

OPINION and REVIEW

EDITORIAL

The Need for a Weekend Library

by Vi Ong

A freshman student enthusiastically strolls off to the school library one Saturday morning, wanting to get a head start in her first semester of college. Suddenly, she finds herself feeling disbelief and disappointment that the library is closed on weekends. Still denying the fact, she walks up to the entrance doors, applying some force against the handle, hoping it's open — but nothing happens. She then turns around, mumbles a few words, and leaves in anger. This is a very common scene for incoming freshmen, and a disturbing issue for the majority of Penn State students.

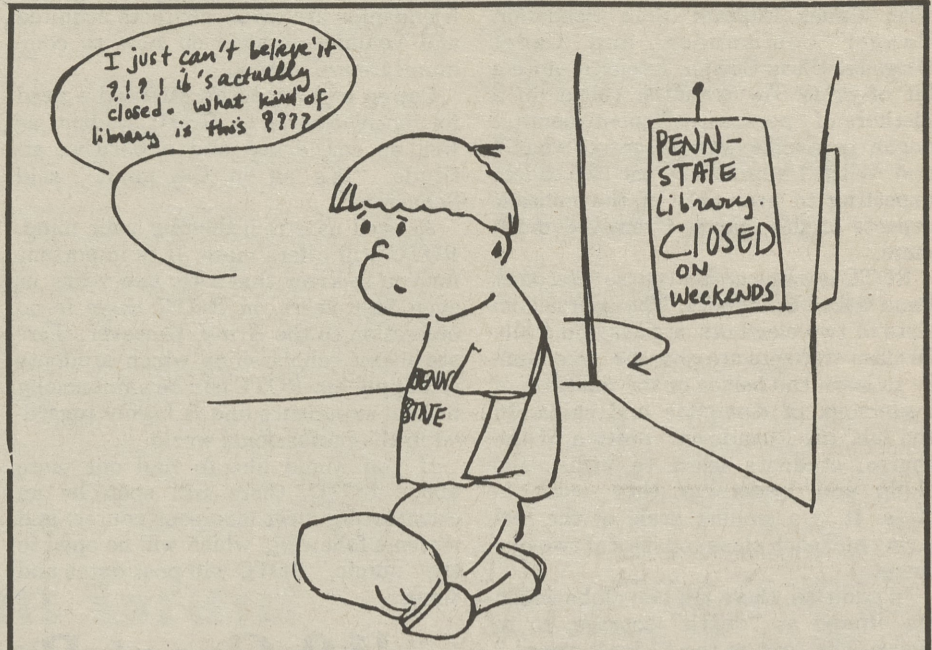
The library itself is no doubt a perfect size, and filled with more than enough resources for the school campus — not to mention teaming with excellent library staff members. But as we all agree, the essence of this debate is not the quality, but the quantity of time that is in demand.

Consider this. A survey was completed last week. Thirty students were asked to share their opinions on whether or not the school library should be open on weekends, and an overwhelming ninety percent of the students strongly favored and requested it to be open, while the other ten percent doesn't seem to care much.

Most commuting students on this campus reside within the perimeter of this county and work part time. Therefore, weekends provide a very valuable opportunity to either catch-up or excel in their school work. Any true student will agree that home is the second best place to study because social activities are omnipresent. Phones are constantly ringing; the cable T.V. is too tempting. Distraction is definitely an inherent quality of a home. When the situation becomes intolerable, students usually end up driving the extra ten to twenty miles to the library of another institution or a public library. This effort and time is indeed unnecessary.

To most students, the library is far more than just a structure containing a vast amount of resources; it's a place where information collected from class is being slowly redigested; it's a place where ideas and creativity are transcended into a realistic task.

One librarian, when asked about the subject, commented that the possibility of opening the library on weekends will be reconsidered if the students' attendance rate is high enough. This is the issue. The library is a valuable resource to the students at all times — especially on weekends. Its existence and purpose to serve one student is equally important as serving ten students, no matter if it's a Monday or a Saturday.



EDITORIAL

Racial Tension Hurts PSU

by David Clements Jr.

On September 20, I had the pleasure of going back to my high school, Chester High, on behalf of the Admissions Department of Penn State. I talked to some of the members of the senior class about the importance of going to college and attaining a college degree.

After the rap session was over, I had a chance to ask if any of the students had thought about attending Penn State. The answer was a flat out "NO!" Penn State was out of the question. Why?

As everyone knows, Chester High is 90% African-American, and the students are saying if they have to spend thousands of dollars on an education they are going to go somewhere where there is no sign of racial tension.

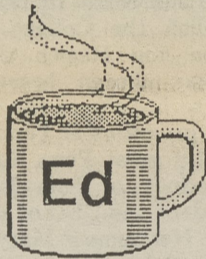
Racial tension is turning a lot of students away from Penn State, or to make it more exact, away from College Park. Students, including myself, have no time for any form of racial tension. We only ask for one thing, and that is to get the education we are paying for, not to have to go somewhere else or be afraid of walking down a street always having to look over our shoulders.

The Delco Campus has seen a very large increase in the number of African-American students in recent years. And the reason for this is the second year Afro-American students have been telling the new students that everyone on this campus, no matter what their skin color, get along fine, like human beings should, and not like a pack of wolves claiming an area in the wilderness.

If people get their acts together up at the Park, maybe they will start to see a major number of black students go to that campus. But if the tension does not go away, Penn State will lose out on a rich cultural learning experience and heritage that can bring a lot to the lives and the community that African-American people touch.

THE FRONT DESK

by Ed Tomezsko
Campus Executive Officer



E pluribus unum. Someone asked me to write in this column about cultural diversity. I decided to give it a try. This pair of words — cultural diversity — has become an important part of the lexicon of most Penn Staters and most people in higher education. The operational word is "most."

The campus strategic plan states: *cultural diversity and gender equity are of critical importance as benchmarks to measure the intellectual rigor and the social quality of the educational experience which our campus provides.*

Do you believe that racial discrimination, gender discrimination, religious discrimination, sexual preference discrimination takes place? When you read this last sentence, did you react by saying "no"? Did you react by saying "They get all the breaks?" "Most" people with whom I talk will tell me that "It's a problem."

Problems in themselves are not wrong, but problems do require solutions. Let me state the obvious: good solutions benefit the most and bad solutions benefit the least. How we approach the solution brings on rights and wrongs. Broad generalizations are rarely correct in all cases.

A few notes here. "You're just a pretty face." She's in the top 10% of her class. "Girls can't carry a video camera; let one of the guys do the shoot." She in the top 15%. "I was only having fun" when I tried to pinch your behind. "You probably won't get a job there, they prefer Jewish people, try ---, they hire Catholics." "You know that they just aren't as smart as we are." "Did you hear the one about . . ." "What do I have to do to be accepted?" "I didn't mean it, some of my best friends are Black." "She's a racist!" "He's a bigot." "Gee wizz, she's only a girl." "They have to earn their own way."

Before you draw the wrong conclusion, these sentences come from man about man, woman about woman, man about woman, woman about man, majority about majority, minority about minority, majority about minority, and minority about majority. No ethnic or gender group is holier than any other ethnic or gender group.

In my job as the Executive Officer, I hear the stories directly from students, faculty, and staff and read the reports of racism, sexism, religious intolerance, gay bashing and the like.

Trust me, these things really do happen, and these things will continue to happen. The purpose of a University is to build knowledge and character, to help formulate and identify personal and professional values, and to put people into society who are effective and efficient people and who respect one another. The ideal university would be one in which people are people. The ideal world would be the same.

Here's the point. There seems to be a basic, and flawed, tenet of society that each person needs someone to look down on, to blame for the ills and poor luck of their own person. Cultural diversity focuses on people's differences and it proposes to respect these differences. Respect for people is the real issue. If broad generalizations are rarely correct, or stated in another way if we are all and each of us different people, focusing on diversity allows us to focus the solution to problems.

What makes the word "most" stand out is that for most people the issue is important and it is worth the extra effort to see racial discrimination, gender discrimination, religious discrimination, sexual preference discrimination corrected. However, "most" is not "all," and the "some" left over from the "all" see no problem and these people make the most noise about "What do they want now?" "They" is a good catch-all word — covers everyone without identifying anyone. We will, on this campus, be supportive and be respectful of the individuals present on our campus. If it doesn't happen to you, just find my office.

You will find the words *e pluribus unum* on a ribbon clutched in the mouth of the American eagle in the Great Seal. You should take a look at the Great Seal and think about its meaning.

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