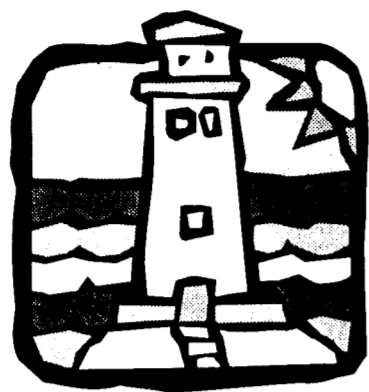


A View from the Lighthouse

A decision to sleep on

Some students and even some faculty members here on Behrend campus may not be all too familiar with the city of Erie. Sure, you probably know the hot spots - where to dance, where to get a drink, and where to shop. You may have noticed, however, that despite the number of unique things Eric boasts, a good convention center isn't one of them. True, we have that beautiful lake, a nice size shopping mall, plenty of cool restaurants, but what do we do when we want to see a concert or car show? We have to jump in the car and drive to the nearest "big city" in order to attend an event. Sure, we have the Tullio Convention Center, more casually called the "Erie Civic Center," but for a growing city, we will soon be too big for what the Civic Center can offer.



to be looked at before the group can make a decision.

We at the *Beacon*, however, have made our decision. We want to see that new convention center go up, so we're definitely in favor of the 5% hotel tax. We believe that Erie is truly growing, and to help support the needs of the community, a convention center wouldn't be a bad idea. Many events could take place - more expos, perhaps some car shows, and as one of our editors put it, "we might actually get a decent concert around here for once." (What's wrong with 98 Degrees and LFO?)

We know that you know that Erie can be dreary (take that, Dr. Seuss). Winters here are not a whole lot of fun, and we can only use our beach for a few months out of the year. There have been areas of compensation, though. Junior's Last Laugh comedy club, as well as places like Forward Hall, have appealed greatly to the younger masses. And that's another issue to look at as well. There are many, many young people in the city of Erie, many of whom will soon have families. We see the building of this convention center as an improvement to the city, and improvement is always good.

While the County Council and hotel owners look deep into the fiscal aspects of imposing a tax and building a convention center, we would like to encourage you to look at the benefits that it could bring to this city's morale. Imagine it ladies, a Tupperware show bigger than ever; and for the guys, how about a motorcycle show for once? Maybe a concert or two, how about community sporting events? It all could happen...

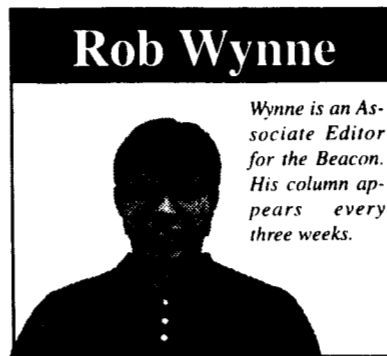
And In This Corner...

Get the truck outta my way

It's always a lot of fun commuting to Behrend. After 20 minutes on the highway, I reach school and I am forced to boost my adrenaline level to keep up with the rest of the traffic. More than likely someone is going to pull out in front of me, more than likely someone is going to walk out in front of me, and more than likely I'm going to have to dodge cars in the parking lot as I try to make it to class. But that's not the end of it.

I used to figure if I made it into my first class in one piece, then I was safe for that day. I figured wrong. Not only do I have to dodge the cars in the parking lot in the morning, I have to avoid them in between classes as well. I'm sure every single one of us has had the experience of being "followed" to class by someone in a car, truck, or van.

What do we do in a situation like this? One side of me feels that I should stand my ground, strut right



Rob Wynne

Wynne is an Associate Editor for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

down the middle of the pathway, and show that person "what's up now?" Another side of me feels compelled to move over as far as possible so as to not take any chances of being a burden, because obviously this person has a more important place to go than I.

Last week I was on my way to the Nick Building, and as I was walking along the path, someone in a vehicle coming from the opposite direction decided to squeeze by me. Now take

into consideration the fact that I was walking in front of the Science Building, a point where the main pathway narrows. I was forced to walk in the mud since the vehicle was quite large, and since the driver couldn't wait for me to walk through. I don't pay to come to school to play in the mud. I can do that for free in my woods at home.

While discussing this topic with a friend of mine at lunch one day, I learned that we weren't the only ones peeved about all of the cars. He added, "Yeah, one time when I was walking to class, a staff member drove by and used their windshield wipers. They got fluid all over the girl I was walking with - she was pretty mad." Now that's ignorance at its best.

Now before some of you get fired up about this editorial, please know that I am not advocating "No Driving Between Buildings." I think we all

are pleased during the winter when the snow plows have most of the walkways clear, and yes, there is mail to be delivered around campus. However, there is a time and place for everything. In-between classes is not one of those times.

I have a class 9-9:50a.m. in Hammermill, and one 10-10:50a.m. in the Academic Building. I can make it across the campus in 5-7 minutes. That means that any able-bodied person should be able to as well.

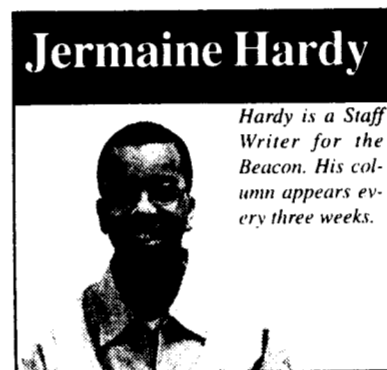
Just let us walking folk have that 10 minutes between classes. Heaven forbid we make a staff member teach all their classes in the same building, that might lessen the traffic a little. Behrend is a beautiful campus if you take the time to walk through it. I'm just not too fond of a "drive-by."

Look At It This Way

Smart guns, not so smart

The increasing mayhem surrounding guns and children lately has been a catalyst for increasing gun control controversy. Efforts for gun control legislation are being taken more seriously lately by Congress and politicians, due to incidents like the Columbine High School shootings, and the shooting and killing of a six-year-old girl by her six-year-old classmate in Michigan last month. The gun industry is reacting to such tragedies and to several lawsuits posed by big cities that are pushing to recoup the public health costs of gun violence. Gun manufacturer Smith & Wesson has responded to calls for gun control with their recent adoption of child safety locks. Other gun manufacturers are also working on "smart gun" technology using computer chips to develop firearms that will only allow their owners to fire them. While some manufacturers are working to improve the safety of their guns, others are standing firm on opposition.

John Velleco of the Gun Owners of America expressed his feeling that gun safety developments, such as child safety locks, make guns less safe for those who need to use them efficiently. In an interview with MSNBC last week, Velleco stated



Jermaine Hardy

Hardy is a Staff Writer for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

that, "criminals in crack houses aren't going to use safety locks." As the gun industry continues to face turmoil and as gun owners get increasingly concerned we should be expecting more controversy to erupt over the issue, especially as we move closer to fall elections.

While politicians and the N.R.A. debate over the issue and as the gun industry responds, America suffers due to the self-defeating exploitation of the issue. For many politicians the debate is simply a battle of rhetoric, a way for them to eloquently increase their status. The N.R.A. argues that Congress should work on enforcing existing laws and concentrate on returning to family traditions. But on the other hand they support the production of firearms throughout America,

the same America that is rapidly losing youth to these guns. And while politicians argue for gun legislation they make very little social effort to decrease gun violence, or violence period, amongst youth. So, how much do they really care?

With gun regulations and technological improvements the gun controversy is being further exploited. The controversy resulted in an increased membership for the N.R.A., showing that the exploitation is only helping the problem to persist. Throughout history such controversy exploitation has had negative influences, especially for youth. When America said, "Say no to drugs," kids further indulged in them, when they gave out condoms in schools, kids had more irresponsible sex, and when they aired increasing suicide rates on television, more kids killed themselves. And now they are bombarding us with gun safety innovations. Hmmm I wonder if those bomb building, internet savvy kids know how to take those child safety locks off their parents' guns?

America is avoiding the real problem and thus creating a bigger one. Instead of working on improving the violent mentalities of today's youth, we are making room for more bad behavior. The more we exploit the

notion of responsible gun use (which can be considered an oxymoron) the more we promote the use of guns. This will not help in cultivating better behavior in America's children. What is it for society to say "we're gonna put safety locks on guns now, so you kids can start using knives the old fashioned way. O.K.?"

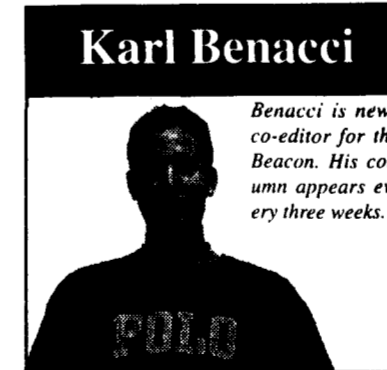
Besides the fact that the controversy is driven by rhetoric, it doesn't address the majority of youth involved in gun violence who are getting weapons regardless of the laws. I do support gun legislation but this isn't where the problem with gun violence lies. The problem lies within the careless behavior of our youth. It would be more powerful to actually teach non-violence than to just restrict some of the means of violence, because people will always find the means. We need to work on instilling different goals and hence different means shall follow. We have to teach children to deal with themselves and their world nonviolently. Otherwise we might as well forget gun policies because violence will explode with or without gun regulations. We have to erase the garbage from our kids' heads and replace it with knowledge and discipline.

Oh, You Didn't Know?

Stop the stench!

I love the weekends at Penn State Behrend. It's a great time for everyone to relax and have fun. However, there's one aspect about the weekends that I dislike. What is it? People vomit. Yeah, that's right, they vomit. It doesn't seem to matter where, either. I've seen vomit in the strangest places. On sidewalks, in sinks, even on couches! On the weekend, residence halls look more like war zones, with vomit splattered all over the toilets and floor.

Do people ever consider that someone will have to clean up their disgusting mess? I feel absolutely awful for the maintenance people who have to clean it up. We're in college, right? We want to be treated like adults, right? Well, if we want to be treated like adults then we need to



Karl Benacci

Benacci is news co-editor for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

be responsible for what we do. If you make a mess then clean it up! This year's worst vomit experience happened in December on the first floor of the Reed Union Building. I avoided getting my mail for a solid month because it stunk like hell. Thousands of students became nau-

seous because one person vomited there. It still haunts me to this day.

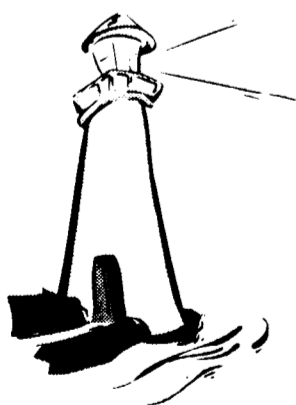
In all likelihood, the person vomited because he/she was drunk. I'm not hinting for students to stop drinking, if I proposed that I'd probably be beaten by a mob. As a matter of fact, there's nothing wrong with drinking (in my opinion) as long as it doesn't negatively affect other people. I am, however, asking for people to clean up their mess and not let it sit until someone else cleans it up. I say this because the first floor incident in the Reed Union Building proved that the only thing that lasts longer than the Energizer Bunny is the smell of puke. Hopefully you get my point.

So what can be done about this problem? Vomit bags? No. Gas

masks for everyone? No. Hidden cameras? No. The only solution for this problem is for the wrongdoers to stop regurgitating on everything. It's as easy as that. I can hear the guilty people now. They're saying, "I'm not a drunk, that's just an ugly rumor started by people I've thrown up on." I feel no remorse for you people. I'm hoping that a toilet returns the favor by spewing cold water across your face. Maybe that would help you sober up. You're making this campus look (and smell) bad. So please, throw out your throw up problem. Penn State Behrend is a great college and we should treat it that way!

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