

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Greeks respond to election coverage

Dear Editor,
As members of the sororities and fraternities here at Behrend, we want to express our anger and irritation at the anti-Greek attitudes that have prevailed in *Collegian* articles throughout the past year. The editorial and the SGA election article in last week's issue pushed it too far. We do not appreciate the fact that, just because the authors were opinionated against Greek life, that they automatically assumed that we conspired against the rest of the student population to "take over" the SGA elections. Get the facts straight. To those of us that are currently senators and officers of SGA, the editorial was nothing but insulting. SGA is not a Greek toy. In fact, Greek interests are rarely if ever an issue, unless the Panhellenic and Interfraternity Council representatives have business to conduct. We would like to correct the unfounded opinions that were presented as fact last week.

First, there's the issue of the list. You know, the list that the Greeks were apparently forcing everyone to take as they walked into Reed. Right? Wrong. That list was mere campaigning, about which there is nothing illegal unless it is done directly in front of the voting booth. It wasn't. Furthermore, the list was given only to sorority and fraternity members, only so that they would know which candidates were Greek. We did not have to vote for any one of these candidates. The majority of us did not vote directly from the list. Think about it. Why would a fifty-vote spread exist between the Greek candidates if ev-

eryone relied upon the list? We have one word: campaigning. That's all it was. If you remember, *The Collegian* published a few campaign letters itself prior to this election.

And just because this list was circulating, the Greeks ganged up on all other organizations to steal the SGA. Right? Before complaining that eleven of the seventeen Senate candidates were Greek, and that ten of these candidates won, maybe you should congratulate their participation. It's admirable that our organizations support one another. With most of the participation in this election being Greek, it's no surprise that our candidates received the most support. More people could have run for senate seats, and more people could have voted. Only six of the seventeen candidates were not Greek. It's not our fault. As for trying to take over SGA, nine of the thirteen current senators are Greek, again reflecting our participation. As we mentioned before, Greek interests do not predominate now, so why would they next year?

Finally, those of us on SGA now were appalled that we were even accused of handling the election poorly. SGA has a system of running the elections that ensures that people will vote only once. Each person that votes is supposed to show his or her ID and get his or her name crossed off a master list. The voting booth counts the number of people that have voted, independently of the number of candidates for which each person voted. According to Christa Bucholtz,

Chair of the Election Committee, the number of names crossed off the list matched the number of names registered on the voting booth. If a person's ID card wasn't checked, it was only because one of the two people running the voting booth knew this person personally. The Greeks managing the voting booth did not allow people to vote more than once, and did not allow them to vote under a different name. We have more respect than that.

As much as we want to avoid being rude, *The Collegian* is giving us no choice. We did not run or vote for SGA to promote Greek interests or to give ourselves a title, but to become involved, as we do in various other organizations that we join. If we're not mistaken, hasn't a lack of participation been a problem? If there weren't such hostility between the newspaper and the Greek organizations when our interests do arise, we wouldn't always be on the defensive. But now, we don't appreciate how our involvement is automatically seen as a selfish conspiracy. All we ask for is respect and support, not constant bashing.

Julie Meyers AΣA, SGA Senator, Mandy Elder AΣA, SGA Senator, Doug Watkins ZBT, SGA Senator, Buck Goedicke ZBT, SGA Senator, Andrea DiPlacido ΘΦΑ, SGA Senator and Vice President, Tim Smith ZBT, Current SGA Senator and Vice President, Craig Dombkowski ΣΤΓ, SGA Senator, Rita Camillo ΘΦΑ, SGA Senator, Joe Tripodi ΔΧ, Former IFC Representative, Dan Plonski ZBT, John Butler ΔΧ, Former SGA President,

Lori Betters AΣA, Carley Downs AΣA, Wendy Driscoll AΣA, Joanne Perotta AΣA, Carrie Runski AΣA, Stacey Schenker AΣA, Shannon Lenze AΣT, Kelly Updegraph AΣT, Kate Wombacker AΣT, Mark Kacprowicz ΔΧ, Glenn Rishel ZBT, Megan Doyle ΘΦΑ, Joe Angelo ΚΑΡ, Patrick Corrigan ΚΑΡ, T.J. Dye ΚΑΡ, Ed Haft ΚΑΡ, Matt Irwin, Chadwick Knight ΚΑΡ, Don Largent ΚΑΡ, Donny Pastorius, Rob Shaffer ΚΑΡ, Scott Tennant ΚΑΡ, Todd Beddick, Nate Eberhardt ΣΤΓ, Joe Gadani ΣΤΓ, Ed Hanlon ΣΤΓ, Steve Tomlinson ΣΤΓ, Jim Buzzard, Jennifer Teasdale

Editors' Response

Editors and reporters for this newspaper observed the following at the SGA polling place last Tuesday:

- A SGA and fraternity member in charge of the polling place distributing the Greek endorsement list to a student coming up to vote.
- The Greek endorsement list being handed out to non-Greeks.
- Students unknown to the SGA member running the polling place not being asked for their ID or social security number.

The Collegian stands by its reporting on the SGA elections.

Students support Greeks in SGA

Dear Editor,

In the spirit of politics I firmly believe that in order to compete for an important political position one must be willing to campaign. The "Greek" organizations that these elected Senators and SGA officers belong to are only a part of the persons that they are. If we take some time to look beyond the "letters," we see that each candidate has had experience with SGA or other political positions. In a way, by labeling all elected senators on that list with the title "Greek" the editorial staff commits a form of discrimination. Perhaps not as serious as racial bigotry, it is however just as harmful. When one forgets about people as individuals he begins to stereotype. By saying "Oh he's another ZBT/Sig Tau/KDP/Skin" or "She must be this way because she's a Theta Phi/ASA/AST" one is making a dangerous generalization. These "Greeks" who were elected are individuals, just like you and me.

When I read the newspaper (which is innately a political vehicle as well) and see that the editors are incensed by a list of individuals who happen to have one thing in common, it seems trivial. Possibly I feel this way because since the beginnings of time people with ideas in common have been getting together and campaigning in a group. They called these people political parties. One may become upset because a certain political party holds the majority of seats in the SGA, but to become upset at the "Greeks" for being involved in campus student government is a travesty. There is nothing wrong with campaigning as a group. Any political science major will tell you it is one of the strongest modus operandi for being elected.

If the editors of this paper are so upset with the election results, per-

haps they should have run for SGA office. This would have been a good idea since three of the most important positions went unopposed, namely president, vice president and secretary. Lack of participation means either 1.) People aren't interested in Student Government or 2.) That people who are interested, aren't willing to campaign for a position. Perhaps they would rather write editorials proclaiming their disgust of people who were willing to run for office.

Frankly, each individual Senator/Officer should be congratulated for the offices they campaigned for. They should not be slandered for the unsubstantiated acts of corruption. The idea of joining a list of people who share a common bond with you is truly American, and to condemn anyone who would be un-American. Politics exists, even in its smallest form on the Behrend campus. The only way to do something about the election results is to run for office next election term. One may say, "Why should I run for office if only 'Greeks' get elected? I say 'Greeks' get elected because they campaign."

How can anyone encourage participation if no one willingly acts? The example being the voter turnout. Only 237 people cared enough about SGA to vote, maybe most of them belonged to the candidates' Greek organizations. Perhaps that is how they became elected. The larger issue is the ineptitude of the student body to voice their opinion in the SGA by voting. Some may say that people do not feel included because the SGA is now a "Greek" majority. I remind you that behind each different set of letters, there is an individual who was elected as your Senator, and is there to serve you, the student body.

Steve Murphy
07, Biology

Don't take remarks so seriously

Dear Editor,

In response to the letter to the editor that bashed some students in the April 9th article entitled "SGA issues report on Station Road businesses," I have a few things to say to Prof. Champagne.

I feel that I must let you know how much it annoys me when someone who seems to be a crusader for the acceptance of difference cannot accept what other people have to say unless it goes along with his or her own beliefs. No matter what anyone does, it is never correct—someone is always offended. You have taken the ar-

ticle at hand way too personally and I feel that it is about time that someone returns your backlash. In my eyes, you are a key example of why this country is so "messed up." Freedom of speech gave those students the ability to say what they did, me the freedom put it in black and white and you the chance to express your disgust. However, I think that you were a little brash. Granted, conflict is what makes this country that we live in so interesting and I bet that if we were to sit down over a cup of coffee or something we would clash over quite a few topics. But, how else do people

learn from one another if they do not have different views on things?

So please, the next time that you want to talk about being "objective" and use Samuel Delany as your example, take a good look at your own actions and attitude. It is very easy to point a finger at someone but remember that there are always four fingers pointing right back at you.

I do understand, on another level, how one might be offended by the comments. However, that is all that they were—comments, words. The students who used the expressions were not saying them to offend anyone but Housing and Food Services

and they chose the phrases, "It feels like Housing and Food Services make you drop your drawers and touch your toes" and "Housing and Food Services, why you riding mine?" because they thought that the students reading the article would (more likely than not) interpret them as they intended them to be read. More or less, it was a joke. An effective way to say how much they do not appreciate the high prices that are charged for food and the poor quality of the living areas. Yes, maybe they do not enjoy being penetrated from behind as some people do. Those who do like it,

Dear Editor,

Your article in *The Collegian's* April 23, 1998 issue is extremely one sided. The student participation in the recent student government elections can be characterized by the mismanagement of the elections by its organizers. There was no announcements of the elections by any professors, any student involved in the election process, or no information was posted on any bulletin board. The assumption that

the GREEKS are taking over student government is a figment of someone's warped imagination. Many non-Greeks have friends that are Greeks. If your paper sees the last recent student government elections as some weird conspiracy, all I can say is WAKE UP AND GET A LIFE.

Sincerely,
James Koc
08, Operations Management

good for them! Have a ball! No one is trying to stop you (plural). Who are you to judge them for that? And to try to answer your question, "Would you want to be intimate with someone who thinks that sex with him is equivalent to the 'screw-

ing' he gets from Housing and Food Services?" Personally, my answer would be "No" but you know how big some men's egos are. Sincerely,
Joet Kolano
02 DUS

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"I would attempt to integrate communities more. Feelings of separatism lead to feelings of contempt. If people lived in the same neighborhoods, worked at the same jobs and went to the same schools, they may be more accepting."

"Advocate the recruitment of more minorities into college institutions."

"Somehow try to get all races to see eye-to-eye."

"I would ask that all races look past colors for a moment and treat everyone equally. I'm not talking about a giant, global hug, but basic respect."

"Make people realize that it's not the color of a person's skin that matters, it's what kind of mind a person has that counts; I don't know how or if ever this change will be made."

"The justice system. African-Americans receive totally unfair treatment in the courts and that is one of the roots of the problems of racism."

"Stop Affirmative Action!"
"One thing I would do is try to avoid the reverse discrimination being portrayed on movies and television."
"Do away with segregation!"
"I don't believe the idea of racism will ever change, but hate crimes

need to stop."

"Educate people from a young age on the sources of stereotypes. Hit the elementary schools."

"...I think that people need to be less sensitive. Not everything said about another race is intended to be derogatory."

"Offer more opportunities for people to meet each other and share experiences."

"Change our government in a way that everyone gets a fair chance."

"Not put so much emphasis on it—it only heightens the differences. It shouldn't even be an issue."

"Educate your children by talking to them."

The root of prejudice and racism where thought to be:

"It seems to me that these views are passed from generation to generation and they continue because of fear of unknown things."

"Lack of education and willingness to understand."

"Fear of difference."

"Fear, hate, misunderstanding."

"I feel that long-running stereotypes are the root of the problem. It becomes easy to blame problems on stereotyped images of other races."

"The fact that whites were dominant in the U.S. for many years, now

other races are beginning to change that and whites believe that they built everything we live by today, and other races are trying to take that away from us (whites)."

"Nobody knows why. It's blamed on how parents raise children or it's because they are bad or maybe it's because nobody of another race lives in Tannersville or Moon, PA, etc. Races tend to isolate themselves."

"People want to feel superior to others at any cost."

"Prejudice and racism have always been present. Merely looking different is the root of racism."

The only way that people today could ever be "blind" to race is to go back and rewrite history. Back to Biblical times, Pilgrims and slavery—we would have to change it all and make everyone equal. The need for supremacy must be erased from everyone's minds. Unfortunately, a time machine has not been invented like in "Back to the Future" and we cannot go back. We must merely live with each other's differences and love one another for them. There are many other things that people can base fights on besides color. That is what sports and board games are for.

