

# THE DARTMOUTH JACK-O-LANTERN



## War, Sex and a Sense of Humor: The Dartmouth Jack-O-Lantern From 1967-1974

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The Dartmouth Jack-O-Lantern Humor Society, founded in 1908, is one of the oldest college student organizations devoted to publishing works of satire and parody. Its past directorates boast alumni who have gone on to make distinguished names for themselves in literature, entertainment and politics. These include former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, screenwriter and actor Buck Henry, and, perhaps Dartmouth's most commonly referenced graduate to date, Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel). And though the Jack-O-Lantern has chronicled innumerable events and ideas of the last century—relating to not only to the microcosm that is Dartmouth College, but also to the larger world that exists beyond the Hanover plain—I believe its most interesting and exciting period occurred during the late 1960's and early 1970's. This was an epoch that witnessed two landmark events in the history of the United States and Dartmouth College. The first was the escalating American conflict in Vietnam and the ensuing social and political upheaval it that it precipitated throughout US college campuses, Dartmouth being no exception. The second was the matter of coeducation—initially as an abstract, distant-seeming possibility that then developed into an inevitable reality—which had a more localized relevance to the Dartmouth community, but nonetheless marked a changing ideological tide in America that was very deeply ingrained in the struggle for civil rights, feminism and, at least for the writers and editors of the Jack-O-Lantern, the desire for girlfriends.

I will herein examine the Vietnam War and Dartmouth coeducation, as it was reflected in the wit and topical humor of the Jack-O-Lantern, between the years 1967 and 1974. Paying particular attention to, what I believe is the apogee of the magazine's sophistication, the Spring, 1967 issue, I will evidence how a few of the creative types at Dartmouth during the height of the counterculture and New Leftist movements, managed to scoff at history as it was unfolding before them. What was the express interest in using satire as a political tool in the Jack-O-Lantern's of the late sixties? In what sense can the various directorates be viewed as "voices of their generation" in airing popular student grievances with both the Vietnam War effort, as well as with critics of Dartmouth coeducation? Also, what correlation was there—if any—between a noticeable drop-off in the funniness of writing following the official admission of women to the College in 1972? Moving chronologically along a seven-year timeline of publications, I shall try to analyze the type of Jack-O-Lantern humor that pervaded this era, without, hopefully, "killing" the all jokes in the process.

### Laughter Is All You Need: The Jack-O-Lantern Attacks the Draft and the War in Vietnam

In the Spring, 1967 issue of the Jack-O-Lantern, the Vietnam War figured prominently as a comic foil for articulating decidedly anti-war politics. The editors at this time had no qualms about

lambasting the draft, as well as outspoken and recognizable military figures responsible for sending so many college-aged Americans off to fight "their parents' war." As would be expected of young writers entrenched in a revolutionary cultural climate, much of the humor in the Jack-O-Lantern's of the late sixties came at the expense of public icons of authority, most notably government officials and bureaucrats. College campuses at this time were awash with rising New Leftist and counterculture sentiment, which saw true evil in some of the actions being taken by their nation in the name of promoting peace, liberty and democracy outside American borders. As *Washington Post* reporter E.J. Dionne put it in his remarkable book, *Why Americans Hate Politics*, "[The young radicals of the sixties] saw what others refused to see: that American power in the world could as easily be put to bad use as good, and often was" (Dionne, 32). And given that 1967 witnessed the largest anti-war demonstration in American history, the Spring Mobilization in New York City, is it any wonder that Vietnam took center stage in the satiric output of Dartmouth's only humor magazine that year?

This issue included an apocryphal interview with a "General Louis Hersheybar;" clearly a pun on the actual director of the United States Selective Service System, Lt. General Lewis Hershey. The writer dubs Hersheybar, the "Grand Dragon of the United States' Army's biggest draft board," and offers this highly descriptive, biographical preface to the interview:

"General Hersheybar is a corpulent, balding man in his eighties [*the real General Hershey was in his seventies at this time*], has a personal history that is both long and uninteresting. He prepared for the college of his choice at Horatchee Lower Falls (N.J.) High School, but was forced to leave school before he entered because of low marks and abysmal college board scores [*this is untrue of Hershey, who grew up in Indiana and in fact did go on to college, after which he became the principal of a small public school*]. Later, he got married. (*Jacko*, Vol. 1, 3, 1967: 5).

So already we see a not-too-subtle attack on Hershey's character through his satiric doppelganger. Obviously, the writer of this piece sought to portray him as something of a bitter, reactionary dinosaur: too far removed in generation and sensibility from the average 60's undergraduate to be deciding the wartime fate of that same undergraduate. Hersheybar is thus made to look ridiculous and hypocritical in his position of power; anti-intellectual (evidenced by his own lousy academic performance) and anti-youth. (It should come as no surprise that the sketched image of Hersheybar depicts him chomping on a cigar, wearing a furrowed, earnest expression on his face as that of a man who takes his rank and status within the Armed Forces very seriously). That Hersheybar will repeatedly affirm in the course of the interview: "Believe me, I majored in education, I oughta know," only furthers this dichotomy between a genuine awareness of the erstwhile sociopolitical climate at a school like Dartmouth College, versus a pretentious, laughably poor awareness of that climate, which Washington officials like Lewis Hershey notoriously flaunted whenever confronted with an invasive line of questioning over the efficacy and purpose of the Vietnam War (*Ibid*, 5).

Indeed, the faux-interviewer in this piece wastes no time accosting "Hersheybar," asking as his first question: "Why do you feel we're *in* [author's italics] Viet Nam?" (*Ibid*, pp. 5-6). The good General responds in true buck-passing fashion: "Well, as I've said, a lot of that goes right back to the local boards. Those people have their quotas to meet, and they'll do it any way they have to" (*Ibid*, 5). This response is more grounded in truth than absurd, parodic fiction. General Hershey was a conservative Republican and a longtime believer in decentralized government, dating back to his military participation (on a federal, administrative level) in the late 1930's. Working in

conjunction with the Selective Service Act of 1940, he helped to implement a more state-based draft system, whereby 4,000 local boards were given full jurisdiction on matters of draft status and deferment. The boards consisted of three members—ideally, chosen from within the community they represented—who were appointed for life. Hershey himself was tolerant towards conscientious objectors during World War II—citing religious reservations against entering into combat as more relevant than secular, moral ones. Yet despite the fact that the Selective Service System remained largely unchanged in the postwar period and into the early sixties, US involvement in Vietnam certainly did alter the ideological landscape for mandatory military service. For one thing, there were more students in college than there were in the 1940's. Karl D. Nelson, in his paper, "'By Reason of Religious Training and Belief...': A History of Conscientious Objection and Religion during the Vietnam War," states that by June of 1967, "A million and a half men held student deferments" for the Vietnam War (Nelson, 25-27). To Hershey, this was obviously problematic insofar as his new stock of soldiers might now more readily hide behind higher education to evade service. "A boy becomes an adult three years before his parents think he does, and about two years after he thinks he does," was General Hershey's oft-quoted rationalization for adopting a laissez-faire attitude towards some of the local boards' tightening of restrictions on student deferment. So when the Jack-O-Lantern interviewer asks Hersheybar if it's acceptable to force a person to fight in a war he does not believe in, the mock-general replies: "[If] we were to let a boy off just because he doesn't believe in killing people, nobody would ever get killed. And wars don't get fought without getting killed" (*Jacko*, Vol. 1, 3, 1967: 6).

With steadily increasing draft calls throughout the two-year period between 1967 and 1968, local boards were required to handle more cases in order to meet their individual quotas for recruitment. Naturally, the issue over how the Vietnam War might affect matriculation and graduation rates, was an exigent one to many enrolled college students. The Jack-O-Lantern interviewer poses the question: "General, with draft calls rising every month, a lot of students are worried about the possibility of not being able to finish their education." And Hersheybar's answer to this is:

"That's a common misconception and I'd like to correct it right now. These kids feel that being dragged out of college to go in the army denies them the right of finishing their education, but that's just not so. Three years seems like a long time when you're young, but I'm past my 80th birthday and I majored in education and from my end of the thing, three years looks like a mighty short time to give to the protection of your fatherland. All of these boys can go right back to college as soon as they've served their turn, unless of course, they get killed over there. Or maimed—it's pretty hard to hold a pencil if you've lost both your arms. But the army understands about these things. (*Ibid*, 6).

Hersheybar's ambiguous, accountability-shirking rhetoric, therefore, is no great departure from the actual rhetoric being spouted by Washington policy-makers and Selective Service officials in 1967. Admittedly, the bit about students' getting killed or maimed was not the stuff of bureaucratic press releases. But, after all, what is good satire if not the taking of an already dubious argument to its logical albeit revolting extreme?

Concerning the matter of draft-dodging, or the burning of draft cards, the Jack-O-Lantern article is again ironic and flip in articulating Hersheybar's response. He answers that aside from igniting the Selective Service cards, "some [card burners] have been burning themselves. I wish more of them would" (*Ibid*, 6). Here, Hersheybar no doubt flexes his ignorance over activist student politics yet again, mistaking the Buddhist monks in Saigon who practiced self-immolation in

protest of the Vietnam War, for American university students. Furthermore, Hersheybar paints such horrifying acts as nothing more than cheap publicity stunts, going on to comment: "It's funny how there's a lot of other stuff going on that people never hear about. A boy up in Maine went in for induction lately and urinated on the loyalty oath, but you didn't see *that* in the papers, no sir" (*Ibid*, 6). When asked how he accounts for the lack of media coverage of this particular act of defiance, Hersheybar responds: "I don't. He [the perpetrator] was my own son, so I was pretty close to the thing, but nothing was ever said about it" (*Ibid*, 6). Thus ends the interview on a note I believe the Jack-O-Lantern editors intended to reinforce throughout the piece: that General Hersheybar, and Lt. General Lewis Hershey alike, are nothing more than detached, self-interested automatons, who have as little compassion for the young American troops being sent to an uncertain future in South East Asia as they have an understanding of the sense of unease and disquietude defining the 60's college experience in general. The Hershey/Hersheybar ego is consequently punctured, leaving a feckless, muttering old fool in its stead.

While I do not purport to extrapolate the ideological affiliations of all the Jack-O-Lantern editors in 1967, I do think it is fair to say this interview suggests an anti-war sympathy, at least espoused by its anonymous author. The writer of this piece obviously was critical of the Selective Service System and viewed the draft as a draconian process. The one failing I see in this satire *qua* anti-war critique is that it neglects issues of race, gender or socioeconomic background in determining who the other, non-matriculated 18-22 year olds were that were being called into involuntary military service. The Jack-O-Lantern's inability to look out beyond the scope of its own purview—that of a predominantly white, middle-class, Ivy League college campus—could be either ignorance or selfishness. College life does tend to exist in a social vacuum—especially in rural Hanover. Perhaps the Jack-O-Lantern directorate felt they were under no obligation to address all the wrongs that didn't directly affect them as draftable Dartmouth students.

In support of this hypothesis, there was another feature that ran in the Spring, 1967 issue, entitled "Status Seekers"—or what might more accurately be referred to as student stereotypes, invoked to predict the ideal candidates for the draft. Among those rejected by the army is the "Big-Ten Athlete, who's strong, conditioned and tough...[but who has] a trick knee, so can't be drafted due to a lack of ace bandages in the soldier's pack;" not to mention, the "Playboy...[who is] healthy, wealthy and socially apathetic, and therefore too valuable to risk his life...he will be the VP of his dad's defense plant when he graduates" (*Jacko*, Vol. 1, 3, 1967: 10-11). Those college personas most eligible for the draft according to this parody include the "Anti-American American...[who] hates America, bourgeois conformity, ideals like freedom, equality, peace and more money...[and who] thinks Americans are bigots and hypocrites;" and the "Aging Revolutionary...[who is] too old to rebel against parental authority, but too young to be a fanatic" (*Ibid*, 11).

Indeed, the Jack-O-Lantern directorate in 1967 tended to aim their caustic humor more at members of their own community; i.e. the kind of student activists and anti-war sympathizers the Hersheybar interview ostensibly vindicated. "The True and Exciting Story of...Peace Creep!" charts the *Bildungsroman*—like story of a Midwestern naïf, named Watson Emmettworth, who arrives at college and reconfigures his identity. No doubt this was commentary on the kind of personal transformation many 60's students underwent, abandoning their repressive, sheltered backgrounds for tense, intellectually wrought academic environs. And given the burgeoning peace movement that was so much a part of university politics at the time, the irony in pointing out the not-so-revolutionary—and in most cases, downright bourgeois—origins of some of Dartmouth's more notable campus activists, was surely a secret pleasure for the

Jack-O-Lantern's staff. Accompanied by graphic depictions of Emmettworth's journey into university-man adulthood and beyond, the first few frames tell how he encounters a charismatic student rebel, or "peace creep," situated in characteristic form, preaching to the masses from a soapbox. We are told this "peace creep" stands for "Singularity, Originality and Non-Conformity" (*Jacko*, Vol. I, 3, 1967: 21) and apparently, these are highly attractive ideals to Emmettworth, who subsequently becomes enamored of the campus counterculture movement. Though, judging by the tongue-in-cheek tone of the writing, Emmettworth is of course less concerned with the legitimate sociopolitical foundation of that movement, and more interested in its superficial, aesthetic adjuncts. For instance, he goes from being the scrubbed and polished Ivy League man of perhaps his father's generation, to the stereotypical hippie, complete with the obligatory facial hair, a pair of whitewashed blue jeans, and an elbow-patched corduroy sports jacket. He takes part in "sit-ins, sleep-ins and fly-ins" (*Ibid*, 21) with that last activity consisting of him literally flying over the college administration buildings in some form of unclear protest.

Emmettworth's identity is only further redefined after he meets a busload of women, visiting his school from a neighboring junior college, who, upon noticing him, call him "ugly" (*Ibid*, 21). Thus, feeling sexually undesirable in his current "hippie" state, Emmettworth vanishes from school, never to be heard from again. Though "legend has it" he either became a knockoff of the more macho, hard-hitting 1950's rebel, à la Marlon Brando in *The Wild Bunch*; or, he simply went back to being a happy suburban conformist, a "square," who (fatuously) believes in "truth, justice and the American way." Humorist and former *National Lampoon* editor P.J. O'Rourke once described his disillusionment with the sixties counterculture movement in terms that might well apply to the Jack-O-Lantern's portrayal of Emmettworth: "...I couldn't stay a Maoist forever. I got too fat to wear bell-bottoms. And I realized that communism meant giving my golf clubs to a family in Zaire. Also, I couldn't bear the dreadful, glum earnestness of the left" (O'Rourke, xiv).

A year later, the Jack-O-Lantern followed up their incisive take on the politics of war and anti-war sentiment with a May, 1968 issue that featured, as its cover, a close-up portrait of then-president Lyndon Johnson wearing sunglasses that reflected a doctored American flag, with swastikas in place of stars. Already, a pretty loud declaration of purpose from the editors; and the envelope-pushing didn't end there.

In an article called "The Official American Handbook," the editors featured a jingoistic interpretation of the history of the world, beginning with God's creation of Heaven, followed by His creation of the United States—in the year 1620. "These were his two great accomplishments. People who try to tell you otherwise are communists and their names should be turned into the officers of OFFICIAL AMERICANS" (*Jacko*, Vol. III, 3, 1968: 4). The article goes on to claim that God got angry at the US, and as punishment sent the "devil" to rule over his chosen people. The devil in this case being the "one-cylinder intellectual 'liberal' type, who has been in control ever since, sucking off the lives of good, decent, God-fearing Americans" (*Ibid*, 4). Clearly, this is commentary on the kind of right-wing rhetoric surrounding Cold War politics America, which was used, quite specifically, to paint Vietnam War protesters and New Leftist intellectuals or academics as unpatriotic—almost treasonous—in their thinking. The end of McCarthyism in mid-fifties did not spell an end to anti-communist hysteria, which, especially at the height of US involvement in Vietnam, often assailed universities and the academy as, in the words of this Jack-O-Lantern spoof, "pinko educators, trying to dupe Mr. American citizen" (*Ibid*, 4). Provided as part of this joke history lesson is the question, "Which of these are commie-front organizations?" with some of the following as choices: the "Democratic Party;" "*The New York*

*Times*;" "New York" itself; "Those fancy-dance Ivy League schools;" the "Supreme Court;" the "Jewish 'religion,'" and "Poland" (*Ibid*, 4).

Paying particular regard to the "fancy-dance Ivy League school" category, on October 5, 1966, the Dartmouth newspaper ran a front-page article entitled, "Faculty, Students Join to Protest Viet Policy." The article announced the formation of an on-campus organization, headed by Assistant Professor of Government Paul Leary, openly opposing US policies in the Vietnam War and calling for systematic de-escalation of US involvement in the region. So evidently, Jack-O-Lantern writers needn't have looked very far for their material.

Overall, the Jack-O-Lantern's treatment of the Vietnam War and the impact it had on American college society in the late sixties reflects the kind of disillusionment with government, Washington policy-making and authority in general that might be expected of free-thinking students interested in creative forms of print media during this era. Unfortunately, I was unable to reach via e-mail anyone listed in the masthead of these two issues dealing with the war, which would have provided me with first-hand accounts of what went on at the top of Robinson Hall in those days. (Not that alumni generally reminisce objectively and honestly, especially those who, from the looks of the fruits of their undergraduate labor, took neither themselves nor their historical context too seriously.)

In the remaining portion of my paper, I hope to examine the ways in which the Jack-O-Lantern addressed Dartmouth coeducation: both in anticipating its arrival in the early to late sixties, as well as in making light of gender relations on campus after the admittance of women into the College. What I noticed in moving along the timeline was a qualitative drop in the Jack-O-Lantern's sophistication and wit<sup>(1)</sup>, after Dartmouth became co-ed. Much of this is likely attributable to sheer coincidence; the results of a few changes in Jack-O-Lantern directorate and writing staff over the seven-year period in which this paper deals. However, I also believe the decline in quality is the result of a more obscure reshaping of attitude on the part of male editors (there was not a single female editor or contributor from 1972 to 1974) after witnessing the most revolutionary change ever to occur to the Dartmouth social landscape. No doubt, the Jack-O-Lantern—again using levity to come across as the voice of its generation—was in favor of coeducation, as evidenced by the parodies and short stories printed in the late sixties, which depicted male students woefully unenlightened about romance and dating rituals and badly in need of immersion in real world heterosocial situations. (Many would argue things have not improved much at this school since the sixties). And yet, once the repressed sexual longings were satisfied in 1972 and male ignorance was at least given the opportunity to correct itself, the Dartmouth standard for joking about such things seems to have been lowered.

### **Creeping Coedism's Vox Clamantis in Absurdo: The Jack-O-Lantern and Its Response to the Admittance of Females to the College**

For example, in that same Spring 1967 issue that dealt so effectively with the Vietnam War, the Jack-O-Lantern printed a brilliant satire entitled, "The Perils of Wendy." It was about a Smith student visiting Dartmouth during the historic "Great Day" that had been held in March of 1967, just a few months prior to this issue's publication. The "Great Day" marked the first time Dartmouth had hosted a coeducational activity, not centered around Winter Carnival, Homecoming or some other socially oriented calendar event, but rather dedicated purely to an

intellectual discussion of literature. According to Dartmouth History Department Chair Mary Kelly, "400 women from Colby Sawyer, Mount Holyoke, Smith, and Wellesley came to the College" to talk with male Dartmouth students about "books ranging from Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* to Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (Kelley, 3). There were misogynistic undertones to the D's coverage of the "Great Day"—the "oldest college newspaper" fulfilling its epithet by always referring to female students as "girls," while the male students were simply "students." Not to mention, the even more pejorative comments made by students about the "'creeping coedism'" (Kelley, 2) that experiments such as this represented at Dartmouth. The Jack-O-Lantern, on the other hand, had an amusing and highly ironic take on the situation, with "The Perils of Wendy."

Essentially, the main character of this story, Wendy, arrives at Dartmouth in search not only of stimulating dialogue about novels and critical theory, but also of a good time with a choice male undergraduate. We first encounter Wendy exiting a nameless fraternity, having abandoned her inattentive date, whereupon she meets an approachable-looking student, who, the narrator tell us, is actually a timid athlete, worried about maintaining his upscale reputation within the Dartmouth community, since, after all, "his picture almost always [appears] in the paper after a big game" (*Jacko*, Vol. I, 3, 1967: 3). The next student Wendy encounters is a more artsy type, seated around a bevy of "creative-looking youths whom she overheard discussing the 'current revolution in campus morals'" (*Ibid*, 3). Putting the merits of the "Great Day" to the test, and "[s]ince she was already as good a Jacobin as any" (*Ibid*, 3), Wendy asks to join the discussion, hoping to befriend the creative-looking artsy guy. One of his friends "fled in horror, his Botticellian locks streaming madly from his fleeting head" (*Ibid*, 3), while Wendy's would-be mate "stroked his chin calmly, found his hirsutinal culture reassuring, and in a grand gesture, invited the opposition to sit down" (*Ibid*, 3). Wendy opens the conversation with the direct, self-revelatory line, "I like a man with a good head on his shoulders. Have you read Reich on orgonology, *The Function of the Orgasm?*" (*Ibid*, 4). The bearded Dartmouth student is noticeably blanched at this, having not only read the book, but apparently never hearing the so-called "opposition" talk about sex in such open, cerebral terms before. Worried the conversation might have practical purpose later on, the shy Dartmouth man sputters some irrelevant comment about "technologically oriented society" (*Ibid*, 4) and its effects on male-female relations. At this, Wendy is nonplussed in her sexual pursuit: "'Let's bring back the good ole days, loser man,' said Wendy, grown giddy with her new and undreamt-of power" (*Ibid*, 4). She then placed her hand on the "beard's" knee and he, as a result, fainted. So much for Dartmouth's "old traditions" failing.

The writer concludes the story with Wendy repairing with yet another potential partner to the latter's dorm room. She sips brandy on his mohair rug, and he shows her "all his sweaters, tingling warmly as his voice seemed to harmonize so well with that of Johnny Mathis emanating from the stereo" (*Ibid*, 4). The mood—however silly and effacing—is set, but does Wendy realize her wish to make it with a Dartmouth man? Of course not. He curls up on his bed, clutching his "St. Bernard" stuffed animal, and begs her to read him "The Tugboat That Could," warning, "'I won't go to bed unless you do! I won't, I won't, I won't'" (*Ibid*, 4). Noticing his little fists of fury pounding defiantly in the air, and "sensing instinctively that such people are dangerous when excited" (*Ibid*, 4), Wendy placates the childish Dartmouth student, and we finally realize her purpose in this story, and, indeed, the purpose of any visiting woman to Dartmouth before coeducation: to lull the frightened, sexually intimidated Peter Pans of the Big Green into a pre-coital (and anti-coital) deep sleep. On her way out, Wendy makes sure "not to turn off the little green night-lite" (*Ibid*, 4) and all is ostensibly safe again for the callow, male Dartmouth undergrad.

This story was a very clever way to illustrate the more ridiculous disadvantages to having an all-male student body at Dartmouth. As Kelley points out, in 1968, after the advent of "Coed Week," which was a lengthening of the original "Great Day" program, "One student from Vassar told the D that 'most of the older guys seem to have forgotten how to talk casually to a woman—especially in the middle of the week. They seem to think we're all verboten—either married or someone else's date'" (Kelly, 3).

Yet when the Jack-O-Lantern did give pre-coed Dartmouth men a more aggressive romantic edge, it always ended in humiliating failure. The Fall, 1968 magazine had a pictorial quiz called "The Dartmouth Gentleman's Guide to Weekend Etiquette." It briefly limned the need for "male manners," what with the forthcoming Winter Carnival that year, during which "[visiting] charming, sophisticated young ladies should not be subjected to the atmosphere which pervades an all-male campus" (*Jacko*, Vol. III, 1, 1968: 10). A crash course in proper male behavior was thus needed to keep the cruder members of the species from alienating those women not already alienated by the shrinking violets assayed in "The Perils of Wendy." One frame depicts a Dartmouth student and his date dining in Thayer Hall, with the former wearing his spaghetti dinner on his head and the latter wearing a look of tried patience on her face. The options for "What's wrong with this picture?" include, "(a) No Dartmouth man should ever take his date to Thayer Hall; (b) The knife should be held in the right hand, the fork in the left; (c) This man should have combed his hair prior to dinner" (*Ibid*, 10). The "Gentleman's Guide" calls to mind some of the actual comments made by Dartmouth students who, while championing coeducation, nonetheless acknowledged some of the male liberties taken for granted within the single-sex framework. Kelley quotes one 1963 D editorial that candidly stated: "'it is true that without women we feel free to be grosser, grubbier, less mature, more irresponsible, and in general less like thinking human beings...But is this what we came to college for?'" (Kelley, 2).

A year after the Jack-O-Lantern "Gentleman's Guide" parody appeared, The Trustee Study Committee on the Education of Women was established to help examine the possibility of coeducation. Its findings concluded that, in the words of Professor Kelley, "coeducation was not only a possibility, it was a necessity if Dartmouth College was to maintain its reputation as an outstanding liberal arts college" (Kelly, 3). This sentiment no doubt resonated with the Jack-O-Lantern in the following months, as a new decade brought with it frenzied student discussion—and anticipation—of coeducation.

In May, 1968, the Jack-O-Lantern incorporated the modern debate over coeducation into the historic mythos of Dartmouth itself—by writing a mock diary of the College's founder Eleazer Wheelock. Often the subject of hagiographic biography due to his alleged progressivism in seeking to educate Native Americans, Wheelock is here seen as vehemently—and, given his time period, anachronistically—anti-coeducation. Most likely the iconographic embodiment of the intransigent, conservative alumnus, Wheelock describes men who have had little to heavy exposure to women as though he were diagnosing them with a dreaded disease. The diary entry is divided into four prescriptive categories of female avoidance and degree consequences. "Pure Avoidance" is described as the summit of puritanical, male self-sacrifice, forsaking all contact with women. "Harmless Association" is the justifiable but minimized interaction with "office receptionists, store clerks and your friend's date." "Semi-Permanent" is a man's heavy involvement with a "Venus Fly Trap" or woman; and "Permanent" is the lost cause: "when the quality of life has degenerated to such a point that the poor fellow is subjected to an every-day live-in (marriage or otherwise) with one or more females" (*Jacko*, Vol. III, 3, 1968: 4) Harkening



back to anti-communist hysteria of previous issues, this parody seems to cast Dartmouth coeducation in similar light: propaganda being disseminated by leftist academics and radical male students.

Incidentally, there were a lot of both around this time. Kelley cites a survey conducted in 1971, which said that 88% of Dartmouth students at that time were in favor of coeducation (compared to 91% of the faculty). Not surprisingly then, in Fall, 1970 issue of the Jack-O-Lantern, which was a parody of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, more eagerly anticipates the now very real prospect of admitting women to Dartmouth:

"Dartmouth ushered in its 3rd Big Green century and flies were flagging [sic]...The Coeducation Committee is faced with the somewhat unique problem of finding a way to admit 1,000 young women to a small, New England, liberal arts school for men while preserving Dartmouth's distinctive atmosphere, that of a small, New England, liberal arts school for men (*Jacko*, Vol. IV, 1, 1970: 1).

The editors of this issue also take a swipe at College President John G. Kemeny, who they claim, "recently stated that in the near future will say how near in the future the [Coeducation Committee's] report will be out" (*Ibid*, 1). Little did they know the following year, Kemeny would make good on his promise for imminent results, with the November 21 on-air WDCR announcement of the Trustees' decision to make Dartmouth both coeducational as well as operational on a year-round basis under the so-called "D-Plan."

In the immediate months following the announcement, the Jack-O-Lantern put out a Spring, 1971 issue that already began to show signs of strain in the quality of coeducation humor. In fact, one could argue the humor magazine was now biting the hand that had fed it for so long, opting for more jokes at the expense of college women, rather than at the administration and the patriarchal mindset in general, which had strongly opposed coeducation. One satire, another pictorial piece, attempted to illustrate the quintessential "Ivy League Girl." She wore "baubles and beads" on her wrist; she smoked cigarettes—or to more accurately describe the parody, she held them between her fingers—in order to appear sophisticated and urbane; and of course, she toted around the requisite biography of Susan B. Anthony (*Jacko*, Vol. IV, 3, 1970: 15). While I wouldn't call this utterly tasteless humor, it does seem poorly timed on the part of the Jack-O-Lantern: if it was a prognostication of what the incoming female class of 1972 would look like, it certainly wasn't making that class feel terribly welcome.

In addition to the "Ivy League Girl," there was a similar article in the Fall, 1972 issue of the Jack-O-Lantern, which summarized the characteristics of female undergraduates from the neighboring Twelve Colleges. It is strange that the editors would have to look beyond their own backyard at this point, with 177 first year female students enrolled at Dartmouth that year. Yet this passé take on stereotypical women from all-female universities was included.

The article described the Colby Sawyer curriculum, for example, as "geared to teaching females the rudiments of making the opposite gender feel superior." The assessment of Green Mountain Junior College is far more virulent: "There are more cows than people in Vermont and, if you don't believe it, this is utter proof" (*Jacko*, Vol. V, 1, 1972: 6) And Smith girls are, of course, proper to a nauseating (and apparently, alliterative) degree: "One meets the Right people here if one says the Right thing and has enough tact not to trump an ace...Prudish primness is

perpetually pumped into blatantly bland females and the total effect leaves one wondering whether one has gone to Emma Willard or Farmington by mistake" (*Ibid*, 6).

I speculated that the partial reason for this creative nadir was due to something more the subject of controversy at Dartmouth today: the Greek system. Indeed, the directorates from 1970 to 1974 credit many of the same names as editors and contributors. And in the Winter Carnival issue of 1974, social affiliations within the Jack-O-Lantern were made explicit in self-referential parody. One pictorial article, entitled, "How the Grinch Stole Carnival," depicts an alienated and lonely editor-in-chief of the Dartmouth newspaper, plotting to destroy "all the Winter Carnival fun for those pesky Jacko fraternity brothers" (*Jacko*, Vol. VI, 2, 1974: 11).

Though there is hardly any concrete evidence to support a correlation between the Greek-dominated staff of the Jack-O-Lantern and the offensive, pandering humor that would come to define the magazine's post-coed conception of women and gender relations in general, there is something to be said for fraternities' notorious lack of diplomacy and goodwill in tolerating marginalizing groups within the Dartmouth community. Kelley mentions an incident that took place during Green Key in 1975, wherein members of Theta Delta entered the Hums annual songwriting and recital competition. Their song, called "Our Cohogs," was commentary made about the role of women at Dartmouth, articulated in familiar terms: they were "'all here to spoil our fun.'" (Kelley, 10). So perhaps there is something to be said for institutionalized misogyny finding its way into the Jack-O-Lantern Humor Society in the early and mid 70's.

## Conclusion

In studying the light-hearted responses to both the Vietnam War and Dartmouth coeducation, I was struck by how similar the components of humor were thirty years ago, as compared with those of today. If the purpose of studying history is to avoid repeating it, then this project is a flop. As a current editor of the Jack-O-Lantern, I've seen with a great sense of awe how satire through the decades has repeatedly made clowns out of established authority figures, unapologetically punctured cherished social conventions, and happily deflated overblown feelings of collective earnestness in the pages of this magazine. As would be expected of any century-old publication, the Jack-O-Lantern has had its fair share of comedic triumphs as well as tasteless disappointments; and yet the magazine, as well as the society of creative people behind it, have doubtless made satire a force to be reckoned with at this institution. Here's hoping the future is as tumultuous, groundbreaking and laughable as the past.

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[1] I do realize I am propping myself up as a sort of retrospective cultural arbiter for comedy. In defense of this self-appointed role, I'd say it's the duty of each successive youth generation to judge the tastes and fashions of its parent's generation. I'm providing a necessary and well-precedented service.

## ADDENDUM

### Important Supplement to the Above History

On July 5th, 2008, the Jack-O-Lantern received an email from Richard Livingston '68 who, along with fellow Dartmouth student Al Skean '68, served as Co-Editor of the Jack-O-Lantern from Spring 1967 to Spring 1968, concerning some inconsistencies in the above paper. The Jack-O-Lantern Editor-In-Chief at that time Dylan Kane '09 replied to this message offering to add Livingston's corrections as a supplement to the paper. To this, Livingston replied that he had no objections to this, but wanted to consult his fellow editor Skean first to see if he had any additional comments. This is where the history runs dry, and the Jack-O-Lantern does not currently have any record of Livingston or Skean reaching out again, nor of Livingston's corrections being added to Weiss's paper. On December 18th, 2019, Skean [passed away](#). After years of both being missing, the Jack-O-Lantern has rediscovered Weiss's original paper as well as Livingston and Kane's message chain. We would like to return Weiss's paper to the Jack-O-Lantern website, but feel that it is important that we include Livingston's corrections as well. In the event that any contributions from Skean come to the Jack-O-Lantern's attention, we will happily add them to this document. The relevant portions of Livingston's message are as follows:

*"I understand that you are working on a history of the Jack-O-Lantern. Coincidentally, I was amazed while Internet surfing one day to come across a history paper by Mike Weiss concerning the Jack-O during our era of 1967-68.*

*I would like to make a few clarifications about that. Al Skean and I were co-editors for the 12 months running from Spring 1967 to 1968. We ran several articles that made fun of the Pentagon and war in general. However, we did not have a consistent editorial policy against the Vietnam war. It would have been impossible to enforce any kind of editorial policy given the very loose organization of the Jack-O at the time. It was hard enough to get the staff to produce enough publishable material on any subject to get out a complete issue.*

*The other point concerns the urban legend that Robert Reich was on the Directorate of the Jack-O during that period. This is absolutely untrue for 1967-68. He had no involvement with us. I think he did get a cartoon published in his freshman year, but that was about all. In fact we took to publishing jokes about his insatiable lust for power. Also a key plot element in the Shakespearean play about Winter Carnival "The Awefull Tragedie of King Chilperic" (Feb 1967) was based upon an episode from his reign as freshman class president. This was when he over enthusiastically booked too many busloads from women colleges for a mixer."*

For an organization as old as the Jack-O-Lantern, we believe it's important that we maintain an understanding of our own history, in order to provide our actions context within a larger institutional narrative and to prevent us from making mistakes that have already been made in the past again. For this purpose, we display this historical information on our website to acknowledge our past and ideally learn from it.