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## Echo responses

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## Echo responses

The article in the spring edition of *Furman about the 1955 Echo* ("Echo of the Past") generated many responses.

The story recounted the decision to ban distribution of the student literary magazine in part because its editors bypassed their faculty advisor and in part because of its controversial content. The Spring 1955 *Echo* contained articles supporting integration and criticizing church hypocrisy and Southern Baptist practices — all hot-button issues likely to anger state Baptists already upset with Furman over such things as dancing and fraternities on campus. The furor over the withholding of the publication led to a flurry of local and national publicity.

Many requested copies of the 1955 *Echo*, which was published this spring in conjunction with the 2005 edition. A sampling of reader comments follows.

What a lot of memories you stirred up!! That was my sophomore year, and I was slated to take the following year in France, but my feelings were often focused on the anguish my father was going through about the conflicts raging at Furman amongst those who were its leaders.

My father was Dean Alfred E. Tibbs, and he was often placed on the line facing trustees who wished to see fraternities abolished and other special targets eliminated. I don't know if he had anything to do with the *Echo* decision, but I know what his basic liberal principles were, and his meetings with trustees with whom he did not see eye to eye were frequently unpleasant.

He kept little objects on his desk that helped him to keep a firm grip on his feelings, among which were a small cast iron donkey reflecting his political leanings, a series of little dinosaurs and Cro-Magnons from the Field museum in Chicago that demonstrated his Darwinism, and his statue of Socrates. I don't think he ever felt he had to mention why he had those things. They were just there, and I have them now that he is gone.

One day after a particularly difficult meeting I heard him tell my mother, "I couldn't agree with anything, so I just said, 'Let us pray,' and that ended the meeting."

— **Mary Margaret Tibbs Molina '57**  
St. Paul, Minn.

## Article on controversial literary magazine spurs reader interest

I found your article about the 1955 issue of the *Echo* interesting. While before my time at Furman, I remember the era well.

I was 10 years old in 1955 and living in Greenville. Many of the same controversies still existed when I became a Furman student eight years later. I had forgotten that the South Carolina Baptist Convention opposed integration.

Many people outside the South don't realize that there were white Southerners, some Baptists, who supported integration following Brown vs. Board of Education. The 1955 *Echo* spoke for us.

An irony is that many of my students here in Michigan in 2005 have attended high schools that are mostly one race due to *de facto* residential segregation. Today, the 10 most segregated cities in the United States are in the Midwest and Northeast, while a number of the least segregated cities are in the South (source: 2000 Census and University of Michigan).

I am delighted that Furman students took such a courageous stand 50 years ago. The spirit represented by those students and by many faculty and staff members over the years is what, to me, made Furman great. We were taught that it is important "to speak truth to power" even if there is a risk in doing so.

That message is as relevant today as it was then.

— **Alan G. Hill '67**  
Bay City, Mich.

*The writer teaches sociology at Delta College. He taught at Furman from 1979-87.*

Thank you for the excellent article. It was an interesting time, when many of us were much farther ahead in our thinking about segregation than the world will ever know.

As I recall, the rumor was that all the printed issues of the *Echo*, excepting for some stolen away, were dumped off the side of a mountain.

— **Frances Thomas Stelling '57**  
St. Augustine, Fla.

*The writer penned several poems published in the spring 1955 Echo.*

I am a parent of a rising senior. I would love a copy of the 1955 *Echo*.

I think that its re-release, so to speak, is bold in itself and I admire the team behind the effort to track down an original copy and to go several steps further. Thank you for offering it to those



of us who will, hopefully, appreciate it for its historical value as well as giving us a sense of the times.

— **Joan Colglazier**  
Isle of Palms, S.C.

I still remember the feeling of absolute fury I experienced when word spread that the administration had confiscated all copies of the Spring 1955 *Echo*. Your article gave a mature perspective to the entire event. It would be interesting to see if, 50 years later, I still believe the confiscated material did not warrant suppression.

— **Armina Witherspoon Freas '57**  
New York City

Although not a part of the *Echo* staff, I was there, and was aware of the problems, and DID NOT get my copy of the *Echo* — to which I thought I was entitled, because I had paid for it in my student fees.

As I remember, I was not surprised at the administration's unhappiness with the articles, but I was upset that they did not distribute the magazine — because the students had already paid for it! I argued, unsuccessfully, that if they did not distribute the magazine, then each of us students was entitled to a refund.

Some things deserve to be remembered!

— **Herman Williams '55**  
Mineral, Va.