

Campus attempts at safety fall short

I would like to commend Bennett for its attempt at improving the campus security. It is a relief to know that some changes are taking place to upgrade campus safety.

However, it seems to me that the measures being taken are not very effective in keeping unwanted visitors off the campus. Rather, it seems to me that they are designed to keep the students on campus.

For example, the fencing in of the campus and parking lots — what is the purpose? If anyone wants to get on campus for any reason, he is still able to do so. The fencing around the campus is not high enough to deter anyone from climbing over it. In fact, a 12-year-old child could probably scale the fence with no problem.

Also, the gates, located near Cone Hall and the Black Hall parking lot, do not have locks. Therefore, all anyone who wants to get on campus, has to do, is open the gate and walk through. If the fencing is supposed to keep outsiders out, don't you think it should be high enough and with enough barbed wire at the top to deter anyone from climbing over?

Now, as for the parking lots, the locked gate really does nothing but lock students who are coming and going, from getting on or off campus. Anyone planning to do anything illegal on this campus most likely would not be dumb enough to park his car on campus for possible identification, anyway. Also, it would probably not make any difference if the parking lot is locked, since anyone

could easily hide in the shadows of this poorly-lit campus, and simply walk to his car parked on a nearby side-street such as Gorrell or Washington Street.

And yes, this is a poorly-lit campus. The areas by Merner Hall, the Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel and between Barge and Pfeiffer Halls are very dim at night. If security is to improve on this campus, extra lighting should be a priority.

Although I have heard that there are supposed to be new security stations built at various locations on the campus, it seems to me that they should have been completed earlier in the summer before the students arrived. I understand that most of the security changes are a result of the rape incident which occurred on campus in July, but I would think that because of the incident, the improvements in security would have been completed immediately afterwards.

However, it seems as though Bennett has once again waited until the last minute to do anything.

Nevertheless, I am glad that Bennett is attempting to improve the safety of its faculty, staff and students. Yet, in order for any new security measures to work, they must be effective enough to keep unwanted visitors off of the campus, without restricting the freedom of the students. I understand that changes were in order, but they should have been well-thought-out in advance, so as not to waste valuable time and money on fences that are too low and gates which lock the students in more than they keep anyone out. (Yvette Freeman)

Democracy: an unjust system's reality?

Just think . . . Chinese students were willing to stand in Tienamen Square opposite tanks and armies and be executed for it. The Polish want to use it to elect officials fairly. Lack of it makes East Germans climb over a wall to West Germany.

Americans have become world evangelists in order to spread its grace and glory. What is this thing called a democracy? Just what does it do?

It allows there to exist the new wave of Pan-African Awareness Asse-oops (Not "Assembly." That's another editorial). People wear their awareness on their shirts: "It's a Black thang. You wouldn't understand." It's a human thing; we all need to understand. It (democracy) allows people to wear red, black and green medallions dangling from their necks and know little about pass laws, apartheid, Mansa Musa, Afrikaans, Timbuktu or the Bantu tribe. Somewhere I hear a movement approaching, and it's peopled by rebels without a cause or a pause.

It lets a Supreme Court composed of males (O.K., so there's one woman) to sit around a table and come to some justified conclusions about whether or not a

woman should decide whether or not to have — give birth to — a baby that she harbors within the confines of her own body.

It permits a New York mob of whites to chase Yusef (Yeah, he was black), beat him, kill him and escape unpunished.

It approves of a "Mr. President of the United States" saying that there are no injustices against blacks but that these so-called injustices were "created" in an effort to continue the existence of civil rights leaders. Hmm.

It is what makes America act like Wonder Woman . . . always coming to the rescue of those who have not asked for help and ignoring the cries for help of those who want and need it. That is our right, though. We're a democracy.

It supports the prison sentence of a woman who wants to protect her daughter from a father who molests her.

It is why I can write this and you can read it. Why you can say aloud, if you'd like, "She's just trippin'!" But am I?

Just think, what is this thing called a democracy? . . . and where would we be without it? (Cherryl Floyd)

A masterful author's "record"

Angelou sings through words

a column
by Cherryl Floyd

She is a songstress, and yet she does not record her voice on albums. She is a melody maker of words; she records her voice on paper. She is Maya Angelou.

Angelou is an exquisite autobiographical writer. As she reveals the eventful moments of her life, the reader cannot help but feel that her life is a song which rings out the praises of triumph and overcoming the odds. Her books, *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*, *Gather Together In My Name*, *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas*, *The Heart of a Woman* and *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* reveal that Maya Angelou did not just happen; she evolved.

Even her name is indicative of her evolution. She was born Marguerite Johnson, and that is what she was called as a young girl growing up with her grandmother in Stamps, Ark. Her brother, Bailey, though, whom she

loved dearly, affectionately called her Maya. Later, after she was grown, had a child, and was singing in San Francisco, at a nightclub called the "Purple Onion," a talent scout and his wife (Don and Jorie) gave her the name Angelou (pronounced "Ang-elloo"). Don and Jorie's suggestion of the name Angelou was not entirely original, though. It was derived from the name of Marguerite Johnson's first husband, Tosh Angelos.

Angelou has lived her life in stages, which is why there had to be five separate autobiographies with five different names rather than one large volume. In each stage, she exhibits a strong-willed innocence, and becomes naive only in her relationships with men. Perhaps her naivety is present because there always exists her willingness to perform what she obviously does best, love unconditionally. She has triumphed over rape, poverty, low self-esteem, fear of lesbianism, prostitution, a confrontation of African traditions, male domination and

by the end of the fifth volume has learned to love herself unconditionally.

The autobiography master is also a poetess extraordinaire. She has published three volumes of poetry, which are sometimes sold in one volume. These poems are so poignantly brilliant, so bluntly honest, that they should be another volume of her autobiography. Among these poems is the one that Bennett College loves so well, "Phenomenal Woman."

To simply say that Maya Angelou is only an autobiographical writer and a poet is to disregard the fact that she is multi-talented. She is the actress who starred in "Cabaret for Freedom" and "The Blacks." She is the musical score and screenplay writer for "Georgia, Georgia." She is the broadcast journalist who interviewed guests for "Assignment America" on the Public Broadcasting System. She is the producer and author of "Three-Way Choice," a CBS miniseries, and author of the screenplay, "The Sisters."

Speaking of the word

"sisters," I must assert my only "personal beef" with Maya Angelou. In a May 1986 issue of "Essence" magazine, Angelou stated that she was offended when a young woman on the street about 18 years old approached her and called her sister. She did not feel that this 18-year-old could possibly have enough in common with her since she couldn't have possibly had an even slightly similar struggle as Angelou has. My point is Angelou couldn't possibly have known. Recalling the events of Angelou's life and assuming that a common struggle establishes sisterhood, I'd dare to say that I am her sister.

Sister or not, though, Angelou is powerful. She is now the Reynolds Professor of American Studies at Wake Forest University. Her life as it is written is a universal statement of what is possible in the realm of the human spirit and how a woman (I did not mean "lady") can evolve . . . because Maya Angelou did not just happen. She evolved.

An alumna's advice

To the editor:

My fellow Bennett Sisters: It was only a couple of months ago that I was wearing the same shoes you are walking in now to that long and difficult road of success. There were certainly a lot of rocks in and under my shoes which hurt me in many ways, but with determination I conquered the pain the rocks threw in my direction.

I feel that it is my duty to give you advice which is important for your success at Bennett and once you leave Bennett. The world of work is not an easy one to adjust to. It is not like being a freshman and having to deal with a roommate and college life in general. It goes deeper than that. It's an adjustment one must make quickly.

No more hanging out in the late morning hours, no more skipping that 8 or 9 a.m. class and no more taking advantage of being a college student. Once you graduate, the day after, your life changes completely. From now on you will not hold the title college student, but your new title will read responsible adult (hopefully). And it is up to you, to follow through on your new title. Do not prove yourself wrong.

I guess what I am truly trying to say is, make the most of your four years at Bennett; take advantage of everything. Study long and hard, but while you study, retain all of that information, for you will not know when you will need it again.

Be pleasant, honest and, most of all, truthful. This will get you through a lot of situations that may be difficult to overcome. But most all, enjoy Bennett while you have the chance.

I am realizing now how much Bennett means to me now than when I was attending. I was ready, willing and able to get out.

I wish you all the best of luck in all of your future endeavors. Remember study hard and enjoy yourself.

Love to you all,
Audra N. Washington
Class of '89

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