

Editorial, The Gleam, Sept. 2, 1983, p. 2

First Issue

For the second year, The Gleam has been printed before the students arrive on campus. No, it is not a mistake re-committed, but an early issue for orientation. It is also an issue for returning students to see who is editing The Gleam this year (probably much to their chagrin.) For The Gleam staff, it gives us the summer to find interesting articles to fill up space instead of doing it the first week that classes begin.

Most important, the early issue is a way for The Gleam editors to advertise for staff writers. So, if you want to make The Gleam truly a student newspaper, or at least a newspaper with a staff offering different viewpoints vis-a-vis the editor (or other editors), come on board!

Censorship

“Student-newspapers in junior and senior high schools and even in colleges are regularly censored when daring to treat controversial topics.”

—Karen DeWitt, 'School Press With More Articles on Controversial Topics is Under Increasing Attack,' New York Times, May 6, 1979.

May 7, 1983 — Commencement exercises were held at Westmar College. The same day in the Des Moines Register was an article titled 'Westmar President bans article, students claim censorship.' The literary expressions of the students at Westmar College, who are here to search their own truths, were once again the objects of scrutiny with infringement being placed upon the authors' creative process.

According to 1982-83 student guide, student publications are not to be subject to prior censorship with that responsibility belonging to the particular student editor involved. Regardless of what people may have thought about the literary expression involved or private institutions cloak of self-righteousness, censorship is censorship.

The act of censorship beyond the editor is in contradiction to the fundamental beliefs of this country, our philosophical and religious heritage, and most importantly, our liberal arts education. We are here to seek the Truth, so we are told. Truth to each person is different, or an appropriate analogy would be that Truth is the trunk of a tree, and we are those numerous and diverse leaves and twigs coming forth from that trunk seeking various truths.

Can we have censorship and artistic creativity at the same time? How can anyone justify self-righteousness of one truth over another truth? How can toleration survive if we can not accept a person's interpretation of life? How can a liberal arts education be justified if truth is subject to prior approval?

IRV Proposal

Within the structure of Westmar College (as written in authoritative documents) are three separate and distinct yet connected "levels" of decision-making. Level one is the basis of discussion, idea-exchange and negotiations. At the bottom of level one are college committees which are amendable to the two recognized deliberative bodies — the Faculty Senate and the ASWC Senate. These two traditionally acknowledge bodies can be subject temporarily to actions of the College Council which is the top group in level one. The next two levels with respect to legislative actions are mostly, by custom,

reactionary levels with ultimate "veto power." However, to be fair, the next two levels can also be creative levels. Level two is the President of the College. The third and highest level is the Board of Trustees.

The Inter-Residence Visitation (IRV) policy proposal of last semester successfully traversed level one in the "traditional" route. As the traditional route suggests, the implementation of a college committee-approved proposal is complete if one or both senates approve it. However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are the other two levels of higher authority to be taken in consideration. President Richardson after weighing several feelings and opinions rejected the "level one-approved" policy.

The IRV decision by President Richardson in the long run is a beneficial one; though, *prima facie* the decision did not appear to be beneficial. Through cautious reasons, the rejection of the IHV proposal can be seen as made in good faith. With all due respect to his decision-making, it appears that the reasons given by Richardson for his decision could be blamed for the original negative reaction. The given reasons seemed to be insufficient and confusing. Conceptual reflection indicates that the Westmar community relations can be enhanced by a liberal interpretation of the present IRV policy which in itself is sufficient reason for Richardson's veto to be a good decision.

It would be advisable for President Richardson in the future to provide more adequate justification for his decisions in order to alleviate much adverse reaction.