

THE BEHREND BEACON
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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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hello my fellow Behrendonians (if that is in fact what we are called; truly, I have no idea). I would just like to comment, if I could, on the lovely article written in Nov. 30's paper. You know the one friends, the deeply emotional and inspirational article entitled "PDA's Link to S & M" written by the highly talented Mike Butala. Well first of all, I would just like to say that it truly hit home. No one should be a victim of accidental PDA sightings, especially of the.....how should I say.....not so flattering variety. That sort of thing should be saved for late night cable programming. I cannot even recall

how many times I have been subject to such a thing, even in my short first semester here at Behrend. By the way, does anyone know why the hell it rains so much here?? Anyway, I would just like to thank Mr. Butala on bringing this touchy and controversial subject into the open. Perhaps he should receive some sort of journalist award for that. No, probably not. Back to the point I believe I was trying to make, good job Mike, you made us proud. This sort of thing should not continue to go 'hush hush' forever. This issue for me, being now a currently single coed (Hey Ladies!) is now all the worse. About a month

ago, for example, I was walking from my mailbox in Reed to the stairs by the bookstore when I happened to catch a couple on a couch...let's just say "getting to know each other." Well, as one might expect, I unknowingly made a face of disgust. To my surprise, a very cute girl had been watching them also, and had caught my facial expression. Yeah, I think I lost my point again. Well the moral of the story is that people like that should be more considerate of those of us with weaker stomachs. So hey I hope you fine people of The Beacon can print this, and way to go Mike on a job well done. By the way, if

there are any fine women out there that happen to read and like this, they can feel free to come see me at the library where I work and have time to enjoy this fine paper (wow, way to promote two things at once;) or make a trek up to Almy Hall. If you are lucky, maybe we can pass each other notes. I would just like to say to The Beacon thank you for your time, and if anyone out there reads this, that'll make two of us.
Sincerely,

Matt Thomas
01 Computer Engineering

The infamous comb-over



Don't believe everything you read

Kevin Fallon

I could always opt for the infamous comb-over but I would never humiliate myself that much. It is called a comb-over for a reason:

your need for a comb is OVER.

The most popular advice I get is to shave my head. I am sure this is what I will do if it comes down to it but I would prefer not to look like a real life Charlie Brown.

But what I really want to know is what effect this will have on my love life or lack thereof. I don't date that much now and I am sure looking like Mr. Clean with anorexia won't help my cause. I do have a plan though: I am going to find a girl and get married before all my hair is gone. Then she will be stuck with me. I guess she will just have to love me for what is on the inside. Sucker.

Soon I will graduate from college. I will get a job, have children, then grandchildren. I will retire one day and say, "Where did all the time go? And where's my Ben-Gay?" I know my youthful looks will only continue to fade. Wrinkles and false teeth are probably also in my future. I should just pack up, get a Cadillac, move to Florida, and get it over with.

As I head toward the white light, one positive thing I can say I have learned in my old age is: true beauty is what someone has on the inside. Or is that just something ugly people say? What I do know is we should all enjoy life the best we can, hair or no hair, because someday we will die. Good grief.

As I enter my seventh semester of college there is one thought that I just can't shake: I am old. I am 22, so many people laugh at me when I tell them I feel old. But I insist that the days of wearing plaid pants and going to bingo night are not too far away for me.

The first sign that I was getting old was when I could use the pick-up line. "Hey, I can buy you beer." Since then my transformation from perverted college kid to old fogie has progressed. The latest and by far the most terrifying sign of my old age is something I have dreaded for a long time: I am going bald.

During the past year or so I have noticed my hair getting slowly thinner and my forehead getting slowly bigger (although not as slow as I would like.) It doesn't look that bad right now and if the situation doesn't get much worse then I will be okay. But that is just wishful thinking: my hair is fading faster than Mariah Carey's career.

What can I do about this? People are always offering solutions to my ailment. Medicines, wigs, shampoos, and sprays have all been proposed to me. One person told me I should join a hair club. I am not exactly sure what a hair club is. I want to know: Why is it called a hair club when none of the members have hair? It's like a book club for the illiterate.

Maybe telemarketers could find bin Laden

By Jill Porter

(KRT)

Osama bin Laden may very well be dead, despite the videotape of him that was aired on Al-Jazeera television last week. But -- dead or alive -- he doesn't seem any closer to being caught than he was when we set out to find him two months ago.

His ability to keep his whereabouts secret is a feat perhaps more mind-boggling than invading and attacking impenetrable America. Sure, the network of caves in the Afghanistan Mountains is as intricate as the pathways in hand-stitched lace. But it still seems surreal that something as primitive as a cave can offer protection from our highly sophisticated methods of surveillance, much less from

hundreds of soldiers breathing down your neck.

Think about it. Bin Laden has evaded detection in a world in which:

-Our every move is tracked by databases, monitors, cameras, microphones and paperwork trails, and our every thought endures in the e-mail afterlife.

-Our every identifiable idiosyncrasy, from our choice of video rentals to our medical profiles, is afloat in the information ether, ripe for exploiting by credit-card companies, catalog distributors and other commercial predators.

-We're so detectable that machines can recognize us by voice, touch, heat or our mother's maiden name (even our telephone can tell another telephone that we're on the line).

-We're such a part of the public domain that not only can't we hide but we can be stolen. Someone else

can steal our identity and have more fun than we're having by buying things we'd never buy for ourselves.

Bin Laden manages to evade us still. Maybe we should be more creative in our mission. Maybe we should put telemarketers on bin Laden's trail. I'm sure they'd find him the minute he sat down to dinner. Or maybe we could hire little children, who'd burst in on him the minute he decided to have sex with his spouse.

Sure, other heinous criminals have avoided capture and arrest over the years. Everyone on the FBI's Most Wanted list, for instance, is the object of an intense manhunt. One fugitive has been on the list for 20 years, another for almost that long.

But most long-sought fugitives are known only to their would-be captors. They could live next door to us for years without having their

cover blown. And they could be anywhere in the world at any time, making an intense manhunt problematic.

But Osama bin Laden? He's tall, bearded and ignominious. He couldn't disguise himself without the help of a plastic surgeon. He certainly couldn't live among us without detection. And at least we know in which corner of the world he's hiding. We've tracked his radio transmissions and traced his trail to the area of Tora Bora. We've narrowed our search to the caves in the nearby hills.

But still no bin Laden. The videotape bin Laden released last week is no doubt meant to reassure the terrorist faithful that he's still alive. But it's also meant as a taunt to us, a reminder that he's outsmarted us once again - so far anyway.

U.S. students put spotlight on foreign sweatshops

By Ralph Nader

(KRT)

It is a long distance from student consumers at college and university campus stores in the United States to the wretched overseas factories indenturing sweatshop workers who produce products for the U.S. market. But the United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) has built a network of students across our country to bridge that distance with organized consumer power and citizen pressure.

The companies whose brand names are on the items in the campus and other stores do not generally put their brand names on the grim factories with serf-like labor in Central America, Mexico, southeast Asia, China and elsewhere. These and other authoritarian regimes allow health and safety conditions that jeopardize workers daily.

Several dozen college and university administrations, both shaken by or admiring of the students

ethics-in-action have joined a Workers Rights Consortium through which visitations are conducted to these factories in various nations. Students return with far more than facts and eyewitness accounts. They return with the drive to change the status quo. Some students even arrange for workers to visit the United States to provide firsthand testimony about their oppressive overseas factories.

Some of these manufacturing facilities use child labor to make products for international commerce - a situation that is legal under the World Trade Organization rules. You cannot buy anything made by child labor in this country, because such labor is illegal in the United States; but ironically our government cannot ban such imports without violating the WTO trade agreement and subjecting the United States to monetary fines or other trade penalties.

This is just one reason a growing coalition of labor, church, human rights, environmental, consumer and student groups oppose corporate globalization.

Over the last three years, USAS has been doing more than arousing the campuses, holding training conferences and enlisting faculty to their cause. They are pressing U.S. companies to insist that their contracting companies in foreign countries upgrade their miserable working conditions and demonstrate proof of that result. For example, USAS reports a recent victory following its coordinated effort with organizing efforts of workers at the large Kukdong factory in Puebla, Mexico, that makes collegiate apparel for Nike and Reebok. The laborers now have their own independent trade union.

In the United States, USAS is active as well. Presently, students are mobilizing behind factory workers at the New Era cap factory in Derby, N.Y. - a facility that makes baseball caps for more than 400 universities and is the exclusive supplier for Major League Baseball. Workers have been on strike to oppose a 30 percent pay cut, an increase in workload and unsafe working conditions.

Consumer leaders for decades have

dreamed of organized consumer power - whether by boycotts or promises of one through more intricate networks and corporate campaigns - to reshape company misbehavior along more decent pathways. These students are pioneering new territory in turning such dreams into reality.

There are many workers, sweating under terrible bosses, devoid of any rights or legal protections, unable to feed their families and exposed to the arbitrary actions of tyrants and their business partners in these third world countries. It is their plight and their needs that keep these students expanding their mission of justice.

USAS has its offices in Washington, where Rachel Edelman, Amber Gallup and Bhumiya Muchhala run a beehive of activity. Readers who want more information or who wish to support this committed organization with tax-deductible contributions should contact USAS at Suite 303, 888 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006

