

The Behrend Beacon

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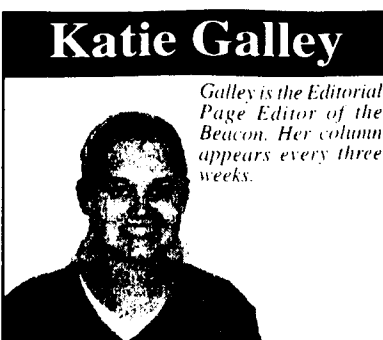
Detours and Small Potatoes

Is waiting the key to gun control?

Doesn't it seem like every season this year has been marked with tragedy? Spring: Littleton, Colorado. Summer: a daycare in California. Fall: the most recent, a youth assembly at a Baptist church in Texas. Every time another shooting happens there is talk for a month or so about gun control in this country. People get all enraged and start speaking out (for or against) the NRA and the laws in this country. The media (from local to international) get to cover the sometimes heated debates, and the people of America stop and think about "What could have prevented this terrible tragedy?" for awhile.

Soon though, the media finds something else to harp on, and Americans forget...be honest, how many of you had forgotten about the shooting in Texas all ready? Every time that shootings occur though, I personally get sick of hearing the same tired arguments and I get tired of listening to the same Bill Clinton speech over and over. I pretty much have it memorized by this point. "As we grieve for the lost in (fill in blank with city of your choice), we need to realize that stricter gun control in this country is what we need..." Blah, blah, blah. I've heard it all before...but wait, I think Clinton may actually have a point. It's just too bad that he can't actually act on his words and make it happen.

Gun control is a very sensitive subject in Pennsylvania. Hunting is like the national past-time around here and in my family guns are practically is-



Katie Galley

Galley is the Editorial Page Editor of the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.

sued to the boy babies at birth. So to take away the freedom over their guns would be the biggest atrocity ever. But really, what is the big deal about gun control? Is it such a hardship to have to wait to buy a gun?

In Pennsylvania there used to be a law commonly referred to as the "Cooling Off Period". This law stated that any person wanting to buy a gun had to wait 7 days after they went to purchase the gun before they could actually take it out of the store. That law, though no longer in effect, seems to me to be just the safety net that America needs.

The point is not to argue whether or not this country needs gun control, but exactly how much is needed? In 39 of our states there is no waiting period when purchasing a handgun. Pennsylvania is one of those states. That means that I could, in theory, go out right now and purchase a gun and take it home with me. That's great for me because I'm not going to go out and shoot anyone. Who it's not great for is the crazy man/woman intent on

killing someone right then and there.

A waiting, or "cooling off" period should be in effect for all of our nation's states. Hundreds upon thousands of civilians could be saved every year if only we had a nationwide law like this. Sure, it is foolish to believe that terminating the second amendment is going to put an end to all the violence and crimes in this country. But the ineffectiveness of this state's background check system versus an actual waiting period should be considered intolerable.

In the United States, after the Brady Bill expired this nation adopted something called the National Instant Check System, or NICS for short. In any store where weapons are sold, the seller must call into a 1-800 number to verify if the buyer can pass the instant background check. However, this background check is not a thorough review of a buyers history.

Only past criminal records are checked. If a person has mental problems, they will not show up on the background check. So even though the store puts a background check through, not every aspect about that person is revealed. A person can be unstable and the background check will not bring that to the attention of the clerk. A mentally unbalanced person can have a gun in their possession in a matter of minutes. Scary thought, huh?

Right now in this country, there are over 20,000 individual gun control laws, so I can kinda understand why

pro gun activists are upset, but this all goes back to the "not if, but how much" theory. If there are this many laws, why aren't they working and why are there still kids getting guns, and criminals getting guns? There are obviously loopholes in the system and people who should not have guns are getting their hands on them.

Does all this really matter to you? It should. If you had forgotten about the Texas shooting already than perhaps you also forgot about an incident that happened at Penn State in 1996. A student stood on the HUB lawn at University Park and opened fire and killed one girl and wounded 5 others. If it happened at UP, then it can happen here. Could better gun control have stopped the shooting? Not necessarily, but somewhere a waiting period could be saving someone right now, if only we had them.

So what should be done? The waiting period seems the most obvious answer. However, the one law that may actually work, is the one that is not in effect. So to President Clinton and the government trying to 'help' the American population, please try to remember that a waiting period is the way to go. Cooling off is the best bet, for impulse decisions are hardly ever the most wise. Check it out for yourself though, www.handguncontrol.org

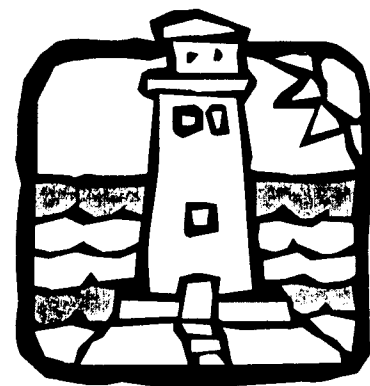
A view from the lighthouse

Out with the old and in with the new!

There is no Homecoming this year, so what? There is something better, the Fall Festival/Parents and Families Weekend. Even though Homecoming has always been a highlighted event at University Park, it has never been that big of a deal here at Behrend. There are no highly attended parades and dances, so now the focus is on families.

Families have been the backbone of Behrend from the very beginning, and this year the homecoming activities have been dropped in favor of a full family event. Even though we are away from home and away from our parents, there is no reason not to celebrate with our families.

Try and take full advantage of the events Behrend is hosting this weekend. The time you spend with your parents can be valuable and reward-



ing. Let them come and see what you do during the week. Share a meal with them at Dobbins (maybe they'll feel bad and take you grocery shopping later). Go see B.R.U.N.O.S. and it will let them in on what really goes on here. You know what your parents do day in and day out, let them in on your life here at Behrend.

Bitchin' by Mike

Mike Frawley

Boy, it didn't take long for something else to upset me. Oh well, this time I am really pissed off, so here we go! As I sit here typing this, I am attempting to block out the tremendous amount of sound that is emanating from the Backroom at this very moment, and I am contemplating calling Police and Safety to get some peace and quiet. It is almost impossible for any member of the Beacon staff to get anything productive done when some form of profanity is echoing through the office. By now you must be wondering what is going on in the Backroom that could be creating such a disturbance. It is "rush" time, so that means some obnoxious "rush" party is going on in the Backroom.

Now, just for the record, I personally have nothing against the Greek system, as long as they admit to what they are and what they do. I know that next week we will get some letter to the editor saying that the Greek system is a great one, and all of the good things that Greeks do, blah, blah, blah. And that Greeks never do anything wrong, and how dare I comment on something that I am not a part of. News flash! I don't have to be a part of the Greek system to be affected by it (and I am really being affected right now, how many times does someone need to swear when they miss a shot at pool?), and because I am affected by it I am going to put my two cents in.

Greeks drink and party. Simple enough for everyone to understand? No one joins a fraternity or a sorority (and I mean the social fraternities and sororities) because it will improve their grades, or because of the community service that they do. While Greeks may do community service,

they also drink and party. And please don't send me an angry letter saying that Greeks don't drink and party, admit it, they do. Now I don't care that they drink and party, hell, I drink and party all the time (if my liver makes it until I graduate it will be a miracle). So why are people so drawn to joining a frat?

Is the need to belong so strong, that people are willing to be humiliated or worse to become a part of a frat (and please don't tell me that hazing doesn't happen, we all know that it does, it's just hidden better now). We all need to take a look at reality for a moment. Do we really need the Greek system anymore? Does it really serve a purpose? Greeks say that the system provides them with valuable contacts in the job market when they graduate. Boy, that's what I want!

"I want to get a job based solely on what frat I belonged to, instead of my qualifications! Viva la education!"

I want to get a job based solely on what frat I belonged to, instead of my qualifications! Viva la education! I paid for four years of college, and because I didn't drink and party, I am going to end up working at Burger King? Uhhhh, let's think about that one for a minute?

Please don't say that I feel jealous about not being a member of a frat. Sorry, but I've never felt an overwhelming urge to have to pay a fee to have friends. Just consider this a wake up call to the Greeks. If you are trying to improve your image, you're not doing a very good job of it. As I sit here listening to another four letter word that I refuse to print echo through the Beacon offices, remember that things like this do not improve your image.

Mike is the Managing Editor of the Beacon. His column appears everytime he feels the urge to bitch.

Join me in reality

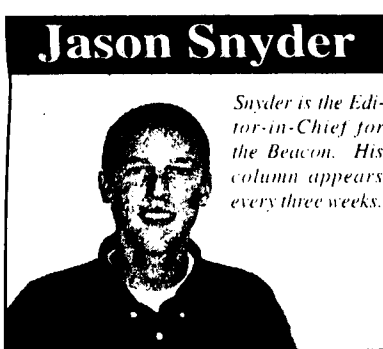
When a vote means too much

We have all sat through the months and months of endless bickering, the weeks of impeachment hearings, the spur of the moment bombings, and the sex scandals that you don't even find on daytime television. We have witnessed what a horrible past year this has been for our poor, poor president and his family. And we have all come to somewhat of an acceptance that most Americans don't care what happens in the White House, because sometime in the past seven years, the actions of our president in the "tax-payers" White House is no longer any of our business.

So without dwelling too much on this scandalous past year, I will attempt to shed some light on a rather dark subject. No, not the events going on in the Oval Office when the lights go out, but rather the events going on in the public's eye. Events that have perhaps been missed due to the regularity of controversy in the Clinton family.

If there is one way to find a connection between two subjects as different as elections and terrorism, leave it to the Clintons to find it. And if there is one man daring enough to use something as horrific as terrorism to benefit himself, leave it to Bill to take that chance.

On Saturday, September 11, President Clinton did the unthinkable.



Jason Snyder

Snyder is the Editor-in-Chief for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

Our president freed 12 Puerto Rican nationalists that supported hundreds of terrorist acts on American soil in the early 1980s. That same group of Puerto Rican terrorists that showed no remorse in defending their beliefs at the expense of human lives, are free. And they were freed by the man that is supposed to be giving us a sense of national security.

Any sane American would quickly ask why. The prisoners must have been cleared of all charges, right? Or at least they showed some deep regret for their actions, right? No, neither. These terrorists were freed from American prisons for one reason, more votes for Hillary in her New York Senate seat bid. By releasing these prisoners, there is a good possibility that the first lady will gain popularity

from the Hispanic voters in New York.

Heaven forbid someone named Clinton make it through a campaign without some sort of scandal. If the term "Clinton scandal" hasn't been used enough already during the four-year terms of our president, it sure hits an astounding high as Team Clinton scurries to win votes for upcoming elections. But is the safety of our country a lesser priority than putting a Clinton in some powerful position in our government?

I don't think so, and I would hope that all of the Clinton worshippers wouldn't think so either. Because it is those same worshippers that applaud our president every time he makes an emotional statement about stopping terrorism in our country. And I am willing to believe that those people are now running around trying to find an excuse or justification as to why this man freed the people he so strongly opposes.

When are we, as Americans, going to at least show some signs of disagreement with the actions of our president? This is our country. If we don't feel terrorists should be free, why don't we show it. We continue to let the goings on in the White House remain a "private" issue of our president. Well, when a terrorist

act suddenly ends the life of a family member, friend or even yourself, then maybe questions will be asked.

It's no longer an issue of our poor, poor president being the target of the Republicans. It is an issue of our poor, poor president making us the target of a much more dangerous group.

You can continue to fool yourselves and believe that the welfare of our nation outranks our president's obsession for power, or you could join me back in reality and realize that the number one priority of Bill Clinton is Bill Clinton.

We shouldn't struggle or even attempt to struggle in justifying the acts of our president. If there is no justification, say so. There is nothing wrong with admitting when a leader does something wrong. Do you think that Chicago Bulls' fans didn't criticize Michael Jordan when he took a bad shot? Do you think that Seinfeld fans never admitted to seeing a bad show? Of course not.

But the problem is, a bad shot by Jordan or a bad show by Seinfeld don't have nearly the significance of a bad choice by Clinton. Clinton's decisions can affect you directly. That makes it your job to speak out. If you don't hurt the Clinton family where it counts (the voting booths), they will continue to hurt you without any remorse.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Who are you to judge?

I was sitting in Bruno's this morning eating my breakfast when suddenly I noticed the people around me, I mean, I finally noticed them. There is a man on campus who slightly resembles a woman. I think he is a transgender, but I am not sure. Anyway, as I am sitting there eating, that man walks by. I think nothing of it until I look around me and find that about four tables of students are staring at him.

I look to my right and hear, "That guy/girl...it, thing is so disgusting." I turn to my left and see two girls roll their eyes and laugh. The other

tables continue in the same inappropriate manner. As I keep looking around, I really can see how horrible you people are.

You sit there in your stable, unchangeable environment, never questioning or needing to alter yourselves because everyone likes you. You fit it. Hell, you even like yourself, but let's imagine for a second that you don't fit in. Let's say that you find that you aren't so "normal". What will happen to all of your "friends"? You know, the ones that you sit with and berate the "strange people"? Do you even know what it's

like to hate yourself so much that you can't stand it? Do you know what it's like to look in the mirror everyday and think, "I do not like this body and I do not fit in this role"?

The answer for me is no, I don't know what it's like. The difference between you and me is that I will not sneer and berate another human being for being himself, unless of course that human being is you jerks at Bruno's.

Christian Darling
03, Education

Send all letters to the editor to:

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