

Women students shun 'the W&L attitude'

ANALYSIS

By TED LeCLERCQ
Staff Reporter

Women at area colleges feel that Washington and Lee men are often self-centered and unapproachable to the point of being rude, according to a recent informal survey.

Furthermore, many students at the five local women's schools say they prefer the punch-and-cookies politeness of Hampden-Sydney College to the drunken fraternity debauchery that results in what they refer to as "the W&L attitude."

The young ladies noted that especially during initial visits, they found that a "stand-offish," elitist attitude frequently prevails at W&L parties. This contrasts sharply with the

lavish, even fawning, attention they receive at Hampden-Sydney functions.

Kathryn Pearce, a senior at Mary Baldwin College, said she's noticed a sharp difference in the attitudes exhibited at the two schools, both of which currently have all-male undergraduate student bodies.

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— Polly Paton, *Sweet Briar* sophomore

"The Hampden-Sydney guys love meeting new people much more than the guys at W&L," she said. "Hampden-Sydney guys appreciate it so much more when we go down there."

"Although they are still concerned about the freshmen going through Rush, the girls get about equal time and attention," she continued. "At W&L, girls take a back seat."

Kara Albert, a junior at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, perceived similar problems at W&L. "A lot of girls go to Hampden-Sydney because they are a lot more friendly down there," she said,

"Until you know a few people at W&L, no one talks to you," she explained. "That's the big complaint about W&L guys with Randy Mac girls — that they won't come up and talk to you."

Ms. Albert said that girls are "an ornament for freshmen" at Hampden Sydney as much as they are at W&L, but at Hampden Sydney they "still have a good time — we're not put upon."

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Despite Ms. Albert's criticism of the attitude of W&L men, she still prefers to party in Lexington rather than in Farmville.

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"I think Hampden-Sydney men are sort of gooberish, actually," she said. "It's just that they are really eager to meet girls."

Trichel Berryman commented on the W&L party system from the perspective of a Hollins College freshman.

"You meet a million people during rush," she said. "They have to go through the routine: 'What's your name?', 'Where

are you from?', 'What year are you?', 'Where's your hometown?'

"The freshmen are just glad to be there but they can't wait till it's over," continued Ms. Berryman. "Overall, it's not so bad, because it's temporary."

She hopes the situation will improve after Rush. "The girls are not getting the attention now that they may get when Rush is over," she said. "There are so many girls here at parties, though, that by the time we roll in around 11 o'clock, we have to approach the guys."

"A lot of guys say in essence, 'You're here to meet us,'" Ms. Berryman complained. "But overall I love it, it's a fun place and there are all the good elements of a party, as well."

Margaret Kennedy, a first-year student at Southern Seminary, has noticed that the parties get better after everyone has had a beer or two to relax.

"At most of the parties I've been to, they've all been pretty wasted and they seemed to have loosened up by the time I got there," she said.

Ms. Kennedy said she has discovered going to parties with

several friends helps ease the initial moments at the houses.

"It's not too hard to get introduced then, because if I am with somebody they know, then they come over and I get introduced," she said.

Polly Paton, a sophomore at Sweet Briar, noticed the difference in behavior at the two schools.

"First impressions make a big difference, and Hampden-Sydney makes a better one," she said. "The Hampden-Sydney guys make more of an effort to talk to girls."

"When you go to W&L, it's more like a meatmarket situation, because you know they are looking around to decide if you are good-looking enough to talk to."

"Once you meet a W&L guy or two, then everybody is really friendly," Ms. Paton continued.

"If you are an outgoing type of girl, then you can make it work," she added. "But a lot of girls aren't that way."

Ms. Paton contends that there are more important things than perfect manners, however: "I'd still rather go to W&L than Hampden-Sydney."