

A View From The Lighthouse

The SAT Controversy, Beacon Style

Richard Atkinson will soon be the hero and icon of many high school kids. No, he doesn't play a pro-sport, nor is he a WWF wrestler. He did, however, manage to tackle the SATs and is considering booting them out of his arena, the University of California. Atkinson claims that the SATs are not a good enough tool to be used in considering a student for admission to college, and that a new, more effective test should be implemented.



We could have told you so. Actually, we're quite glad that some business-suit wearin' starched and clean shaven college administrator woke up to the issue of the SATs and decided to do something about it. Now don't get us wrong, the SAT is a valid tool to measure a student's performance in math and verbal skills, but is there more to the equation?

- A) Yes, of course there is.
- B) Yeah, maybe.
- C) No, the tests are effective.
- D) SATs - what r those about?

If you picked letter B, start reading the newspaper more often and take a stand for something! If you picked letter A, you'd agree with Richard Atkinson and the Behrend Beacon, something to be very proud of! Measuring a student's performance on the SAT is like looking at a new car and trying to give a review without even driving it. How's that for a SAT question? The point is that a complete picture of a student cannot be attained by just merely measuring reading and verbal skills of a person - that's not how the real world works.

Say for example that a student earned a 1500-something on his/her tests but really didn't care for much else. Just a plain bookworm, passing up opportunities to participate in extra-curricular events and community service projects. His/Her classmate, however, was involved in many activities and was a local coordinator for the March of Dimes. That person's score was maybe a 900. Clearly a discrepancy, but if it came down to the decision between the two, who should make it in? The seemingly gifted student or the one that may struggle a bit because of other obligations? It's something to consider.

Of course, colleges don't just look at the SAT, they look at attendance, grades, and so on and so forth... Wait? Did we say grades? What is an A and what is

a B? Some high schools don't even use the A-F grade scale anymore. They use numbers or rate by "Excelling," "Passing," or "Failing." Where is the standard? The SAT seems to be a good candidate as it has measured a number of students' performance over the last 75 years. Is a little bit heavier weight placed on the SAT? It's possible.

Okay, so we've complained about the problem, now what? There are many solutions being proposed not only by Richard Atkinson, but also by President George W. Bush. Both men believe that there should be a standard by which students are measured, but maybe the solution lies in stressing the fundamentals and offering more testing at the lower grade levels. This would help poke a hole in grade-inflation and begin to establish a national "norm."

Also, there is heavy consideration by some of the 300 schools who have already dropped the SAT from their admission requirements to adopt the SAT II. The SAT II, unknown to many, has been around for quite some time and measures certain subjects like English Composition, Spanish, and certain types of Math. The only problem is that each carries a fee. A few other solutions include weighing a student essay sample a bit more and possibly holding personal interviews with potential students.

So to make our opinion very clear, we support the idea that Richard Atkinson has started, and we hope someday it will hit Behrend. Perhaps a larger variety of students with different interests will be admitted if the SAT is set aside and a look at the bigger picture, not just the preview, is taken into consideration. How about a match between Atkinson and Stone Cold? They could throw books at each other... nah, we'll settle with him working on the SAT problem.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Student defends Police and Safety

This is in response to the *Letters to the Editor* article in the Friday, February 9 edition, "Questioning Police and Safety."

Behrend spans many acres of land, most which is wooded, and officers patrol these areas as well as academic buildings/parking lots. The size of Behrend (in acres) exceeds that of every other PSU campus (even UP).

Police and Safety currently employs five full-time officers and two full-time protection guards. To employ more officers would take more money, and if someone would like to donate funds to pay for another salary, I'm sure the office would be extremely grateful. Having only five officers makes it almost impossible to have more than three people covering a shift.

Police & Safety officers are called upon to do much more than guarantee the safety of vehicles. When someone locks themselves out of a room or has an overflowing toilet, who do they call? The first reaction is to pick up the phone and dial 6101, because our officers are also trained mechanics, plumbers, and magicians. If you want an officer out patrolling, encourage other offices to have night staff so our officers don't have to do other's jobs. Not only do they have to quit patrolling to answer these calls, but they have to devote time to solving such mysteries as "who keeps calling me at 2:00 a.m.," and "why did my car get towed, even though I parked in front of a TOW-AWAY ZONE sign."

To provide better security in the lots would cost money. Who will pay for this? I don't suppose the student body would want to. Students complain non-stop about the cost of parking, but they don't know where the money goes. The funds from permits do NOT go into the budget for P&S. They get put into a pool of money to purchase things like parking lots, snow removal and summer maintenance. I'm sure the cost of parking would decrease if P&S were to decide that a new, unpaved, unsupervised, unguarded, maintenance-free lot were to be erected in the cow pasture down the road.

Parking ticket money does NOT go into the budget of P&S. Who gets this money? YOU do. SGA redistributes it back out to student affiliations. Does your fraternity need more money for beer? Go park on the grass a few times....

The new computers at P&S were NOT paid for with your permit/ticket money. The office has a yearly budget with which to buy supplies. These new computers were badly needed and are much appreciated.

If you would like the officers to spend more time patrolling, go apply for a job. Student Auxiliary are hired to do key services, escorts and ticket writing. The same goes for weekend office hours. How can the officer sit in the office to answer the over-flowing toilet call if (s)he is out watching your vehicle? I forgot, our officers have the ability to be in two places at once.

The parking lot wouldn't be so overcrowded if there were fewer cars in it. I know this is difficult, but fewer

cars = more open parking spaces. What does this mean? If you want to make parking a better thing, you would offer to give up your parking space. But that vehicle is needed for a job, a ride, or something else that would cause life to cease if not cared for. Such is the story throughout campus. Until students start leaving their vehicles at home, parking will continue to be a problem.

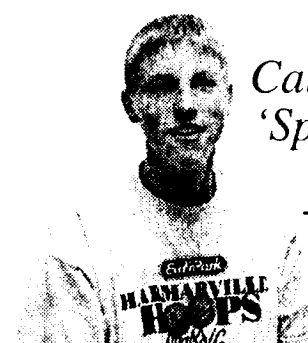
There is a reason why our officers have the same rights as "real" police, *they are real police.*

It isn't the officer's fault that your car was broken into, that you parked where you shouldn't have, or that your permit was not displayed. But somehow the blame always gets shifted onto the officer. What you don't see them doing is taking care of the important things: making sure the campus is safe, finding new ways to ensure safety and helping victims of crime. While the safety of your vehicle is truly something to consider, there are lots of obstacles to overcome. The most apparent is the society we live in. Why do people damage other's property? That is the most important question. So when a car is damaged, don't accuse the officer of not being there when it happened, ask your peers why it happened.

A Behrend chemistry major

(editor's note: This letter was submitted before spring break. No more unsigned letters will be printed in the Beacon.)

Diversity begins by opening your eyes



Caught in the 'Spyder' Web
Jason Snyder
Editor-in-Chief

Americans voted for Al Gore than George W. Bush. I didn't count the people in the audience, but I could bet that more African Americans attended the speeches made by Cornel West and Arthur Flowers than Brandi Chastain. There are some things that are obvious. And it is obvious that more African Americans will attend a concert by Shaggy than if we had groups like Fuel or Our Lady Peace.

I don't believe we need to do a study before we make a safe assumption. That is sort of what seemed to be implied when saying that "I don't know for a fact that Shaggy appeals more to minorities" than someone like Fuel does. I would hope that we wouldn't ask the Behrend Concert Committee to make a survey that asks people to write what their skin color is before they mark down their favorite band.

My actual point when making that "racist" comment was to say that it is fair. It's fair that after having all-white bands like the Goo Goo Dolls and Train, that Behrend invites a more diverse selection of music to this campus. And Shaggy is the perfect choice. According to his website, "Hotshot proves Shaggy remains a master of many styles - from reggae and dancehall to pop/R&B - making it a happy hunting ground for every kind of music fan." *Every kind of music fan* refers to whites, blacks, men, women and anybody else who turns on a radio for entertainment.

I'll admit that my statement was stereotypical. We have been taught since elementary school that stereotyping people is bad. I agree...in some cases. If I am speaking to an individual member of a Greek organization, I shouldn't assume that person enjoys partying or drinking, just because it fits the Greek stereotype. But I don't see what's wrong with assuming that more people would attend a frat party for alcohol than attending a Beacon shindig to get smashed. The number of people that last attended a Beacon party was about ten. How many people attended the last frat party?

But when you think about it, aren't we basically being asked to stereotype or make assumptions based on race sometimes? Just think if race

wasn't taken into consideration and coincidentally all entertainers on campus, including bands, speakers and performers were white. Would that be fair? I would hope that people would stand up and say that it isn't. I would hope that the people who plan these events would be allowed to assume that all-white entertainment is not going to appeal to the black students, faculty and staff on this campus.

Am I wrong for saying that Fuel would appeal more to the white students on this campus? Am I wrong for saying that the Dave Matthews Band appeals more to college students than to the elderly? I don't believe many people would think that I am wrong for making such assumptions. But as soon as we throw the words "black" or "African American" or "minorities" into the mix, we all suddenly approach the topic with caution. It's as if some people are asking to remove these words from the English dictionary.

The words "black" and "white" aren't bad. They are not something we should avoid saying in fear that we aren't being completely politically correct. It's my belief that we should embrace these words. We should understand that in many ways we are different. We have different backgrounds. We enjoy different things. We relate to different people. It's what makes us human. We should be equal in the eyes of the law, but different in the eyes of each other.

Anyone who believes that being blind to color is the solution to fixing a prejudiced society is foolish and, in a way, racist. Being blind to color is pretending that we are all the same, living in a white-dominated world where blacks should just keep adjusting to our way of living. And that is unacceptable.

I welcome Shaggy. And it's not because I think his music is better than Fuel or Our Lady Peace. It's because he will give many whites and many blacks some diverse music that has eluded Behrend since I stepped foot on this campus three years ago.

Snyder's column appears every three weeks.

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