

# OPINION

## The Behrend Beacon

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



Daniel J. Stasiewski, Editor in Chief  
Amy Frizzell, Managing Editor  
Courtney Kaplin, Advertising Manager  
Alyssa Peconi, Public Relations Manager

News Editor: Brad Stewart  
Student Life Editor: Lori DeFabio

Opinion Page Editor: Andy McNeil  
Calendar Page Editor: Rob Frank

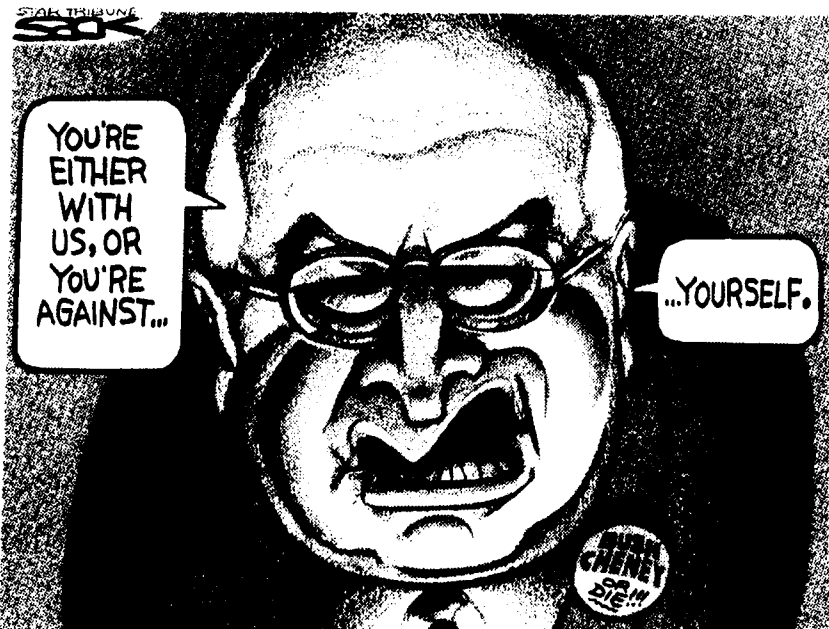
Sports Editors: Sam Cibula, Sara Kamber  
Copy Editor: Lacy Buzard

Beacon Assistant: Carolyn M. Tellers

THE BEHREND  
**Beacon**  
"Professionalism  
with a personality"

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.

# Cartoon Roundup



# Terrorists are people too

George W. Bush says we must fight terrorism. And who wouldn't want to go to war with terrorists? Who wouldn't want to hunt down Bin Laden and give him what he deserves? After all, they did attack us. Al Qaeda is responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent people. Has anyone taken the time to stop and ask why we were attacked?

Bush would tell you that Bin Laden hates progress, laughter, smiling babies and butterflies—he would rather murder a man than hug your cherished cookie-baking grandmother. It's a little more complicated than that.

Terrorists don't have tree-house club meetings and discuss how they can make other's lives miserable (they have cave meetings and a beard is required). All terrorists want something.

Sometimes they want prisoners released or vast sums of money. In Russia, for example, Chechnyans want independence. Is that too much to ask? Didn't our nation's founders fight for independence when they were unsatisfied



Brad Stewart

news editor

with the form of government. Of course, taking an entire school hostage, lining it with explosives, and pressing the button while all the students are still inside may not be the best way towards achieving a solution. Violence begets violence.

What does Bin Laden want? No one knows for sure. Part of his anger stems from American soldiers inhabiting land in the Middle East that he considers holy—the equivalent to him coming to

churches, synagogues, places of worship in America and defecating on the altar. Wouldn't you be upset?

Bin Laden also disagrees with America's capitalist way of life and our obsession with material goods, but that's something that won't be changing any time soon.

I'm not saying that terrorist's demands should always be met—if we all got what we wanted when we wanted it the world would be a much different place.

I'm also not saying that terrorism or terrorist acts are justified in any way. There is no excuse for killing innocent people.

I'm just saying maybe some steps could be taken, baby steps, in a direction where those who feel infringed upon could feel some relief. Like any relationship, you need compromise. Because lets face it, terrorists will always find a way to kill people. You can't stop them all—especially those willing to die for what they believe. *Brad Stewart's column appears every three weeks.*

## Debates and Bush: irrelevance or cowardice?

By Chris Hvizdak  
editorial columnist

In the coming days George Bush will decide whether or not he will be participating in the "town-hall" format presidential debate scheduled for Oct. 5 at Washington University in St. Louis. Although the Bush campaign has reportedly expressed interest in the two debates (Sept. 30 and Oct. 13) which will take the traditional candidate-moderator format it has apparently communicated reservations about the Oct. 5 debate.

The reason behind this concern is that such a debate would likely require Mr. Bush to answer questions from college students and the general public. Is this a cheap tactic to avoid directly addressing the concerns of individuals who Mr. Bush is supposedly representing? I certainly believe so.

Although presidential debates are considered by some political scientists to serve little purpose outside of galvanizing voters who have already made their choice, I believe we deserve to have these candidates rigorously challenged in a national, high profile forum. If these individuals are to manage our nation to the best of their abilities and represent us in the world forum, they should simply not have the option to decline.

Mr. Bush, if he's a decent American,

should recognize this. Most consumers would not purchase a car without taking it for a test drive, yet we as citizens vote for presidential candidates despite the absence of a rigorous verbal test of their argumentative might.

In this era of election turmoil and evolution, I advocate legislation that would not only require candidates participation in all sanctioned debates but also the addition of a debate format wherein the candidates would question each other directly, not simply field questions from an impartial panel. We deserve a legitimate discussion regarding the affairs of our nation conducted by the individuals who may be looking after them. Are these requirements likely to come about?

No. Most candidates don't want to make the act of campaigning any more difficult than it already is. There is, however, one man who has lead what is likely the most criticized administration in history that could bite the bullet and make presidential debates a meaningful process... but he's afraid to talk to his own people.

Mr. Bush champions himself as a defender of the free world committed to the elimination of terrorism and "evildoers," but he is unwilling to directly interact with his fellow Americans on national television.

If Mr. Bush does not care to or is sim-

ply incapable of unmediated interaction with the public, is he legitimately qualified to serve as commander-in-chief? Is he afraid of a tough question? Is he afraid some smarmy college liberal will come up to bat with a whopper he can't answer that will make him look like an idiot and deliver the election to John Kerry? Yes, I believe Bush is afraid of just that. Very afraid.

I doubt George Bush could finesse his way out of a wet paper bag let alone answer a tough question, but you know what? He should prove me wrong. If Mr. Bush is in any way qualified to serve as President of the United States, he will not only agree to the town hall format debate but he will *encourage* tough questions.

In my book, a legitimate leader will be willing to address all the concerns of all his or her constituents, no matter how controversial or unpleasant those concerns may be. not simply spew pre-fabricated answers to bland, "Miss America"-style questions.

With that in mind it is no surprise that John Kerry has already agreed to all three debates including the town hall debate and lobbied for more. So what'll it be George? Are you capable of figuring out your final answer? *Mr. Hvizdak's column appears every two weeks.*

## Subliminal propaganda posing as textbooks

College is a great experience, a wonderful opportunity to open your mind and explore new ideas, but are we opening our minds or just being indoctrinated into liberal ideology? Don't get me wrong, considering new things is great; it helps you decide what you are and where your values lie. However, something in one of my textbooks made me wonder what having an "open mind" really means, especially during an election year.

In "Gender, Race and Class in Media" by Gail Dines and Jean M. Humez, deregulation of media is portrayed as a major issue. "Deregulation of the media" is really just a wordy way of saying that people can own more media outlets than before. Some people worry that this limits the opinions that are available for consideration. Here is what the book said about deregulation on page 30:

"The anti-regulatory sentiment in government that had escalated with the Republican Reagan and Bush administrations continued into Democrat Bill Clinton's administration. Nowhere was this more clear than in the passage of the wide-ranging 1996 Telecommunications Act."

For those of you who haven't taken Mass Media and Society, the 1996 Telecommunications Act was the latest act that allowed media corporations to merge into gigantic media lords; some



Lacy Buzard

copy editor

people may call these monopolies-in-progress.

Monopolies are not good things whatsoever; competition among businesses is what makes the United States economy one of the best in the world, even during recessions. That's not what scares me though. The part that concerns me is that a bill passed during the Clinton administration is attributed to leftover influence from Reagan and Bush. The bill was passed in Clinton's fifth year as president!

How can these people possibly say that Reagan and Bush are to blame for a bill that passed in the beginning of Clinton's second term? If this situation is possible, then can't we also say that Clinton is responsible for the

downward spiral of the economy during George W's term? I remember people complaining about the economy at least six months before George W was elected, but no textbook I've seen says anything about that.

What does all this mean? It means we have to be aware of what we're reading in our classes. We need to realize that not all textbooks are objective. Our professors want all of us to have open minds and they also want us to know the material in our books. This doesn't mean that we have to adopt the views that the authors of our texts present in their writing.

Having an open mind is just that, having an OPEN mind. We have to be open to thinking about viewpoints that may disagree with our own; we don't have to change ourselves to fit our books. We have to read critically. We have to decide what is fact and what is the authors' opinion. We have to take into consideration what we have read and evaluate it on our own terms.

Being in college can change you, I know I've changed, but we don't have to become the people the authors of our books tell us we should be. Our professors know that; they encourage us daily to voice our own opinions, not the authors' opinions. In the end you'll be better off being yourself than a textbook copy. *Lacy Buzard's column appears every three weeks.*

disagree? disagree? disagree? disagree? disagree? disagree?  
**send your opinion to The Beacon**  
 e-mail The Beacon at [beaconletters@aol.com](mailto:beaconletters@aol.com)  
 and make sure you include your name, major, and semester standing