

Thursday, September 29, 2005

Dear Editor,

My years at PA were very important to me and I have always been enormously grateful for the opportunity to have four years at such a wonderful school. However I have had no association with PA since the election of George W, due to my disgust with the pride shown by my alma mater in producing the worst-educated president in our history.

My last visit to the school was for the 15th reunion in 1988, before the first Bush presidency. I was dismayed at the time at the preening shown by so many in the PA community even then at association with the Bushes; but the situation had yet to worsen with the election later that year.

Let us remember that the central moral focus of President W was established early in his life—as our school motto would suggest. It seems he learned not from his neglected classes but from facts on the ground; that it's not what you know but who you know, as well as who your parents are and how much money you have. He was endlessly rewarded for his birth and saw no advantage in a life of scholarship or intellectual or artistic development. What he needed to know, *as taught to him very effectively at PA*, was the names of his classmates. Hail Fellow Well Met. These names he memorized throughout his school career, neglecting all else. He didn't get into PA by studying, any more than for Yale or Harvard; rather he displaced intelligent and diligent students less well-born even as he displaces a qualified leader in the seat he now holds. Thus Affirmative Action of the Old School—them that has, gets.

This is not without consequence. What he learned at PA he now has applied to government. Notice that throughout his administration, former heads of a long list of agencies who actually studied their fields and had much experience, were fired and replaced by those who had paid the required bribes (to campaign chests) and who knew the right Old Boys. They had memorized their frat brother's names just as W did. As a result there has been an exodus of talented civil servants in disgust. Witness the results in Louisiana, if the rest of the world is too far away to notice—a world amazed at our picking such a provincial and ignorant character.

I'm sure that my small statement is of no consequence, since it has no economic impact. There can be, for instance, no boycott of alumni contributions in protest, since W serves the moral code of the fundamentally selfish corporate community—of which PA is an extension. There will come a time all too soon when his running of this country, and its economy, into the dirt will come home to roost. When it no longer rains on our crops, people will not have food to eat; then they will regret the destruction of our climate engineered by those for whom *during his PA years* W was an enthusiastic cheerleader.

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