

The Behrend Beacon

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

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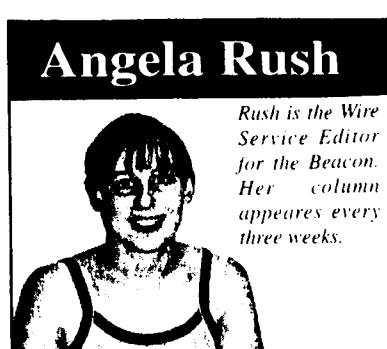
Rush to Rocky Road Consequences of drunk driving

They seem so full of life. Their eyes reflect their dreams, their hopes, and their joy as they pose for the camera in happier times. They are mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, friends and neighbors, and even grandparents, obviously loved by those near and dear to them. The oncoming car high-light beams shine brightly into the driver's eyes, and before they know it the car slams right into them, a head-on collision that instantly kills the driver.

Now they are gone, their lives cut short when they crossed the path of drunk drivers. They were victims, but not the only victims. Each left behind friends and family who also suffer as victims of this crime, which is repeated thousands of times each year.

About two out of every five Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related accident at sometime in their lives unless we act now. About 17,274 persons are killed per year in an alcohol-related crash, averaging one every 32 minutes. About 1,058,990 are injured in alcohol-related crashes - an average of one person injured approximately every 30 seconds. The numbers are surprising, but just think that we could have stopped all of these accidents from happening. Just by not drinking and driving.

I was a victim when I lost a friend to drunk driving. The anger was unbearable. I remember the pain that



Angela Rush

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

built up within me because I knew that there could have been something done to prevent it from happening. It was like someone had just literally killed me, by killing someone that I cared for. Even when the offender gets a punishment it does not seem like enough for the life that they took. All the thoughts rush in your head, why did your friend have to die? Why so young? Just so that someone could have fun and get plastered. (That one night of fun can turn into a night of horror.) Justice is truly never serviced when something like this happens. One can't really understand what the pain is like until they have experienced it themselves.

That is what upsets me about the whole thing. I just wish that people would think before they get into a car drunk and endanger the lives around them.

What right do they have? They are not God, they can't determine when

someone's life is going to end. It is a selfish act when someone that is intoxicated decides to get in a car and drive. What is the point of drinking, what does it really do for a person? So maybe it makes you feel good for a little bit, and makes you forget your problems. There are other means of dealing with problems and there are other ways to have fun; drinking is not the ONLY thing you can do to have fun. (Something I really don't get, because normally you get sick and hung over. Now tell me how that really makes you feel good?) So if you are going to drink why not do it responsibly?

Over 70% support the use of sobriety checkpoints to screen for impaired drivers, and 59% support stronger penalties for repeat offenders. Every weekday night from 10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., 1 in 13 drivers are drunk, and between 1:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. on weekend mornings, 1 in 7 drivers are drunk.

For all crashes, the alcohol involvement rate is nearly five times as high at night. During the weekend more people are normally out traveling and to think that all these people that have been drinking are out driving does not make me feel too safe at all. In the past decade, four times as many Americans died in drunk driving crashes as were killed in the Vietnam War. Drunk driving is considered a serious offense in all states.

The DUI statute in the state where the violation occurred will determine the extent of the punishment for a first-time offender. Generally, a first-time offender convicted of the offense is usually considered a misdemeanor, in which the offender is ordered to pay a fine and may be sentenced to a minimum term of imprisonment. A suspension of his or her driver's license will usually occur as well.

Furthermore, if you are involved in a case where someone has been injured or killed, different charges can be brought against you. Manslaughter is a more serious offense and its effects have a huge impact on one's future. Direct costs of alcohol-related crashes are estimated to be \$44 billion yearly, including \$6 billion in direct medical costs. There is an additional \$90 billion that is lost in quality of life due to these crashes. Today, there are many successful deterrents against drunk driving, and many people support them.

Of course, the best deterrent is simply to take a drunk's car keys. A more realistic approach is the "designated driver" concept: a friend who decides not to drink while with friends and then drives everyone home. So if you are going to drink, don't plan on driving, because in one split second you never know what you will be facing; a life sentence or your own death.

A view from the lighthouse

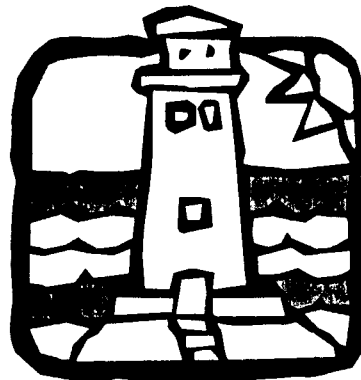
Helping Behrend feed the needy

Here on campus we have many different choices when we get hungry. We can eat at Dobbins or we can eat at Bruno's. And when we get there, we have a never-ending buffet to feast on. Some people aren't so lucky.

Imagine getting up in the morning and not being able to eat until lunch because you have no food for breakfast handy. Not that bad. But then for lunch, the same thing happens. You open your cupboard door and find it empty. You'll just have to wait until dinner to eat. Dinner time comes and there is still no food for you to eat.

This would never happen to you, right? You can always bum money (or a meal plan) off of your friends. Sadly, most hungry people don't have meal plans or a Dobbins to eat at. And they go to bed hungry every night.

Behrend will be hosting a food drive until November 16th. The goal is to collect 1,000 items of food. There are roughly 3,700 students here at Behrend. If every person that goes



to Behrend donates just one item of food, then the goal will have been reached, times three. That is a lot of food, but there are also a lot of hungry people in Erie. We just may not see them, living here on campus.

Here on campus, and even in our nice homes (for the commuters), we are so lucky to be able to have access to food anytime we want it. We have much to be thankful for. Let's stretch out our generosity and help out the less fortunate.

'Musings...' Kate Galley

Using our extended vocabularies?

Okay, in light of all the heavy, tense letters to the editor, I just wanted to lighten the mood a bit. (You'll find the more serious, pressing issues on the next page.) Something has been bothering me for quite awhile now. I will say it one time, in this article, and the then the issue will drop. Here we go, one time, ready?

"It's called ALMY Hall, not ALM-NEE hall!" Did you get that everybody? The name of the second newest hall on the Behrend campus is AL-MY, not ALM-NEE. Why is this so hard to grasp?

When I first returned to Behrend, I had a friend naming all the halls to me. He called it ALM-NEE. At the time, I was naive to the actual names of the halls. However, upon arriving on campus and moving my things in, the sign in the front of the building clearly stated that the name was AL-MY. Well, I called him on his mistake and he told me that everyone called it ALM-NEE and that he was right.

Then my first semester here came and went without too much incident. Returning here this fall though, it

seems like the whole campus has changed the official name to ALM-NEE hall.

Where was I when this happened? We go away for the summer and suddenly we all lose our ability to read and enunciate properly?

I think that the all time low for this spontaneous epidemic was when I called Housing and Food Services earlier this semester and talked with someone (who shall remain nameless) who called it ALM-NEE hall! I was distraught because this is someone who is employed by Penn State and they do not know the real name of the hall? Gggrrr!

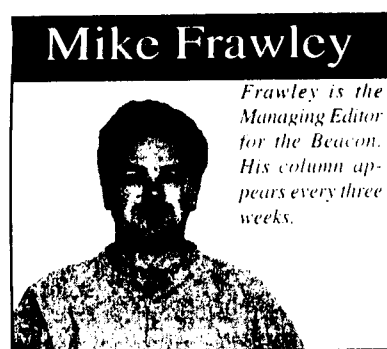
Okay, deep breath. Let's all realize that we are in college to improve upon the reading and writing skills that we learned in secondary school, or apparently learned. And the last time I checked, there are a lot harder words in the English language than AL-MY! So let's dredge up all those years and years of elementary English and call the hall by it's proper name!

Galley is the editorial page editor for the Beacon.

The Voice of Reason Once more into the breach

Well, I hope that everyone is having as interesting of a week as I am. And while I know that most of you expect me to use my column this week to defend all of the attacks I received this week (just look at the next page!), I am disappointed that I might have to disappoint you. I thought that I would take my column this week and devote it to a topic somewhat more relevant, a discussion of freedom of speech at Behrend.

People need to speak their mind. I think that it is great that we have so many letters to the editor this week. It is nice to see that some people on campus want to state their views on a subject that they feel is important. And while I might not agree with everything that the letters have to say, I still feel that they have the right to be heard, as much as I do. Oops, I forgot, I am not allowed to state my point of view because it is controversial and upsets some people. Wait a second...did I miss something? Was the Bill of Rights repealed while I was sleeping? Damn those <fill in your least favorite political party here>!!!!



Mike Frawley

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

Why is it only O.K. to say good things about what goes on here at Behrend? If I sat here every week was, no one would have a word to say about it. But as soon as I start pointing out some of the things that are wrong, I become the Anti-Christ. I don't mind that, but it seems like people are saying that I don't have the right to state my mind about something.

I know that I might be somewhat of a harsh critic, but let's be realistic here for a second, if I didn't write about things the way that I do, would anyone even bother to read them? All I know is that because I write the way

I do, people read what I write. Hell, the only reason most of you are reading this right now is because my name is at the top, and I have a reputation of writing stuff that's interesting to read.

I will admit that I don't have all of the answers to the problems that I point out, but does that mean that I should ignore the problem just because I don't have the answer? Again everybody, get real! Until a problem is brought out in the open, and people have a rational discussion about the problem, there won't be an answer. I am willing to rationally discuss any of the problems that I write about, just stop down at the Beacon office. And please don't bother with personal attacks on my character, I really don't care what you personally think of me and I don't lose a wink of sleep if you think that I am an a**hole.

And please don't tell me that my columns bring down the paper, you're reading it right now aren't you? And while only the vocal minority who doesn't like my views write into the

paper, I have received enough compliments from students, faculty, and staff, that my column will be continuing for the foreseeable future. The Beacon has never been better than it is this year. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of everyone involved in the paper (especially our editor-in-chief Jason Snyder, who's unbelievable drive this semester has been the driving force behind making the paper as good as it is), the Beacon has reached a new high, and if I thought that for a minute that I was bringing down the paper with my columns, I would stop in a second.

Contrary to popular belief, I do not just pick a campus organization out of a hat and bitch away. Almost anyone on the Behrend staff will be able to tell you that it takes a lot for me to write one of those columns. However, when I believe that the student body needs to know something that is being done wrong on campus, I will write about it. And if I'm wrong, please feel free to let me know.



Voice your opinion!
Send all letters to the editor to:

behrcoll2@aol.com