

The Behrend College Collegian

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

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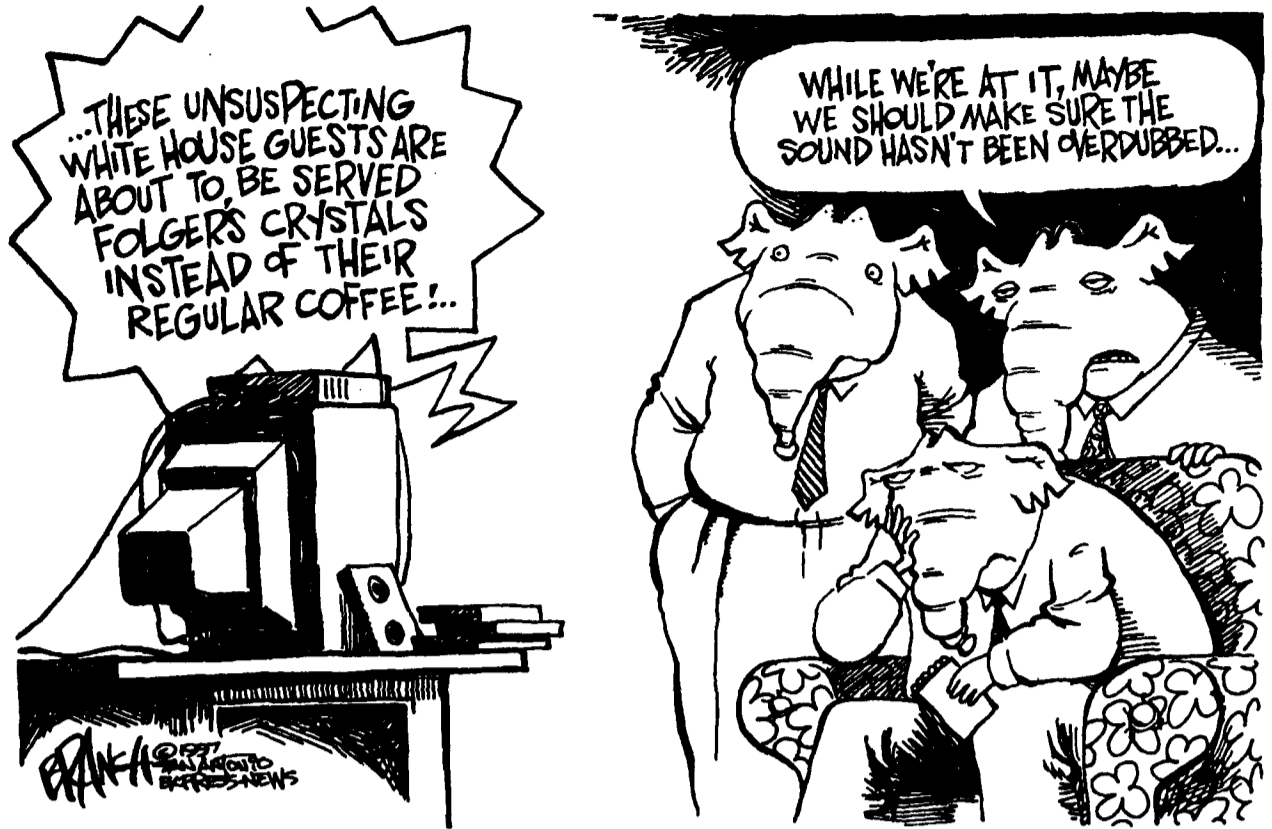
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Letter Policy: The Collegian encourages letters to the editor on news coverage, editorial content and University affairs. Letters should be no longer than 400 words. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer.



Editorial

The word is getting out about SGA's plans to investigate zoning regulations along Station Road. Monday night, Mike Zampetti, the president of SGA, and SGA vice president Tim Smith were stopped by Channel 12 news who were inquiring about their plans to look into the possibilities regarding bringing for businesses to Station Road.

As a result of SGA's investigation, they found that not only is it a possibility to put a video rental store on campus, but there is a parcel of land available on Station Road already zoned for business.

As this project gains momentum, the work of SGA alone may not be enough to see it to completion. Residents along Station Road, who have the distinct advantage over most Behrend students of being registered to vote in Harborcreek, are a likely source of protest over some of the conceived changes.

Students at Behrend do have the opportunity to create a force in the opposite direction of most of the Harborcreek residents around us. They also have the opportunity to make it known that they can be a voice and what that

voice will say.

Politicians realize that college students make up a minute percentage of their voters. This information will most likely make a politician apathetic to students' needs and demands because politicians have nothing to gain by pleasing students.

If students are serious about the changes to our surrounding areas, they have the right and the obligation to become involved with the inevitable politics that will accompany it. The most effective way to become involved is to be a registered voter in the township that you reside in for the majority of the year. It is legal for students to register to vote in their campus residences.

Voter registration forms are available in all public libraries. You can also register when renewing your drivers license.

Another, more aggressive, course of action would be to write letters to Behrend Dean John Lilley and Penn State president Graham Spanier, or to attend local town government meetings. The louder the collective voice of the students is, the more administrators and politicians will be forced to listen.



Eye on Erie

by John Groller
news editor

Tuesday, October 7, the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority stated they have plans to build a \$1 million customs and immigration center on Erie's Sassafras Street pier.

This move will be taken in hope of attracting cruise ships to the Erie area. Work is also being done on the Viking II, which has been docked at the pier for a year. Plans for renewed passenger service between Erie and Port Stanley, Ontario, by way of Viking II, are in order, and expect to be underway by next summer.

Prospective additions to the pier include a hotel, parking facility, and an aquarium-convention center. Also, a hub-type dock where passengers would have shopping and recreational opportunities would be added. According to the plan, a

drawbridge or elevator system will connect the Sassafras Street dock with Dobbins Landing, enabling visitors to enjoy the Bicentennial tower, restaurants, and other attractions.

The Columbus, a German cruise ship which uses the pier, plans three cruises this fall and five next year, carrying 420 passengers, a majority of whom will probably be German. In order to accommodate this German influx, a customs and immigration center is also in the plans. On October 17, the ship will stop in Erie on a tour to promote its five year cruise of the Great Lakes. This customs and immigration center will also be needed for the Viking when it is once again functional. The pier also has had an unsolicited proposal from a company that wants to operate a 500 passenger high-speed ferry up to the Niagara River for gambling.

Some immigrants wrongly see bilingual education as a "right"

By Gregory P. Kane-(c) 1997, The Baltimore Sun

I bought my issue of the Final Call - the apocalyptically named newspaper of the Nation of Islam - in the usual place: the corner of Northern Parkway and Wabash Avenue in Baltimore. I slipped the nattily attired young man a buck and he handed me a paper.

I had scanned the front-page headlines even before I bought the paper. "How the IRS wrecks lives," read one. Another read, "Activists struggle against alcohol, tobacco ads." It sounded like the stuff I could get in any newspaper. Were my friends in the Nation of Islam trying to go mainstream on me?

The most interesting article was inside, on Page 9, covering an issue that should be of grave concern to every American. "Latinos battle for bilingual education," it read. Rosalind Muhammad, the West Coast bureau chief of the Final Call, presented both sides of the issue. But it's the quotes of the pro-bilingual education folks that warrant scrutiny. Here is an excerpt from Muhammad's article:

"Critics are up in arms over a new statewide campaign to end bilingual education in public schools. Many of them charge that the initiative, dubbed

'English for the Children,' is racist and unfairly targets Latino children."

Ah, there's that "r" word again - racist. Well, we've had anyone opposing affirmative action labeled a racist, so why not anyone opposing bilingual education? Never mind that many Hispanics oppose bilingual education. Never mind that some studies have shown that English-as-a-second-language (ESL) curricula benefit Hispanic students more than bilingual education does. ESL courses would result in Hispanic students learning only English. And among some Hispanic activists, that may not be a desirable goal. It was a chap named Hector Perez-Pachenco who really got to the meat of the matter in the Final Call. Muhammad's article continues:

"This is just an extenuation of Proposition 187," said activist Hector Perez-Pachenco. "They see our numbers (population) rising, that we're going to be the majority in another 10 years. So little by little, they are taking away our rights."

So bilingual education is no longer just a tool of dubious effectiveness used to teach immigrant children English. It is now, according to Perez-Pachenco, a "right." That must

come as a shock to those descendants of immigrants whose forefathers didn't have the benefit of bilingual education. It must come as a shock to today's immigrants - Hispanic, Asian, Caribbean, Russian - who want their children taught in English.

But look closely at Perez-Pachenco's comment. It's clear that among at least some Hispanics - probably not a majority, thank heavens - learning English for the purpose of making an easier transition to American citizenship is clearly not the goal. The goal is for Hispanics to become a majority in California, perhaps the entire Southwest. What would follow then would be some sort of at least philosophical, if not physical, reunion with Mexico. Think of it as a Hispanic Anschluss.

That's not the worst of what we must infer from Perez-Pachenco's harangue. It's not an "anti-immigrant" frenzy sweeping the nation that led to the passage of Proposition 187, which denies California education and health benefits to illegal aliens. It's this "gimme" attitude that some liberal Americans want to inculcate among immigrants both legal and illegal.

It seems in rather poor form for

an immigrant to come to the United States and demand bilingual education as a right. Immigrants coming to the United States should think about what they owe their adopted country, not what their adopted country owes them. They shouldn't come here claiming rights not in existence, especially when once they land on these shores they have the benefit of the Bill of Rights, which extend to them more liberties than they probably had in their country of origin.

The only exceptions might be - and this is a very strong might - those immigrants from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, countries where the United States has in the past supported tyrants dedicated to crushing democracy, tyrants who have made conditions worse for their people. It may well be argued that immigrants fleeing those countries for the United States are escaping situations pinheaded American politicians made worse.

It's a distinction that probably escaped Perez-Pachenco. It will be interesting to see if, when the Hispanic majority does indeed come to California, that majority still considers itself part of the United States.