

## THE BEHREND BEACON

published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

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**•Letter Policy•**

The *Beacon* encourages letters to the editor. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer. Writers can mail letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Sunday for inclusion in that week's issue.

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Need to get something off your chest?

**Send letters, both positive and negative, to the editor!**

**behrcoll2@aol.com**

### A VIEW FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE

## CAUTION: Construction ahead . . . for next five years

Welcome back everyone! It's another fall semester and that means yet another chance to tell everyone how much we here at the *Beacon* detest the construction going on! Now that almost half of the people on the staff are commuters, the bitterness has only increased with the onset of this semester.

Let's start with the most obvious part: the traffic. The lines to get on and off campus at any given time are enough to make even the most mild-tempered commuter develop a case of road rage that would make a Bostonian proud! Nothing is more frustrating than sitting there while you watch a guy in a pretty orange vest wave on every row of traffic except the one that you are sitting in.

We do have to thank them for placing those wonderful heavy machinery crossing signs up to warn us that we are about to endure another 20 minutes of bad radio before we get to park our cars. And since we are on the subject of parking...

Let us, for a moment, pretend that construction of this great new highway is going to finish sometime this decade. OK, since we are using our imaginations, let's pretend that the administrators finally get wise to the fact that we need a stinking parking garage!

It is chaos in the commuter parking lots at any given time. There are cars everywhere and no one is safe! Sure, it keeps Police and Safety putting up all those cute little 'Full' signs at the entrance of every lot on campus, but really, don't they have enough to do? Now we know why they need to carry weapons: to keep all the commuters from breaking out into Jerry Springer-like behavior while fighting over a spot somewhere in a five-mile radius of campus! The answer seems so simple: just build up (i.e., a garage), instead of around the trees! And since we are on the subject of trees...

Where did all the trees go? Oh yeah, that's right, into the gigantic chipper/shredder thing that turned them into a big huge pile of mulch! If you had the pleasure of visiting Behrend during the summer, you would have witnessed the homicide of about an acre of trees. We don't want to alarm anyone,

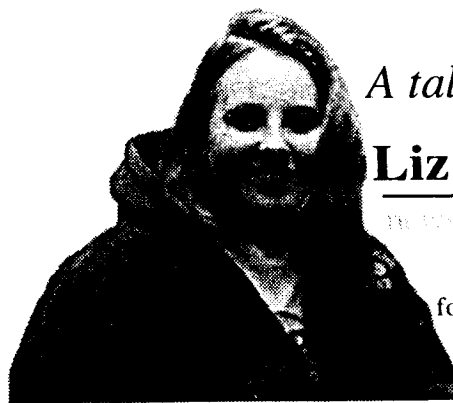


but the squirrels might be running out of places to dwell. And since we are on the subject of huge eyesores...

Oh wait, we weren't on that subject yet. But we are now! It has been rumored in the past that the college won't construct any buildings over four stories high so as not to take away from the natural beauty of the campus. But they will build a new four-lane highway right through the entrance of campus. Not that the tremendous pile of dirt and dead trees doesn't look great right there behind the Penn State Erie brick wall, but honestly, it looks a heck of a lot worse than a four-story building! And since we were on the subject of not being able to get from one side of the campus to the other without encountering an obstruction...

Has anyone tried to get to Logan House lately (you know, that building independent of the campus that you pass while driving to Buffalo Road)? It's probably a good thing you don't have a reason to go to Logan House, because the one path (aside from busy, heavy machinery-laden Station Road) to get there from campus is blocked off. You are denied! Let's just hope they don't block off the Behrend Fields...or plow them over for that matter!

What do we hope to prove by talking about all this in the paper? The same as usual: not much. We just thought there might be some other students, faculty, and staff out there that are as inconvenienced as we are. And since we are all in this together for the next five years (at the minimum), let's band together to make sure that the construction doesn't get out of hand and leave not only the squirrels, but also us, the Behrend community, without a place to park!



A tale told by an idiot

**Liz Hayes**

## Ugly Americans

Not a good idea when you are on someone else's turf!

And yet, people were doing it all the time. Nothing was good enough, modern enough, or fast enough to make so many Americans happy. In other words, Europe wasn't America. Well, news flash, America doesn't occupy the whole globe...yet. When you go to another country, you are supposedly going because it IS different - not because it is the same. That's part of the "international experience."

Another common complaint of Americans was that Europeans were so rude. Maybe because they were sick of arrogant Americans coming and bashing their country! Do you hear foreigners coming to America and openly insulting the country the minute they step foot on land? I haven't. And maybe foreigners find Americans to be really rude! Hey, there's a thought.

I mean, how nice are we really to people coming from other countries? Throughout history we have blamed foreigners for all our social and economic problems. We shove them into little sections of city ghettos, insult them because they don't speak English well or at all, and treat their children like second-class citizens. And then we get upset because the Parisians don't respond well to our weak attempts at French and our inability to understand them. But do we blame ourselves? Of course not - it's not our fault!

It was rather frustrating to hear people blaming their messed up orders at restaurants on the waiter's misunderstanding. Wouldn't it be

our misunderstanding? If someone from Lithuania ordered food at our restaurant and the waiter couldn't understand Lithuanian, who would you say was at fault? Certainly not the American waiter. True, English is more universal than Lithuanian or even French. But if English isn't the first language of the person you are speaking to, it doesn't really matter how many other people understand it.

I guess my point is we need to have a bit more tolerance for other cultures. Yeah, our country is a superpower right now. But the Roman Empire once ruled the world, and look where the Italians are now. How many schools in the world are requiring students to know Latin so they can communicate globally?

And don't forget, the United States has only been around for a couple hundred years. Half the countries in Europe were world powers for a short time span, just like the U.S. I think someone needs to come up and knock some of that arrogance out of us. We are the young, upstart whippersnappers. We should have a bit more respect for countries that have been around for a couple millennia because they've got a few years on us.

*\*\*And for those who are confused about the headline of this editorial, The Ugly American is a book about failed American diplomacy and arrogance in Southeast Asia during the 1970s. Surprised you didn't know.*

*Hayes' column appears every three weeks.*