

The Behrend College Beacon

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

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What You Talkin' bout Willis

WILL JORDAN

"It can't happen to me"

What's the deal with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome? HIV is a virus that attacks and weakens your immune system, leaving it open to opportunistic illnesses not usually experienced by healthy individuals. HIV attacks various types of immune cells. It then uses these cells to reproduce itself. When the HIV virus takes over a cell, that cell can no longer do its job and dies. When enough of the cells in a person's body are dead or damaged, they are no longer able to protect the body, and opportunistic infections begin to occur. At this point, you may be HIV-symptomatic or have AIDS.

There are a lot of people who are having unprotected sex and who are experimenting with intravenous drugs. For one reason or another,

these people are under the illusion that they will never get HIV or AIDS, and, in most cases, they are lucky enough not to get HIV or AIDS. However, luck can only run for so long. Within the past seven years, I have lost two uncles and a cousin to AIDS. All three of them acquired AIDS through the use of intravenous drugs. All of us have heard lectures about the AIDS virus in high school, so we know how people contract the virus and how deadly it can become when it breaks down your immune system. A couple of days ago, my mother made me aware that a family friend has recently discovered that she had contracted HIV. She contracted it by having sex without protection. It is bad enough that these people have contracted the virus, and

have died, or are dying, but I do not believe that these people are aware of how this has affected the lives of their families. This family friend has yet to tell her parents that she has contracted the virus. I can imagine how dismayed and horrified her parents will be when she tells them. I know that the wives and children of my two uncles that died were very distraught when they found out.

Recently, in the *New York Times*, an article was written about researchers who have traced the AIDS virus to a subspecies of chimpanzees. "The riddle of the origin of the AIDS virus has apparently been solved, according to an international team of scientists who reported today that they had traced its roots to a related virus in a subspecies of chimpanzee in Africa."

Scientists speculate that this virus was transmitted by chimpanzees through "bites and exposure to blood in hunting and dressing of chimpanzees."

Hopefully, through continued research, a cure for the AIDS virus will be found. Until then, people should learn to respect their bodies by not experimenting with intravenous drugs and practicing safe sex. Children, as well as adults, should realize that they can contract this awful virus and that it will affect them and their families for the rest of their lives. By doing so, they will avoid putting their families and loved ones through the pain that my family has experienced.

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

The Behrend Review

CHARLES TESTRAKE

Campaign finance reform

A view from the lighthouse

Show your support for the play

The Visit, a play which will run from February 19th through February 28th, is a rather unique production which casts both new and accomplished actors and actresses and possesses a one of a kind plot.

All of the fourteen cast members, whether they are experienced or inexperienced, make a very dedicated team of people, willing to spend much time and effort on the production of the play. They all have a multitude of talents and skills to offer.

Also, Tony Elliot, the Studio Theatre director, is to be commended for the continuous support and effort he has demonstrated. Ken Saunders, assistant professor of Mechanical Engineering, is also starring in the play as mayor. Their effort is to be appreciated by the Behrend community.

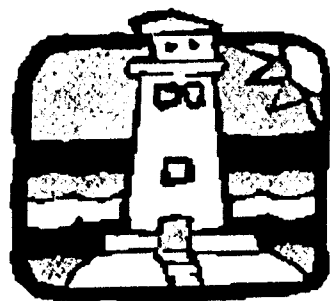
The plot of the play centers around the evil aspects of human nature, such as deceit by loved ones and the desire for justice through a "small price", which many college students are familiar with. The play is mysterious and full of suspense.

For this semester's production, the stage will run through the middle of the theatre, with students sitting on either side. Although this seating ar-

angement won't provide a plethora of seats, it should make for a more dynamic viewing. These qualities should draw Behrend students to see the play.

We are extremely lucky to have a Studio Theatre on campus and a team of students willing to exert much dedication in order to entertain the Behrend community.

With all the complaints of lack of school spirit, going to this show is not only a delightful way to spend an evening or afternoon, but also a great way to support your fellow students. So, please show your support of the Studio Theatre by attending the show, which costs only three dollars for students and five dollars for general admission. The play is a worthwhile event to go to. You will enjoy it!



I don't know about you but every time I see another campaign ad, with a candidate proclaiming that he or she is for jobs, schools, and lower taxes, with warm fuzzy music in the background, I feel like I'm going to vomit. However in this era of capital intensive campaigns, which ever candidate runs the most ads, digs up the most dirt on his or her opponent, and spends the most money will probably win the election, regardless of whether or not they are the most qualified candidate for the job.

In 1952 when General Dwight Eisenhower was running for president, he became the first candidate to fully utilize television as an influential campaign tool. While his opponent, Adlai Stevenson, ran television ads which feature him sitting in front of a fireplace discussing his views on the important issues of the day, Eisenhower's ads merely had the jingle of "I like Ike! You like Ike! Everybody likes Ike!" The big difference between the two is that Stevenson's ads were long and boring, and Eisenhower's ads were short and entertaining. Now don't get the idea the "I like Ike!" ads alone led to

Eisenhower's landslide victory, but they did demonstrate the power that television has over people.

The 1952 Presidential election was a major turning point in American politics. From there after, any candidate seeking election to major office would need to utilize the media for all its worth. This meant television campaign ads. And television campaign ads cost a lot of money. So candidates not born into wealthy families would need to raise money any way they could, even if it was not ethically or morally right. An example of this was the 1972 re-election campaign of President Richard Nixon. The Committee to Re-Elect the President, or CREEP, spent an all-time record of \$65 million (some of it illegally) to re-elect Nixon. If adjusted for inflation, that would be well over \$100 million today which would still be an all-time record.

Following the 1972 election, Congress passed a campaign finance reform law. Under the law there were five major points:

1. Limits were placed on how much any individual or interest group could contribute to any campaign or can-

didate. A \$1000.00 limit for individuals and a \$5000.00 limit for interest groups.

2. Any party that received more than 25% of the vote in the last presidential election would receive full public financing in the next presidential election. And also any party that received between 5%-25% of the vote in the last presidential election would be partially reimbursed after the election and receive partial public financing for the next election.

3. Limits were placed on the overall spending for Congressional campaigns.

4. Limits were placed on Candidate self-financing.

5. Limits were placed on spending allowed by so-called "independent" groups that were not officially connected which a campaign or a candidate. Unfortunately though, in *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) the Supreme Court ruled points 3, 4, & 5 of this campaign finance reform law unconstitutional. While the Court ruled that points 1 & 2 were constitutional, it was of the opinion that points 3, 4, & 5 violated the First Amendment Right to free speech.

While the opinion of the Supreme Court in *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976) was legally accurate, it was nevertheless the wrong decision. By this ruling the Supreme Court opened American politicians up to the exploitation of those who finance their political campaigns. And thus unwittingly sold American politicians out to the special interests.

The only way to correct this grave error by the Supreme Court is to immediately pass a Constitutional Amendment on campaign financing. Any proposed Constitutional Amendment of campaign financing should include all the previous points the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional in *Buckley v. Valeo* (1976), provisions against donations by foreign nationals or governments, and most importantly, a time limit on how soon campaigning could begin prior to an election.

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

Studying isn't always the way to get ahead

by Michelle Blair
Cornell University
The Cornell Daily Sun

Do you get an average of three hours of sleep on weeknights? Do you often find yourself studying at social events? Do you feel that most of your friends and associates have a much livelier social lives than you do? Can you remember the last time you went to a party or major social event?

If you answered yes to any of the previous questions, you may be suffering from a syndrome known as over-studying. (If you are not a student and one of these characteristics applies to you, you are in serious need of some fun.)

That's right. There are way too many people here who are overly concerned with their grade-point averages. Before they even attempt to learn what they are studying, they calculate exactly what score they need to get on a prelim exam so they can end up with an 'A' in the class. These are the people who may graduate without learning one concrete thing, since they devoted all of their time to worrying about their grades. And sometimes all of these worrywarts have to ask themselves one practical question: Whom am I trying to impress? If they are thinking of apply-

ing to some kind of graduate program, maybe their anxiety is justified, but for the others, you have to wonder what their problem is.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating low GPAs and poor study habits. It's just that when students start regularly neglecting important necessities like sleep, or when they start depending on beverages to get them through their classes every day, there's a serious need for priority assessment. Most students can't survive long periods of time pretending they're not human.

The self-sacrificing student is just one example of the grade-obsessed; worse yet are those who base their self-worth on their grades. This type of person ranks his health as less important than his parents' approval. Constant stress and desperation, all for the sake of getting an 'A', forces certain members of this group to make such serious and final decisions as suicide.

I'll never forget asking my high-school history teacher for a pass so that I could attend an information session about Cornell University. As soon as she heard my request, she said, "You want to go to the school with the highest suicide rating?" I was shocked. Why mention such a thing in such a way? Before then, I

had never realized that there was a suicide rate ranking for American colleges.

Sadly, there are many students who define themselves by their GPAs. If you know someone who seems like they take their grades too seriously, try to make them understand GPAs are never more important than their existence.

If you are an "over-study," please talk to a family member or close friend who you know would love to hear from you. If you've given something your all, console yourself with the realization that your best is good enough.

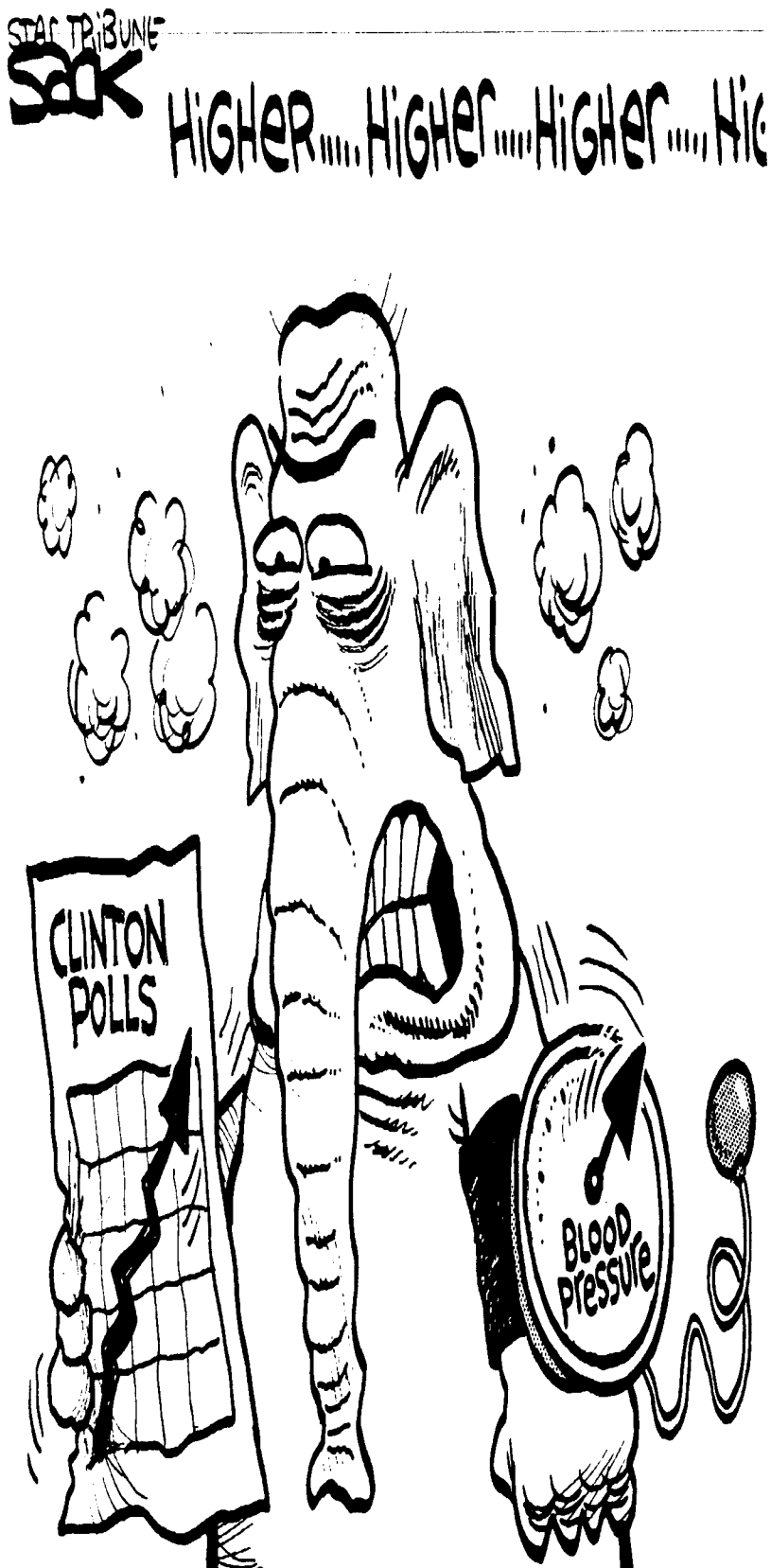
It may be a nice plus for an employer to be able to read that you've been on the dean's list eight semesters in a row, but in the end, that won't be the pivotal factor that gets you the job. Book knowledge is book knowledge, so for those who think GPAs automatically make up 75 percent of a person's eligibility for a job, please try to remember the important distinction between book knowledge and practical knowledge. Your GPA won't help you after you walk into the interviewer's office.

There are many organizations and on-campus jobs that help students exercise at least one or two of the skills they'll need to be successful.

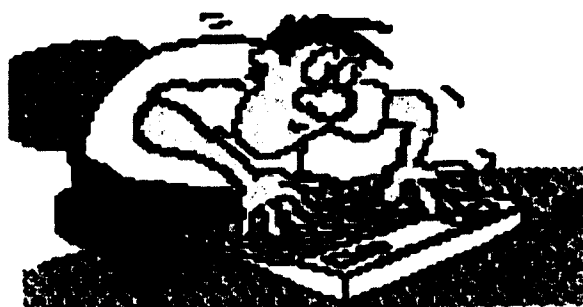
It's a good idea to check out those options, because a senior who has never participated in a single extra-curricular activity may not fare well when job hunting. One job interviewer told me that most students she sees don't participate in enough things to even fill out the small section set aside for them on the job application. That, she said, is not impressive.

The bottom line is this: Sleep. Enjoy social events to the fullest - which means leaving your books at home. Make a commitment to do at least one thing each week that doesn't involve schoolwork. If you're really concerned about getting that job, involve yourself in at least one extra-curricular activity. (Your social life will improve by leaps and bounds.)

If this seems like too many changes to make at once, implement one at a time. The key is to enjoy something - anything. After all, isn't some degree of happiness required for a truly beneficial college experience?



Letters to the editor:



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