

# Editorial

## Students need alternate daycare

Behrend's administration has taken a series of steps towards establishing an on-campus daycare center, but somewhere along the way it lost sight of who it is trying to help.

Both students and faculty/staff members would use a child care service, but students have the greater need.

There are discrepancies between the concerns of the faculty/staff and those of the students, such as cost and type of child care services provided.

Since most student-parents aren't able to work full time while in school, they cannot afford the commercial rates for child care that would exist under the administration's proposal.

The administration has limited the students' options for child care on campus. While there will be a commercial service on campus, the administration has ruled out the possibility of a co-op program. With a co-op situation student-parents work as sitters in proportion to the time their child spends there.

A commercial child care service is definitely a step in the right direction for Behrend, but to meet the needs of all involved groups, both programs should be put into effect.

In a study conducted by Behrend's child care task force it was found that 54 percent of students with children would definitely use a child care facility on campus, while only 18 percent of faculty/staff members with children would use the service.

This would indicate that the students represent the greater need by numbers alone. Even if the numbers were balanced, shouldn't the students have at least an equal say in what services the College provides? They're paying to be here, not getting paid to be here.

# Opinion / Editorial



## Letters to the Editor

### New professor encounters mindlessness

An otherwise pleasant introduction to Behrend took an unfortunate turn during my first week of teaching. The "welcome" took the form of racial slurs yelled at me from two different dormitory room windows on campus.

I was saddened and angered over the incidents, but not at all surprised. I am not one who seeks out, or relishes, controversy. But, I realize that the implications of what occurred belong to all of us.

It is delusion to think that Behrend is a cultural oasis, safely tucked away and immune from the distasteful realities of racism, sexism, and prejudice. We reflect the larger social structure within which we live and are not separate from it.

The aftermath of the Reagan years left us with a new coping mechanism for dealing with these troublesome social issues, namely, denial. Hence, professors, both the sincere and insincere among us, who address the issue of "diversity" (the new catchword) in the classroom are perceived as giving lipservice, doing what is "politically correct".

Racism and sexism are alive and well in America and will not go away by merely thinking it does not really apply to us.

I am not writing this letter to scold, lay blame, or bemoan the incidents. I am not addressing this issue to appeal to your sense of morality. Your moral values and beliefs are your business. But, I do issue a challenge to your intellect and your reasons for attending an institution of higher learning.

It is a human characteristic to classify things and people, to

create categories to help manage and make sense of the world. However, when we create categories we lose information and distort reality. The fewer categories we make, the more we distort.

At its simplest level we construct two categories to construe people and events (good-bad, right-wrong, black-white, we-them, etc.). A prominent psychologist, Ellen Langer, refers to two-category thinking as "mindlessness". Two-category, or dichotomous, thinking is born of ignorance and an absence of critical thought.

When we include people in this system of mindless thought the seeds of prejudice (prejudgment based on distorted assumptions) are planted. Significantly, dichotomous thinking (with its reality-distorting tendencies) is also a major factor associated with maladjustment and a number of emotional disorders (see the works of Aaron Beck).

Hence, prejudice reflects ignorance. It is the domain of the simple-minded. My challenge to you is to rise above and grow beyond mindlessness, to think critically, to experience new things and people who are different from you, and to expand your ways of thinking. Isn't this why you came to Behrend?

The destructive elements of prejudice affect each of us, not just certain groups of people. It has implications for your mental health, education, and the place you take in society. Racism is not merely an annoyance. When it is acted out, racism can kill.

What happened to me were not isolated events. They were explainable and predictable. The college administration became aware of the incidents and wanted to intervene on my behalf, but respected my wishes not to do so.

I do not know the people who were involved, but if you are

reading this letter I offer an invitation to join me for lunch (I'll buy). In this way you could learn to see me as an individual and not a category or stereotype. We would both be the better for it. In fact, I extend an invitation to all of you who read this letter to talk with me. My door is open. (West Carriage House 8, extension 6238)

Dr. Michael Ichiyama  
Assistant Professor  
Psychology

### You won't believe this, but...

I am a prisoner on death row at the Arizona State Prison, and was wondering if you would do me a favor. I have been here for over fourteen years and have no family or friends on the outside to write to.

I was wondering if you would put an ad in your campus newspaper for me asking for correspondence. I know that you are not a pen pal club or anything like that, but I would really appreciate it if you could help me.

Death row prisoner, Caucasian male, age 44 desires correspondence with either male or female college students. Wants to form a friendly relationship and more or less exchange past experiences and ideas. Will answer all letters and exchange pictures.

Prison rules require your full name and return address on the outside of the envelope. (Box B-38604, Florence, AZ 85232)

Thank you,  
Jim Jeffers

I'll tell you what, whoever can produce a letter from Jim that explains why he's in jail will win two free movie passes from *The Collegian*. No joke.

-Ed.

## The Collegian

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