

**Boston Town Hall Meeting, 11-08-06**  
**From Cj Broer '81:**

The meeting in Boston was attended by 32 people, three of whom were Heather, Ginger and Skip. There were two alums at the meeting who were openly supportive of the co-ed plan. There were about four others, who I wasn't sure of their bent, two later, I discovered were against the co-ed plan. The rest of the group appeared to be very pro preserve RMWC.

We have a lot of work to do. First, Ginger's speech, the same one that we have heard reported and printed up, is smoother and she'll do her best to continue droning on in that vein for as long as she can. She obviously dreads the Q & A sessions. Ginger does not want to get to the questions. She wants to tell you all about the difficult decision they have had to make. But, that is not what we came to hear. We came to ask questions and have them answered. I was the trouble maker who stopped her finally, and asked if I could ask a question as it was 7:40pm. She agreed to take questions.

My first question was "Why is RMWC, the top woman's college in VA with the largest endowment in trouble when our sister schools, SBC, Hollins and Mary Baldwin are surviving?" Ginger did not have an answer for that and tried to wriggle out of it by taking another not even relevant tangent. I pulled her back.

It took the group a bit of time to get going, but, slowing, the message began to emerge that this group did NOT support the move to co-ed. Many questions were raised including: "Is a year enough time to prepare the students for men on campus?" (the answer to that was it is happening.) However, there were no concrete answers to any of the questions raised. Ginger stated that a college is not a business. Janet Strimitiatis, a former Past President of the Alumnae Association and hugely involved with the college for many years, corrected her on that and stated that it was indeed a business. That businesses need to have clear plans, that formulating a strategic plan and then hiring a new president to fulfill the plan was putting the cart before the horse. There were no clear answers to any money questions, such as having men on campus which will create many issues that we do not currently face today, for example, drug and alcohol abuse, rape, destruction of property, and counseling services for male students. It was clear to me that the board has NOT taken into consideration these issues which will arrive on campus with male students. They have not made a clear plan for the housing of these students.

The husband of an alum, noted to me that in his opinion, and I agree with him as I have had the same conclusions, that all of this is based on a lie and that Skip, Ginger and Heather are not being truthful. Not even now. They are selling this to us as a "done deal". Please, please, someone in the next "Town Meeting" raise the point about the illegal vote that the board took on the 9th where they failed to register with Virginia's FCC the change in venue for the college. This paper work should have been filed ten days prior to the vote. As it was not, the vote was illegal. It is my observation that most people are NOT aware of this. I shared it with the two alums who were reluctant to commit to either pro or con and got a surprised reaction from them. They were unaware of it.

The question of marketing was brought up a few times and although they again, said that they have "Tried", no one bought it. One alum drove over to Boston from Albany, NY to attend the meeting. She informed us that where she lives there are three private schools for girls and one private co-ed

school which would be great places of good students and money to draw on. Yet, there is no recruiting of these schools by RMWC? NO one could answer her question of why not? I asked everyone in the room then, about whether they had ever seen or heard a radio, television, or print ad in a magazine or newspaper advertising RMWC and the entire group shook their heads "no"! Yet, the school insists that they have tried.

In my opinion, this "plan" is weak. It has not been thought out. It is a poor investment. Any financial investor would not recommend making any type of investment in this business (the new college). Ginger, when pressed and pinned down, resorts to saying "we've tried". Nothing more concrete. Skip falls back on his 30 years of experience. Again, nothing concrete. When I asked him about the marketing attempts, and stated that I was aware that they had used four different companies, he said they'd tried. I replied that it took Robert the Bruce seven tries to get it right and that by my account, they had three more tries to make. Skip had no response. Heather too, slipped into the "we tried" too, but I nailed her with a "apparently not hard enough to save RMWC." She fell silent and withdrew.

There was also a poignant question raised by alums about ten years or less out of school who raised the question, "What do I do now that my college doesn't exist?" What do I say when I'm on a job interview? NO one had any reply to that.

Ginger kept trying to introduce the topic of renaming the college, but, she got nowhere with it. They will do anything to avoid having to address the real issues and the pointed questions. Bring them to task!

May I suggest the following tactics for those PEC attendees? Go armed with a question! I took questions that had gone unanswered or unasked from the summaries provided from the previous town meetings. I also had my copy of the "20 Reasons You Should Change Your Vote" to share and to draw more questions from. As soon as I arrived at the meeting, I began to chat with other people to learn which ones were for preserving RMWC. Then, I shared with them the questions to be asked and asked them to choose a question they felt comfortable asking. This was very successful. Ginger, Skip and Heather were all uncomfortable. Be persistent about asking questions and getting a direct answer out of them. (No, I don't dislike any of these three people.) However, this is the ONE and ONLY time you will get to ask these questions! Don't worry about being polite and hurting their feelings! Remember, they are the ones that left the alums out of the loop when all of this was transpiring! ASK NOW, or forever hold your peace. Raise as many of the questions that you can. (There was no mention of the Maier Art Museum.) Keep hitting them hard with these types of questions and make your opinions heard. Let them know that you are not pleased. Let them know that your support will be withdrawn. They are scared. They are breaking down. Keep hammering at them. Keep them unnerved with disturbing questions! We are trying to save RMWC.

Know also that when you get to the meeting they will have available a "Town Meeting" Supplemental Materials. On the first page some one has put together a list of just what "Global Honors" refers to. A wonderful woman from the class of '80, who has lived and worked overseas for most of her career thus far, pointed out that this is well, you all decided. I have included a scanned attachment of this first page so as to better prepare you all.

Cj Broer '81