

The Behrend Beacon

published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

Editor in Chief
Lauren Packer

Managing Editor
Robert Wynne

Assistant Managing Editor
Scott Solits

News Editors
Courtney Straub
Justin Curry

Sports Editors
Kevin Fiorenzo
Amy Frizzell

Editorial Page Editor
Eileen Falkenberg

Features Editor
Erika Jarvis

Greek Life Editor
Eileen Falkenberg

Staff Photographers
Jeff Hankey
Heather Myers



THE BEHREND
Beacon

"A newspaper by the
students for the students"

Advertising Manager
Ryan Russell

Calendar Page Editor
Amy Wilczynski

A&E Editor
Daniel J. Stasiewski

Healthy Living Editors
Courtney Straub
Erika Jarvis

Adviser
Cathy L. Roan, Ph.D.

Copy Editors
Carolyn M. Tellers
Kristin Bowers

The Beacon is published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, the Behrend College; First Floor, The J. Elmer Reed Union Building, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563. Contact The Beacon at: Telephone: (814) 898-6488 Fax: (814) 898-6019 ISSN 1071-9288.

The Beacon encourages letters to the editor. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing, and major of the writer. Writers can mail letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for length, content, libel, spelling, and grammar.

Florida's Governor should accept the right to die in Schiavo case

The choice between life and death is a serious matter and should be treated as such. What it should not be is a political battle or entertainment/publicity show, which is what Gov. Bush and the parents of Terri Schiavo are doing.

Terri Schiavo is living in a persistent vegetative state and has not been fully conscious for 13 years. Three out of five experts agree that Schiavo is in a permanently vegetative state and has no chance for reversibility or treatment.

Schiavo became this way after she suffered a heart attack and her brain was deprived of oxygen. The reason behind the heart attack is believed to be a chemical imbalance due to an eating disorder.

Husband Michael Schiavo filed to have his wife's feeding tube removed in 1998. According to her husband, Terri Schiavo expressed the wish to not live artificially should she become incapacitated. Michael Schiavo is the legal guardian of Terri Schiavo. Florida law gives guardianship to the spouse.

Florida law also requires those seeking to remove a feeding tube to pass a

high legal bar, one which includes providing "clear and convincing evidence of a patient's intent." Michael Schiavo has passed this test several times by numerous Florida courts. The parents of Terri Schiavo are contesting that she never expressed anything of the sorts.

However, if experts agree she has no chance for survival, her husband has passed the objectionable view of the court and they have found clear and convincing evidence

of Terri Schiavo's wish not to live artificially, and a circuit court judge ordered the removal of the feeding tube, then why do the parents of Schiavo and Gov. Jeb Bush want to prolong this poor woman's death?

Respect for life includes recognizing not just when it exists but when it ceases to be meaningful.

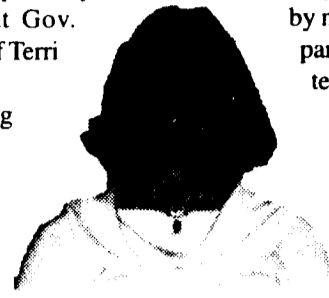
It seems sad to me that Gov. Bush has stepped in to play, if you will, "God." The Florida legislature, under pressure from Bush, authorized a law giving the governor power to overturn the circuit court ruling. The law went into effect six days after Schiavo's feeding tube

was removed and signs of organ failure were beginning to show. Schiavo's doctors and lawyers testify that the introduction of fluids after a week without food or water could just make her suffer worse.

Why make a woman suffer like this? Gov. Bush and the Schiavos must realize that Terri Schiavo's body, and importantly her wish to not live artificially, should be respected. A critical decision made by Michael Schiavo to respect his wife's wish, and one made by hundreds at hospitals across the U.S. every day, has been made into a publicity show-down.

Terri Schiavo's parents and Bush have no right to use this case a political football to toss back and forth between them and the Florida courts. Bush certainly was out of line when he stepped on the toes of the circuit court and overruled their ruling. The reinsertion order of the feeding tube was a constitutional violation of the separation of powers.

In the 1990 Cruzan Supreme Court case, the court ruled in favor of a patient's right to die 5-4. Now with Bush's order, Americans can't even be sure that their wishes to die will be upheld. The major advances made by this court ruling will take a step backwards if Bush's insertion order isn't overturned.



Lauren Packer

editor in chief

Welcome to the so-called real world

All of our lives we were taught that there is no where to go but up. From the time we were three we knew that there was a procession we went through in growing up. First we go from elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school and from there college. What's left after college but the real world and working for the rest of our lives? That sounds so unappealing and really makes me not want to graduate from college any time soon.

College is supposed to be our time to grow, learn about our potential job and start to get accustomed to the so called real world. Don't forget it's also four years to have some fun! This is our time to become more independent then we ever were.

Also, a good majority of us are living on our own, without our parents. Now it's our turn to do our laundry and figure out what we're doing for breakfast/lunch/dinner, etc. We are expected to get to classes on our own, do our work on our own time, yet at the same time we need to be active on campus as well. We can't just dedicate our time here to our studies. We have to build our resume to show future employers that we are what they like to call "well rounded" which may consist of us joining a Greek organization, working, volunteering and joining a special interest club, etc. Yet, everyone on campus at Behrend is expected to be involved in more than just classes and that's a lot to add on top of our studies.

As a sophomore, I feel that I have had a lot of familiarity with the whole college experience. One thing that I can't

seem to get over is the whole concept of studying, and tests. I understand what tests are and we have to study for them, but have you ever noticed how many people either skip a class to study or pull an all-nighter to study. All on top of us being active on campus! So, how does that benefit us in getting us ready for the real world?

Just to do well in one class we sacrifice our classes for the day of the test, or our sleep. I know this isn't why we come to college, or what we're supposed to be doing, but we can't help it. This is what the college student does! I know not everyone is like this, but a lot of kids are!

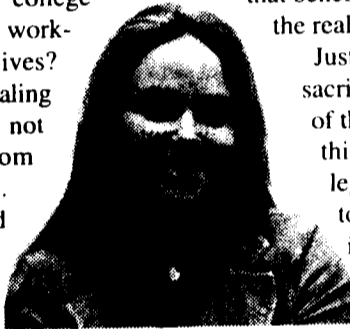
What happened to us between high school and college that scared us so much that we are acting like this just to do well in school? The direction we're running is no longer up, it's down. Are our future employers going to let us take a nap in the morning before we have to do a presentation in the afternoon because we didn't sleep the night before because we were up working on it? I highly doubt it. So how do we start preparing ourselves now for such a situation later on in life?

I don't even know where to start in finding a solution for this problem. Of course we can do the obvious and start studying for tests in advance, but sometimes you don't have as much time as you'd like. We could also get more sleep before tests and presentations. But, I know I'm a nervous wreck the night before a test and I can't sleep.

I think we all need to take a breather and realize that unfortunately the real world isn't "seven strangers, picked to

live in a house and have their lives taped." Sometimes it feels that after college we just plateau and our procession of climbing higher is over, but it's not.

I think that we all need to take a class in "Real World Education 101" before we graduate so we can get hit with the things we truly need to know about life after college such the importance of prioritization and how to adjust to a corporate lifestyle. Hopefully then we can all realize what we need to do to continue climbing that ladder we learned about when we were younger.



Erika Jarvis



Court correctly decides to let doctors, patients discuss pot

courtesy of the Detroit Free Press

The U.S. Supreme Court came down on the side of compassion in deciding that federal drug warriors should back off from prosecuting doctors who recommend marijuana use for medical purposes.

The high court on Tuesday refused to review a lower court decision that the federal government cannot punish doctors for discussing marijuana use with their patients. Pot is most often suggested to remedy the extreme nausea that accompanies treatment for cancers and AIDS. It is outlawed by the federal government, but nine states have provisions for medical marijuana use. Michigan is not

among them, although the issue might come up here and elsewhere, following the court's ruling.

The Bush administration argued that public health - not the First Amendment free-speech rights of doctors or patients - was at stake. Federal drug czar John Walters regards marijuana as a "gateway drug" leading to harder stuff and believes that supporters of its medical use are really trying to take a first step toward legalization.

The scientific community doesn't agree fully on the medicinal value of cannabis, but several prominent groups, including the American Academy of Family Physicians, have recognized its anti-nausea properties. Doctors don't recommend it lightly,

but only as a way to make life tolerable for some patients, including those who don't have much life left. Synthetic versions of marijuana in pill form cost far more and must be swallowed, an impossibility for some patients. If states are willing to allow it, the federal government should let them be and concentrate on more pressing drug issues: busting those who deal in large quantities of harder drugs.

disagree? disagree?
disagree? disagree?
disagree? disagree?
disagree?

write your opinion to The Beacon

e-mail
The Beacon at
behrcoll2@aol.com
and make sure to
include your name,
major and
semester standing

Welcome to Erie: play the ponies, win a slum

I've called Erie home my entire life, and despite the steady cries of "Erie sucks" from me, my friends and countless members of Behrend's student body, I know there is a front-porch community feel that makes Erie attractive.

Erie's chummy, Middle-American existence doesn't appeal to me, but I've been told it makes Erie a great place to retire or raise a family.

That is if you can find a job. Mayor Rick Filippi and County Executive Rick Schenker have taken on the tough task of revitalizing our dying rust-belt city and making it a Mecca for business and culture. Unfortunately, with both business and culture 100 miles away in three directions, Erie will always have a hard time being anything more than a suburb.

Filippi and Schenker know this, and every political move they make, from saving the inadequate public library system to developing the bayfront, is directed at making Erie livable for white-collar, big city workers and tourists.

Recently there has been a move in city government to create a gambling complex on the lakefront industrial site that formally housed International Paper.

The convention center and hotel once slated to be part of Erie's bay front are now looking to relocate to the IP site. So is a horse-track that had long eyed a Summit Township location.

With Gov. Ed Rendell pressing his "Slots for Tots" campaign, using gambling revenues

to fund education in the midst of Pennsylvania's budget crisis, the horse-track could house enough gambling to resurrect the Rat Pack. Give him time and the governor will throw riverboat gambling into the mix.

A gambling complex anywhere in Erie is going to hurt business, even the retail stores that thrive in Erie's suburban atmosphere. And as it stands now, the complex is going to be right across the street from the Boys and Girls Club of Erie's new home (field trip, anyone?).

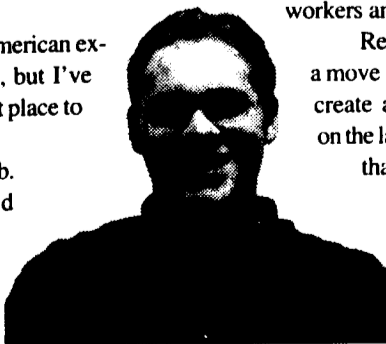
I've been to Vegas and Niagara Falls, and the 24-hour-party atmosphere is not something that is going to bring business to Erie. Gambling of any sort is setting up Erie to become a service-based tourist town, not the neighborly community Filippi and other officials claim they are trying to renew.

Wide-spread gambling is not going to save Erie. Because I do remember a time when enticing large corporations like National Fuel Gas with tax incentives was the city and

county officials' main focus, I don't understand were this sudden sense of hopelessness has come from.

The mayor seems more than willing to turn Erie into the Sin City of the Great Lakes. Despite the enjoyment I get every time Filippi pisses off the Old Erie Democrats sitting on City Council with his fresh ideas, I can't say his current plan to sacrifice prime commercial real estate for a gambling complex already separately planned for other parts of the community is the right one.

Erie will grow. It's stupid to assume a Great Lakes city with a ready port, scenic bayfront, and, as bland as it sounds, extensive infrastructure can just shrivel and die. Creating a gambling complex would be like slipping arsenic into an IV solution. If a poverty-stricken, service town is what Erie wants then roll them bones, but as soon as I graduate I, like other graduates from the three area colleges, will be looking for a job outside of this town.



Daniel J. Stasiewski

web editor