

MHS MIRROR TEACHER OF THE MONTH

Behrends provides curriculum, life lessons

By Trey Skocy
Multimedia Manager

When people think of a valedictorian of a high school class or those who earn a 30 or higher on their ACT, would they also think of the student who doesn't do his homework? Well, one social studies teacher at Mattoon High School, Bill Behrends, would fit that description, although much has changed since then.

"As far as being a good student, I wasn't," Behrends said. "I knew every trick in the book. I knew how to play the game. I didn't always do my homework, and when I was in college, I didn't always show up to class. Other things kind of got in the way of that."

For Behrends, teaching wasn't even on his radar. He just wanted to be the college student who tried to have a good time and enjoy life. It wasn't until after college when then substitute teacher Behrends found out what he wanted to do.

"I loved it! As soon as I walked into the classroom I was like, 'This is what I really want to do,'" Behrends said.

With both parents being teachers, Behrends had an idea of what it would take to get the job done, both in the classroom and out of the classroom.

"I remember growing up hearing the stories of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and stories like that," said the social studies teacher, talking about his childhood with his father, who was also a teacher. "Just the way he could tell the stories is what made it interesting, and that's why I chose social studies."

But one thing Behrends tries to talk about in his class, a little bit more than his father did, is life stories and life beyond high school.

When Emily Davis, freshman at MHS, was asked to describe her world cultures teacher, Mr. Behrends, in one word, she said: "interesting."

The way Behrends comes off as "interesting" is in his teaching styles, and also what he does to prepare the students for outside of school.

Behrends is known for a lot more than the big, bald guy who is also the JV boys golf coach; he is known for preparing his students.

"I just believe our job as teachers goes a lot farther than just teaching you the curriculum. I think we need to try to help you guys grow and be better people," said Behrends. "[The students] are young adults and are on the cusp of some crucial years of their lives, and the more



PHOTO BY TREY SKOCY

Bill Behrends helps his students with their school work in his second-hour World Cultures class. He uses his real life situations to help the students achieve more than just an A on their tests.

advice we can give you, the better."

CJ Meaker is a junior at MHS and just finished his third season with Behrends as a golf coach.

"He is a very good coach by getting straight to the point," Meaker said.

When it came for Meaker's turn

to pick a word to describe his favorite golf coach, he used the word "strong" with a smirk on his face.

So when MHS students refer to a teacher and coach who makes time for his students and makes sure they are getting the most possible

work done in the classroom, one should look at Mr. Bill Behrends, the MHS social studies teacher who has been through the ups and downs of life and now finds himself sitting happy in the small town of Mattoon.

Read Katie Ervin's blog, "Human Doors," on mhsmirror.org

to see her perspective on how people are like doors.

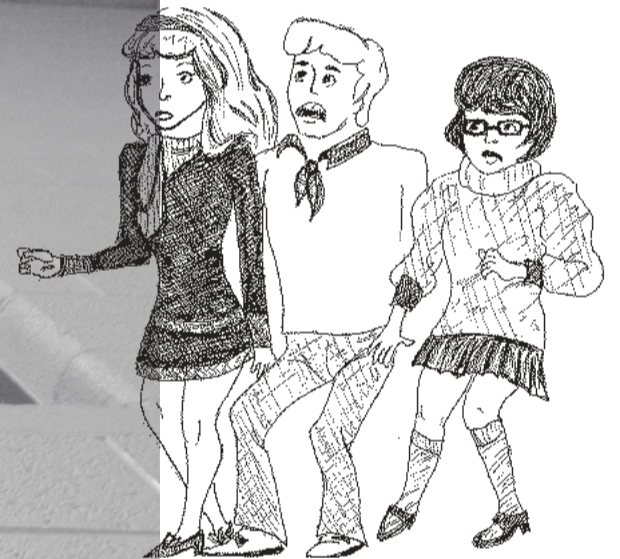
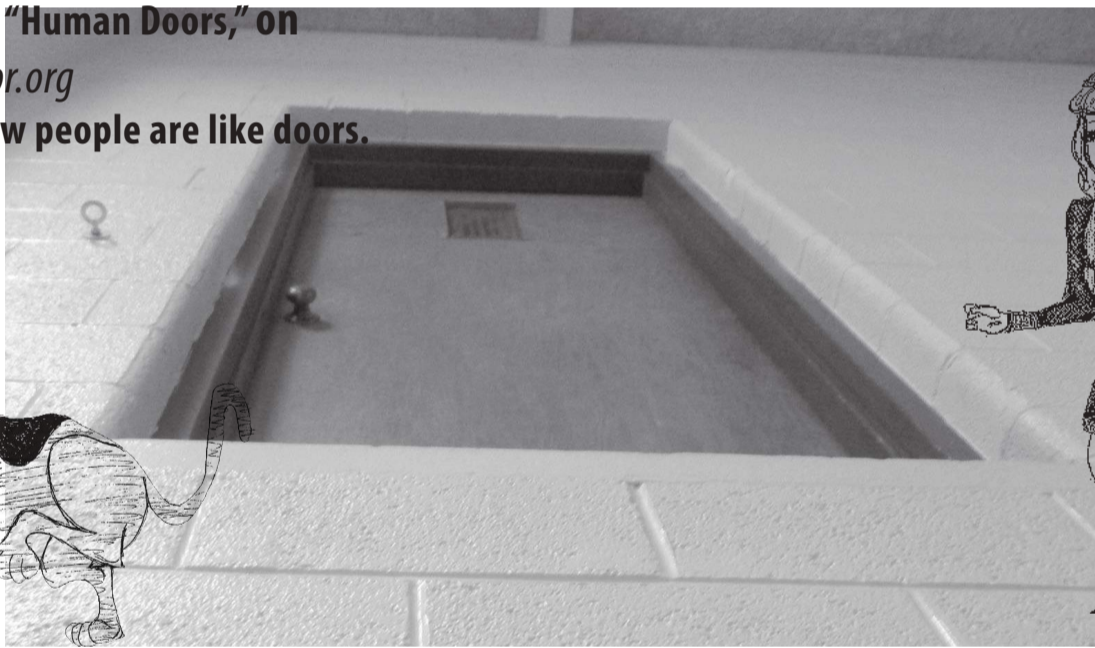


PHOTO BY BELLA WILLIAMS; ILLUSTRATIONS BY DERBY ROAN

The elevated doors are located on the left and right sides of the south balcony in the main gym at MHS. Many students have studied the doorways curiously, seeing as they are far from accessible.

Opening new doors?

MHS students ponder purpose behind floating doorways

By Bella Williams
Reporter

Mattoon High School holds a mystery in the balconies within the main gymnasium. One door for each of the two balconies stands higher than any human's reach. It's understandable that this would bring curiosity to any individual, but that also brings up rumors and assumptions about the purpose of those doors.

It's almost impossible to not notice a door roughly 10 feet high off the ground (well, unless you're one of those people who looks down when he walks).

Curiosity opens creative fear in this case; could it be a donjon for

the trouble makers like the classic childhood movie "Matilda" or a portal into another dimension? Even though they are crazy assumptions, how can you completely mark them off if you haven't stepped foot in there yourself?

Looking up, it's easy to say no one goes up there often by the dust that sits upon the knob and trim. Scuff marks were seen on the ground beneath the door, most likely from the ladders used to get up there.

"I thought it was just storage, kind of like an attic," said MHS senior Nicole Cowan. Yes, so maybe it is storage, but what is stored up there?

Narrowing it down to storage makes the mystery a smidge bit

easier to solve, but nevertheless still difficult. Although that still doesn't explain the massive height that the doors are placed at with no tangible access to them.

"Well, attics are high up, maybe because the other side of that wall is part of something we need so that was the only choice," Cowan said.

What would be in a high school attic? With so many possibilities, one could assume the worst. Any scary movie plot could hide beneath those doors, which is maybe why no student is allowed inside.

"I think they're probably just storage rooms for the bodies of the kids that used to misbehave," MHS senior Jessica Walker, said. That may be a bit too extreme, but very few students at MHS know the hidden secrets of the doors. Perhaps the students who have already graduated know something.

Former MHS student Drew Baker, with a surprisingly disturbed look on his face when hearing the accusations that were stated previously, chuckled.

"Oh yeah, they use it to store things from ROTC and stuff for

P.E. usually," said Banks.

Comparing this to all the exciting assumptions makes the solved mystery an unfortunate letdown. Despite the dullness of the out-

come, it's certainly a relief to know the doors hold neither dead bodies nor any other dimensions. It can be said the mystery behind those doors has been solved.

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