

Fancy Dress: A Unique Memory for all Freshman Perspective

Female

By Ann Gregory
W&L Freshman

Fancy Dress—a fairy tale night. The full moon gazes benignly on a stirring Lexington, bathing the city in pale light, beaming on those who are to commence an endless evening of fantasy. Perfumed, made-up and coiffed to perfection, I slip into a gorgeous gown, a princess awaiting her prince.

He raps at my door and I sweetly bid the visitor enter. A blond Adonis strides gracefully into my room. His blue eyes shine deeply with admiration as he be-

holds me, and almost shyly, hands me red roses.

We rush off, arm in arm, to the chariot waiting outside, which whisks us away to an intimate restaurant. We sit in a corner, the shadows cast by flickering candles playing hide and seek around our faces. For once in my life I don't worry about getting food caught in my teeth or using the wrong fork—no, tonight is perfect. Our words, our actions, the night itself is enchanted; nothing can or will go wrong.

After wining and dining me, my god-like escort leads me on his arm to the ball itself. What gymnasium? This is a palace

ballroom. As we begin to dance gracefully, our feet hidden by magically misty air, the other couples turn to stare. Never have any two people seemed more like one, gliding across the floor in perfect rhythm, laughing gaily. The soft lights in the room follow us around as though attracted magnetically. He leans and whispers softly into my ear, and I arch my neck back and smile into those watery pods of his eyes which reflect my happiness.

I wake from my dream with a sigh. My date doesn't have to be an Adonis, and the chariot can be a beat-up Ford. I just hope I get a date.

Male

By Franklin Daniels
W&L Freshman

The South's Greatest Party, an unparalleled weekend of drunken revelry and collegiate spirit, fabled tales of conquest and fair-lure from veteran fraternity brothers, extending the bid; all of these images accumulated over the last six months create the general freshman impression of Fancy Dress. Building anticipation only adds to the yet unexperienced mystique.

I see Fancy Dress Weekend as a culmination of the Freshman experience at W&L because it seems to represent all the elements our university typifies. Tradition, regalia, a healthy dose of pomp and circumstance, and of course, fraternity func-

tions all combine to give those involved a taste of collegiate high society. An old-fashioned good time, the W&L way.

Truly a grandiose event, FD is all you make of it. The potential for great success or disaster is only a question of how your luck holds and what your attitude is going in. So, after milking as much attention as is humanly possible in deciding who "receives your bid," by all means dive right in. Folks, Fancy Dress is a happenin' thing. At very worst, you'll lose consciousness sometime Thursday and resurface during the day on Sunday with no clue as to how your weekend went, but satisfied that it did, indeed, live up to its touting. Now that's a W&L tradition. Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to Washington and Lee.

Sophomore Perspective

Male

by Richard Zuber
W&L Sophomore

So I started to think what I could say about the renowned Fancy Dress Ball. The first obvious thing to do was to go back to that blurry five day weekend and try to scrape up some data on the event. But as I began to think, I realized that it was just that...blurry! Surely it must have meant something to me though...I don't know—have some relevance.

Well I'll tell you what "was" relevant, at least at the time. I lost my bow tie, I got hollandaise all over my lapel, my roommate lost the tap for the after-party, I never saw my girlfriend again, and I didn't even get to see Asha the elephant! You say, "wait a minute, did I just hear something about your girlfriend in between the tap and the elephant?" I know it sounds absurd, even tragic, but we just

didn't get along. So you're probably thinking that my FD stunk. That's what I was thinking too for a while, but when it was over I realized that in fact, I had had a blast.

Anyway here we are. It's Friday night, the Ball is near and my girlfriend and I have just had another big blow out. What perfect timing, I remember thinking as we walked toward Doremus. After all this is FD and certainly no time to be in a fight with your girlfriend. The night was cool and clear though and at least I thought something was on my side. The sky, deep and almost purple, was a warm welcome from the cold shoulder I was receiving from my girlfriend. Sounds corny, but as the sweeping spot lights began to lure us in and as we walked closer and closer, we began to forget about the fights and the stupid little things. It was as if the excitement of FD was taking over as our minds began to drift toward and ponder the events soon to appear.

The interior amazed us: a gym transformed into a jungle. I remember The Tommy Dorsey

Band playing some big band Frank Sinatra tune, the dimmed lights, the scent of the tropical leaves. I don't know, it all kind of gave me a feeling of importance, like we had finally surpassed those awkward high school dances and had finally reached something of significance and something most importantly to remember.

Those magical hours in the Dark Continent began to erase the reality behind us. We even began to laugh as we forgot what exactly it was those fights were all about! That is what Fancy Dress is to me: A time to step outside of reality and enter an imaginative world where things like next week's tests are insignificant and the only important thing is that moment.

Fancy Dress probably means a lot of different things to different people. To some it might just be a good time. To others though, it might mean something more, perhaps tradition or nostalgia. For me at least, Fancy Dress has the magical ability to transport me back to a time where yesterday and tomorrow mean nothing and today, means all.

Female

By Cheryl Bowles
W&L Sophomore

The thing I remember most about last year's Fancy Dress is that I got caught as soon as I walked into the gym. I wasn't really doing anything wrong, of course, but a friend of mine who was working security really wanted to get one of those little bracelets on my wrist.

I didn't even want to drink at Fancy Dress. A freshman would have been so out of place among all the seniors and juniors on the balcony where alcohol was being served. But I got snagged anyway. The night was off to a great start.

But it did get better.

I was quite impressed by my first Fancy Dress. It really is


amazing what they can do with that gym. The bands were terrific, although it is rather embarrassing to be dancing in a long dress to the sounds of the Hoodoo Gurus while your politics professor is looking on.

The most impressive thing about the ball is its impact on this university. It is one of the great W&L traditions. It is also the cause for much anxiety about dates, clothes, dinner plans, and such. For some, the arrival of Fancy Dress weekend is festive and exciting, for some it is stressful. Thoughts of Fancy Dress elicited a strange and wide variety of reactions from the girls on my hall, everything from elation to depression to feigned indifference. But the fact is that no one can be indifferent to Fancy Dress—it is the light at the end of a long, dark Winter term tunnel.

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Junior Perspective

Male

By Joe Caccamo
W&L Junior

When I think of Fancy Dress, I think of more than just a great party weekend. To me, Fancy Dress represents the advent of spring at Washington and Lee, or at least a spring spirit that visibly unleashes itself upon the souls of the entire Washington and Lee community.

Yes, the weekend (or week, depending on how far you want to push it) is incredible. Yes, the Thursday night concert always promises to feature a hot rock band. Yes, the ball is always a new, unforgettable spectacle of extravagance. And Yes, the parties are "raging" non-stop.

But more important than all of this, Fancy Dress creates smiles that are real, transforming some of the hardest hit winter scrooges into fun-loving spring bees.

Senior Perspective

Female

By Mary Halliday
Sweetbriar Senior

Have you suddenly noticed many more women showing up at your fraternity parties? Even Graham-Lees has been taken over by the surrounding women's colleges. This is only because the Fancy Dress season is approaching, and although many girls refuse to admit it, they hope to be asked. As soon as one girl is invited she becomes the envy of others. In many ways F.D. weekend is much dreaded. Perhaps this is because many feel it is an honor to be a part of Fancy Dress. I tend to agree, simply because

F.D. is not only a well-known event in Virginia, but also in other surrounding areas. Even in my home state of New York, people have either heard of or attended the Fancy Dress Ball.

All in all, Fancy Dress is the BIG DEAL that people seem to make it. Never have I seen such a motivated and organized group of students so dedicated to make a school function such a success. Fancy Dress is not merely for the students, but also faculty, alumni, and even parents. It is probably the most festive social function that can brighten up the winter months. What does F.D. entail? A four-day party that is definitely worth the exhaustion. If you are at all hesitant about Fancy Dress, don't be! Give it a chance; it is a weekend you will remember.

Female

By Liz Smith
W&L Junior

He finally asked me! I just knew he would—there was never a doubt in my mind. So what if it's Thursday morning—I've still got *one whole day* to get ready.

My dream date.

The Perfect Guy.
"Hello?...Oh, hi! Yes, I'm almost ready. I just need about ten more minutes

to...What?...Oh, you do...O.K. sure, no problem—No, I really wasn't hungry anyway... Sure, well, I—I guess you can pick me up later then...What? Oh, yeah, I suppose I could meet you there if you'd rather. But, how will I find you in all the crowd?...O.K. sure. I guess it doesn't matter...(pause) Oh, by the way, what's the deal about tomorrow? You know, I've always thought Fancy Dress Saturday is more fun than the ball itself. Isn't there a big party at your house tomorrow afternoon with that band from Georgia? I heard some people talking about it and they said they were fantastic! I can't wait to see...What? Oh, really...I guess not...That's O.K....No, actually I was prob-

ably going to do something else anyway...(pause) Well, do you think you'll be free by Saturday night for the...no, I didn't think so...Yeah, I know what you mean—I hate fighting the crowds too. (pause) Well, I also heard about a *small group* going up to the parkway on Sunday if you'd like to go and we could...Yeah, I have to study too...(pause) Well, I...I guess I'll meet you at the ball later tonight then...O.K.—talk to you soon. Thanks for calling. Bye."

"Liz, who was that on the phone?"

"Oh, it was my date calling to work out the details for the weekend. He's *such an awesome guy*—I'm really excited! It's going to be a *great weekend!*"

Male

By Jim Williams
W&L Senior

FANCY DRESS—two of the most popular words that a Washington and Lee student can utter. The thought alone brings to mind some of the most cherished memories I possess. This is, without a doubt, the most festive activity on the school calendar. In case you have not experienced Fancy Dress before, or if you are considering leaving for the weekend because you cannot find the right date, please allow me two minutes of your time.

Make any necessary arrangements to be in Lexington, Virginia between the second and the sixth of March, 1988, for these days will provide you with some of the best fun and festivities that you will experience anywhere, anytime. But before this time arrives, you have one task—that of finding one individual with whom to share in the grand splendor of this eagerly awaited

woman from one of the neighboring colleges who would gladly give away her Daddy's BMW to have "THE BID" extended her way. If you are a girl, blow some guy's mind and ask *him*. Whatever you do, just be there.

The festivities will begin around Wednesday and run non-stop through the weekend. People will congregate at the Pit, at the new Student Activities Pavilion (for a top-name band, we hope), at the Warner Center for the ball itself, and at every location of campus organization for parties of every sort. The Fancy Dress experience, I dare say, will not let you down. As a senior staring graduation in the face, I realize that there are innumerable things that I will sincerely miss about my undergraduate years. Fancy Dress is right event. If you are a guy and need a date, check out The Palms any night before March 1, or better yet, just be seen in public and you are bound to find some

around the top of the list. It is the most eagerly awaited weekend of the year, as people arrive from all over the nation simply to experience this colossal occasion.

Quite frankly, I cannot think of a better way to spend four or five days and nights. One of the best and most unique qualities about W&L is the personable nature of our community. Fancy Dress is the perfect personification of this characteristic. It brings together everyone who has any tie with the University for quality celebrating. For just a while, the cliques and the barriers of our social lives are stripped away so that we can all enjoy time together, an otherwise nonexistent condition. I hope everyone can come away from Fancy Dress with the same satisfaction that I have been able to enjoy. Grab a date, call some friends from home, and be sure to find yourself in Lexington in early March; for a better time cannot be found.

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