

Why a conference on women and blacks?

Kim Krynock
Student Project Director
of Symposium

You may know that this weekend marks Behrend's *Symposium in Celebration of Women and Blacks: Gifts, Goals, and Barriers*. You may know that the conference is free and open to the public. You may know that the conference of April 19-20 has been planned by members of ABC, Roundtable, and Women Today. But what you may not know is how the conference involves YOU.

While I was hanging posters publicizing the event recently, a student I know walked by. I know this person socially, but apparently not as well as I thought. The poster looked a little crooked to me, so I stopped him to get a second opinion. "What do you think?" I asked. He was taken by surprise, and not sure what I meant: "What do you mean? That? Oh, well, I don't care what they do." I, too, was caught off guard. "What do you mean they? This isn't they this is me!

I don't know when or who it was that taught this person to see the world in terms of 'us' and 'them'. I do know, however, that

this person is not alone in his attitude. We are told, continually, that we live in apathetic times. Practicality and personal gain, we are told, these are society's new values.

This incident was not only a reminder that prejudice still exists, around us and in us all, but also a reminder that to some, the world will always be a matter of 'us' and 'them'. I don't know how I can make someone understand that it is all 'us', all you and me, and that everything we do affects the rest of the world. I don't even understand why this seems such an obvious truth to those of us who have been planning this weekend's event. I only know that in a very basic way, this knowledge of our ties to the rest of the world is vital to our survival as a people, as a culture, and as a world.

Some say that the issues of prejudice and inequality are old issues. They are gone, resolved, the worries of an idealistic past. My response is that no, sadly, these problems and questions of the Civil Rights and Women's Rights movements of the past decades are not resolved. As one of our planners said at one of our

very early meetings, "We're still here. The issues are still here. The issues are not resolved. Now, what are we going to do about them?"

The impetus for this conference, then is a desire to educate ourselves and our community about issues of vital importance to our future. Complacency, apathy and ignorance need not be the hallmarks of our generation. The most that we can do, you and I, is educate ourselves about our world, and about the people with whom we share it. The best that a college education can do for us, I'm convinced, is spark new ideas and foster new understanding. But the desire to understand must come from within you.

We want you to join us this weekend, to celebrate our gifts, examine our goals, and find ways around the barriers that befall us. This weekend won't solve all the world's problems, but it may raise a new question, spark some new thoughts, shine some desperately needed hope onto our little corner of the world. Where have all the flowers gone indeed? The flowers are all around us. Come and discover them this weekend.



"What we really need is a shortage of lawyers."

Donald Kaul

We have a new crisis. Add it to the budget crisis, the crisis in education, the AIDS crisis and the crisis in Central America. It is the liability insurance crisis.

Liability insurance, according to current hysteria, is out of control. Damage claims have skyrocketed and insurance rates with them. Insurance companies are dropping certain kinds of coverage and many doctors, particularly obstetricians, are giving up their professions to become garage mechanics. Things are that bad.

Politicians are falling all over themselves in an effort to make things better. Some states have put caps on certain kinds of damage awards and a presidential commission has recommended restricting punitive damages and awards for "pain and suffering," as well as putting a limit on attorneys' fees.

How dumb. It is as though a province in India noticed that an unusually high percentage of its citizens was being eaten by tigers and decided the

(continued next page)

Student Opinion: Stop Library noise and walkway traffic

This is my fifth year here at Behrend, and I will (finally) graduate this May. It has been my experience that many people find it hard to believe that anyone would want to spend their entire college career here. Well, you could do a lot worse than Behrend. I have enjoyed Behrend for its size, openness, and proximity to my home. This campus is growing fast, and in ten years, will be a fantastic college. I've seen a lot of change take place; most for the better, but there are still a few problems that are here year after year, and growing worse. I'd like to air a particular few of these that are, for me, posteriorly lodged sideways.

First is the noise in the library. I just don't understand it. I have never been in a library, other than our own, where the main area was a social hall. Whoever heard of a library with a 'quiet study'? The entire library should be dead silent. There is a lounge just outside the library entrance for students to talk until they're blue in the lips. In my opinion, our library is a joke not because it doesn't have the resources that bigger libraries do, but because of its uncollegiate atmosphere. In a few years, Behrend will have a newly constructed, very impressive library. I wonder if it will continue the tradition of being the laughing stock of college libraries.

Has anyone noticed how dangerous it is to walk to class lately? I have had students, professors, administration, security personnel and maintenance people nearly take my life as they whiz by me on the main walkway. During class changes seems to be the worst: cars and trucks going both directions and students walking in the mud to avoid them. I walk nearly half of a mile to get to class every day, yet a lot of faculty members drive right up to their offices. Why don't they just install garage bay doors on each classroom so they can drive right into class? I can understand maintenance having to drive down there occasionally, and of course, handicapped persons. But pizza deliveries? Three television crews every other day? Some of these vehicles are not going at all slow, either! That walk is for PEDESTRIANS ONLY! Students should have exclusive rights to the main walkway and the right of way all over campus. All vehicles should be prohibited on that walkway. If you see a student walking at his own pace, directly in front of a car and refusing to move out of the way, it is probably me.

Dean Lilley: why is it that I can't even catch a glimpse of you unless I bait a trap with a TV camera? I have tried to see you about problems I have with my

college program, and I know many other students that have wished to see you and couldn't get past the secretary. I think you are doing a fantastic job of raising money for this college, but you need an open door policy toward students; a drop everything and listen policy. If it weren't for us, you would be kind of lonely at work.

The coup de grace of my peeves is student attitude. Everybody complains, but few have the spine to do anything about it. The problem is that one person will accomplish nothing. I know; I've tried. Students must group together to the point where they can't be ignored. A lot of radical changes took place during the sixties. How did they do it? They rallied! I have tried to approach people about the library problem and lots of people agreed with me, but nobody would go with me to the top. The same is true for a problem I have concerning my engineering program. Several people agreed to go to the division head with me, but when the time came, I sat alone. The scanning electron microscope is still in its packing crates.

My point is this: This campus belongs to YOU, the students who shovel their money into it. You can change things if you want to and if enough of you have the guts to do it. Stick together on the problems! Get some people together

and make a proper nuisance of yourselves! It's just like growing up; decisions will be made for you until you learn to make them for yourselves.

Jeff Hummer
Eighth Semester, E&ENT

Jeff,
An old story, but a true one. I agree with you on all counts but one. Students can get in touch with the Dean. And if you don't make an appointment, you can catch him at a monthly "Coffee With the Provost."

Back to the library. I do have trouble accepting the library's atmosphere. And the day I walked in to see the sign "Quiet Study Upstairs," I could not help but let out a sarcastic laugh adding to the already existing bedlum. "Quiet Study Upstairs"--what does that mean--a free-for-all downstairs?

I wholeheartedly agree that the entire library should be "dead" silent. After all it is supposed to be the optimal place for studying. pm

