

THE SOU'WESTER

The Weekly Student Newspaper of Rhodes College

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Wednesday, February 19, 1997

Raspberry Stresses Need To Build "Bridges"

By Erin Riches
Editor-In-Chief

Pulitzer Prize winning journalist William Raspberry, a nationally syndicated urban affairs columnist for The Washington Post, lectured at the BRIDGES Forum at the Orpheum Theatre Feb. 9.

BRIDGES, INC. is a Mid-South organization that attempts to connect people with the workplace in a multicultural world through training and motivation. One of its most prominent programs, BRIDGE BUILDERS, seeks to unite high school students from diverse backgrounds through culturally sensitive leadership training.

In keeping with the mission of BRIDGES, Raspberry emphasized the necessity for a kind of bridge building distinct from the 'Bridge

to the 21st Century' popularized by the Clinton administration last fall.

"We must undertake the difficult task of building a bridge to the best future America is capable of," he said to the audience. "There is a two-pronged process for restoring society. First, we must restore families; and second, we must renew the community.

"In a desperate underclass, there is disintegration of the family structure and disintegration of community.

"The business executive who feels no constraints... is as much a part of the problem as the inner city drug dealer," Raspberry continued. "Some of you think that building more prisons and killing a few of them is the way to make that happen. My hometown Washington, DC, locks up the

highest percentage in America... and there are a lot of useless, bitter ex-convicts."

Children, he said, should be the focus of any bridge building effort.

"Our children used to be our number one priority—they are just 25 percent of our population, but they are 100 percent of our future," Raspberry said.

One of the barriers to effective bridge building in America is the historic tendency toward the isolation of various groups on "islands" that are alienated from the dominant culture, according to Raspberry. "Worse, he said, there has been a recent repopulating trend on these islands.

"We wonder if the progress is an illusion," he said. "We think sometimes that white people do not really want many of us off the

island—the reason that some people start knocking is that the island is not really meant to be depopulated. They let a few make it to sustain the system, to perpetuate the myth that the system is open.

"The island could increase in population and decrease in the quality of life at the same time," he added.

Widespread willingness to find satisfaction in "diversity" in place of a desire to progress to "unity" sustains the existence of these islands.

"Why don't we believe we can go from diversity to unity?" he demanded of the audience.

In an interview following the forum, Raspberry, currently a professor in the Duke University (NC) School of Public Policy, remarked on the need for bridge building on

the college campus.

"At the college level, it is desperately important," he said. "I see group after group with the mission of magnifying their differences from other elements of campus—there is no group on campus molding into community.

"I am not unhappy with various groups coming together to address the effect of instances of the community of communities," he added. "There is a necessity for pulling specialized groups together, and there may be no better place to do that than the student newspaper.

"The student newspaper can get the conversation started," Raspberry said. "Its mission should not be to preach but to set the agenda. And, if you can do that, then you are a better than average journalist."

RSG Commuter Diversity Survey Results

On Monday, January 27, the RSG Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity sent a survey to a select group of commuter students. The survey was designed to determine the extent to which commuter students feel they have a place on campus. The results of this survey are listed below. Percentages may not equal 100% in all categories because some answers were left blank.

1. Number of commuter students surveyed:

30 white, 35 minority students
Number of commuter students responded:
20 white, 16 minority students

2. Specify the semesters you have lived on and off campus:

50% white students lived off campus from fifth semester on
44% minority students lived off campus from third semester on

3. To what extent do you feel a part of the Rhodes community?

(1 = not at all, 5 = strongly)
1 - 10% white, 25% minority
2 - 20% white, 25% minority

3 - 40% white, 25% minority
4 - 30% white, 6% minority
5 - 5% white, 19% minority

4. Do you believe minority students on campus face more challenges adjusting than non-minority students?

Yes: 65% white, 44% minority
No: 30% white, 50% minority

5. Do you feel the administration is adequately involved in efforts to recruit and retain minority students?

Yes: 35% white, 12.5% minority
No: 35% white, 68.8% minority

6. Do you feel comfortable making contributions in class?

Yes: 95% white, 100% minority
No: 5% white

7. Do you feel any different when the faculty is minority (gender or ethnicity)?

More comfortable:
5% white, 25% minority
No difference:
90% white, 75% minority

8. Do you feel that minority representation/perspective is important within the faculty?

Important:
65% white, 75% minority
Unimportant:
30% white, 6% minority
Indifferent: 19% minority

9. Do you favor increasing, decreasing, or maintaining current minority faculty?

Increasing:
60% white, 44% minority
Decreasing:
30% white, 31% minority
Maintaining: 25% minority

10. Do you feel our curriculum is ethnically and ideologically comprehensive?

Yes: 30% white, 19% minority
No: 65% white, 50% minority
Indifferent:
5% white, 25% minority

11. Do you feel that classes, content, and teaching styles are geared towards all students?

Yes: 60% white, 56% minority
No: 35% white, 44% minority

12. Is hiring more minority faculty important for providing role models and improving campus climate?

Yes: 30% white, 56% minority
No: 40% white, 13% minority
Indifferent:
25% white, 31% minority

13. Do you feel the administration is adequately involved in efforts to recruit and retain minority faculty?

Yes: 30% white, 13% minority
No: 40% white, 69% minority
Not a concern:
25% white, 13% minority

14. Have you ever considered transferring to another institution?

(1 = never, 5 = often)
1 - 35% white, 31% minority
2 - 10% white, 12.5% minority
3 - 20% white, 12.5% minority
4 - 30% white, 25% minority
5 - 5% white, 19% minority

JHD To Screen Email

By James Spears
Managing Editor

President James Daughdrill recently announced that he will no longer receive electronic mail from students, faculty, and alumni. Citing the vast amount of e-mail he receives on a daily basis, Daughdrill stated his "JHD" e-mail account would be screened by his secretary, Sherry Fields, and that he would look only at those with extreme urgency or importance.

Daughdrill stated that he regretted his decision, and "enjoyed the many personal, even chatty things I have sent and received. But drowning in communication is the alternative and that is even less desirable."

EDITORIAL OF THE SOU'WESTER

NEW ELECTION CAMPAIGNS PROMISING

Observing the spring elections this time around, the candidates for the various elected positions on campus have taken measures to become more active and public in their political campaigning. In addition to the public forum, in which the candidates introduce themselves to attendant members of the student body, *The Sou'wester* is running a brief biography of each candidate and their sought position. We include candidates for positions in the Honor Council, Rhodes Student Government, Publications Board and Social Regulations Council.

In years past, the most accepted and standard campaign has involved a blitzkrieg of signs and snappy slogans that played more to the popularity and wit of the candidate and not her or his qualifications for, plans for, or expectations of the position. The attitude of the people running and the student body

at large was one of apathy and ambivalence to the entire process, reducing it to a formalized popularity contest and resumé filler.

However, there seems to be a growing level of maturity within the student body and its government and elected positions. Discussion between different student groups is higher than it has been in years; also, students are taking more of an active role in issues concerning the welfare and identity of the community, and the candidates for elected positions within the community are focusing on the issues related to the respective position, rather than pandering to the common denominator of name recognition and spectacle.

The biographies of the candidates that appear in this week's issue of *The Sou'wester* are provided in an attempt to continue informing the community about the governing bodies on campus. Each candidate has prepared a statement of purpose and/or a resumé of qualifications for the position she or he is seeking. Events such as the public forum and the running of

brief biographies offer you, the student body, the ability to become more informed about the candidates, positions, and ideas that will speak for you during the 1997-98 academic year.

This availability of information is not a matter to be taken lightly. The general opinions about Rhodes from outside the Rhodes community come from observations of the different groups on campus. The Rhodes Student Government, the Social Regulations Council, the Honor Council, and the Publications Board act as, and for, the student body. It becomes necessary, then, to take an active role in determining who represents the student body, how she or he plans to represent the student body, and why she or he is running.

Hopefully this type of interaction among students will continue in future elections, and students will maintain the level of maturity and respect they have fostered with this display of concern and responsibility.

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All staff editorials published in *The Sou'wester* represent the majority opinion of the Editorial Board composed of section editors and executive editors. Opinions expressed in *The Rhode'ster*, opinion columns, and letters-to-the-editor do not necessarily reflect the opinions of *The Sou'wester* Editorial Board. Letters-to-the-editor are encouraged; all letters must be signed and will be edited for clarity.

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Member, Associated Collegiate Press (ACP)

CAMPUS SAFETY LOG

February 10-16, 1997

2/10		No Unusual Activity Reported
2/11		No Unusual Activity Reported
2/12	9:15p.m.	Female Robbery Suspect from earlier robbery last semester sighted at University/Tutwiler entering a small red compact car. MPD notified and broadcast made.
2/13	8:00a.m. 5:00p.m.	University St./Phillips Lane - Automobile accident. MPD scene. Freshman Lot - Motor Vehicle Theft reported. Victim last saw vehicle on 2/9/97. MPD contacted.
2/14	10:20a.m.	Housekeeper needing medical attention. Memphis Fire Dept. ambulance called.
2/15	12:47a.m.	Blount Hall - Smoke Alarm - False: resident pulled alarm from its mounted position thus setting off the alarm.
2/16	12:16a.m.	Alcohol Violation issued Gym Lot

STATISTICS

ACCESS	151	JUMP STARTS	12
CITATIONS	101	ESCORTS	38
VISITORS	916	PROPPED DOORS	11
CARS BOOTED	0	ALCOHOL VIOLATIONS	1

Spring Election Candidates "Fingered" For Success



MATTHEW JONES
THE FINGER

I've just come from the RSG elections information meeting for those running for positions in Friday's officer elections. And I'm feeling a little more confident in the weird and often incompetent politics of Rhodes College.

All the candidates save one have first class seats on the clue train. It's been a long time coming, but this year's candidates are presenting us with a great deal of experience and initiative from which to choose. The election is finally dominated by people who give a damn.

I wish I could say as much about each senator that neglected last Thursday's RSG meeting. But the RSG's lack of quorum is something to think about after the officer elections.

• Mr. Damon Norcross, the current Vice President and candidate for President, is responsible for the charging both the Ad Hoc Publica-

tions Committee and the Special Committee on the Purpose Statement. His only truly experienced opposition comes from Ms. Kristen Rauschkolb, a threetime member of the RSG President's Cabinet who has done far more work this year than almost any senator.

These two candidates will present a much more sophisticated campaign than last year's "eight valence electrons" (*sic*) advertisement that won Mr. Michael Faber his position as President.

Ms. Rauschkolb chaired this year's most public RSG endeavor, the Special Committee on the Purpose Statement. But the staying power of her work is in doubt because of the early compromise she herself encouraged. The committee's achievement lies in the mature public discussion produced by the Special Committee, and this great achievement is shared by five of the six RSG officer candidates. However, I cannot support Ms. Rauschkolb's candidacy after she helped tie the hands of her own committee.

Again, the most important issue in this election is each candidate's ability to produce results for stu-

dents. The Special Committee produced a strong debate and then compromised it away. Both RSG President and Vice President must act as advocates for the student body. These officers must be able to teach senators to compromise with or oppose Mr. Daughdrill on behalf of the students these senators represent; in this case, the Special Committee acted as Mr. Daughdrill's compromising safety valve.

• I hope to find out at Wednesday's forum each candidate's role in this compromise because it is typical of RSG's historic inability to build upon its successes as the advocate for student concerns. In addition to the Presidential candidates, this question involves the three sophomore candidates for vice president: Ms. Neeta Venepalli, Mr. Jason Dunn, and Mr. Adam Beeler. Relative to these three, the first years did not produce a candidate. In spite of creating and organizing the RSG sponsored "Treat and Feed" collection of canned goods for charity, junior senator Jordan Schniper has apparently chosen not to run for an officer slot.

Mr. Beeler's primary experience

comes from his work on the Special Committee. However, Ms. Venepalli and Mr. Dunn each have more experience than Mr. Beeler.

In addition to their work under Ms. Rauschkolb, Ms. Venepalli has actively sought student opinion in her position as chair of the Diversity Committee, and Mr. Dunn played an important part last year in expanding election reforms.

It should be said, however, that Mr. Dunn's work has been largely procedural; coupled with the debate-producing strengths of Ms. Rauschkolb, the ticket these two have formed leans too heavily on process and seems to neglect product.

• I would love to see a Venepalli-Norcross ticket. Ms. Venepalli's work with both the Special Committee and Diversity Committee gives her more direct experience soliciting student concerns and acting on them than anyone else running, except perhaps Mr. Norcross.

To be fair, when I cast my vote for RSG President, I will be voting against such empty silliness as the "eight valence electrons" (*sic*) that won Mr. Faber the last election for this position. And this year we have

even better reasons to vote for candidates than the fact that their campaigns are not problematically irrelevant.

In conclusion, the three candidates running for RSG President all are capable of more than simply spinning around some nucleus while neglecting the Cabinet. Although I'm all for beer in the Lynx Lair, and the beer proposal does address some important problems created by the alcohol policy, I want a president who will push more important issues than this.

• Moving on to the officer candidates for Honor Council: this body is one of the oldest, most important, and unfortunately most ossified governing bodies of the college. I am endorsing Mr. Eric Johnson because he's the first person I've heard talk about the honor code in terms of educating students. I wish Mr. Johnson were running for President, but he has chosen to oppose Ms. Amy Whigham for the Council's vice-presidency.

I do not yet know enough about either of the two junior class candidates for President, Mr. Chip Lane and Mr. Stephen Hester. Whichever one of the two of them is best able to provide strong assistance to Mr. Johnson's goals will get my vote. Any person who cannot address the Council's increasing lack of relevance ought not to be elected.

• The races for both Publications Commissioner and Social Regulations Commissioner are unopposed. Hair splitting isn't necessary when there aren't any to split. Frankly, I know nothing about Mr. Fallen (the only candidate for SRC), but I do hope the foregone conclusion of his election won't lead to any less initiative on his part.

And as far as initiative goes, Mr. Jonathan Nolen, candidate for Pub Commissioner, has more than most anyone I know. Certainly more than qualified, his somewhat renegade work on the new Pub Board constitution is both a recommending factor and a cautionary one. He'll be taking over the strong, accountable bureaucracy that he helped create. But how does a renegade foster cooperation? Publications have tended to attract editors that publish (or not) with little interaction with the Board or other editors. More importantly, will he continue this year's work to both educate and retain publication staff members?

So I've fired my guns. Hopefully, someone will worry enough about this election to argue with me.

Admitting We Are All A Little Bit Ragged



MARY MCCOY
LITTLE HEMINGWAY

My first encounter with a book called *Ragged Dick* occurred when I was nine years old and nosing around through a shelf of old books in my attic. I smuggled it to school, and showed it to all of my third-grade girlfriends on the playground.

In all of our bountiful third grade knowledge about dicks, ragged or otherwise, we speculated and giggled a lot until Mrs. Coutsolioutsos came and took it away from us.

Imagine my surprise and perverse pre-pubescent nostalgia when I was buying overpriced critical editions for one of my literature classes this semester and realized that we were going to read *Ragged Dick*. When the professor assigned it, her last words before we left class were, "It's the worst book you'll ever read," which made me wonder, "Then why the hell are we reading it?"

I was operating with the theory

that if we could be reading a great book and talking about why it's great, why waste time reading bad books and talking about why they're bad?

After spending a few days talking about the social climate in America, and money and morality, I understood why we were forced to wade through a couple hundred pages of sentimental crap. For just a moment, reflect about the most popular writers of today. I wondered if someday there would be a class offered at Rhodes using the works of John Grisham, Stephen King, and Danielle Steele to figure out what made 20th century Americans tick. Scary.

Apparently Horatio Alger had aspirations of becoming a great writer, but the only thing we remember him for are a bunch of books like *Ragged Dick*, which makes him rather pitiable.

Re-discovering Mr. Alger reminds me of the graffiti my friends and I used to write with Sharpies into the asbestos on the ceiling of our auditorium whenever we set up the lights for a high school theatre pro-

duction. This was some attempt to leave our "legacy," or whatever you can call it when you're eighteen.

One day I was up there, and I saw a pretty little poetic musing written by someone who had graduated and moved on.

Then, right next to it, I saw a limerick which eloquently began, "There once was a cavemen named Dave, who kept a dead whore in his cave...." Ask me if you want to know the rest, but I don't think it can be printed in this tasteful, God-fearing publication.

The significance of all this is that, in retrospect, I remember the "caveman" poems much more vividly than I do anything which is good. I feel bad for the number of times that I've been trying to describe a person to someone else, and I'll use a two sentence anecdote from the Rhodes rumor mill to sum up an individual.

There is something important, however, that can be gathered from these more sordid, lesser-quality aspects of life. One can learn just as much about life in America from Danielle Steele as from William Faulkner, as much about people in

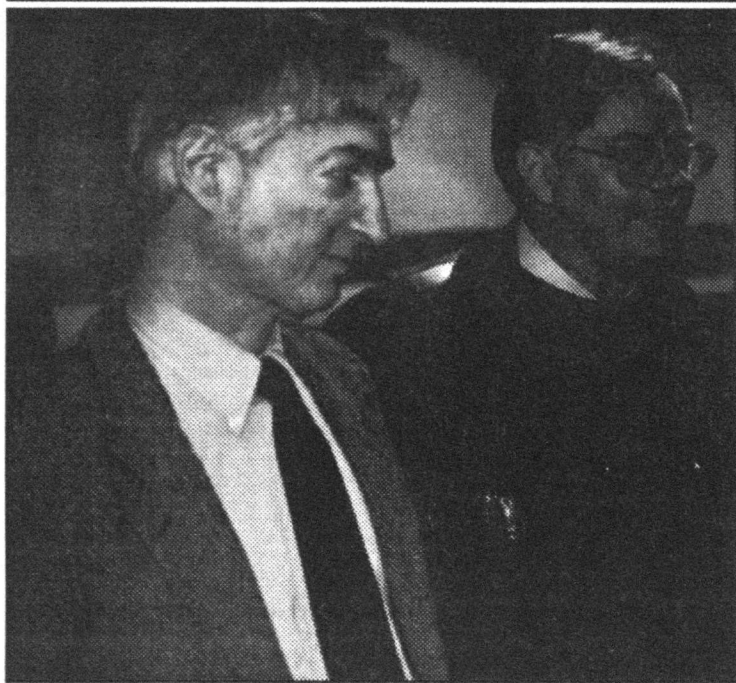
high school from a caveman limerick as from a pretty little poetic musing, as much about Rhodes students from a raunchy pledge name as from a professionally conducted RSG meeting.

And just as there is a reason for studying bad books when there are many good books to choose from, there is a reason for looking at the less savory attributes of Rhodes life. They say just as much about us.

On one hand, great. At least we're human, and not just the products of a huge future doctor/lawyer factory.

On the other hand, we should make sure that the ideas that can be drawn about our character from our actions are things that we can live with. There's nothing wrong with being a little "ragged," if that doesn't involve being pitiable or pathetic.

We have a beautiful campus and great professors and multi-talented students, all of which are a credit to the college; but, like all institutions composed of complex human beings, we have chinks in our armor that we will be remembered for as well.



Enrique Espinosa/Sou'wester
Philip Weinstein, author, and Jim Lanier, Associate Professor of History.

Mid-South Model UN Conference At Rhodes

By Steele Means
Staff Correspondent

The Mid-South Model United Nations Conference was held at Rhodes from February 14th to the 16th. Approximately ten high schools from Tennessee and various bordering states attended the conference. Each school represented one or more of the member countries of the United Nations.

The workings and methods of the separate committees and sections of the United Nations were fully simulated at the conference. Each committee had specific topics to address and attempt to resolve. The issues of this year's conference ranged from women's rights to the need to

place an international ban on land mines.

The faculty advisor of Sidney Lanier High School in Montgomery, Alabama said that all of his students expressed positive sentiment about the conference as a whole and he personally felt that the conference had been a success.

The Rhodes UN club hosts the conference every year and its members take on the responsibility of administering it. Yohann Demel, President of the club, said "there was good debate in the committees and the club did an excellent job overall in running the conference."

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Philip Weinstein Speaks on Race, Faulkner, and Morrison

By Blake Rollins
Staff Correspondent

Former Rhodes Distinguished Visiting English Professor Philip Weinstein returned to Rhodes Thursday to speak on his new book, *What Else But Love? The Ordeal of Race in Faulkner and Morrison*.

The soft-spoken Mr. Weinstein delivered a powerful discourse on race calling from seemingly opposite perspectives, that of the white, southern, male William Faulkner and the northern, black, female Toni Morrison.

Both Nobel Laureates, Faulkner and Morrison believe racial conflict, termed by Weinstein as American culture's "central neurosis," can be amended through love - even when that love proves destructive.

Weinstein initiated his discussion by comparing the different ways students from the South and North interpret the racial undertones of Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury*. His students at Swarthmore perceived the Compson's black maid Delsie as a stereotypical racist of the southern house servant who accepted her subservient role in the family as an indestructible reality.

However, students at Rhodes approached Delsie as a "flesh and blood" woman who understands the racist climate of 1920's Mississippi. Delsie loved her employers even though love brought her no profitable return. Faulkner based Delsie from his personal experience with a maid named Callie. On her gravestone, Faulkner inscribed "Her white children bless her."

Weinstein compared the *Sound and the Fury* to his own experiences growing up in segregated 1950's Memphis. As was the fashion, Weinstein's family hired a black maid named Bannie, who became the mother figure in Weinstein's life. While knowing nothing of her life outside his

home, Weinstein adored Bannie. She taught the children ethical rather than racial lessons. In loving Bannie without knowing her, Weinstein believes he only promoted the separation of the races.

Bannie requested that Weinstein "put on her red shoes" when she died. Only later did Weinstein discover the significance of red shoes meant that the one who wears the "red shoes" embodies the gospel for all to see.

Toni Morrison's literature entangles itself in the issue of race, often describing the dilemma of black manhood, history and traditions.

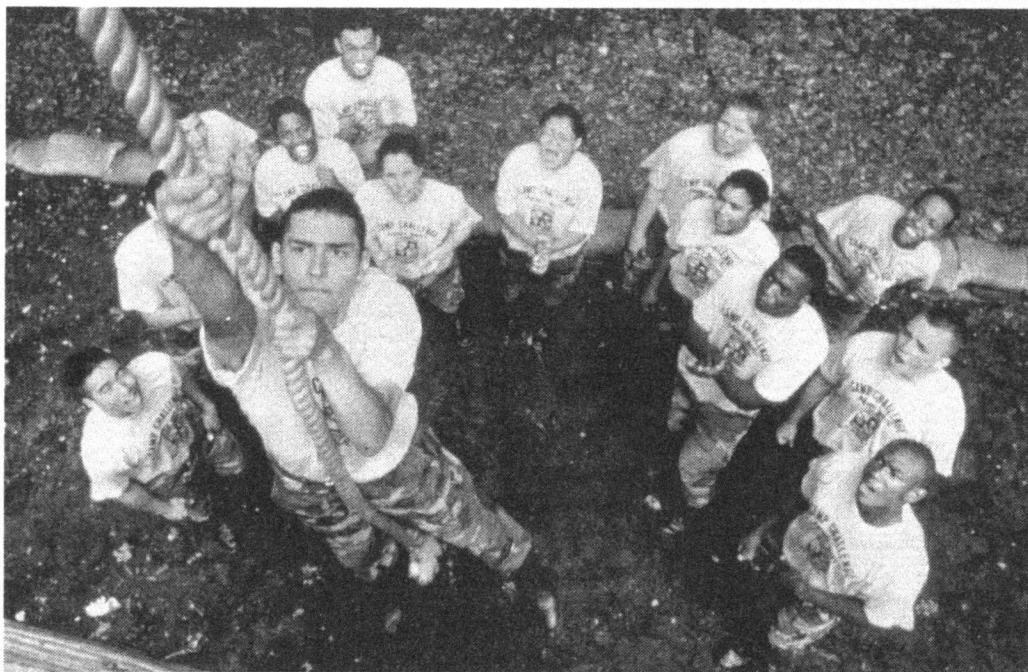
In *Song of Solomon*, Morrison presents the violent image of gutting and skinning a bobcat to illustrate the trapped nature and violent outcome of racial hatred. Yet strangely the phrase "What else but love?" reappears throughout the description.

Weinstein suggests that only love can prevent the outcome of racial violence. He also suggested that violence and death punctuated by the search should not end the quest for love.

Weinstein asks in his book, "How can love guide a politics of racial violence? The answer is that it must: what else could justify that violence, give it a human shape?"

He compares teaching Morrison and Faulkner to young minds to touching a membrane. When new ideas touch the membrane, it is often permanently altered rather than being destroyed or invaded.

Perhaps after coming into contact with Morrison in her reclamation of black self and Faulkner's infatuation on the Southern Family and heritage, Weinstein proclaims the student might "participate in the work of bridging (not erasing) those differences, helping the different races and genders to speak to each other."



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Meet The Candidates: Officer Election, Friday, Feb. 21

RSG PRESIDENT DAMON NORCROSS, '98

Career Highlights:

- Bonner Scholar (Bonner leadership team)
- Chair, inaugural Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity
- Rhodes Student Government Vice President
- Charged the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Publications
- Charged the Ad Hoc Committee on the Purpose Statement
- Charged the second Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity chaired by Neeta Venepalli

Personal Statement:

"Some people look at the way the world is and ask, 'Why?' but I dream about the way the world could be and ask, 'Why not?'"

—Robert Kennedy

This quote sums up my desire to have the honor of calling myself the next President of the Rhodes Student Government. Many students ask themselves why things cannot be implemented, they ask "Why Not?" I believe it is the obligation of the President, through a complete effort of RSG, to answer this question with "Here it is." I believe that my vision for the President of RSG, one dictated by the desires of indi-



vidual students, is the vision which has the greatest chance of meeting the qualifications of President which are:

**ASK THE TOUGH QUESTIONS:
CANDIDATE FORUM, TONIGHT AT 7
FRAZIER JELKE**

vidual students, is the vision which has the greatest chance of meeting the qualifications of President which are:

- serve as the chief spokesperson of the Student Body.
- have the authority to ensure the enactment of the resolutions of the Senate.
- vested with the power to veto all actions of the Senate.
- to provide for the Student welfare
- to advance Student representation within the College Community

—Rhodes Student Government Constitution, Adopted 1995

KRISTEN RAUSCHKOLB, '98

Biography and Qualifications:

My name is Kristen Rauschkolb, and I am a junior international studies major/German minor from Montgomery, Ala. I would like to serve as your Rhodes Student Government President for the 1997-98 school year. Serving on RSG for three years, I have watched the organization evolve. I have served under three excellent presidents, and have observed their strengths in leading the RSG. Now that we have settled into our new role, I think it is time for a new visionary—and I am that person. I

am running because I believe I have the qualifications of an RSG President that can change the way students and the administration view this body.

The President of RSG serves as the students' primary liaison to the administration, and is often called upon to articulate the sentiments of the students to the administration and the Board of Trustees. I firmly believe that students could rest comfortably knowing I am their chief spokesperson. As Chair of the RSG Special Committee on the Purpose Statement, I was called upon to meet regularly with administrators, to make speeches and statements on the sentiments of the students, and to organize forums fostering student dialogue.

The duties of the RSG President also include the chairing of the President's Cabinet and student membership on the Board of Trustees. I have served as both the Publicity Coordinator and the Executive Secretary on the RSG Cabinet for the past three years, and am very familiar with the duties of the Cabinet. I currently serve as a student member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board of Trustees, and I realize that vocal and concerned students can have a profound impact on their deliberations.

Reasons for Running:

The dialogue surrounding the amendment to Rhodes' Purpose coupled with the remarks of Trustee P. K. Seidman left students with many questions. If elected, I will firmly advocate the establishment of an RSG committee to investigate the ambiguous role of student and administration interaction.

The RSG Constitution vests the body with "the power to make studies, reports, and recommendations advocating student rights, needs, and interests to the college community, administration, Board of Trustees, and the public," but in order to do so, we must truly represent the students. The rigid rules of parliamentary procedure tend to discourage student attendance at RSG meetings. For that reason, I advocate a revision of meeting procedures that includes less formal rules of procedure and a brief RSG Rap Session at the beginning of meetings dedicated to addressing the concerns of students in the audience.

I am running for RSG President with Vice Presidential candidate Jason Dunn, as his leadership and unparalleled vision for RSG complement my leadership abilities and organizational skills. Our ability to work together coupled with the congruency of our platform is a guarantee to the students that we will work as a team to accomplish the aforementioned goals. I will actively seek the ideas of all students by promoting forums, a more inviting RSG meeting atmosphere, a biweekly chat-table in the Rat to foster dialogue with all students, and periodic hall/commuter meetings.

RSG VICE PRESIDENT

ADAM BEELER, '99



I am a sophomore from Franklin, TN. I was one of the Freshman Representatives on SRC last year and have served as a Sophomore Senator on RSG since then. As a Senator, I have been a member of the Student Life Committee and served on the Special Committee on the

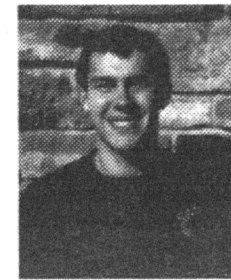
Purpose Statement. Also at Rhodes, I have been a captain of a Saferides team and a Peer Assistant, and am a member of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity.

The reasons that I am running for Vice President are simple. I am a responsible and capable candidate. I believe, if given the chance, I will be able to serve the student body well individually, and by having open communications with the rest of the RSG. I am ready and willing to listen to opinions from other students and, in turn, do whatever I can to act on those opinions. Thank you for your consideration.

JASON DUNN, '99

Biography and Qualifications:

I am currently a sophomore Economics and Business major. My interest in Student Government originated in high school, where I served four years with a senior position as President. Further, Student Government has become an integral part of my life here at Rhodes. I have served on the RSG now for two years, presently serving as senator and Student Life Standing Committee Chair. My accomplishments include work which led to passage of reform of the current housing selection process, student influence of the Purpose Statement of Rhodes, and significant



progress with regard to the awareness of sensitive gender relations issues on campus.

Reasons for Running:

I want to be Vice President of Rhodes Student Government for several reasons. I would like to further develop and utilize my organizational and leadership skills to continue with the proactive transformation of Rhodes Student Government into a more truly representative body of the students. I want to be able to utilize the experience of serving under two unique and able Presidents, and, finally, with this reform I want to contribute to the increased influence of the student voice at Rhodes. These are my reasons for running, and, they also are my reasons for wanting to serve as Vice President under the leadership of Presidential Candidate Kristen Rauschkolb. With her added experience and the congruency of our goals, I believe we would be able to serve our positions effectively with energy, creativity, and an open mind.

NEETA VENEPALLI, '99

Biography:

Born: Hyderabad, India

From: Fairport, New York

Passions: social justice and individual empowerment, the writings of Jonathon Kozol and Antoine de St. Exupery, Martin Short, the Old Power Rangers

Major: biochemistry & sociology

List of Qualifications:

- RAB representative 1995-1996
- Ad Hoc Diversity Committee Member 1995-1996
- RSG senator 1996-1997
- ARO tour guide 1996-1997
- Peer Assistant 1996-1997
- columnist for *The Sou'wester* 1996-1997
- student delegate for 1996 National Civil Rights Museum Conference on Freedom
- student delegate for Martin Luther King forum 1997

Ad Hoc Diversity Committee Chair 1996-1997

- (1) currently evaluating minority student retention rates at Rhodes College for last decade
- (2) currently rewriting Non-Discrimination Statement for Rhodes College
- (3) development of an information network be-

See CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES, Page 6

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Candidate Biographies For Informed Voting On Friday

Continued From Page 5

⇒ NEETA VENEPALLI

tween 50 peer colleges as a resource for new ideas, contacts, college to college comparison studies

Bridges to Diversity Townhouse 1996-1997

(1) administered Diversity Survey evaluating status of diversity within Rhodes Community

(2) established Student Diversity Events Calendar to increase student access to diverse programming

Reasons for Running:

Experience is significant not in itself but as an indicator of individual passion, and most importantly, as potential for self-development. My cumulative experience at Rhodes has contributed to my current ideals of leadership, my vision for RSG, and most importantly, for Rhodes.



What exactly do I want to see emerge from the Rhodes Community? First and foremost, I want to increase individual student empowerment and collective student presence. RSG exists to serve as an advocate for individual student empowerment, as reflected in every student's ability for self-determination. Do the majority of students on our campus, excluding those in elected positions, feel empowered? Do they feel their voice will be heard in determining campus policies, social and academic and administrative? My experience tells me plainly that the answer is a resounding No. RSG has little relevance for the electorates it attempts to represent. Rather than frank and candid dialog, confusion, lack of communication, alienation characterize our relationship. Accordingly, I suggest a redefinition of the roles of both students and their elected officials, a realization that the power of self-governance derives more from the student electorate than the positions to which students are elected. Tangibly, I want students to demand more accountability from their elected officials, demand that their voices be heard on more than just RSG paraphernalia, and RSG to reciprocate by shifting the balance of power from positions to people. RSG must attempt less to be 'inclusive' and more to be genuinely expansive, focusing on the quality of student-student interaction as well as the quantity. How much of our student apathy is due to lack of effective communication? The commitment to self-governance requires much more than the occasional election and student poll, from both the student and their elected representative, and ultimately, my goal is to transform this commitment from the abstract to the tangible.

HONOR COUNCIL

PRESIDENT

STEPHEN HESTER, '98

Biographical Information:

- Born June 26, 1976 in Murfreesboro, TN
- Attended the Webb School in Bell Buckle, TN

- Member First United Methodist Church, Murfreesboro

Qualifications:

- Elected in '94 as Freshman Rep.
- Elected in '95 as Sophomore Rep.
- Elected in '96 as Vice President

Reasons for Running:

I feel that through my three years on the Honor Council I have gained the experience



that is required to make an effective President. I want to serve in this capacity for two primary reasons. First, my father was President of his Honor Council when he was in school, so I have grown up around the concept of an Honor Code and its importance in maintaining the integrity of a community. Secondly, I feel that this is one of the primary means by which I can serve my college. By working to ensure the success of the Honor Code I hope to strengthen a tradition which creates trust among both faculty and students.

ROBERT C. "CHIP" LANE, '98

I know that many of you are probably looking at these personal statements and saying to yourselves, "What are all these people talking about, and why should I bother reading them?" I am writing this so that those of you who don't know me can get a better feeling of the kind of person I am. The position I am seeking is Honor Council President. This position requires more from the individual than many other offices at Rhodes. I have spoken with the past three Honor Council Presidents, and have inquired about how difficult it is to be in charge of this organization. How much of your time does it



require? The answer really did not shock me. All three have said, "It is much work, and if you desire the position someday, be prepared to devote many hours to it." I listened to them and have made several sacrifices already so that if I am elected, I will be able to run the Council more efficiently. I am confident that I can run this Council well and I believe I have the experience to do so.

I have been a member of the Honor Council since the spring term of my Freshman year. Since that time, I have played the roles of an investigator, advisor, obviously a voting member, and have been called in to help with an appeal. These are basically all the roles an Honor Council member can perform. I have a good working and non-working relationship with the present Council, as well as many professors and deans. Perhaps one of the most important factors of the presidential position, is to consider how approachable this person is. I have lived on campus every year, and in that time I have made many friends, and have become extremely involved. Because of my involvement as an ARO member and a Rhodes

Ambassador, I feel that students and faculty alike will be able to approach me. Being familiar with the appeals process is another important factor in deciding the president. As I said, I have been involved in an appeal, and have become familiar with the way that process works. The requirements of the president are many, but I know that I am more that qualified to handle the responsibility.

The Honor Council has recently increased its education of the Honor Code, and I plan on increasing it even more. The Rat is presently the main concern. There have been numerous problems in the Rat that need attending to. I will do my best to eradicate this problem, but I will not forget the other aspects of the Honor Code. Plagiarism, cheating, and stealing are not tolerated on this campus, and with greater education, these problems can be lessened. I will be able to do all of this if I am given the chance. I urge you to cast your ballots well and vote for the candidate with the drive, determination and knowledge. Good luck to the other candidates.

HONOR COUNCIL

VICE PRESIDENT

ERIC JOHNSON, '99

Provocative leadership. To preserve the effectiveness of the Honor Council, this approach must be taken. I do think that the council makes just decisions. However, we need to take on a much greater level of responsibility.



Right now the Council needs to address some fundamental questions. For example, does the Honor Code simply exist in order to provide an environment of trust, allowing students to internalize integrity? How can Council members truly represent their constituents when no medium exists for interaction between the Council and the campus? Also, why is it that representatives are not directly accountable to their class? Why is there so much confusion over what actually constitutes an Honor Code violation? Once questions such as these are addressed, steps may be taken to alleviate the problems. The end result will be the proactive prevention of violations, rather than dealing with infractions after they have occurred.

My primary goal is to address the current issues hindering the effectiveness of the Honor Code. An apparent disrespect for the Code coupled with the topics mentioned above are the central problems that I will work to resolve. No official mechanism currently exists to formally and comprehensively address Honor Council issues. To amend this lack of structure, I would like to organize individual committees, similar to an RSG Ad Hoc committee, to focus on specific problems. The committee would be chaired by a Council representative, and be made up of non-Council students and possibly a faculty member. A committee such as this would prove advantageous since a diversity of input would produce a more comprehensive solution. As Vice President, I will have the means to implement and administer these changes.

In order to execute such a complex task,

a proactive leader is vital. I have the necessary qualities for such a responsibility. I am ethical, responsible, diligent, assertive and practical. My experience as an Honor Council representative, RSG Ad Hoc committee member, and campus leader have cultivated these traits. These qualities combined with my vision and passion make me the best candidate. As your Vice President, I will strengthen the spirit of the Honor Code rather than perpetuate the evident state of apathy.

AMY S. WHIGHAM, '99

Rhodes College is different from other college campuses. Here, there is a strong sense of trust and community that is seen in both the academic and the social setting. Our professors trust us in assigning take home examinations and giving un-proctored finals. We leave things in the Rat or on tables in the library and feel confident that other students will not bother them. This



sense of community is due to the values of honor, trust, and integrity that the Honor System has instilled in our students. I feel that the Honor Code is essential. It gives us more responsibilities as Rhodes students, yet more freedoms as well. By living within the Honor System, we are able to trust and respect each other and have earned the trust and respect of our faculty. I would like to ensure that these privileges and freedoms are upheld on campus.

I have served on the Honor Council for the last year and have functioned in the various roles of the Council members. I am familiar with the various duties and processes of the Honor Council and would like the opportunity to have a more active role on the Council. I am also involved with other campus groups, such as Kappa Delta Sorority, Habitat for Humanity, ARO, TexMex, Peer Assistants, and the Health Professions Society. I am a very dedicated and reliable person and am willing to devote myself to better educating the student body about the Honor System and ensuring its effectiveness.

The main roles of the Vice President include overseeing a yearly evaluation of the Honor Council Constitution, acting as a substitute for the President when necessary, and functioning as a voting member. I feel confident in my abilities to assume these roles. This past year, there have been many improvements to clarify certain points in the Constitution and to educate the student body about the seriousness and implications of the Honor Code. I also have more ideas

to increase the students' comprehension of the aspects of the Honor System. In running for the position of the Vice President of the Honor Council, I hope to work with the other members of the Council to increase the understanding of the student body and the effectiveness of the Honor System.

SRC PRESIDENT

STUART FALLEN, '99

I think that my experiences on SRC, and on similar councils at my high school make me a good candidate.



I believe that I would do a good job remaining unbiased and keeping the Council in order.

PUBLICATIONS

COMMISSIONER

JONATHAN D. NOLEN, '98



Experience

Publications:
Two years experience on Publications Board
Editor of *Cereal Info* '95-'96
Staff Member of *The Southwestern Review* 1994-present

Other:

Secretary of the Honor Council, 1996-present
Activities Board '95-'96

Qualifications

Integral in drafting the new Publications Board Constitution
Acted as Systems Administrator for the Pub Center computer network, 1994-present

Objective

To increase the quality, reliability, and respect of the student publications on campus.

Editor's Note: Not all candidates submitted biographies; some races may include more candidates than are listed here.

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Our Country's Good Displays Excellent Cast and Script

By Henry Murphy
Associate Editor

The selection of Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Our Country's Good* (from the renowned Thomas Kenneally's book, *The Playmaker*) was a stroke of high theatrical intuition on the part of the McCoy's play selection committee.

The fact-based story of several English convicts, sentenced to serve in Australia, taking part in a theatrical production directed by an officer in the British army, turns into an original mixture of symbolism and naturalism.

David Jilg's set is economical but not sparse or limiting. The actors march over a platform cut into the shape of Australia, the whole of its surface painted as the British flag - a flag with scuffed, grimy colors.

Aged-looking barrels and seemingly useless structures of wood point

out, as stated by lighting designer Laura Canon, the "flotsam and jetsam" of an imperialist invasion. Lighting, rather than elaborate stage constructions, helps convey the emotional timbre of most scenes. The focus starts, and remains, on the people in the story.

The opening scene has a theatrical but forceful energy: Brandon Barr, speared in a single beam of light, screams as he is whipped by a British officer. In the shadows surrounding him, shapes of prisoners roll and moan. Ron Newlin growls out a monologue that is barely intelligible above Barr's screams.

The scene is done in short order; the rest of the play avoids such aggressive techniques, but it is a smart opening move.

The plot itself, as mentioned above, is intriguing. The commander of the troops at the Australia settlement is one of the followers of the

Enlightenment that flourished during the play's time period. He quotes Rousseau and likes the idea of letting the prisoners put on a play.

The argument boils down to punish vs. rehabilitate. The struggle between the ideologies continues throughout the play; the story is harrowing in its depiction of savagery under the guise of civilized "correction." And the idea swinging underneath the story, that theatre has the power to change its society, and particularly the outcasts of that society, is just as subversive today as it was back then.

All this talk may make the play sound top-heavy, but there's no worry of that. Jones lets the script work itself out through the sets and the dialogue - when appropriate.

He plays to the more pragmatic faces of the cast, the element of individuals within the ensemble. He doesn't let the script drive him.

Matt Nelson, as the officer directing the production, handles a large part fairly well. His accent holds up, and he plays well to an audience without becoming overly stagey. Ben Houston is much livelier here than he was in last year's *Medea*. His convincing Irish brogue and nervous but gregarious manner provide him with more than one scene-stealing, hilarious speech. He also keeps it up through out the show.

Melissa Anderson, as Mary, once again displays her acting talent with a tender portrayal of a woman trying to regain her self-respect. She makes the battle against her conditions and her inner demons moving and funny. Elizabeth Wells, as Mary's best friend, also lights up the stage again. Remember her in *The House of Bernarda Alba*? She stood out in that show with her natu-

ristic melancholy and a witty weariness, two qualities she works even better here. Her accent and sometimes her humor are slightly over-deliberate, but these are small faults compared to the work she does.

Newlin and Barr are both hectic (Barr in particular) but entertaining, and Newlin hits a meaty part as hard as he can.

The cast in general is excellent. This production features some of the most enjoyable ensemble acting (especially among the British officers) to be seen in the McCoy in recent years.

Particularly noteworthy are Brady Potts, as a drunken and incomprehensible Scotsman; Chris Luter, once again investing the bad guy with plenty of baaaaddness; and Darryl Brown, solid and convincing as the French-speaking Malagasy slave (if you're lucky, you'll get a full view of his fine stomach after a fall).

Meeting Of King And Malcolm X Provokes Thought

By Mary McCoy
Staff Correspondent

Though the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X were both influential figures in the African-Americans civil rights movement the two only met once, briefly, and exchanged only a few words.

In honor of Black History Month, the Black Student Association and Rhodes

Activities Board co-sponsored the theatrical production, *The Meeting*, by Jeff Stetson, which speculates what might have happened if the two had ever talked in depth given their divergent views regarding activism. The production was performed by the Kuumba Players from Boston in Hardie Auditorium on February 11.

The imagined "meeting" takes place in a shabby hotel room in Harlem in February, 1965—the day after Malcolm

X's house is bombed and shortly before his assassination. Malcolm X invites Martin Luther King to his hotel room, much to the dismay of his bodyguard, Rashad, who cannot imagine why he would possibly want to talk to King.

Malcolm X submits the premise that it is no wonder that King received the Nobel Peace Prize when King's ideas are easily able to be accepted by whites without any sense of moral obligation.

A motif of struggle carries throughout the piece, wherein the two men arm wrestle; first, Malcolm X wins, then Martin Luther King wins. When each man argues that he let the other win, they compete a third time, and, almost predictably, no one wins.

Although there is hostility between the two men, there is also the bond of a common cause and humanity.

"The Meeting" examines "both the public and private lives [of King and Malcolm X]: the clash of ideas and tactics for the advancement of freedom, but also the humanity of two devout men, loving fathers and husbands, and leaders willing to lay down their lives for the cause of justice."

Soon after King arrives, the two engage in heated debate. Malcolm X quotes directly from King's speeches, which seem to him to be advocating black submission to white violence.

"The Meeting" portrays Malcolm X in a very different light than that in which he is usually seen. Typically, Martin Luther King receives greater and more sympathetic attention, but here King appears to be almost helpless against Malcolm X's convincing arguments.



Photo By Enrique Espinosa/Sou'wester

Myatt-Davis Exhibit Opens Friday In Clough-Hanson

By Sara Hopp
Staff Correspondent

The next exhibit in Clough-Hanson Gallery will feature two artists who teach in Memphis: Alonzo Davis, Dean of Memphis College of Art, and Greely Myatt, associate professor of art at University of Memphis.

Davis's paintings are inspired by quilts, blankets, hides, clotheslines and indigenous textiles. Working in series, such as the Blanket series in which he has been involved since 1980, Davis metaphorically weaves the fabric of his life experiences.

Painting on canvas and fabric, Davis then cuts and weaves his artworks, often painting again on the newly created surface.

Experimenting with how the resulting works are hung, Davis rejects conventional framing techniques, using instead bungee cords of painted dowels to suspend the images. The end result is that the work has a great immediacy, and the craft involved is emphasized.

Among Myatt's pieces will

be an oval hooked rug made out of mop and broom handles. Mimicking the braided rugs so often associated with grandmothers, the 5x10 ft. spiral rug will be constructed out of pieces cut from multicolored handles.

Nearby will be a whip handle carved into the smoothed top surface of a rough alabaster rock. The whip itself will be cast in bronze.

Both pieces speak of Myatt's fascination with materials and his ongoing interest in sculptors such as Michelangelo and Brancusi, as well as his affinity for Southern folk crafts.

Davis is currently completing two commissions, including a mural for the new Wolfchase Galleria. Myatt's sculpture *Good Morning* was recently installed at the Hartford, TN Welcome Center.

An opening reception will kick-off the exhibit on Friday, Feb. 21 from 5-7 p.m. Also, the artists will be giving an open lecture on Feb. 27 at 4:15 in Blount Auditorium.

Lynx Players Excited About Baseball Season

By Matt Beck
Staff Correspondent

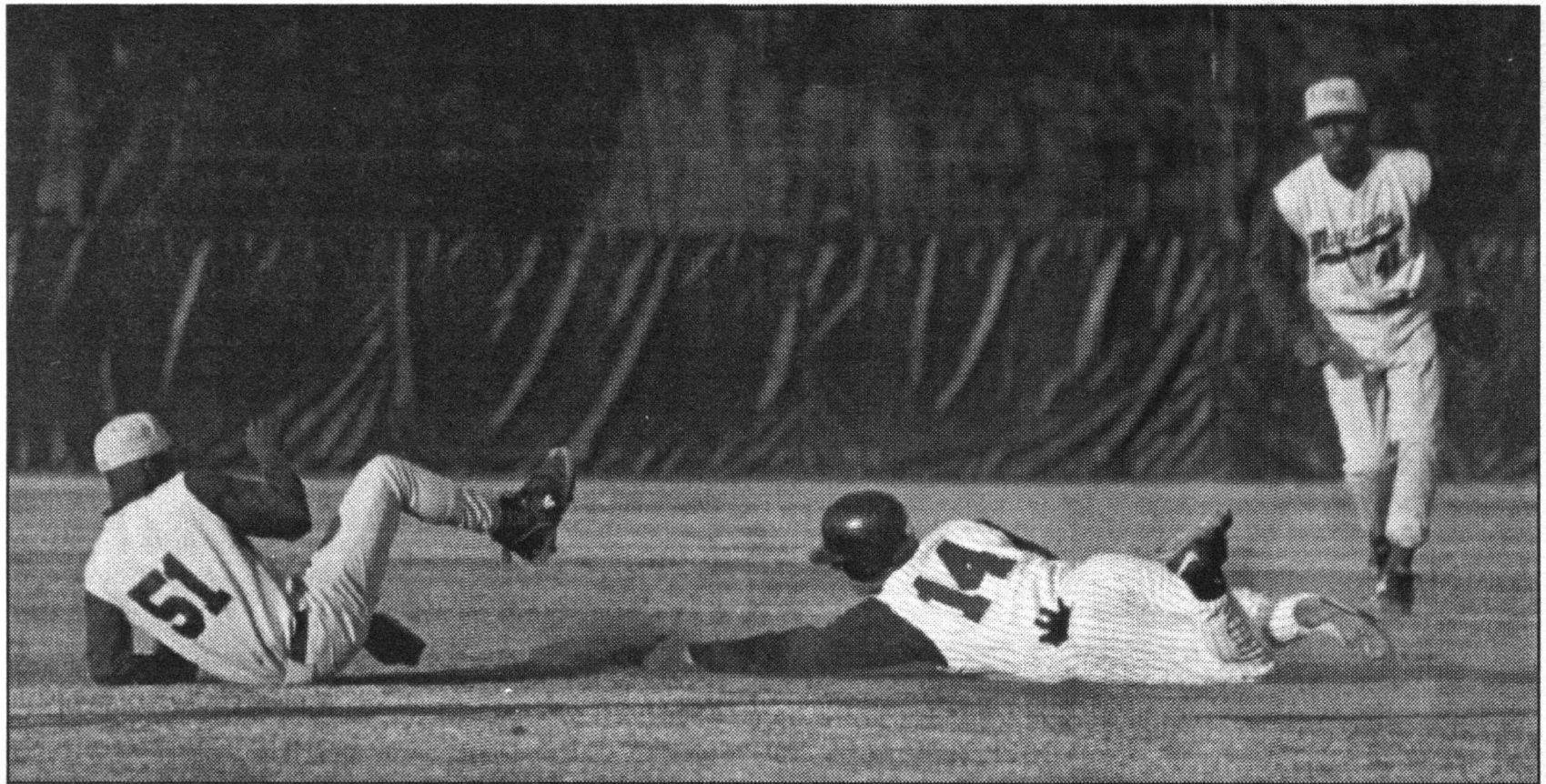
"The Running Lynx are back!"

This quote by senior Zac Ives sums up the excitement of the Rhodes Lynx baseball team. Following an off year, the Lynx are ready to prove themselves this season.

There is a lot to be excited about, too. The baseball team comes out with a fresh look this season including twelve new freshmen and a deeper pitching staff.

The Lynx have eight new starting pitchers as well as junior Andy Cates and freshman Morgan Wintermeyer in the bullpen.

Junior standout Chris Valas (short stop, pitcher) says, "The coaches (Jim Elgin and Alan Reynolds) are working us hard, and are dedicated to giving us a chance to compete in the SCAC



Ives steals second against LeMoyne Owen College during the second inning.

Photo by Enrique Espinosa/Sou'wester

tournament."

It will be a rocky road, though, as the Lynx have to face many tough opponents including conference foes Southwestern and Trinity. Games against non-conference competition including Illinois Wesleyan and 1994 national champions Wisconsin-OshKosh

will be tough as well.

Although the team only has two returning seniors, Ives and Chuck Ellingsworth, the players believe this team is better than last year's.

One major reason for their confidence is the new speed freshman have brought to the team.

Ellingsworth is "excited about the new talent."

Rhodes' ballpark is larger than most ballparks in the SCAC, which accentuates the speed advantage.

One of the new players this season who is expected to make a large contribution to the team is second year transfer Patrick Finley (center field). He believes that this is a "good team," and says, "all we have to do is perform."

Another factor the team is anxious about is the crowd support. The fans haven't packed the stands

in quite a while, and Valas says, "We would appreciate support from the student body. It is much more fun for us to play while people are in the stands."

The Lynx began their season on Monday, February 17 at noon in a double header against LeMoyne Owen College.

"It is a big game for us and we want to get the season started off right," says Cates.

The team is excited and is hoping everyone will show up for this home opener.

Women's Basketball Bounces Back: On Winning Streak

By Dave Speas
Staff Correspondent

While the eyes of most Rhodes sports fans are on the men's basketball team, the women's team has quietly won seven of their last eight. In that span they have put together a six game winning streak.

After a disappointing 2-10 start to the season, the Lynx have rebounded to raise their record to 9-11 overall and 7-3 in the SCAC.

It was not without effort that the women turned things around. Head Coach Lori McConnell attributes the turnaround to a "strong bond that formed among the girls over the break."

Assistant Coach Jon Gravois feels that two things happened at

once to change the direction of the team's play. "We believed we could work harder than the other teams," he said, "and the girls quit believing what people were saying and realized that they are a darn good group of ballplayers who can compete with anyone in the nation."

While coming together very well as a unit, Rhodes' on the court performance has especially improved.

Anyone associated with the team will tell you that hard-nosed, in-your-face defense is the key to their success.

When asked about the turnaround, senior co-captain Ginnie Roberts was quick to answer, "It's because of our improved defense."

Since the Christmas break, the Lynx have earned honors as the conference leaders in scoring, defense, turnover margin, and opponent's shooting percentage. Defense is the key to winning basketball games, but a team must also be able to put the ball in the hole.

Offensively, the Lynx are led by senior Carissa Lucas. Lucas' 24.0 PPG (points per game) currently ranks her third in the nation in scoring. In addition to Lucas, anyone on the team is capable of stepping up and making big shots. As a team Rhodes is averaging 70.8 PPG (3rd in the SCAC).

This past weekend Rhodes traveled to Hendrix, the current conference leader, to try and keep their winning streak alive.

Winning Streak Ends for Lady Lynx

By Brendan Minihan
Sports Editor

The women's basketball's winning streak came to an end Saturday in their 78-69 loss to conference leader Hendrix (10-0) in Conway, Ar.

The women were confident going into the game but were also aware that they were up against some tough competition. Senior Carissa Lucas was the high scorer for the Lynx with 30 points, including 12 field goals and one three-pointer.

Junior Kate Maffei scored 17 points, including two three-pointers, and Kristin Reich scored nine points,

all of which were three-pointers.

"We need to put things together in the first and second halves and play a complete game," says Maffei.

The team is confident about the rest of the season.

"We were seeded as third from last," says Senior Ginnie Roberts, "and we have a shot at second in the conference. I'm very enthusiastic about our success this season."

The Lynx play Trinity at home on Friday.

 ^{THE} SOU'WESTER
Mardi Gras '97
a "ret-throw-spective"



*Text by Allen Boudreaux
Photos by Enrique Espinosa*

Photo Essay

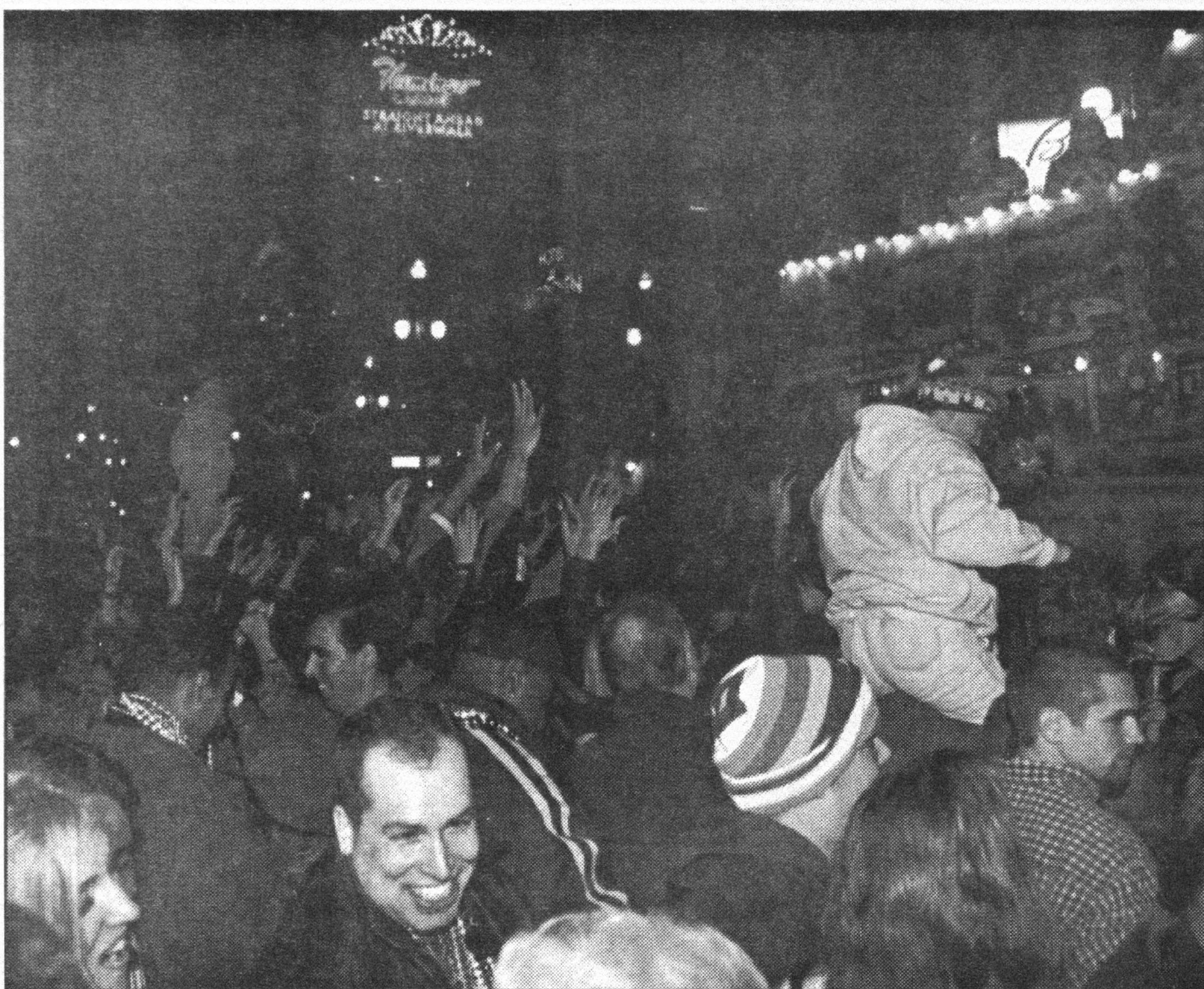
Wednesday, February 19, 1996

THE
SOU'WESTER

Special Insert Page 2

It was no surprise to see near-empty classrooms at Rhodes on the days leading up to Tuesday, February 19th. That was because Memphis happens to be only 400 short miles from "the greatest free show on earth" - Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

Using some local connections, the Sou'wester was able to get an inside look at the celebration, and so we present this Mardi Gras '97 "ret-throw-spective" of some of the more remarkable sights you may have seen, and some you probably haven't.



Mardi Gras is a celebration evolved from various Christian and pagan festivals, which exists in many cultures around the world. The New Orleans tradition of parades and floats (not to mention debauchery and vice) evolved in the early 19th century.

The modern day Mardi Gras season is celebrated in New Orleans for the two weeks preceding Fat Tuesday, the day before the beginning of the Catholic season of Lent. During that time, organizations known as "krewes" put on parades in which masked riders on elaborate papier-mache floats throw plastic beads, cups, and aluminum coins called doubloons to bystanding crowds.

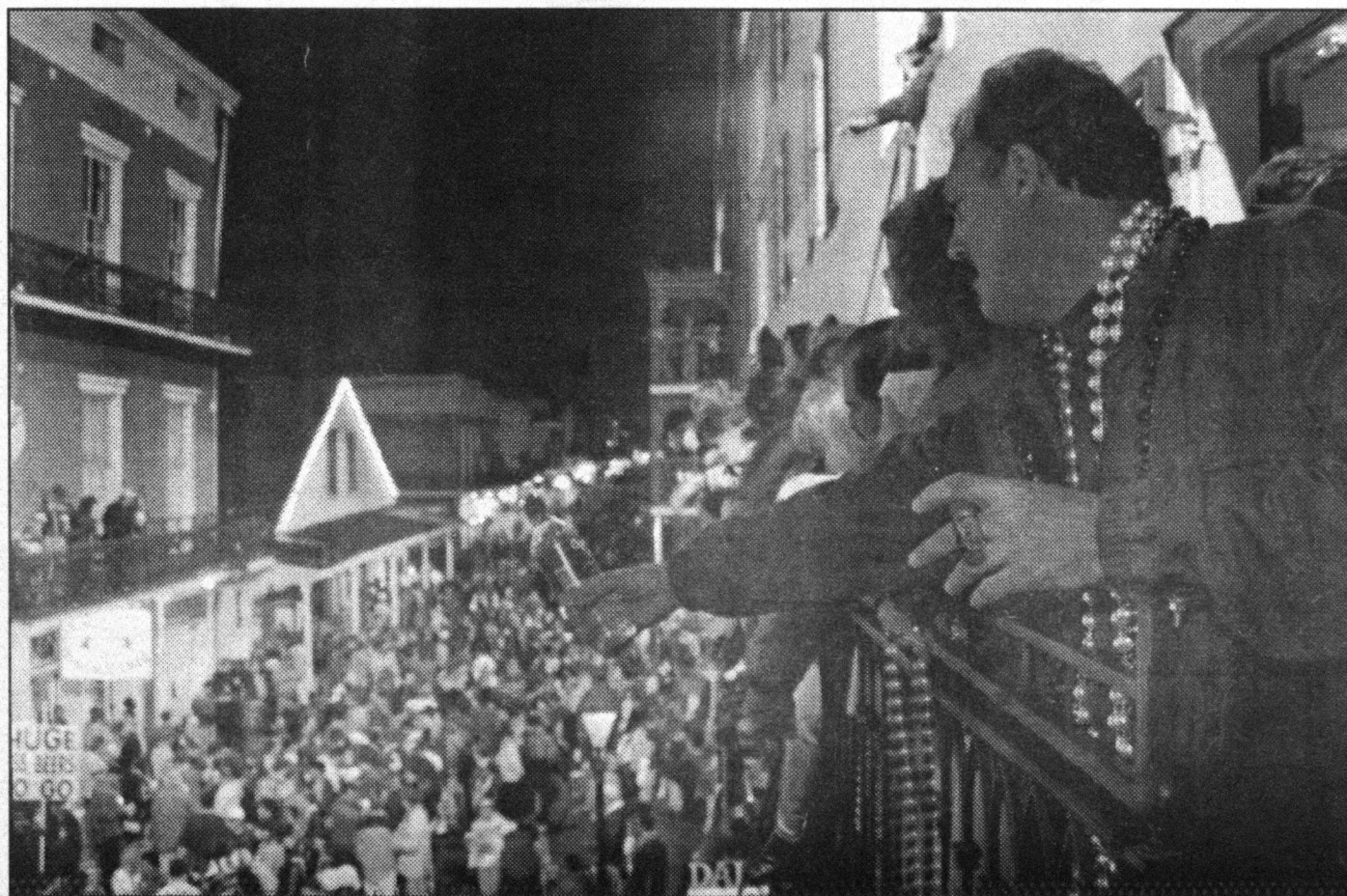
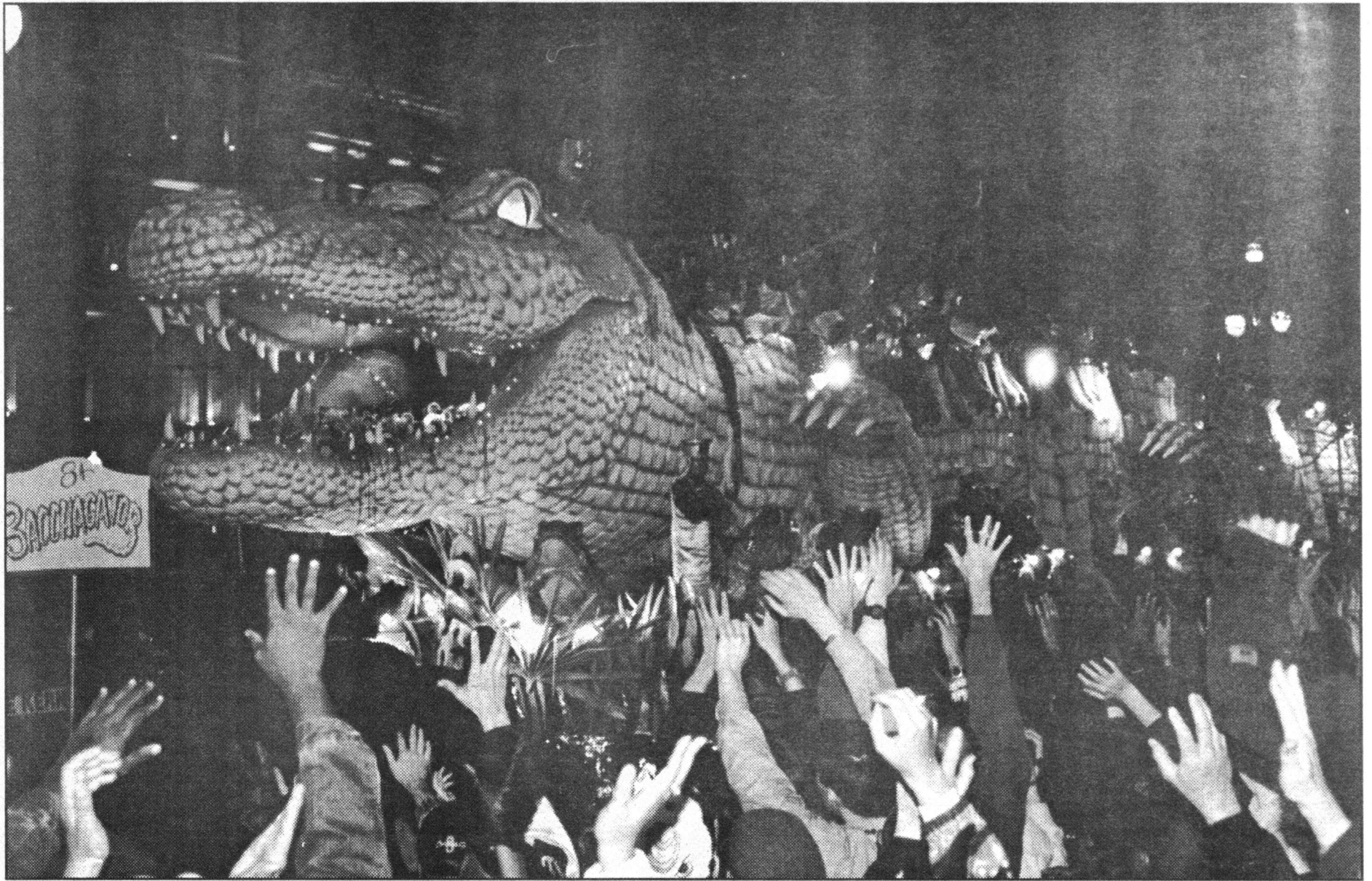
Although Mardi Gras is most often associated with the drunken antics of the throngs which crowd the French Quarter during the weekend before Fat Tuesday, locals know it as a much more family oriented holiday season which is in most cases fun and safe for kids, as at left.

Photo Essay

Wednesday, February 19, 1996

THE
SOU'WESTER

Special Insert Page 3



More familiar to most are major parades such as Bacchus, whose superfloat the "Bacchagator" is pictured above. The Krewes of Bacchus, Endymion and Rex have the biggest parades and draw the largest crowds.

Except, that is, for the crowds in the French Quarter. On the left, people with balcony seats to Bourbon Street dangle beads and trinkets to solicit extraordinary views from the crowd below.

Photo Essay

Special Insert Page 4

THE
SOU'WESTER

Wednesday, February 19, 1996



The Black Mardi Gras Indian tradition is one of the lesser known aspects of the Fat Tuesday celebration. For as long as there has been a Mardi Gras in New Orleans, many African-American citizens have taken part in the celebration masked in stylized Native American garb.

The exact origins of this tradition are not clear, but it seems certain that it originated as a gesture of unity among the disenfranchised populations of the area. Today, the Black Mardi Gras Indians are neighborhood organizations which march in many of the major parades.

On Mardi Gras day, the Black Mardi Gras Indian organizations compete against one another to determine which group's ritual costumes, chants and dances are the best that year. Preparations for these contests can be year-long and very costly, requiring ornately designed homemade costumery.

Here, a 'tribe' prepares to march in the Endymion parade on the Saturday before Mardi Gras.

Fat Tuesday '97 is gone, but the greatest thing about Mardi Gras is that it happens every year! See you in New Orleans in 1998!

