

The Behrend Beacon

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

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A view from the lighthouse

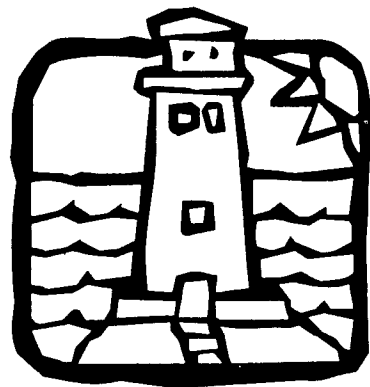
Thanks for 'Feeding the Need' here at Behrend!

Thank you so much to everybody that donated food for the 'Feed the Need' drive. It was so successful this year. Behrend collected over 2,000 items of food for the hungry. We here at the Beacon collected almost 200 items! All this success just goes to prove how we can all work together and make our campus great. It also shows our generosity.

Maybe the generosity was because it is close to the holidays and we are feeling extra generous, or maybe it was because you wanted to get rid of all the food that you knew you would not eat this semester. Whatever the reason though, it shows that despite being 'just a bunch of college kids,' we are thinking of the less fortunate.

Unfortunately, there are people here in Erie that are less fortunate than we are. You may even know some of them. And we should be thinking about them all the time, not just at the holidays, even though it is nice to give extra help this time of the year. Hunger does not discriminate on what time of the year it strikes, and sadly it is a constant in the world today.

However, for the past two weeks students at Behrend were aware of



the need and helped aid in the relief of it. If you donated, you should be proud. If you didn't, please do so next time. Every packet of Ramen Noodles helps! Just remember how much it sucks when you miss dinner at Dobbins and you go to bed without eating- hundreds of people in Erie do that every night.

Again, thank you for donating and keep being involved in the world outside of Behrend. For all too soon you will be living in it and the problems that 'aren't yours' might possibly become your biggest concern.

See you in two weeks! Happy Thanksgiving!

The way it ought to be Matt Wiertel

The hypocrisy of SGA

In recent weeks the Student Government Association, SGA, has gone to great lengths to improve their image on campus. SGA has formed a public relations committee and they created a weekly information box in the Beacon in an attempt to be more student oriented. But the \$64,000 question is: has SGA improved at all?

Amidst all of their feeble attempts to improve, there still are some fundamental problems with SGA.

Last week I attended one of these so-called meetings and listened to the usual rhetoric, waiting to give my input concerning the proposed Real Audio station. When the issue was addressed, I raised my hand and was acknowledged to proceed with my comments. So I began to talk about my concerns with the proposed radio station and within a few minutes I was abruptly cut off. Or in other words, I was gavelled. The SGA president proceeded to end the discussion, saying that the discussion was for committee meetings.

Whatever happened to student input? Apparently it's gone out the

window with several other aspects of SGA. I was under the impression that student input was allowed during this point of the meeting because several other students did the same thing as I in previous weeks. But did they get gavelled? Oh, hell no! Their discussions were allowed to proceed without interruption. This is hypocrisy my friends. They ask for student input and when someone finally does go to a meeting they are told to keep quiet. I was directed to take my concerns to the radio station committee. But

who says the committee chair has to express my concerns to the senate? They could merely sit there clueless and bellow "we had an in-depth discussion" or "no report." With all this being said, some members of the senate disprove of the actions taken against me and I thank them for their support. I call on the student body to go to these meetings and see what a sham they are. It's time to get some representatives who actually care about the student body.

Wiertel is the sports editor for the Beacon.

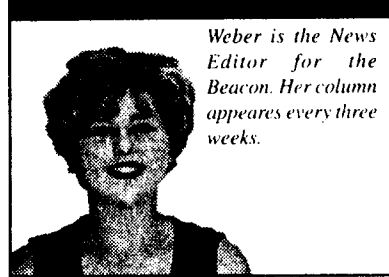
"I call on the student body to go to these meetings and see what a sham they are!"

A little bit of Kool-aid and milk They'll huff, they'll puff, they'll give us a lottery

Hopefully, if you are going to be a returning student, and are planning to live on campus again, you attended the meeting in your residence area about the new system commonly referred to as the "Housing Lottery." Why? Well, that was your chance to find out what the housing lottery is going to entail. It was also a chance for you to voice your opinion about the new and improved way to assign housing. If you weren't here last year, you are probably not completely aware of the "housing riot" that broke out in the Reed Building when students handed in their housing contracts. There is no doubt that the students were willing to fight for their housing assignments at almost any cost.

Well, thankfully we will not have to deal with that. Don't get me wrong here, I want to live on campus again next year, but not at the risk of my life. I am a pretty small person and would be completely defenseless against a large mob of people. Living on campus doesn't mean that much to me.

Shannon Weber



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

Housing and Food Services, along with staff members and students have set up the "Housing Lottery," which is still having a few kinks worked out. As of now the game plan is this (remember that the apartments are in a whole different game-this is for students wishing to live in the residence halls, suites, Army and Ohio): students that are living on campus for the spring semester 2000 who wish to live on-campus in the fall of 2000 must submit a housing contract in the Housing Office the week of January 17-21 (mark your calendars!). When you hand over your contract, it will be stamped with

a date, time and a chronological number. When all the contracts have been submitted, the fun will begin. A random number will be selected and that number will determine which contract is first in line for the assignment process. All other contracts will be placed in chronological order following the selection number. For example, if number 345 is selected, then 345 is first, 346 is second, 347, 348 etc. until all contracts are placed in chronological order. After they go through and assign housing, they will post the listing for students. If you didn't get in they will put you on a waiting list. However, another positive thing is the fact that you have "recall rights" back to your room (thank goodness).

One thing Housing is doing for us is opening up more rooms in the suites for returning students. They used to have approximately 40 rooms available for freshmen, not any more. So the older students will have more places to choose from.

Students that are requesting each other as roommates submit their

housing contracts together. If your roommate's contract gets pulled first, then they will pick the names off his or her list.

I am still feeling kind of apprehensive about this whole idea. I think that is because it's a new idea that students are not familiar with. I have no idea what I am going to do if I don't get my choice of housing on campus, although the school is going to give us enough time to search for a place to live, like an apartment off campus. I still don't like not knowing what number I am going to receive. Camping out at least allows you to count on where you may end up living for the next year. Camping out in line isn't a bad idea; it is how it is handled that is the problem. If we moved it to a bigger area on campus (i.e. Erie Hall) and set up lines (i.e. with ropes) maybe it could work?

So how can you increase your chances of getting your choice for housing? I don't know, but if you find a way, let me in on it.

For what it's worth

Let's put an end to Affirmative Action

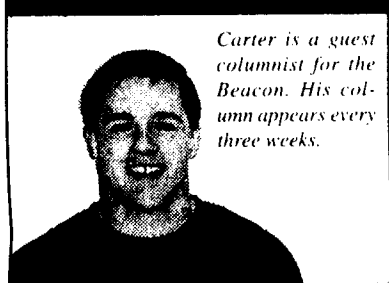
Whenever the word discrimination surfaces, accusations are bound to occur as people start pointing fingers and blaming each other for the pitfalls of society.

People start offering up magical "solutions" that will somehow set society on the right path and make up for past discriminatory practices. As everybody certainly would like to see a world without any racial or ethnic discrimination, some people wonder if such a place is simply utopian and question whether it can ever really be achieved. One thing is for sure though: Affirmative Action (AA) is certainly not the way to go to achieve such a world.

First off, it should be painfully obvious that AA is, in itself discriminatory. Let's take two people, Pat, who is white, and Brian, who is a minority. They both apply for the same job at a local business, and let's say Pat is better qualified for the job than Brian. Due to AA, if that employer is not "proportionately represented," he has to hire Brian. (even though he is not as qualified), or possibly face a lawsuit. What are the consequences of such a policy? Pat was discriminated against because he's white, therefore punishing him even though he had no part in past discriminatory policies.

Minorities certainly don't like being discriminated against, so what

Nick Carter



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

makes people believe that whites don't mind? For sake of argument though, let's say that the employer is, in fact, a racist. Do people really think that any policy or legislation will actually change his or her attitude and deter that person from discriminating? If anything, AA will make racist employers more resistant and racist, thereby intensifying race relations in society. Yet this is ignored.

The proponents of AA rail back and argue that it's necessary to defend equality and give minorities equal opportunities. They also argue that it levels the playing field and redresses historic wrongs. Does it really? In order to defend equality and level the playing field, don't all races have to have the same opportunity? Yes, and this is exactly what the AA supporters argue that it does. But what they are ignoring is the fact that the playing field is not even and that there is

not equal opportunity for all when certain groups, whether white, black, green, or purple, receive preferential treatment. People argue that this is not what AA is supposed to do, but it is an unintended consequence.

Does AA really "correct" past discriminatory practices? Maybe it does in some people's minds. But is the best way to correct one wrong to create another wrong? Two wrongs certainly don't make a right, but this is what AA supporters implicitly argue. By creating new discriminatory policies intended to make up for past discriminatory policies, society is setting itself up for a vicious and perpetual cycle of discrimination which may never be broken, while ignoring the fact that ending all discriminatory policies is the first step to reducing discrimination.

Although AA has good intentions, good intentions simply do not justify bad policy. What would happen if somebody proposed the idea of incorporating AA in the NBA? After all, the idea would have good intentions of increasing the amount of white players in the NBA, when by simple observation one can see that it is dominated by black players. But what would the consequences be? It would lower the standard of excellence by forcing teams to hire less qualified players and create the feeling among

whites that they are "entitled" to something.

Instead, by hiring the best qualified players, regardless of skin color or the number of tattoos they have, the NBA has achieved a high level of excellence. The same can happen to businesses or any other institutions when AA is ended.

All in all, AA hurts and cheapens the success and accomplishments of hard-working minorities who might be looked down upon because of preferences some people assumed they have received. It hurts hard working non-minorities by discriminating against them for their skin color.

I will go out on a limb to say this, even though people may not want to hear it and may not even realize it: the whole premise behind AA is the assumption that minorities are so intrinsically inferior as to be unable to compete in an open, nonsegregated society. This is one of the most egregious assumptions ever made.

I'm one of strongest believers in hard work rewarding success. Anybody, no matter of skin color or economic status, is capable of greatness and success without having to look to Big Brother for an entitlement. All society needs to do is level the playing field, yet this is the exact opposite of what AA provides.

National Commentary

Copycats are fashion disaster

Robby Messer
Northern Arizona University

Tuesday is wing night. This is when I can go the local sports bar and munch on all the chicken wings my sensitive stomach will allow. I catch up with my friends, whom I often neglect during a long week of studying. (By Tuesday, it's already been a long week.)

I'm always amazed by all the famous-looking people I see there: the Britneys, the Backstreet Boys and the Green Day groupies. I'm willing to bet that if you go to your favorite hangout and take a long look around, you'll know what I'm talking about. Chances are really good that half the women standing around are wearing really tight capri pants and shirts that would better fit an infant. Oh, yeah, and they always seem to travel in pairs, and it won't matter if it's 20 degrees out, they won't be wearing socks or jackets, and they'll still be sporting those crazy,

little shirts that show off their belly buttons.

I blame Britney Spears for making women think it's all right to go "Crazy" and dress in next to nothing.

While I'm among those red-blooded males who enjoy a pretty woman, I'll be among the first to say that there's nothing wrong with a little mystery, either. If a woman is wearing something sensible, and yes, perhaps a little more conservative, she's much prettier in my eyes than some chick who's having to suck in her breath because her pants are too tight.

And thanks to the Backstreet Boys,

some guys are conducting fashion faux pas of their own, too. Like the Britneys, they travel in packs. They not only shop at the same store for their polo shirts, jeans, and baseball caps, but they buy the same brand. They're really living "Larger Than Life" when they don't all buy the same color. They even act like a

boy band. They have the same cool limp while they walk, they turn their hats back and forth as if moving to music, and they all order the same thing. (Now, I must confess: I do wear polo shirts, and so does my roommate.

But when we're in public together, he doesn't wear a hat, which blows the boy band thing. Dare to be different.)

Hmmmm, and there, standing far away from the Britneys and BBoys, are the Green Day groupies. Their hair changes color faster than a chameleon, they wear grungy clothes most people wouldn't even bother to put in a washing machine, and they comb their hair at the beginning of a semester. You can just imagine the smell, which is why I strongly recommend to all who fit this category that you go have the "Time of Your Life" somewhere else.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why my favorite hangout is always so crowded on wing night. After all, Britney, the Backstreet Boys and Green Day are sure to draw a large crowd. Which I find disturbing, particularly because I have a sensitive stomach.

"Chances are really good that half the women standing around are wearing really tight capri pants and shirts that would better fit an infant."