

"SNIP, scrunch, wire, fluff. Snip, scrunch, wire, fluff." These horrible words haunt SOU coeds as avid preparations for Homecoming get under way.

In case your experience with pom-poms ('scuse us, Mr. Webster, but that's a campus colloquialism) is limited, these are the steps one follows in the production of those oh-so-necessary staples of Homecoming festivities—the house decoration.

Surely, this sort of work must promote unity, you say . . . and creativeness. True, everything is most united 'n' creative 'n' copacetic for the first hour or two sacrificed for the good of the group. However, the novelty soon wears off, and the whole process becomes an ordeal to be overcome as quickly as possible.

Anywhere from 5,000 to 25,000 pom-poms go into the fantastic extravaganzas.

Most discouraging is the fact that pom-poms are strictly preliminary. While the feminine 'n' fragile are indoors snipping, scrunching, wiring and fluffing (one has adequate opportunity to become an expert in each of these four steps; a sort of human assembly line process is often adopted), 'tis necessary for the more stalwart of us to turn mechanic, carpenter, and electrician. Your life has been relatively simple if you've never been confronted with the task of molding a hunk of chicken wire around a piece of wood in order to have same resemble a dog, doughnut, or dandelion. This is especially difficult when one's experience at this sort of thing has been restricted to helping big brother build his entry for the model airplane contest 14 years ago.

Traditionally simple "rah-rah, let's beat the opposition" ones depicting a football player and some character symbolizing the other school are a thing of the past. There is no stopping the dog-eat-dog competition. In this day and age, Homecoming alums are dazzled by an octopus spread over the entire yard, an amazingly realistic, 30-foot buffalo, a train moving on a track.

Motion is a must! Whether it's a winking eye, waving hand or something more elaborate, no group with any hopes of copping a prize would consider a decoration without animation of some sort.

Attractive? Yes! Impressive? Definitely! What alum doesn't enjoy returning to the alma mater to discover that organized houses have erected gigantic displays which look as if they belonged in the Mardi Gras celebration. But, are the final dividends—usually appearing as a finished product for no longer than two days—worth the investment?

Books are necessarily sloughed; grades sink. Any professor who has the ridiculous opinion that college is for learning and schedules a quiz a day or two before Homecoming is greeted with cries of anguish: "Please, I am required to work all night on our Homecoming decoration . . . there just isn't any time at all to study!"

Neglect of one's health goes hand-in-hand with neglect of the books. It is not at all unusual to drive past houses at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning the day before judging and see exhausted figures twisting pom-poms through chicken wire or frantically trying to discover why their motor won't function. Hollow eyes accented by dark circles and a great increase in coffee consumption are the rule rather than exception in days preceding this great event.

Through all this discombobulation, as the Homecoming chairman screams for more wire-twisters, the treasurer is pacing the floor (or more likely, front yard), eyeing the widely-strung array of perishable booty with dollar signs clicking mentally through her brain. A limit of \$200 per house is placed on the decoration. Nevertheless, it is generally conceded that a little fudging on bills is not too strictly reprimanded. Thus you have \$200 or more invested in a mass of crepe paper and chicken wire which can be devastated in minutes by a sudden downpour or Oklahoma windstorm.

Another case in point: the purpose of all this. Way back 'when,' the main consideration was welcoming of the alums and bringing their families back to the University to recall 'n' reminisce. Somewhere along the line, though, a mingling of purposes occurred, and it is fairly obvious that winning the trophy emerged as chief goal. Defeat can be right bitter when you've stretched your budget more than a little just to land the gold symbol of superiority for your trophy case.

Is there a solution to this seemingly unending period before Homecoming which is obviously detrimental to budgets, health and scholarship alike? Many suggestions are circulating the campus this year. Let fraternities and boys dorms alternate years with sororities and girls dorms. Try dividing the campus up into two groups, letting each group decorate if they so desire every other year. Go back to the simple, inanimate decorations of the good old days.

A change is definitely in order. I say if nothing can be done about these oversized monstrosities which any time now may interfere with sky routes, let's eliminate Homecoming decorations entirely!

*a once-hallowed affair
is now an annual debate.*

DECORATION



Nay-sayer Sue Barton is a Chi Omega, managing editor of the Oklahoma Daily, and will graduate this June.

YEAH...?



ALL of us alum quarterbacks expect action and color, on the playing field and around campus—especially at Homecoming.

Many a husband is adjured early that week, "Let's be sure to get down to Norman early, Joe, and see all the house decorations before the traffic gets bad. We can pick up Jody and drive around together before we have lunch at her house."

Who'd take that away from bill-footing parents who more than likely stuffed chicken wire statues themselves in their own time here?

Or further back in limbo on the Sooner campus, they not only decorated the front porches but constructed fairly mobile floats that conveyed costumed members of their residence group in sunlit splendor (if it didn't rain) down Asp, along Boyd, and onto the hallowed turf of the stadium itself at halftime.

Themes for these prehistoric floats varied from vague Grecian to theoretical Indian. One canon governed selection of float riders, if memory serves. Only the prettiest girls in the house, and the handsomest or funniest-looking boys—depending on tableau topic—got to take stances on broadbacked, flatbed trucks hired for the occasion. Glamorizing a truck took some doing, too, we'd like to remind contemporary students who groan that Homecoming decorations are just *too much*.

It was simpler then, of course, because nobody had devised anything fancier to do with crepe paper than to cut and twist strips, and nobody had invented glitter. Therefore nobody could get any wholesale from a pledge's uncle in an adjoining state.

What you couldn't do with crepe paper in standard colors bought in Norman emporiums and with Rit-dyed costumes hurriedly culled from rush week stunt castoffs, you just skipped. (I can't remember anybody who rented costumes from Oklahoma City for anything in the '20s except perhaps plantation belle-and-beau get-ups for the KA Dixie balls.

And this brings up a possible explanation for today's tepid enthusiasm among students for Homecoming decorations. Fraternity and sorority house parties have gone in for such elaborate decorations for their traditional and seasonal dances that likely much of the interest and energy is drained off from the campuswide make-believe settings. Almost every group has a spate of special parties during the year calling for fake waterfalls in the lobby or live circus sets in the back yard. After the underlings build a few South Sea Islands and feudal castles for house dances, they understandably lose steam for Homecoming folderol.

Students today who spend too many hours and lose too much time from studies conjuring up Homecoming decorations that dance and play like the fountains at Versailles, might consider scaling the whole Gargantuan effort down a bit. They could do so and still keep the spirit of pep-on-the-old-campi reasonably intact to gladden Homecoming visitors. And this is the object of Homecoming decorations; not to win prizes.

Why the men's houses pull out of the plan every few years and leave the girls high and dry to swing the whole show, I can't imagine, chivalry being their prerogative and all.

Of course, I understand that boys build a lot of the girls' pink—or should I say white elephants and rhinestoned satellites (and those boys are especially handy with rented electric motors!). But in all fairness, the joyous spectacle of O.U. decorated from Jenkins to Chautauqua and South College ought to be coeducational, it would seem.

If every organized house would build, not Jo Mielziner stage production sets, but moderate and colorful house decorations within a reasonable cost limit, all dorms and Greek houses, men's and women's, could still present a festive "Welcome Alumni" front. Everybody in the act and nobody in the red, either scholastically or financially.

Frankly, as a faculty member and offside sounding board of sorts, I hear a lot of pretty valid complaints from tired students who build the elaborate and highly competitive house decorations now in vogue.

Those gaudy, gorgeous, brittle, soluble concoctions you admire out the car window as you pass, take a whale of a lot of pompons made after study hall. And not every house has an uncle in the chicken wire business.

Notwithstanding, here's hoping the collegians won't give up Homecoming decorations—not just for the show and color they provide, either.

Altogether aside from pleasing the eyes of returning grads is the fact that building the live cartoons as a group effort, knits some ties that will bring these same young people back some years hence to clap each other on the back and do their own remembering.

It's not what you do alone while in college that pulls you back to the campus a decade or generation later. It's in the hope of finding someone who worked with you on something—got into the same scrapes—hated the same prof—wore the same size shirt or skirt—OR bruised fingers on the same papier mache Homecoming mammoth.

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