

PTK conference became a source of inspiration

BY SHAWN DEHRING
STAFF WRITER

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Phi Theta Kappa Regional Conference hosted by Jackson Community College. Of the 29 community colleges invited, 22 were represented by about 160 students which made it the biggest Michigan regional meeting yet.

The goals of the meeting included electing new regional officers, voting on future meeting locations and the intermingling of people and ideas.

As a new member, I had not even attended a local meeting, but the trip was an opportunity not to be missed. Doubts overwhelmed me on the journey there, and I began to think, "Who am I trying to kid by going to meet all these smart people?"

But fortunately, it was too late to back-out. The trip was great and it was full of chances to listen to speakers, meet people and experience a sense of fellowship that is hard to find.

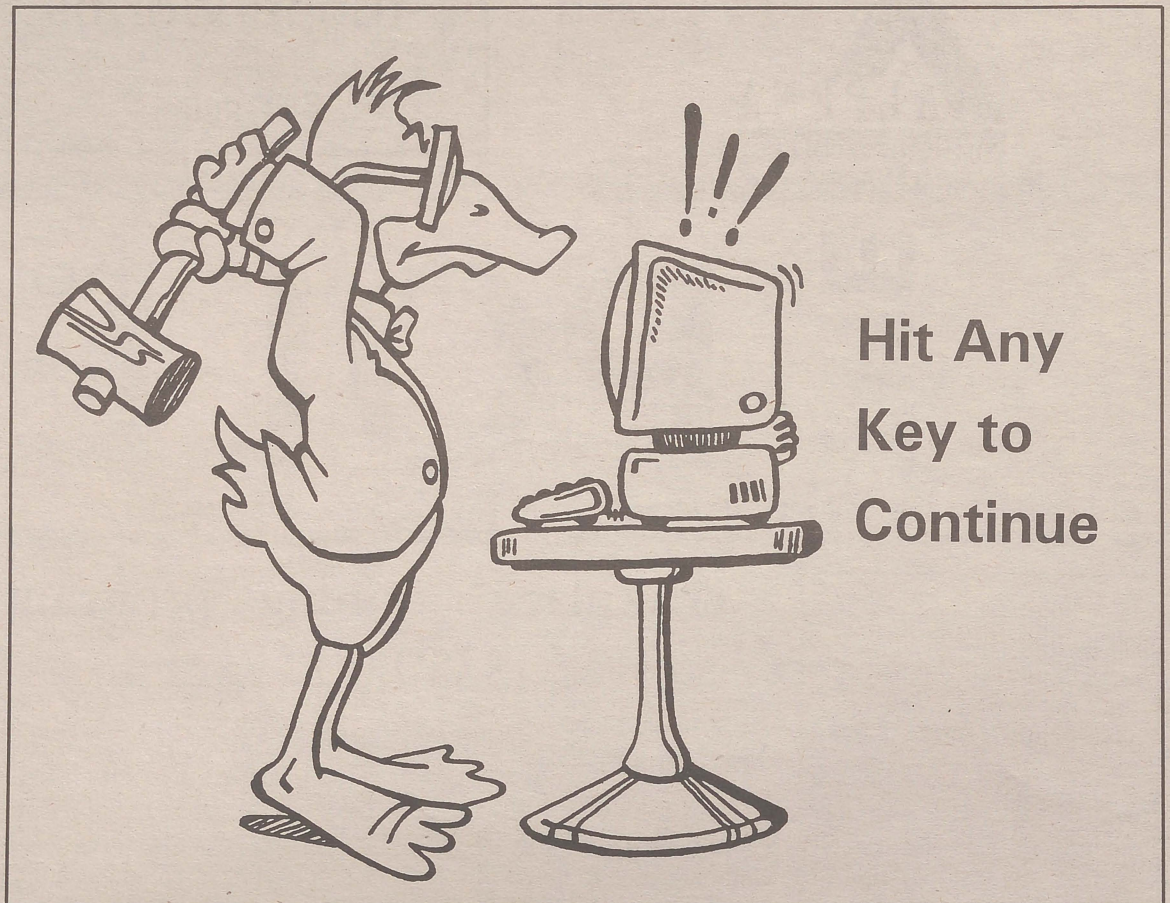
The seminars included talks on Pre Columbian Americans, world overpopulation, genetic research and more. The best thing about the seminars was the rapid intellectual discussion they instigated. Debates raged all the way home.

In between activities, a wonderfully diverse group of people of all ages, races and ethnic backgrounds mingled. It was a group that represented the variety of students found on community college campuses. And yet, as different as people were, there was a commonality, the PTK bond, that united everyone.

This bond can have a tremendous effect. These students are united in scholarship, fellowship, leadership and service, and they work to make a positive impact in their schools and communities. They help people from children to senior citizens by doing everything from tutoring to community clean-up. I felt I was with the future leaders of America.

ACC's local Nu Omicron Chapter has held several leadership seminars, run a voter registration drive and hosted Science Olympiad.

These kinds of activities show the potential and power students have. If students united and worked together, they could be a force to be reckoned with.



You're in college -- so think like it

BY JEN GOODBURNE
CO-EDITOR

Is it true that people only care about things that affect them personally?

The Polemic has received volumes of letters concerning a (at one time) simple, innocent question: What do you think of the snack bar?

However, we got no response from the article we ran about gays in the military, a tinderbox issue which throws some sections of the political spectrum into frenzied bursts of opinionated zeal. Nor did we hear anything about local businesses playing monopoly with Alpena.

I understand that the snack bar affects students. But so do gas prices, especially for commuting students.

It's true that the "gays in the military" issue doesn't touch most people on a daily basis, but that doesn't mean this social issue will not effect people in the long run.

Whether or not to allow gays in the military is important for more reasons than the obvious, surface one. The

issue deals with general morals and standards; the decision on this matter will effect more than homosexuals. It will signal a trend which will likely dominate the rest of Clinton's presidency. This trend will, in turn, influence state and local decisions.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan used a legal loophole to fire

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airline workers of the PATCO union, thus effectively breaking their strike. He sent the signal to big business that unions could and should be busted.

The result? I'm sure many, many of the non-traditional students on this campus who are here as a result of a job loss could tell you. This event, so long ago,

managed to greatly effect little ol' Alpena.

Political issues may have far reaching effects. This is why we need education, involvement, and input.

Who's to say what sort of an impact Clinton's decision will have? Will it or will it not touch the life of a heterosexual student, who isn't even interested in the military?

A student is a person who is seeking an education. A college student needs to expand horizons beyond the concrete dealings of a particular situation.

This brings us back to the burning issue of the snack bar.

While input is always a good thing, regardless of its nature, I'm still hoping that people will open up to bigger, more significant things.

"He who snoozes loses." I know it's a cliché, but who could have known Ron was taking major steps to put the blue collar workforce out on its ear in '81? I was only age 9 at the time, but the effect it's had on my life makes me wish someone would have caught on.

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