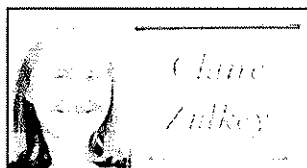

THE HOYA

Tuesday, September 26, 2000

FEATURES

'Hoya Saxa' Experiences Too Far Apart



Alternating each week, one senior and one freshman pen a column on the life and times of their respective classes. This week, Claire Zulkey, a senior in the College, offers her perspective on life on the Hilltop.

Last week, Charlotte Nichols, the freshman who shares this space with me, opened her column by asking, "How long has it been?"

"How long has it been since what?" I thought. Oops. Not until about three-quarters of the way through the column did I realize she was talking about our school fight song.

This is a very poor showing for a senior like myself, but I have never been that great with the fight song anyway. I am impressed that freshmen know it already. I couldn't recite the lyrics until sophomore year, when I joined New Student Orientation. I figured, erroneously, that I would be perfect as a shining beacon to guide terrified freshmen through their first days at Georgetown. Instead, I realized that I still didn't like getting-to-know-you games, I did not like wearing the same T-shirt for three days straight, and that transfer students really don't want to go through NSO again. Anyway, for NSO training, we were forced to memorize the fight song, or else we wouldn't receive our T-shirts — or freshmen.

I guess it faded from memory. It pretty much becomes a bunch of "dum da dums" after "It's been so long" and picks up again right at "But the yell of all the yells, the yell that wins the day is the HOYA HOYA SAXA!"

Let's face it, the entire point of the song is to yell "Hoya Hoya Saxa!" at the end of it. It's the best part, it's the most fun and, if you ask me, it's one of the best cheers out there. It's simple, it sounds great when you yell it all tough-like, you can split it up between two groups and it's even a little academic. Did you know that "Hoya" is a Greek word and not actually a breed of bulldog? It took me a while to catch on to that one.

The problem, if you ask me, is that we don't use the cheer enough in non-athletic situations. Let me tell you about my best Hoya Saxa experience. I'm sorry for all the underclassmen who weren't there for this, but I imagine that

many of my senior friends remember this:

Freshman year, 1997 — Many Resident Assistants had tricked their students into going to the free National Symphony Orchestra concert performed every Labor Day weekend. I say tricked because everybody knows that freshmen try as hard as they can to resist any interesting cultural projects RAs try to arrange for them. We actually may have had a good time, even though we resisted.

Of course, the obvious thing to do after being exposed to patriotic music and the National Mall is to head back to Georgetown and negate the worthwhile activity by heading to the bars. For some reason, Georgetown Station threw open its doors to all students, underage, of age or pretending to be of age. Music was blasting, and sober or not, students were piled up on the tables and bar, dancing away. Maybe everybody was excited that the Class of 2001 had arrived. Maybe they were excited that I was there ... yes, that must be it. Anyway, out of nowhere, the bar started thundering.

Some yelled "Hoya," some yelled "Saxa," some yelled both, but the bar was filled with the Georgetown cheer. Everybody was doing it, and everybody was loving it. And I can probably speak for my class when I say that I was excited that this was college, and this is what you do at Georgetown. You listen to a free concert under the looming Capitol, go to a bar, dance away on top of tables and cheer.

Well, it's all been downhill since then. Not since then have I enjoyed the "Hoya Saxa" so much. Not that I've been doing it much. I'm not sure why, but it's just not as special when being coaxed to do it by cheerleaders at games. My heart just isn't in it, by the time the entire crowd participates, the team is losing, or there is a time out, or the game's over, or something.

I'm certainly not going to preach about a lack of school spirit because then I'd be a hypocrite. I admit that the closest I came to the football game Saturday was using the bathroom at Yates while tailgating. I make macaroni and cheese with my pots; I don't bang on them at the soccer games. You won't catch me throwing on facepaint or wearing a basketball on my head or such nonsense at a basketball game —okay, a lot of times you just won't catch me at a basketball game. I'm too busy, uh, studying.

Okay, as a senior, I should try to be more of a supporter in athletic arenas, but why do we have to limit school spirit to sports? I'm hoping that we can make this year a better "Hoya Saxa" year. Next time we catch ourselves in a particularly Georgetown moment, whether it's at Block Party, in Leavey, in New South or, okay, even at a bar, let's do a little "Hoya Saxa." We could even do it at football games without cards instructing us to do so. I think it'll be fun, and it'll be great school spirit to cheer for old George-something.