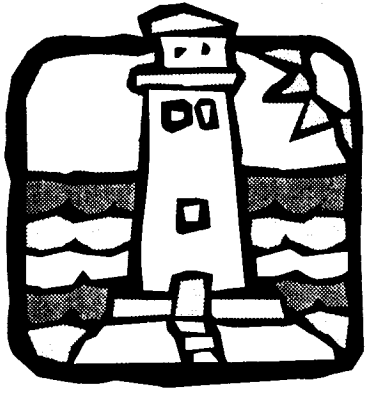


A View From The Lighthouse

Hey man. Got a chode?

Just imagine a beautiful spring morning here on Behrend campus. The sun glows all around outside as morning reaches noon, the wind is blowing only a little bit, the temperature is warm enough for no jacket, and as you leave the Academic Building full of good feelings you open the door to breathe a nice fresh breath of...smoke! Your nose cringes, you hold your breath, and you quietly walk through the cloud of smoke that encompasses the entranceway. Then, as you briskly walk to Hammermill for your next class, you manage to inhale a few whiffs of fresh air before two people in front of you expel a cloud of smoke from their lungs, hitting you in the face. You decide to walk around them. As more second-hand gases bombard you, you notice all along the sides of the freshly cut grass lie many cigarette butts. "Disgusting..." you think.



starting? Well, we won't dive into the issues of adolescence during this editorial, but most of you know how it was in high school - it was the "in" thing to do. What starts out as a show for friends becomes a lifelong habit - a gross one.

What we don't understand is how many of you like to actually pay money to live a shorter life. Chodes are expensive today. What are they, like \$3.00 a pack? Smoke 2 packs a week? That's \$24 a month, almost \$300 a year, at least! There is also risk for lung and heart diseases. Just drop the habit. Save yourself time and money.

If breathing in the smoke isn't bad enough, it is quite bothersome that students aren't responsible enough to put their chodes out in the proper places. At least if you are going to have the nerve to breathe your smoke in other's faces, have the courtesy to put the cigarette out in the butt cans placed all around campus. If your going to smoke, smoke responsibly. If there is such a thing.

Patty McMahon, director of the Health and Wellness center here on campus, believes that people may need some help when it comes to calling it quits. She says, "support for smokers to break this addiction and to prevent others from ever starting this very addictive habit is essential to developing a healthier community." She believes that smoking should be banned inside buildings, but should be allowed outside. "Yes, smoking has been proven to cause many serious health problems, but also important is the individual's right to choose." That is a very valid point, the individual's right to choose. However, some colleges banned smoking all over campus. Although there are not many like it yet, Lafayette College has banned smoking both indoors and out.

So, maybe someday Behrend will be a smoke-free campus, but as for now, those of us who don't smoke are just going to have to "suck-it-up."

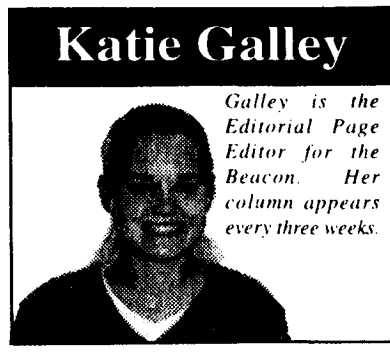
Detours and Small Potatoes

A farewell to National Women's History Month, you've come a long way baby.

I was looking through my latest *Jane* magazine when it arrived the other day and you know who was on the cover? Monica Lewinsky. You know who was on the back cover? An 85 pound Calvin Klein model in practically no clothing. Then suddenly, something occurred to me. March is National Women's History Month. Yeah, it flew by for me too. Why did an ex White House intern and a skinny waif make me think of that? I have to say that it was the stark contrast of body appearance between the two and how society views these women.

Like most people I spent the month of March completely forgetting that it is the month that we celebrate the achievements of women throughout history. Why did I forget about it? Maybe because there has been nothing monumental done by women to bring it to my attention in the past 5 years or so. Don't get me wrong, I am sure that somewhere, some woman is curing a disease or breaking a new world record. I know that it happens everyday. It just doesn't get noticed that much anymore. Why? I feel it's because of all the latest images of women that we are bombarded with through the media.

Not only do the portrayals make me sick, but the women that buy into this pseudo-persona make me ill too. If I have to hear one more girl sitting in Bruno's whining that her legs are too fat, or that she gained 2 pounds, I'm going to go postal. None of us look like the women in the magazines, not even the actual women! So deal with it. Do you think that Tyra Banks or Rebecca



Katie Galley

Galley is the Editorial Page Editor for the Beacon. Her column appears every three weeks.

If you were to look through my *Jane* magazine, you would see about 20-30 pages of anorexic looking female models. Now, I don't know about you, but I do not look like that. And I don't know too many women that do. However, that is how females are portrayed in television, print and plenty of other mediums that it makes me sick.

How do we, as a society go about teaching the newest generation of little

girls that we are all different and have different looking bodies? For one thing the ads in magazines have to stop. Of course, that is really unrealistic of me to expect. Modeling agencies are going to keep hiring the emaciated looking teenage girls, and they are going to keep sending them to the photo shoots for the magazines. So maybe we should attack Mattel, for their production of Barbie Dolls. Wait, wasn't there supposed to be a Barbie that was more "realistic looking" with wider hips and bigger legs? Sure the concept was nice, but did they even get around to making the mold for the doll? I doubt it.

So what is the answer? Ban diet pills? Burn all the Barbies? Boycott the magazines that use models that look like they haven't eaten in more than a month? Stop watching *Ally McBeal*? Smash all the airbrushing guns that decrease the size of the supermodel's thighs further? No, probably not. I know that the only way that we can save the girls and women all over the world is to help them look at themselves as beautiful. How do I propose to do this? Until we can get rid of all the supermodels, your guess is as good as mine is.

How do we, as a society go about teaching the newest generation of little

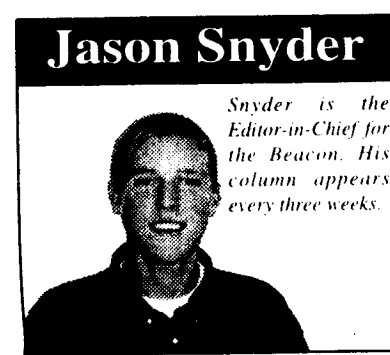
Join Me In Reality

Live in a more diverse world...away from Erie

You hear complaints about the city of Erie all the time. "There's no good radio stations here." "There's nothing to do in this crappy town." "The lake is a polluted, seaweed filled, zebra mussel plagued mass of dirty water." And there's even the concept that we have four seasons called "almost winter," "winter," "still winter" and "construction." But, to me, all these conceptions about our "mistake by the lake" are nothing compared to the lack of diversity in this city and the hateful results of this culture.

This past semester of classes for me has probably made me think more about racism than anything I have ever experienced before. I have had many discussions in class about different people's views about racism, which have broadened my understanding about the issue. You hear views of people that come from different parts of this state and even this country. It is amazing to see how different those views are; based solely on the area someone is from.

I recently experienced this concept first hand. In a trip to Washington D.C. a few weeks ago, I entered a



Jason Snyder

Snyder is the Editor-in-Chief for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

society much different than Erie's. I always heard about how dangerous of an area it is and how to watch out for the pick-pockets. What I found in my week there was something much different. I found a city with many different people: blacks, whites, Asians, homosexuals and almost every other lifestyle you can imagine. Everywhere you go everyone you see is different. It is as if you are forced to look at people as individuals. You don't see minorities and majorities. You see a diverse group of people going against every stereotype this city's culture has portrayed upon you.

I have to admit that I have not always been clear in my views

towards blacks. I used to have arguments with people, trying to understand how people could judge an individual based solely on the color of their skin. I'll even be daring enough to say that my views towards blacks changed when I got a job and rarely worked with anybody of a different race. I automatically assumed that blacks are lazy and rely on the government to pay their way.

But what I saw in Washington D.C. was something different. There were some blacks dressed in suits and ties, involved in the fast paced business world. There were some serving food, driving buses and selling clothes. There was even a young black boy standing by a metro station selling *The Washington Post* to people that passed by. I saw my belief that blacks are lazy diminish in front of my eyes. I began to understand that you can't judge a group of people until you see the entire picture. And believe me, living in Erie does not give you the entire picture.

Besides discussions in class and my educational trip to our nation's

capital, I have also experienced an event that, quite frankly, scared me. I made the mistake of listening to a talk radio show. If I haven't said enough already, I will continue. After a series of events, I found myself featured as a guest on one of those morning radio talk shows, trying to put to an end to some hateful views by local citizens. Much to my surprise, I saw Erie at its worst, bashing people for daring to be different and fearing homosexuals that supposedly have some sort of an "agenda." I was frightened to see that Erie citizens are so against a group of people that they would actually pick up the phone to call the radio station and share their hateful message.

I challenge the students of Behrend not to get wrapped up in Erie's hateful society. See the real world. Not the selfish and racist views of people that don't understand that everything in this world isn't like Erie.

I am quickly beginning to believe that I would rather live in a city known for violence than to be imprisoned in a town with angry and racist people that corrode my mind with hateful messages.

The Way It Ought To Be

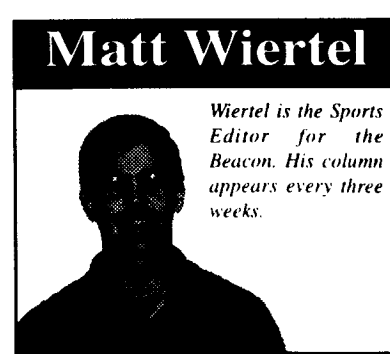
It's time for a change

Last week's Sunday issue of the *Erie Times-News* initiated an in depth report on the state of the education system in the Erie area. The report displayed various statistics from each school district and gave readers the ability to look up the salaries of any teacher employed in the 17 school districts covered.

While reading the various reports and statistical data, I decided that now was the time to bring the public back to reality.

According to the statistical data, each pupil enrolled in the public school system costs the taxpayers \$6,000 on average. Teachers also claim a large portion of the tax dollars per year. In this region, all districts are currently paying their instructors above the national average salary of \$38,509. The Millcreek school district compensates teachers quite nicely by sending them home with an average salary of \$46,941 per year. Not too bad for nine and a half months of work, five days a week, with all national holidays off.

Now I've heard all of the stories from teachers saying how the kids are so terrible these days and that they aren't making enough money. I didn't buy it then and I hope that you don't buy that rhetoric either. I understand that sometimes teaching is strenuous work that involves working on papers until the wee hours of the morning, but



Matt Wiertel

Wiertel is the Sports Editor for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

if you don't feel that you make enough money try your luck at some other profession. What right-minded employer will allow you to have union protection, nearly a quarter of the calendar year off, and still pays you above \$40,000 per year? No one.

This issue requires more analysis though. Many people, I being one of them, are dumbfounded when they see teachers go on strike demanding higher wages. What in God's (sorry can't say that in public schools) name could they want when they already have it so good? Not only do they ask for more money by going on strike they hold the taxpayers and school district hostage. It's time for taxpayers to say that enough is enough. The next time teachers go out on strike, I say fire them all, the whole lot of them. School districts and taxpayers

shouldn't have to fear teachers and their unions. We pay their salaries, and we have every right to take them away. But due in part to various laws, this drastic action never can materialize.

Another point, public educators are constantly crying that the education system doesn't receive nearly enough funding to provide adequate education to the masses. The last time I checked my parents were still paying school taxes even though their children never attended a class at a public school. The reality is that public schools are given money for students that don't attend their schools.

With that being said, where do educators think that this new money will come from? Do they think that taxpayers will generously give their hard-earned money to a system that should have more than adequate funding?

God forbid the teachers take a pay cut instead of taxing the working public to death. If the teachers were really in this profession to teach and were always looking out for the children's best interest, then they should be refusing the automatic pay increases that are given to them. But they don't, and why is that? Truthfully, some teachers don't give a two penny damn about the students and milk the system for all that it is worth. Others think that the government has

infinite resources at their disposal, wrong answer there chief.

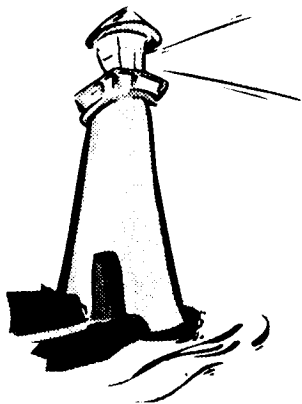
Take the Erie school district for example. Some 66% of its enrollment comes from low-income families. Families, I might add, that do not contribute as many tax dollars to the system as an average or middle income family does. The money simply isn't there for the school district to justify paying teachers these outrageous wages. Wages that are not based on student performance or test scores, but which are based on the number of years the teachers are in the system.

This high tax burden on the middle income families will force parents to choose the public schools, and only the public schools. Parents who currently can afford to send their children to private or parochial schools will have no choice but to send their kids to public schools. The new influx of students, will put even more pressure on the public system to cut teacher salaries or sacrifice the education of the children.

It's time for the citizens of this fine metropolis to realize that things aren't what they seem. What we need are some leaders that will make the tough choices and have the vision to fix these problems before they ever occur. I think now is the time to take a serious look at a Metro school district, before the entire education system in this area collapses.

THE BEHREND BEACON

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Editor-in-Chief
Jason Snyder

Managing Editor
Michael Frawley

News Editors
Liz Huxey
Karl Benacci

Editorial Page Editor
Katie Galley

Features Editors
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Jim O'Loughlin

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