

the college news

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Mawrtys Make Nice: Confrontation at Bryn Mawr

by natalie abbott

Students, faculty, and staff gathered last Friday in the Multicultural Center in a discussion titled "How Women Fight: Making Nice at a Women's College." Professor Kim Cassidy and students from a gender and psychology seminar class talked about how the campus community seems to draw back from saying edgy things both inside and outside of class because they don't want to offend others.

Professors related the experience of students not speaking up about problems they had with the class, and then getting "slammed" in class evaluations. The speakers and participants pointed out that college students are working hard at maintaining relationships and do not want to mess them up due to confronting someone. Although the focus on relationships can create friction when problems arise, the willingness to work on relationships is also a strength of Bryn Mawr students.

Participants brought up the fact that many of these issues are not unique to Bryn Mawr and are seen throughout society. Women in general seem to be more worried about relationships than men are; for example, a woman may not quit her job for a better one because she does not want to leave her friends. College students especially do not want to fight with someone who they could potentially see the next day in the dining hall. Several participants and presenters questioned the perceived phenomenon of men or boys dominating discussions, and people gave examples for and against that happening in the Bi-Co.

Several comments about the issue of speaking in class were raised. Some

people theorized that maybe women are socialized not to volunteer in general. Others said that students at Bryn Mawr are afraid of being wrong and do not speak up because they do not want to be seen as being wrong. Part of the difficulty or anxiety around confrontation occurs because it is very hard to be told or tell someone that they are wrong, especially in an environment like Bryn Mawr, where several participants noted that people here are easily offended or "touchy."

Students observed that other students are protective of their intelligence, possibly citing this as a by-product of not talking about grades, because students feel as if they have to demonstrate their intelligence. Discussing the perception that women are more apt to phrase declarative statements in the form of a question, participants raised the issue that it might be because of uncertainty or due to a fear of sounding obnoxious.

Many students identified with the feeling that they were walking a "bizarre line" between standing out and being invisible. Many women want to be somewhere in between because if someone stands out, she perceives herself as not in a relationship, making her feel more vulnerable. Several participants said that questions serve as an "artificial" declaration. Faculty and students voiced concerns about how the academic integrity of Bryn Mawr could be maintained without honest discussions. The concern about being perceived as the "annoying girl in class" and the effect that has on the willingness

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photo by christina dougherty. look inside for more from our feature photographer.

Cartography Exhibition Opens at Canaday

by merrilee millar

Bryn Mawr College kicked off its 2005 "Friends of the Library" season last Thursday, January 27th, with the opening of a new exhibition in Canaday Library entitled "Mapping New Worlds: The Cartography of European Exploration and Colonization, 1450-1750."

The afternoon began with a talk by Ignacio Gallup-Diaz of the Bryn Mawr History Department on "Cartographers of Imagined Empires: Drake, Raleigh, and the Buccaneers" and the audience overflowed from the chairs onto the floor as Gallup-Diaz discussed maps not merely as scientific navigational documents, but

as readable cultural texts. Early maps reflect dreams of great empires before they existed while later maps depict not only what and whom the explorers found, but also how they viewed these new discoveries. In fact, Gallup-Diaz claims that some of the more ornamental items on maps are equally, if not more important than their actual cartographic aspects. Sea monsters, for example, next to elaborate sailing vessels demonstrate the power of the sea and the explorers' desire to conquer it while biblical characters in the corners emphasize an important religious presence and the Winds, humanized in their

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THE GREAT HAFFNER FLOOD

by adina halpern

On Tuesday, December 21, a Bryn Mawr public safety officer noticed water gushing out the front door of Haffner French. Further investigation concluded that Haffner French had in fact flooded when a third floor bathroom pipe burst. The hatch to some electrical equipment on the roof had not been shut correctly, and a strong wind had blown it so violently that it had broken off of the hinge. Cold air had subsequently seeped into the roof and frozen a pipe. When the weather warmed up, a tiny crack formed in the pipe causing it to leak through the walls of the dorm.

The water traveled down to the second and first floors and began to leak out of every opening in the walls and ceilings, including smoke alarms, lights, and vents, saturating items underneath. Unfortunately, these items included beds, desks, and their contents. There was not more than a few inches of water on the floor, but as Pritika Hingorani '05, Haffner French's only Hall Adviser explains, "Water was leaking from everywhere." As Occupational and

Environmental Safety Officer Don Abramowitz notes, "Everything was sort of saturated, but nothing was floating."

At once, Bryn Mawr staff members flew into action. Facilities, Residential Life, staff from the Deans' Office,



including Dean Chuck Heyduk, and Housekeeping worked together to repair the rooms in time for Haffner residents' returns from Winter Break. Some staff members were even in the dorm on Christmas Eve.

Every heater in the dorm was turned up to high, and anyone who has ever

experienced the heaters in Haffner, even at a low setting, knows that the high setting is *really hot*. This was in the hopes that the heat would dry out what had been soaked by the flood. The temperature of the dorm when staff arrived after Christmas is barely imaginable (around 120 degrees), but it had not sufficiently dried out Haffner French. Although the damage was not as bad as it was originally thought to have been, Abramowitz decided to replace the walls and carpets in order to make dorm residents' returns as comfortable as possible.

Anything left out in the rooms over the break, including anything on the floor, beds, chairs, televisions, and desks, had to be boxed and removed from the rooms or put on the windowsills so that the carpets could be replaced. All of the smoke alarms in the dorm were also replaced, as well as many of the walls. Damaged clothes and bedding were sent to the dry cleaners. Abramowitz notes "the worried look on

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