

Congratulations, you're an adult, but not quite yet!



Chew on This
Rob Wynne

with service editor

Rob Wynne, at the ripe old age of 19, is considered

in the state of Pennsylvania to be legally an adult. Well, as Bill Clinton may ask, what exactly does "adult" mean? The years 18, 19, and 20 seem to be a buffer zone when it comes to defining a person's age. Granted, there are many legal doors that open when someone turns 18. A person can legally buy tobacco products, legally leave home, legally operate heavy machinery, and legally incur the expense of credit cards. However, there are certain instances in which people may take the age issue too far: so far that the age issue is in violation of all reasonable common sense laws (if only we had them). I had such an instance happen to me over fall break.

Two Wednesdays ago, I was enjoying the end of my 20-mile commute from Behrend. As I was traveling on Rt. 98 in Fairview, I heard a crunch under my hood, and I lost power to my car. Luckily I was able to coast into a Country Fair, from where I later would have my vehicle towed back out to the dealer. It was obvious that something major had gone wrong.

As I placed numerous phone calls to the dealer, I learned that I would be without a car for possibly a week. So, I took out my extended warranty contract and became quickly aware that I was allotted up to \$175 in car rental money in case of a vehicle breakdown. "Excellent!" I thought. I can get a rental and not have to mooch off of anyone else for rides. The idea was excellent -- in theory.

I called some local car rental agencies (names will not be mentioned to protect the guilty), explained that my car had broken down, and that my service contract allotted me money for a car rental. As I proceeded to make reservations and hand over all of my personal information, one of the operators asked, "are you over the age of 21?" Guessing my fate, I said, "No, ma'am, that means I can't get a car, huh?" "Sorry, have a nice day," was her response. I now had bad feelings about my excellent idea. Place after place that I called, including my dealer, always brought up the age issue. One agency stated that their minimum age requirement was 25! Good God, man!

Life Lesson #247 If you are a commuting college student between 18-20 years old who suffers from a vehicle breakdown, don't count on any car dealers or agencies to aid you in your dilemma.

Apparently, rental car agencies view all people under 21 as a safety hazard. They must know that as soon as I get into that car I am going to attempt donuts, drive irresponsibly, shred the tires, and then crash into a tree. They're just soooo smart! NOT!

It's not like when I turn 21, all of my immaturity will automatically be converted into responsibility and maturity, making me more able to operate a motor vehicle. Heck, when I'm 21, I'll still be a full time student with a minimum wage part-time job. I just may have a few more bags under my eyes, that's all.

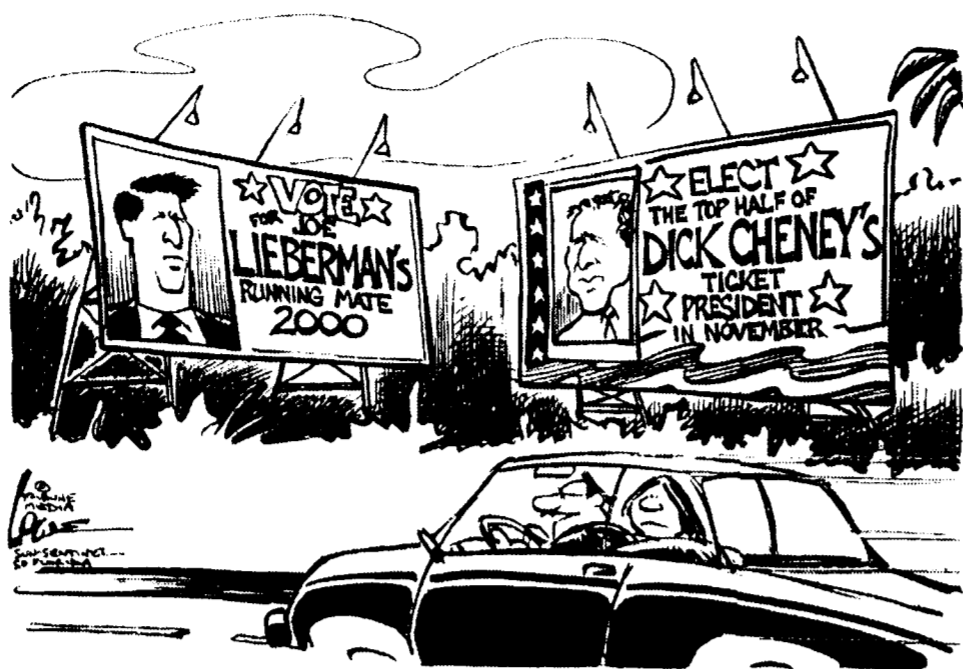
My dilemma was solved, however, when Enterprise Rent-a-Car willingly examined my situation and offered me a solution. "Have your mother come in and sign for a rental, then you can drive your mother's car, is that okay?"

"That's the best solution I've heard today," I replied. The number of working vehicles at our house was the problem, and their offer was a reasonable solution.

In another story, what made matters even funnier that week, was when I switched car insurance companies. While my new agent was explaining to me the discounts I was eligible for, he stated that I was not able to receive the experienced driver discount. This was for drivers age 55 and over. I said to him, "Isn't that when they start to get worse?" A few weeks ago I ran a wire article about an elderly man who backed his car into a bank and killed a small boy. They don't get much more experienced, I guess.

So what did I learn from this situation? It doesn't matter if you have the I.Q. of a shoe - if you are over 21, the world is yours. You can rent cars and buy booze. It's a lot to look forward to.

Wynne's column appears every three weeks.



"I SEE IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THE CAMPAIGNS TO WISE UP."

Tell us what you think!

Send a letter to the Editor! Send all letters to: behrcoll2@aol.com

Advising, FIGs, and all my money...

I am a junior at Behrend, what could I possibly have to say about FIGs (First-Year Interest Groups) considering I never had to take one? That's right, FIGs were created fairly recently, and the incoming fall class of 1999 were the first students to take part in these courses at Behrend College.

Now that I am in my third year, I was looking forward to graduation in May 2002, but the past few weeks have made me realize that probably will not happen. Last fall, my sophomore year, I decided that Biology was not for me and I switched my major to English. I know what you are all thinking: wow what a change of mind! Well, not really. When I decided to come to Behrend it was because it offered great programs in both Biology and English, both of which I was interested in, but I was made to choose. I am sure most of you felt that choice was a fairly difficult one if you were interested in more than one major. So what



Coffee Talk
Kristin Rodgers

has the college done about helping you choose? Well that's where FIGs come in. FIGs are a one-credit course that all incoming students (effective summer/fall 1999) must complete for graduation. These courses were designed to help students find their strengths in a particular major. These classes group students with similar interests and a junior/senior level student within the certain major who acts as a peer mentor to freshmen.

For those students who like many different things, how can one class in one area be beneficial to you? I am not sure it can either. I think there should be a freshmen seminar on how to schedule classes correctly, or how about one to shun students away from switching majors.

Here is why I am angry: During freshmen testing, counseling, and advising the summer before I started my freshman year, I was ill advised by a professor. When he asked my major interests, I responded with Biology and English. Four of my five very first college courses were for the Biology major; the one other was English 15. Would a Biology FIG have helped me? I think the FIGs should be set up much differently than the present ONE area interest. I feel the FIGs should rotate each week. The first week students explore History, the next week students explore Engineering, the third week students are on

to Business, etc. This way, students get exposed to all majors or at least the majority of them during their first semester. I know this may mean a great deal of work on students' and professors' schedules, but at least this way students do not have to wonder if they'll be here for five years. Advising at Behrend College seems to be a major problem with most students. I recently sat in an English class, and the students voiced their concerns to a professor who was appalled about the way advising is being handled. There definitely seems to be a "one chance only" way of doing scheduling correctly, and if you switch majors or miss scheduling a class -- Welcome to your fifth year at Behrend, and more money to the University!! Freshmen and sophomores, have FIGs helped you? Let me know.

Rodgers' column appears every three weeks.

When the smack down must back down

Okay, I'm from the old school. I was a big fan of the WWF back in the day; back when the Ultimate Warrior and Hulk Hogan went at it. And like any average kid today, I went through my influential phase, attempting to mimic my pro wrestling heroes. And I can't tell you how many whippings I received for tearing off my undershirts during my Hulk Hogan transformations.

So I can identify with popular culture's need for the charged show of violence we call wrestling.

But since the days of the Ultimate Warriors and Macho Man Randy Savages, a lot has changed. At any given time I can turn on my tube and observe a wrestling ring which contains a wrestler who palms the neck of his opponent in his hand while he pounds away at the face. Nothing unusual about that, until the recipient of this beat-down becomes a woman.

I don't watch wrestling much anymore, but I'd hate to find out that violence against women has become the norm in this form of



My Society
Jermaine Hardy

entertainment. It seems that our major pro wrestling shows such as the WWF and WCW have been pushing the envelope a bit further with more outrageous renditions of physical battle.

With this, women are being flung across wrestling rings at alarming rates, and I have grown concerned. Some of the examples which have raised my concern consist of women getting their faces repetitiously bashed into walls, being body slammed, closed lined, punched, kicked, and kicked again. Get the picture? Wait, how about a woman getting smothered by the buttocks of a 500lb man? Yeah, these are just some of

the things which have raised my concern. I was not aware of the increasing need in audiences to see women get the crap beat out of them. Thus, I sure would like to know what viewer poll suggested this, and moreover what television programmers would have taken heed to it.

I'm not here to bash the whole setup of today's professional wrestling, nor am I here to expose the social evils evolving from it. I'm just here to bring attention to a fine line, which should be drawn. No matter how much responsibility you want to put on the parents, the huge percentage of young children and impressionable teens who are watching wrestling are being influenced by what they see. Though my mom's whippings didn't make for very pleasant experiences, as she attempted to prevent me from ripping my t-shirts the way Hulk Hogan did, the punishment did little to stop me.

I would hate to see the influence that today's pro wrestling images have on

today's youth, especially those which promote violence to women. And while we all know that the violence in the ring isn't real, let me show you some statistics that are real. In the US, 1 woman is battered every 9 seconds, every minute 1.3 women are raped, and 1 out of 6 women are victims of domestic violence. Thus, are images of violence against women in our best interest? I don't think so. We are easing across a line that should set clear standards not only for our children, but for the country as a whole.

I don't know about the rest of America, but I'd be damned if I caught any one of my nephews disrespecting a woman in any way, let alone putting their hands on her. The images such as those portrayed by today's pro wrestling, which suggest that hitting a woman is okay, will make the already low moral standards of our youth even lower if we aren't cautious with the messages we send them.

Hardy's column appears every three weeks

National Commentary

I don't want my MTV

by James Boozer
Campus Correspondent- Columbia College

Listen up, music fans! In case you haven't heard the news, the Box Music Network, described as "the world's only interactive all-music cable channel," will soon be wiped out of existence by its music video rival MTV.

For those of us who turned from MTV to the Box to fulfill our growing need to watch music videos 24/7, the news that the one channel that "exactly" serves the needs and wants of its viewers will soon be gone for good, leaves many people, myself included, wondering why?

According to an article published on

Billboard's Web site late last month, the Miami-based Box Music Network will be downsized and folded into the operations of MTV2. MTV2 was created several years ago to play more videos after MTV itself decided to turn its attention to game shows and reality series like "The Real World" and "Road Rules."

Launched as the Jukebox Network in March 1989, the Box offers viewers a large variety of music videos to choose from via a 900 number for \$1.99 per video giving them the power to program their television. MTV Networks purchased the Box in 1999.

Their "music television you control" approach made the Box a fan favorite among teens and 18-to-25 year-olds. It's that core constituency advertising executives covet and in this case, the group MTV and its parent company Viacom wants to

control.

The Box reaches 24 million homes (double the number homes it reached in 1990) and showcases a large and vast sampling of new music videos each week. Reportedly, MTV adds fewer than 20 videos a week.

And probably the most important factor in this "so-called" merger, is that the Box caters to genres like punk, death metal, hardcore rap and country, which is something you would likely never see on MTV. And to no one's surprise, there is no reported guarantee that once the Box and MTV2 become one network, you, the viewer, will be able to have any say in what you see.

Let's face it...if this was about cutting cost and saving money, why not shut down MTV2? The network is mainly available on satellite TV and reaches less than half the households of the Box. This seems to me to

'The Hot Debate of The Week' Inventing the Internet and fuzzy math

If your idea of a successful debate is to come out of it with a firm decision on whom you disagree with and who you agree with, then maybe the three presidential debates between Al Gore and George W. Bush might not have been meaningful for you. But if your idea of a successful debate is to hear about the similarities and differences and learn about the type of people the debaters are, then these past three debates have served their purpose.

Anyone can read about the issues in the newspaper or watch the nighttime news to hear about the campaign trail of our presidential nominees. But not often do we get to see our candidates react to people and their concerns. We hear sound bites that attempt to capture concerns of candidates through a series of two sentences, then believe that we are educated enough to make a choice. But often times, those two sentences only give one a sense of a particular issue, not the whole picture.

These debates have served their purpose because they showed people who we are voting for. If we saw these two men as bickerers that will say anything to get elected, then we could rethink our choice. But if there was one solitary moment when a candidate looked at us and touched our hearts in some way about something, then maybe we can enter the voting booths with a purpose and confidence, not a guess based on a phony ad or 20 second sound bite.

Every week, two editors from the staff will debate a topic that is hot. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to email suggestions for the hot topic. Send ideas to behrcoll2@aol.com

With the election coming up, people who are still undecided about who they are going to vote for are now paying close attention to the issues that each candidate is putting forth to make an informed decision. At least in theory that is what they should be doing. And the best source of this information should have been the presidential debates. Notice that I said should have been the best source of information: as it was, the debates were horrible to watch.

First of all, both candidates spent weeks arguing about the format and rules for the debates, then immediately proceeded to break their own rules. You mean to tell me that they couldn't even follow their own rules? Watching two grown men fight like three year olds and scream, "I'm right and you're wrong," makes for good television... if you're watching Jerry Springer.

And ask someone whom he or she is voting for, and why. I am willing to bet that the answer you get is based on who looked or sounded better, and not on any real issues. All the Democrats or Republicans need to do to win an election is to run a Playboy Playmate for president, and because she looked so damn good in her saran-wrap bikini at the debate, how could you not vote for her!

Now don't get me wrong, I like the idea of Presidential debates, but maybe we need to go back to radio debates, that way people are forced to make the decision based on what the candidates say, and not who looks better during their close-up.