



Evaluating the opposite sex's endowments – one phase of men's liberation day at Wittenberg.

Staff Photos by Walt Kleino

The judges: co-eds were delighted with their turnabout role
... Boys' backsides won reviews, but shoe sizes drew interest, too

And the winner blushed

By Jim Casey

Journal Herald Staff Writer

SPRINGFIELD — "I've never been so embarrassed in all my life. I think I'll just stand here and turn red."

And he did, all the way from the top of his shaggy blond head to the tips of his bare toes, every square inch of him save what couldn't be seen beneath

escape from their stereotyped roles as "success objects."

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"date," the girl was to lead the boy away and, for a full five minutes, carry the conversation. Her partner was permitted only to nod or shake his head.

For the next five minutes, the woman was to make physical advances to the man, trying for "a score." The man, in return, was to set up defenses to "protect his reputation."

"We've got to be cool," he said.

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Emerging from the dressing room, they walked down a gauntlet of women, some of whom took the opportunity to pat their fannies.

Next came a "talent contest" in which one man did a handstand, another did a "dramatic reading" of "Spring is sprung the grass is riz," a

third sang "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," another recited "Little Boy Blue," and the fifth did "a few pushups, and I might even throw in a heart attack."

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But, somehow, the women seemed to be having all the fun.

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That part probably was blushing, too.

For it was turnabout time at Wittenberg University, a boys' beauty contest for the benefit of a bunch of giggling girls delighted with a chance at evaluating the opposite sex's endowments.

"HE'S GOT A nice rump," shouted one member of the audience.

"He's hunchbacked," remarked another co-ed about a second contestant.

"He's too short from his waist to his neck," cried one young lady.

"He's got a cute blush, doesn't he?" said someone near the front.

BELIEVE IT or not, this was "men's liberation."

Warren Farrell, author of "The Liberated Man: Freeing Men and Their Relationships with Women," was on campus lecturing on how males should

escape from their stereotyped roles as "success objects."

He staged the "beauty contest" as a role-reversing experiment, switching the men from success to sex objects and taking women off the stage and placing them in the front row.

"The purpose of a men's beauty contest is not to put men through what women have been through but to give you people a chance to experience some of the feelings you have when you undertake another role," he explained.

"IN LIFE in general, every woman is a contestant in a beauty contest all the time. In life in general, all men are judges in a beauty contest all the time.

"We don't stereotype in the opposite way, looking at a woman and saying, 'Now there's someone who could support me'."

Farrell used another experiment to underscore the same point, separating the class into men and women and telling them to eyeball each other from across the room.

The women were asked to study the men as potential sex partners, choose one and ask him for a date. The men were told to evaluate the women as providers and decide whether or not to accept.

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"date," the girl was to lead the boy away and, for a full five minutes, carry the conversation. Her partner was permitted only to nod or shake his head.

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The initial approaches were predictable — nervous laughter, shuffling of feet — and the girls' lines were carbon copies of ones they'd heard before — "I've seen you around the campus and thought I'd stop over and say hello," "I don't think you need to go to a bar to meet people."

But the reaction to the reversed roles were surprisingly pleasant.

"IT WAS THE first time I, as a woman, felt confident with other women," one co-ed said. "I felt like I was somebody. I felt confident to look someone, well, in the body."

"It was really pleasant," responded one of the men. "I just felt so good being in that position, not having to take the first step and everything."

The experiments Farrell said, help the men understand the roles they are forced into, often unconsciously. Boys, for instance, automatically train themselves "not to walk with a wiggle."

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AS ADULTS, Farrell added, "We start figuring out how can I succeed in a given specialized area, how far can I get in that area and how fast can I get there."

Eventually, instead of growing in his occupation and enjoying his work, a man becomes concerned with questions like, "How can I preserve my job? How can I increase my budget? How can I increase my staff?"

By the time the man discovers that he no longer enjoys what he's doing, Farrell said, "he gives up any thought of getting involved in something different.

"Something different might involve quitting work to go back to school, sending his wife to work in the interim while he studies and cares for the family, possibly accepting a lower standard of living.

AND SUCH THINGS just aren't done, Farrell said.

A man would be ostracized merely for smoking an Eve cigarette, he said, not to mention quitting his job and taking over the housework. Men are too worried about living up to the Marlboro Man.

"I think that is why we have such an incredible, stupid admiration for movie stars," he said.

Farrell's ultimate program for men's liberation would include paternity leaves for new fathers, men's birth control and more flexible working hours.

AND AT WITTENBERG, at least, the chance to be a beauty king.

Fifteen male members of the lecture audience were lined up in front of the women, and each was asked to pose in profile and backward positions. The girls were urged to make comments.

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Many were ribald, particularly after Farrell told them the "old husband's tale" that a man's sexual prowess can be estimated from the size of his shoe.

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... Turning red a lot less strenuous



Kid start





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The runway: a gamut of giggles, pats on the behind

... This contestant in the title "Little Boy Lost-Pants"

Kid start



By Marty Schipfer

Here's a nightly ritual at our house. Each child gets a goodnight "back scratch." (Or, "rack scratch," if you please.)

Dad started counting them when the children wanted more and more. Twenty is our magic number and now the children count them.

Our funny fear is that our 3-year-old will be mesmerized to sleep in first grade when the class is counting to 50. By 21, he will be snoring.

If you have suggestions for helping children develop, send them to Marty Schipfer in care of The Journal Herald.