

# Table Talk

News and Views of the  
Student Body of The Lutheran  
Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.



Volume X      October 5, 1973      Issue #1

## "FIRST IMPRESSIONS SHOULD NOT BE LAST- ING IMPRESSIONS" -

The spire of the Church of the Abiding Presence loomed ahead of me as I approached my new home from Route 30 on that fateful day. The schedule of events sent to me through the mail, twice, promised something else. Knowledgeable of the verdict that my new residence was to be Valentine Hall, I obediently followed the directions, "Parking For Loading or Unloading Only," and unloaded my body. I then entered the threshold to search for Mr. Benson. Mr. Hartzell was only too happy to assist me as he ceremoniously shook a golden key from a small brown envelope. "For your room," he declared. "Thank you," I remarked.

After completing innumerable trips to the fourth floor of the medieval castle, I ventured, at last, to the refectory lawn to check out the picnic supper, with faculty. A gentleman named Jim Ellison, purporting to be student body president, was busy distributing name tags to one and all, while at the same time introducing a lovely lady purporting to be Mrs. Ellison. Were it not for the formality of the brown folding chairs at the picnic, we would have had entirely too much to handle; the baked beans on the left knee, the ham(?) sandwich on the right knee, and the brown "liquid" in the left hand, leaving the right hand free to eat and to shake hands with many other strange creatures with name tags. Meanwhile, drops of clear "liquid" began to fall from the sky. We merely moved the brown folding chairs under the spreading trees and continued our juggling and shaking and talking and attempting to eat. (Some did flee to the indoors, but returned at the prospect of dessert!)

(cont. page 3, col. 1)

## "ON THE GRADING SYSTEM: AN OPINION"

The following is fully intended to be irritating, smart-assed and generally conducive to upsetting ping pong tables and/or stuffing the mailboxes with daisies.

It boggles the mind. What link might there possibly be between the first page of the explanation of the grading system (found in Student's Handbook), and the second? Ah, yes, the staple. Aside from this marvel of technology what does page 2 have to do with page one? Little enough. Let us hope this is a discrepancy of ignorant innocence and not some Nixonian attempt to manipulate language, that is that we, the student body, should assume that page 2 is a good example of the vocabulary on page one. But, let us cool down the rhetoric and examine where the greatest discrepancies lie. When one looks closely there is really only one paragraph under Some Preliminary Considerations which says something positive about grades:

Grades can be useful as motivators and evaluators, however, when they have the same meaning for both the student and the teacher. This, however, assumes effective and clear communication of what is expected of the student, and what the grade means in relation to a student's academic progress.

One asks how this "meaning" is to be established. Already one highly-quoted professor has established his own "meaning" to a grading system he does not like. That is to say "H", "P", or "F" in that class already has a different value than in any other. At the same time those of us with P's last year must assign a different mean-  
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(cont. from page 1, col. 2) ON THE  
GRADING SYSTEM: AN OPINION

ing to the symbol (and will the outsider observer make the transfer which a note on the bottom of the transcript will indicate?)

But this is a minor grievance. Observe the following:

Once fear becomes an established norm in the classroom, the student often strives to make the teacher aware of his knowledge rather than his ignorance, and thus both teacher and student miss what may well be the student's most "teachable" moment. Yet it is this moment--the moment of ignorance followed by the first prick of curiosity--that stimulates most teachers themselves in their independent research.

Fine, now let's look at the grades on page two. Of H, P, D, F, INC., if you really think about it there are four grades which imply a punitive stance--P, D, F, INC. How many of us really enjoy considering our work acceptable and adequate, by the grace of the professor to be sure. That leaves one "reward" to be gotten -- the mighty "H". How is that for a grading system which is to minimize the punitive aspect? In conclusion, this system implies more pressure on the student than an average letter grade system. (As has been pointed out, the missing "B" is that grade most frequently give to the grad. student.)

There are other considerations. What does any grading system imply in terms of the seminary as community? Here, I will speak in terms of experience, the psychology of the community as observable last semester and this. There was very much present semester--the ethos that in terms of seminary as a growing experience, we could all learn from each other. That is, the extent to which we were rewarded or punished for being and growing was minimal. We were free to use time to grow with each other and in that area no academic distinctions served as proof that what one said was more valuable than what another said. This semester I'm not so sure. One envisions giants of academic achievement,

their H's emblazoned on their chest, as a race apart, "superior" was the word, was it not. What really hurts is that many of us have undergone a process of growth (and pain) in CPE to learn precisely, there is not a better or worse way to "be". But, evidently there is a better or worse way of "being" a seminarian.

And here we arrive at what probably lies behind any confusion over a grading system. What is the purpose of the seminary as it defines itself? What I saw last semester I liked and here is how I defined it to myself and to others, (particularly to a brother to whom I upheld the seminary as a good example of what education could be, where some of those theories on academic freedom were really in practice.) Seminary is a community. It provides growing experiences of theoretical and practical nature to facilitate the exploration by a given individual of his potential for church occupation, occupation where being and doing are primary over knowing. Contact with professors was important where one saw learning subordinated to being, yet supporting and strengthening it. Contact with other students was important because their experiences were so often richer and profitable to one's own growth.

I seriously contend that the grading system is counterproductive to such a community. Therefore, I propose that hearings should be reopened on the grading system with the view of reinstating the pass/fail system for this year.

Carolyn Walborn

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ON THE GRADING SYSTEM: A RESPONSE

In the Fall of 1971 the Seminary's faculty voted to establish a Pass/Fail grading system. The understanding was, however, that this "new" system would be evaluated after it was in operation for a time.

The topic of evaluations and grades buzzed all about campus last year. In October, 1972, the Academic Policies Committee appointed a Task Force on Evaluation of Grading. The purpose of this task force was to: (cont. on page 3, col.2)

(cont. from page 1, col. 1) "FIRST IM-  
PRESSIONS..."

Next on the "agenda" came the inevitable introduction of all the big wheels present. Mr. Heiges congratulated Mr. Christianson warmly for remembering all the faculty and their children on the first round. Mr. Christianson was quick to point out the absences of Mr. Heikkenen and Mr. Myers, furthering in our tender minds the aura of mystery surrounding these two personages. We students were then given the distinct pleasure of screaming out our names, home towns and colleges to a large group of people who could not hear, much less care. We soon found ourselves inside the chapel, in a very similar situation, with Dr. Heiges screaming out our names, home towns and colleges to a captive audience who could, if nothing else, hear. The president's "History of the Seminary and Grounds - Abridged" was well received and all of us came away with a sense of destiny at being privileged enough to be at such a place of historical and religious interest.

As I once again ascended the steps of Milt-Valentine Hall, I was minded to recall the events of that fateful day--driving through the mountains in the rain on Pennsylvania Turnpike as well as the detour of Route 30, my dead battery at the Bedford Plaza, my overheated engine, the picnic supper-with faculty, the historical sketch of the seminary, all the faces-with-no-names, and then, the sudden realization that I had left my pillow at home ! ! !

To be continued . . .

Steve Patrick

Table Talk will be published on the first and third Friday of every month - or as contributions from students and faculty will allow. Articles, poems, or short announcements should be in the Table Talk mailbox one week before publishing date.

Thank you for your "patronage". We wish everyone the best of luck this year. Please remember...keep those cards and letters coming!!

Editorial Staff

(cont. from page 2, col.2) "...RESPONSE"

1) Accumulate data from other studies on grading systems used in other seminaries, graduate schools, etc.

2) Evaluate the then present Pass/Fail system with the use of student polls, open hearings, etc. and

3) Propose recommendations for the future.

The Task Force consisted of four members: Mr. Christianson, Chairman, Mr. Gobbel, Ken Nelson (special student) and Andrew Krey (Junior).

The Task Force's research and data collecting ended with the publication of "Some Preliminary Considerations" on motivation, evaluation, and grades. The entire student body received copies of these and "received" these considerations at their meeting on May 22, 1973.

The Task Force's efforts to evaluate the Pass/Fail system and to obtain reactions to a tentative proposal culminated in open hearings. It would be impossible to put one's finger on a "student opinion" which emerged from those hearings. The students aired conflicting opinions and wishes so that the entire range of grading systems from no grades at all to the traditional A, B, C, D, F system found some student support. In short, there was no consensus relative to a grading system amongst students. The problem seems to be in part that students yearn for feedback but are reluctant and even fearful to receive evaluation on their work.

The Task Force's proposal to the A.P.C. recommended a basic Pass/Fail system with degrees of competence noted with a H, S, or D. The faculty adopted this proposal on May 22, 1973.

Whether equating this to the conventional A, C, D, F system does justice to the concepts of the proposal is the question students should ponder.

The chore of coming up with a system of defined symbols to describe competence and performance is difficult if not impossible. We cannot expect simple, practical grades to tell us everything. The more complete evaluation must leave a system of 2 to 5 symbols and to lengthy paragraphs of English grammar.

Andrew Krey

Episcopacy suffered one of its more minor setbacks at the hands of Lutherans last Saturday as the Gettysburg Seminary All-Stars rallied to defeat Virginia Theological Seminary, 12-7, on the winners' turf. The winning score came with thirty seconds remaining, on a 30 yard pass play from Jim Ellison to Stef Zehrfuss.

The game was played on wet grounds and with an intermittent rain. However, a beer keg provided a key incentive for both the players and the fans, and the result was a tight, exciting defensive battle, with a great deal of enthusiasm all around.

The home team got off to a fast start when Dale Hollingshead deflected a Virginia pass on its first offensive play and junior Bernie Carl grabbed the ball in the air, giving the All-Stars the ball deep in Virginia territory. On the ensuing play, quarterback Ellison eschewed his receivers and streaked up the middle for the score. After that, the first half belonged to the defense, the only other offensive threat being a Virginia bomb caught beyond the end zone, and the half ended with Gettysburg in the lead, 6-0.

Virginia began to generate some offense in the second half on short passes into the middle and out to the sidelines, but was unable to push over a score until less than two minutes remained in the game. The conversion put the Episcopalians ahead, 7-6.

On the ensuing kickoff, junior Dennis Moore took the ball and, with one reversal of field, returned the kick deep into Virginia territory. The winning score came on a third down play.

The visitors, far from accepting defeat, drove back with the effective use of short passes and time outs, and the game ended with a completed Virginia pass five yards short of the goal line.

This was the first football contest betw. the Lutheran seminary and another member of the Washington Theological Consortium, and it resulted in an invitation by the

(cont. next col.)

Virginia Seminary to return the favor next year, along with a defiance to repeat the result on the visitor's field in Alexandria, Va.

The day ended with a community meal, with covered dishes provided by Gettysburg Seminary wives, and the overall result was a much more enjoyable Saturday than the rain alone was likely to have provided.

Ralph Strohl

#### IZZY 'S CORNER

"Is God Dead?" (Reprinted from Edge Magazine)

Hey man, don't bug me.  
You're not where it's at.  
I'm not gonna sit around here and listen  
anymore.  
Your talk is endless.  
Action, baby,  
Action, not words, to set things right.  
Man, you sit in a sacred seat every week  
and bob up and down  
And sway and sing  
Making a golden Calf of Him;  
And then you hate, persecute, segregate  
And you lie, steal, and curse  
And you shut your eyes and ears  
To people you feel don't deserve your  
God,  
And you sit around and say,  
"Is God dead?"

7 to 1 against your God, baby.  
But my God's alive  
'Cause I make him so,  
He's not up in the sky, smiling down.  
He's in me, fighting  
He's changing, not talking  
He's livin', not hating  
He's helping, not hurting  
He's protesting, not agreeing  
He's living, not dying  
'Cause I have it so.  
And you claim your God is in you  
And you're talking  
And you're hating  
And you're hurting  
And you're agreeing  
And you're dying  
And your God's dead.

Man, you made it so!

## LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY \* A KID'S EYE VIEW

Where once there tread great scholars  
 Now little feet do tramp!  
 Young voices echoing in these halls  
 Where great theological debates resound:  
 For all its cool and mighty marbled splendor  
 The chapel now a nursery knows.  
 Crying babes banging on toys with much abandon  
 Are said to help the choir in practice.

Historic Old Dorm with its great round veranda  
 Becomes on Saturday afternoon a mighty ship,  
 That sails forth to defy the mighty tempest.  
 On board a bearded pirate and a damsel in distress.  
 The great old cannons in Dr. Folkamer's yard become  
 Mighty stallions to carry forth two young knights.  
 The graystone fence around said house is, of course,  
 The walled fortress of these young warrior lords.

Behind West House is Sherwood Forest where  
 Maid Marion and Robin Hood lead a band of Merry Men.  
 A little trickle of water from the boiler room is  
 The greatest place to catch a whale if you but try!  
 Dr. Schmaucker would you approve? Well, how it doesn't matter.  
 To kids, this is the greatest place to dream away a day.

Mrs. Rod Ronneberg

Editor's note: Cathy Ronneberg was very influential in  
 establishing that chapel nursery. We  
 thank her and wish her and Rod an excellent  
 intern year in Chambersburg.

## SUFFUSIVE SEMINARIAN (STARTS STUDY.

Another year has dawned at the Sem.  
 with all its joys of renewing old  
 friendships and anxieties of meeting  
 the new.  
 We find our friend Suffusive Semina-  
 rian filled with anticipation as he  
 leaps from his bed for that eight  
 o'clock class. Full of vitality he  
 stumbles over a pile of Budweiser  
 cans that were stacked neatly the  
 night before. A groan and a moan  
 exhibit the joy he has for eight  
 o'clock classes.  
 Staggering into the classroom Suf-  
 fusive tries to focus his sleep  
 filled eyes on Dr. Myers, who has  
 obviously been up since around four  
 and is bright eyed and bushy tailed.  
 The minutes tick on and Suffusive  
 dilligently is writing in his note-  
 book: "Dear Bill,"...

(cont. next column)

(cont. from previous column)  
 Next we find Suffusive in his nat-  
 ural habitat, the coffee shoppe!  
 Here he will ponder the great thots  
 of the previous hour. "Hey, does  
 anybody have a ping pong ball?"  
 Well, maybe tomorrow he'll ponder.  
 Suffusive puts daily time in at the  
 ping pong tables, but the highlite  
 of his day is visiting his mailbox.  
 He is sure he will find a letter,  
 since no one has written for over a  
 week. They couldn't have forgotten  
 he was alive...maybe they thot this  
 was a monastary and mail wasn't per-  
 mitted! But wait! He sees the piece  
 of white protruding from the pigeon  
 hole. Ripping it open, he reads:  
 REFLECTORY;PAY AMT. DUE So, another  
 year has begun.

Marcela Thompson

## CLASS OFFICERS, COMMITTEES, STAFFS

Juniors

Pres.: Charles Polm  
 Sec./Tres.: Charlotte Combs

Middlers

Pres.: Scott Gustafson  
 Sec./Tres#: Jim Higgins

Seniors

Pres.: Roy Steward  
 Sec./Tres.: Bob Eastlack

Worship Committee

P

Pat Beech (J)  
 Fran Biondo (J)  
 Phil Squire (M)  
 Rich Stetson (M)  
 Jim Knowles (S)  
 Brad Wallace (S)

Ecumenics Committee

Dale Hollingshead (M) Chairman  
 Bob Criste (J)  
 Terry Robichaud (J)  
 Rich Bigelow (M)  
 Don Wilcox (M)  
 Joe Scholtes (S)  
 Mary Ann Horefield (S)

Social Action Committee

Jane Shields (M) Chairwoman  
 Barb Balling (J)  
 Dennis Kiesling (S)

Table Talk Staff

Dave Ernst (M) Mng. Editor  
 Bob Dealey (J)  
 Ralph Strohl (J)  
 Marcia Thompson (J)  
 Jim Drury (J)  
 and most important: our typists!  
 (who are being PAID this year)

NOMINEES FOR COMMITTEES  
(VOTE: OCTOBER 8)Academic Policies (2 to be elected)

Bob Mitchell (J)  
 George Mendis (M)  
 Steve Kanouse (S)

Admission & Scholarship (elect 1)

Al Riethmiller (J)  
 Andy Krey (M)  
 Tony Harvey (S)

Continuing Education (elect 1)

Bob Dealey (J)  
 Steve Caler (M)  
 Jim Dollhopf (S)

Field Education (elect 1)

Berney Carl (J)  
 Beth Spitzner (M)  
 Ken Thompson (S)

Luth. House of Studies (elect 1)

Al Rider (J)  
 Dale Bissecker (M)  
 Joe Donovan (S)

Library (elect 1)

Mark Miller (J)  
 Emily Styer (M)  
 Sue Noble (S)

## DILEMMA.....

Please help me! I'm having trouble fitting in. I'm very shy and it takes me awhile to open up to people. I need someone to talk to, someone who will go beyond the superficialities of everyday life. I need someone I can relate to, and have some sort of meaningful relationship with. If you're so concerned about the sense of community here, please reach out ...and help me.

A Junior Student