

# Junking the GPA System

We note with interest the new grading system which has been initiated at Whitman College. There is no perfect grading system. Probably there never will be. But the Whitman plan seems to bypass many of the pitfalls of other systems.

They previously had our familiar five-grade scheme using the letters A, B, C, D, and F. But the faculty voted to replace this with a somewhat different letter-grade system. The most flagrant defects they found were:

- "(1) the fallacies and abuses of the D grade;
- "(2) the misleading and unintelligible character of grade point average;
- "(3) the impossibility of equitable and rational administration of rules of probation and dismissal and of graduation requirements based on the old plan of letter grades and grade point averages."

They found that the D grade was the chief focal point of trouble, a "purgatory" grade. For although the student receives credit hours for his grade, he has to offset those hours with an equivalent number of hours at grade B or better. Large numbers of students were carried on current probation lists whose scholastic difficulties are not at all current.

Furthermore, it was discovered that many students on probation because of a 1.8 or 1.9 GPA were actually, course for course, doing better work than others who were "coasting along" with a 2.1 or 2.2. A grade of A in a one-hour course was frequently the sole explanation of the difference in GPA.

The Whitman faculty began to realize that a grade point average is mostly a mathematical fiction—not an accurate and reliable measure of educational achievement.

So they junked the D grade and the intricacies of the GPA system. Now when a faculty member evaluates the student's work he must decide whether performance has been good enough to count toward graduation. If not, a grade of F is awarded. And the failure can only be made up by repeating the course.

If the work measures up to graduation standard, he may give one of the three passing grades: P, signifying pass; H, signifying Honors, or HH, signifying highest honors. There is no grade point evaluation of these grades, no computation of GPA, and no grade point requirements set for good standing or graduation.

But a student must earn passing grades in three-fourths of the hours in which he is currently registered. If not, he may go on probation for a semester. He is dropped if he does not maintain his standing for two successive semesters.

The Whitman faculty, according to President Chester C. Maxey, is coming to feel that the new grading system possesses the merit of truthfulness to a far greater degree than their former system—which was identical to our own.

Now a Whitman grade of F simply means that the student did not do the work of graduation quality. A grade of P means that his work was up to graduation standard. There are now twice as many Fs. And only half as many HHs. But an HH is definitely a higher earning than the former A.

Their system is both easier to administer and less costly in time and money. There are no longer any borderline cases. The student passes or fails. But he can't fail by a hair-breadth computed to hundredths of a grade point.

Of course all grades represent fallible human judgments. But the Whitman faculty seems to have taken a long step in the direction of common sense.—H.S.

## 12:01 p.m. is Too Late

Now is the time for all good students to come to the aid of their parents, government, wife, husband, self, or whoever it is that foots the bills. In other words, finish registration through step five by noon Saturday or the University will be very unhappy and assess you a \$5 fine.

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## Sophomore Wisdom

# After Four Years, This is What You Get

by Bob Funk

Something we have been looking forward to for a long time is at last in the process of happening: senior rides. It isn't as though we dislike the seniors, or that the two years we have lived with them in brotherhood haven't been practically deliriously happy—but, well, stout fellows though they are, we will not regret making up for the time we have been reprimanded for wrong songs at the table and talking on second floor after 11 p.m.

A senior ride consists of pouncing on the victim, tying him hand and foot, locking him in the trunk of someone's car, and dumping him rather unceremoniously in the vicinity of the Mexican border. Seniors do not approve of this procedure. Their little minds cannot grasp the obvious humor of the situation.

At times, in fact, they tend to act like a bunch of stuffed shirts. Nyaaah!

Well, anyway, with the coming of spring



weather, the poor belabored freshman and the long-suffering sophomore begin to get out their travel folders and pick unlikely spots to dump someone rather unceremoniously at. A dusty road is best—you get one last look at the senior, peering through a dust cloud, coughing his lungs out. This satisfies any strain of sadism you have in you.

Senior rides are a lot of work for everyone but the senior. You have to make sure the victim is not peeking out from under his blindfold, that you have enough gas to get back to town, and that your guest of honor is not going to die of fright and leave a nasty lawsuit in your lap.

It is most disheartening to arrive back at your starting point only to find that the seniors have been back for an hour, having caught the subway, and are sitting around the fire telling war stories.

Recently that group of seniors which is my own particular pride and joy railroaded a no-senior-ride rule through at house meeting. The fine for violation is twenty-five dollars. However, it is to be expected that if any senior whilst of voluntary nature jaunts deep in the hinterland late at night, happens to get out of the car for a bird walk and doesn't have enough sense to get back in, no fine will be levied.

Ain't we got fun.

## Crotchety Old Vet

# Will the Little Graph Get up to 60?

by Steve Loy

Wednesday morning's Emerald shows only 30 per cent of the campus Red Cross quota total has been collected. I'll be surprised when and if the little graph gets up to 60. Just a guess. Editor Smith tells me that maybe the Red Cross has really done a lot of good within the country. I think I'll go along with that. They are a good agency for handling disaster work and probably the Willamette Valley gets more than a proportionate share of what they contribute because of the floods here. Still, it will be a long time before some

of the old soldiers forget paying a dime for a Time that was a year old.

I hope the powers that be are bearing in mind the sentiment of the veterans in making their decision about whether to change the calling of the vet's dorms. Those of us who feel strongly on the subject are prepared to constitute a very vocal portion of the dormitory population.

It would be great to see someone write some good lyrics for "Rag Mop" to use for an Oregon fight song. Love that tune!

## On the Air

# Are You Listening, Politicians?

by Marty Weitzner

How many people are really interested in University radio? As soon as a projected poll is completed (sometime in March or April, maybe) we will know officially what we already surmise is true.

It seems no one, from the FCC on down to the youngest freshman connected with the "KDUK that layed an egg," is showing any initiative to revive the campus station. Are you listening campus politicians?

Some of the people who are trying to plug our radio programs, have come up with the idea of getting a variety show which would be taped and given to one or several of the local stations. Variety is

what they want, and variety is the one thing that KOAC does not want. Such a program, run once a week from the University Theater, would attract a lot of local attention and uncover a lot of hitherto hidden University talent.

We were looking for an excuse to cover the bits of comment that we occasionally come up with concerning matters politic. We think we've found it in the Portland Oregonian, where William Moyes in his column, "Behind the Mike" tears into local politics.

As long as we've got an excuse for it, we would like to pass an insignificant bouquet along to several of our instructors. It has been said that we at Oregon are politically unconscious. That may be true, but is not the fault of several professors. In keeping students abreast of the world situation, they have shown no hesitance in telling us that heavy, heavy, is the sword that hangs over our heads. It has gotten so, that every night when we go to bed, we turn toward the Kremlin and pray that someone over there made a miscalculation on the formula for converting hydrogen into a destructive force.

