

Apathy's voice

--Steve Landon

"The greatest strength of a democracy is the people. The greatest weakness of a democracy is the people."

These words can actually describe quite a few situations in the world today inside and outside the free world. I would like to discuss how they describe our campus community at Behrend.

I have been involved with the Student Government Association (SGA) for two years now. I have dedicated an excess of time, energy and emotion into leaving Behrend a better community than when I got here. I'm not saying it was bad in the first place, I just feel it is every person's duty to improve what they are capable of changing.

During that time I have seen a number of quality student leaders come and go. They usually get enthusiastically involved in the beginning but are quickly discouraged by the lack of participation by the campus community as a whole.

It is very discouraging to put all of your "spare" time into a program for the entire campus and only a few people show up at the event.

Many good quality programs are sponsored by the Student Programming Council and other student organizations that students don't even bother to check out.

I often hear the statement that there is nothing to do at Behrend or in Erie. The same people I hear this statement from don't know about the Blue Bus or admit they have never ventured to Erie for a play, a concert, or a hockey game.

These are just a few of the problems apathy causes. They are not the only ones however. Another problem is the quality of leadership in SGA. Lack of participation in campaigns and elections results in non-competitive acclamations rather than elections as they were meant to be.

You may say that why should anyone bother, SGA doesn't do anything anyway? I beg to differ. SGA now administers about a \$60,000 a year budget. With the new student activity fee that could rise to as much as \$200,000 next year. This is hardly nothing. SGA also is the recognizing authority for all student organizations. This is also not a trivial task.

The capabilities of SGA to effect change on campus concerns and in improving campus life are great. They have yet to be realized because of the present attitudes pervading student organizations as a whole today.

It is common knowledge that "Greeks" control what happens on SGA election day. I am not anti-greek in any sense, they are just the only ones who turn out to vote. There are about 300 members of Greek organizations at Behrend which accounts for less than ten percent of the full-time enrollment here.

As the president of the Commuter Council, I hear a lot of commuters complain about the fact that Greeks and/or residents seem to be the central and sometimes only focus of the administration. The reason for this is because they are the only ones organized in their complaining and the only ones who get organized to get someone friendly to their concerns into office in SGA.

There are approximately 2200 commuters on this campus which represents about two-thirds of the student enrollment. If just one-third of those would vote in SGA elections, they would essentially control what SGA does every year. There are ten permanent commuter senator seats on SGA and five resident seats. As of the writing of this column, three of those commuter seats are still vacant due to lack of interest, the resident seats are presently filled.

Commuters have the power to effect change but have failed to exert that power.

You may be asking, what is your point Steve? Well, as I have already said, the quality of leadership we have is directly related to the participation of the student body at Behrend.

How can we change this trend? Attend weekly SGA meetings every Wednesday at 5:15 p.m. and voice your opinion and let Tim Mallon and SGA know that you are going to hold them accountable for their actions.

Another key is to run for senator seats during elections this spring. There are going to be at least ten Commuter Senator and five Resident Senator seats open in addition to the SGA president and vice-president. To be a Senator, all you have to commit is two office hours a week that you pick and the weekly SGA meetings.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT BACK!!

Become active to prevent your concerns from being ignored by the present student leaders.

The present self-defeatist attitude must be changed if we are to mature as a student body and take control of our campus lives.

Personal memoir...

Erie, PA
The College Years
16563

I was asked by my editor to write a final column for this issue because I am graduating in January. My mind has never been so cluttered. I tried to think of something to sum up my my collegiate career. I couldn't think of one particular incident to cite. There were so many things to write, but this would end up more as a memoir.

I guess, like anything else, my college career has been about change. I don't see how in four and a half years anything could have remained the same. Nothing has.

I can only reflect on the present. The past is dead, I will not live in memory, only learn from it. I am sorry to those I may have hurt along the way and I also pardon those who have hurt me. It's a chaotic world. Somethings work out and others don't.

The present is this: I am leaving Penn State, Erie-The Behrend College. Behind I leave many friends, both from school and outside of school. Everyone has had an impact on me, an effect on the way I view things and for that I am thankful.

For everyone who has helped me along the way, when I was down, when I was drunk, when I was pathetically melodramatic, when I was throwing stress-induced tantrums in the newspaper office, I am thankful.

To all of the professors who attempted to lead me into the realms of higher education and were able to endure my often unconventional tactics, to those who introduced me to the fine literature of the world, and who helped me struggle to complete a thesis, I am thankful.

I am thankful to my family who has supported me through my trek. I am thankful to my "boyz" from the hood, who have been there for my entire life and to those who have popped up recently to lend a shoulder.

To my fraternity who proved to me that I have potential to accomplish my goals, I am thankful.

To all of those who inspired me and put me through hell, I am thankful.

To Michelle, who has meant more to me than any resource manual, who in seven months finally got through my thick skull that the greatest gift is love, I am thankful.

Love. The love of a cause. Of a goal. A bond. Support. Friendship. College to me wasn't about who conquered the Mesopotamians or what the significance of the whale was in *Moby Dick*. College was about education, the higher kind, the kind that deals with life and relationships. The kind that lends insight to the self and its discovery.

Whitman said that life exists and identity and the powerful play goes on and you may contribute a verse. I contributed my verse. And hopefully, in the hearts of the people I touched and the people who have touched me I hope it remains.

That's what my college career was about.

--R. Carl Campbell III

From the Hip

From the Late Nite Crew
at The Collegian

Scary thing, isn't it?
Graduation I mean.

The thought of graduating and beginning my job search is almost enough to make me go part time and prolong my college years.

But change is good.

Without change, where would we be? Not only would Fred Flinstone be changing the boulder tires on your car and your feet be calloused from the constant running to keep the car moving, but we wouldn't be able to talk together from a computer screen or do a simple thing such as flush the toilet.

The nineties signify a lot of change. How many times can the Pepsi can change? Talk shows came and went like herpes. But the most important change in the nineties takes place in a sort of sexual revolution, Cybersex.

I have to raise several questions to this form of intercourse. Is it just an advanced form of masturbation or does it take the place of candlelight and Metallica

albums?

Romance on a computer screen!

I can see it now, banging away at my keyboard, dimming the lights, listening to a little Chris Issak played real low, sipping a light wine, Chablis perhaps.

I'm so worried about safe sex that I wear latex gloves when ever I'm online. You never know what you can pick up when typing dirty.

However, cybersex is virtually safe unless your computer catches a virus...

There was more to the early nineties than the computer and the sensual words it sends. From the death of a Grateful Dead legend to Desert Storm, we have come a long way baby. But it was a way with its share of hills and turns.

I guess to wrap it up, it hasn't been all that bad so far...so far I've said. I've still go bills to pay and Christmas to borrow from my loan shark. All in all, it wasn't all that bad. And there's only room to grow.....

THINK YOU CAN DO IT?

THEN APPLY!

The Collegian has openings in both writing and photography.

For the more bold -
apply for
OPINION EDITOR.

Write to the Editor
if interested.

