

The Behrend Beacon

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

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A little bit of Kool-Aid and milk It's all up to you

Have you ever lost someone dear to you? A friend, a relative, maybe even a pet? At some point in our lives we will or have already experienced the loss of someone we care about. I don't think the pain we experience can be compared to anything else. It's an immensely emotional time that takes time to overcome.

In my past, I have lost many relatives, pets and a very dear friend, but this summer took away two very special people in my life. The first was a friend and someone I admired, Kelly Thomas and the other was a very dear gentleman, whom I called "Grandpa".

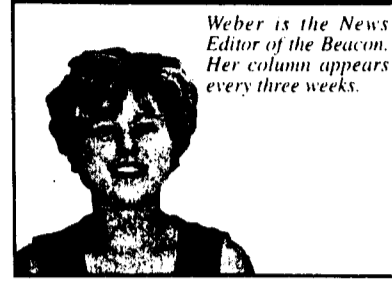
Kelly Thomas was killed in a car accident (I will spare you all the details). He was only 29 years old. Kelly was a reporter at the newspaper I interned with this summer. He helped me with my writing skills as a journalist and taught me how to use a digital camera. He was well respected in the community he worked in. The only flaw I could see that this great guy had was the fact he was a Pitt Alumnus. (We can't all be perfect and attend Penn State.)

I took his death very hard. There wasn't a moment that I didn't miss him, or a moment that I stopped crying. I had only known him for two months and he had touched my life so much that it will leave a lasting impression. That was in June.

When my brother and I were younger, an elderly couple that were friends of our parents had asked them if they could adopt us as their grandchildren. (They didn't have any and would love to have us as their own.) My brother and I agreed. Why not?

This couple was so sweet and so nice. It made us happy to know we

Shannon Weber



Weber is the News Editor of the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.

were bringing joy to them. Over the years we became very close and attached to them. They were afterall, family.

My grandfather passed away in August due to an illness. I am glad he isn't suffering anymore, but I know his loss has been hard on his family, especially my grandmother. My grandmother had told me at his funeral that when my grandfather was asked if he had any grandchildren he would never hesitate to say, "Yes, a boy and a girl."

Hearing that helped me smile through the tears and be stronger for my grandmother. While my brother and I could, we brought joy to his life.

Writing this now is still very hard. I miss these two people so much. I miss telling Kelly how terrible Pitt is (who am I going to pester about this weekend's game?).

It has taken me two months to get over the initial shock of Kelly's death. Although I am not completely over it, I have accepted the fact I may

never be. I can accept the loss of my grandfather with a little more ease. He was very sick and now he doesn't have to suffer.

In the time I spent mourning and talking to people for advice on death, I learned a lot. My advice may not help ease the pain, but here is my insight.

I am so glad that these gentlemen came into my life for the amount of time that they had. I would have rather had them in my life and known them and mourn their loss than never to have known them at all.

Feeling guilty, thinking I could have stopped the accident my friend was in stayed with me for a long time. But I have realized that no matter what, it was his time to go. And even had I been there with him, he would have died that night. Feeling guilty is a natural part of coping with a loss. We sometimes even blame ourselves or others for what has happened.

Don't blame yourself or anyone else. No one could have prevented what happened. It was meant to be, that can be hard to accept, but think of how wonderful that person made your life while they were with you.

Take care of yourself and don't deny your feelings whatever they might be. It's okay to be angry, depressed, sad or mad - whatever your feelings might be. Some people have trouble concentrating. You have been struck with something extreme.

Take your time with this and move at your own pace. Let yourself cry. Talk when you are ready. Write in a journal. Some people even turn to their faith during this difficult time.

No one understands your feelings better than you. There are people that have gone through it that can sympathize, but can't truly understand how you feel. You are the only one that knows that.

I came across a book *When a Friend Dies*, by Marilyn E. Gootman, Ed.D. I definitely recommend this book to anyone who has suffered a loss. It can help explain in a better sense some of the feelings you may be having. It can also be a good tool to share with friends and family about what you are going through.

I found it comforting to talk to people that knew Kelly and my grandfather. We were all experiencing the loss in different ways, but talking about the all the good things was very consoling. It's hard. I felt alone during each loss, but for me talking about it helped me deal with it much easier.

We don't know how long each of us is going to be in this world. While we are here, we should take the time to let those we care about know how much we truly care about them.

When can you fully be over the loss of someone? Personally, I don't think anyone can. I think that you are able to become stronger with handling your emotions. I have accepted their deaths, but I still miss them and cry on occasions. And that's okay. This is my way of dealing with it.

Find your way to deal with your loss. It's all up to you. Try different things. I can't guarantee there won't be a pain involved or that tears may not fall, but in the end you will know what works for you and start on a path to a recovered heart. Take care!

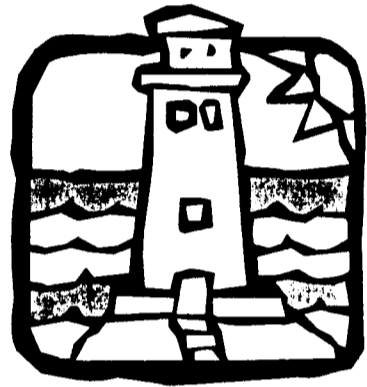
A view from the lighthouse Making room for students?

Penn State Behrend is supposed to be the "Small College with the Big Degree." However, with all the new students that came to Behrend this semester they may have to change that line on all the brochures they hand out at high school career fairs.

Enrollment is up by over 300 students. While this is great for the college and great for all the students that will receive a great education from Behrend, it is detrimental for the returning students. Growth is great and so is advancement, but when upgrades are not made to accommodate all the new students on campus, problems arise.

First of all, there is the problem with parking. There have been many new parking spaces added...for on-campus residents. The commuting students have to fight over what little spaces they are left with. They pay money for the spaces, same as residents, however, no additional spots were added for them.

Next there is the task of trying to eat in Bruno's or Dobbins at peak times, especially in Bruno's. It takes forever to get your food and then it is impossible to get a seat, it's crazy. People pay A LOT of money for their



meal plans and they are not always accommodated to. It is not always possible to plan your day around Dobbins' peak hours.

In the end, it all comes down to providing things that are essential for basic happiness, such as an open eating environment free of chaos and places to park when you come to class. Even though Penn State is quickly moving towards the new millennium with state of the art technology, it is all for nothing if it leaves some of the students behind. So before Penn State brings more students to the Behrend campus, how about dealing with the ones you already have?

For what it's worth Sex, drugs and rock 'n roll

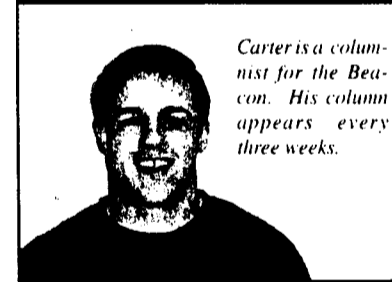
Is leadership lacking among today's youth? Many people would say that it is, arguing that today's young people are simply more interested in "sex, drugs and rock 'n roll" than in developing personal attributes that contribute to the well being of that person as he interacts with society. Others, perhaps more emphatically, would disagree, saying that our society has never had more young leaders among our high schools and college campuses than today. Both have excellent points, but the question of who is right and who is wrong will most likely never be answered, so it would be a worthless debate.

Instead, I think it would be more worthwhile to focus on exactly what makes, or breaks a leader. What is it about that "mystique" of a leader that draws many people to their side? For without learning how to develop those special skills, a leader somehow learns one could not reach that level of success.

or excellence that they dream to achieve one day.

Probably the biggest key to unlocking the potential of leadership is attitude. It's such a simple idea, yet it

Nicholas Carter



Carter is a columnist for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

could be the hardest to develop. Attitude is simply put, a habit of thought. Like all habits though, it can continually develop and change for the better. The impact of a leader's attitude is profound since it affects the attitude of those around him (or her). As often

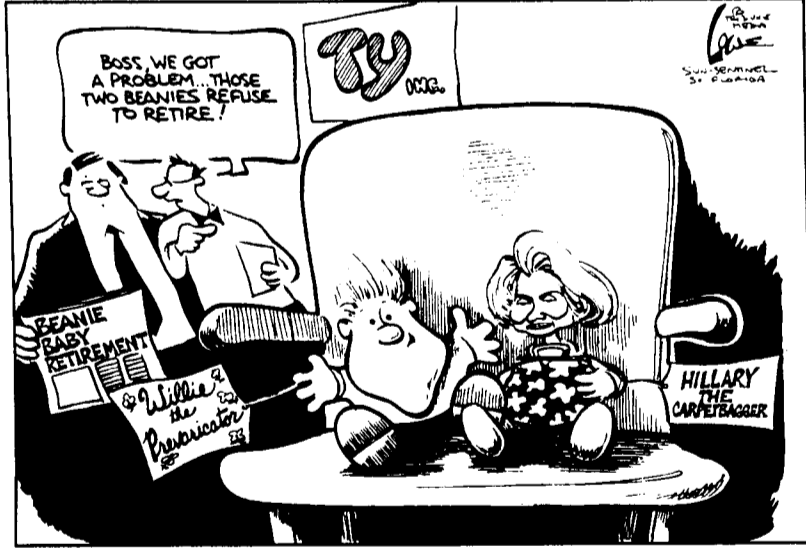
stated, "Life is 10% of what happens to us and 90% of how we react to it". People just don't like to hang out with those people who constantly complain and grumble about the wrongs of society and the wrongs done to them. One person's attitude can also set the tone for the rest of the group, and that's why it is so important to be careful and set the standard for everybody else and demonstrate a positive and optimistic attitude.

A second key component to developing leadership is self-discipline. This is what separates the strong from the weak. Self-discipline is maturity. Now, I admit that this is a very slippery term. Some people would say that maturity just comes along with age, but I beg to differ. I would venture to say that maturity results more from life's experiences and the attitudes that contributed to the reactions of those experiences, than solely from getting older. A proper attitude, com-

bined with experiences help breed maturity, and maturity breeds leadership.

These three characteristics are important not only to leadership, but they are characteristics that are important to life in general. It is the people who lack these very skills, whose first priority is "sex, drugs and rock 'n roll", that by the time they do get their lives back on track, it will be so screwed up that they will be too frustrated to dig themselves out. They will be the ones who will, when they are old and gray, look back on their lives with regret, saying what "could have been" or what "should have been", instead of reminiscing about what "was."

Remember, the weak believe that they are determined by their circumstances and can't do anything about it. However, the strong look for and create opportunities, and have the proper attitude, self-discipline and maturity to rise above circumstances.



Cosmetic surgery the end of originality

by Jocelyn Wood
The Online O'Collegian
Oklahoma State University

Every morning when I wake, I fight those inner thoughts, which capture me tightly under the sheets, to get out of bed.

When the battle is finally won, I stumble to the bathroom and look into the mirror. I close my eyes hoping to escape myself, but when I shut my lids together all I see is my true self-being. Do you think I like what I see? Not personally, but it's me and nothing else.

Well, the groundhog officially shrugged his shadow off, so spring should be heading this way.

Great. Girls will soon be racing to the tanning salons to darken their pale skins for summer. Oh wait, tanning salons are open all year round and half the town look like they have memberships at Tan and Tone America. I hope they're ready for

skin cancer when 30 comes around. Speaking of unnatural body touch ups, what is going on with cosmetic surgery today?

Don't people like themselves anymore? Are we getting so ugly in our own minds that we have doctors advertising breast implants in the newspapers and girls actually calling for appointments?

In Tulsa, a free seminar is being offered on all cosmetic procedures so mark your calendars now.

You wouldn't want to miss out on any important information on how to take away that body fat or how much the "monthly bill" is going to cost you.

Who wants to change their appearance anyway? When I have to look into that mirror each morning, most of the time I gag at what I see. But I would never think of letting a doctor take the fat from my stomach and put it in my breasts. I would no longer be me.

The gods above designed my body and put my skin where they felt it was necessary to be. Why are we reshaping our creator's master invention? Come on, girls and boys.

Yeah, I know plenty of guys who are supplying the money for these implants and butt reductions for their girlfriends.

Is that your way of saying, "I like you just the way you are, except, you could look better if you were different?" Nice booster, there, pals. You are really helping out the world.

Girls have enough depression with competing against each other on their weight without their own boyfriend, or husband, knocking them down as well.

Who cares what the girls or boys think in this world? They don't live your life and they don't have to like what you look like either.

Do you care what other people think of you? Personally, I believe in originality.

Dare to be original! Without it, you're just another face among them billions of lifeless faces that already walk this earth. I'm not lifeless, nor do I look like any of you.

When I walk through campus, I get enough stares at my hippy clothes. Do you think I care?

Just because I care to be myself and nobody else, you have no right to condemn me.

Try it yourself sometime. It's actually quite an experience. It's almost like being a superstar. Laughing or admiring, you're still looking my way.

My name may not be remembered after I leave this school, but I guarantee if I walked through campus wearing my patchacoly pants and my mother's old '60s shirt, you'll remember my style.

I don't care if you remember me. I care if I remember me and when I grow old I don't want to be dishing out more money to cover up the

wrinkles I paid to get 20 years ago. How do you expect anybody to remember you if you get boob jobs and face lifts and butt lifters? How do expect to remember yourself?

Marilyn Monroe even once said, "I want to grow old without face lifts. I want to have the courage to be loyal to the face that I have made."

I'm bored with gossip, everyone looking alike and cliches.

High school is over, it's time to move on but it's not time to reinvent yourself because your nose is naturally and uniquely shaped, or your chest just isn't big enough for the whole world to see.

It's time to be ourselves. Be natural for a change. Mankind made makeup and blow dryers. It also invented cosmetic surgery.

Have you ever heard of exercise or loving what's inside? You can stare at me all you want. Keep on staring and take a good look, because at least it's me. I'm no wannabe.

Send all letters to the Editor to:

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