

## EDITORIAL

## Letters to the Editor

## School sponsored profanity

Dear Editor,

The recent AMCC tournament has brought capacity crowds to Erie Hall. Many of these enthusiastic fans rarely visit our campus, and one would imagine that the college would be eager to put its best foot forward to impress them.

On the contrary, however, the very first impression many fans received upon entering the arena was the reverberating sound of "SHUT THE F\*CK UP, SHUT THE F\*CK UP, SHUT THE F\*CK UP..." blasting repeatedly from the speakers during the men's warmup period.

This is offensive. It is inappropriate. It certainly does not project a standard of excellence for our institution. And it exhibits a callous disregard for the increasing incidents of violence among college and professional athletes.

The *Beacon*, open-minded as you are, does not routinely use this word in print - much less in a front-page headline. My recommendation is that the athletic department take their own advice.

Daniel Barnard  
Instructor of Music

## Apology to the campus

Dear Editor,

I, John Park, would like to apologize to Daniel Barnard, my coaches, Mr. Streeter, Dean Lilley, and everyone else that I offended at this weekend's men's AMCC basketball tournament. I made the warm-up tape that contained Limp Bizkit's hit song "n 2 gether now".

The men's basketball coaches and Behrend's athletic administrators are NOT to be blamed for this incident, I am. The coaching staff had no prior knowledge of the songs played on this tape. This was the first (and LAST) game that this tape will be used. The songs contained on the tape were not purposely put on to offend anyone. I assure you that future warm-up tapes for men's basketball and every other sport will be tasteful to all ears.

Again I'm sorry to everyone that I offended. I should NOT have put "n 2 gether now" on the tape, or any other song like it. But I did, it's over now, and I have to deal with the consequences.

John Park  
Men's Basketball Team

Intolerance at the *Beacon*?

Dear Editor,

I feel a personal commitment to comment on the editorial page in the Feb. 25 edition of *The Beacon*, because I often forget that such opinions are so popular. Mr. Snyder's invitation to join him in reality means HIS reality (which, as a typical young college student, is mainly information imposed on him rather than personally experienced or thought through). Mr. Wiertel's vision that "Americans want a moral leader" really means he would like a group to belong to

(Americans), and he is unable to define his own personal morality.

These young men set out with good intentions to define their place in society, as good people, and wound up condemning people they know nothing about; people who challenge their limited knowledge of the world. Their need to find individuals or groups to feel superior to makes me want to comfort them in their fears of thinking for themselves and risking being alone.

Thank you both for reminding me that even on a college campus, a place supposedly dedicated to education, there are people who would prefer if people like me, a non-political, bisexual, young single parent, would disappear, die, or work for the fast-food industry in order for you to continue your ignorance unquestionably.

Mr. Snyder's notion that having children responsibly is strictly a matter of money, and that raising them is not work, speaks tellingly of the rea-

son why I will refrain from reading *The Beacon* in the future. It is not necessary to hold on to my, perhaps delusional view that humanity and success hold worth beyond dollars. Thank you for your time as time, money, right boys?

E. Twobig  
Behrend student

## Behrend students exemplify pride

Dear Editor,

I had the pleasure of traveling to Cortland, NY this past weekend to see our men's basketball team play in the NCAA Division III Tournament. As everyone knows by now, Behrend won Friday night, beating Cortland State, and advancing to the Elite Eight, but then lost a tough game Saturday to Salem State for the right to go to the Final Four in Virginia. Like all the Behrend fans in attendance, I was disappointed. However, like all the Behrend fans in attendance, I was extremely proud, and that is why I decided to write this letter.

After the game, we drove back to Erie from Cortland, NY. While trudging through the snowstorm during the six-hour ride back to campus, I had a lot of time to think. I thought about the players, and how they played their hearts out, and left everything they had on the floor that night. I thought about the fans, and how many members of the Penn State

Behrend Community were in attendance, including parents, family members, students, faculty, staff and administration. They all made the trip to support the team. Then I thought about the women's basketball team and how proud I was of them for their fantastic win and how much fun I had announcing the men's and women's basketball games all year long. I thought about the band, cheerleaders and dance team, who have all helped to bring spirit and fun to Behrend basketball games. This led me to think about the entire past year at Penn State Behrend, and how something special is beginning to spread across this campus, PRIDE!

I know spirit and pride have always existed at Behrend in one form or another, but this year it seems to have improved immensely. Members of the Athletic Department, including coaches, staff members, administrators and players, have done a wonderful job promoting all men and women's sports on campus. I see

athletes supporting other athletes in different sports, along with students, faculty and staff supporting our teams.

This pride, however, goes much further than with the Athletic Department. It seems that more and more students are becoming involved at Behrend, attending events and joining campus organizations, whether in their academic major or in some other area of interest. More students seem to be working with faculty and staff in areas of research and academic internships. Computer students seem to be more involved and attending more events on campus, while in the Residence Halls it seems that more students are taking an interest in their living areas and working with their Hall Councils. Due to our growth, more students are choosing four year majors at Behrend instead of changing assignments and going to University Park or elsewhere. Each semester we seem to be growing and improving, and it is nice to see. While I know we still have much

more room for improvement, our growth, we have come a long way, and we should appreciate the efforts.

I am very proud to be a part of the Penn State Behrend Community, and this past weekend in Cortland, NY, reminded me of just how special Behrend is. A wide variety of the Behrend community was represented in Cortland, and as a group we shared joy, disappointment, laughter and team pride. Our men's basketball team represented us extremely well in the NCAA Tournament, and for a matter what the scoreboard read on Saturday night, Penn State Behrend won in every sense of the word. I am always proud to tell my family, friends and acquaintances that I am a part of Penn State Behrend. It's just that now I am able to tell them with my head a little higher and my smile a little wider.

Dan Schiesser  
Residence Life Coordinator

The *Beacon* holds the right to edit all letters to the editor that they receive. We encourage writers to refrain from profanity in their letters. Thank you.

## National Commentary

## Confessions of a WB teen-drama buff

by Mark Lowry  
Knight-Ridder Tribune

A few weeks ago "Dawson's Creek," Pacey Joshua Jackson explained to his brother why he could never tell Joey (Katie Holmes) that he's in love with her. It would have disastrous effects, something akin to the tides changing directions, floods destroying the Earth and a Hell Mouth opening up and unleashing hordes of havoc-wreaking demons on humankind.

When Pacey watches "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" too. Glad to see I'm not the only one. I have plenty of friends who share my stalkerlike obsession for the Buffinator. I've never felt embarrassment in proclaiming adoration for Buffy, Xander, Willow, Giles and the rest of the Scooby gang, especially since every TV critic in America has backed me up.

But what about all those other WB dramas largely designed for teen-age girls? You know the ones: "Felicity," "Dawson's Creek," "Roswell," "Popular," "Charmed," etc. What are 30-year-old men like me to do when their peers are watching "adult" dramas such as "Homicide" and "Law & Order," and we're glued to the Frog Channel watching 17-year-olds pontificating on life issues they shouldn't be worrying about until they're, well, our age? You make excuses.

For months, I had been referring to shows such as "Felicity" and "Dawson's Creek" as "guilty pleasures." A friend finally clocked me. "Either embrace them or quit watching," he said. "No one has that many guilty pleasures." Point taken. It's now time to come out of the closet. Yes, I'm a WB drama teen-aholic and proud of it. So, like, shut up!

These shows have some of the best writing on TV. Now, if you're not up-to-the-minute on your pop culture, much on "Buffy" and "Charmed" will sail over your head faster than "Popular's" Nicole can throw away her discount store bracelet when a fashion-minded friend busts her for donning it. And the acting's not bad either.

But before I totally kick open the door, let me first offer a few disclaimers: First, as someone who keeps himself entrenched in the local arts scene,

I can't be accused of succumbing to Couch Potato Syndrome, for which they're still searching for a cure. Most of these shows I view the following morning from the tape in my VCR. Let's just say I go through a lot of videocassettes.

Second, I do watch a few "adult" practices, mainly "The X-Files," "The Practice," "Once and Again" and, though I'm even more embarrassed to admit to this vice, "Ally McBeal" (although I don't know why I continue to hang on; "Ally" gets dumber each week). I must confess that I've completely given up on sitcoms. Well, once reruns kick in I might catch up on lost "Simpsons" and "That '70s Show" episodes. Currently, those two are up against "Felicity" and "Freaks and Geeks," respectively. (By the way, the latter is probably the best slice-of-high-school-life show on television, now that Buffy's protecting a college campus, but we're just talking WB.)

Second, I don't watch every WB drama. Don't do "7th Heaven." Can you say "Touched by an Angel" meets "Eight Is Enough?" And "Safe Harbor" might as well be called "Baywatch 7th Heaven." What's that all about? I quickly lost interest in the ultraboring "Jack and Jill," and besides, the new "X-Files" season finally began. And "Charmed" just has too many unfunny royal witches (read: former stars of bad TV shows Shannen Doherty and Alyssa Milano) to care anymore. Then there's the new show, "Zoe Dot-Dot-Dot," but like I said, I can't be bothered with sitcoms. Here are, in order of importance to me (because this list is all about me, after all), quick break-downs of the WB shows and their worth in cell phones.

X X X  
"Buffy the Vampire Slayer" 8 p.m. Tuesday. No doubt, it's one of the best TV dramas ever. Now in its fourth season, it's still smartly written and loaded with surprise plot twists. To creator Joss Whedon: Thank you thank you thank you for finally making Spike a regular. And though we were totally bummed to see Oz (Seth Green) depart, the whole Willow and

the lesbianic Wicca chick thread almost makes up for it. We also dig the new bf, Riley. But it's really time to give Giles a love interest. Jenny's been dead for how long now? Oh, and the "Hush" episode with its creepy "Gentlemen" was the best hour of television I've ever seen.

Rating: 10 cell phones (on a scale of 1-10)

X X X

"Angel" 9 p.m. Tuesday. I was determined to love this show, since it is a "Buffy" spinoff. It started off slow, but like the title character, it doesn't reek anymore. At first I wasn't down on the "Batman" parallels (come on, a grapple hook, stakes that retract from his sleeves automatically?), but the fact that the characters kept making fun of the Dark Knight-y lead character (he dwells in the Bat Cave, drives a Batmobile) salvages it. I hate that they killed off Doyle and replaced him with Wesley (the Watcher who replaced Giles in last season's "Buffy.") Does Angel really need two bumbling sidekicks? And although Cordelia still has some of the best lines, she's not as funny when there's no one to snark back at her, a la "Buffy's" Xander. Nevertheless, the "Buffy/Angel" punch makes Tuesday night the real Must See TV.

Rating: 9 cell phones

X X X

"Roswell" 9 p.m. Wednesday. Okay, began. And "Dawson's Creek," which means it's often slow-paced and the young'uns are waaaaaay too serious. But it has the best-looking cast (and that's saying a lot for the WB) and the best funky-cool-chick character, Maria (Majandra Delfino.) And could Brenda Fehr (who plays Michael) look any more like a young David Duchovny? Don't think so. Extra points for using Dido's song "Here With Me" as the theme. Speaking of music, here's another reason I'm hooked on the WB: the music. All of the shows play scores of weepy Lilith Fair singer-songwriters. I like to call this genre SEW (Suicidal Ethereal Women). The WB loves Beth Orton, Fiona Apple, Tara McClean, Sarah McLachlan and The Sundays as much as I do. "Felicity" scored major points

for playing Kate Bush's "This Woman's Work" early in the game. Which brings us to ...

Rating: 8 cell phones

X X X

"Felicity" 8 p.m. Sunday. I started watching because it originally followed "Buffy." Again, it was way too serious at first, but finally lightened up. After "The Practice," it had last season's best cliffhanger. I really was caught up in the whole Noel vs. Ben ordeal. And unlike most people, I dig the new 'do. Major kudos for giving Meghan and Sean more time. Now, if we can just do something about Julie. She has way too many issues.

Rating: 8 cell phones

X X X

"Popular" 8 p.m. Thursday. I thought nothing would ever top the rapid-fire sarcasm fests of "Buffy," but Nicole (Tammy Lynn Michaels) has officially dethroned "Angel's" Cordelia as the queen of putting everyone in their collective places. Detractions: Too many so-out-there-they're-ridiculous characters, such as the Pat-like science teacher and the spaz kids. Cheerleader Mary Cherry (Leslie Grossman), a Dallas native, sports an over-the-top Southern accent that's more Alabama than Texas. Josh is basically Dawson in California. And as much as I love Nicole, her hair is so 1996 Faith Hill. Need to rethink that one. But, love the theme song. (Alanis/Imogen Heap sound-alike Kendall Payne's "Supermodels").

Rating: 7 1/2 cell phones

X X X

"Dawson's Creek" 8 p.m. Wednesday. So I haven't kept up with this much. I'm not sure who Joey and Dawson are currently dating or what Deep Thoughts issue they're discussing. So I don't cry if I miss it, but when I do catch it, I am quickly sucked in. Something about these teen-agers talking all grown-up, like even grown-ups don't talk. OK, so maybe I still have one guilty pleasure.

Rating: 7 cell phones

X X X

Mark Lowry is a staff writer for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. You can send him at markl(at)star-telegram.com.

## St. Patrick's Day Transcends Irish Experience In America

by Edward T. O'Donnell  
History News Service

'Tis shocking but true -- the St. Patrick's Day parade in America isn't really about being Irish. How can that be, what with millions turning out in scores of cities and towns across the country to enjoy the dancers of Irish pipe bands, step dancers and county societies? The answer is that behind these scenes of Hibernian pride and pageantry there lies a larger and more profound message of American inclusion and tolerance.

This message is evident in the parade's origin and evolution. The first recorded marches took place in colonial New York City (by regiments of Irish soldiers in the British army). But it was in the mid-19th century that the parade as we know it took form. This coincided with both the massive influx of Irish immigrants to America due to the Great Famine and the sharp rise in anti-Irish bigotry by those convinced the Irish would never make good Americans.

As a result, these early St. Patrick's Day parades expressed both the pride of the Irish in their heritage and their demand for acceptance as full and equal citizens. They highlight the Irish ethos of tolerance and inclusion. A century and a half later, this same spirit motivates the groups of Irish lesbians and gays who in the 1990s began battling parade organizers in court and police in the street for the right to participate in the parade. Why do they bother, some ask -- aren't they there pressing issues?

The reason for their activism is clear: Members of these groups see inclusion in the parade as a validation of their larger efforts to gain the full measure of respect and rights they believe they deserve. It's hardly go-

ing out on a limb to predict that they'll soon win that right. After all, similar groups are now allowed to march in parades in Ireland.

To see the truly pluralist implications of the St. Patrick's Day parade, one has only to look at the event's endears in cities and towns across the country on days other than March 17. Simply put, the original celebration of America -- and its border message of pride and inclusion -- has spawned thousands of ethnic parades. This year in New York City, the birthplace of the St. Patrick's Day parade, more than 40 such events will occur. The largest will take place on March 17 but on Sept. 4, the annual West Indian Day Parade and Carnival.

Critics and pessimists might argue that this proliferation of ethnic parades, in contrast with the decline in traditional parades like Veterans Day and Labor Day, indicates fragmentation of American society.

Yet one only need look at the catastrophic results of ethnic hatred and religious hatred around the world -- in places such as Kosovo, Rwanda, Israel and, of course, Northern Ireland -- to appreciate the enormous degree to which Americans may have found ways to weave ever more disparate groups into the national fabric. Surely we have a long way to go in pursuing this ideal, but it's important to recognize how far we've come.

It's in this sense that the St. Patrick's Day parade transcends the Irish experience in America. From the very beginning it has embodied the spirit of tolerance and inclusion that has helped propel forward the nation's remarkable and ongoing, if imperfect, experiment in multicultural democracy. Now that's something worth celebrating.

Send all letters to the editor to:

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