

THE SPINNER

THE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER
College of Wooster

Vol. I. No. IV. May 1979

WOMEN AT WOOSTER: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Inequalities, prejudices, narrow-mindedness, and discrimination, all seem to be cast into the life pattern of the female in the world today. The sometimes subtle moves together with the overt actions of many compound the problems of the Black female. We all are aware of this, not only in distant places, but right here on Wooster's campus. The campus fosters some very real inequalities in its atmosphere too.

It is quite difficult being Black and being female here at The College of Wooster. Imagine being expected to possess: all knowledge about Black heritage, the reason for controversial issues, and the answer to the "What do you really want" question. Hence, when discussions arise in class she must give her opinion in a quiet unassuming way. The answer must also be presented in a pleasing manner so that it does not hurt any feelings or cause any ire. One has to be endowed with this information, for it is not important enough to be included in many text books or taught in many classes. Sometimes, guilt feelings do surface from the other parties involved and to appease, a good deed, extra points, a compromising smile, or a half-hearted thank-you may be rendered. Yet, in the very next instance, if the Black female by chance has to approach the desk or table for any reason and the black hand is seen before the black face, the Black female had better be prepared to stand there "x" amount of minutes until all papers are shuffled and minor notations made.

Black attrition is an experience that surfaces differently in different places. This process includes unfair grading, not informing the Blacks on certain requirements for graduation, or by blatantly informing the student that her achievement in the class will be low due to her race. Along with these racial problems, the Black female also suffers sexual inequalities. The female, no matter what race, creed or color, is discriminated in the fashion that her place is in the home to serve as "housekeeper and sexual object". Unfortunately, none of these jobs is exciting and they provide very little impact upon our lives unless it is a detrimental one. It is quite sad that the rest of society cannot realize how monotonous a female's life would be if she were to occupy those awesome roles. It is even more unfortunate that the college has not come to this realization. More and more, we females are advised to go the route of getting married and having a family instead of going on to graduate school or establishing ourselves in a professional job. We are told that we can be teachers or nurses. Those jobs are fine, but what about engineering, or other types of careers which are dominated by males? As stated before, the Black woman has to go through this discriminatory action also. With the race and sex of the Black women added together, it is evident that her plight is not a

(continued on page 2)

happy one in this society and consequently at The College of Wooster.

As far as social outlets for the Black female are concerned, there are none. The Black male has the opportunity of living in Harambee and both Black and White males have the option of joining a section. Although the women social clubs, i.e. Chic's, EKO's, or Peanuts may not discriminate against the admission of a Black female, neither do they encourage the action. So where does the Black woman go for female socialization? We need a social outlet as do the Black male, White male, and White female.

Role models pose another problem for the Black female. There are four Black female staff and faculty members on this campus. With the female population consisting of 39, it seems inevitable that these four women can effectively serve as role models for our somewhat small, but recognition-seeking community. This ration of 1:10 is quite high considering these women have family as well as career obligations. Thus their time for spending with the students in a social atmosphere is somewhat limited. Again, the Black female is faced with the problem of easily accessible role models.

The biggest gripe of the Black female on this campus is her lack of recognition. It would be really nice if we were recognized as being Black women who possess special needs. It is not fair that we are identified with the White female, mainly because we are not White. Nor is it fair that our needs are adhered to in the same manner as the Black male, for we are not males. Instead, we would like to be recognized as Black women who need special attention as well as everyone else, and whose lives are a continuous struggle in this world and especially at The College of Wooster.

STUDENT PROFILE: PAM HAMPTON

Pam Hampton is much more than an intercollegiate woman athlete. It would be a great mistake to categorize Hampton as simply a Wooster tennis player. Pam is a member of a team. She is a person to be enjoyed and admired.

The facts are evident. Hampton is a four year women's varsity tennis player at Wooster. This year she holds down the #1 singles spot in addition to teaming with Sophomore Audi Wynn at the #1 doubles position. Hampton and Wynn recently captured the State title at that position. Hampton's game is based on consistency at the baseline. She has been able, in addition, to develop a strong attack and quickened reflexes to become an "all-around" player.

Pam Hampton, though, is more than a tennis player. As the only senior on this year's Scottie's tennis team, Hampton has become the group's leader. She has accepted this role graciously and modestly. There is a common, implicit feeling among the team members that Pam is always there to "lean on". As coach "Doc" Sexton says, "Pam is completely for the good of the team." Pam's doubles partner, Audi Wynn, adds, "Pam keeps the tempo of our game up, helps us maintain the right mental attitude, and never gets upset when I make a mistake...and she doesn't choke in the big matches.

Pam is probably every coach's ideal player. "Doc" Sexton commends Hampton for her exceptional common-sense and reliability. Sexton says, "Pam has never stepped out of a match due to sickness or injury". Even rival coaches and players compliment Pam on her "beautiful" game and personality. At a top position where it is extremely difficult to set records or achieve personal glory, Hampton is a prototype of the devoted athlete. She plays tennis because she loves the game, and because she enjoys being part of the team.

After her graduation this spring, Pam Hampton may not be remembered as the greatest woman athlete ever to have played on this campus. It is inevitable, though, that Pam Hampton's spirit of dedication, concern and sincerity will remain as a source of inspiration to future athletes and as a tribute to this exceptional woman.

"THE WAY IT WAS...."

Can students attending The College of Wooster now in the 70's understand how the women enrolled at the college during the 1930's were treated? Freshmen "girls" (as they were called then) were more carefully protected and disciplined than many had been in their own homes.

All women's dormitories were closed on week nights at 10:00 p.m., Sundays at 9:00, and 11:00 for juniors and seniors Saturday nights. All lights were to be out one half hour after the closing hour. The dormitories were conducted under the proctor system, with new proctors being appointed from residents every six weeks. There was a house mother living in each dormitory. Women students assigned to "sit desk" (one of the few employment opportunities for females on campus) were responsible for keeping the sign-in-sign-out records. Destination and purpose of being out of the dormitory had to be indicated at the desk. Late arrivals were given demerits for each minute late and after a certain number of violations the punishments were determined by the Women's Self Government Board.

Quiet hours in the dormitories were 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. until 6: a.m. During these hours pianos in the lounges and radios (there were not record players in those days) could not be played, and noisy "bull sessions" were subject to discipline by the proctors.

A student handbook for 1930-31 stated that the number of "engagements" in one week after 7:00 p.m. were limited as follows: seniors, no restrictions; juniors, four, sophomores, three; freshman, two. Library study was permitted until 9:10 p.m.; freshmen limited to two nights a week. No Sunday engagements with men were allowed until 6:30 p.m.

Women were not permitted to ride in cars without written consent from home; a trip outside of the city of Wooster required special permission from the Dean of Women, as were overnights within town. The handbook also made clear there were to be no public dances or dances in hotel or halls managed by students. The first dances on campus were held in the fall of 1932. Since 1916 the custom was for students to have no dates at football games. Of course, there were no intercollegiate athletics for women. All social functions where men and women gathered together were to be chaperoned by approved faculty or administrative couples.

The dress code for women permitted no slacks to be worn in the classrooms, heels and hose were required in the dining rooms for the evening meals and Sunday noon where male waiters served the women at assigned tables. Tennis shorts were to be covered by coats when women were crossing campus to the tennis courts.

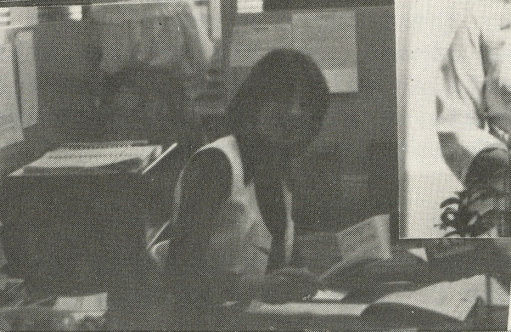
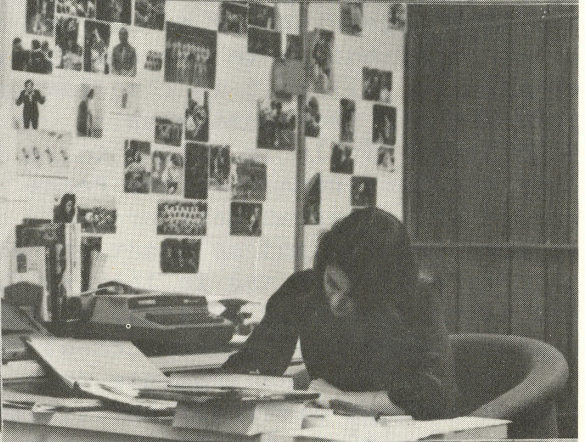
Daily Chapel (convocation) was mandatory, attendance taken by proctors, and seating designated by class with women on one side, men on the other, faculty in the choir loft. Accumulated cuts in chapel and classrooms resulted in fines and loss of academic credits. A woman would not attend Sunday church service in the college chapel with a man unless formally engaged.

The only restrictions for men on campus were limiting the use of tobacco only in the dormitories (women were forbidden to smoke anywhere in Wooster--downtown or in private homes), outlawing the use of intoxicating liquors, gambling, theft, or destruction of property belonging to the college or individuals, and serious violation of decency or good order.

The 1930-31 handbook, published by the Christian Associations of The College of Wooster, was prefaced by a welcome from President Wishart (known as Prexy) with statements such as: "We want you to feel free at home in the Wooster family."..."We hope that before too long you will find yourself definitely partaking of that glorious experience we term the Wooster spirit."..."We want you to enter heartily into every phase of college life and activity. This is the simplest yet most effective treatment for any unbidden pang of loneliness or homesickness. With hearty cooperation on your part we know you will soon be able to adapt yourself."

WOMEN OF WOOSTER





WOOSTER WOMEN TRAVEL TO AFRICA

Three Wooster women decided to do something different with their upcoming summer. Judy Simmons, Beth Shepherd and Sally Osborn are going to participate in the Operation Crossroads program. Operation Crossroads is a private, non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes work, traveling and studying in Africa as a vehicle for cross-cultural exchange and understanding and for personal and professional growth. Students travel to Africa after a brief and intense orientation session. They spend their summers living and working with rural village communities. Judy is primarily interested in oral history and an archeological dig. Sally and Beth listed Public Health Education as their first choice in the program. Judy explained that she chose this program because she wanted to get out of the Western Culture and explore different lands. She stated that by participating in Operation Crossroads that she hopes to gain a better understanding of her and other people's biases and therefore make an added contribution to her education. All three of the women hope that this experience will help in choosing careers after college. Judy is interested in Community Programming which involves accessing people's needs and working with them. Sally is hoping to be able to work with senior citizens. Both, Judy and Beth suggested the Peace Corps as a possibility after Wooster. Beth has worked with several work projects in past summers, including working with the Arizona Indians and as a advisor in West Virginia. She is very happy doing this type of work and is looking forward to this summer with great anticipation. The women feel that by going to Africa to work, they will learn more about the culture than by attending school there or just traveling.

One of the requirements that each woman must be able to provide is \$1700 raised through different activities and donations in the community. Their home communities, the Wooster campus, and the Wooster community have been supportive. They are trying to set up an exchange pact with these communities. When the women return next year, they want to give something of the culture back to the people who helped support them and allow them to go. Sally, Beth, and Judy have all been thinking of ways to capture the culture such as keeping detailed journals, taking pictures and learning the music.

At the beginning of July these three women will fly to Africa and participate in an adventure that few others at this college will ever experience. They will work with African students as well as the African peoples in the villages and towns. They will contribute to a rural development project and learn about cultures that are vastly different from our own.

MOTHERS AND WHORES IS COMING TO WOOSTER

Mothers and Whores is a one-woman show produced by "Underground Railway Puppets and Actors" of Oberlin College, is a montage of images of women drawn from literature, history and contemporary life. It's subtitled a cabaret because of its form of a variety show, combining acting, song, mime and dance to depict women as they have seen themselves and as they have been seen by men. This is an appropriate way to present the tangles of images we associate with women; and yet as varied as these images are, they all radiate from a single-split-projection about women's nature.

The cabaret presents images from art and life: that include Bertolt Bercht's songs and plays, Sylvia Plath's letters and poems, Kate Millett's The Prostitution Papers, popular music, certain ancient mythologies and contemporary newspaper stories. When the entertainment is over, it can be followed by an informal discussion with the audience, in order to share reactions.

The production will be presented in the Cage, free, on May 25 at 9:00 p.m.

A FEMINIST'S PERSPECTIVE

When I came to Wooster as a freshman, I was not what I would call a feminist. Since that time, because of my experiences here, I am certainly a supporter of women and a feminist.

It has been difficult and frustrating for me to see the way women live on this campus. Upon entering the College we are sex segregated (huge dorms like Holden). Somehow my hall was made to feel that our worth was earned by the number of dances we got at a party or the number of beers we could drink at the Cage. I felt that Holden discouraged friendships between women because the actual building has such a negative atmosphere for talking or relaxing. Also, the campus seems to look down on those who live in Holden Hall.

Luckily, my upperclass friends incorporated me into their activities and introduced me to other people. But I found that the prevailing attitude of males and females was that women's ideas and goals were held in lower regard than men's. For example, in conversation women were less likely to be listened to or taken seriously. Bad female professors were complained about much more frequently than were bad male professors. Snide comments referring to sex or women's bodies were made frequently in a way that made me feel defensive or angry. Female athletes were not praised or appreciated nearly as much as were male athletes. Even talented women that I met had rather derogatory attitudes about themselves. None of these things made sense to me because I believed that women and men were equally important.

Although I've been using the past tense verb, these incidents occur daily in Wooster. Still this quarter, as in quarters past, I have a professor who continually refuses to acknowledge the presence of women by using all masculine pronouns. This may seem like a picky criticism of a person who grew up during a different generation, but it is a particularly valid request within an academic institution where student and teacher need to be comfortable enough to work with one another. This professor shows through his actions that he doesn't care to interact with his female students. He neglects them.

Despite my frustrations with the Wooster status quo, I am having more frequent positive experiences about women. Perhaps this is because I am more selective about my friends and professors. I am increasingly in contact with somewhat assertive women. These are women who will speak up in class or conversation when condescending attitudes toward women are expressed. I am encouraged by students, faculty and staff who make a commitment to listening and acting upon various types of sex discrimination. At times, I believe that the negative facets of Wooster's conservatism are evolving toward a more positive atmosphere for women. This is especially true when I see many women being supportive of one another; particularly those with opposing philosophical views of "feminism."

My personal attitudes toward feminism have been developing in this atmosphere of traditional values. Some attitudes toward women's lives must change if women are to hold an equally important place as men in our society. I look forward to the challenges of life outside of Wooster, and dream of the time when Wooster women will not have sexist encounters on campus.

NEW BOOK IN LIBRARY: Andrew's library has just acquired a new book on the feminist movement in Russia. It is in the new book display case.

THE DAUGHTER-BANDIT

And say no
 Box your sharp ears
 mama
 and say no
 and learn not
 to call me child

I keep you in a cube
 mama where you kept me
 until I warped through
 a corner you never knew
 and took almost all
 of myself away Now I hold you
 in this glass cage
 of two-way mirrors and I watch
 You are propping up
 what is left of me
 Fashioning my remains
 into a small limp scarecrow
 to ward off your fears

And outside I have become Ophelia
 and orphaned Orphaned
 And still you scold that mute smile of rags
 and fret in whispers that I am not myself
 You do not know if I am listening You know
 only disorder only the hum of severed nerves
 and you clutch shudder
 in the shock waves of my tall dances
 as I gambol and break
 into song and hobble sly
 maddened jigs
 and cast the cube like a die

And you slide and skitter
 and do not break mama
 Each of your walls is a slice
 of diamond leaving my hands
 full of cuts and I laugh
 all to tears as you slide
 and fall and sob vowing
 never to worry about me
 again And box
 your heart beat
 and say no

Debra Allbery

THE SPINNER

Published monthly by the women of
 the Resource Center.....

Contributors

Adrienne Jackson Brooke Bashore
 Nancy Ducan Deb Allbery
 Chris deVries (editor)