

Is Harassment Really Necessary?

"Honey, if you don't have your mealbook, you can't eat. I'm sorry. . ." But sorry doesn't explain why the situation regarding mealbooks and ID cards has gotten worse.

Students wouldn't mind bringing one means of identification and meal sticker in one compact, easy to handle and easier to keep up with packet. As the situation stands, students feel agitated and are getting aggravated with this unnecessary harassment. I use the word "harassment," because, it literally fits the situation that occurred the other day in the dining hall during the lunch hour.

There is not only a feeling of tension and dread present when one enters the dining hall, but it seems as if the students are waiting to see what they will be asked for next!

With final examinations, graduation fees and GREs and a long list of pertinent matters that students have to be concerned with, somehow having to be told that because you cannot verify that you are still pursuing an education at Bennett College, you cannot eat a meal, does not make things easy on the student.

Now, looking at the other side of the coin, regarding students eating in the dining hall who are not students at Bennett, consider the fact that not every Bennett Belle eats within those ivory colored walls of the dining hall. Where does her food go? What happens to those left-over pork chops? We might also ask: Why doesn't the serving line wear hair nets? Why was a four-legged insect found on a dining hall table? Why? Why?

But sticking to the subject at hand . . . mealbooks and ID cards, and unauthorized students eating in the dining hall, the point put by the "top" is mainly that students who are no longer at Bennett should not be eating in the dining hall; that students from other schools should not be eating in the dining hall.

But tell the truth now, is it so bad that Bennett students have to be touched and verbally harassed in the dining hall? Bennett, there has to be a better way.

Some people wonder why college students leave college. Check the environment.



Letter To the Editor

Dear Editor:

I am an inmate at the Marion Correctional Institute in Marion, Ohio, and am in need of some sane correspondence from the outside world. I have no family and have had no mail in the entire past year. Needless to say I'm not looking forward to my remaining year without someone to write to.

I would appreciate your running my letter in your school paper. Maybe there is someone who would be interested in keeping a 27-year-old guy company and up-to-date on what is happening in the land of the free.

Thank you for your time and any help you may give me in this matter.

Bill Maneese
#145-115
P. O. Box 57
Marion, Ohio 43302



Vesper Service Features Shaw Professor Brodie

Dr. Priscilla Brodie was the featured speaker at the Annual Religion in Life Vesper Service Sunday, April 3, in the College Chapel.

Dr. Brodie is professor of Christian education and coordinator of vocation studies at the Shaw Divinity School, Raleigh, N. C. She is the first black woman to hold a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and earned a Master of Divinity degree from the same institution.

The art of making motion pictures is a highly skilled craft which combines both the knowledge of technological skills and machinery with sensitivity, perception and creativity. While technical skills can be acquired or taught, perception and creativity are inherent. Thus, the filmmaker is faced with the task of creating an idea and transmitting through the medium of a two dimensional object: the movie screen. Sometimes however, the intended message is lost through the transformation of an idea onto celluloid (film).

These qualities alone make the craftsmanship of motion pictures a difficult process that has taken time to develop and perfect. A monumental figure in this medium is D. W. Griffith who in 1915 produced "The Birth of a Nation." D. W. Griffith was a master at the newly-found art of movies both artistically and technically. It is however ironic that his greatest achievement, "The Birth of a Nation" (considered by many a classic) depicted blacks in the worst possible light.

Up until "Birth of a Nation," American movies had been restricted to two or three reels fifteen minutes in length, usually casually and crudely put together. "Birth of a Nation" had a \$300,000 budget, was rehearsed in six weeks and filmed in nine. In the end, the finished product ran twelve reels and three hours in length. The plot is simple yet skillfully woven. Based on the novel *The Clansman* by Thomas Dixon, it tells the story of the Cameron family on a South Carolina plantation during ante-bellum

Griffith Film Classic Shows Birth of Klan

times. The Camerons are the typical Southern family who have a "good" relationship with their benevolent, kind, darky servants. All goes well until the Civil War and Reconstruction come about.

With the loss of the Civil War, the South is faced with ruin and destruction all brought on, according to the movie, through the freedom of blacks. Blacks are pictured as literally running a society where corruption, shiftlessness and lust run rampant. They are seen rigging the voting polls, stealing, and forcing whites off the sidewalks. They have also taken over the United States Congress where black legislators hold court with feet on the table and fried chicken and watermelon eating. They dispose of the scraps from these foods on the floor. Raping white women is the national sport and laws on interracial marriage are passed. With this the Camerons have had enough and elect to take on single-handedly the burden of "saving the South."

With this in mind, Ben Cameron goes to the river to meditate over his plight. While there, he spies two black children playing. Two white children come along, discover the black kids and go into action. They disguise themselves as ghosts in white sheets and the two black youngster's eyes pop out, their hair stands on end, and they beat a hasty retreat straight through the river—leaving only water ripples and black footprints. Upon seeing this, Cameron gets an idea and the Ku Klux Klan is born. The South is saved once again. End of story.

Undoubtedly, the most important thing to happen to films during the 1920's was sound. Now the shenanigans of blacks could be heard as well as seen. Although sound did not come into movies until the late '20's, the first "Our Gang" shorts were released in 1922. Produced by Hal Roach, the series focused on the antics of the average American child. An integrated series, the white children are lower-middle class kids with names like Spanky, Darla and Alfalfa. The black children have names like Buckwheat, Farina and Stymie. To this day, the sexual ambiguity of Farina and Buckwheat remain anonymous. The pair was usually depicted with thick hair adorned in pigtailed and baggy gingham culottes. Stymie

Beard on the other hand was just the opposite. Sporting a bald head, black derby and plaid zoot suits, Stymie provided the nonchalance, shrewdness and reasoning lacked by the other gang members. Buckwheat and Farina supplied the eye rolling and hairs standing on end. They acted as the straight men to Stymie's lines with a succession of "um hhm's" and "it sho' do" after every sentence.

Not to be fooled, Stymie sees through every sham. In one episode, a group of midgets disguise themselves as orphans to get inside a mansion and rob some society matrons. Only Stymie sees through the plot. Way in advance he warns "sumptin' ain't right wid dem dere chillun's." His message goes unheeded almost up until the end when his perceptiveness was acknowledged and the robbery is prevented.

Children were not the only ones who jested during this time period. Others in this era included **Clarence Muse**, **Step' N' Fetchit** and **Eddie "Rochester" Anderson**. **Bill Robinson** tapped danced and did handstands on everything from stairs to birthday cakes in order to keep **Shirley Temple** entertained.

It was around the 1930's that the "our" syndrome began. During this phase, black women who always referred to everything or everybody as being ours (meaning mistress and maid) came into play. In these movies they fought fiercely to maintain what belonged to the masters. There was a type of love here that existed between master and servant; but rather than genuine feeling for another human being, it was more the type of love one had for a loyal pet or a familiar pair of old bedroom shoes that the masters felt. Here, the maids were allowed to get sassy and even offer advice. The two reigning queens of the mammy/maid era were **Louise Beavers** and **Hattie McDaniels**.

Louise Beavers is always well-powdered, well-mannered and full of motherly advice in her maid portrayals. Never seen in a bandana, she is usually adorned in a black dress with a crisply starched white apron. In nearly every instance, her employers are sensual actresses or flighty society belles with love problems. She, however, remains a non-sensual, sexless character devoid of any feminine characteristics other than the fact

that she is a female. Despite this, she still counsels her patrons on their love problems. In the end, as **Mae West** says, the mistresses "always get their man" but the maid is denied a love life or for that matter any other life of her own that does not revolve around the employer. In a period of one year, Louise Beavers played maid for **Jean Harlowe**, **Mae West**, **Bette Davis** and **Barbara Stanwyck** just to name a few.

Hattie McDaniels was a versatile, talented performer who was denied the opportunity to play anything other than maid/mammy roles and she reigns as THE mammy supreme for all times. A big woman weighing over 300 pounds, she was often criticized for these roles. To this she replied, "I would rather make \$7,000 a week playing a maid than seven dollars a week actually being one." Naturally sassy and quick-tempered both on the screen and off, she was the only performer allowed to talk back to "massa" and get away with it. Her down-home advice is often delivered with acid sarcasm and the "massa's" love her.

Although an established actress long before "Gone With The Wind," this picture firmly imprinted McDaniels in maid roles. Essentially, "Gone With The Wind" lacks any plot substance other than centering around the romantic mishaps of its heroine, Scarlett O'Hara. All throughout the movie mammy advises her in her ploys to trap Ashley Wilkes and later Rhett Butler (to which Scarlett replies "fiddle-dee and fiddle-dum"). McDaniels adds so much depth and genuineness to her role that she is actually believable in the part. For her acting ability in "Gone With The Wind," McDaniels still remains the first and only black woman to ever win an Academy Award. Thirteen years later in television, she starred in "Beulah," a series about a maid. This time however, she was allowed to clean her own house and rear her own family.

In the next issue of the BANNER, the final installment of this series: The 1940's—the present.

BANNER STAFF MEETING
April 12, 1977
6:30 P.M.

BENNETT BANNER

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