions of minute plants and animals that defy description. With radioactive atoms circulating in this system what has been a cycle of perpetual life is already becoming an inexorable race to extinction.

Ever since the Jews sought solace in words and the Greeks began to reason, man has granted himself dominion over the earth. Aristotle preaches that nature "has made all animals for the sake of man." Genesis proffers "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." What authority is there for such a concept other than our own self-interest and conceit? We are not the owners of life. We are part of it. As I watch the eagles search the Mississippi I ponder their meaning—their bold harpooning of the shad, the bullying of the ducks, their upthrust head and thrilling cry. These have nothing to do with me. The eagle thrills to life as I do. Life is his possession. These great birds were seeking shad long before our race stepped out of the darkness of time.

With the eagles are gatherings of gulls, scattered grebes and crows, canvasbacks, cormorants, mergansers, and scaup, searching the river for their livlihoods, facing as individuals the responsibilities of living and perpetuation each in his characteristic manner, each with relish for his existence. What fiat empowers us to dictate their destiny?

We can destroy all this—the complex social balance that exists among animals and plants, the system that provides for inheritance and change of instinct and emotion and sensation and form—but could we invent a tree all over again, a vine, a rose, a hummingbird with a trumpet flower to fit? Can one of us design a tumblebug and teach him what to do, or grow carpeting as soft as the green moss, or fill an empty sky with geese and teach them Vs and honking and where to fly?

Man cannot build life, for life is made with eons of time, the one missing ingredient in Man's repertoire. To him that commands time all things are possible. To him that does not, let him stand in awe of it.

History is so small. All we talk of as being history and important is one event. Its importance shrinks when we consider the millions of dim geological events that preceded us—the emergence of continents, the building of rivers and soils, the radiation, isolation, and fusion of life. When we interpret our own story we must remember that compared to the cockroach we have barely been born. Turtles have been solving the problems of life 200 million years longer than we have. Dams, drains, revetments, cranes, towers, towns, highways of cars, smoke in the sky, and motors on the river—these things are Man, and yet they are like chalk on a board. His books, his thoughts, his discoveries that seem so characteristic, so majestic, are no more majestic than the methods of the bee that exploits the flower. Animals and plants are creations as important as ourselves, though they are at our mercy, unfair as that may seem.
But man and his machines are in charge of our destiny and that of the planet. It is ourselves that we have been worshipping under the guise of God. Let us admit this deception and turn our admiration to time and life and change, and find in them the proper inspiration for piety and awe. Worship and preach now lest Man, in desperation, resort to catastrophe, condemning the crazy elements to drift in abandon again.

ANNOUNCEMENT

It was announced this weekend that George D. Davis, alias Stub, and Joan E. Hudson, alias Wampo, are engaged. The bit will be placed in Stub's mouth come the beginning of June of the coming year.

WANT ADS

FOR SALE - '62 Chevrolet, 6 cylinder 2-door sedan, standard transmission, snow tires, seat covers. Green. Good condition. Phone GR 2-2032.

Used furniture for sale. Phone GR 2-2032.

FOUND

A sum of money was found on Friday, November 2, 1962 at 10 A.M. in Marshall Lounge. See Mrs. Spear - 107 Bray.

A man's wrist watch has been in Room 107 Bray since the Barbecue. It had been given to Professor Williams at Green Lake. See Mrs. Spear.