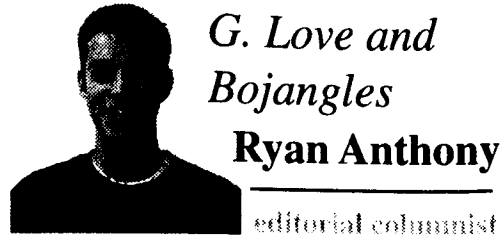


Lack of courtesy on the roadways



G. Love and
Bojangles
Ryan Anthony
editorial columnist

We are all college students. Therefore, 3 a.m. phone calls are not too much out of the ordinary. You know how the conversations go:

You: (groggily) "Hello."
Your friend: (slurring) "Hey! I'm drunk. What are you doing? Come over and party!"
At this point you hang up on your drunken buddy and fall back asleep, thinking nothing more of it.

Now imagine your parents getting the 3 a.m. phone call. It's doubtful they have friends who call them this late, so there is probably another reason for the call. Imagine your parents waking up for a phone call in the middle of the night with a police officer on the other end telling them their son or daughter was in an accident caused by a drunk driver.

I am coming off of the best summer of my life. After two months of working my butt off, I hopped on a plane and spent five weeks exploring Europe. I initially planned on using this first editorial to tell you all about it. Unfortunately, events of this past weekend have changed that and I feel the need to impart my opinion on something else.

Early last Saturday morning or late last Friday night (whichever you prefer), an intoxicated student driving up Jordan Road plowed into a Police and Safety officer pulling out of a parking lot. The student's high speed caused the officer's car to crumple and sail 100 feet up the hill. The student was flown by Lifestar to an area hospital, where he was in serious condition.

You always hear about the drunk drivers being the ones receiving the lesser ill, but when you are not wearing a seatbelt, your head is bound to end up on the other side of the windshield. The officer, fortunately, was only slightly injured.

I don't want to sound like an overbearing parent, but please! I cannot understand for the life of me why people do this. What makes a person who clearly knows he has been drinking get behind the wheel of a two ton automobile...especially if this person is underage?

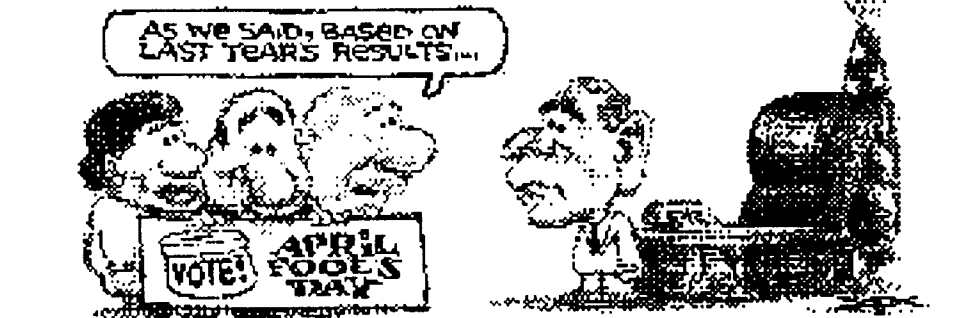
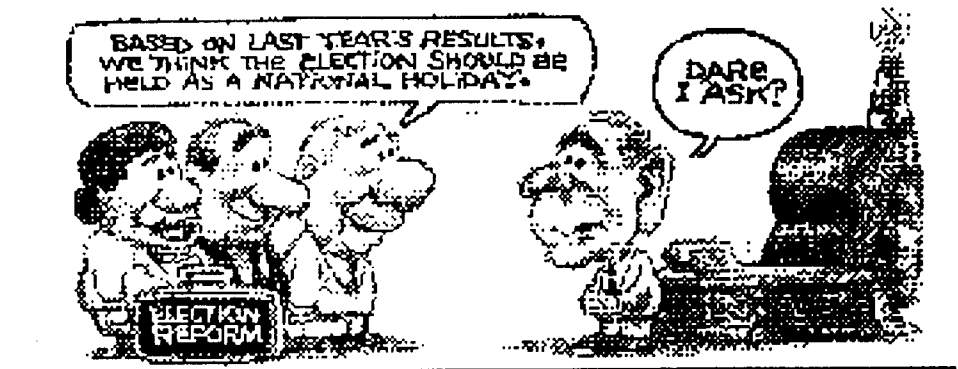
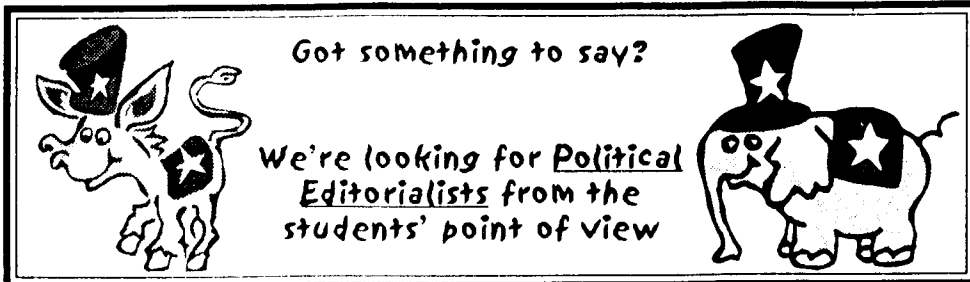
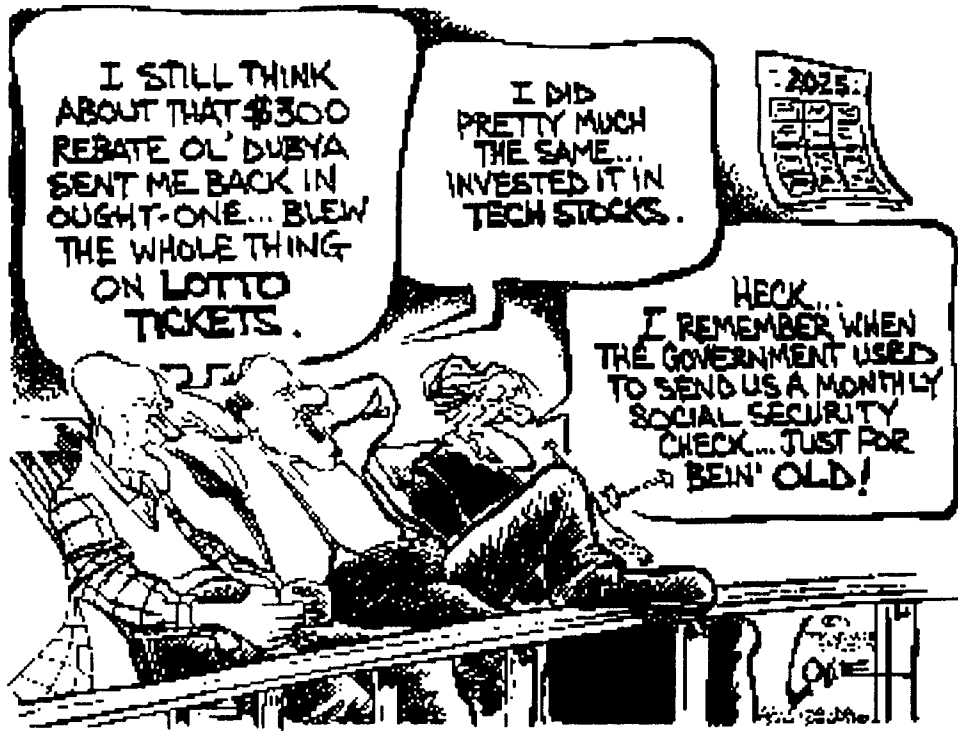
I find it hard to believe that people are too DUMB to not know their limits. I am sure we have all heard at some point in time someone bragging about how they drove home, despite being completely wasted. How does a person take pride in this? It is STUPID. Do these people not realize that they are not the only ones out there on the roads? It's not like they are getting behind the wheel of a go-cart. Statistics say that on any given weekend, one in 10 drivers has been drinking. An out-of-control car traveling 30 miles per hour can do a lot of damage.

Pennsylvania's "zero tolerance" law allows minors a blood-alcohol level of .02—how that is zero, I don't know. Regardless, keep in mind that for most people this is only one drink. So what if you just have one drink and feel like you can drive home safely? What if something happens while you are driving home and it is not even your fault? You are the one underage with a blood alcohol content above the legal limit. You are the one who will face the consequences for years to come.

And that's just from one drink. What if you have a few more and then decide to get behind the wheel? These consequences, as proved time and again, are often disastrous. The legal limit in Pennsylvania for adults is .10, but I am not talking about adults in this article. I'm talking about the sheer stupidity of minors, driving under the influence of alcohol.

I understand that we have only been back at school for two weeks and everyone is anxious to have fun with their friends they didn't see all summer, but please do it responsibly. I see no problem with any student having fun with a beer or two, even if the student is not of legal age. The thing I have a problem with is when drunkenness gets out of control. Please know your limits and NEVER attempt to drive when you've been drinking. There is no shame in handing over your keys to someone else. Keep in mind the rest of us sober folks who are driving on the same roads as you.

Anthony's column appears every three weeks.



The Hot Debate of The Week Cruel or crucial?

Pluripotent stem cell research is vital to science and advancement in health care. It could help to understand complex events occurring during human development, making it possible to identify the factors involved in cellular decision-making process.

This may also lead to understanding some of our most serious medical conditions, such as cancer and birth defects that are due to abnormal cell specialization and cell division. Stem cell research could change the development of drugs and how we test them for safety. Medications could initially be tested using human cell lines. Only the drugs that are safe and appear to have beneficial effects in cell line testing would be further tested in laboratory animals and human subjects.

The most potential of stem cells is the generation of cells and tissue for "cell therapies." Donated organs and tissues are often used to replace destroyed tissue. Unfortunately, people suffering from these disorders outnumber the organs available for transplant. Instead, transplant of healthy heart muscle cells provides hope for patients whose hearts cannot pump adequately. The hope is developing heart muscle cells from human stem cells and transplanting them into the failing heart in order to correct the function of the failing heart.

Stem cells offer the possibility of renewable sources of replacement cells and tissue to treat diseases, conditions, and disabilities including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, Type I Diabetes, spinal cord injury, stroke, burns, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. If you were suffering, and this was the cure, wouldn't you welcome it with open arms?

Stem cell research is inhumane and cruel. Through research of the topic one will come to find that scientists are taking living embryos and using them for scientific purposes. From a religious point of view, this is manslaughter.

The process of this research is, after a woman has had an abortion she is given the option of letting the science use the embryo for the research, or being rid of it. Not only does this promote abortion, this glorifies it!

Scientists also have no idea whether these stem cells can be useful at all. Until recently they had been getting these cells from healthy human organs and blood. Their research in this concluded that stem cells from healthy organs and blood was only marginally helpful. What if the research of embryos turns out to be just as effective? How much human life are they ready to waste?

As I was reading through some articles online, I ran across something that piqued my interest. In one interview on CNN with Elizabeth Cohen, a group participant in this interview is quoted as saying, "You can take these embryos and turn them into any type of human tissue you need, inject it into the organ that is damaged, and the cell will repair itself?" This sounds quite a bit like cloning to me. In this case, we are letting the scientists play God, which may someday prove to be destructive. I believe that stem cell research should be disapproved by President Bush and all scientists researching it should be stopped.

E.Carr

A.M. Havey

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

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

Things to do in Erie #3: Fun with road construction



Attitude problem
Paige Miles

I am sitting in the passenger seat of a 1992 (POS) Ford Tempo, heading west on a major Erie highway. The four of us occupying the car cannot find anything either worthwhile or fun to do that doesn't require large sums of money (anything over a dollar). In front of us, the highway, once four lanes, is shut down to two lanes by a series of orange- and white-striped rectangle barriers. Those barriers must be calling out to the driver as he accelerates to 70 mph and takes out the first one in the row. It is loud. I am waiting for the window to shatter.

When I do finally open my eyes, I ask where the barrier went and what happened to it. "Disintegrated," replies the driver. "Simply disintegrated."

I am not sure if this only occurred in Erie, or across Pennsylvania this summer, but it seemed as if there was an unusually large amount of road construction. A normal three-

minute drive home from work often turned into a 45-minute wait on Water Street in 90-degree weather (with air conditioning on the fritz). Some genius decided to repave Buffalo Road (which I at least agree is a good idea since my CD-player would completely shut down from the bumps when driving the stretch from Giant Eagle to AutoZone).

When Buffalo Road was finally paved, it seemed there would be some relief. No, someone else decided to put sidewalks in. Seems like a small task, right? Nope. Sure, the sidewalks were placed and the world appeared happy again, but two days later, the new sidewalks were removed. Okay, so PennDot changed its mind. No biggie. Waste our tax dollars; we're used to it. Maybe it's a good idea; an unusually large amount of people do walk along Buffalo Road. (I highly respect these individuals; I would be scared out of my mind to make that trek, especially during rush hour.) What gives the impression to be a simple task has turned into World War III between PennDot and motorists.

Sidewalks aren't the only menace to road warriors on Buffalo Road. The traffic light at the intersection of Saltsman and Buffalo roads is broken more than it is functional, which causes construction workers to navigate and

direct traffic themselves. I feel bad for PennDot employees. Yes, they are making fairly decent money, but they are putting their lives at risk with every car that goes by. Not to mention that the sweltering heat and humidity isn't very pleasant either. I have seen more middle fingers from construction workers in the past four months than I have seen from cranky teenagers in sports cars in my life. In fact, in the intensity and stress of construction, I believe my middle finger has been more practical than any other part of my body as well.

So, what is the good out of all of this black-top evil? Road construction is fun, as aforementioned. I am in no way suggesting that anyone in any way should hinder the hard work that PennDot employees do, but road construction games do provide the best stress relief. For example, I have been told many tales over the past few months of SUVs and pickup trucks that have been seen swerving to hit the orange and white rectangle barriers. At first, one would think they just suck at driving or have had a few too many Labatt's. But no, they are just entertaining themselves. Notice the lack of orange road cones lately? That's because every red-blooded teenager in Erie has stolen one, which has led to the extinction of road cones in Erie County.

But what happens to these cones when they disappear from their home on the pavement? They end up in parking lots, blocking off school entrances, rerouting traffic, etc. (I am not in any way attempting to portray myself as guilty. I just happen to know of people who do these stunts.) And last, it has been recently discovered that the road barriers with the blinkers on top make great lamps when electricity bills just get too darn high. As an added benefit, they shut off with a swift kick.

Maybe the annoyances of the road construction do outweigh the fun aspects for now, but soon we'll all have nice smooth roads again...until next summer. My solution? Do the construction at night. It saves motorists gas, it saves stress, and maybe it keeps the PennDot workers a little more happy.

Finally, my dear friend who owns the Tempo has become bored with running over barriers. His next goal is to somehow ramp the bridge that is missing on Route 5 in North East. Good luck, hon. Leave me out of this one.

Miles' column appears every three weeks.

Coming attraction: A new 'real world'



Caught in the 'Spyder' Web
Jason Snyder
editorial columnist

College campuses all over the country seem to have a different name for us. They call us "fourth-year students," or "students in their seventh semester." The most common and widespread name is "seniors," which comes with the understanding that we are college seniors as opposed to high school "kids." I, however, have a new name for fourth-year, seventh-semester seniors...we are students of "the real world."

We heard our parents tell us more than a thousand times about this "real world." Whenever a night came when two essays

were due, one project was to be completed and work just happened to schedule you from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., your parents would chime in with those dreaded words, "Welcome to the real world." That's about the time that your eyes rolled instinctively into the back of your head, and in a bothered voice, you would insist, "This is not the real world."

Well, it is. And why deny it? We act as if there is some sort of negative connotation to go along with the phrase "the real world." We assume everything that goes along with the real world is burdensome and uneventful. Seniors are beginning to understand that these accusations are false.

The real world means that you and your best friend from fourth grade can finally go to the bars and have a couple of beers. It means you can be a little freer with your language in front of your parents, without fear

of getting that "look" that every parent seems to have. It means that high school buddies are beginning to send out wedding invitations and baby announcements. It means that you can finally leave your jobs at McDonald's, K-mart or Ponderosa and work at places that actually interest you. It means you can move out of your parents' house and finally buy all that junk food that Mom used to tell you would rot your teeth.

What is so bad about that? The real world is the transition from 10-page papers, group projects, final exams, extracurricular activities and part-time jobs to eight-hour workdays in an environment of your choosing. The transition is a time where everything seems to speed up. Decisions become a little more important. And you finally realize that whatever you do now has a direct correlation to where you will be in five years. You are finally rewarded for the 16 years of education that you thought would never end.

Three months ago, I was a 20-year old college junior, living at home with a part-

time job in the restaurant business, and a full-time job as editor-in-chief of this paper, thinking the two most important things in life involved a perfect *Beacon* and a perfect *Beacon*.

Today, I am a legal drinker, working part time at the Erie Times-News, living away from home for the first time ever, and understanding that the two most important things in life involve resumes and interviews.

I've jumped on a ride that isn't slowing down. It is an adventure moving from the daily grind of part-time jobs and pointless general education classes to working at a job that will affect my future and an education that will prepare me for my time in the real world.

So, the next time my parents welcome me to their world, I will take it as a compliment. Because in a contest between yesterday and the real world, I will take the latter of the two choices anytime.

Snyder's column appears every three weeks.