

A View From The Lighthouse

Here's your gold medal...just kidding!



Andreea Raducan spent most of her young life in Romania training to be a gymnast. As most people know, Raducan had to give up most of her childhood to her dream of becoming a world class gymnast. And all of the hard work had paid off when she won a spot on the Romanian National Gymnastics Team for this year's Olympics in Sydney. Early in the week, Raducan helped the Romanians win a gold medal in the team gymnastics competition and won herself a silver in the vault. She was flying high heading into the competition for the women's all around gold medal. But she suddenly came down with a cold and a slight fever. She went to her team doctor, Iochim Oana, and received some over the counter medicine to alleviate the symptoms. She then went on to win the gold medal. Sounds like one heck of a success story for someone who doesn't turn 17 until Saturday, doesn't it? But then her whole world proceeded to fall apart.

In routine drug testing after her gold medal performance, Raducan tested positive for pseudoephedrine, a substance banned by the International Olympic Committee, which was in the cold medicine that she was given by her team doctor. She was stripped of her gold medal, and her dreams were crushed.

Now I understand that the IOC is trying to crack down on drug use by Olympic athletes. People who are competing in the greatest athletic competition in the world should not be using performance enhancing drugs, but in Raducan's case they went way too far. IOC director, Francois Carrard said that the medication gave her no competitive advantage. So why take away her medal for something given to her by her team doctor? The doctor was punished (he was banned from the next two Olympics in Salt Lake City and Athens), but in reality does that equal what Raducan now has to go through.

Her teammates, in a show of support for her, have returned all of the medals that they won, but this is little consolation. The IOC needs to rethink their ruling on this. Sometimes

even the best intentioned ideas can lead to the worst possible consequences.

What kind of effect does this have on the games? When people around the world tune in to watch an event, does it really mean anything when the winners are announced? Maybe they should stop televising the events and start televising the drug testing; at least then we would know for sure who the real winners were. That's it, we need a new Olympic event — Drug Testing! The person whose blood is closest chemically to being water wins! With as interesting as these Olympics have been, at least the TV ratings would go up a little.

But that is all the Olympics seem to be anymore — one gigantic drug test. Can you remember that last time you read or watched something about the Olympics without hearing something about drugs or "doping." It seems like the person who wins doesn't get the media coverage anymore, it's the person who gets stripped of their title who gains the headlines. And since the Romanians won all three medals for the all-around competition and they all gave them all back, does the gold medal in the competition mean anything? I'm sure the new gold medal winner, who really placed fourth overall, is so happy running around screaming, "everyone gave the medals back so I won! Yippie!"

As these Olympics begin to wind down, here is one thought to keep in mind. The Olympics are supposed to reward people who overcome all adversity to be the best in the world at their sport. Well right now there is a young woman from Romania who performed with a cold and fever to win a gold medal, and it was taken away. What do the Olympics stand for again?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

More parking problems addressed

I read through random articles of The Behrend Beacon every week. Last week I could not help but notice an article entitled "Parking Problems Being Addressed." In this article, the news editor discussed an interview with William Donahue, Manager of Safety and Security at Penn State Behrend. There were a few comments that caught my attention, and I was irritated enough to write about them.

Mr. Donahue is quoted: "Anyone who says we don't have adequate parking on campus is confusing 'adequate' with 'convenient', and they are not the same thing." A statement that does absolutely nothing except attempt to refute the fact that there is a parking problem on campus that the COLLEGE has let get out of control. I would also argue that the statement I hear most often isn't that we don't have adequate parking; rather, we don't have adequate parking where it is needed. I, personally, have not had the

privilege of Police and Safety making my commute more organized by diverting me to a parking lot an entire campus away from my class. I haven't had much trouble finding a decent spot to park relatively close to where I need to be, but the idea that commuters altering their arrival times can remedy parking problems is a Band-Aid at best. Mr. Donahue has apparently suggested that students arrive 5 to 10 minutes earlier, and we could all avoid traffic jams. Again, this is a statement that says absolutely nothing about solutions and seems to make student behavior the root of the problem. It seems Mr. Donahue is confusing 'discussing' a problem with actually 'solving' one.

I cannot tell you how happy I am, as all commuters should be, to hear of Mr. Donahue's "tentative plans" to begin routing commuters to the ARC lot once it opens in October. How early should we arrive then, Mr. Donahue? Maybe the

College should consider building a parking lot somewhere near I-90, and we commuters can just walk from there every morning. Bring your tennis shoes.

Alas, Mr. Donahue has said there are many proposals being discussed, but our hopes are immediately dashed as no definite plans have been made — shocker. I'm personally rooting for the parking deck idea, but I am not holding my breath. I can't help but ask the same loaded question, "What's being done about parking?" I also can't help but wonder something else.....where do YOU park, Mr. Donahue, and how long does it take you to walk to your office every morning?

Samuel Delp
MIS 05

Land of the free, and home of the greedy

Have you ever seen the commercial for the WB with the little Napoleon cartoon? It has this little guy in a military outfit pointing at a map with a stick, saying "Want it, got it, got it, want it, need it, got it, got it..." While I'm not sure what it was supposed to say about the WB, I think it does say something about the American mentality.

Let me ask you this: how many CD players do you have? If your house is anything like mine, you have about four or five — at least one diskman, a little boom box or two, at least one major stereo unit, and maybe a car CD player. You probably also have a computer which plays musical CDs (my family is stoically ignoring the Information Age and we don't have our own computer... yet).

Another question: what's in your family garage? I bet the original plan was to put the cars (notice the plural) in there, but there is no longer enough room because it is so full of other junk. The garage, basement, attic, gameroom, maybe even a shed or two — they are all full of toys and things used for entertainment value that haven't seen the light of day in years. The old Nintendo, the older Atari, the skis, the bicycles, the canoe, the old furniture, the old VCR and the old microwave, the long-outgrown quad, the snowmobile, the pool equipment and toys, the yard games, and Halloween decorations that are so hard to get to that you just buy more every year and add to the pile. They are all hiding in there, reminders of past whims, waiting to be buried under the next wave of trendy sporting goods and cast-off victims of home remodeling.

Okay, one final question: have you ever seen an ad for something and said to yourself or your friends, "I don't care what that costs, I'm going to buy it tomorrow." Or you find out your favorite band is coming to town and, even though you don't have the money, you are totally committed to going, instantly? What the hell, you always have that Penn State Alumni Association credit card. Looks like Joe Pa will score again!

So what's my point? Everything that I've just mentioned sounds pretty normal, right? Well,

Beyond the Cheap Colored Lights Liz Hayes

news editor



that's my point. It IS normal, and maybe that's the problem. We seem to live in a society where we are so accustomed to eventually getting whatever we want that we take it as our God-given right to acquire. So what if we already have a perfectly fine CD player — now we can get a state-of-the-art Mp3 player. So what if our VCR works fine and all of our movies are on videocassette — a DVD player is the latest wave in technology. Yeah, it'll cost a bit now to upgrade, but it will be worth it in the end. Right?

It seems that Manifest Destiny has become our way of life. We are Americans, and we are therefore entitled to own whatever we want — as long as we are willing to pay the cost. It's pretty hypocritical, if you think about it: we complain about how all these conglomerates own everything and don't give the little guy a break; we tell ourselves that we don't vote because politicians only listen to those who pay the big bucks to fund their campaigns; we sneer at people like Bill Gates and Donald Trump because they use their money as they please. And yet, wouldn't any one of us do the same thing if given the chance? Don't we already do it on a smaller scale?

I have brought this topic up before, and have usually been met with the argument that we are entitled to what we have because we have worked for it. We fought many a battle to get the government and economy we wanted, our ancestors broke their backs building our cities and industries, we have been a powerful force in defending others who supposedly want the same things as we do. So why shouldn't we reap the benefits from our labors?

I'm not saying that we shouldn't, exactly. But whose to say that some other country hasn't fought or toiled or defended as bravely and as

diligently as we have? I am not going to pick apart every country on the earth and site all the wars, both literal and figurative, that they've fought, but I'm reasonably certain that there must be other people who have earned the same rights to possess as we have, if such rights exist. So why are we the only ones in the world who seem to take our "rights" for granted?

I am not a sociologist or a philosopher, or even someone who has any education in this type of argument. But it seems to me that we are breeding a society of people who are so consumed with ownership for the sake of ownership that everything else that should matter gets lost in the shuffle. We don't buy a piece of art because it really affected us emotionally; we buy it because we want to hang it on the wall where all of our guests will be able to ooh and aah over it. We don't send people postcards because we were thinking of them while on vacation; we send them to show off the great places we got to go while they were sitting behind their desks at work. We don't drive a nice car because of the gas mileage or the comfort it affords; we drive it so that all the other drivers on the road can drool on their steering wheels when we zip by.

I don't have a solution, as usual. I am guilty of the same things I'm preaching against — I have many CD players, a two-story garage packed full of stuff that will never be used, and a maxed credit card bill that I will probably never pay off, much to my mother's consternation. I have bought things that I couldn't afford and will doubtlessly do it again. I just thought that it might be interesting to note that while the Monroe Doctrine has met with criticism in my American history classes, the basic principles it set up are alive and well in our society. We view the world as one big resource that we are the sole beneficiaries of, and we assume no one will ever be able to take that away from us. Let's just hope that we aren't being delusional.

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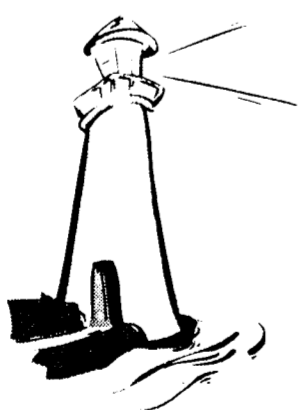
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