

**The Behrend College Beacon**

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**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.

**The Critic****The censorship of connotation**

Last August, a man named Timothy Boomer was charged with violating a 101-year-old Michigan state law when he jokingly swore at his friends after falling out of his canoe. The incident took place on the Rifle River near the Jack Pine Trail recreation area where a woman and her two children were standing within earshot, according to Deputy Kenneth Socia, who issued the ticket.

The specifics of the law that Boomer broke prohibit the use of vulgar or insulting language in the presence or earshot of women or children. The misdemeanor carries a fine of \$100 or a penalty of imprisonment up to 90 days.

"This archaic law singles out women for special treatment without any reasonable justification—a practice held unconstitutional long ago," says Kary L. Moss, Executive Director of the

ACLU of Michigan. "The law is based upon outmoded stereotypes about women's sensitive nature and need for protection."

Moss is exactly right about the law, but is Michigan the only place where women and children are told what they are allowed to hear?

The fact is this story is just a microcosm of the censorship we have in American society today, particularly in music. Imagine the Michigan cop as a major media outlet such as MTV or a radio station. These corporate police dictate to the listeners (weak and impressionable women and children) what is appropriate for them.

Timothy Boomer's utterances were probably not fit to be heard on television or radio. An album with such lyrics would have most likely have a Parental Advisory sticker on the

front. The censorship of George Carlin's Seven Words will be around for a while. But music television and radio are now beginning to censor ideas, rather than just words.

Tupac Shakur's postmortem release, "Changes" contains almost no foul language whatsoever, but is edited to death by the kids over at MTV. In the video, words like "crime" and "drugs" are cut out. In the lines, "First ship 'em dope and let 'em deal to brothers/Give 'em guns, step back and watch 'em kill each other," the words "dope" and "guns" are removed from the MTV version. These lines are written to express the general apathy of the nation to the problems of the black inner-city.

In Everlast's "What It's Like," the word "whore" is cut out when it is used to describe the names a girl is called as she enters an abortion clinic.

JON STUBBS

Once again, the word "drugs" is left out of the edited version.

FCC regulations doesn't dictate the removal of such words. These changes to the original song are made by the radio station or television network, so the company can appear clean and cannot be held legally responsible for any of its listeners' actions. There are certain words that will be barred from the mainstream media for years to come. However, this new trend of censoring words because of their connotation must cease. Censoring words is one thing; censoring ideas is unconstitutional.

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

SHANNON WEBER

**A view from the lighthouse****The Women's Health Center**

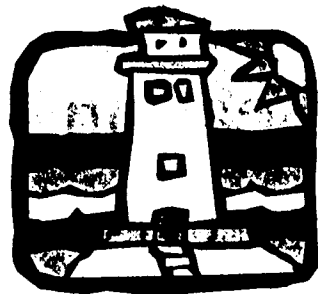
The Women's Health Center, which is a branch of the Health and Wellness Center, is one of the most important facilities on campus. It offers many inexpensive services such as the "morning after pill," gynecological exams, HIV testing, condoms, and diaphragms to women.

Without the Women's Health Center, women living on campus would have to find women-related services elsewhere. Unwanted pregnancies and illnesses would be the result, due to the fact that the students would have to search for a gynecologist off-campus (This requires a lot of time and effort.) Ultimately, women would probably end up not going to receive birth control and other services. These women would then end up dropping out of college due to unwanted diseases and pregnancies.

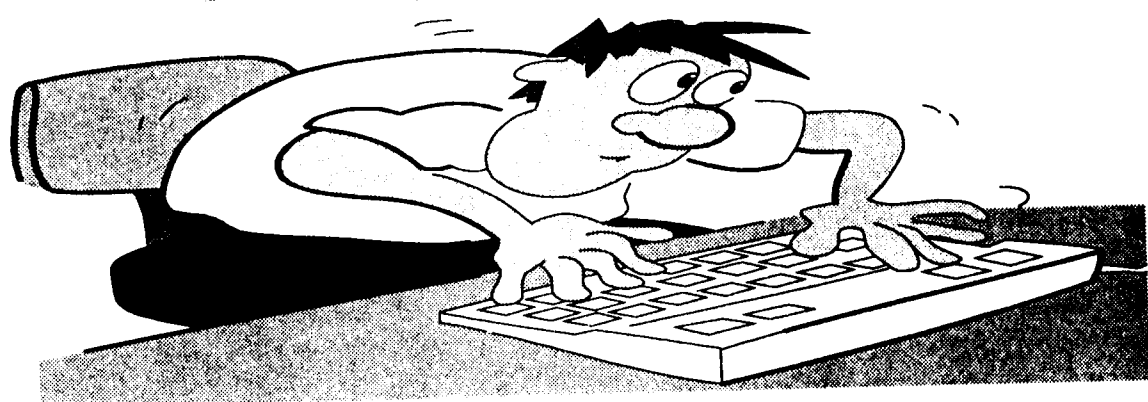
The women staff is all very friendly, caring, and knowledgeable.

Everything revealed by the patient remains in confidence. Support services, such as counseling are also offered to patients.

We all, men and women alike, should be extremely grateful that there is a women's health center located on campus that we can all afford. The university should be commended for providing this facility on campus. The university possesses a realistic outlook on how times have changed over the past decade.



## Letters to the editor: behrcoll2@aol.com

**Use of "N" word reinforces racism**

By Tony Green  
Indiana Daily Student  
Indiana University

The time has come when I can finally say I would be much happier if I never heard that word again in my life. Unfortunately, the word reverberates through popular culture like a bad headache. With the movement of rap music from African-American music to pop music, that word has been a silent parasite working beneath the surface of society. The overexposure to this word in has desensitized many people to its horrible roots and stretched its use to unimaginable limits.

Chris Rock showed me it is out of control. In his infamous HBO special, "Bring the Pain," he drew a weak distinction between "black people" and the "N" word. Whether he realized it, he gave many people the opportunity they had been waiting for. Now people can cite his show and say things they have secretly wanted to for years.

While watching a replay of this stand-up show recently, I was reminded of just how bad it is. I am positive HBO never would have aired the piece had Rock been white, because that portion struck me as stereotypical racism. A good friend of mine, who just happens to be Jewish, recited that part of the show almost word for word with Rock. I was dumbfounded. I did not know whether to be shocked or indifferent, especially since my friend was Jewish. This scene shot-putted me back to my internship last summer when a

similar incident occurred involving five non-African-American people. It is amazing that out of the whole show, most people pick that point as the part to recite.

The first question most white people tell me they have been dying to ask a black person is: "Why can't we use it if you guys always use it?" Although I do not speak for all blacks, I do have theories on the topic. The best explanation I can give is the "fat person" analogy. If there were a group of fat people who were pretty secure in their identity, they might greet each other, "What's up, fatty?" In fact, they might call each other "fat" all the time and become used to hearing it from each other. This would still not make the pain any easier to bear if they heard it from someone outside of their circle who did not know what being fat was like.

There are two main reasons why this is a bad analogy. The first is that this analogy implies there is something inherently wrong with being fat (or likewise being black). As we all know, there is nothing wrong or funny about being obese, and as such, overweight people should not be singled out. The second, more serious reason why this is a bad analogy is that it does not account for how hard we fought to get society to stop using this term. To be sure, those who came before me fought very hard to end that term's widespread use. I could only imagine that Frederick Douglass or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would be horrified at the use of the word now, which

has been started mostly by people of color.

One need only check the fifth track of Jay-Z's Hard Knock Life: Volume 2 album, titled "'N' What 'N' Who" Songs such as this provide the impetus for people to rap along with the music. When one tries to explain certain terms should not be repeated, arguers usually cite free speech and the fact the artist had no problem with using the term. Unfortunately, public figures from Puff Daddy to Jermaine Dupri who have counted on sales to people of all colors to become successful have not considered the effects of the content of their product.

The problem Rock did not consider is that although most people can recognize comedy, many people will see no difference between blacks and the "N" word. For these select few, the term only reinforces preconceived beliefs. For my part, neither my little brothers nor I will buy CDs that blatantly flaunt this term nor will we use it in our homes. I pray that our entire society will do the same. IU can look to recent flyers distributed around campus to see why ambiguity about this word can lead to increased racial problems.

As a long-term goal, maybe society should look at its fascination with the black American experience and why songs such as Offspring's "Pretty Fly for a White Guy" were made.

this, of course, and some of them were represented at the forum. Dr. Jitendra Mohanty represented the eastern world views. He said that evil affects creation, not God, and that evil is in God and creation. Dr. Bernard Leikind represented the naturalist point of view. He questioned that if God is powerful how can He let there be evil and suffering? He stated that moral values change, but it is the people that change them. Another man, by the name of Dr. William Lane Craig, represented the Christian views.

I was impressed by each of the doctor's speeches. Many of the points that Dr. Zacharias brought up I agreed with; that thing he said about the moral law made me think. I have been always curious what the other guy thinks about Christianity. I started to think what my answer would be to Dr. Liekind's question. I

am a Christian, and although that is what I believe, I can't speak for all of us. I can only say how I feel.

I feel that God doesn't give his people anything that they can't handle. He knows our strengths and our weaknesses. If a person has a burden that they feel is too heavy for them, they pray to God for strength. God gives them that strength to handle that situation. It says in the Bible, "With God, all things are possible."

There are times though when His people are struck with hard times, maybe with bad financial situations, illness, or something else. I believe that when these things happen, it is the work of Satan. Satan is evil, and God is good. I believe Satan makes life harder for people. I think that he tries to deter people from God, so he can have more power. The harder Satan makes it for others, the more

apt they are to ask, "Where's God?" and stop following God's word. Satan is out to get us and make us believe that God isn't good and that He doesn't care. Sometimes it may seem that way, but God does care. God never leaves His people to fend for themselves; all we have to do is pray and believe. Some prayers take longer than others, but they do get answered.

I am only one person, and I can't speak for everyone. This is how I see it in my eyes. Satan is the one that gives us evil, and when we let him get the best of us, he wins. If we ask God for His help, Satan loses. If you need a little help, God will be there...it's just as simple as saying a prayer.

Shannon Weber is the news editor of the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.

Barbies with tattoos raise a few eyebrows

By MaryIn Schwartz  
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

I have an aunt who is a doomsayer. But in this instance, I'm afraid she is all too right. She has been watching all this mess going on the Senate floor with pursed lips. All along, she has predicted that standards and decorum will now slip everywhere.

"Once behavior like this is discussed openly in the hallowed halls of law and government," my aunt has warned repeatedly, "who knows what other slips in taste are bound to follow?" Well, they have, Aunt Dorothy, they really have.

Please sit down if this is coming as a complete shock. Barbie has gotten tattooed. Yes, I'm talking about Barbie. That pristine doll who once wanted only to shop for designer clothes until she dropped now comes with a set of do-it-yourself wet-and-stick-on tattoos. OK, these stick-ons aren't whips and chains, just flowers and butterflies. But, still, the door has been opened. And for every tattoo that goes on Barbie, there is one included for the little girl who buys her.

"It's too much," says nurse Nancy Lenox. "Now they've gone too far. I saw this as a commercial on TV. I

can just picture all those little girls running around in their new tattoos." Lenox is a friend of mine. Frankly, she hasn't gotten anywhere near as upset over the Monica situation as she has over Barbie's tattoos. Interns are in and out of fashion. But Barbie, for goodness' sake, is an institution.

"What are we going to have next?" Lenox wants to know. "A Barbie with body piercing?"

This is all part of the Mattel toy company's plan to bring Barbie into the 21st century. A spokesman for the company says the tattoo doll is proving popular.

I know the little girls love it, but what about their parents? "Well, they've also made Barbie's figure more realistic," says Carol Pennington, a mother I talked to while browsing through a toy store. "A tasteful tattoo doesn't bother me. After all, my daughter can always wash off the Barbie kind. Lots of kids are getting tattoos. It's not the shock it used to be. "But to have my daughter play with a doll with that impossible figure would make me feel a lot worse."

I checked out that new, more realistic-figure Barbie while I was in the store. Guess what, folks? I don't know anyone who has a figure like

that, either.

Just like any other out-of-the-ordinary Barbie, the tattoo version is beginning to get a cult following. And it's adults who are buying it, just as much as kids. "I collect outrageous toys," says Marianne Davis, a college student. "I know a girl at school who has her own tattoo and has had an artist friend paint the exact one on this new Barbie. It's quite a conversation piece."

This brings to mind what happened some years ago when the company came out with a Magic Earring Ken. This Ken doll had very blond hair, rather mod clothes, and an earring in one ear. I wasn't aware of this, but a friend tells me the doll was an instant hit, but not with little girls. It was heavily collected in the gay community. This Ken doll is no longer being made. It is almost impossible to find one secondhand.

Toy marketers and a lot of parents like the idea of Barbie and Ken taking on a more worldly existence.

I asked several what they think will be Barbie's next foray. "Anything that's in the spotlight," says mother-of-two Jan Higgins. "Well, let's just hope for Ken's sake, they don't come out with a Lorena Bobbitt Barbie."

