

Ole Miss Goes Bananas

By Rod Dreher, Sept 1, 2017



This week's Confederate flag and statue

(Jiang Hongyan/Shutterstock)

I wondered how long it would take our crackpot culture to come up with a P.C. outrage more stupid than ESPN pulling an Asian announcer named Robert Lee from calling a UVA game. Now, via “The Daily Mississippian” we have our answer:

This weekend, leaders from Ole Miss Greek life convened upon Camp Hopewell in Lafayette County for a three-day retreat designed to build leaders and bring campus closer together. The retreat was cut short Saturday night, however, after three black students found a banana peel in a tree in front of one of the camp's cabins.

The students shared what they found with National Pan-Hellenic Council leaders, sparking a day's worth of camp-wide conversation surrounding symbolism, intended or not. In the midst of the open and sometimes heated discussion, senior accounting major Ryan Swanson said he put the banana peel in the tree when he could not find a trashcan nearby.

Alexa Lee Arndt, interim director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, said she was one of the only university staff members acting in an administrative capacity at the weekend retreat. Monday afternoon, she sent a letter to all campus chapter presidents, council officers and chapter advisers, confirming the incident and outlining the university's plans.

“To be clear, many members of our community were hurt, frightened, and upset by what occurred at IMPACT ... Because of the underlying reality many students of color endure on a daily basis, the conversation manifested into a larger conversation about race relations today at the University of Mississippi,” Arndt wrote in the letter acquired by The DM.

More:

McNeil said her sorority sister then raised her hand to simply ask who put the peel in the tree.

She said Swanson stood up and came forward almost immediately after the question. He apologized and said he did not mean any harm by leaving the peel in the tree.

“I want to sincerely apologize for the events that took place this past weekend,” Swanson said in a statement to The DM on Tuesday night. “Although unintentional, there is no excuse for the pain that was caused to members of our community.

“I want to thank my friends in the NPHC for their candid and constructive conversations that we have continued to have. I have much to learn and look forward to doing such and encourage all members of our university community to do the same. We must all keep in mind how our actions affect those around us differently.”

McNeil said that if the banana peel incident was an accident, people need to consider the effects of their actions versus their intent.

“You see how much fear and how much anger you insight [sic] in black people just from an unintentional image,” she said.

And:

The massive discussion session wrapped up as more and more students stood and left the room – some in tears, some in frustration. NPHC members began texting friends to come and pick them up from the camp since no one had been allowed to drive his or her car up to the retreat. The remainder of the retreat was canceled later that night.

“At that point, we didn’t feel welcome; we didn’t feel safe,” McNeil said. “If we didn’t feel wanted or safe at the camp, our best option was to leave.”

Katrina Caldwell, vice chancellor for diversity and community engagement, said her office was asked to put a plan together to handle the weekend’s incident on campus.

So let me get this straight. Three black students freaked out because they saw a banana peel in a tree while at a mixed-race fraternity-sorority retreat. The entire retreat ground to a halt so everybody could sit around and emote about the banana peel. A frat boy confessed that he had tossed the peel into the tree because he couldn’t find a trash can — then he promptly abased himself for having committed an offense against racial correctness. The freakout got even freakier, with some black students saying they didn’t feel “safe”. Because of a banana peel. Then the entire retreat was cancelled, and now it’s going to be a campus-wide Thing at Ole Miss.

Over a banana peel a frat boy threw into a tree because he couldn’t find a trash can.

This idiot country is losing its mind. Our universities are training students to be total neurotics. If you are an actual adult who wails and gnashes her teeth at the sight of a banana peel, you ought to question whether you are mature enough for college. And if you are an actual adult who lacks the spine to tell students who freak out over banana peels to grow up, you ought to question whether you might be Stuart Smalley.