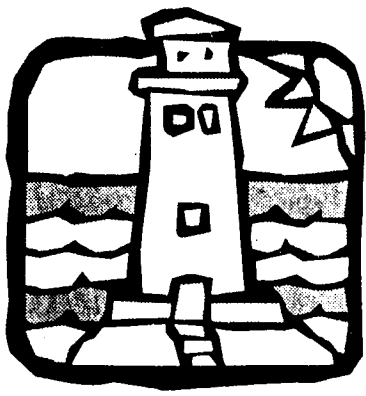


A View From The Lighthouse

Hello, Goodbye



As Behrend's 1999-2000 school year winds down to a close, an array of mixed emotions has just opened up. Oh yes, it's spring fever time and chances are there's a bit of love in the air. But along with love, it's a fair bet that many people on campus are feeling excitement, joy, pride, suspense, and perhaps just a touch of sadness all at the same time. It's time to honor our seniors with a "good-bye," and wish a warm welcome to some fresh faces. It is obvious that Behrend has truly grown, and will continue to grow. Whether you're ready to leave or you're just settling in, each and every one of you has made this campus a more pleasant place to be.

This week, we at the *Beacon* decided that we would refrain from stating our strong viewpoints on topics such as Elian, gays, talk-radio hosts, smoking, and computers, among other things. Instead, we invite you to look back with us at some of the accomplishments that have improved life here on campus, as well as take a peak at what lies ahead in the not too distant future.

To the graduating seniors: "Do you remember your first day on campus?" If so, you remember that registering your vehicle on campus only cost about \$30, and that the lot outside Erie Hall wasn't nearly as big as it is now. Erie Hall was cool to watch a basketball game at, and there weren't so many restaurants to pick from over by the mall. You remember that before Bruno's, there was something called a "cafeteria" that fed your hunger needs, although you probably preferred to live off of mom and dad's care packages. You'll remember that there was no *Almy Hall* or *Ohio Hall*, and the words "kiosk," "e-mail," and "internet" became part of your everyday vocabulary.

You'll remember that when you needed to drop or add a class, you had to wait in a mile long line that wrapped around the old Registrar's office in the Science building. Adding and dropping classes by phone and internet evolved to make your lives easier, but the information technology fee pulled a few more bucks out of your pocket. Hey, it was only like \$25 then!

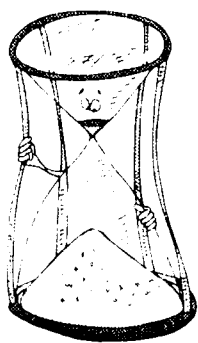
The only computer labs were in Hammermill, and you could

actually use coins in the copy machines. Your school ID card wasn't nearly as cool, and no one cared to read the school newspaper. My, how times have changed!

Well, to the current freshmen as well as the incoming ones, there is definitely a lot to look forward to. As you are taking the first steps in your college career, there will be many new paths to discover. Construction will begin on the Research Economic Development Center and the new Trippie Hall, as construction will be finishing on the new Athletic complex. Obviously in this computer age you will be awarded with faster and faster computers, as well as with faster and faster internet connections.

However, the technology fee as well as the price of books will go up, as your textbook refund can be counted in mere pocket change. Fashion will change for the girls once again as their shirts and pants get tighter and skimpier. The guys will remain in their 20 year trend of plain t-shirts and blue jeans. Oh yeah, everyone will read the *Beacon* and completely agree with our opinions. Well, we might need a little more time on that one.

To the seniors: Congratulations, you've made it! It's now time to start another chapter in your lives! To the freshmen: Good job, you've made it this far! There is a faint light at the end of the long tunnel, go get it!



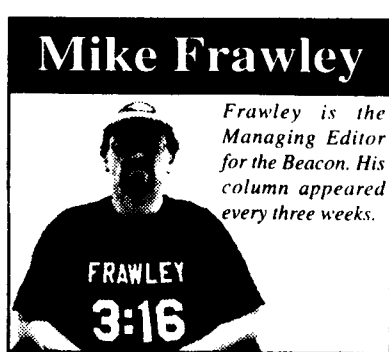
The Voice Of Reason

The Behrend review, Frawley style

Well the year is finally over. I get to put my pen down and try to have a somewhat normal life for the summer and maybe regain some of the sanity that I have lost over the course of this year. But I thought that I would use this last column of the year to talk about everything that has gone on this year. My own little "year in review" of all of the things I've talked about in my writings this year, just to see if it was really worth all of the headaches that I went through.

So what should I start with? Well the very first thing that I talked about this year was the computer center, so that is as good a place as any to begin. The computer center has become more responsive to the students and much more helpful in general. And while there is still a ways to go, I think that there has been a marked improvement there. So hats off to the computer center for all of its work this year.

Now let's move on to SGA. My head hurts just thinking about SGA. Every time that I think SGA is improving as an organization, something happens to make my opinion drop even further. At the beginning of the school year, SGA was an unresponsive organization that no one cared about. With a little prodding, SGA tried to reform itself



and made great strides to become a better organization. And while they were still a little rough around the edges, and sometimes going to a meeting was like having teeth pulled, things seemed to be looking up for the organization as a whole.

Then came election time, and what should have been the highlight of the year has turned into the biggest fiasco I have ever seen. For once there was actually a contested election, and we had the biggest voter turnout at this school that anyone can remember; the percentage of voter turnout here at Behrend was even bigger than what University Park had for their student government elections. And while I have my own thoughts as to why the turnout was so big, it still was very encouraging to see. But now the entire thing is marred by scandal. The election process was so badly handled

that the entire thing is starting to resemble a circus. And instead of just sitting down and figuring out how to handle the problems immediately after the election, it has now dragged on for three weeks. In my humble opinion this entire problem could be handled with two quick questions:

A. Are you eligible to hold your office? (None of this "well you can serve but not have the stipend" crap, that just drags down the entire organization. "Well I'm not qualified but who cares?")

B. And if you are not eligible, are you willing to step down?

Problem solved. Everyone involved knew what the requirements were, and if SGA as an organization allows someone who does not meet them to hold office, what kind of example are they setting? I hope that next year's SGA runs and works much better than this year's, but I guess we will just have to wait and see.

And last but not least, I can't forget about the Greeks. Now everybody relax, I'm not going to bash Greeks. I just want to point a few things out.

The *Beacon* is constantly being accused of being anti-Greek, yet the only things negative that have been written about the Greeks were 3 editorials throughout the entire year.

while we have printed many good articles about what the Greeks have done. Three weeks ago we gave the Greeks almost the entire front page, and anytime they ask us to, we cover their events, yet we are anti-Greek. And I'm sorry to disappoint everyone, but I don't consider myself anti-Greek. I just see some problems that need to be addressed so the Greeks can overcome their reputation, and I point them out. If you don't want people stereotyping you, do something to overcome the stereotype—don't just whine and cry that you have one.

So have I served a purpose this year? I think that I have. By pointing out the problems on campus and making them public, it forces people to deal with them. And isn't that the whole point of the media? We are here to let the public know what is going on in the world around them so that they can make informed choices about various issues. And with all of the bitching and moaning that you hear about what we write maybe people will be motivated to try and change things.

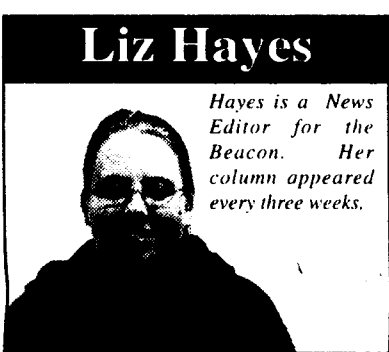
And don't worry I will be back next year to keep life interesting for everyone around here, and I'm sure that Bitchin' by Mike will make another appearance.

This Is Earth, Have We Met?

Generation indifferent

For years now the members of my generation have been listening to our "elders" call us "Generation X." Then, a few years back, it was determined that the youth of today was not part of the original Gen Xers, and we received the label of "Generation Y," though no one seems to know what is the difference between the two letters. But, after we were labeled with this rather insulting and uncomplimentary phrase, what did we do about it? Nothing. There has been no real outpouring of grievance over this label, and no one seems to really mind — if anyone even knows what it implied in the first place. Which is why I think there is a more apt label that can be given to us: "Generation Indifferent."

I can't begin to count the arguments I've had with friends or have witnessed that have ended with the authoritative "Who cares?" The argument seems to be progressing along just fine, but then someone runs out of steam or realizes that the other has a great point that they can't argue. So, what better way to win an argument than by simply stating "who cares." At that point, the other person



usually agrees that no one cares, and the discussion moves on.

I think part of the problem is that no one really knows enough about anything to firmly state an opinion. Or more to the point, no one cares enough or is motivated enough to learn more about a topic. It would require work, after all, work that would not be rewarded with a letter grade or a salary, so it is not worth our valuable time.

"Why didn't you vote in last week's SGA elections?"
"Oh, I didn't know there were elections. Did you vote?"
"No, I didn't know any of the people running, so I didn't bother."
"I hear ya. Besides, who cares — it's

only SGA."

"Exactly."
Sound familiar? Not just the SGA part, but the overall gist? I can think of various arguments about all sorts of things that have ended similarly. Presidential candidates (Bush is a shrub), Elian Gonzalez (phone home), organized religion (weak-minded fools), campus organizations (down with the Greeks), Erie (ghetto suburb of Pittsburgh)... all have been the subject of numerous debates between myself and some friends, but we never reach a point where we at least see the other's point, if not agree. Why? Because no one knows what is really being discussed, for one thing. Also, no one believes in anything enough to defend it.

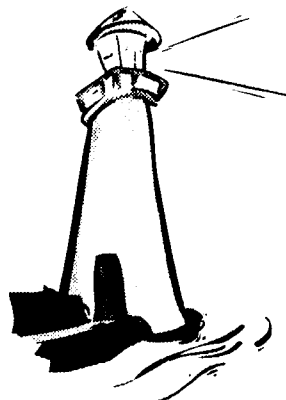
The *Beacon* receives all sorts of verbal comments from people every week — mostly from people in organizations that an editorial columnist has offended. But how many actually have enough to say about something that they can scrape together 300 words and write a letter to the editor? The paper gets maybe one letter every two weeks, and they are rarely longer than 150 words. No

wonder our generation isn't taken seriously — not only can we not write articulately about a topic, we can't even pull 300 words of crap out of our butts! And all those people who tell the columnists that they agree completely (who, by the way, usually outnumber those who don't like the paper), who ever hears from them?

What's my point? Who cares? No one will be able to conjure up a sound argument, anyway. And no one will really care. Actually, it is rather depressing to be sitting here writing this editorial knowing that. However, I do have one suggestion for anyone who does care. Find a cause and learn everything you can about it. It doesn't matter if you decide to join an anti-affirmative action league, a midgets' rights coalition, or a save the earthworms group. Just pick something to believe in. It'll make the world a better place. That way, in one hundred years, maybe the image people have of us won't be of a bunch of plastic people sitting around in khakis and earth tones singing "Mellow Yellow."

THE BEHREND BEACON

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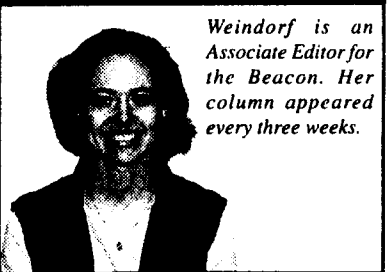
The freshman homecoming

I can't wait until the end of the semester. Yes, I have enough to do with all my finals and all my papers, but the end of the semester means the big homecoming. The homecoming of the class I graduated with from McDowell High School. (And the only reason I really care is because I'm curious to see how they held up.)

Actually, it will be nice to see the other 550+ people I graduated with, because we all had time to mature in our first years on our own — at college, at a job, about whatever. The differences that separated the cliques all seemed to dissipate quickly after graduation. That's the way it should be; after all, I will be guaranteed a McDowell alumnus sighting at least once a day, if not more.

But the real reason I want the semester to end is because all my

Becky Weindorf



friends from high school will be home. Especially my best friend Becky (yes, we have the same name) because she can actually find something fun to do in Erie during the summers. Not only do we hit the beach and drive around in her big beat-up white van, we pull all-nighters and talk about who's pregnant and who's rich already from my

graduating class. Between the two of us, we could dish the dirt on anyone after an all-nighter.

Summers mean showing off the "new you" after your first grueling year of college. The questions come flying right and left, especially from me to some of my friends; for example, "You pierced your what?"

Warm weather means lots of time to stay out late, go dancing, go to the dock (as if there's anything to do at the dock but sit in a lawn chair and eat watermelon) or just bond with a friend who's come back from college.

Where is the downside, though? Everything seems so wonderful, with your high school friends coming home, that we remember that we're losing our "other half": the people you met go home too. Nobody looks forward to losing their group of

friends after their first year of finals, midterms, gallons of coffee, sleepless nights, and being on your own. It's hard to give up that pocket of security one finds when it's their first time away from home.

And that means a complete "role reversal": instead of keeping in touch with alumni through email, people will keep in touch with their current classmates/roommates through email. High school friends will be right up the street now; roommates and classmates will be a postcard or long-distance phone call away. And the cycle will occur all over again in the fall: the tearful good-byes and the joyful hellos. And with summer coming, I get to fill in all my friends on what happened in Erie this year — as if that's worthy gossip material to begin with.

Have a great summer, and remember to tell us your beef in the fall!
We'll still be here. Send all letters to the editor to:

behrcoll2@aol.com

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