

## The Behrend Beacon

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

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"Professionalism  
with a Personality"

**Postal Information**

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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. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue.



## Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing

Well, this is it, folks. It's the last time you will ever have to see my ugly mug gracing the editorial pages - or any page, for that matter - of the Behrend Beacon. I graduate next week... assuming the University doesn't play one of its little tricks on me. Jury's still out on that one.

I've been looking forward to this moment for two years when I realized I would get to write The Final Editorial, in which I could say whatever I wanted about whoever I wanted without fearing reprisals. Not that I really fear reprisals, but you know what I'm sayin'.

Unfortunately for both you and me, I've gotten no sleep all week and I'm really stressed out between getting this last issue of the paper finished, completing all my papers and projects, working, and sending out resumes to all those who will just love to hire me. Therefore, I haven't given The Final Editorial much thought and I'm really unfocused right now, so I have no idea what I'll end up typing into this space. Try to bear with me.

First of all, as a super senior (it's not really that super,) let me give undergrads a bit of advice: Go to University Park. Not to knock Behrend - it's a nice school. The trees are pretty in the fall, the grass smells nice in the summer. As a lover of snow, the area usually satisfies (except this year, but don't get me started on that one.) However, I wouldn't want to base my future on, "Hmmm, it seems like a really nice school."

Behrend and other Commonwealth Campuses are a good transition from high school to college. They get you into the college frame of mind without sending you into culture shock. You get accustomed to the juggling act that is college, and by juggling I don't mean keeping three bottles of Rolling Rock in the air at once. You learn how to balance class time, study time, extracurricular

activity time, work time, and drinking time.

But after a year or two, you should know the ropes and be ready to move on. Let's face it: Behrend isn't exactly the bubbling pot of cultural, educational, and extracurricular activity. University Park offers much better stimulus. The opportunities available at UP overcompensate for what Behrend administrators like to call a lack of student/faculty interaction. And I question that lack - students just have to learn to take advantage of their professors. And yes, I realize I just made a sexual innuendo. Try to focus, please.

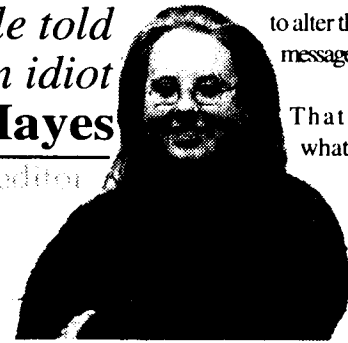
Go to Main Campus and get a real education; you won't be sorry. Unless you are a plastics engineering technology or a MIS major, Behrend's got less to offer you. And if you are a liberal arts student, leave now. Don't pass go, yada yada. While Behrend's engineering students get top-notch attention, you will be lucky to get a newspaper dispenser in Academic that will let you use your ID card to get papers out. That's as technologically advanced as our side of the campus gets.

And yes, that's right - I called it Main Campus. The administration isn't fooling anyone by calling it the Center County Campus or whatever the new PC term is. It is the dominating force behind Penn State University, if for no other reason than Jo Pa resides there. Main Campus is the focal point of the University, and rightly so. It only has 10 times more students than Behrend. Of course it's going to be the focus.

While I'm whining about Behrend, I also have to say a few things about my major. Several people have asked me what I have learned as a Communication and Media Studies major at Behrend. I have an immediate response, as do all COMBA majors: the model of communication. You

see, there is a sender and a receiver. The sender sends a message through verbal and nonverbal channels to the receiver. The receiver then sends feedback to the sender. Meanwhile, there is all this noise that works to alter the messages.

*A tale told by an idiot*  
**Liz Hayes**  
news editor



learned. And I learned. And I learned. If there was something else, I must have missed it. I want to be a journalist. I don't think I learned anything about journalism in any of my writing classes. I picked some things up from working on the Beacon and my own endeavors, but other than to tell me what a lede is (about 30 times) and what a nutgraph is, my writing classes did little for me.

My other COMBA classes were mostly about theory. Theory's a fun thing, if you are going to be a philosopher. But I'm not. And neither is anybody else. I do think it is important to be taught the theory behind your field. But you gotta learn the field, too. Ah, but here comes the standard argument that college is meant to prepare you for life, not get you a job. Well, you make college free so I can graduate without five figures of debt hanging over my head, and I'll go along with that. But I have bills to pay, and I don't know any person who went to college because they weren't looking to get a good job.

I support the notion of general education in the curriculum - I have written editorials in the past supporting it. But I'm not paying thousands every year

to be generally educated. I want to know what I need to be a more intelligent person, but I also want to know what I need to be a good employee. So teach me, dammit!

And please make sure you hire some people who can teach. This goes for all schools. It doesn't matter how much experience someone has in a given field. If they can't transfer that experience into usable knowledge for me, they may as well have no experience in the field. I would recommend to the department heads to have a serious sit-down discussion with students and really listen to what they say about who's getting the message across and who isn't. It's not worth paying a professor who actually causes freshmen to change majors. And yes, it has happened! It is happening.

Those are my two messages to students and faculty at large. And don't worry, I realize you aren't reading this but using it to line the bottom of your cat's litter box. No offense taken, even if it was intended. These are probably age-old gripes of students that are standard issue. No one likes what they've got and the grass is always greener in Happy Valley. I just had to join the group. Call me a sheep.

But, I do have fond memories of ole Behrend. In 20 years or so (hopefully more), I may shed a tear when I recall my life and times at Behrend. I may even be one of the weird alumni who for some reason want copies of the Beacon so I can relive days gone by. Or to line the litter box...

So farewell, Behrend. I bid you adieu. Fondly remember me, a poor player that struts and gets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It was a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

Hayes' column ran every three weeks for the past two years.

## The View From the Lighthouse

### Are we the only ones failing?

Are we alone in saying this semester sucked? Are the Beaconians the only ones not doing so well in classes? Is anyone else mighty glad this semester will soon be nothing but a distant nightmare?

What happened this year? Everything started normally. Everyone was gung-ho about the new school year. We all bought the planners we haven't used in two months. We all bought the books we will be reading ferociously next week. We all signed up for the 8 a.m. classes we haven't attended since before Thanksgiving Break.

It was a typical semester; we started out enthusiastically and soon just didn't care. But that's pretty normal. We swear in September we will use that planner, read those books, and go to classes. Then, by Fall Break, reality has set in and we are back to our half-assed, procrastinating selves. No harm, no foul. We just make the grades by the skin of our teeth (usually), and the cycle starts anew in January.

So what the hell happened this semester? What it Sept. 11? Or is that just an excuse? Were we really that affected by the terrorist attacks and subsequent war on terrorism that it threw us all off track? An interesting question, indeed.

For those first few weeks, Sept. 11 could definitely be linked to school performance. Most of us sat around watching CNN for a full week. Classes, tests, projects - all paled in comparison to the stress of those days. Many professors realized the lack of concentration, or at least the new focus of concentration, and adjusted. Tests were postponed, classes were canceled or devoted to discussion, project due dates were pushed back.

But are we really still suffering from those days? And what about what followed - the bioterrorism threat and the approaching war in the Middle East that we would become directly involved in?

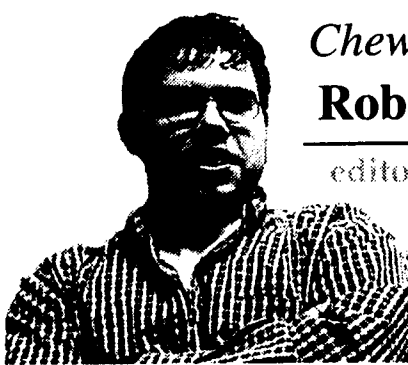
It's really hard to say what went awry this semester. But it seems safe to say something happened. It's hard to remember a time when college students looked forward to a break more than we do right now. There's gonna be a lot of intoxicated, celebratory students come the end of finals week, even more so than usual!



## Beacon Superlatives Fall 2001

- Most likely to hog our AOL account: Mikey Bello
- Most likely to turn in a 1000-word editorial 24 hours after deadline: Jason Snyder
- Most likely to use odd Clip Art: Karl Benacci
- Most likely to threaten quitting: Liz Hayes
- Most likely to get mentioned in the BUDPOT: Katie Galley
- Most likely to blame everything on Liz: Ann Marie Havey
- Most likely to vote Republican: Guy Reschenthaler
- Most likely the last person on the planet to use a MAC after everyone else switches to PCs: Rob Wynne
- Most likely to have a "big ass paper" to write: Jeff Hankey
- Most likely to ask Rob for help: Jeanine Noce
- Most likely to wear Pooh inspired clothing: Erin McCarty
- Most likely to get lost in overhead compartment of an airplane: Paige Miles
- Most likely to get married: Becky Weindorf - LaDow
- Most likely to talk about masturbating: Ben Kundman
- Most likely to irritate Kerwin (faculty advisor): Kelly Walsh
- Most like to wear overalls: Kristin Rodgers
- Most likely to be doggie-style on the front page: Sarah Orr

## "So, how's school going?"



*Chew on this*  
**Rob Wynne**  
editor-in-chief

So, how's school going?

Be prepared to answer this question about 100 times during Christmas vacation. Family gatherings, work parties, and similar functions are breeding grounds for dumb questions; this being the main one. There will also be the standard follow-up question, "So what's your major again?"

I'm sure the upper-classmen can vouch for me on this one, but be warned, freshmen, it's coming. Usually, I say the same response over and over again until I begin to sound like a politician (not that there's

anything wrong with politicians.) I'll raise my voice in certain spots, look the other person in the eye, and use some hand gestures, showing them just how much my college education has made me a well-rounded social interacting animal. Truth is, I've just told 40 other people the same thing, but practice does make perfect. I'm not criticizing fellow family members, because sometimes there is a lot of catching up to do, but that's due to another situation that I'll talk about later on.

Recently it was my mother who asked me "the question." I said, "good." Then what bitterly followed must have been a reflection of what I've wanted to tell everyone else who has asked, "So how's school?"

"Actually, mom, school sucks." If you think about it, the only kids who enjoy school are the ones who party every weeknight and weekend, the

ones who write letters home to their well-off parents crying that they need \$20 for a book (the book's title being "Coors Light,") and the ones who can actually find a few quiet minutes to study. For the vast majority of us, finding time to get a degree in-between working to pay for school, maintaining a relationship, and trying to keep active with some kind of extracurricular activity just leads one through a vicious cycle. Usually, the cycle involves stimulant abuse and a scenario where the student has spread him or herself so thin that nothing seems to work out, and at best just a mediocre job can be accomplished.

But, this is how the real world functions so we better get used to it in college. And who do we have to thank? It's the hippies of the baby-boomer generation who took it easy smoking pot back in the day, who now want to make up for it in their middle age by running their kids back and forth to 14 different activities in their Ford Excursion as they put on a happy face for the family while arguing with

their spouse behind the closed doors. And no, these aren't my personal and family problems, but I've heard enough tales of terror lately it just makes me wonder.

No family member has time to interact with one another because soccer starts at 5 p.m. and cheerleading lasts until 7 p.m. Microwave meals are what's for dinner, and the only activity the whole family participates in together is banging on the bathroom door each morning to get someone else out of the bathroom. It's a sad reality, but one that is often true. And it all starts in college, where you learn how to cram more than you can handle into a day, and the "real world" can be defined as a life-long competition to get the most stuff done.

So, how's school? You just had to ask, didn't you? Anyway, I'm out for this semester; I'll see everyone around again in the spring.

Wynne's column appeared every three weeks.