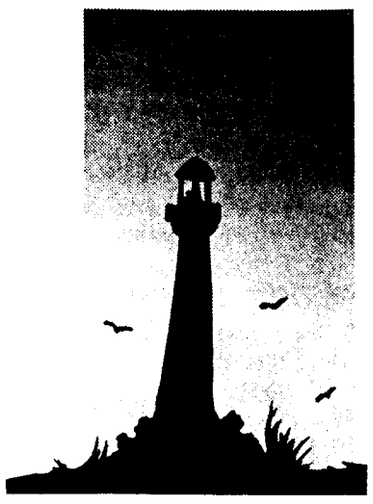
A View From The Lighthouse

www.ourinternetserversucks.com



Technology is a wonderful thing isn't it? Well I guess that it would be if it worked the way it was supposed to. We would be completely lost without our computers or Internet access. Oops, wait a second, our Internet access isn't working the way it is supposed to, but then again it never has. All the time we hear about how the University is working to bring Penn State into the 21st century, and working to improve out Internet access, but, to put it bluntly, it still sucks.

Any off campus student can tell you the litany of problems that they have trying to connect onto the Penn State server. One of the most frustrating problems is busy signals during peak periods, and as the semester goes on these peak periods are getting longer and longer. Some days it takes upwards of an hour to connect in before 8 p.m. at night. And when you can get on, the connection is so slow it wasn't even worth the time you took to connect in the first place.

And on campus use is just as bad. The one advantage of living on campus is having an Ethernet connection that moves extremely fast. But the connections are not up and running in all of the dorms yet, and the ones that work run slowly. Most of us at one time or another have had their connection slow down to a crawl so that you can't get anything done. All of this is frustrating to the extreme.

But why are our Internet connections so important to us? While it can be said that we do use our Internet connections for things like talking to our friends and playing games, it is also becoming an integrated part of many of our classes. Teachers post assignments for their classes on the web along with additional information and notes that students need to pass their classes. And let's not forget the poor physics and other physical science majors that have to actually complete their assignments online. The excuse "the internet wasn't working" must be ringing in the ears of professors all over campus by now. So what are we supposed to do when we can't get the information that we need? For the money that we pay in tuition, this should not be a thing that we have to be concerned with.

The internet has become an integral part of our lives in this technological age and we need to have good access to it for it to be useful to us. A lot of time and money has been spent this past summer to upgrade the computers around campus, but the internet connections need to keep pace. And what happened to the notebook computer data ports that were supposed to have been put in the Reed Commons? This is another thing that has seemed to have slipped through the cracks. Please don't make us whine about how we feel our $115 technology fee isn't being spent fairly or even properly for that matter.

We understand that a lot of the problems with the Internet connection have to do with University Park, and that the Behrend Computer Center does not control the funding that is needed to upgrade the system, but something has to be done to fix this problem. There is no quick fix for it. We need a massive upgrade, and we need one now.

THE BEHREND BEACON

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

Editor-in-Chief
Jason Snyder

Managing Editor
Michael Frawley

News Editor
Liz Hayes

Editorial Page Editor
Katie Galley

Features Editors
Karl Benacci
Jermaine Hardy

Arts & Entertainment Editor
Deanna Symoski

Sports Editor
Doug Smith
Abby Long (assistant)

Wire Service Editor
Rob Wynne

Photo Editors
Jeff Miller
Becky Weindorf

Associate Editor
Christine Kleck

Copy Editor
Paige Miles

Money Page Editor
Amortya Sinha

Advertising Manager
Kim Zuck

Business Manager
Kristine Harakal

Office Manager
Kevin Bruner

Public Relations Manager
Ainslie Ulmer

Secretary
Melissa Proba

Advisor
Robert Speel

Postal Information: The *Beacon* is published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College; First Floor, The J. Elmer Reed Union Building, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563. The *Beacon* can be reached by calling (814) 898-6488 or (814) 898-6019 (FAX). ISSN 1071-9288.

Letter Policy: The *Beacon* encourages letters to the editor. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer. Writers can mail letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Tuesday for inclusion in that week's issue.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The *Beacon* gets a compliment

In high school I was editor-in-chief of one of the highest acclaimed school newspapers in Pennsylvania, "The Canary." ... yes, "The Canary". You may laugh that my school mascot was a Canary, but if you knew the reason you wouldn't. Anyway... this paper was beautiful. We had it all; an excellent staff of writers, editors, and administrators. To go with this, we worked with a publisher who was extremely helpful and reliable. Man those were the days! I couldn't wait to get to college and work on a COLLEGE newspaper!!

Well, nearly 4 years ago when I came to Behrend, I joined the staff of the then called "Collegian". What a nightmare. I couldn't believe what I saw. In high school we used a program called Adobe PageMaker 6.5 to design our layouts. Once designed, it was a simple process of printing out and taping down. Every story, every picture would be designed onto a page on the computer, then printed out as a whole. So easy.

The Collegian functioned differently. Each and every story, picture, sometimes word and letter, "byline" (where the author's name goes), page number, headline, and black line (that you see between stories or columns), was individually taped down to the layout paper. Perhaps that doesn't sound like that big of a deal. Well let me assure you, it is.

Go back and look at some of the old Collegians. Notice how the stories are crooked, how the lines are wavy, and how every now and then you could see shadows of the massive amounts of tape used to fasten the printouts to the layout pages. "Production nights" were on Wednesday nights and lasted from 7:00 PM until 7 or 8:00 AM. If we were lucky, some nights we would get out by 3. This is the time where everything is put together to be sent to the printer. I can't even describe the chaos.

Enough of the negative stuff. I'm sure you all get the point. I'm not writing this letter to discuss the downfalls of the *Collegian*, but rather the relative glory of the *Beacon*.

Hats off to Robert Speel, the Advisor, Jason Snyder, the Editor-in-Chief, and the rest of the *Beacon* staff for taking huge steps to improve not only the visial quality of the newspaper, but also the story and editorial quality. One now gets a much more accurate and positive impression of the school and its students by reading the newspaper.

Athletes who were virtually unrecognized for their accomplishments are now praised adequately in the re-vamped sports section, while color pictures of campus now cover the front and back pages accompanied by excellent school-interest stories. Entire layouts of all sports scores are now also included.

The editorial section is full of interesting commentary by Katie Galley, Editoral Page Editor, Becky Weindorf, Ben Kundman, and Liz Hayes. I'm still trying to understand though just what Jason Leto was talking about in his letter to the editor... hmm. Anyway, Kudos to the Editorial staff, namely Ms. Galley for heading up such an entertaining section.

How could I write a letter to the editor about the *Beacon* without mentioning the Police And Safety Report? Well I can't. All I can say is that the P&S Report better stay in the paper unconditionally!! If for any reason one week I don't get to read about how P&S "secured the situation" of a cat running through the halls of one of the dorms, I will immediately have the *Beacon* print a retraction of this letter! Well not really.

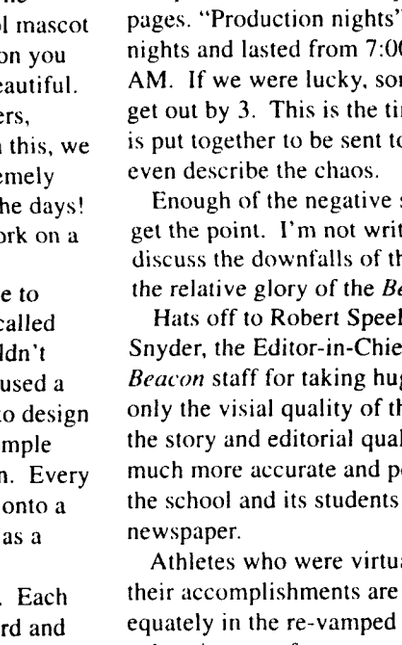
Well, in an effort to keep this as short as possible while still getting my point accross, I'm going to end it here; but not before I take credit for my little claim to fame with the *Beacon*. I was the one... yes I WAS THE ONE who introduced Adobe PageMaker 6.5 into the production process of the *Beacon*. So for those of you on the staff who are interested, I will be in Reed Friday from 2-4PM signing autographs and laying hands.

Sincerely,
John Groller
MISBD, May 2001
The Pennsylvania State University
http://sandoval.dynip.com

The Behrend revolution

Pay No Attention To The Man Behind The Curtain

Mike Frawley
managing editor



Well another summer has come and gone, I hope that everyone had fun, but now it's time to focus on other things. Unless you have been living in a hole (and from some of the dorm rooms that I've seen you have) you know that there is a major election coming up. And if you are like most other people in the age group of most college students, you don't care in the least about it. And you are probably sick of people telling you that you should care, but maybe you just don't realize how much of an impact your vote can have for Behrend and the surrounding community.

Do you realize that if you live on campus and register to vote as a resident of Harborcreek you could help take over the local political scene? We could pick a candidate to support, then everyone could march down to the polls, vote for that person, and they would win by a landslide. Ok, by now you're saying to yourself, that's nice, but again why should I care about who gets elected, how does this affect me? Well let's think about all of the ways that your vote could help change Behrend.

District Justices are elected in this area. So let's assume that you get caught underage drinking (god forbid that that would ever happen on this campus) and you have to go to the district justice for your sentence. Do you want some D.J. who was elected by the AARP and hates college students or do you want someone who might cut a first time offender a little slack because they understand what it is like to be in college? At least in my opinion this is a no brainer.

And who do you think controls any kind of development that we will have around this campus? Do you really enjoy having to walk miles down a dark road to get to a store where the prices are jacked up through the roof? Don't you hate being forced to eat on campus because the nearest restaurants are all down on Buffalo Road? The only way that we will ever get any kind of development is to have local politicians who see this development as a good idea. We can vote candidates in who support these views.

Local politicians would also be forced to pay attention to our needs. Once they know that we control their chance of election they will be forced to tailor their positions to things that we care about. Behrend is one of the largest gatherings of potential voters in Harborcreek, but political candidates never come here to try and get votes. They know that college students don't bother to vote, so why should they bother with us.

Well, damn it they should be paying attention to us. I, for one, hate to be ignored, and that's what they are doing to us. Do you know what age group has the highest voter turnout? Senior citizens, that's who. And what kind of things do they vote for. No money for schools, that's what. They figure that their kids are through with school, so why should they keep paying for them. Why don't our schools have enough money, especially state supported public colleges? Because seniors don't want to pay the taxes and they vote, so they get what they want. So why aren't we doing anything about it?

This election on the national level has been very focused on trying to get the youth vote. MTV's Rock the Vote and the WWF's Smackdown the Vote have had a great deal of success. The WWF alone has had almost 40,000 new voters registered to vote. Now many critics of these programs say that most of these newly registered voters won't bother to come out and vote, but if they had a reason they would. While the topics that candidates are talking about are important, such as Social Security, prescription plans, and what to do with the tax surplus, most college students don't care about them. Is it then surprising that we don't bother to vote?

Behrend could be a great voice for change in the community, all we have to do is get active and regeister to vote! All you have to do is go to *www.rockthevote.com*, fill out the online form and you're all set. Behrend's College Republicans and College Democrats are now active organizations on campus so come check them out, and keep on reading the *Beacon*, as we will keep you posted on the issues of all of the major local races.

Frawley's column appears every other issue.