

New School Meets Old

FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS, JUSTIN Zumsteg, originally from Rochester Hills, Michigan, has been involved with the Galens Smoker — an annual student production known for its ribald parody of Medical School faculty. As a fourth-year student, Zumsteg served as one of the four “czars” in charge of this spring’s show, “Prader-Willy Wonka,” based on the 1971 Gene Wilder movie.

INTERVIEW BY WHITLEY HILL
PHOTO BY J. ADRIAN WYLIE

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THE SMOKER IS DEFINITELY ‘old school’; this is its 92nd year. It started when students and faculty would get together to enjoy skits and smoke cigars — an opportunity to get to know each other outside of the classroom and the wards. The final step in its evolution was in 1962 when Dr. Robert Bartlett suggested the skits be combined into a musical, which is the Smoker’s format to this day.

“By and large, the faculty really enjoys the show. Most of them view being ‘smoked’ as an honor. The Smoker does have a tradition of being a little off-color and irreverent. Over the years, there have certainly been a couple of feathers ruffled along the way. This year, we tried to keep it really fun, nothing that’s going to make anyone uncomfortable.

Well, maybe a little uncomfortable ... ”

—JUSTIN ZUMSTEG

