

The Behrend College Collegian

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

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Postal Information: The Collegian 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. The Collegian can be reached by calling (814) 898-6488 or (814) 898-6019 (FAX). ISSN 1071-9288.

Letter Policy: The Collegian encourages letters to the editor. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer. Writers can mail their letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5pm Tuesday for inclusion in that week's issue.

EDITORIAL

Big brother is watching in Almy Hall

Last Tuesday the residents of Almy Hall each had to turn in their keys that allowed them to gain access to the building. The original lock and key format was replaced with a computerized system that scans residents' Student I.D. cards. Once recognized by the computer, the door will unlock automatically. The new system was put in place for security reasons, which certainly must be comforting knowledge for the residents.

However a downside to this new system is that the computer reading the cards will keep a record of when exactly everyone enters the building and will help campus police services monitor who exactly enters the building and at what time they do. This sort of documentation is an invasion of the residents' privacy.

Many of the students living there feel uncomfortable knowing that ev-

ery time they enter their living quarters it will be kept on record. Keeping track of each students' entering time really doesn't seem like necessary information for security purposes.

IDs are not required for entry in any of the other residence halls on campus and seems like an unnecessary intrusion on those living in Almy Hall. In George Orwell's novel, 1984, an entity Big Brother watches over everyone. Almy Hall is gaining that sort of feeling with the addition of the new entry system. The fact that there is a record of when students enter building has made many residents uncomfortable. The record of when the building is entered by an individual plus the already existing cameras in the hallways and stairwells has started to violate basic privacy rights.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A call for abstinence

Sex is a wonderful thing. Last semester's article about the Safe Sex Cabaret got the old wheels a turnin' in my head.

I thought, "That sounds like a good idea; to drop some knowledge about safe sex to the college community." However, I did not attend the "cabaret," so I don't know precisely what they covered at the event, but what I noted in the article was the quote by Sue Daley that "If we don't talk about awkward topics, they will stay awkward." I agree wholeheartedly, so let's talk about sex.

Most people would agree that sex is one of the greatest gifts that mankind has been given. It is to be a deeply intimate expression of love between the heart and soul of a man and that of a woman. In fact, it is so intimate that it is to be shared only with "the one whom my soul loves." I believe that truly safe sex leads to truly divine sex.

Sex in its purest form is the emotional and spiritual fusion of a man and a woman and is most surely a heavenly and praiseworthy experience. But how can we assure ourselves such a wonderful sexual experience?

Imagine for a moment that you wanted to learn exactly how to use the library's catalog system. To best find out, you'd probably get the best answer from the system's inventor. So why not do the same thing with sex?

Now, stay with me for a second. I know some of you probably don't believe in God, and the rest of you think He's a spoil sport. I might be able to understand that, but just use your imaginations for a minute. If there is a God who created the whole universe and everything in it, wouldn't he know everything there is to know about having perfect sex? And if He happened to put this knowl-

edge in a book, wouldn't you want to read it? If you're not willing to read the Bible, then you don't have to dare to learn about perfect sex, but for the rest of you, let me get you started on some of the keys.

First, let me apologize for all the churches you may have attended that never taught you about sex. After all, sex has become a dirty word in most of our churches (tee hee hee...I said 'sex'). But now the truth about sex comes out.

Churches most often avoid the subject of sex but to say that it should stay in marriage and not be talked about openly. But the first command God gave man once He had created us was to "Be fruitful and multiply." (Genesis 1:28) Now, I know all you math/science majors are going to be disappointed to learn that He wasn't telling us to learn about a specific arithmetic operation, but that He was telling us to reproduce, and He created humans to reproduce sexually. It's a shame that most churches aren't willing to help us see how great God wants our sexual experiences to be, so the real question is "What kind of experience does God want sex to be?"

First I would ask, "What does it mean that 'the two become one flesh'?" (Genesis 2:23-24) This could be meant to paint a picture of two bodies during intercourse as the two become temporarily one, but I think it means something much more exciting and much more wonderful than a temporary physical union. Look at 1 Corinthians 6:19. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" If our bodies are indeed a place in which God's Spirit dwells, then a sexual experience of "two becoming one flesh" might be a spiritual experience as well.

This realization could be the key to

The Other Side

Alcohol abuse: no laughing matter

RAY MORELLI

There are certain things in life that everyone just takes to be a given: the earth is round, tomorrow will follow today, and college students will drink. That seems to be the opinion of many who ignore alcohol abuse among college students. Alcohol usage is an issue at any school. Recently, questions relating to alcohol have arisen as to what is acceptable, what is unacceptable, and what needs to be done about use among college students.

Last year, alcohol use among college students was very prominent in the news, specifically "binge drinking", which claimed the lives of two students. Scott Krueger was an eighteen year old freshman at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Living away from his Orchard Park, New Jersey home, Krueger joined a fraternity in hopes of meeting new people and making new friends. As a pledge to Phi Gamma Delta, Krueger was allegedly part of a hazing ritual in which he was required to consume a large amount of alcohol. His alcohol blood-level was elevated to 0.41—over four times the legal limit. For Krueger there was no legal limit, he was three years short of the legal drinking age. He fell into a coma for three days before dying of alcohol poisoning. His life ended as it was just supposed to be really starting.

Benjamin Wynne was a student at Louisiana State University. Like Krueger, he also pledged himself to a fraternity, Sigma Alpha Epsilon. At one of the frat's party, drank over two

dozen drinks, raising his blood-alcohol level to .588, almost six times the legal limit. Once again, the drinker was underage. Wynne died of alcohol poisoning at the age of twenty.

Any death is tragic. When the young die, it's even more so. However, it's perhaps saddest at universities. These are the places we send our brightest, most talented young adults to learn, and hone their abilities so they come out ready to make lasting contributions to society. That, unfortunately, is the ideal. In reality, many young people find themselves making poor decisions which, if they are lucky, later live to suffer the consequences of. Many students greatly endanger their opportunities by participating in binge drinking, which has become alarmingly popular on campuses across the country. A Harvard University poll found forty-four percent of students had engaged in binge drinking, defined as drinking five or more drinks at one time.

The question which must be examined is, "Why do so many young people often take part in behavior which they are aware is very self-destructive?" It's a question to which there's no simple answer.

The fact that both binge drinking deaths occurred at fraternity houses is no coincidence and hardly surprising. While most universities have set policies regarding alcohol they enforce in their residencies, it can be extremely difficult for them to do much of anything about off campus

gatherings. Fraternities are the main hosts of gatherings where drinking violations take place. Frat members and their party attendees are notorious for heavy drinking. Residents of fraternities and sororities were found in the Harvard poll to be four times as likely as other students to be binge drinkers.

It's understandable how Krueger and Wynne could have made such poor choices. Everyone has experienced peer pressure. It's always hard not to do something everyone else around you is doing. If you're at a party where everyone has a cup in their hand, it can be very difficult for you not to do the same. Unfortunately, the group mentality that runs rampant among Greeks only amplifies the peer pressure already inherent in any gathering. Everyone wants to be accepted, and it is easy for many to go along with the crowd in order to attain the sense of belonging they, and everyone, need.

There must be strong opposition to this peer pressure if we are to halt the tragedies at campuses like LSU and MIT. A large obstacle facing those who want to crack down on college alcohol abuse is the attitude our society as a whole has about college drinking. The idea that drinking is simply a part of college life is very prevalent. Almost every older adult has a story to offer about their "wild college days," making it easy for today's students to then justify their own abuse by dismissing it with such logic

as "All college students drink." The idea that any form of substance abuse among students is not only illegal but also in direct opposition to what society holds as acceptable needs to be conveyed in a firm, convincing manner if we are to prevent any further drug-related tragedies.

An anonymous respondent to the Harvard survey made the comment, "I was having a great night. I drank fifteen beers, then completely passed out." This is a perfect example of the mentality schools face. It's incomprehensible that the speaker sees nothing wrong with this. The speaker put themselves in great personal danger and even went so far as to call it "a great night," rather than admitting to a lapse in judgement. Unfortunately, similar statements are frequently heard around campus here at Behrend.

Student drinkers need to stop and reassess what's really important to them. Students are at college first and foremost to learn and develop personally. Alcohol impairs learning abilities as well as having negative social effects. Sadly, the attitudes among many students, and in society also, only serve to permit and even encourage behavior clearly detrimental to the students themselves, who often suffer from the effects of alcohol abuse. Worse yet, as two students tragically found out last year, sometimes one poor choice can cost you everything.

"The Other Side" will appear every three weeks in The Collegian.

25 years of wasted zealotry over abortion

By Patt Morrison—(c) 1998, Los Angeles Times

Goodness, where has the time gone?

Twenty-five years ago Thursday - as luck would have it, the same date Queen Victoria died in 1901 - seven U.S. Supreme Court justices outvoted their two colleagues and declared that

the right of privacy extends to a woman getting an abortion without finding herself or her doctor being sent to jail for it.

Simple. Obvious. Next case. Curious, isn't it, that in the quarter-century since, abortion has become the least private matter on the national agenda (next to President Clinton's underwear)?

Twenty-five years of screaming and preaching and millions in propaganda money ... all the zealots and scolds like those who stalked and picketed my OB-GYN friend and red-painted the sidewalk in front of her house with the word "murderer" ... the "pro-life" men who shot and killed five abortion clinic workers in the last five years. If all that venom and vehemence in the wake of Roe vs. Wade had been turned to worthwhile ends, then perhaps we'd have programs and policies, birth control and counseling.

The women I know who have had an abortion wanted to love and care for their children properly, with a father, in a home - the very picket-fence family fantasy some of those very zealots also cherish.

They are more loving women by far than the self-righteous who believe the biological title "mother" excuses any failing. They are more loving than the careless teenager or the indifferent woman whose children, begotten in heedlessness and born into indifference, are destined for police files or newspaper stories: left alone, shaken, neglected, beaten, burned, starved, even dumped into a trash can on prom night.

But hey - at least Miss Prom Queen didn't have an abortion.

It was hard to know where to rub-berneck first at the Planned Parenthood luncheon in Los Angeles last week marking the Roe vs. Wade anniversary.

There was the superb Dina Merrill - a Republican, she told the crowd merrily, and intending to stay one, but with a little midcourse correction from the party - and the remarkable Sarah Weddington, who as a 26-year-old pleaded her first contested case and won it: Roe vs. Wade.

And there were young doctors and lawyers, not yet born in 1973, who cannot imagine a world even before Roe, before the 1965 Griswold vs. Connecticut ruling, where advising a married couple about contraception was a crime.

Knocking on the Supreme Court's front door has so far failed to overturn Roe vs. Wade, so anti-abortion forces have spent years worrying at the windows and back door, chewing away bit by bit, state by state, like mice in a cupboard, with restrictions like these:

-A 24-hour waiting period for an abortion. A burden and expense for a woman who has to travel to a clinic, a rule not imposed for breast cancer

treatment or breast implants. And patronizing: Go home and think it over? What woman hasn't? Here's what they must think we think: "Gee, Thursday. What should I do today - get an abortion, or a manicure?"

-Parental consent. (I thought the idea was keeping courts and government out of family values.) Kids don't need permission to get pregnant, and not having a note from home won't stop the contractions nine months later.

-The defunct gag rule. At any clinic that got any federal funding, patients could not be told about abortion options. Think of an orthopedic surgeon being able to tell a patient not that he could have his broken leg set - only amputated. (Abortion, about the most common surgical procedure in the country, is the safest; first trimester deaths per 100,000 are less than one; for tonsillectomies, it's three in 100,000.)

There's much more beyond the marble steps of the Supreme Court: wrongheaded medical insurance that pays for abortions but not for birth control pills; doctors who forget to tell women that antibiotics can make birth control pills useless; and the hysteria about RU-486, the so-called abortion pill, whose approval means women won't need to go to clinics, and that deprives abortion foes of the chance to wave their bottled fetuses.

Let's say we go down that road, all the way. Make abortion illegal. Go back to the days when hospitals had an IOB ward, infected obstetrics - women sick and dying from illegal abortions, self-induced or otherwise. Handcuff them to the beds. Press them to confess. Prosecute them and their doctors. Sentence them to prison. There's lots of room.

And, of course, declare the fetus a person from Cell One.

Now, if a fetus is a person, then any woman who gets pregnant can claim a tax deduction for a dependent in utero. Hundreds of thousands of women could file 1040 returns claiming dependents, even miscarried ones. The IRS would have to pay out huge refund checks. The government goes bankrupt. The economy collapses. A dictatorship takes over. America as we know it will vanish.

But they'll have gotten their way. Abortion will be illegal.

Morrison is a Los Angeles Times columnist and frequent commentator on National Public Radio.

Sincerely,
Ryan Schenck
10, Mechanical Engineering