

EDITORIAL & OPINION

VOTER APATHY DISAPPOINTING

During the last two weeks, the campus has been littered campaign propaganda in the forms of e-mail, letter, debate, sign, banner, and person-to-person contact. This was done to inform each and every student of occurring Thelmo elections. I know this because I was a candidate. However, my experience running, and losing, in this election is separate from my opinions regarding campus voter apathy. I am not at all bitter about my loss. Instead, as a student at this university, I am disappointed by the small numbers of votes cast in each race.

Although there was never an official announcement of the candidates made by the Election Chairperson prior to election week, fierce campaigning took place in every race. The approximate average number of votes cast in each race of the primary election for candidates was 598. This means that the fate of the elections was to be determined by roughly one-third of the campus population.

My point is this: election information was everywhere. Most of the candidates did everything they could, while still tending to academic needs, to inform the campus about the elections and the candidates who were running for positions of the Executive Board. Why weren't more votes cast in each race of the election?

Did we not learn from the United States Presidential Election? Perhaps many students think that Thelmo is not as important to the student body as the United States Executive Council. Clearly, it is. Each semester, students enrolling or returning to St. Lawrence pay a fee to the Student Activities Fund. The government of the student body determines on what that money is spent. If that is not a big enough reason to elect who one wants to lead the organization, I don't know what is. It must be understood though that Thelmo does more than just dole out money. It serves as a sounding board for ideas, and acts as a liaison between the students, faculty, staff, and administration. Surveys, proposals, and reports are all made by Thelmo Executive Board members and Chairpersons in order to help the student body achieve what it wants. This is why it is important to elect strong leaders in the positions.

Elections took place from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. This was a more than adequate amount of time for any and every student to go to the University Center and cast a vote.

I am angered by the apathetic students who claimed that they did not have enough time to vote, or who simply claimed ignorance of the elections altogether. To those students, I suggest they wake up and become a part of the St. Lawrence community.

Trish Jubinville
Editor-in-Chief

LETTERS TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD

How Christmas Was Stolen

For as long as I, or any member of my family who has attended St. Lawrence University can remember, the university has always provided Christmas trees to help students celebrate the holidays. As I am sure many people have noticed, the university has decided not to do so this year. Any group of students that wish to have a Christmas tree have had to go out and buy it on their own. This would be understandable if SLU was running low on funds. However, it is not.

St. Lawrence Administration has decided not to provide Christmas trees because it does not want to offend any students on campus. It is a sad day when an organization has become so politically correct that it is not even willing to celebrate something as pure and wonderful as Christmas. Furthermore, who is being more "offended", the 95% of students who are Christian, or the remaining 5%, from whom I have never heard a word of objection. Moreover, SLU sponsors Jewish events for Jewish students, Muslim events for Muslim students and even has allowed Buddhist meditations to take place in Herring-Cole. God forbid, and forgive for using the word "God", if the University were to actually do something that would pertain to the majority of students on campus.

I think it is wonderful that St. Lawrence has worked hard to help minority cultures and religions feel welcome and at home on campus. It just concerns me that the University has become twofaced by not allowing a

Christian holiday a voice in administrative planning. President Sullivan's house has been decorated to celebrate Christmas. The Giving Tree in the UC has been put up to help needy children receive Christmas presents. Why not distribute Christmas trees to students so they can celebrate as well?

Mark Forsyth '02

Response to Jambo from Kenya

It is with great concern that we address the latest letter from a student currently studying in Kenya. It is sad-dening that after 3 months living, working, studying and getting acquainted with the Kenyan culture in a number of environments both urban and rural that the writer still clings to old stereotypes. The Kenya Semester program is intended to have the exact opposite effect. It is apparent that it has failed in this case.

As citizens of Kenya, we can clearly state that most of the views in her article lack knowledge of the Kenyan culture and reiterate typical stereotypes. Here are just but a few stereotypes and insults expressed by Carrie about our country and our people:

- "I don't have worms, tuberculosis or malaria- so that is good"

In response to this we say, "In our years of living in New York, we haven't been shot, raped, mugged or run over by a taxi cab"

-Meru a village?

Then Canton must be a bustling city. Meru is a bustling business, agricultural and educational center for the entire northeast of Kenya. Ref: <http://www.rcbowen.com/kenya/cities/meru.html>

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- "...I don't have the answers to Kenya's problems. This was hard to be in a position to be seen as these people's only help."

The writer apparently cannot tell the difference between making conversation about topical issues and acting as a political consultant. It may be different here in America but Kenyans prefer to discuss serious issues around the dinner table or fire as the case may be. Being involved in a conversation like this in no way implies that they are seeking a quick fix from the American visitor. It seems to us that she still believes we are toiling under the colonial mentality that the white man is intellectually and morally superior to us Africans.

- "When I showed them pictures of my home they were amazed by snow! Trying to explain this concept was somewhat challenging."

Meru is located in the foothills of Mt. Kenya the second highest mountain in Africa. Snow is nothing new. If this concept was hard to communicate, then the fault must lie with the one trying to make this point in the first place, perhaps a deeper knowledge of Swahili would have helped. Once again, she has made a very patronizing statement that takes the people of Kenya to be childish, ignorant and stupid.

We could write more but we will end with a few final thoughts. The writer has clearly shown that she has learned little if anything from her stay in Kenya and

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