

News

Discrimination at Grinnell

by Mike Cleary

Discrimination on campus today tends to take subtle forms. Different groups experience it in different ways. In any case, discrimination is hard to prove.

Rick Rose said that "discrimination is subtle and that not every gay person sees it." Not every gay person experiences discrimination. "I don't feel discriminated against here," says Thom Barthelme. "I felt much more comfortable coming here." Beth Johnson presents a different picture. "I know many people who have been ostracized."

M.J. Constant says that her being gay had something to do with her getting kicked off the baseball team. "Coach Martinek mentioned two reasons. One, that my presence was a disruption — that's a quote — and two, that I wasn't tough enough. The coach said that it was my presence as a lesbian. My very being disturbed them. I was who I was and not what I did. And if that's not discrimination, I don't know what is," she concluded. "The guys on the team and the coach are always ragging on gays," she said.

Most gays mention the graffiti in Burling and verbal harassment. Rick Rose said that "it's often very violent." Gays also mention the posters promoting the band F.O.R., which said things like "I'm sick of lesbians" and "I hate lesbians."

Gays say that the tone on campus has worsened recently. Examples include the vandalism of the art exhibit in Negative Space, the backlash against allegations of homophobia on campus, and the tension surrounding the demonstrations for the Gay Resource Center.

Kendyl Linn, visiting her fiancée at Grinnell, participated in the demonstration for the Gay Resource Center. She was walking across campus when she was verbally attacked. "I heard a voice yell at me. They yelled, 'hey, lesbian.' I was scared. I didn't know where it came from so I turned around and ran back toward Younker."

Others hold more moderate views. Rich Beck says that "when the issue of homophobia became so large on campus, I think it became overblown. But that doesn't mean it's not a pertinent issue, that it doesn't exist."

One of the most important things to gays is learning about gay heritage in classes. As classes present them, there are "no gay writers, no gay painters, no role models. There were no gay people who were successful," says Beth Johnson. "Gays are denied any history."

"There's nothing overt," said Dave Dorsey about discrimination against blacks. Tony Marshall found it "difficult to articulate" the discrimination she felt. Many pointed to the scarcity of black professors (1) and inadequate recruitment efforts in admissions as examples of at least unconscious discrimination. Todd Coulter says that blacks have been refused opportunities to do research projects over the summer. Valesta Wiggins thinks there is a certain degree of "institutionalized racism."

Wiggins says that sometimes blacks are patronized. People "tell Richard Pryor jokes or talk in a black accent because they think I'll like it."

K.C. McClanahan tells of one black student who moved to South campus, and later ended up leaving Grinnell. Shortly after she arrived on her new floor, "she heard somebody say, 'oh, we got another black student.' It shows the insensitivity of students." He continued, saying "people make jokes and expect people to be integrated and therefore it's okay to make that joke."

McClanahan said that he was discriminated against when he applied to become an SA. "I went through the interview process. I was not accepted as an SA but as an alternate. Later, there was a shortage of SAs, so Flossie Mitchell called me. . . She said the reason you were not accepted was that the committee who interviewed you felt that you did not have enough white friends to warrant being an SA. She said she realized it was not a good criterion . . ." said McClanahan. He said that this implies that one "had to have a certain number of white friends to be validated as socially functional."

Dorsey says that there are "a lot of prejudices and stereotypes on campus because most students do not have a lot of exposure to blacks." McClanahan agrees that there is "not much integration between black students and white students."

Specific examples of discrimination against women are difficult to identify. Rebecca Weston points to where women are employed in the college. She says the Food Service and the maids are women.

Kim Judis mentions that women generally are reluctant to speak in class. "It's part of what is expected behavior," she says. Laura Jajnesica says she has heard that men tend to take control in lab situations.

In academics, they find more reason to be critical. "I think they do a miserable

job trying to incorporate women into the curriculum," says Jajnesica. She says that students have requested professors to present feminist interpretations in class. The professors declined, saying that they don't know feminist critiques well enough. "It's their job to know about it," says Jajnesica.

Judis says that her professors ignored Women's Day last year. On that day, women's issues were to be incorporated into the classes. "Not one of my professors did," says Judis.

The prevailing attitudes towards women are hard to characterize. Jajnesica mentions negative attitudes on campus towards feminism. "When I tell people I'm a feminist, they think I'm radical, angry, that I hate men," she says. Judis is encouraged that some men "take an interest in Women's Groups."

Conservatives on campus experience much more often displays of discriminatory behavior. "I was labelled homophobic for just opposing the Gay Resource Center. I thought they didn't need their own room," says Todd Troutner.

Following the raid on Libya, posters announced that a "discussion" would take place in North Lounge. Mark Hallerberg describes what took place at that meeting. "It was assumed from the start that the discussion was going to be about protest. I said that any U.S. president would have done the same thing. People started shouting all sorts of things. The whole atmosphere was antagonistic," he says.

An even more graphic example occurred when Paul Macready and a friend were

discussing the contra issue in Loose Lougne. "We were called to our faces 'babykillers'. We were able to continue to discuss because each side refrained from Neanderthalic name-calling and allowed a real debate to occur."

It was even suggested that some people bring discrimination upon themselves or use their membership in a minority group as an excuse to claim discrimination. "People tend to hide behind a minority," says Thom Barthelme.

Meanwhile, the social isolation of blacks, conservatives, gays, and to a lesser extent women and athletes continues. McClanahan says that blacks will feel more comfortable with a larger and more diverse mix of black students. He suggests that 120 to 130 black students, especially more from inner-city areas, would be good. There would be a better support network, so blacks could stop worrying about "survival" and become more involved in the campus community.

The issue of the Gay Resource Center is another symptom of social isolation. Some gays admit they are less open about their homosexuality nowadays. Paul Macready remarks how conservatives tend to associate with the small part of the campus that is not liberal.

That open-mindedness would do much to dissolve stereotypes and prejudice seems obvious. Whether it is realistic to assume that such open-mindedness is possible to attain and how much it can reduce discrimination is a matter of opinion.

Divestment

from page 1

services from companies which do not qualify for investment." Phil Cantor said, "Any company that Grinnell divests from does not qualify for investment."

In explaining the Board's reason for not boycotting Ford, Drake said, "a boycott of Ford was seen to lead to hurting the already struggling Grinnell economy." Drake went on to point out that a boycott of Ford would hurt the local Ford dealership in town and the college does not want to do this.

Another justification for not boycotting Ford was the possible implications of boycotts on other automotive companies. Drake said, "The trustees believed that a Ford boycott could possibly lead to a boycott of all other automotive companies. The trustees said that they did not want to face that possibility."

As for the MGM/UA boycott, Drake said

that the trustees wanted to remain consistent with their boycotts. Drake said, "We couldn't very well boycott MGM/UA and not boycott Ford."

There have been accusations that the Board voted to review the divestment policy at this meeting as a result of the absence of Gardiner Dutton and Andrew Loweli who not only sit on the Investor Responsibility Committee but are also reported to be in favor of divestment. Cantor said, "I think some people took advantage of the fact that Loweli and Dutton were not at the meeting." Yet Drake said that probably the fact that Loweli and Dutton were not at the meeting prevented the Board from coming to a final decision.

Students to End Apartheid have begun a petition drive and have scheduled a protest of the Board's decision today at 4:00 in front of Nollen House. The trustees plan to meet again in Grinnell in mid-November.

OH, WHAT A
WONDERFUL FELINE!



© RPP, Inc.

Boynston

Graduation
Cards from Recycled
Paper Products, Inc.

Available at:

The Varsity

News Stand
917 Broad

236-3010



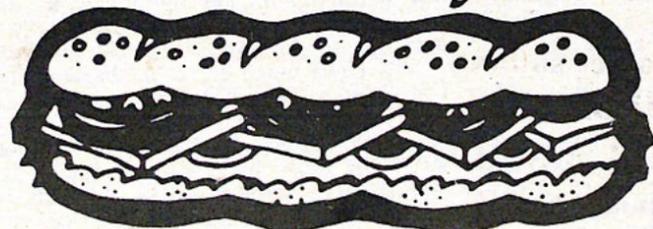
OPEN SUNDAY

May 18th
4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Please make your
reservations now

J's RESTAURANT
COCKTAIL LOUNGE
UPSTAIRS-DOWNTOWN, MAIN STREET-GRINNELL

Back Alley Deli



Will Be Delivering
Every night During Finals Week

May 11th thru the 16th
8:00 p.m. to midnight

Back Alley Deli

917 Broad St. 236-3010