

The Behrend Beacon

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

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Rush to Rocky Road Babies with babies

Angela Rush



Rush is the Wire Services Editor for the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.

What is up with today's society? It seems like every time I turn around I see another child "with child." I realize all of us are technically adults here, but most of us are still very young. I am not one to be so judgmental about an issue like this, but come on, give me a break! Do young people realize how much pressure it can be to take on the responsibilities of a child?

I mean, think about it, life for most of us has just started. How can a nineteen-year-old be sure of what they want to be doing everyday for the next eighteen years of their life? Most of the nineteen-year-olds I know can't even pick a major. Many disadvantages come from becoming pregnant at a young age. Young mothers are more likely to drop out of high school or college. With her education cut short, the mother may lack job skills, making it hard for her to find and keep a job. More likely she will be dependent upon her family or welfare.

About 83% of teens that give birth are low income or poor, and inevitably remain so. In 1993, 3.8 million mothers aged 15-44 received welfare

or aid for families with dependent children, and of these 3.8 million, 55% had become mothers when they were teenagers. It is not just the mothers who are affected, the child inevitably pays for the parents actions.

The younger a woman becomes pregnant the more at risk they are to have problems, such as premature labor. Many pregnant teens, as well as young adults, have poor eating habits, and may smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs which will increase the chances that their child be born with health problems. One in three pregnancies receives inadequate prenatal care, thus babies born to young mothers are more likely to be low

birth weight, and have childhood health problems. They are also more likely to be hospitalized than those children born to older mothers.

A young woman may not be able to emotionally support a child. It is rare that a young woman can develop good parenting skills or have social support systems to deal with the stress of raising a child. I am sure we all know that raising a child is not a cakewalk, but does everyone really realize the amount of stress and responsibility that comes with having a child? There are a lot of sacrifices that a young mother has to make for a child.

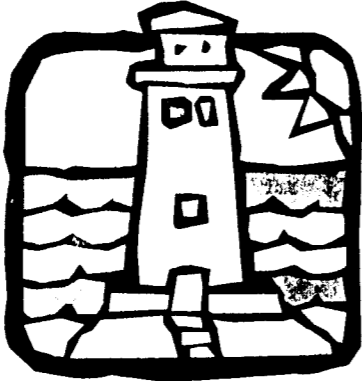
If one can not imagine being pregnant at this moment, I am only a sophomore in college. I have the rest of my life to start a family. Frankly, I can't understand what the rush is to have a child, when it takes up so much time and responsibility. I mean, I hardly have time for a social life with my current college workload. I can't imagine throwing on top of that feedings, diaper changes, 4:00 a.m. wake-ups, and constant check-ups with the doctor. Not to mention the

financial burden of buying baby clothes, formula and expensive medicines (and that's when the baby is perfectly healthy).

What kind of example are we setting for women both our age and younger? A lot of children and young women, look up to younger and older adults, and if they see that more young women are becoming pregnant the general perception will be that it is all right to get pregnant. I have no problems if a woman is both emotionally and financially ready for a child, then it's her decision, but just keep in mind that when you decide to have a child you are making a commitment to that child. You cannot have a child and then neglect it. Your child's needs have to come before your own.

One thing I firmly believe is that, at this age, you should not even be thinking about whether or not to have a child. This is time to enjoy your freedom. At this point in your life you should be focusing on discovering who you are, not finding out what kind of parent you might make.

A view from the lighthouse Stipends? We don't need no stinkin' stipends!



The President of Student Government Association now gets over \$3,300 in stipends per year. That was decided in last weeks SGA meeting. Now the question that still remains is "Does the President of SGA really need that much money?" What work does the President do that makes the position so demanding that she/he would need all that money? Last year, the SGA president received NO stipends to do the same work as this year. That seems a little greedy.

So what if the money was available for the officers to receive stipends. Why did all of it have to go the people holding offices in SGA? Couldn't at least some of that money have been redirected for student use? The SGA is supposed to be an organization that serves the students and provide a central voice for all of us. Unfortunately, hogging all the stipends shows a lack of respect for the position they are holding.

Also, the other thing that is bothersome about this is the amount of time that the SGA has spent deciding how much in stipends each person is to get. So much time at each meeting has been spent arguing over how much each position will get and if they will they be allowed to work at an outside job, it's a wonder that they have gotten anything accom-

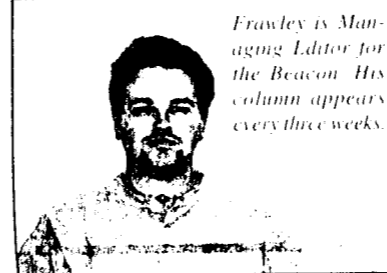
plished this semester.

Outside job? Maybe for the less involved jobs such as Secretary and Vice President. But the President should not be able to get all that money and not have to spend more than twenty hours per week in office hours. How can we expect she/he to get anything for the students accomplished while holding an outside job?

Not to say that the students in SGA don't deserve some stipends, but why so much? For example, the President gets almost half of the cost of the tuition here at Behrend. That seems like an awful lot of money for a previously unpaid position. Whether stipends increase or decrease over time, let's just hope that the people in the SGA are in it for the students, not the stipends.

The Voice of Reason Use it or lose it!

Mike Frawley



Frawley is Managing Editor for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

Well, it's that time of year again. Politicians have started actively campaigning for elections that won't be occurring for over a year. As if I wasn't sick of listening to these people as it is, now I get to listen to them constantly for the next year. But that's besides the point. I was reading in a political science journal (yes, people really do read political science journals, but only if they are majoring in political science) that college students, age 18-24, have one of the lowest voter turn outs. Why don't college students vote? It doesn't really make sense. The politicians that are elected will be passing laws that will affect us for the rest of our lives (and most of us have a long life ahead of us, even though my life expectancy seems to have diminished lately). So why don't we go out and vote, and make sure that the people who get elected will do things that are good for us?

Talking with people around campus, everyone thinks that our political system is corrupt and the people who we elect are idiots, morons, or

mentally imbalanced. So why do we elect them? Go out and vote for the guy you think would be best. I know that the selection of candidates is not the greatest this year, but at least make your voice heard. It is really annoying to listen to people bitch about people in politics, then saying that they don't vote. If you don't vote, you have no right to bitch about who gets elected. If you can make a difference in a situation and you don't, why should you go around and complain about it?

Behrend potentially has a very powerful voting bloc in local elections. The people who are elected

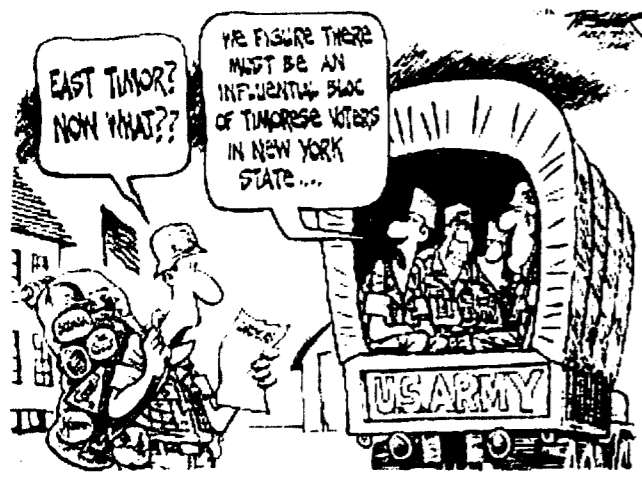
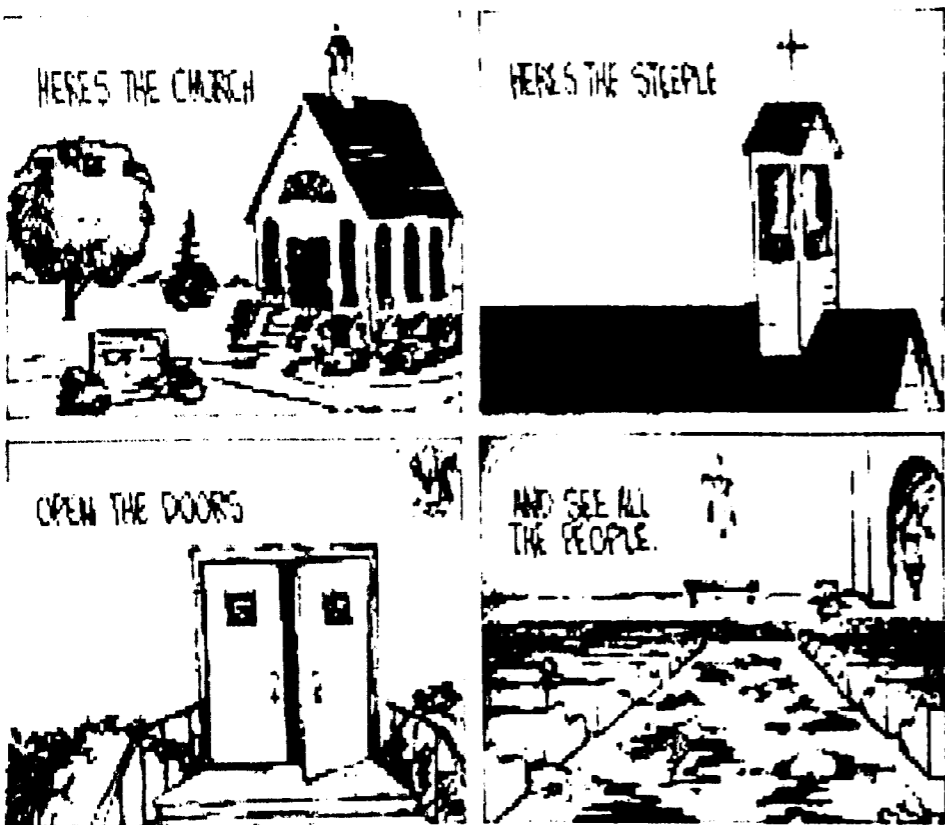
to office in this area have a great affect on the students who are living at Behrend for eight or nine months out of the year. The people elected to the various local offices in this area decide on numerous things that affect all Behrend students, such as : zoning regulations to let new business come into the area, grants for improvements at Behrend, and judges for speeding tickets. So shouldn't we be trying to get people elected who are sympathetic to us? If you live on campus, you can register to vote in this area. In an area as small as Harborcreek, the one thousand votes or so that Behrend can muster would be a force to reckon with.

This could potentially bring more money on campus, as politicians would have to campaign actively at Behrend. And wouldn't it be interesting just to see politicians trying to campaign at Behrend? Trying to answer questions about issues that we care about. Like why we can't get some kind of fast food restaurant across from Behrend?

And I understand that this presidential election is not shaping up to be one of the better ones in recent history. Like we really need another Bush in the White House, or someone with the personality of a tree like Gore. What a choice, a bush or a tree! But seriously, you still need to go out and vote. If you don't like either candidate, then write one in. At least let the government know that you are alive and kicking. We do have a voice in our government. All we have to do is vote.

I don't want to go off on some patriotic, "Your an American so go and vote" kick. But what is the point of living in a country that gives the opportunity to vote, and then not taking it. People in countries around the world have fought and died to gain a right that we are all born with. Yet, we have become so blasé about having this right that we don't use it.

And things that are used for a long period of time tend to disappear, don't they?



Got something to say?

Write a Letter to the Editor!

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