

Call for the end of winter



Chit Chat for Change
Christine Kleck
associate editor

Yes, folks, it's that time of year again. The beautiful Christmas snow of December is now nothing but gross slippery slush that caused you to...whoops...run through that red light. All those last minute gifts and errands that you didn't think would add up are now the reason that your credit card's finance charges are more than double what you charged on the card in the first place. Ah yes...the mid-winter slump, blues, cabin fever...whatever you want to call it...has hit us again...pretty hard, I might add.

If you're a college student, you're just getting used to your classes. You've hopefully already dropped the ones you can't stand, and yes...you've got bills...credit card bills, and more credit card bills. All those extra hours you worked at your part time job over Christmas break won't even put a dent in that mounting debt. After all, our finance charges are more than TRIPLE what we've charged on the card in the first place. It's not like we got anything fun with our credit cards. Oh, no way! I mean after finishing your Christmas shopping...and buying...well...BOOKS...everything was just about maxed out.

Well, I guess instead of griping about this dull and dreary time of year, the best thing to do is to get over it by overcoming it. Set some goals for yourself. If that box of chocolates, five fruit cakes, and dozen Santa cut-out cookies has finally taken its place on what's left of your perfectly toned summer 2000 body, start exercising! Incorporate more fruit into your diet. Gradually mix things into your life that make you think of summer. Throw on a pair of shorts (if they still fit), while you study in your (hopefully warm) dorm room. On a sunny day, break out those sunglasses and summer hat. Not only will it protect your eyes from the sun's rays, but it's also a great way to remind yourself that somehow, someday all this snow will eventually melt and spring and summer will arrive.

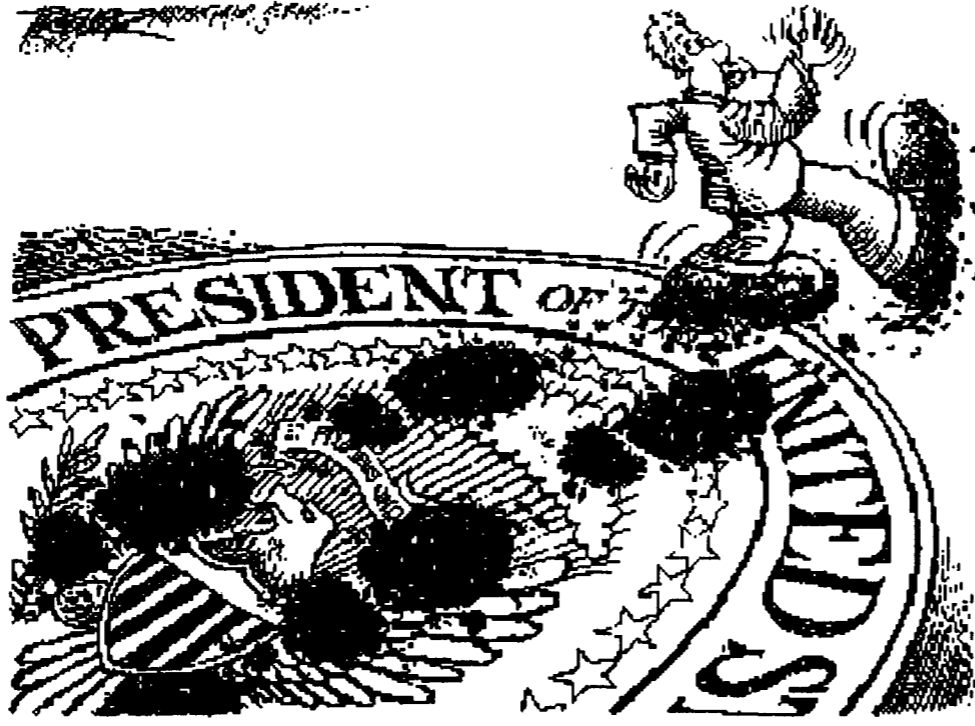
... Create an official countdown to summer. I know it sounds corny, but it will give you a good idea about when your goals should be reached. Then give yourself countdowns within your summer countdown. For example, a countdown till the day that you are ten pounds lighter, or a countdown till that huge (not to mention overwhelming) paper is due, or maybe a countdown till the next Midnight Bingo in February. Then if you make it to those goals (without going totally insane), reward yourself!! If you lose ten lbs, maybe go bathing suit or summer clothes shopping (don't forget to use the credit card that you have paid off entirely!!). If you get your paper done in time, and you earn your desired grade, maybe celebrate by going to a movie, or to a fancy restaurant with some friends (THEIR treat!!). All of these things will make the time go quickly, without taking advantage or losing sight of the current day. By setting goals, I think it's easier to realize how important each day (or stepping stone) is to that final destination (or goal).

If you like this time of year...God bless you!! Become a mentor...that is for someone who doesn't like this time of year. Explain to them the positives of these winter months. Maybe how winter driving will make you a better driver all year, because it trains you to be more cautious and alert. Don't forget to include all of the winter holidays!! How Valentine's Day always seems to fall at about the perfect time every year...right about when you are going to burst from all the snow, ice and cabin fever victims. Don't forget resolutions. Yeah...you know...those things that you began over Christmas break...and broke by the time you were back to school.

Revising those broken resolutions is a great way to get yourself out of an impossible winter slump. There is usually some worthwhile benefit that comes along with a well-kept resolution. Organization, that feeling of accomplishment, and personal satisfaction can all be acquired if you stick to that resolution (not to mention getting yourself out of that nasty winter rut that everyone seems to be in right now).

So there you have it. There is a way out. We've all been through it before. Just think...twelve months ago you were going through the exact same thing that you are going through now...and you made it out. Blast some music, read a book, take a jog...GET OUT OF THAT SLUMP...after all, there are only roughly three months left in the spring semester!!

Kleck's column appears every three weeks



'The Hot Debate of The Week' Welcome Bush

For one of his first presidential initiatives Bush is proposing school vouchers, but will they really work?

For too long, public schools have failed in teaching children how to read and how to perform well in math. We've been too accepting in letting public schools go through the motions of education. Meanwhile, students have been missing out on their chance to be successful, missing out on the basics of further education.

The question about vouchers asks if this is acceptable anymore. Parents are forced to keep their children in schools that won't teach, because there aren't any other options for them. Do we punish children whose parents can't afford tuition for private schools or transportation to passing schools?

Vouchers aren't saying that we've given up on failing schools. It simply says we want improvement.

There is agreement that we shouldn't rush into the voucher program. First, there are other options. Public schools have three years to improve, to teach children the fundamentals of education. If success isn't immediate, principals will be fired, and more money will be spent.

But the line should be drawn there. If new leadership in certain public schools isn't effective, we can't continue to spend money on a lost cause. We need a better cause in which to spend the money.

This idea forces change. Teachers' jobs will rely on their ability to teach. Principals' positions will rely on their ability to force improvement among our children. We have to stop punishing children that can't afford a quality education. We simply need to make sure they are getting a quality education that ensures equal opportunity for all.

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

So, we are going to take money away from public schools and give it to parents who may or may not be able to determine which schools are best for their children. But what then happens to the public schools that aren't doing well?

The government has taken away that school's funding. After enough funding is taken away the public school is going to realize that it is doing something wrong and will try to correct its mistakes. Which appears to be how the plan is supposed to work - giving public schools some really tough incentives to get their acts together. But where will the money come from to change? All the funding has been taken away and given to the parents, and none is left for the schools. Even if the school was willing to change, it would have no way to pay for those changes. So that school is just going to continue its downhill trend and eventually close. Then there will be no more public schools.

And what happens when there are only a few choices to send your kids to? What if you are Jewish and the only good school in your area is a Catholic or Buddhist private school? Or what if your kids are African American or Hispanic and the only school that you can feasibly send them to is in a predominantly white neighborhood that is hostile to African Americans or Hispanics?

School vouchers are not going to improve public education. In the long run, it will probably ruin it.

Tell us what you think!

Send a letter to the Editor!

Send all letters to:

behrcoll2@aol.com

Here's a tip

Seeing that a lot of us are broke college students, especially after having to pay the outrageous prices in the bookstore, I'm sure most of you have been forced to work at some point in your college careers.

We Behrend students are employed all over the city in all sorts of different jobs, while some of us work right here on campus. I bet that it I'd be right on the money if I guessed that a lot of you hate your jobs for a variety of reasons, so here are some of the more popular ones. Please feel free to pick which one is most relevant to you, a) you hate the mindlessness of your job, b) you hate the people you work with, c) you are sick of being paid minimum wage, d) you just hate work in general, e) for those of you in customer service jobs, you despise the general public whose crap you are definitely not being paid enough to put up with or, g) you are a server who is getting really sick of customers who you gave excellent or at least darn good service to tipping you practically nothing! Personally, I'd have to go with answer g, although e is running a close second.

Now don't get me wrong, since I started serving at a local restaurant almost six months ago, I have made quite a bit of money. I have waited on countless people who are really generous, tipping far more than fifteen percent. This is wonderful, a perk of being a server I must admit. But, if



What's My Point?
Kim Zuck
editorial columnist

realize all this is not humanly possible. But, overall I try to be as conscientious, quick, and personable as possible.

So as you may have been thinking, maybe these women can't afford to give a decent tip. Well, this is not true because the women I am referring to are always upper scale businesswomen with perfectly manicured fingernails, snazzy business attire, and expensive jewelry. These women are so tight with their money it's amazing they can get their wallet open without a crowbar. They are generally pretty nice, but really picky.

For example, they will say, "can I have my salad with no tomatoes, croutons, olives, onions, or cheese? And can I have my drink in a tall glass with just a little ice, not too much, and a water with two or three lemon wedges? Oh, yes and extra dressing for my salad, on the side, of course!" This is fine, I understand that some people do not like certain vegetables, but why not just order a bowl of lettuce and a lemon? But, I digress. So, these women get their food and drinks in a timely fashion and sometimes will gush, "Oh, you're so sweet. You're a really good server!" So, in my naive beginnings as a server, I would eagerly bring the bill and anticipate my big tip. But, for some reason a lot of

businesswomen don't know what a big tip is (less than ten percent seems to be the only figure they know). So, for instance when I collect the bill and money from them, they will say in a sugary tone, "Oh just keep the change, you're tip's included."

As I walk away, counting the money and realize they only gave me \$40.00 on a \$37.99 check, after I catered to their every single whim for over two hours, I feel like marching right back to their table and saying, "Listen here, sweetie, I've got a little tip for you, how about you take your snobby butt out of here pronto and don't come back until you learn how to calculate a decent tip!" But, of course I don't, I just keep walking with a smile pasted on, quietly muttering choice words under my breath.

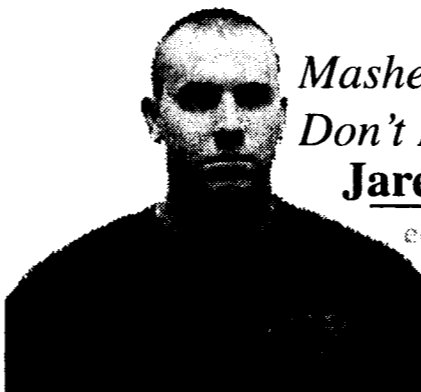
So, what's my point in all this? Well, just to plead with you to never forget what it was like to be a broke, struggling college student working a crappy job. Hopefully when we graduate we will land good jobs and be prosperous and successful in our careers. So, here's a little tip for the future, no matter how far we go or who we get to know, we should never lose sight of what it means to be fair and decent to others because most of us can testify from experience that being broke ain't no joke!

Zuck's column appears every three weeks.

World Wide Trash

I'm currently a miserable resident of Ohio Hall, otherwise known as "the lemon." I have been noticing for some time the letters "WWT" written on various parts of the building, and from what I gather, it is also written on other buildings and sidewalks in other parts of campus. I did some investigating into what this means and who is doing it, and I'm here to let everyone know what I've learned.

WWT is the acronym for the words "World Wide Trash." This is a group of kids (probably from some local high school) that are sneaking over in the middle of the night to write it on my building, along with various others throughout the college. I have learned that this is a very elite group of people, so my attempts to infiltrate them would be in vain. At first, I couldn't really understand why people would repeatedly feel the need to inform the whole campus of their presence, but then I realized the natural desire for "the elite" to let their establishment be known. This is common throughout life, and we deal with it all the time whether we like it or not. I mean hey,



Mashed Potatoes Don't Mean Gravy
Jared Matola
editorial columnist

some of us are just better than others.

Now that we understand why it is done, let's take a look into the members themselves, and find out the necessary qualifications for becoming a member. To be a WWT member several things are necessary, as this is a group, and with all groups there are certain distinguishing characteristics. First of all, smoking is mandatory, I mean you have to let your presence be known to the people you sit by in class, as we all know the delightful smell of smoke on top of morning breath slicing through the air during an 8:00 a.m. class.

Now as far as the hairstyle goes, there is

some leeway here. Basically anything is good, as long as the hair is dirty and not maintained. Short clean hair is simply unacceptable. As far as clothes go, baggy pants are good, if there is an oil stain on them, that's all the better (you will move up quickly

through the ranks by taking advantage of that tip). Also another important point to remember about clothes is that washing must be kept to a minimum at all times, and it is common practice to have a huge beer stain on the front of the shirt; yellow armpit stains also enhance the look. Facial hair with food stuck in it is also another thing to try (although this is not mandatory).

Now you're probably thinking, "why would you dress, look and smell like this?" I know that the mentally challenged might think that this behavior would signify "dirtball status" but quite the contrary. The unique look allows members to spot each other, and the smell allows them to sniff each other out in a heavy crowd of

people. As I mentioned earlier my attempts to infiltrate proved to be unsuccessful. This is because no matter how hard I tried, I was unable to obtain the necessary degree of "dirtball status" (correction: I meant sophistication).

Now I'm not trying to bash these people or humiliate them, I'm just trying to understand them. Why is vandalism such a cool thing? Is it "cool" to make the campus look worse than it already does? I used to think that there was some type of screening process that was used during admission, but apparently this fell through. There are some people you just can't communicate with, those that will do what they want when they want. We are seeing this more and more throughout society. Respect is a word that seems to have disappeared off the face of the earth. I don't really consider this an "issue" so to speak, but more of a wakeup call to the rest of us. Evaluate yourself, assess what you are here for, and for god's sake, try to imagine how your acts project yourself to the rest of the world.

Matola's column appears every three weeks.

Fighting over something with your friends? Want to see it debated in the newspaper? Send us your idea, and we will debate it in our 'Hot Debate' of the week discussion!
behrcoll2@aol.com