

## The Behrend College Beacon

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

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### A view from the lighthouse

## MLK celebration promotes diversity

Once a year students are afforded the opportunity to engage in a celebration of life; the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. After a holiday season of giving, King's birthday provides a chance for many to acknowledge his strides for not only African-Americans but all Americans. Students should take advantage of the Martin Luther King Jr. celebration at Behrend. Although ninety-three percent of the students on campus are white, this event will benefit all students. Our campus is not racially diverse, by any means and unfortunately there are students who are still very unaccepting of other races or perhaps just have a limited knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement.

The MLK celebration definitely promotes diversity on campus and will hopefully cause people who are attending to question the country and the society we are living in today.

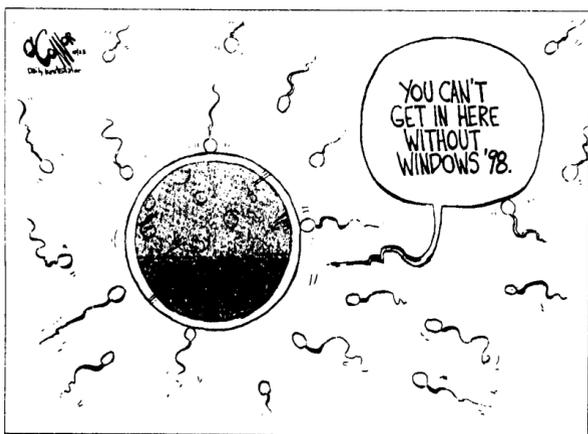
With such programs as the re-en-

actment of the 1963 March on Washington and featured speaker Bobby Seale, the students will become more aware of how far blacks have progressed since the 1960s and the extent to which MLK was an influential leader.



It is necessary to possess knowledge of the movement, because it is a part of our history. What happened then is vital to understanding why things are the way they are currently. It is what shapes us today.

# Join the Beacon NOW!!



## What You Talkin' bout Willis

WILL JORDAN

# Behrend Singing the Blizzard Blues

What is the deal with the snow clean up here on campus as well as on the main roads? I think that it is a shame when people have to tread through snow and risk slipping on ice and slush just to get to class. I don't know if the maintenance people who are supposed to take care of these issues are undermanned or not skilled in plowing the walkways or what. I personally have worked on a highway department crew and have never left walkways unshoveled or slush and ice on stairways for people to slip on and fall.

I understand that the plow crews have been plowing throughout the

persistent snow that had been falling the past few days. By Tuesday afternoon however, the precipitation was basically wet and would not stick. When I worked for the highway department, on days like this, we would shovel up the slush and put down sand instead of salt so there would be more traction. The sand would also absorb some of the water and prevent all of the puddles that are occurring in all of the buildings.

And what about the snow clean up on all of the main roads in Wesleyville and the ramps on and off route 90? I truly am surprised that there haven't been more accidents.

Monday night someone's car slid off the road and into a ditch on Station Road. Cooper Road was even worse than Station Road. When I was driving a friend home on Cooper Road, the really bad turn and hill down by the gorge was covered in snow. On the way back, one car was stuck trying to get up the hill. I had to drive around that car, avoid getting hit by a car coming down the hill, while speeding away from a plow truck that was coming up behind me. When I was coming back from Christmas break, route 90 was fine until I had to get onto the ramp for Wesleyville. The ramp was completely covered in

ice and slush.

I understand that we don't get as much snow where I live in lower New York State as they do in Erie, but I would think that the highway departments in this area would be better prepared for these conditions. Despite the snow and slush, I hope that all of you get to class safely and, if you have to drive anywhere, take your time and arrive alive instead of not at all.

Will Jordan is the editor-in-chief of the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

## The Behrend Review

CHARLES TESTRAKE

# The Ten Best films of 1998

The criterion I used for selecting my choices for the Ten Best Films of 1998 were: What impact did the film have upon me? Could I empathize with the characters of the film and understand their pain and pleasure? Was there any thought provoking ideas or messages within the film? And finally and perhaps most importantly, did I like the film? However it should be noted that this list is incomplete. For I have not seen and probably will never have time to see every film that was released last year. Also several films which I plan to see, such as "Shakespeare In Love" or "A Thin Red Line" have not come to an Erie area movie theater.

10. MEET JOE BLACK: When this film was released in theaters about two months ago it was unfairly rebuffed by many critics for being "too long". While I will admit the film could have been shortened by about a half an hour, it was never the less a fascinating story about "Death." A media mogul, played by Anthony Hopkins, is told by "Death," played by Brad Pitt, that his time on Earth is up. However before "Death" takes him, he wants Hopkins character to show him the world. Then as the film progresses "Death" falls hopelessly in love with Hopkins' daughter played by Claire Foriani.

9. SOMETHING ABOUT MARY: Is definitely the funniest film of the year, if not one of the funniest films ever made. Although this film is not for some tastes, due mainly to the many gross out gag's throughout it, which I cannot describe in this column for risk of offending some of its readers. However once you get past the gross out gag's, the film is a clever romantic comedy about a woman (Cameron Diaz) who is the object of every man affection.

8. THE PARENT TRAP: Is a surprisingly delightful remake of the 1961 original film. This time with newcomer Lindsay Lohan giving a flawless performance as 11 year old identical twin sisters Hallie and Annie who were separated shortly after birth when their parents divorced. While the plot of this film is somewhat inconceivable and off the wall, it is a

real treat to watch the very talented Lohan in dual-roles conniving and scheming to get her parents back together. I think in about ten years, with a little luck, Lindsay Lohan will be one of the most sought after actors in Hollywood films.

7. BULWORTH: In my opinion this was perhaps the finest film ever made by actor/director/producer/writer Warren Beatty. In the film Beatty, in a Oscar caliber performance, plays a United States Senator who has a nervous breakdown just prior to the California Democratic Primary. A very distraught Beatty then has contract taken out on his own life and then, no longer fearing for his political future, begins to say and do what ever he feels like. However Beatty later tries to cancel the contract when he falls in love with a 26 year old African American woman played by Halle Berry. The thing that makes this film stand out above many other political satires is its brutal honesty and the statement it makes about race relations in this country.

6. SLIDING DOORS: Have you ever wondered if your life would have been changed if you had made a split second decision differently? That is what this very clever British comedy attempts to answer. The film stars American actress Gwyneth Paltrow who, with her perfect British accent, is 100% completely convincing in the role of Helen, a London public relations executive who is fired at the beginning of the film. The story then takes off in two different directions as Helen is in a London subway station trying to catch a train home. While in one reality she catches the train only to arrive home early to find her boyfriend in bed with another woman. While in another reality she misses the train only to arrive home late to just miss boyfriend in bed with another woman. The remainder of the film follows and compares the two very different realities of the same women all the up to a climatic conclusion.

5. THE PRINCE OF EGYPT: Is an animated musical remake of the 1956 film "The Ten Commandments". However unlike the 1956 film, "The

Prince of Egypt" is about two hours shorter and has a more condensed and focused story line. The major focal point of this film is the relationship between two brothers, Moses (Val Kilmer) and Rameses (Ralph Fiennes) and their two different destinies that drove them apart. Perhaps this film should have been called the "Princes of Egypt".

4. THE TRUMAN SHOW: The first time I saw this film I didn't much care for it and couldn't understand what all the hype was about. However when I saw it a second time several months later I was completely blown away by it. "The Truman Show" is the story of a man, played by Jim Carrey, who finds out that his whole life has been a 24 hour television show and that every person in his life is merely just an actor. Besides from Carrey's stupendous acting, which I feel was the best male performance of the year, the film really makes you think and question your own life. Is your life really the subject of a 24 hour television show? Who knows!

3. SAVING PRIVATE RYAN: Is one of director Steven Spielberg's greatest film to date, second only to his previous cinematic masterpiece "Schindler's List". From its opening scenes on Omaha Beach, the film quickly dispels any myths of war as a noble human enterprise. It instead portrays war as man's stupidest and costliest endeavor. The film stars Tom Hanks who, shortly after D-Day, must lead a squad of American soldiers into German territory, in a mission he truly doesn't believe in, to rescue one American soldier whose threebrothers were recently killed in combat. The film truly takes you into the heart and soul of the American fighting man and makes the audience members understand what these men went through and the sacrifices they made to free the world from slavery.

2. PLEASANTVILLE: Is the story of two teenage siblings who are transported from the color world of reality, to the 1950's sitcom world of "Pleasantville", which is in black and white. Once there, the siblings slowly but surely introduce their own values and ideas into the culture of

Pleasantville and the people of the town begins to change by tuning from black and white into color. As is the case in most societies, change leads to conflict and conflict leads to violence. And that is what happens in Pleasantville as the town soon divides into two factions: the "black and white's" and the "colored's". Those who fear change, the "black and white's" begin to violently persecute those who have changed, the "colored's". The town's Mayor and leader of the "black and white's" is played by the late actor J. T. Welsh in his final screen appearance. Welsh's great performance, perhaps the most overlooked of the year, is reminiscent of Orson Wells in "Citizen Kane" and definitely deserves Oscar attention.

1. WHAT DREAMS MAY COME: Is in my opinion the Best Film of 1998. It has the most stunningly beautiful cinematography ever put on the big screen, which creates indelible images of both heaven and hell that will stick with you long after you leave the theater. The film also has an incredibly powerful story line. In the first ten minutes of the film Chris (Robin Williams) and Annie (Annabella Scioria) meet, fall in love, get married, and have two kids who are killed in a tragic car accident. The film then jumps ahead four years where Chris is himself killed in another tragic car accident, leaving Annie all alone. The remainder of the film uses many consistent flashbacks to explain the love that Chris and Annie feel for each other as well as for their two children. This leads up to the film's climax where Chris must risk his immortal soul to save Annie from an eternity of pain and misery.

Charles Testrake is a junior political science major. His column appears every three weeks in the Beacon.

# Are Wifebeaters more than just the name of shirts?

By Melissa Sperr  
Orange Source  
Syracuse University

I remember the first time I heard the term "wifebeater" as it pertains to clothing. At home in friendly Minnesota, I was shopping with a friend, whom I will refer to as "Brand Name Boy." He began a discussion detailing the points of his argument that Abercrombie and Fitch's wifebeater — although more expensive — was a much better deal than those offered at other stores. "What are you talking about?" I said with a furrowed brow. "You know," he retorted. "Muscle shirts. Tank tops."

Hey, I don't want to stereotype people who wear wifebeaters, but when clothing crosses the line into

blatant dull-wittedness and scorching harassment, I have to speak up. I am willing and proud to make a broad statement about the type of person who walks into a store and, from below a baseball cap brim, asks the cashier: "Heymmm, do you sell those wifebeater shirts?"

This exact scene happened the other day as my friend and I awaited a price check on a bathroom scale. The cashier knew exactly what the young shopper was talking about and directed him to an area somewhere between plastic "Mulan" jelly shoes and sateen nightshirts. She turned to us with bemusement and shrugged. We get that question all the time, she said, and I recalled the gobs of individuals on campus and at house parties who

were clad in these garments.

It was at a house party, actually, that I most recently encountered a wifebeater shirt. I was waiting in a particularly obnoxious keg line when a wifebeater-wearing individual shoved his way up to the source of the beer with an authority that can only be demonstrated by a person showing off his muscles. He placed his cup directly under the tap and crased all rules of keg etiquette with one little shrug of his exposed shoulder. What I thought was, "Hey, asshole!" But what I said was, "Do you want me to pump?" The wifebeater guy left with his beer, and I was left waiting—again.

About 10 minutes later, outside with a cup of beer that was not worth the \$3 admission I paid for it, I complained about the individual, whom I

referred to as "Wifebeater Guy" (and whom everybody knew immediately by that title). Then I forgot about him. Until, as I walked down the bustling street toward campus with my friends, he came out of nowhere and gave me a pick-up line only a wifebeater guy could muster. Here's how the scene played out: Wifebeater Guy: "Hey there, ladies. Where are you guys headed?" Me, appalled: "You're the rude character who cut in front of me at the keg."

Wifebeater Guy: "What? No way, I would never do that. Especially not to a pretty lookin' lady like yourself." Me, secure in my obvious moral superiority: "I'm afraid you're wrong. You definitely cut, and it was definitely rude. I recognize your

wifebeater shirt."

Wifebeater Guy: "Oh, Well, maybe I did. But I'm sorry, and I wouldn't have done it if I had known I was going to see you again later. So, where are you staying tonight?" Me, nauseated: "My house. My home. By myself, thank you."

Wifebeater Guy: "Well, hey, I think you should come back to (the dorm) with me." After I laughed and turned directly around, Wifebeater Guy began shouting things at me that I just can't repeat about what I need done to me and how he would be the perfect person to do it. When that didn't work, Wifebeater got mad. "What's up with these bitches, man? You know you all just want to get laid, man. These bitches

at this school, man!"

Would I be wrong to link this gentleman's attire with his attitude about life and, indeed, "bitches"? Maybe. Probably not. I mean, it takes a certain type of individual to wear a wifebeater on a brisk autumn night. It also takes a certain type of individual to get angry about a girl's perfectly reasonable refusal of his come-on. If these types happen to be one of the same, it's not my fault.

If you can prove me wrong, please do. But until that day, I maintain my opinion that there is a reason people who wear wifebeaters aren't affected by the fact that the very name of the shirt they're wearing is a form of abuse: They think it's funny. You know what I think is funny? Wifebeater Guy went home alone.