

**The Behrend College Beacon**

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

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# Live From Guyana

## Why don't we read?

AYODELE JONES

Extra!! Extra!!! Read all about it. Unfortunately, we, as college students, seldom do so. What exactly am I talking about? Well, you tell me. When was the last time, that you read a newspaper? Was it for that current event article in third grade or was it last week when you lined Furry's cage?

Let's be real, some of us don't even read *The Beacon*, unless we are waiting outside our professor's office, and one just happens to be on the floor. Let's be real, some of us wouldn't even know that the U.S. was bombing Iraq if our favorite television show was preempted. If our only source for news was the newspaper, we'd be a campus full of zombies wondering whatever

happened to Michael Jordan and Da Bulls.

The University has sponsored a program, which provides students in the residence halls, suites, and the apartments with a free assortment of papers to choose from. These newspapers include *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Erie Daily Times*, and yet unfortunately many of the papers remain in their respective stacks at the end of the day. Students refuse to take advantage of this opportunity.

I know that many of our classes require a heavy reading load, and that it is often difficult to find the time to even complete those assignments.

However, just think of all the things you're missing when you don't read a paper. I hate to break this to you guys, but MTV 1515 doesn't exactly cover world and news events, and talk shows, like Rikki Lake and Jerry Springer, only give us a small piece of the American apple pie. Before the advent of the television and the Internet, newspaper provided us with our news for the day. Don't get me wrong: television news shows like *Dateline*, *20/20*, and *60 Minutes* do provide us with news about what's going on at home and what happening abroad, but just think if you can sit down and watch a show for an hour, you can probably read or cover

some of your favorite sections of the paper in the same amount of time or less.

So take my advice, this Spring Break when you're in Spain, Daytona Beach, or maybe just home relaxing, sit back, relax, and pick up a paper. I promise it won't bite. After all you don't want to be one of those zombies walking around campus asking whatever happened to New Kids on the Block and MC Hammer.

*Ayodele Jones is the managing editor of the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.*

## Teens and sex: the lure of forbidden fruit?

By James Wagoner  
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

In the United States, why do about 700,000 teens become pregnant and 3 million teens contract a sexually transmitted infection each year? Why do 50 percent of all new HIV cases occur among young people under the age of 25? Why, despite recent declines, is the U.S. teen birth rate three times that of Germany, nearly six times that of France, and over seven times that of the Netherlands?

Advocates for Youth led a fact-finding team of experts and graduate students to Germany, France and the Netherlands to examine the different approaches to teen sexual health, hoping to find a solution to teen pregnancy, abortion and HIV infection.

Could it be a mass media campaign like those in Europe that boast a single, consistent message - safe sex or no sex? How about public health systems that make contraception available confidentially, at little or no cost? Or maybe it's all about communication - the open, honest, and early conversa-

tions about sexuality that families, educators, and health-care providers have with teens.

We discovered that success does not rest on a single program or strategy. Values and attitudes are equally important. The German, French and Dutch nations present sexuality as a normal part of growing up. These countries expend little time and effort trying to scare young people about sex. Instead they focus on educating and empowering young people to think and act responsibly in regard to sex.

Is this a formula for lax morality and promiscuity? No. Dutch teens - growing up in the most open and liberal system - begin sexual intercourse later, have fewer partners, and experience a teen birth rate eight times less than ours.

"In the Netherlands, teen-agers can find out anything about sex," says Cindy Grotzinger, a 16-year-old Dutch student living in Washington, D.C. "We are open about it, because there's nothing to be ashamed of. Teens shouldn't have to explore sex

to find out what it means."

These societies subscribe to the three R's of teen sexual health: rights, responsibilities, and respect. Young people have rights to accurate information and confidential health services. In return, they are trusted to behave responsibly by postponing sex until their later teen years and by protecting themselves and their partners when they become sexually active. Young people are also respected, seen as a resource rather than a liability, and valued for who they are, not just for what they will become.

In the United States, we are uncomfortable discussing sexuality and, especially, teen-age sexuality. A recent Kaiser/ABC poll found that 63 percent of Americans believe we are "uptight" about sex, and 68 percent believe that, if we talked more openly about sexual issues, unplanned pregnancy and STDs would be less of a problem.

We send confused and conflicting messages to teens. Advertising and entertainment programming too often send messages that seem to say,

"Just do it!" Meanwhile, the congressionally mandated, government message to students is "Just say no until you're married," despite the fact that the average age of marriage is nearly 26, and by the age of 18, 70 percent of teens have had sexual intercourse.

"Because of all we see and hear about sex (in France), it is less of a forbidden fruit," said Marianne Malicet, 18, at a Capitol Hill hearing on adolescent sexual health. "The temptation and the curiosity might be reduced by the knowledge we have acquired."

Maybe we can use the experiences of the Dutch, the Germans and the French to help us find more balanced approaches to adolescent sexual health - approaches that really work. We can start by adopting the three R's of sexual health - rights, responsibility and respect - to help us achieve social consensus on sexuality as a normal and natural part of being a teen, of being human, of being alive.

## A view from the lighthouse

### What were they thinking?

There is a general consensus of the on-campus residents that the locking up of residence halls at seven p.m. this Friday is a heinous idea. What were they thinking? Housing failed to consider the needs of residents who live in other states and/or are unable to get a ride home until Saturday or Sunday.

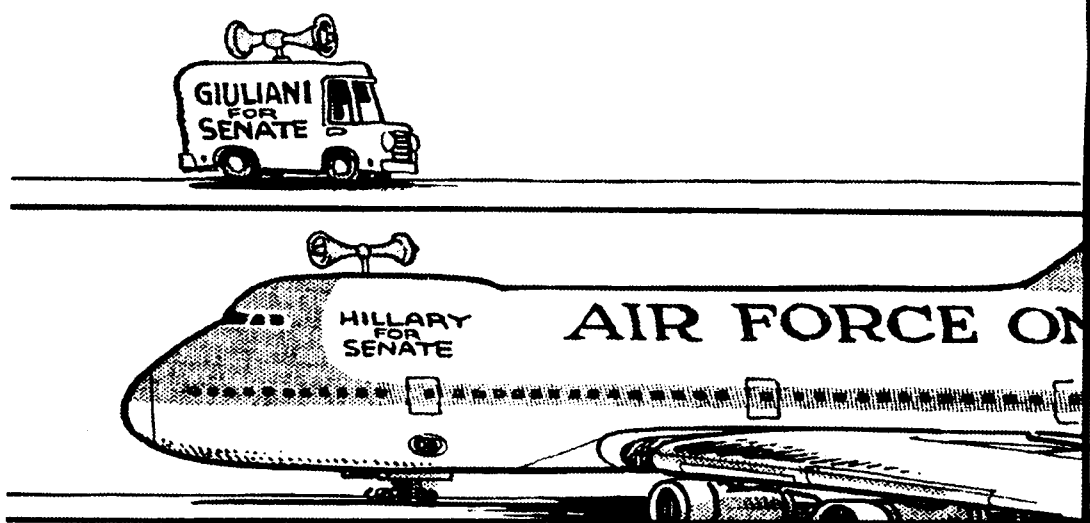
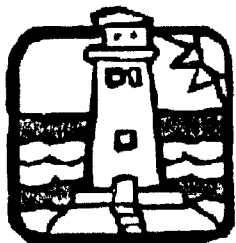
And, to put the icing on the cake, Housing had the audacity to slip papers, which outlined hotels throughout the area that residents can stay at, under residents' doors. Does Housing really think that students, who are already paying at least \$1,100 a semester for housing alone plus meal plans, tuition, and personal expenses, are able to afford another \$40 to \$100 for a hotel room?

So, where are all these residents supposed to go if they cannot leave until after seven p.m. Housing's an-

swer is too bad. They do not care. Why should they? They have a place to go home to that is nearby.

The purpose of Housing is to consider the needs of students and to act upon those needs in an effective manner. Housing should not just assume that students will be O.K. with every decision made, especially if the decision made fails to consider resident needs.

Housing, this is your wake-up call. Your job, in itself, is to cater to students' needs, not to ignore them.



## Going Greek; a lifelong enrichment

by Rose Forrest  
copy editor

As Copy Editor, it is my responsibility to correct articles on grammar and structure, but I have no control over content. Last Wednesday I faced my hardest night at layout ever as I realized I had no authority to keep the anti-Greek editorial ("Face it Greeks, you've asked for ridicule" 2/25/99) from running in the Beacon the next morning. I might have had problems with the article, but I respected his First Amendment right and planned a rebuttal for this issue. I hope to dispel his arguments and perhaps some local problems.

Many of the problems I had with this piece involved the author, Ryan Van Winkle, from Syracuse University. My preliminary analysis of him reveals his ignorance of the situation. I'm assuming he is not Greek and could not understand as much as he claims he does. I will concede that there might be certain chapters at certain campuses with bad reputations but one can not judge an entire system from this. He stereotypes the whole Greek system as "a big, ugly, binge drinking, black pants wearing, roofie dropping, legs spreading..." He also mentions several times throughout his article that he could care less for Greeks or the whole situation. Why then does he feel the need to vent about this? Somehow I get the impression he cares a lot. It takes strong feelings to write such an editorial; perhaps he is jealous.

There is a lot of which he has to be jealous. Fraternity/sorority life can

be the most rewarding thing a collegiate can partake in. I've been an Alpha Sigma Alpha for over a year now, and I can honestly say it is the best thing I ever did. Besides making friends I'll have for life and knowing I'll always have someone to call on for help. I've been given many opportunities I would not have normally had. Being part of a Sorority provides you with a network. I have connections through the school and even the community because of my sisters. I'm part of a group of people that are all completely unique but share the same ideals and love each other very much. It provides me with a good feeling that I'm sorry so many don't understand or can't associate with this.

I admit, I've heard students here at Behrend make many of the same arguments that my friend in Syracuse does. Many non-Greeks think that Fraternity or Sorority members are 'just buying their friends' or 'need letters to make them feel cool.' They don't realize that Greeks share a history and heritage that bonds them. I'm closer to my sisters than anyone else on this campus.

Seeing three pledge classes go through has enabled me to see how much these young women grow during their time in the Sorority. Perhaps it is the self-confidence they develop or the role models the older sisters provide but being in a Sorority is a very satisfying experience.

Another stereotype Greeks deal with is that they are 'binge drinkers.'

I put up with a lot of remarks that Greeks are responsible for the drinking problems on campus. I don't see how this could be possible. I work with the head of Mercyhurst Police and Safety, a Greek-free campus, and he is constantly reporting of parties and drunk people. The author of the editorial even admits in his piece that he is a drunk and he is not a Greek. To be honest, I feel much safer going to a house with a bunch of Fraternity members with a group of my Sorority sisters whom I know I can trust. We would never leave each other and we always watch out for one another. I think this is a much safer situation than the one at the bars.

I hear a lot of complaints from the student body that Greeks are taking over this, that, and the other thing. I find this ironic, because I'm simultaneously hearing that there is no participation in Behrend activities. Greeks are involved because of their dedication and desire to be involved. The reason they join SGA and other clubs is the same reason they pledge a Sorority or Fraternity. The Greeks are hardly the "pathetic...lousy sheep" Winkle feels they are. They are role models for students.

Although I'm angry with the student at Syracuse for insulting Sororities and calling us names, I feel sorry for him. Sorry that he will never experience all the wonderful things I get to from being Greek. If printing that infuriating article putting down the Greek system really makes him feel that much better, I guess I'll let it go, but I'm glad I can say my part too.

## Coping with the aftermath of rape

by Nicole Stuart  
The Indiana Daily Student  
Indiana University

It's been a year and a half now since I was raped. During that time I have had to endure many careless comments and a lot of downright stupid advice.

It was up to me to convince a prosecutor to pursue my case. It was acquaintance rape, so it would just be my word against my attacker's, the lawyer had said at first. The prosecutor finally saw a case worth pursuing when I took my attacker through the university's judicial system, where he stated we didn't have intercourse that night because I said no.

Now I wait for the DNA to speak for itself.

I had to fight for my life when I was so depressed that I didn't want to live anymore. I had to fight to get my financial aid back after the university took it away, because I was too distraught to continue with school.

Officials at the Office of Student Ethics told me I would have to learn some coping skills after the university made special concessions to let the rapist back onto this campus. Of course, they could have just expelled him in the first place, but I guess they would rather have a rapist at their university than the women he has and will rape.

But the biggest insult of all came in the mail. It was a bill from Bloomington Hospital for \$330.70. Emergency Room \$200, Lab/Bacter & Micro \$80.00, Lab/Immunology \$24.00, Laboratory \$26.50. This is my bill for my rape examination. That's right, I have to pay the bill for the exam I had to endure to collect evidence after I was raped.

The attack took place in September 1997. I immediately applied to the state of Indiana's Sex Crime Victim Services. At that time I was also suicidal and nearly catatonic. I couldn't deal with the situation so I didn't. Because of my inability to function, I was late in deciding to prosecute. I missed the deadline

(which wasn't listed in the paperwork I was given by the hospital) to be eligible for a fund that would cover my expenses. It took me more than three months to try that route because that's how long it took me to look at my mail.

I tried to call the office directly to see if I could appeal. I'm on full scholarship and an independent student. I don't have money to get the turn signal fixed on my car, let alone pay for this atrocity. So I called, and the phone was answered by someone whose first language was not English. That was upsetting because when dealing with something of this magnitude, I want to talk to someone who I can understand clearly and I know will understand me.

I was told that I missed the deadline — so too bad. The woman on the other end of the line told me, the rape victim, that it was too bad that I was so horribly damaged psychologically by what that monster did that I was unable to make their short deadline.

With that, I contacted Victim's Assistance at the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office and asked them what I could do. They said they would take care of it.

But they haven't. So now, a year since they reassured me this matter would be handled, I'm sitting here with a bill for \$330.70. I'm also still waiting for the crime lab to finish with the evidence that was collected to see if charges will even be filed.

I wonder why I went through all of this crap. I mean really, did the Boulder, Colo., police send the bill for the testing done on Jon-Benet

Ramsey's body to her parents? Why am I expected to pay the bill for the autopsy done on my life?

When I took another look at the bill tonight, I had to fight the overwhelming urge to turn over rocks until I found the one that criminal who raped me had crawled under so I could sever his disgusting head from his loathsome body right before I beat his corpse to a bloody pulp.

Not that I'm bitter, of course. Instead, I went to my room, popped two tranquilizers, put Toad the Wet Sprocket's "Walk on the Ocean" on repeat and began to compose. God only knows how I'll be able to endure my classes tomorrow, but I've found a way before and I will do so again.

Let's just pray that I don't run into him on my way to class. Of course, I am not going to pay that bill. I have paid enough for what he did to me that morning, but this is being done to women several times every day. If anything, this system is set up to deter women from coming forward, reporting and prosecuting their attackers.

At every turn I have hit yet another brick wall, but I have not given up.

Did you know that one in four women and one in 10 men will be raped in their lifetime? Think about your friends, girlfriends, wives, daughters, grandmothers, sons, grandsons, brothers, mothers ... Is this how you want them to be treated after the ultimate violation? Let your state legislators know how you feel.

I am, and the state will pay my bill even if I have to ask the governor to pay it out of his own pocket. I refuse to pay another cent for what that coward did to me.

Send Letters to  
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