

# DONALD KAUL: A doo-dah version of black history



said, was "not only an insult to the talents of the wonderful artists participating in this motion picture, but a direct slap in the faces of Quincy Jones and Steven Spielberg, two of the most talented personalities ever to work in this industry."

That's like the United Jewish Appeal complaining because "Triumph of the Will," an admiring documentary of Hitler's Nuremberg rallies, never won an award.

"The Color Purple" is not one of the best movies of the year. It is not one of the best movies of the past 15 minutes. It is, in fact, a perfectly dreadful movie--dull, stupid, racist and false.

I'm beginning to think that NAACP stands for the National Association for the Abasement of Colored People. What else is one to make of the Hollywood-Beverly Hills branch of the NAACP protesting the failure of "The Color Purple" to win an Academy Award this week?

The film, a story of black people in the rural South of the first third of the century, was nominated for 11 awards but won none. This, the NAACP chapter

They made a big deal over the fact that Spielberg wasn't even nominated as best director. He's lucky he wasn't arrested.

I know, a lot of people liked the picture. They're wrong.

It is a film in the tradition of Hollywood movies made by white men about black people: "Birth of a Nation," "Song of the South," "Green Pastures"--but it is way down on that list. It takes us back to a time when blacks were presented as a kind of comic,

sub-human species, loose in morals and violent in manner, but don't they smile pretty though? It's got all the stock characters: an Aunt Jemima, a Little Topsy, a Steppenfetchit, a Simon Legree (black version) and the obligatory blues queen. Spielberg leaves no cliché unturned to bring his vision of the black experience before the American public.

The film drew some controversy earlier because black males felt they are unfairly represented in the movie. And they are, unless you think all black males are brutish louts given to wife abuse, rape and alcoholism. But the black women don't come off much better. Neither do white people, for that matter. There's hardly a true moment in the entire film. I don't know when I've been more offended by a movie and its success.

Yes I do. It was "The Deerhunter," that vastly praised film of a decade or so ago that dealt with the lives of Slavic Americans in a grim Pennsylvania factory town. It was set in post Vietnam America and it portrayed Slavs as a simple-minded, rough-

and-tumble bunch who were relatively content with their lives if they could get drunk on weekends, wreck cars and go out and shoot a deer every once in a while.

I happen to know something about Slavic-Americans; I am one. "The Deerhunter" had about as much to do with us as "The Color Purple" has to do with blacks.

The problem, of course, was that the film was made by Michael Cimino, an Italian. That was the way he thought Slavs were, which is his problem. Did they let Roman Polanski make "The Godfather"?

They shouldn't have let Spielberg make "The Color Purple," either.

Blacks are under enormous pressure these days. The image of the black person is under a more vicious attack today than at any time in memory, and my memory extends back before desegregation. But we don't attack it out

front; we do it in code.

We say that college admission standards for athletes have to be raised. But the image produced by the commendable goal is of black athletes too dumb to be allowed in college.

In this atmosphere, exaggerated racial stereotyping is last thing we need. Even less do we need Spielberg's doo-dah version of black history honored as a work of art. What could the Hollywood-Beverly Hills NAACP types have been thinking of?

Spielberg has been called the modern Frank Capra, but he's not. Ron Howard, the director of gentle fantasies like "Splash" and "Cocoon," comes closer to that. Spielberg, the maker of such grand entertainments as "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and "E.T.," is the modern Cecil B. deMille. He, like the master, creates lavish spectacles that are fun to watch and have no relation to reality.

Let him stick to what he knows best.

## Student opinion: Behrend slights student party habits

In order to clarify the relationship between alcohol and social problems, it is necessary to put into proper perspective the conditions under which both drinking and social problems occur. The use of alcohol may appear to be either a direct or remote contributing factor to social problems. It is direct in such problems as drunken driving, divorce, unemployment, or in my case, affecting the social atmosphere at Behrend.

I have visited numerous colleges throughout my life already, and what I have seen is different than that found at Behrend. Most colleges do not have strict patterns or rules by which their students must follow. I think it is a major consensus that they not interfere unless of course there is some type of casualty or serious incident that has occurred. Behrend on the other hand, has roughly 2,200 students only. The regulations that the students follow are therefore more heavily enforced. Simply put, it is much easier for a student to get caught at Behrend because of the ratio of students to RA's (Resident Assistants) and police officers. I am in no way implying that this is wrong but I do feel that there is a certain amount of "lee-way" that the student should possess.

I'm going to try to explain the possible positive attributes about the alcohol-student problem. In "Alcohol Education for Classroom and Community," D. McCarthy states that, "An opportunity for the necessary release from tension, cannot properly be defined as a drinking problem." How this correlates with students here at Behrend is somewhat obvious. Most of the parties here are simply a get-together of either a small or large group of students. These students are at the party to release their tensions of the day or week by associating themselves with their friends or other students. To obtain even better atmosphere these parties usually distribute

some form of alcohol to those who attend. It seems as though it is common for a student at college to drink at times socially. Now what I'm trying to say is that if handled properly, a party can have a great positive effect not only on the student but on the college as well. A party many times will develop new and stronger friendships between students. This in turn, (in the case of Behrend) will allow things to operate more smoothly. If friendships increase then college life is effected positively. Is this not what the administration and the students want?

I'm not trying to say that all parties are great: no fighting, no drunkenness, and most of all no accidents. There are at times a drunk-driving accident, or some violent act associated with the alcohol. And I know simply forbidding alcohol would alleviate many of the problems. But let's also look at the positive aspects that will be lost.

Social behavior, especially in college life, is affected both positively and negatively by alcohol. There is no direct solution in what many consider a problem. Is there not a way that both sides can be satisfied? I feel that the responsibility should be left to the student. I have never in my life seen anyone drink because he or she didn't want to. If there is a way that parties can be reasonably controlled, the alcohol be kept to some form of minimum, and most of all, accidents be lowered, then why can't we try it!

I was caught for having a party in my apartment recently. You can say that I have learned my lesson and I will not have any more at my place. But what I have lost is also very valuable to me. I lost the privilege of what I like to do most. The "privilege" of making people laugh and have fun on Friday nights.

Concerned student,  
**Mark K. Wuerthele**  
4th Semester, Operations Management

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