

Editorial

The Lobster and the music to the dance of life

MIKE PERKINS

Don't complain about dead whales

I consider myself an environmentalist. I believe that we as a species need to do anything in our power to prevent species from going extinct and to stop polluting the only world in which we can live. However I can't understand the radical environmentalists who are trying to stop a tribal whale hunt in the state of Washington.

The Makah tribe has lived in Northwest Washington state for two thousand years and throughout that time hunting whales has been an important part of their culture. Eighty years ago they were forced to stop hunting whales by the federal government, but were recently given permission to revive their old ways. Immediately a swarm of protectionists have descended to the area with the intent on stopping the hunt.

These environmentalists have brought dozens of boats and a miniature submarines that they intend to use to scare away the whales. I can't

understand why they won't let the Makah hunt like they have been for thousands of years.

The tribe hunts the California Grey Whale, which was removed from the endangered species list in 1993. There are over 22,000 of these whales in existence. According to a global treaty the United States is allowed to kill twenty whales over the next 5 years. All those whales are allotted to the Makah. Twenty whales out of more than twenty thousand isn't that much, and the hunt is of great cultural importance to this tribe, who by the way were the only tribe to protect their whaling rights in treaty. Legally they have the right to hunt them, so why can't we let them.

I mean, isn't it enough that we came to this land, unleashed biological warfare among the Native Americans, continued to hunt them down, slaughter them (Sand Creek, for example) and steal all their land. We

have broken literally hundreds of treaties since this country was formed, so isn't it about time that we honored one?

The Makah are a small tribe with a quota on the amount of whales they can hunt. This isn't a slaughter like the pioneers did with the buffalo. This is not a mass technologically advanced hunt of the whales. All the Makah are using is dugout canoes with one steel harpoon and one gun. The rest of them will use their traditional wooden weapons. There is no danger of the Makah hunting the whales to the point of extinction.

I truly have nothing against the whales, and don't wish to see them hunted down. However, I don't think that America can impose itself on the culture of others. If the Makah were doing something that could do irrevocable harm to the world environment, then we should interfere. Considering though the scale that this hunt is on, we should just stand back

and watch.

I think the protestors that are complaining about the whale hunt are focusing too much energy into a small problem. I can't stand it when all these environmental groups spend so much time, money and energy to combat a nonexistent or small problem. Stop worrying about controlled hunts of deer, whales, or whatever the animal. If you want to protect the whales, why don't you protest the Japanese and Norwegian fleets who kill hundreds if not thousands of whales every single year? Try focusing on a real problem, not an imagined one. Why don't you go try to solve a real problem like deforestation, the ozone layer, or polluted water and air? Do something that will make a difference.

Perkins is the layout editor for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

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

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

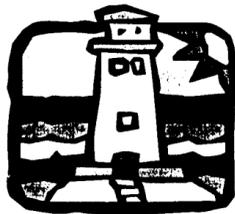
Letter Policy: The Beacon encourages letters to the editor. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer. Writers can mail their letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5pm Tuesday for inclusion in that week's issue.

A view from the lighthouse

New Directors have potential to improve the quality of Behrend

Dr. Roberta Salper, Director of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, recently resigned from her position. Dr. Dean Baldwin is the interim Director of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. However this position will have to be filled in the near future. Dr. Richard Progelhof, the Director of the School of Engineering and Engineering Technology, will be retiring at the end of the Spring semester.

Two directors out of the four Schools at Behrend will be replaced in the near future. What kind of people do we want to fill these positions? The appointment of the directors should maintain Behrend's high quality standards while introducing new and innovative ideas into their schools. This in turn will benefit the students by giving them the opportunity to experience a variety of subjects and classes that will inspire them to attain their goals.



Behrend is very concerned with its reputation and ratings. This gives Behrend an opportunity to improve both of these characteristics. The candidates for these positions should be selected with the students and the College's needs in mind. The new directors have the opportunity to move Behrend forward and make sure that it is an ever improving school. The new ideas and knowledge that carefully selected directors could bring has the potential to greatly improve the quality of education of Behrend students.

Case against Microsoft should be full and open inquiry

The following editorial appeared in Monday's Los Angeles Times:

District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson will begin presiding next week over a trial intended to bring some law and order to the Wild West of cyberspace.

The question before Jackson may seem legalistic: Has Microsoft, as the Justice Department and 20 state attorneys general assert, engaged in a "broad pattern of anti-competitive behavior" since 1991? But Jackson's eventual answer will help resolve key issues of the information Age, such as whether Microsoft will be allowed to charge a tariff for every financial transaction conducted on the Internet.

The case against Bill Gates' company began with the Justice Department's charge last year that the Redmond, Wash., software giant illegally pressured computer companies and Internet providers to use its Internet Explorer browser instead of a rival browser called Netscape Navigator. It has since expanded to include new Justice Department evidence that Microsoft might have exerted more than pressure. For example, according to the Justice Department, a 1991 e-mail message from Microsoft executive David Cole endorses a plan to "put competitors on a treadmill" by using a computer bug that "would surely crash" programs installed on a non-Microsoft operating system.

Understandably, Microsoft is now asking Jackson to limit the trial to the original browser charges, but Jackson should resist. The aim shouldn't be to gang up on Microsoft but rather to do what all parties in the lawsuit say they want: to focus the trial not on narrow legalisms but on the larger question of how to ensure that competition thrives in cyberspace.

The public interest and Microsoft's self-interest are not necessarily at odds. After all, if Microsoft loses on any one of the dozen or so charges against it, that could set off a flurry of lawsuits against the company, thereby depressing its stock, which has been a blue-chip bulwark in today's volatile market.

What's key is that the trial be open and impartial, which is why the Circuit Court of Appeals should not accede to Microsoft's request that Gates' three-day-long deposition, recorded on videotape in August, be kept private.

Since 1913, federal law has mandated that pretrial testimony be "open to the public as freely as are trials in open court." That law is especially relevant here, for Gates' testimony provides key evidence of what's really being assessed by the court: his way of doing business, which, by imbuing Microsoft's culture, sets the tone for much of the information industry.

The best measure of the trial's success will be whether it inspires Microsoft to show more respect for customers and competitors than it has in the past. The Justice Department's most compelling argument is that by eliminating competitors, Microsoft has undermined innovation. For instance, the company's signature product, Microsoft Word, does not allow users to perform one of the most basic of all word processing tasks: searching a document for more than a single word or phrase at a time. That's an astonishing omission for a product used by more than 70 million people and one that would have never happened had Microsoft focused less on silencing its competitors and more on listening to its customers.

The Critic

JON STUBBS

Student run radio would be advantage

The other night, I was listening to Gannon's college radio station, WENG FM 89.9. The student DJs, Burt and Brian, were making a few comments about other college campuses in the Erie area. Penn State-Behrend was mentioned a few times, but nothing overly offensive was said about our school. But suppose they were being critical about Behrend. How would we defend our fine campus? The only major media outlet comprised of mostly students is this here paper.

The Beacon does its job by informing the students and faculty that are contained within the confines of the campus, but fails to reach the other citizens of Erie. Trying to distribute the Beacon to the entire city of Erie would prove impractical. However, there is one way the students of Behrend could be finally visible to the public. That being the same way Gannon is reaching the people of Erie: a student radio station.

Now it is true, we have WPSE, Penn State-Behrend's financial and news station, which is all well and good in itself. But this does nothing to provide a dialogue between Behrend's students and the commu-

nity.

Behrend desperately needs to become noticed by the general population. Why should we care what the residents of Erie and its neighboring communities think of us? Here's why: Do you think it's a royal pain in the ass to drive a half-mile down Station road for a couple of Twinkies or a pack of cigarettes, especially when you consider the fact that

which developers could construct many different kinds of businesses, from restaurants to various entertainment establishments. The college needs a louder voice in the community and a student-run radio station is the answer.

I can't find a downside to such an organization. As mentioned, the students could voice their needs and opinions to people who could pro-

So I urge the student body to prove everybody wrong about their theory of our apathy toward everything and approach the administration about such a station.

you're probably going to lose your parking space when you get back? Once businesses realize that money is to be made by constructing a much needed convenience store within a convenient walking distance, they will eagerly comply.

Are you one of many students that have decided that there is nothing else to do but drink yourself into a stupor on your nights off? You may be right. But you can change that. Behrend owns plenty of land for

vide solutions, the administration could use the station as an effective tool for communicating to students as well as prospective students, and Police and Safety could use it to tell us where we're not allowed to park. It is without a drawback.

I'm not sure how all students feel about Erie radio, but I think it's pretty awful. There are two main stations that monopolize the radio waves in Erie, that being STAR 104 and JET 102, which are mediocre at best.

Rocket 101 seems to be adequate, but could be improved. The only stations that I can look forward to listening to are Energy 90 and some Canadian station that you can get if you're in the right place at the right time. So Erie radio has room for improvement. A Behrend station could fill that void.

So I urge the student body to prove everybody wrong about their theory of our apathy toward everything, and approach the administration about such a station. If we are bored at Behrend, then it's our fault. With enough pressure from the student body, we can change things. Remember: we are the University's customers. We, in theory, at least, decide where funds are allocated. The key to change is communication. The most efficient way to communicate with the city is our own call letters and numbers on the dial. That or an infomercial on late-night public access. That might work too.

Stubbs is the features editor for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.



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