

A View From The Lighthouse

Behrend is the best in the area

Just this past week, Behrend has made two major announcements dealing with expansion at the college. Yes, the ARC is open and another company has agreed to join Knowledge Park. Add these to a multitude of other announcements over the past five years, and there is justifiable cause in calling Behrend the best college in northwest Pennsylvania.



Behrend has always seemed to be the quiet college in the area without much media coverage and congratulations of its accomplishments. Colleges like Mercyhurst, Gannon, and Edinboro seemed to be associated as the most popular colleges in the area. Or at least that was the perception.

But now, in 2001, things are different. Behrend is headlining the local newspaper more and more as the schools that once brought pride to the Erie community begin to be silenced by the growth and improvement of this college.

Aside from the occasional gripe of bad food and poor parking conditions, not to mention the increase in tuition, the students at this school should be realizing what this school really does have to offer over the others in this community.

No other school in this area has a Knowledge Park. No other school in this area has as modern of an athletic complex. No other school or business in this area has a more professional and caring child care center. No other school in this area has a campus that is more pleasant to walk through than this one. And no other school in this area has as promising a plan for the future.

We could go on if we were to take in the opinions of students at the other colleges in this area, but in an attempt to stay modest, we won't.

Even though Behrend doesn't wish to pride itself on this idea, this college does open up the opportunity to students to transfer to University Park after completing their general education. This benefits our students because we are open to

more areas of study without dealing with the class sizes that University Park's general education classes hold. Behrend's students can take their English 15 in a class size of 30 instead of a class size double that. But with Gannon, Mercyhurst, Edinboro and Allegheny, there is no opportunity for this. What they offer is what you get.

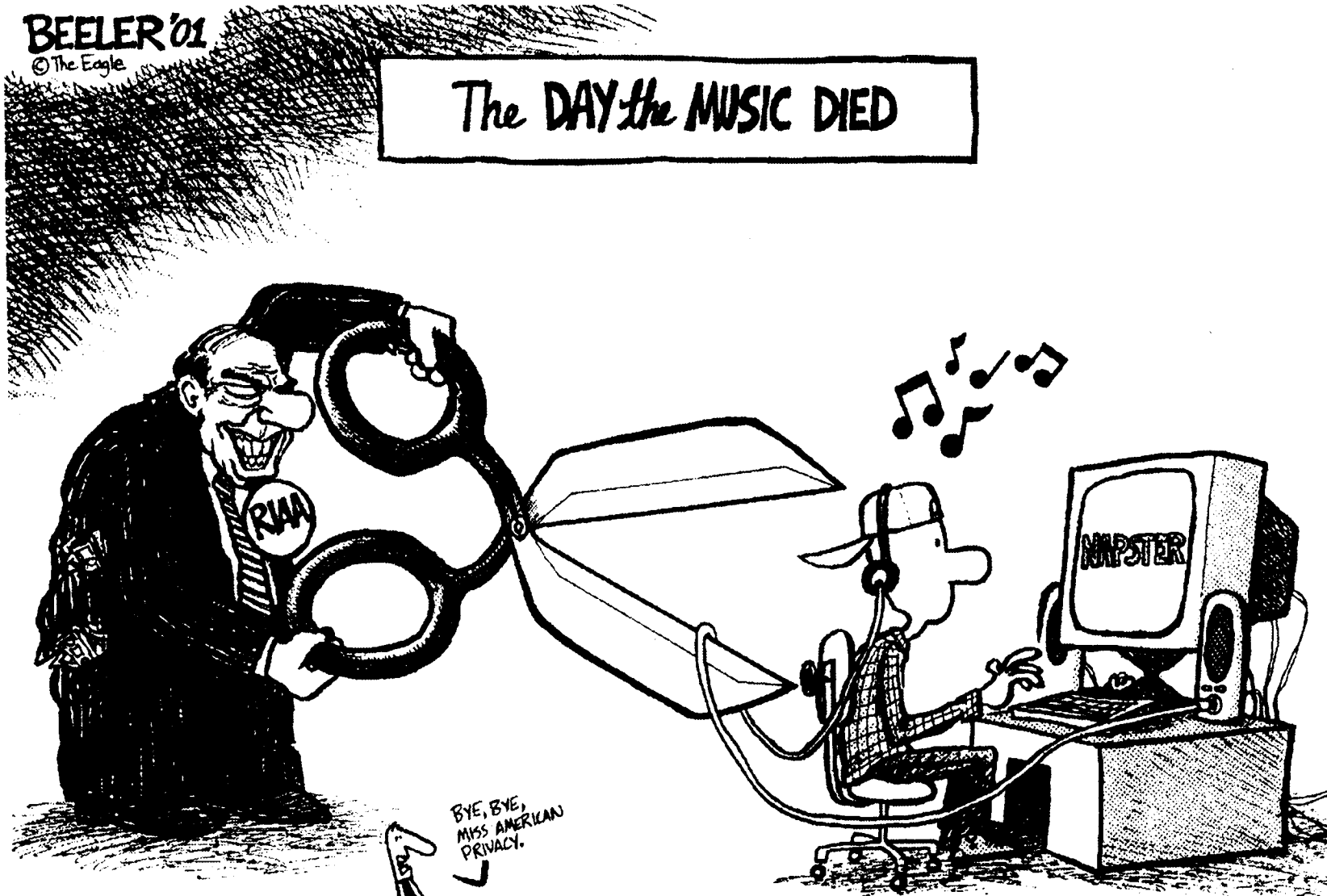
Student organizations on this campus can rival any student organizations at other campuses in this area. The Behrend Student Government is always moving forward and representing student needs in a respectable manner. Take for example their stance on the child care center they took earlier this semester. The group saw students in need and made their concerns clear to the administration that the center was of vital importance to the students, faculty and staff at this college.

Behrend has some of the most involved diversity focused groups in this area, always planning events to expand Behrend students' knowledge. We'll even go as far as to say that this college has the best newspaper in the area, but maybe that's a little biased.

And we can't forget that Behrend is one of the top ten "hot and trendy" schools in the country. But we won't elaborate on that.

So, there it is. One of the most vocal critics of this campus, the *Beacon*, even realizes the advantages of attending this school over the others in northwest Pennsylvania. Are we perfect? No! But are we the best in town? You betcha!

BEELER '01
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safety over privacy?

Dear Editor,

At 2:00 a.m. on February 8th, 2001, I am writing this letter thoroughly pissed off. About one half hour ago, several people entered my dormitory floor, and as far as I am concerned caused a great disturbance. I had gotten up a few minutes prior to use the bathroom and as I was washing my hands, I heard the door to my floor open. This is a very normal occurrence at 1:30 in the morning on my floor, so at first I thought nothing of it. But a minute later, when the noise coming from these people still had not passed, I began to get angry. I waited in the bathroom a good five minutes for these people to enter someone's room or leave the floor. Finally, while the noise had definitely not stopped, but had at

least moved further down the hall, I left the bathroom. As I approached my door, I saw a sign taped to it entitled, "Gotcha. You were caught with your door unlocked!!" Of course my door was unlocked! I had just left my room to use the bathroom! Otherwise, my door would have been securely locked.

What ticks me off about this is the very fact of how they found out my door had been unlocked at the time. They would have obviously tried to open my door. Where do these people get off doing this? This is exactly the type of behavior these people are condemning. They claim that "perpetrators" have "simply walked in" to peoples' dorm rooms "because the residents didn't lock their doors!" Maybe if people like them weren't walking around

opening people's doors in the middle of the night, there'd be less of the "crimes" they were reporting. And not only were they trespassing, but they were being obnoxiously loud. They obviously didn't care if someone came out to see what they were doing, as they were so loud! These people may think that they are doing us a service, but all they are really doing is causing us an inconvenience. Rather than tape these "Gotcha" pamphlets to our doors, they ought to issue letters of apology to those of us they disturbed and angered.

An Angry Dormitory Resident
(Editor's note: this letter was submitted before Spring Break. No more unsigned letters will be accepted for this page.)

Maybe you should go back to college for another seven years and study a globe



Beyond the Cheap Colored Lights
Liz Hayes

Let me start out with a little disclaimer: I am in no way discouraging people from bashing our school. If I were to write that nothing was wrong with Behrend and the Penn State system, I would be the biggest hypocrite on campus. I whine about our university everyday. However, there have been some gripes I've heard lately that I think are really out there, and though it irks me a bit to be the school's defender, I just have to say something here. Yikes!

Let's start with tuition. Yeah, five or six grand a year - or however much it costs now - is a lot of money. It is especially a princely sum when you are just out of high school, working at McDonalds and earning a grand total of \$7,428.92 a year. However, if you take a look at the cost of going to other colleges in-state, it ain't that bad. Of the four colleges in the Erie area, only Edinboro is cheaper than Behrend - and if you want to go to Edinboro, more power to you. You will always be working at McDonalds. You might move up to middle management though. Both Gannon and Mercyhurst cost well over a \$10,000. Now, my fellow nerds and I will retire to the nerdery with our calculators and figure this out, but I think that \$10K is a bit more than \$6K.

So don't keep whining about how much it costs to go here. You are getting a pretty good deal. While we may not be entirely sure why, Penn State seems to be a fairly respected school. If you want to go to college, I don't think you are going to be able to do so for much cheaper than Penn State and get the same quality of education. Of course, there are those great community colleges around that employers think so highly of.

Okay, enough about that. Moving on . . . I think many people are missing the point of a college education. Yes, it is important that we get jobs after college.

We have accumulated huge debts from going to this horribly expensive school and we need to pay them off. In other words, we need to make money. So I agree that it is important to get a degree that will enable you to get a job. However, from its conception, college was designed to do a bit more than just get you behind a desk pushing papers.

General education has a purpose, believe it or not. We are now living in a society in which it is vital that people learn more than one skill. For those who think that they will graduate with one degree, get a job, and do that exact same job for the rest of their employed lives, check in with reality for a moment. Most people now have several jobs in their lives, and I'm not talking about moving to a higher position in the same department. I'm talking about completely different professions and job descriptions. If you only get training for one specific job, what are you going to do when that job becomes obsolete? The way technology is moving, it is a pretty good bet that your job will change or even cease to exist before you retire.

That is where general education comes into play. You gain background in other areas and become that well-rounded individual. It sounds pretty sappy, but it's true. And employers do care what you know. I recently had an interview for an internship. I had to take a pretty intense spelling and grammar test - no spell check allowed. I also had to take a general knowledge test. Thanks to my electives and general education classes, I probably knew the answers to 30% more of the questions that I otherwise would not have known. I knew Ishmael was the central character in *Moby Dick* (thanks Dr. Morris), I knew that the Treaty of Versailles ended World War I (thanks Dr. Meyerhuber), and I knew that the boat Darwin sailed on was called the *Beagle* (thanks Dr. Hamilton).

Sure, it seems like a waste of time taking music theory and the history of the non-Western world when you are planning on becoming a

mechanical engineer. And maybe you can't see the benefits of learning the names of the constellations or the major comedies of Shakespeare when all you want to do is immerse yourself in economics. But you don't know where you will be in ten years. It would really suck to lose a job in your desired field because you didn't know enough about the world around you to make intelligent conversation with your employer or prospective clients. It would be rather awkward sitting around the lunch table with your coworkers while they are comparing the situation in Eastern Europe to the start of WWII and all you can add is the funny comment Letterman made last night about George Bush's haircut. And how about when the boss asks you to take clients to the opera and you can't say one word to them the whole night because you know nothing about the opera, music, or even the directions to the theatre.

A college education is designed to educate you - in as many areas as possible. If you wanted to only learn one thing and get a job doing only that one thing, that's what the gazillion two-year tech schools were for. I think most colleges are pretty clear on the fact that they still make students take general education courses. And while I am with the rest of you in boycotting gym classes - oh, no, excuse me - ESACT classes, that's about as far as I go. I like the fact that I can converse intelligently with well-educated adults on a variety of subjects. I like being able to play *Trivial Pursuit* or to watch *Jeopardy!* and actually know one out of ten answers. I like when I understand the allusions to historical events that pop up in modern songs.

Well, luckily for all of us, I think I've run out of positive things to say about Behrend. We can all take a sigh of relief. I hope that wasn't as painful for you as it was for me. Stay tuned for the next installment of my life and I'm sure I will be back in critical form. Thanks for listening!

Hayes' column appears every three weeks.

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