

A View From The Lighthouse

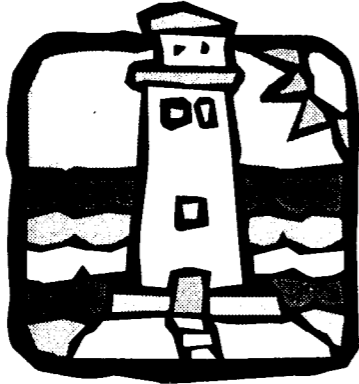
Where did summer go?

Well it's time for us to go back to school again. I don't know if it is just me, but summer went by way too fast this year. We at the Beacon are looking forward to an exciting year of putting out newspapers. But coming back to school also means many other things that we as students have to be prepared to deal with.

For those of you who are coming to college for the first time, the transition to college life can be very difficult. While college is not half as hard as everyone in high school made it out to be (for some reason high school teachers love telling horror stories about how hard college will be) it still requires a lot of work and effort. So here is a little advice for those who have gone before you into the abyss of college life.

First things first, SLEEP. I cannot stress this enough. Take it from someone who knows, trying to go a week on no sleep does not work. Try reading a paper you've written after not sleeping for three days, it'll be the funniest thing you have ever read! Staying awake in class on a full night's sleep is hard enough, but on no sleep, it is almost impossible. And if a professor has to wake you up for snoring too loud or not answering when called upon, life as you know it will come to a screeching halt.

Another major item to remember is not to put things off. Procrastination is the worst thing for a college student to do.



Take it from people who know, waiting for the last minute then trying to write a five-page paper. Waiting, too, for the last minute to try and get everything that you have due done is just asking for trouble.

I know that it is very hard to get back into the swing of things after being off for the summer, but unfortunately we have very little choice. Remember how ambitious you were last year when you scheduled that 8:00 a.m. class? I know that after you try to drag yourself out of bed for the first time that early, you will have an overwhelming urge to drop that class. Take it from someone who knows, don't do it. You'll be a lot happier getting the class out of the way, instead of trying to take a 26-credit semester later on.

Hopefully these few hints will help you become adjusted to college life a little faster and enjoy the college experience much more. College can be a great time in your life, as long as you put as much effort into your schoolwork as you do into having fun. Good Luck!

This Is Earth, Have We Met?

MARCH 17, 2000

What a college education means to me: an essay

Liz Hayes

Hayes is a News Editor for the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.

Look out world, but I think I am about to defend Behrend. Yes, you heard correctly: this editorial may actually point out good things about our school, rather than bashing it for its many huge, embarrassing failures. Recently, I have been confronted with some opinions about how the school as a whole is failing to provide students with a proper and complete education. These views have come from students, parents, Erie community members, and even a few local "celebrities." Wait a minute... I retract the celebrity part of that; let me say local pinheads instead.

Maybe I have been missing the point of college the past few years. Maybe the candy shell around my brain has grown a little too thick. Maybe my brain is clogged with a bit too much malted hops and bong resin. But isn't there supposed to be more to the "college experience" than just in-class situations? I thought students were encouraged to do more than just sit in lecture halls all day, listening to the sometimes endless droning of our teaching establishment. I thought doing something other than studying or watching WWF *Smackdown* in the evenings was a good thing.

When choosing a school, don't people look for the extras a school offers? Does it have varsity sports teams? Does it have social organizations? Does it have clubs and organizations that interest me? I realize it's been a few years since I was look-

ing at colleges (lots of people go to college for seven years...), but I seem to recall these questions coming up quite a bit. True, I made sure Penn State had the academic programs I was interested in, but a lot of schools offer my major. The deciding factors were the extracurricular things a school could boast. So, correct me if I'm wrong, but wouldn't that indicate that extracurricular activities play a pretty decisive part in education? Humm, provocative.

Therefore, one can imagine my dismay when I learned that some events being held at Behrend were being called "university" and "uneducational." As far as I'm concerned, just about anything can be a learning experience for somebody. Sports, for instance, encourage fundamental behaviors like teamwork and drive for success. Organizations like SGA, JRC, and Commuter Council provide leadership and involvement opportunities for students.

Groups like MCC, Trigon, and the Campus Ministries allow people to gain experience with cultures and viewpoints that differ from their own. Let's face it—just about any experience you can gain by interacting with people on any level will help you in the "real world," and I'm not talking MTV people. Hell, even socializing with the Greeks could be helpful someday. Maybe they weren't the smartest guys, maybe they spent a little too much time puking off balconies, but they had fun. And I bet they even taught you something that will help you someday. If nothing else, whenever you are on *Jeopardy* or *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, you will know a few more letters of the Greek alphabet than you otherwise wouldn't have.

I will even go so far as to defend the general education system at Penn State. I'm here to receive a liberal arts education. I was well aware when I came in that I would be taking a wide variety of classes. I think it is called "broadening my horizons?" Maybe I will never professionally use my knowledge of Shakespeare. But when the boss is talking about the performance of *Hamlet* he is about to see, maybe I can score some Brownie points with my knowledge of the subject. Or when my contemporaries are arguing which President decided to nuke Hiroshima, at least I will confidently be able to say that it wasn't Andrew Jackson. Yeah, people are graduating in just a shade

under a decade, but is that necessarily the school's fault? I know too many people who don't talk to their advisor until it is too late and they are already screwed. And how many people actually have a blue book, you know, those things that tell you what to take and when to take it? Maybe if people would read that thing once in a while instead of having older classmates schedule for them they'd manage to graduate on time.

What's my point? Now that's not really a mystery. It's actually simpler than you think—everything you do in college, everything you learn, everything you experience, everything you want to kick yourself in the ass for doing, *everything* is going to help you someday. The world isn't a bubble anymore. That global village everyone is talking about is gonna be your new hometown. There will be Asians, there will be Latinos, there will be Africans, there will be lesbians, there will be Democrats, there will be atheists. There may even be a straight, patriotic, wears-the-pants-in-the-family, average white man, though he is a dying breed.

So get out there and learn something tomorrow. Be it the location of Davenport (it's in Iowa 22 miles from the border of Illinois), or how to read (. . . top to bottom, left to right, group words together as a sentence. Take Tylenol for headaches, Midol for any cramps.), I guarantee it will help you someday.

The View From Up Here

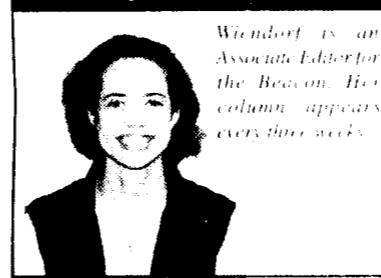
FEBRUARY 11, 2000

Living the Behrend life, Commuter style

All right, so I'm that girl you see in the halls with car keys jingling in her purse and with luggage for books, pens, pencils, a calculator, change of clothes for work, money for food, and a snowbrush for my parents' red van that I drive to school everyday. I'm telling you, the commuter life isn't as smooth as it gets—sure, I get home-cooked meals every night and my job doesn't involve preparing food in Bruno's. And I have a car at my fingertips whenever I say, but the commuter life is much more than just that. Allow me to present the commuter day, typical of the Weindorf household:

I have a 9:30 class today, but I set my alarm for 7:15 a.m. because my dad needs the hot water by 8 a.m. And I supposedly use all the hot water in the twenty minutes it takes me to shower (I don't, really!). So after I grumble a few injustices about having to share the shower (hey, there's little sisters all over the place—I have to grumble everything now), I walk in the bathroom and find that the toilet, is, well, backed up (I am not kidding).

So I grumble a few more curses

Becky Weindorf

Weindorf is an Associate Editor for the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.

about how my 12-year-old sister can't take one second in unclinging it, but luckily, I don't have to because it soon clears. I then remember my dog, who needs to be thrown in the snow (she's a big baby when it comes to going out) before I can jump in the shower, shivering. It is now 7:25 a.m., another five minutes of hot water shaved off my dad's shower.

So I kick the dog back in the house, run upstairs, and jump in the shower, and to my dismay the stupid drain in the shower is clogged, too. And I grumble more injustices.

Then I'm done with my shower, jump out, smear some lotion on my legs, and walk over to the sink in the

next half of the bathroom to dry my hair. My six-year-old sister walks in with a purple sweatsuit and asks me how I am doing. I say I'm doing good, and she goes downstairs to wait for mom to make her breakfast. I walk back to my room to change and feel perturbed at the sight of my room, since I just cleaned the damn thing two days ago, and now it looks messy again. More injustices mumbled.

I make my way downstairs, deciding to toast a bagel and peel a tangerine to eat on the way to school, and my mom asks if I can take some videos back to Wegman's since they would be overdue today. I say fine and fill up a bottle of water, carefully avoiding my dog, my little sister, and my dad, who just got up and turned on the cold shower upstairs. (No injustices mumbled from him, he's allowed to shout them "in his house"!)

So I leave ten minutes early and find that I have this to carry out to the car: my bagel, tangerine, bottle of water, keys, parking permit, coat, gloves, purse, bookbag, and three rental videos plus boots that I

haven't attempted to put on yet. Time: 8:37 a.m., an hour before my first class. I sigh and dump my luggage in the red van and start to head out of the subdivision, sliding off the road and spinning my wheels to Wegman's. Not that I have anything against Wegman's, since I work there, but come on.

I drop off the videos and slip and slide my way to Wegman's, avoiding huge trucks and snowdrifts that decided to form in the middle of the highway, spit out the seeds from my tangerine while driving with one hand, manage to find tracks on Exit 9 to get off the cursed highway, and I mumble more injustices over the blasting radio.

As soon as I make it to a parking spot on the ice rink we call a parking lot, I pull in the spot and belt out some tunes by Celine Dion on the radio. I get out of the car with my luggage and so much crap, wondering why I carry so much crap to school instead of leaving it in my room.

And I grumble more injustices, one I cannot hear, since my six-year-old sister would repeat them if I got out of my routine.

Got something to say? Say It!

Send a letter to the editor to
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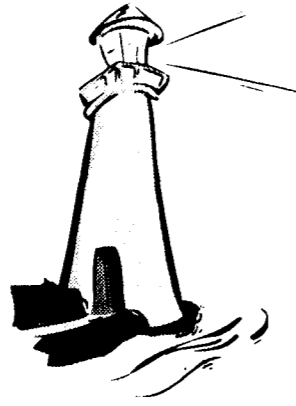
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A View From the Lighthouse

FEBRUARY 4, 2000

A little too much sex ed?

Psst . . . Hey you, come over here . . . yeah, it's okay, no one is watching you read this column. We're going to talk about sex . . .

Okay, now that we have your attention, the staff of the *Beacon* would like to give some thumbs up and some thumbs down (heh heh, get it? up and down?) to a few campus events. And just to keep your interest, we'll talk a little bit about sex.

First, hats off to Trigon for holding the most attended event of the semester — The Safer Sex Cabaret. Held in the Studio Theatre (yes, we know it's a small building), on Thursday, January 27, the group promoted HIV prevention through a number of silly skits. Topics covered included forbidden passion, body piercing, condom use, homemade lubricants, dirty dancing, and of course, masturbation. What fun! Congratulations, again, Trigon. You guys found the key for successful event turnouts!

Hold on, losing interest already? Here's a little something to keep you

reading: A little boy returning home from his first day at school said to his mother, "Mum, what's sex?" His mother, who believed in all the most modern educational theories, gave him a detailed explanation, covering all aspects of the tricky subject. When she had finished, the little lad produced an enrollment form which he had brought home from school and said, "Yes, but how am I going to get all that into this one little square?"

Funny, eh? While sex is a prime topic for jokes with your friends on just about any occasion, the openness on campus has raised controversial issues lately, such as the transgender student on campus. The point to observe here is that there is more to [college] life than sex. You say that's a ridiculous statement? Well, look at it this way... you've probably heard more on campus about the transgender student than you have about some of the other good things, like the men's and women's basketball teams and the increasingly focused Student Government

Association.

Last winter, the SGA promoted and held a forum open to any and all students who wished to voice an opinion about campus life and events. Yes, it was free, and yes, SGA was waiting for you. No one showed up. However, many students did show up for the free food that was given away the week before by SGA. Another point to observe — we all love fun and free stuff, but when it comes to dealing with the issues and doing some work, well . . . "I had a lot of studying to do."

So, theoretically, if SGA promotes sex in some way when it's time to go to the polls, will we have to call Police and Safety for crowd control?

Another big happening last year on campus was the success of the basketball teams. Yes, it was a very big deal to the athletes, but is it to you? The men and women both had very successful conference records. This is REALLY big. There are some very talented athletes here at Behrend, and they are giving our good school a better name. Why not

go out and cheer for them? Instead of supporting *these* guys and girls, we'd rather watch other guys and girls talk about condoms and masturbation.

Lack of support to the athletics program raises another issue. What about the massive recreation facility that's going to be built across Jordan Road? Oh yes, the athletes will love it, but will they have to stare at 1400 empty seats instead of 300 empty seats? If two superb basketball teams can't fill Erie Hall, what will fill the ARC?

Now, we are in no way criticizing Trigon's promotion of safer sex and HIV prevention. It is the awareness of some student's priorities, however, that worries us. It's time to look at the important issues, people. There is a lot going on at Behrend right now, both academically and athletically. A major point to realize, though, is that involvement in all of Behrend's extracurriculars will only enhance student life on campus, and make it possible to promote more "fun" activities.