

The Behrend Beacon

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

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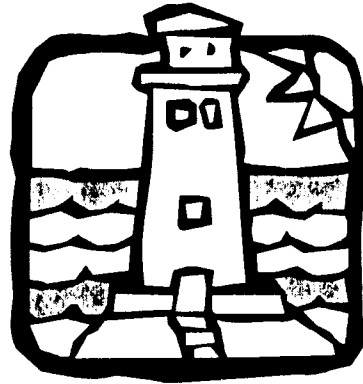
A view from the lighthouse

Rain, mud and students equal great fun!

Were YOU outside of Perry Hall Wednesday night, playing in the rain? You should have been if you weren't. It was a lot of fun! Over 75 students gathered on the lawn behind Bruno's when the torrential downpour began and made their very own mudslide. While this shows that students know how to have fun, it is also evidence of the increasing camaraderie between Behrend students.

Last week, students from Perry and Niagara were involved in a bench war, but the war was friendly. It showed how students can interact with all sorts of people when presented with a new situation. Have you met anyone from your hall yet, besides your roommate?

Certainly, do not go out and start a



bench war and for heaven's sake, PLEASE do not cause a mudslide, but do go out and try and meet some of your neighbors here on campus. You'll be surprised how much fun you can have when you gather a bunch of students and some mud.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Defending the Greek System

I was reading the new and improved Beacon this afternoon, commenting to friends that it did seem to be a bit better than last semester. Unfortunately, I realized that not much had changed when I happened upon the editorial.

Mike Frawley, the Managing Editor who likes to bitch, has decided to continue the Beacon tradition of undermining the Greek system. Once again, we have an editor who knows nothing about the Greek system speaking as if he knows it all.

Mike, in your editorial you stated that you have nothing against the Greek system as long as they admit to what they are and what they do. Well, just what are we Mike? News flash! You have no idea, so I will enlighten you. The Greek system at Penn State Erie is comprised of 6 men's fraternities and 3 women's sororities. We are 9 different social organizations bound by the valuing of tradition and friendship. What we do varies greatly from one organization to the next, so I will fill you in about Theta Phi Alpha Sorority, to which I belong (you see Mike, I am not a member of the other organizations, so I can't speak about them - nor can you). Theta Phi Alpha is a National organization founded in 1912, now with 43 chapters across the United States. The purpose of the organization is to create a close-knit community, which will provide support and friendship through community service and social interaction while stressing academic achievements. Sounds horrible, huh?

When women decide to become a part of Theta Phi Alpha, and of the Greek system, they are not going to pay a fee to have friends. The friendship evolves out of the cooperation and hard work put into planning community service projects and social

events. It is nurtured and grows through the years. And, since you don't know this I'll tell you, Greek organizations are run like businesses. Everyone has a job to do to ensure that the organization is successful and will be around in the following years for others to experience. The membership dues are not a sinister aspect. I am positive that my grandfather doesn't pay the dues to his social club to buy his friends, do you? So, sorority members attend meetings, hold positions, have responsibilities, plan events, balance budgets, file reports, form friendships, relax together, and have fun. Guess what Mike. If a prospective employer knows that I am a member of a Greek Organization, that employer knows that I am able to work with people, I get involved, and I can handle responsibility.

Finally, you insightfully stated that Greeks drink and party. Would you like me to introduce you to my sisters who do not drink and do not party? I'm sure that they would have much to say to you. Such a general, false statement screams of your ignorance. Why don't you mention that the overwhelming majority of students at most parties held by Greek organizations are NON-GREEK? I go out maybe 3 times a semester, I have a 3.92 QPA, and I am president of Tribeta Biological Honor Society. I love my sorority, and I work hard as its president. Do I fit in with the stereotype that you are helping to perpetuate?

Your ignorance is comical. The next time that a few people annoy you by being loud or saying a foul word call your mommy. Do not waste space in our NEWSpaper to bash organizations (PEOPLE) that you do not understand.

Jen Osmanski
President- Theta Phi Alpha Sorority

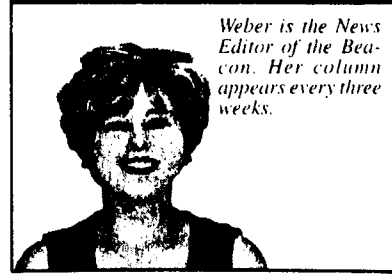
A Little Bit of Kool-Aid and Milk And the alarm goes off...

My alarm clock goes off at 7:15 a.m. and I roll out of bed to turn off the most annoying sound in the world. I groan and jump back into bed. I have about 30 minutes to get ready for my 8 a.m. class. As my head lays on top of the ultra-soft pillow, I contemplate not going to class today.

I go over in my head justifications as to why I deserve not to get up out of bed and head to class. The class can be very stressful. I need my official eight hours of sleep, I just don't feel like going, I am under a lot of stress due to other things, and I need the break and many other reasons emerge from my tired head. But then, reality sets in. If I miss today, I will miss the new material and will get behind. If I get behind, I will be under even more stress. I need to go to class.

I look at the clock and notice it's now 7:25 a.m. and I jump out of bed. I scurry to get ready and head off to class. Now of course, this goes for both morning and afternoon classes. You just came back from your morning class and decide to take a nap. Your alarm goes off to let you know it's time to get out of bed for your 3 p.m. class. You roll over, still tired and think,

Shannon Weber



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

"Euh, I stayed up all night studying, I deserve the extra sleep." Personally, after spending a 15-hour layout night at the Beacon, I rarely feel like going to class the next day.

Now although we may only be contemplating a class, many people also are trying to make the decision whether or not to play hooky from work. According to a survey that appeared on September 23, 1999 in the Morning News entitled, "Stressed-out workers playing hooky more often" it showed that more U.S. employees than ever are too stressed out to make it to work.

I know I am not alone on this one. How many of you do the same thing? Or how many of you go the extra step

and stay in bed? Sometimes you just feel that you need a break to just rest, like a "vacation," before you open the classroom door or put your nametag on. You come back with a clear mind and ready to focus on your studies and your work. No harm done, well at least until you start skipping regularly. Then your work, homework and classwork starts to pile up. You get behind and your professor and/or boss get upset. Well, you know the rest.

Now for the employers, it remains a costly problem which is fueled by workers burning out from stress, according to a report released Wednesday, September 23, 1999 by CCH Inc., a Chicago publishing and research firm.

The survey of human resource managers at 305 companies was conducted and it represented almost 800,000 employees. It showed that most workers who are away from the job on short notice are not sick, but are staying home because of stress, family issues, personal needs or simply because they felt they deserved the day off. To combat the absenteeism, some employers have increased workplace flexibility and providing stress-

busting benefits.

Now there are, of course, the exceptions to not going to class or work, such as really being sick and a death in the family, etc. But if you find yourself needing help in a class, which may be causing your stress — ask for help! Maybe you are avoiding work because of a colleague. Talk to your boss if you can. Or if you need help with personal issues, there is always Sue and Alison in personal counseling and advising office (check out the column on page 3). I encourage you to seek help whatever the case may be.

Some professors take roll and class participation is mandatory towards your grade. We have to keep ourselves motivated — rewarding ourselves is a good way. I went to class and now I can reward myself with a can of Coca-Cola Classic or whatever you decide is reward for motivating you. Just be careful that you are not substituting one class for another. Although once in awhile, it can be helpful, just make sure skipping class or work is not once a week and you are not getting behind.

For what it's worth

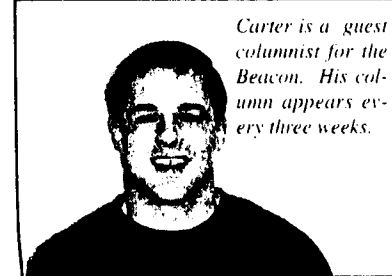
The insanity of hate crime legislation

For over 100 years of our nation's history, if a black man killed a white man, he was punished severely - much more severely than if a white man killed a black man or if a black man killed another black man. Everybody - well at least people with a little common sense - now agrees that certain practices used in the 1800s and early 1900s were unfair, cruel and hypocritical. They set a double standard, sending the message that white lives were more important than black lives. They administered law and justice on the basis of one's skin color and social status, instead on the nature of the crime itself.

If everyone can agree that the practice used back then was deplorable, then why in the world do we see the exact same practice happening in today's supposedly "enlightened" society? The tragic and sickening deaths of James Byrd, Jr., a black man, and Matthew Shepard, a gay man, have renewed a firestorm of calls for new "hate crime" legislation that will "send a message to all of those hate groups that hate will not be tolerated." These policies, which have been enacted in many states, will prosecute criminals more heavily simply if they target their victims because of their race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

The proponents of such "hate

Nicholas Carter



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

crime" legislation are ignoring some crucial elements of the policies that will have serious ramifications. First, they are ignoring the fact that the term "hate crime" is, simply put, redundant.

All crime is a hate crime. No crime has ever been committed out of "love". Have you ever heard of somebody being robbed out of "love"? Has anybody ever been raped out of "love"? More importantly, has anybody ever been murdered out of "love"? Obviously not, and to say that some crime is hateful and other crime is not is complete nonsense.

Such "hate crime" legislation also creates a double standard and sends the message that some lives are more important than others, something that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have cringed at the thought of. A life is a life, and everyone's life is equally protected under our nation's great

law. Such legislation is a direct attack on objective law by redefining crimes in the terms of their subjective intent. The white or straight person will be punished more severely in a crime against a minority or homosexual, while the exact same crime committed by a minority against the white or straight person will not be punished as severely. This is a gross perversion of our nation's legal system and is not doing any justice to the victim's family of the lesser-punished crime. All crimes should be punished equally harsh, no matter whom the victim is.

Proponents of such "hate crime" legislation also seem to believe that society can eradicate hatefulness or ignorance out of its existence, and ironically, they try to achieve that goal by enacting reverse prejudice.

Hateful people will exist wherever you go - that is just a fact of life. But when we start prosecuting people more severely because of their beliefs or hatefulness, what is going to stop us in the future from prosecuting people based solely on their beliefs or hatefulness?

Also, who will be our "thought police"? How will people determine and prove that a victim was targeted simply because of his "special status"? After all, the criminals in Shepard's case claim robbery was a motive. Thought is not a crime, and

it can't be legislated out of its existence.

All in all, special "hate crime" legislation is misguided and unnecessary. It divides our country into different warring classes and pits one group against another group instead of uniting society as a whole. It is a "feel good" social policy that makes its proponents feel "warm and fuzzy" all over for its good-heartedness and good intentions. The truth is, all the laws enacted today cover all crime. All that has to be done is for these laws to be equally enforced. Yet, those who favor this "special status" for our country's minorities are trying to brainwash our country into believing that those who oppose "hate crime" legislation are "insensitive" and "ignorant" to the needs and plight of our nation's "downtrodden" who need "special protection". That is garbage, and needs to be seen for what it is.

Everyone's life is equal. Everyone who takes a life should be punished harshly and equally. We are destroying our legal system when we believe otherwise. That is not "insensitive", because we are not dealing with "compassion". We are dealing with enforcement of existing laws. That is just common sense, but, unfortunately, common sense is not so common.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Tolerance is good...to a point

This letter is in response to last week's letter to the editor. "Who are you to judge?" Christian Darling's letter struck a chord with me, one which I felt compelled to share. Darling had written in about students at Bruno's making fun of the "man on campus who slightly resembles a woman."

First, the obvious: no one deserves to be ridiculed. It's hurtful, negative, and accomplishes nothing. Regardless of whatever choice this individual has made, he deserves respect simply because he is a human being with feelings, and we as a college community should try our hardest to respect that.

Second, the less obvious thing people are afraid to say in print. This individual has problems. I say this not to join the crowd at Bruno's chastising him, but to make a point. Someone that is so uncomfortable with themselves that they feel compelled to become a completely different person obviously has serious issues they should be resolving. But again, compassion is the answer, not ridicule.

A friend told me the individual whom Darling said he "thinks is a transgender" is taking female hormones in order to develop breasts and is planning on fully becoming a woman. I don't know if this is entirely true, but this is concerning.

Darling makes an argument that is of great concern to me. We are living in a society where we are told that we have to accept absolutely everything that comes in our path or we are deemed hateful bigots. I see the Trigon signs plastering the Academic Building which included a mention of 'transgenders.' We are being force fed the idea that if we don't accept a man wanting to be a woman as normal, we ourselves are the ones with the problem. Such logic is ridiculous. We should accept people for who they are, certainly. Discrimination is wrong. But "transgender" is not a race or an ethnicity, or any ascribed characteristic. It is a matter of choice, and it is out of concern for the well being of that individual that we recognize he has problems, and needs our help.

To say that he was in fact "born that way" is damaging to him, as well as to society as a whole.

I know this letter will no doubt bother some people in the college community, but the truth hurts. Darling questions us, "Do you know what it's like to look in the mirror everyday and say, "I do not like this body and I do not fit this role?" No, I don't. No one should have to deal with that kind of feeling.

However, accepting this as normal and telling this troubled individual that it is okay to be so uncomfortable with himself as to create a new persona is irresponsible and the sad result of an age where we are told that we must tolerate all by the small number who push ultra-tolerance to achieve their own personal goals.

Ray Morelli
05, DUS

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