

THE BEHREND BEACON

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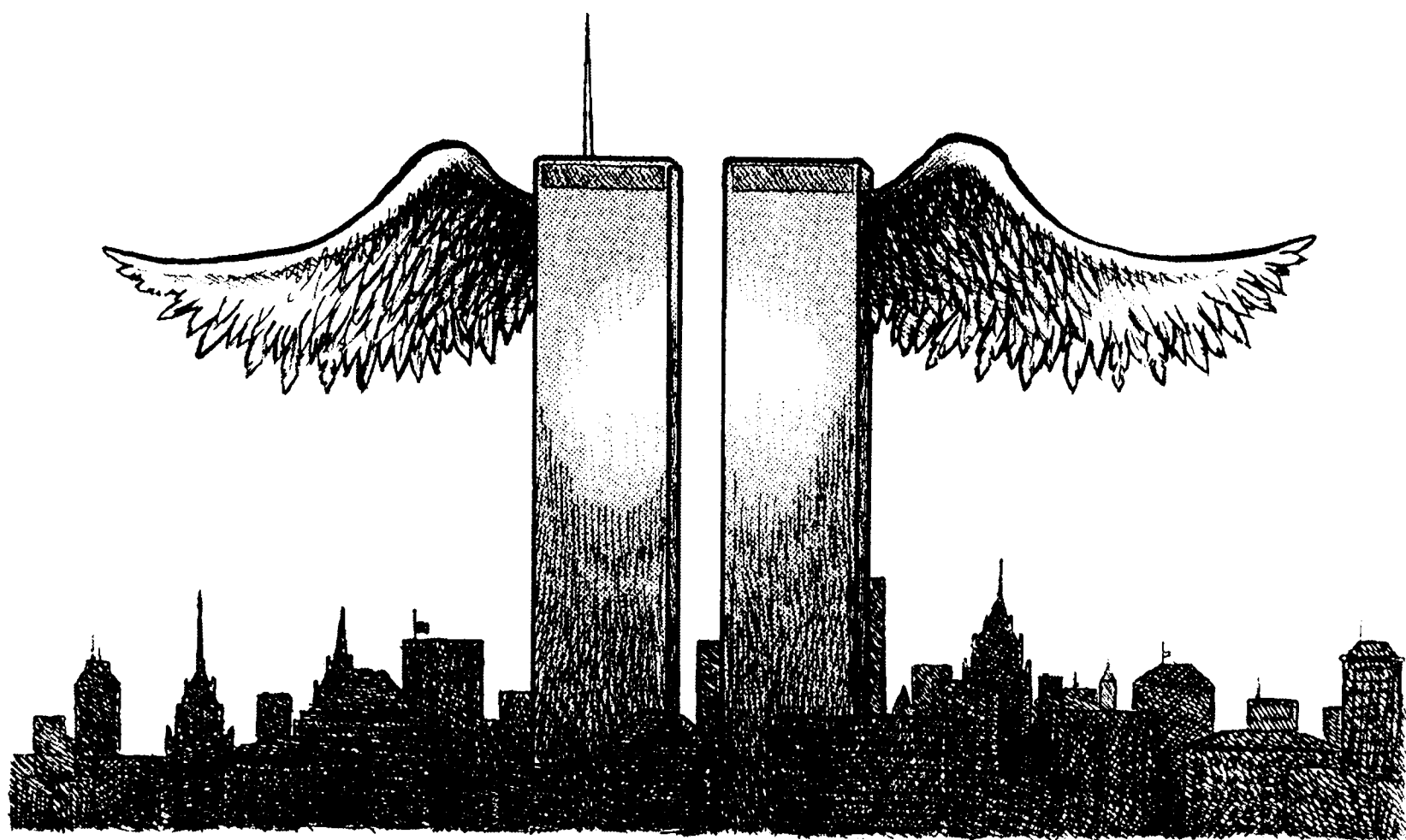
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•Letter Policy•

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.

BEELER'01
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What can Behrend faculty, staff, and students do?

After the rubble has been cleared, the death toll has been tallied, and Wall Street goes back to work, we will still ask ourselves what we can do. The question is difficult. Historical analogy fails us. Sept. 11, 2001 has been compared to Dec. 7, 1941. Yet after Pearl Harbor, America had an identifiable enemy, a state that could be defeated by recognizable military means.

Today, America is "at war," yet the military defeat of one or more states will neither win the war nor remove the terrorist threat. President Bush promises to treat those who have aided or hosted the terrorists as America's enemies; yet the most important training the terrorists received was in flight schools in Florida. The perversely logical conclusion would be for the President to wage war on this state governed by his brother, to which he owes his own election.

Surely such a diffuse enemy whose most potent weapon is his willingness to die for his cause cannot be defeated by military means. Terrorism needs neither enormous resources nor huge organizations to be effective. It takes no more than a handful of determined and competent individuals to turn powerful technologies into instruments of mass destruction. The solution to terrorism can only be political.

The terrorist attacks reveal the tragic shortcomings of American foreign policy. America has believed that technology such as missile shields, "smart" bombs, and surveillance satellites offered sufficient solutions to its foreign policy problems. Yet these technologies were useless on Sept. 11. America has believed that it could ignore international problems that did not impact it directly and act unilaterally when America's immediate interests were considered to be at stake.

Our leadership has done little to resolve the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as it spins out of control. It has repudiated without discussion the Kyoto Accords on the environment and tells the world that it will build a missile shield even if it violates the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty of 1972. On September 11, the problems of the Middle East hit home and American unilateralism revealed its vainglorious impotence.

If, as many of us believe, the world will never be the same after Sept. 11, our relationship to the world must change. To defeat terrorism it will be necessary to isolate the fanatical few within their own culture. Assuming that these acts of terror originated in the Middle East, this can only be accomplished if the United States addresses the

considerable discontent of the Arab and Muslim world with our actions. Without such an effort, new terrorists will emerge to strike new targets. The history of Palestinian terrorism in Israel hardly supports any other conclusion. A foreign policy that seeks to deal with the roots of the problem rather than assault its manifestations will have to be subtle. It will have to be one of dialogue and understanding, a foreign policy that addresses Arab and Muslim concerns rather than sidesteps them.

What can we, the faculty, students, and staff of Behrend, do? We can have no direct impact on American foreign policy, but as a College we have an obligation to offer an education that addresses the needs of our time. On this account we have an enormous challenge before us.

Like American foreign policy we have placed our faith in technology and made only minimal efforts to address the world on its own terms. Education in foreign languages, which is the foundation of any serious effort to understand other cultures, is inadequate at Behrend. Behrend students are not offered the opportunity to major or minor in foreign languages or even study them beyond the third semester. Even foreign literature in translation is rarely taught at

Behrend.

Other important fields relevant to today's concerns in the humanities and social sciences are also underserved. Course offerings in anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and religious studies are severely limited by a lack of faculty. In none of these fields is there more than one full-time faculty member at Behrend. Surely something is wrong when a public institution like Behrend builds a chapel on campus without also offering more than a smattering of courses in philosophy or religious studies. We have a place to pray in our moments of distress, but we lack the resources to understand either the threat of radical Islam or the dignity of mainstream Islamic traditions.

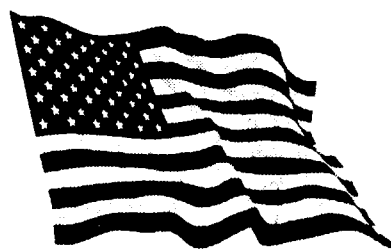
Ridding the world of ignorance may be as utopian as our President's vow to "rid the world of evil," but in today's world we cannot begin to address the problem of evil without addressing that of ignorance. As an institution devoted to pushing back the walls of ignorance through education, Behrend College can make its contribution to America's "war" against terrorism by transforming itself.

-Dr. Michael Christofferson, Assistant Professor of History

A VIEW FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE

Proud to be an American

Fly high the red, white, and blue. Never before has it seemed that patriotism in our country has been so widespread and strong. On nearly every home flies an American flag, so much so that many stores across the States cannot keep up with the heavy demand. Old Glory flies proud, as it was meant to.



the greatest nation in the world. Whatever the future brings, we are able to stand strong and get past it-but only as one. United we stand, divided we fall. Now, we are united. Divided, destruction such as this will be allowed to happen.

Our founding fathers would be proud of the camaraderie the United States has shared over the past several days, but they would be sickened by what it took to get us here. The carnage America now faces has created a countrywide anger, one that is directed at those who hate and kill. The anger generated has created a strong spirit, one that allows us to gather and pray. One that allows us to hope and mourn together. One that allows us to realize how precious the next human being is.

In the early nineties, America displayed spirit by tying yellow ribbons around virtually everything in support of the soldiers overseas. America was one. But not long after our troops returned home did we return to hate. We hated our country and each other. Why? We are all in this together. We all live in the same space. Why not make the best of it? And now, when we face war again, we must pull together, as we have, and support our troops that have flown to the Mediterranean. Also, we have to keep a positive attitude.

It is sickening to hear Americans who have been born and raised in this country to constantly insult it. What other country in the world has such a diverse population? The States are a melting pot of the rest of the world. We speak many languages; we are many colors. We learn from each other. This is where our hip, upbeat, thriving culture stems. America has created a path for the rest of the world. We have been to the moon and back. We have survived many tragedies and disasters, but have not given up. America has remained strong.

It might seem egotistic to state at this point, and maybe it seems pretentious, but we are

God Bless America.

Splendidly isolated, no more



A tale told by an idiot

Liz Hayes

news editor

while we watch TV classes Can you imagine working while a reincarnation of

Tuesday was occurring?

It's been a little over a week since our lives were irrevocably altered. The initial shock of the blast has begun to wear off and the fallout has begun. And while I fervently hope those hours of terror on Tuesday can never be fully recreated, I fear a new type of terror will take its place. And it may be a terror of our own creation.

As I slowly went from being horrified to being numb last week, a multitude of thoughts passed through my mind. Probably the most lasting one was: this is how some other countries live. All the time. Every hour, every day, every night - the next terrorist attack could quite legitimately be just around the corner. And many of those countries have been living this way for decades.

That thought produced quite a few others. For one, is that how we will now live? Fearing the next attack on our way to work in the mornings, wondering if something will happen while we sleep? As we have seen already, it's a horrible way to live. I know most of my friends sat around all day Tuesday, glued to the television, unable to look away. While it was certainly understandable, if terrorism continues in the U.S., we can't all spend everyday skipping work and

while we watch TV classes Can you imagine working while a reincarnation of Tuesday was occurring? We have only been living with this fear for a week now, and as last Tuesday becomes more distant, we seem to expect another assault less every day. All day last Tuesday and into Wednesday morning we waited with bated breath, hoping CNN wouldn't break in and report a new attack. But now, at least for us Americans on the perimeter, the fear is starting to fade, to be replaced with anger and vengeance and a rather scary attitude of reckless retaliation.

I'm not saying we've forgotten the intensity of Tuesday already. But we seem to have moved on. And while moving on is probably a good thing, I think we may be moving on too quickly and for the wrong reasons. Here in Erie we don't have any nationally symbolic icons that seem to be in imminent danger, and the federal buildings are far removed from Behrend. We can therefore feel a measure of protection that helps us to get over our fear.

But replacing that fear are emotions that may be even more debilitating. I have heard so many people saying we should be kicking Afghanistan's ass right now. Osama bin Laden should have been dead eight years ago when he attacked the World Trade Center the first time; he certainly should be dead now. Why are we waiting?

"Bush to rid world of evil-doers." That line provided a spontaneous chuckle when I first saw it being flashed across my television screen. I envisioned DUBYA standing in true Superman style on the Brooklyn Bridge with the smoking rubble and an American flag in the background. He would be wearing red, blue and white Spandex with a cape and big 'W' on his chest. He would probably be wearing cowboy boots and a Stetson. Maybe he'd even have a lasso attached to his belt.

But the more I consider the "war" we have unofficially declared, the more worried I grow. Who are we at war against? Terrorists? Arabs? Osama bin Laden? But is bin Laden the one responsible? And what if we take him out, and Afghanistan as well? What then? We still have a world-wide network of terrorists at work. And while there is a chance that without bin Laden they'll fall apart, there is also a chance that they will be more mobilized and strike back even harder.

I'm not saying we should keep bin Laden alive to prevent future attacks; if he is found responsible for these crimes, he should be punished to the full extent of the law. But the law is an interesting point to bring up here. Are we willing to forget the fundamental principles our country was built upon to rid ourselves of a menace who may or may not be responsible for the latest atrocities? Whatever happened to due process?

I think the risk to our national security is only one of our worries right now. We are facing a tough decision, a decision that the world will anxiously await. The mighty United States now

has a taste of the difficulties others have been dealing with for years. How will we handle it? Will we fall to the lowest common denominator of blind revenge, or will our democratic rationale see us through?

And a final thought that I hesitate to bring up is, did we in some way bring this on ourselves? We are entering a time period when the world is getting increasingly smaller, while our country seems to be getting larger. We have continuously made ourselves the world's police force and the savior of democracy. We have been embroiled in the disputes of other countries for so long, many of their disputes seem to be our own. But how involved have we let others be in our problems? How would we react if another country began to interfere with our government, our economy, our social structures?

Before World War I, England had a practice of splendid isolationism. With all the colonies she had to choose from, England could avoid letting Europe's problems become her own and withdraw into her empire. I think there are some comparisons with the United States. We have our fingers in pies on every continent; in a sense, the sun never sets on our empire. But we have been able to keep the world at bay - no one has entered our space. Until now. We can no longer remain the aloof, unattached adviser to the world; we need the world's advice as much now as ever. The question is, will we take it?

Hayes' column appears every three weeks.