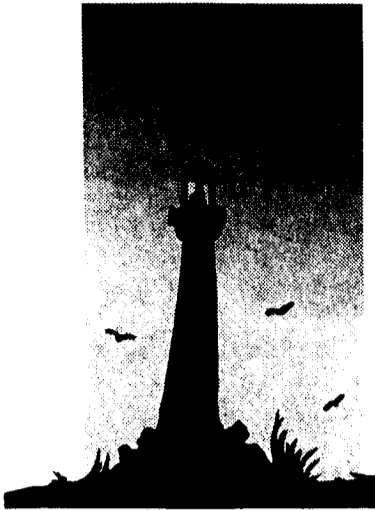


A View From The Lighthouse

Political actors, free food and possible fisticuffs!



So, are you voting for Bush, Gore, or other? You know, George W. Bush, Republican Governor of Texas, and Al Gore, Democratic Vice President of the United States? The two major candidates that are running for president in the 2000 election? The November election in which we, the people, will choose the new leader of the free world? Is this thing on?

Well, those of you who have some clue as to what we're talking about, let's pose another question: why are you voting for a, b, c, or w? Do you like Gore because of his stand on prescription drugs? Or do you like Bush's platform on education reforms? Or maybe you are voting for Nader because you just don't like Stoneface Al or Curious George. But what is it about these candidates that you like or dislike? Is it their stands on social security and military defense that is your deciding factor, or are you picking someone because they look better in Levi's or slipped their wife some tongue on national TV? Hmm, interesting.

Well, for those of you out there who are going to be selecting a leader based on the number of dirty words he has said to reporters, listen up. The *Beacon* and the Honors Programs at Behrend are going to give you the opportunity to gain a little perspective on the actual issues the two main contenders are presenting. We are holding a debate on campus that will give listeners the chance to learn what each candidate is actually planning to do if elected. Informed students will be presenting and arguing the stances for each party. It will be mediated, so there probably won't be any fistfights (unless, of course, some random audience member should choose to throw the first punch... not that we are condoning that). The debate will be structured; the rules agreed to ahead of time will be strictly followed - much like they were in Tuesday's Jim Lehrer debate (I hope you are picking up on my sarcasm, here because I'm laying it on pretty thick).

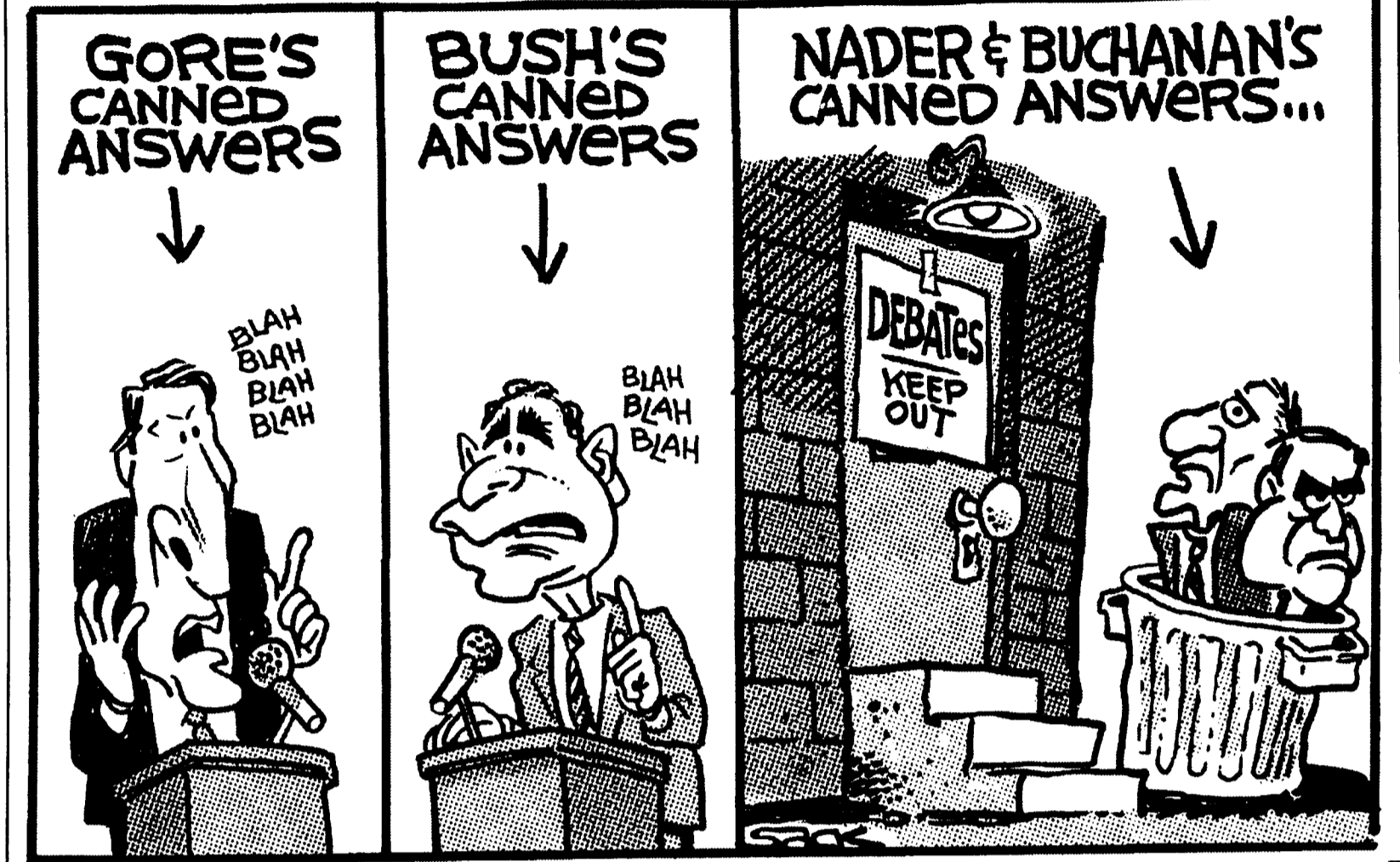
Now, we realize that the idea of gaining knowledge in college (huh huh, that rhymes) may be disturbing to some, so here are a few reasons why this is not a bad thing. For one, think of how shocked your parents will be when

you randomly bring up at the dinner table how you think Gore's plan for dealing with Milosevic is bull. Bet you never saw anyone snarf peas through their nose before! Plus, you will get to see your fellow classmates speak in a public forum other than speech comm 100. And you won't have to give those phony golf claps unless you really mean it! Oh, and local media might be there as well. Think of how impressed when your hometown friends learn you made it on Erie news. Score!

Of course there will be the side benefit of learning what these candidates are really about so that we can make an informed decision when the time comes to perform our constitutional rights. True, that this is not much of a motivator for us Gen Xers, or whatever they are calling us now. Who cares about social security - we aren't going to be able to retire for years. And what's the big deal with missile defense - no one has bombs that will reach the US. Tax cuts for the middle class? Hah! We are all going to be making way more money than those middle class fools. Education reforms? We don't need no ed-ju-cay-shen. We's gonna be graduatin' soon. Lotsa people go to college for several years, and they all like paying out the wazoo for it.

For those who think they know what we are getting at, join us on October 18 in the Reed Commons. There's no WWF events or televised presidential debates scheduled to choose between. There might even be some free food. If nothing else, it's bound to be entertaining. And for those of you who are still trying to figure out who Bush and Gore are, don't worry. I'm sure there will be some reruns or cooking programs on for you to watch.

DEBATES 2000



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Enough "Snyde" parking commentary

Dear Editor,

Perusing the *Beacon* last week, I came across an interesting title that asked, "What Parking Problem?" Following the whimsical title was an article full of "Snyde" commentary that was just too much to ignore. So instead of entertaining "an overwhelming urge to pout" about parking problems, as a mildly irritated commuter, I willingly take the bait dangled before me and will address the article.

Correction 1: The "huge injustice" here is not that all commuters cannot find parking to suit their preferred proximity, but that we all cannot

get parking located in the shade. Please keep that straight.

Correction 2: Surprisingly, for every car I see leaving the campus there is not one, but fifty cars waiting to take that one parking spot left open.

Correction 3: If you can't get parking, "make adjustments in your schedule to make up for the inconveniences." It's a novel idea, but personally I don't have the luxury of leaving work when I please to fetch a prime parking position at Behrend. I leave when the next shift relieves me with no room for argument.

I do agree with the article when it mentioned

banning freshman from keeping cars on campus. Why do I support this? Probably because I will not be an incoming freshman resident next fall. In the myriad parking solutions that have been presented in the last month, that one seems to be the most cost efficient TEMPORARY one. The author even stated that he would start a petition supporting the ban to "satisfy our parking rage." No thanks. Leave it to the commuter council so no time is taken from your writing.

Heidi Proba

Slow down Behrend

Dear Editor,

I have noticed the large amount of letters written to the paper concerning parking. I do think, however, that commuter students have a bigger problem.

On October 2, a commuter student was crossing the road between the Academic parking lot and the Reed building. She was hit by a vehicle and taken away in an ambulance. As of yet, her condition has not been released by St. Vincent's. This student is a nontraditional, single parent who had planned on graduating in May 2001. Because of this accident, her plans for the

future are in jeopardy.

The topic of speeding cars that do not stop for pedestrians has been a cause of grumbling among many commuters for years. I have actually jumped out from in front of speeding cars multiple times, as have many others. What will it take for the speed limit to be enforced? Does somebody have to die?

Granted, there are some signs that urge drivers to slow down (a small Slow sign and a Yield To Pedestrians sign), but we need some more protection. I suggest a four-way stop sign at this intersection, speed bumps throughout campus, and

enforcement of the 15 m.p.h. speed limit.

Above all, I urge, even plead, with my fellow commuters to SLOW DOWN AND PAY ATTENTION! Pedestrians are real people who can be hurt, and who have lives and families that are greatly affected by accidents. I also ask Police and Safety to enforce the speed limit and other traffic rules that directly affect the safety of our commuter students.

Sincerely,
Amy Super, English, 07

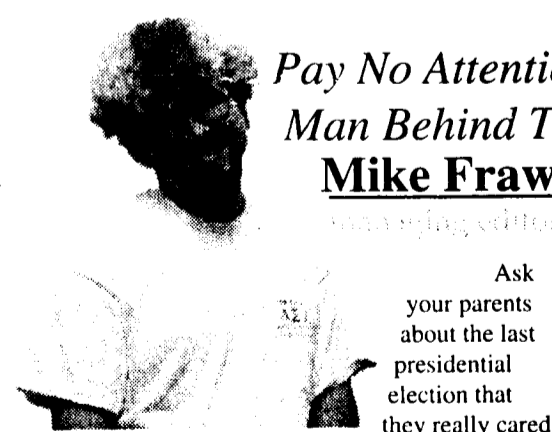
Notif different means the same: picking the right candidate

After watching the presidential debate this week I feel somehow cheated. I am amazed that with as great as our country is, these are the two people that we pick to be nominated for president. What happened to the charismatic leaders of the past who were able to make the people believe that we were a part of something great, that we could accomplish anything that we put our minds to? What happened to hope for a brighter future?

I am now so disillusioned with this presidential election, I don't think that I will be voting for president. Now don't get me wrong, I'll still be voting, just not for the two idiots I just watched act like 4-year olds on TV last night. Isn't it great to see the candidates cut each other off to scream, "I'm right and you're wrong?" I am starting to feel that it doesn't really matter who gets elected, the country will continue to plug along like it always has.

I wish I could feel that my vote would make a difference. That the two candidates had different views of where America would go under their leadership, and I was able to vote for the direction that I wanted it to go, but Gore and Bush are such carbon copies of each other that even the moderator of the debates, Jim Lehrer, had to ask what the difference was between some of their policies.

Forty years ago, the first televised Presidential debates took place, ushering in a new age of politics. People, for the first time, were able to see the candidates, and have television to help them make their decisions. While this might have had the best intentions, televisions have ruined politics in this country. And in the intervening years, people in this country have fundamentally changed, and in my opinion not for the better.



Pay No Attention To The Man Behind The Curtain
Mike Frawley

ask your parents about the last presidential election that they really cared about. I'm willing to bet that they start telling you about John F. Kennedy. What was it about this man that was so moving, and where have men like him gone today? Kennedy did one thing; he gave Americans hope for a better tomorrow. While he was only elected by a narrow margin, voters our age flocked to him feeling that with JFK as our leader they could change the world. How many people are flocking to Gore because he's out to change the world for the better?

Now people tell me that times are different then they were 40 years ago, and a different leader is needed today. But is it really all that different? As we are coming out of a time of tremendous prosperity, so were the fifties. And the problems that existed back then are still the same. People around the world are starving, dying of disease, and being killed in senseless warfare. JFK started programs like the Peace Corps and convinced people that if they tried they could make a difference. Now, we get to hear Bush and Gore

argue how best to waste a budget surplus; boy have things changed. I used to wonder why people our age don't care about politics, but now I am beginning to see why. Candidates like Bush and Gore just suck all of the idealism out of you.

I am about to graduate in December (contrary to popular opinion) and I feel that I should have some kind of drive to change the world, make it a better place for my children, but in reality all I'm concerned about is getting a good paying job where I don't have to work weekends.

Maybe we need to try to rethink our priorities. We need to get out and do something. That 5k walk for the charity of the month is a start, but we could do so much more. As both candidates said, we are at a crossroads, and now a choice needs to be made. Do we continue to live our lives concerned only about the physical wealth we can acquire, or do we drop everything, join the Peace Corps, and give up a few years of our lives to do something worthwhile?

We don't need to go that far to get back on track. People need to take a stand on issues that you feeling strongly about, and don't back down until they are changed for the better. Taking a stand is not always easy, and is not always popular, but that just makes it all the more rewarding when you are done. "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country."

Frawley's column appears every three weeks.

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