

## **Jewett Speech, by Harry Antonio**

A friend of mine asked me earlier this year if I was going to cut my hair after graduation. I told him no. The same question was posed to me this semester and I said maybe. A week ago it was asked again, and I said yes; the business world tends to frown on a long haired hippie. The reality of the world after graduation is finally starting to settle in with me, as I know it is for many of you. And it's not an easy reality. A lot of us are afraid. I know I am. Some of us are afraid of new locations, some of grad schools, challenging jobs, different lives. I'm afraid of barbers. I stand here, a man of 22 years, about to receive his college diploma and go off into the world, and I'm afraid of getting a hair cut. I'm afraid because I don't want to lose what I've spent the last four years growing. There are a lot of memories in this hair. A lot of firsts. A lot of A's, some B's, and more than a strand or two of letters I'd rather not mention. A lot of memories. From the roots to the tips they go back, all the way to freshman year.

I remember being very excited, coming here. The dorms had recently been wired with additional broadband lines for internet access, and the college had just given us free T-shirts, with the words, Marietta College, printed in bright, white letters across a navy blue background. Mine was a size too big, but I figured I had a lot of growing to do. The growing first

started with all of you. In white water rapids, while the sun was turning my skin a brighter shade of red than my hair, we made friendships we thought would last a lifetime. Eagerly we tore off smaller and smaller corners of the same piece of paper to shove into pockets already crammed with numbers. Later on, in business 101, we would learn that this was called networking. Our newly formed network soon descended on the rigors of college academics, with a little help from our advisor friends. The year threatened to settle into mediocrity for its remainder, but fortunately international conflict came to the rescue, and we bonded over supporting, and protesting, the pending war in Iraq. By the end of the year each of us had found our own niche, combed out our own style. Mine was bordering dangerously on an afro, but I was hoping gravity would kick in during the summer.

In the fall we came back; most of us after a summer working low paying jobs that, we were assured, built character, others, after a summer of petitioning the academic standards committee to let us back in (thank you Sue Dewine). In our sophomore year, we witnessed highlights of improvement to the look of Marietta, the most noticeable of these being the long awaited construction project that finally took shape as the Dyson-Baudo Recreation Center. It was great. It offered something for everybody: weights, track, gym. For me, it meant karate classes, which I particularly

liked because it gave me exercise, peace of mind, and a free T-shirt, complete with white lettering on a navy blue background. But the rec' center wasn't all; while we had been away, Gilman had gotten shiny. Chartwells had swooped in, and for a few weeks, we were able to stop complaining about how bad the food was, and instead debate gross overestimates of how much had been spent on new tables, and exactly how many lobsters could have been purchased with the money. Meanwhile, one block over, a new science center was doing for the mind what Dyson-Baudo did for the body. Rickey provided bigger classrooms, encouraged experiment with new labs, and reaffirmed Marietta College's Commitment to the sciences. But highlights fade from view with time, and it would not be long before we ran into some knots.

We experienced our first tangles on September 18<sup>th</sup> of our junior year, when we awoke to our new next-door neighbor, the Ohio River. Living on the first floor of A&H at the time, I remember moving my belongings off the floor and onto my bed in an optimistic, but ultimately futile attempt to avoid the waters. At first there was hope, but the waters kept rising. And rising. And rising. I think it was sometime around when the water started pouring in the windows that we realized maybe the sandbags weren't going to be quite as effective as we had hoped. But surprisingly little was lost. When it

counted, I'm proud to be able to say that we were there for each other.

Massive amounts of possessions were moved to higher ground in time to be saved. And it wasn't all work. To the delight of many, with the flood came Marietta's largest wading pool, for the bold a swimming pool. Sure, you had to get hepatitis shot afterward, but that's a good shot to get anyway.

And I was glad to see the so-called moat around Herman finally live up to its name, as thespians claimed the island in the name of the schwa. Of course, my favorite part of the whole thing was the post-flood meeting. Lots of cooperation celebrated and good cheers. I remember it well because they handed out free T-shirts to us, white lettering, navy blue background.

Though, some people did lose things, and fortunately, some of that was reimbursed by the generosity of alums who have stayed true to their school.

It was hard when those things were sentimental and irreplaceable, though two months later, we learned that possessions were the easiest of things to lose. On November 28<sup>th</sup>, we lost our scholar, our leader, and our friend, Mike Conte. The loss was greater on some but felt by all, and made us all consider our own mortality. A College icon was next with the death of baseball coach, Coach Schaly. Schaly, who turned Marietta College into a national power during his 40 years with the Etta Express, died March 9, 2005. The College lost a great coach and a good friend that day.

Senior year, like the last, started with water, but far south of here. Though a group of 39 students and faculty, remembering our own flooding, spent their winter break to help. On campus, we were having our own problems with facebook showing a face of Marietta College students not everyone was happy with. With the shouting from students of free speech and from administration of misrepresentation, it was enough to drive a student to go to class drunk and steal from Izzy's. So, confronted with facebook crises, we did the most logical thing we could; we held an all campus meeting on the impending reaccreditation visit. And, we talked a little about facebook. But it was a good meeting, because they did hand out free T-shirts. Though these were navy blue lettering, on white. That's what I really like about this college, someone's always finding little ways to change things up, keep it fresh. All the accreditation work paid off though. For one thing, that piece of paper we're about to get is going to hold its value a lot better. Though I hope we don't let our thirst for knowledge end today with that diploma. This year, in leaving Marietta College, we are joined by a teacher and poet we have all come to admire: Dr. Carol Steinhagen. Yet even after her retirement she will be pursuing a masters degree in poetry. I hope we can all follow her example of lifelong learning.

I said I'm afraid and I am. I'm afraid that without my timeline, these last four years won't exist. When I do get my hair cut, when I lose the proof, will I still have the memories I've built here? Will I be able to recall all I've related to you today? If someone took away your diplomas, would you still have the knowledge? If someone took away your yearbooks, would you still remember the faces? I hope so. I hope we all can remember. Remember the formulas, remember the philosophy, but most importantly, remember what we've learned from each other.