Wal-Mart: The Abomination of the 'Burg

By Cory Anderson
News Editor

Prophecy is being fulfilled! "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation" (Daniel 11:31). The abomination has been set right up here in our beautiful, beloved Harrisonburg. It is also present in neighboring Shenandoah Valley towns such as Winchester and Woodstock. The repugnant abuser is defiling the economy and cultural prism we like to call a good southern town. It is contributing to the oppressive wages belittled upon desperate peasants in Third World countries. Worst of all, the abomination is widely supported by many EMU students and staff, whether they're part of a dialogue group opposing everything the Board of Trustees does or an active member in the Black Student Union, which has yet to actually go on strike.

Two such economically idolatrous figures have been erected in Harrisonburg: one on the south end of town on Route 42 and the other just off Route 33 on the other side of I-81. This new pagan idol has earned a place among the false gods of the past. Baal, Molech, Bel, Asherah; all of these idols are now kidnap-squat compared to this new delinquent boom: Wal-Mart! What started as a "good" store by Sam Walton has evolved into an obnoxious plague eagerly devouring the cultural fabric of our little town.

Winchester is an ideal example of the havoc wreaked upon what was once a very friendly town. In the days before the people of Winchester knew of the foreign idol, they thrived in a consumer-friendly, cultural downtown. Farmers would bring their merchandise into the downtown to sell, and small shops offering all of what you could possibly need could be found within two square miles. Around the downtown was a model residential circle.

Then, one day, a foreign people entered the land and erected a Wal-Mart idol on the edge of the town. The country people who were coming into town couldn't even reach the ring of houses before passing by this abomination. Curious, they began to engage in worship of the demon and support it economically. When the people living in the ring of houses discovered the country folks weren't coming into the downtown, they also became curious and even curiously out of town to shop at this Wal-Mart.

Before long, Wal-Mart beat out the local businesses through unholly price "rollbacks." Then when the downtown had sufficiently suffocated, the Wal-Mart moved in for the kill by raising its prices back up to a level where it could suck the money out of unsuspecting residents and ship it to a far away place. They claim to be "rolling back prices," but all they are doing is making YOU more dependent on their store. Wal-Mart turned into a donut, downtown resembling more a lowly hamlet of a hub of economic activity.

Here's some "Wal-Mart: Tales from the Crypt" stories I've gotten from others of all places and ages first-hand:

- Of the Wal-Mart in Alexandria, VA: "They had to clear out a large trailer park to (build the Wal-Mart), displacing the people who lived there, some all of their lives. All they gave them was $800 each family. That was for their money to find somewhere else to live! That wouldn't even begin to pay the rent for a single month on an apartment in that overpriced area."

- Of Wal-Mart's influence in the Far East: "Most of the products from Wal-Mart also come from China as well as many Southeast Asian countries. It is well documented that the factories in many of these countries use children as young as nine years old. Many are forcefully taken from their homes. They are forced to work 12-16 hours a day, in conditions and paid pocket change. They are housed in horrific/brutal conditions."

- Of Wal-Mart's influence in the USA: "One of the most disgusting facts is the way Wal-Mart makes its workers work. They end up earning your paychecks working 12-16 hours a day. They are not even allowed to take a break every hour."

- Of Wal-Mart's firing employees: "They hired all these cleaning employees and got rid of many of them to make a good impression. She said everyone was shocked and crying; they fired everyone except a few people."

I hope the downtown map in this newspaper issue will encourage you to take advantage of the local shops Harrisonburg has to offer before driving all the way across town to go to Wal-Mart when you can get the same things downtown for half the price. Wal-Mart isn't the only store that you need raise an eyebrow to: just look around at the stores that thrive next to the close vicinity of Wal-Mart and you'll find some very similar practices. Please support your local stores and businesses such as the Red Front grocery, the Good and Hearty store, the Dayton's Farmers Market, and any other stores that may not have the money to support advertising, but rely on you finding their stores and supporting them.

CEO's & Cleaning Tables

By Lindsey Weaver
Columnist

What's in a job? Does where you work or what you do really affect how people look at you? Is a CEO treated differently than a construction worker?

As a good friend of mine recently found out, the answer is a definite YES. In order to get some extra cash in her pocket, she decided to start working in the cafeteria. While this may not affect how she is seen outside of the job, when she does the apron some things start to change. Friends she's had for years walk by without a second glance. She's not even a hello! She may get the occasion side-long glance, but for the most part she has been reduced to a status of invisibility.

All of her co-workers are international students, and when I asked how they treated her she smiled big and said, "They're so great! Everyone is really nice to me. I invited a couple of them to come to our home next time we have people over." Interesting how people she's never met before are treating her better, with more respect and attention, than her "friends" do. Maybe it says something about her co-workers; maybe it says something about you. What? Are you afraid to be associated with her? I guess I had assumed the system of class hierarchy was abolished long ago ... silly me.

But really, what's the reason for this perceived difference? She is working hard, earning money, making new friends, and making all of our lives, well at least those who eat in the caf', easier. So what's the big deal? 'Cmon people, this girl (who is actually quite popular) is the same person that you want to chill with after a soccer game as she is when she's cleaning off tables.

So am I condemning everyone out there who sees a job as a defining characteristic of a person's place in life? Not necessarily, but think of it as more of a challenge I am presenting. Let's open our eyes and be real, kids! A gas station attendant works just as hard as an accountant, yet really does have the same feelings, needs, and aspirations. Take time to make friends with those bold enough to work the undesirable jobs around you. You only should friendship be stronger than a person's occupation, but look out ... you may end up earning your paychecks from them someday.

Wal-Mart repackaging goods returned to the store: "We went there to buy some sleeping bags for camping only to get them home and find that had already been slept in ... at least a few times, because they sort of smelled of dirty feet, and one real bad smell."

We also bought a TV/CRV (for home schooling educational purposes) only to get the box home and find someone's broken, used television set in the box."

- Of Wal-Mart's treatment of employees: "I worked there, and they treat their employees horriably. They hire you, but you can't quit because they wouldn't let me take time off for my cousin's wedding and to finish my semester at college. I asked for the wedding off in the required two weeks prior notice, and I asked for time off to finish college a month in advance, both were turned down by the store manager. When I reported him to the general office, they said, "Well, he is manager and he has the right to say no." What ever happened to their "family first" and "being flexible with their workers" mantra?"

- Of Wal-Mart and firing employees: "They hired all these people and really encouraged them to work real hard for the company and do their "best" to make their opening day a success. So they hired all kinds of workers for the big day, and all the cash stands were full of employees and people were in every department. I sensed something was wrong though, and quit before opening day. I came back only to pick up my check, and I found the store nearly empty! I talked to one of the sales associates (who was still there) and she said, 'Oh you didn't miss a thing. Good for you that you left, because the day after opening day, they fired nearly everyone. It was horrible.' Some of these people left stable jobs, only to be used by this big company for opening day, to make a good impression. She said everyone was shocked and crying; they fired everyone except a few people.

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Homosexuality Issue Is No Joking Matter

Letter to the Editors

I am disturbed at the tone of the September 4 editorial entitled "Wee are going to make housing decisions based on sexual orientation." Why does the title infer this issue of homosexuality is a paranormal joke, a comical scene that makes a mockery of the administration and of man's shortcomings? This newspaper should emphasize the gravity of such occurrences.

What is frustrating about the editorial is the way it places us "homophobes" in thronow by stating Arbaugh played by the rules, but we didn't. This whole debate on whether he was celibate or the meaning of celibate is ridiculous. I believe homosexuality is against God's ways; do you now expect me to permit someone to follow the letter of the law and not the spirit of the law?

This editorial bemoans the lack of clarity from the administration regarding certain faculty members. The real reason there is lack of clarity is because the homosexual lobby has done such a good job confusing the minds of believers. The editorial is right to point out that there is not an open and honest support among the student body for the university's policy, but fails to acknowledge the "silent majority" who refuse to be duped. As a paper for ALL students, do not fail to hear their voices or attempt to misrepresent their views.

Michael Ng
Hillside, NJ