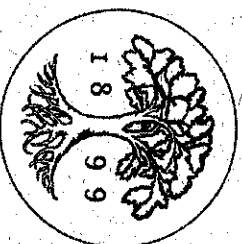


Kiri Baga balances life on the edge of her blades

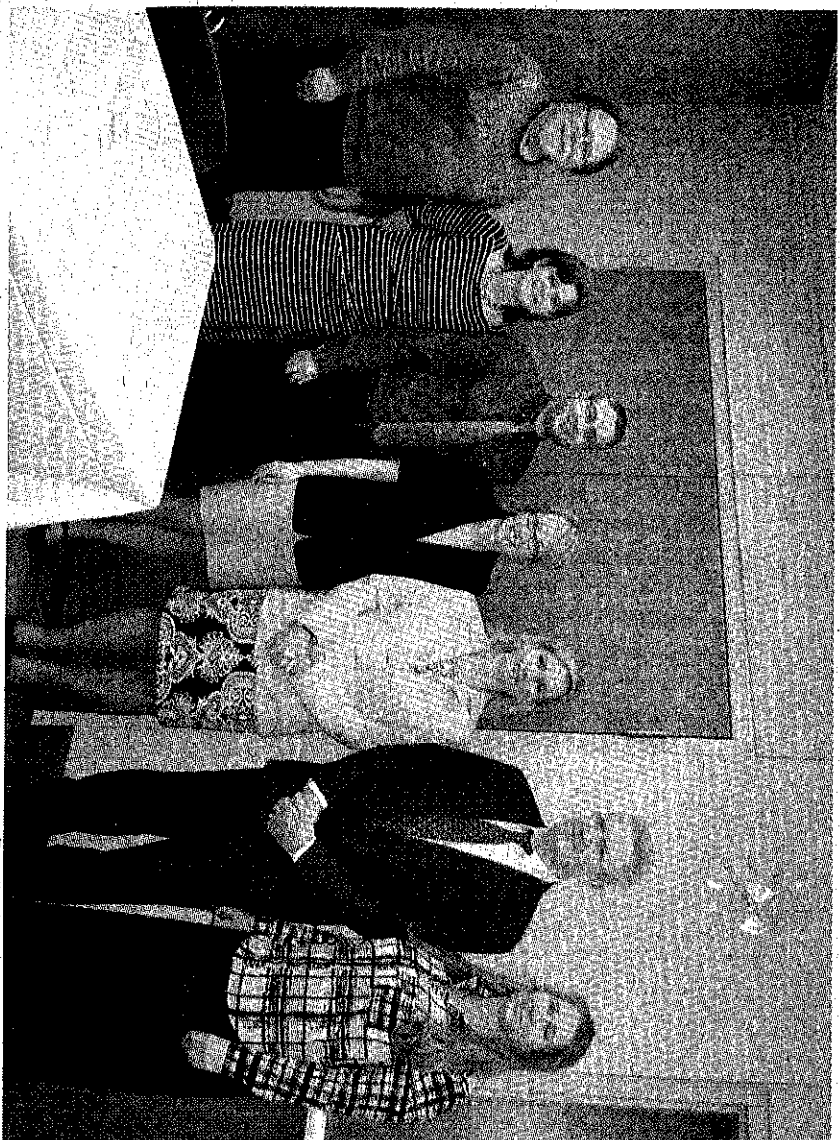


THE SIMMONS VOICE

SINCE 1922 APRIL 10, 2014 VOLUME 94 ISSUE 19

What to do when allergies strike

How the 'right to know' is limited Simmons Palooza discusses barriers to information obtainment



SARAH KINNEY
John Lowe, Catherine Paden, Joel Blanco-Rivera, Laura Saunders, Rebecca Kroeniger-Donohue, Paul Sturges, and Almuth Gastinger shared how accessing information is an important part of their work. (Gary Bailey spoke, but is not pictured.)

By Sarah Kinney
STAFF WRITER

On March 31, representatives from all five Simmons colleges discussed the "Right to Know" as a part of Simmons Palooza.

The speakers agreed that access to government and scientific information and readily available and fair media are critical for an active civil society.

Laura Saunders said that even though there is the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the First Amendment, more could be done to increase access to information.

There are still a number of banned books and unfiled FOIA requests.

Keynote speakers Paul Sturges and Almuth Gastinger discussed how more needs to be done to realize literacy as a universal human right.

"Is access an end in itself?" asked Saunders. She also thinks that people need to know how to use the tools to access the information available.

UNESCO, the U.S., and many other countries recognize the right to speech and publish.

However, policy needs to meet human capacities so that they can have the competencies to participate in such activities.

One way of doing so is to increase literacy.

Sturges said that literacy is a priority of 21st century librarianship.

As a nurse, one of the challenges Rebecca Kroeniger-Donohue faces is patients who can't read and/or understand clinical instructions.

She said literacy is a better indication of health than age, race, or ethnicity.

Often clinicians don't realize their patients can't understand them.

Koeniger-Donohue shared a video that shared patients' stories, including one patient who didn't understand she was signing a waiver for a hysterectomy until a nurse asked her how the surgery went.

Another way to increase access to information is by improving how systems distribute information.

Currently, systems are not designed for maximum usability but are highly structured.

By taking a neuroscience approach, Sturges hopes the system can increase access. By understanding the brain, they can better understand how to organize and share information.

He explained how currently information systems cater to the left brain, but the right side, which is responsible for quick and intuitive decision making, is left out.

Library scientists need to value both sides, Sturges said.

Another problem with accessing information is recycling inaccurate information.

Saunders mentioned cases, such as the "study" connecting vaccines to autism, which has been debunked but still continues to be cited as fact, and research on how raising the federal minimum wage would be detrimental funded by restaurant owners, as times where inaccurate information is perceived as fact.

Informed skepticism needs to be encouraged, said Saunders. The role of the library should be to raise awareness of information rights, raise questions on who creates and controls information, and question their own agendas.

John Lowe said that a commonly cited attribute of leadership is information seeking. Information seekers have the observable behavior of asking questions, investigating, and conducting research.

Catherine Paden said that because private media ownership is for-profit and competing for viewers and advertisers, there are lacks in news information.

There is ideological bias among news sources because people tend to consume stories with a viewpoint they already agree with.

There is professional bias because journalists are often given **see INFORMATION on page 2**

Simmons aims to increase accessibility

by Haley Costen
STAFF WRITER

Director of Disability Services Tim Rogers prefers to look at a space in terms of its "usability" rather than accessibility.

"This office tries to take more of a global approach when creating usable space for everyone," Rogers said.

The addition of the ramp to the front entrance of North Hall by Buildings and Grounds Services in February was not only for wheelchair users or other mobility issues, but for the entire community, including people with strollers or a cleaning crew, according to Rogers. Another benefit could be for students during move-in day or increased accessibility for moving equipment into the first floor of North for any future theme events or programming.

"With more and more individuals accessing North Hall, we said, 'Hey, a wider community is going to be accessing this space. Let's increase the accessibility of it

as much as we can while still being good stewards with the funds that we have to do those with."

There are no current plans to pave a ramp or alter the current ramp. However, Rogers said that if there were any students to complain about any issues with it, for example, if it were slippery in the winter weather, the Disability Services office would address any problems.

"Over the past ten years we've made tremendous strides in giving all our buildings universal access, especially on the residence campus," said Steve Gusmini, director of Buildings and Grounds Services.

Gusmini pointed out the addition of elevators to Arnold, Simmons, and Smith Halls, and the increased access to Quadside, along with the addition of accessible bathrooms.

"Every time we renovate we do it with as much accessibility as possible," Gusmini said.

Gusmini said that part of the **see HOUSING page 2**

Share the love

By Sarah Kinney
STAFF WRITER

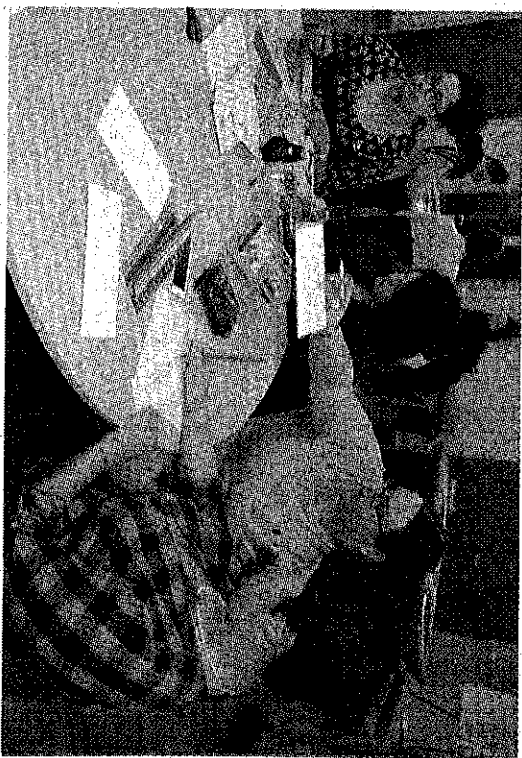
Last week, the World Needs More Love Letters campaign came to Simmons College. Sponsored by the Arts and Crafts Floor, the Office of Student Leadership Activities, and campus RAs, the campaign hopes to spread reminders that everyone is important, worthy, and exceptional.

"We decided to bring love letters to Simmons because, in a society when grades are our sole

focus, we often forget how truly amazing we are," said Matoaka Kipp, who helped to organize the events.

"Love Letters" is to remind the students of this community of their worth and importance. We are constantly comparing ourselves to each other, bringing each other down, and forgetting our own worth in the world. Love Letters works to break this pattern."

Hannah Brencher founded the international campaign, which **see LETTERS page 2**



SARAH KINNEY
Students write dozens of letters in preparation for the More Love Letters project.

INSIDE THIS WEEK

Page

5 NPR fools the nation

Let you won't read this

Page

9 Advice from directors

Film, like life, is changing and beautiful

You can submit tips to the Voice anonymously at simmonsvoice.com.