

FROM FRONT PAGE

TALK BACK TO THE BEACON

were upset by the seeming lack of attention to smaller groups that have made significant changes in terms of membership and format. The members of the diversity groups and the editorial board of the *Beacon* attempted to reach a middle ground to supplement the needs of the newspaper, the many organizations, and the students of Behrend.

The editorial board of the *Beacon* responded to the complaints and concerns by sending out an invitation to join the newspaper staff and start making a change. The representatives from the organizations responded by saying that it is the *Beacon's* responsibility to reach out to the Behrend community for new members by attending meetings of different organizations, or possibly holding a membership drive. Jason Snyder, editor-in-chief of the *Beacon*, collected names of potential staff writers for the spring semester.

Other suggestions included writing out the full names of organizations instead of abbreviations in the calendar page, a possible political column featuring College Democrats and College Republicans, and more understandable horoscopes. Dr. Robert Speel, associate professor of political science and advisor to the *Beacon*, closed by commenting that the paper attempts to cover as many events as possible, but space is limited. To cover every happening on a campus of 3,700 students would take a 100 page paper each week, many more staff writers, and more monetary funds.

The group left for the night after two hours of debate with the hopes of improvement and change. "Only in America can we have an event like this," said Horton. "Everyone

wants a better newspaper—both those who produce it and the consumer."

The *Beacon* staff is currently asking for staff writers to stop by the office to bring positive change to Behrend's paper. Keenan Hanson, member of Student Government, summed up the evening by saying, "ask not what the *Beacon* can do for you, but what you can do for the *Beacon*."

BELOW: Jermaine Hardy, the features co-editor for the *Beacon* and programs director for NSBE, listens to the discussion while moderator Mr. Gary Horton, the executive director for the Urban Erie Community Development Corporation, videotaped the discussion for future reference.



PHOTOS BY JEFF MILLER



ABOVE: The *Beacon* and the National Society of Black Engineers hosted "Talk Back to the *Beacon*" on Tuesday, December 5, in the MISC Studio. Members of various diversity and minority organizations on campus participated by voicing their suggestions and complaints to members of the *Beacon* staff.

What do you want for Christmas?



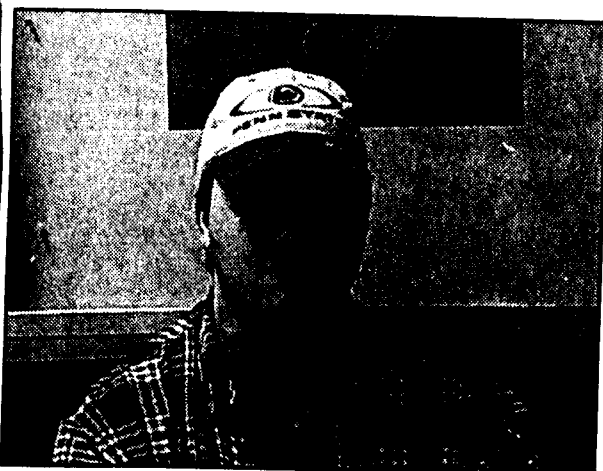
"I want my mom to help me with my wedding."

Maria Alomar  
General Arts and Sciences, 05



"I want peace on earth."

Jan Jatti,  
Assistant Manager of the  
Behrend Book Store



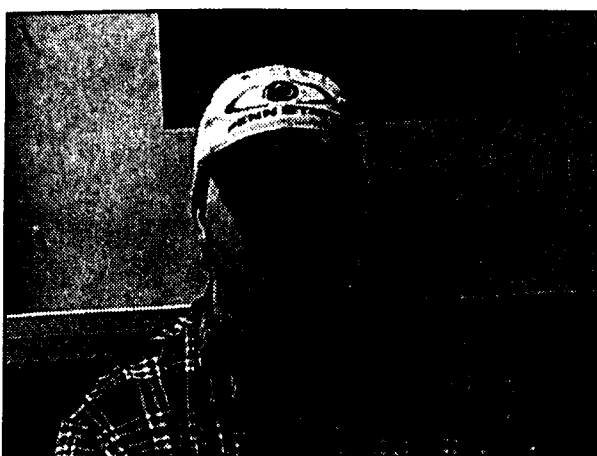
"I want money because tuition is so high."

Jared Hawk  
Political Science, 07



"I want money because I'm planning a trip."

Alejandra Marroquin  
Psychology, 05



"I want money because I'm broke and because Penn State tuition is so much."

John Hodges  
Political Science, 01

CELEBRATIONS

lim calendar. Throughout the entire month Muslims fast, and concentrate on their faith rather than daily concerns. During the day they are not allowed to eat or drink. Then at nightfall they have Iftar, a large meal, which is accompanied by prayer. Eating and drinking can continue until daybreak. On the first day of the next month, Shawwal, the fast ends. Ramadan is then followed by Id-al-Fitr (the Feast of Fast Breaking). At this point gifts are exchanged and friends and family gather for prayer and large meals.

The Jewish holiday Channukah is a festival of rededication. This is an eight day event that begins on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev. This holiday began because after the reign of Alexander the Great, a time when Jews were permitted to observe their religion, Antiochus IV took over the region and began to oppress the Jews. After a revolt, the Jews were finally victorious. At the time of the rededicat-

ion there was little oil to light the menorah. Rather than having enough oil to light the menorah throughout the night every night, there was only enough for one night. Miraculously it burned for eight days. The festival was then declared to celebrate this miracle. Most important, the holiday is not to glorify the war, but to commemorate the miracle of the oil.

Finally, Christmas, which is celebrated on December 25, celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ in the Christian religion. The reason why Christmas is celebrated on December 25 is ultimately unknown, for it is believed that Jesus Christ was born on January 6. It is assumed that it is to coincide with the pagan Roman festival that celebrated the winter solstice, also known as Natalis Solis Invicti. The traditions that are often followed stem from many different origins. A time of merrymaking and exchanging of gifts originated from the Roman holiday Saturnalia on December 17. December 25 was also re-

garded as the birth date of Mithra, an Iranian mystery god. Mithra was known as the Sun of Righteousness. On the Roman New Year (January 1), houses were decorated with pines and lights, and gifts were given to the poor. The traditions of Yule were combined with the Christmas holiday from German and Celtic Yule rites. The European Middle Ages bore the evergreens, a symbol of survival.

Saint Nicholas, today known as Santa Claus, started the tradition of exchanging gifts. Warmth and lasting life, symbolized by fire and lights, have always been associated with the festivities.

These few celebrations represent how diverse the many holidays are, although the underlying theme seems to be a period for family and friends to gather for fellowship, celebrate their origins, and appreciate their existence. The campus is definitely diverse in not only opinions, but celebrations.

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