

The Behrend College Collegian

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Hooters: no place for children

By Anne Rajotte
managing editor

In 1997, years after the women's movement came into mainstream American society, it still seems that there will always be places like Hooters to remind us how far we still have to go. In contemporary culture, Hooters does its part to preserve attitudes women have been trying to defeat for decades.

Hooters, purposefully tacky, caters to men-- with large portions of food, sports on the numerous televisions, and, of course, Hooters girls (not Hooters women) dressed in small tight outfits to bring you your food and beer. To complain about a place with an atmosphere like this may seem trivial, that is, finding problems that really aren't there, but when I was told that families come into this restaurant and say that they want their daughters to grow up to be Hooters girls, I saw definite social consequences.

In an age where many women are struggling to be respected for their intelligence, not merely seen for their bodies, Hooters takes a step back in time. The music played in the restaurant is from the 50's and 60's, possibly a throwback to a time before the women's movement gained the momentum it has today, before sexual harassment was a crime. It could be said that Hooters is just a place to go where men don't have to worry if they are offending women, where they can look openly at attractive women, and just enjoy themselves by being "men". Men can return to a time where it was clear who held the power and it

was perfectly acceptable to see women for their superficial qualities.

I saw children in this restaurant, and was assured that this was a regular occurrence. When parents bring their children to Hooters, a place that reinforces these attitudes, it is instilling a disrespect for women into a whole new generation. Men who grew up in the past were brought up with certain attitudes about women, attitudes that women have long been trying to fight and change.

To have a daughter hear her father say that he wants her to grow up to be a Hooters girl, even if it is only in fun, still sends a dangerous message to young girls. To have a father, who should be encouraging his daughter to excel, say that his expectation of her is to dress up in little outfits and be ogled at by men, will certainly make some kind of impression on her. Do you think that a father would want or even joke about his daughter becoming a stripper? While Hooters girls are far from strippers, the element of using one's body to make money is still present.

While I obviously have some problems with the ideas behind the "Hooters Concept", I can't condemn the women who work there. I feel it is a shame that this is a more lucrative job for women than a regular waitressing job, but taking advantage of this is a woman's prerogative. If men are willing to pay for a little flirting and a little cleavage, that is also their prerogative. Until the attitude of society changes,

attention with sexual content is going to sell. The women who work at Hooters must have some kind of courage to walk into a room of men dressed the way they are.

Kelly Pahel, a waitress at Hooters apparently enjoys her job and said that the other women have a lot of self esteem, and I hope that's true. Maybe they feel good about their bodies, but I wonder how they feel about the way their brains and their personalities are presented, or rather not presented to the customers and the public in general. A woman who worked at Hooters for a short time as a hostess and a food runner said that the waitresses definitely compromised their true personalities for the sake of a higher tip.

Sitting down and making conversation with the customers is a part of this job and this seems to include putting on a front to maintain the image of a "Hooters girl". Do men look beyond the body, or even want to see beyond a body? I suppose that a body may be all they want to see, but a woman is not merely a body. The women who work at Hooters are not generic girls with a pretty face and a nice body.

Pahel admitted that people judge her differently knowing that she works at Hooters, but these judgments are based on stereotypes. She also said that once people come to Hooters, their preconceptions change. This didn't seem to be true for a Hooters customer who admitted that though everyone has different

levels of intelligence, he wasn't thinking about these women's brains.

Even the name "Hooters" doesn't allow women to be seen as individuals. It limits their whole existence to a pair of breasts.

Hooters is, in fact, a part of American culture, or more specifically, a symbol of a part of American culture. It is a symptom of greater problems, problems with the way women are viewed and treated in society. The sexual objectification of women is exemplified by places like Hooters. If a part of a female anatomy is enough to make a restaurant famous, this says a lot about the attitudes that we are still living with at the end of a century in which the role of women has grown so significantly.

The implications and the indications of Hooters are too great to be brushed aside. Families should think hard before they decide that this is an appropriate place for their children. There are real and serious lessons to be learned. Is this an aspiration that we truly want for our daughters? To teach young girls and boys that this is an appropriate and acceptable way to view women, we are reinforcing the vicious cycle of sexism. We can't tell girls one thing and show them the other. Hopefully, girls being taught of their equality and their abilities, and to turn around and believe that a place like Hooters isn't harmful in any way is unrealistic and absurd.

Like it or not Hooters is here to stay. Adults, do what you will, but your children will learn from your example. Are the attitudes towards women at Hooters really what you want your children to learn?

Editorial

The several hundred dollars each resident student must pay before points are even added to their meal plans is only one of a list of concerns the editorial staff has regarding the management of food services on campus.

Considering this initial fee, food prices are in fact higher than local restaurants and grocery stores.

It was also said that the procedures in which points are deducted from a student's account is, in some ways, confusing. Because money is removed in the form of points and not dollars, it is hard to keep track of, as far as how much is spent. So, ending each semester many students are forced to ration what remains on their accounts. This was not a major concern, simply something that could be made easier for students.

One other issue focused mainly on the new Bruno's. While this summer's improvements were much needed, as well as appreciated, some of the better aspects of the past routine were left behind. This includes the lack of a salad bar and the ever popular big screen television.

It appears that the students more concerned with their diet have little selection of nutritious, healthy foods.

Many of these little technicalities will surely be worked out as the year progresses, one problem seems to constantly linger.....The actual price of the food.

Paula Jones offers maddening contradictions

By Marie Cocco

All she really wanted was to be taken seriously. Or so she has said. Yet, from the very beginning, Paula Corbin Jones has provided the maddening contradictions that make that very difficult.

She claimed she went public with her now-famous sexual harassment allegation against President Clinton because she wanted her good name back - even though her name had only surfaced at that point as a semi-anonymous "Paula" mentioned in an obscure conservative publication.

She claimed she was ignored if not rebuffed by liberal-leaning women's groups, a plausible allegation but for the nagging details: Jones has never denied the account of Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, that an early, private meeting to discuss Jones' case was canceled at Jones' behest so she could shop for a dress she wanted for a public appearance.

Faced with the predictable legal maneuvers and stalling tactics the president used to thwart the case, Jones said she only wanted her day in court. So she took the crusade to the Supreme Court - a courageous and risky undertaking that raised serious constitutional questions. It ended with her victory when the high court said a sitting president was not immune from having to defend himself in a civil lawsuit that involved conduct before he took office. Now the perplexing case has taken another turn. Amid what has been described as inner turmoil among her advisers - if not open warfare - Jones has lost the counsel of the two lawyers, Gilbert K. Davis and Joseph Cammarata, who did the most to win for her the credibility she persists in throwing away.

It was these two Virginia lawyers who, on short notice and with little knowledge of her case, managed to get her lawsuit filed in time to beat

the fast-approaching statute-of-limitations deadline. It was they who took on the task of persuading the legal press - and then the mainstream press - to review the particulars of Jones' allegations and determine for themselves whether they are believable. Some, but not all of them, are.

It was these two who won the Supreme Court case that allows the Jones case to go forward. They provided, in the words of federal judge Susan Weber Wright, who granted their request to be taken off the case, "zealous and effective representation."

What more could a plaintiff want?

That is, as it always has been, the question that hangs over the whole Jones affair. She is now back where she began, in the hot embrace of Clinton-hating zealots whose real interest is not in winning a lawsuit or even getting a public airing of the charges (that's been accomplished) but the downfall of a man they simply cannot accept as president of the United States.

"He's a liar, a philanderer and an un-American," Susan Carpenter-McMillan, Jones' new chief guru, has opined. Carpenter-McMillan, a wealthy California conservative activist who made a name for herself in the anti-abortion movement, is now in charge. She is Jones' friend and public relations adviser, a tireless presence and effective spokeswoman on television who sparred regularly and sometimes publicly with the legal team. Carpenter-McMillan now is searching for lawyers who might be willing to take on the case before it goes to trial in May.

Jones has a perfect right to switch lawyers, to continue to insist on a detailed apology the president's lawyer has said will never be forthcoming, to make her own friends and to lie in whatever political bed she chooses.

But she cannot have it both ways. She cannot now argue that



she is a woman done an injustice, who looked wherever she could for help - and then effectively reject the best help she's ever gotten. She cannot now claim that her goal isn't Clinton's downfall, when she chooses to be the willing pawn of those for whom that is the singular,

consuming purpose.

Paula Jones, bitter that women's groups never rallied to her, will never help the cause of those concerned about sexual harassment. And it's not because she's got big hair.

In shredding her own credibility,

she bestows legitimacy on all those who believe that ordinary women who bring charges are flakes, gold-diggers or devious manipulators who are pursuing hidden agendas. The victims of sexual harassment had quite enough trouble being taken seriously before Jones came along.

Cocco is a columnist for Newsday.