

# Editorial

## The Voice of Reason Fresh meat for the grinder

Mike Frawley

Well, as another summer comes to a close, it's time to take a look at what the upcoming school year has in store for us. While most of the upperclassmen have heard this all before, and are approaching this year with their normal, blasé attitude, there are many freshmen out there who need to understand just what they are getting themselves into.

I know that there is not a single student on this campus who has not heard the standard warnings about college life. Your parents and high school teachers/counselors probably spent the last half of your senior year of high school drilling into your head all of the pitfalls that you can get caught in during your first year, and if you were anything like me (and I'm willing to bet that you were), you tuned them out, then went out and partied the entire summer. Now you're back in school and completely unprepared for an environment like Behrend. Well, never fear, I'm here to try and set you straight. Trust me, the adjustment to college life can be very rough, but once you get into the swing of things, you'll

have one hell of a good time!

First of all, and I know you don't want to hear this, but your classes are going to be a lot of work. Most likely you have heard the old cliché, that for every hour you spend in class you should spend two or three hours outside of class studying. No matter what the class is this holds true. Every semester, I take one class that I think is going to be a cake course just to boost my GPA (and for those of you who are unfamiliar with the term GPA, don't worry, you'll soon be obsessing about it like the rest of us). I would always try to find one course, like underwater basketweaving, that any idiot could pass. Then, after slacking off half the semester, I would discover that, oh my God, I'm getting a C. After saying a few choice words, which are better left out of this editorial, I would do the required out of class work and get my A. Someone once said to me (please don't ask me who, I have enough trouble remembering last week, let alone this long ago), "Get the best grades that you possi-

ble can, or what is the use of paying for a college education." For any college student, those are words to live by.

Now the second thing that will greatly increase what you get out of your college experience is to get involved. Behrend offers some wonderful opportunities for students to get involved in campus life (wow, now I sound like a go to Behrend ad; hmmm maybe I've found a new career). As a member of the newspaper staff last year, I went to many activities, and found them to be a very enjoyable experience. But with the number of students that attend Behrend, around 3600 I believe, I was surprised at how small the turn out was. And as for student organizations, last year's SGA election was uncontested, with fifteen open seats. Only eleven people ran (including me, I wonder if I won?). Getting involved in activities like this make college much more interesting, and it looks good on your resume after you graduate.

Finally, just a quick warning. Par-

tying can be detrimental to your grades. Now I know that I should not be the person to lecture anybody on this subject, as I spent most of the summer in a drunken haze (featuring an incident in Niagara Falls with a border guard which I will never be able to live down). But it will effect your grades. I have friends who carried GPA's of 3.5 — 4.0, then they turned 21, started to party and drink too much, and ended the semester with a GPA so low I won't even repeat it. So please heed my warning and control yourself.

Hopefully my words of wisdom (quit snickering, I can hear you, damn it) will help you on your way. College can be a very rewarding experience, but you have to make it one. Good luck and have a grrrrrrreat year (I love Frosted Flakes).

*Mike Frawley is the managing editor of the Beacon. His column will appear periodically throughout the semester.*

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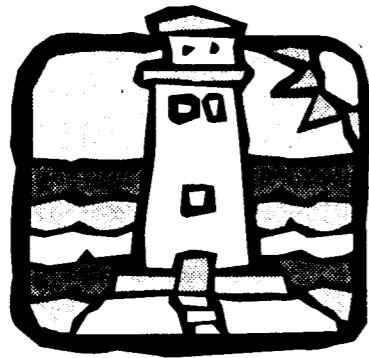
**Letter Policy:** The Beacon encourages letters to the editor. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer. Writers can mail letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5pm Tuesday for inclusion in that week's issue.

## A view from the lighthouse

Because the name of our newspaper is the Behrend Beacon, we here on the Beacon editorial staff felt that it would be appropriate to call our weekly staff editorial A View From The Lighthouse. Last year we had a letter to the editor which called into question different aspects of what the staff editorial was. So to quell some of the confusion, here is our explanation of A View From The Lighthouse.

A staff editorial, is exactly what the name implies, an editorial from the staff of the Beacon. As a staff we choose a topic that we feel needs to be discussed. When then form an opinion about the topic that the whole staff agrees upon. Finally, one member of the staff puts our thoughts into words and writes the staff editorial.

You will notice that no one person puts their name on A View From The Lighthouse. That is because it reflects



the opinion of the entire staff, even though one person is responsible for writing it.

We at the Beacon are planning to make many changes to the paper over the coming weeks to provide the campus with what we hope will be a better paper. So please bear with us as we go through our growing pains.

Good luck in the coming year!

## Live From Guyana

Ayodele Jones

### Living with a roommate requires respect

Think back to your high school graduation day: you just received your diploma and you were thinking of the ways you were going to spend your last summer at home before you went away to college. You could get a summer job, or just party and have fun before you had to buckle down for the upcoming semester.

So now the time has come for you to get ready and depart to a new world, and all of your friends and family have a piece of advice to give you. "Remember your college years. They will be full of memories of all the good times you've had" or "don't drink too much" or "don't mix your whites and your reds," but nobody warned you about roommates.

Living in a dorm, a suite or even the apartments, students are forced to live with people they've never known or

probably would never care to meet. Even if you do know your roommates, living together may cause a rift among already existing friends. The sharing of basic facilities in small space provides the perfect environment for conflict. Before you know it, it's two in the morning and you are arguing over closet space and how much space your food takes up in the refrigerator. Is there anyway we could avoid this disturbance of peace? I gave this problem a lot of thought and I've finally came up with a solution: RESPECT.

Respect is earned only if it is given. This basic principle of life was taught in kindergarten; never take without asking, respect other people's property. Yet, by the time we reach college I guess most of us have forgotten this simple fact. Instead, we al-

low strangers to sleep in our roommate's bed, we gobble her food and even have parties on Monday nights while she is studying for an exam. Once these injustices have been committed against us, we resort to guerrilla tactics, such as defacing her property, labeling our food and totally ignoring her presence. Is it the dishes that have been sitting for a week or is it the garbage which hasn't been emptied in four days that really pushed your buttons? Fed up, you begin to tell your roommate how you exactly feel whether she wishes to hear it or not. Hopefully it does not result in any physical violence.

I wish that these uncomfortable moments of life could be avoided, but how? The roommate agreement that all on-campus students fill out in the beginning of the year is a distant

memory by October, and by that time many have had their first major argument with their roommates. By this time we are so far gone, that we could care less about her wants or needs. When you walk into your "home," you wish you were back in your 8 a.m. class listening to your teacher explain the forces of nature; instead you are in the middle of a warzone. Is there anyway to recapture the feeling of the first day, when you first moved into your apartment and all was well with the world? I highly doubt it, but I just heard that Ohio Hall has 64 single rooms, all roommate free.

*Ayodele Jones was the managing editor last semester for the Beacon.*

## A response to forwarded chain letters

By Maria Savvas  
The Simpsonian  
Simpson College

"Warning: If you do not pass this on, something as bad as those in the stories or WORSE will happen to you."

Please, if this were really true, I would have been dead a long time ago. Fortunately, I've been able to steer clear of any 18-wheelers that would like to make me their next road kill victim.

Forwards. They are an almost unavoidable part of everyday life for anyone who holds an email account. In my opinion, bored college kids who have a lot of extra time on their hands make up most of these stories.

These little hassles are received on the average of three to four messages in a day. More if everyone has your address, less if you are one of the fortunate ones.

If any of these stories actually

come true, I should receive a check in the amount of \$500 dollars, a trip to Disney Land, while possibly finding my soul mate in the next seven days. Do you think that if you forward a message to as many people that you can think of you're going to be paid for it?

By sending one of the forwards to just 10 of my friends my crush will ask me out. On the other hand if I don't send a different one in the next hour of receiving it, I am going to have bad luck in relationships for the rest of my life. I don't think this is a very legit way to base the future of my relationships on. If I was going to have bad luck in relationships for the rest of my life, I probably don't need some forward to tell me.

What I don't get is why all the meaningless ones get passed around to everyone. In my case I receive most of my forwards from my friends. If they know that they are dumb and they don't want them, then why do they send them to me? With the overabundance of all the for-

wards that are being passed around, I know that I, and some of my friends, are starting to delete them without even reading them. Unless there is a check made out to me when you send it, or you really want to be involved in a kiss war with me, don't waste your time.

While most of these forwards are just company for my trash can, some of them, I have to admit, can be comical. Most of the jokes are pretty funny in a sick sort of way and who wouldn't want to take a cool quiz? So not all of them are bad, but just learn to sort them before you send them.

As a last bit of helpful information, here's a forward not to waste your time with. If you received the, "So kewl, gotta try this," forward that you have to send to 11 people, don't. Sorry to disappoint the people who want to see the really hilarious video, because there isn't one.



IN HARM'S WAY

## The Critic

JON STUBBS

### Too late for blame

Once again, in the wake of another violent disturbance with many left dead, Americans are forced to try and explain to themselves just exactly how such a massacre could happen within the borders of the world's most prosperous nation. Gun control advocates point the blame toward the NRA; the NRA and its right wing allies point toward violence in popular culture, and popular culture gives Right Wing America the finger.

The truth must be that nobody really knows why Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold killed 13 of their classmates and wounded 24 others last Tuesday at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. The diary of one of the shooters revealed that they had planned this attack for a good bit of time before it was acted out. According to CNN, the diary also revealed that Harris and Klebold hoped to kill at least 500 people during the attack, and then hijack a plane and crash it into New York City.

Some news agencies have reported that Klebold and Harris liked

to play violent video games like Doom. A lot of people play Doom. Not a lot of people want to kill their peers. If popular culture such as violent video games and violent movies gave people the insatiable urge to kill, we would all be dead. I've read *The Catcher in the Rye* at least ten times in the past three years. Holden Caulfield never told me to kill anyone. In fact he probably never told anyone to kill anyone.

So popular culture is not to blame. How about the NRA? Guns don't kill people, people kill people. But when there's more guns than people in the country, people kill people with guns. It is true that the United States has more deaths by gunfire than any other country. In 1994, 14.24 per 100,000 people died from a gunshot wound. So if the United States had stricter gun control laws, like the United Kingdom, for example, this may have never happened. It's hard to say.

What is interesting about the past few school shootings that have

caught the attention of the media is that at least two of them have been the doing of more than one person. Perhaps the killers were examples of a psychological phenomenon called, "groupthink". Neither one of the killers believed that they had anyone else to trust except each other. They may have started bouncing ideas back and forth from one to the other and they began sounding less and less crazy.

However one dissects it: whether guns, popular culture or psychology is to blame, nobody will ever really know. We have plenty of theories to make us all feel better; it's too bad that we can't find a clear-cut answer to this mystery. Maybe if someone had just asked Harris and Klebold why they were going to do this minutes before they had slaughtered 13 people, we would have all slept easier last Tuesday night. However, be it as it is, we've waited way too long to ask why.

*Jon Stubbs was the features editor last semester for the Beacon. This column previously ran in the Beacon on Thursday, April 29, 1999.*

# Letters to the editor

behrcoll2@aol.com