

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

Editor-in-Chief
Robert Wynne

Managing Editor
Rebecca Weindorf

News Editor
Erin McCarty

Asst. News Editor
Kevin Fallon

Sports Editor
Mike Bello

Asst. Sports Editor
Kate Levitansky Petrikis

Editorial Page Editor
Ben Kundman

Features Editor
Karl Benacci

Arts & Entertainment Editor
Jeanine Noce

Wire Service Editor
Guy Reschenthaler

Staff Photographer
Jeff Hankey

Advertising Managers
Libbie Johnson
Melissa Powell

Public Relations Manager
Kelly Walsh

Distribution Manager
Eric Kiser

Office Manager
Jason Alward

Technical Support
Doug Butterworth

Health Page Editor
Sarah Orr

Humor Page Editor
Ben Kundman

Professional Publication Mgr.
Dave Richards

Advisor
Mr. John Kerwin

Professionalism with a Personality

Postal Information
The Beacon is published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, the Behrend College; First Floor, The J. Elmer Reed Union Building, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563. The Beacon can be reached by calling (814) 898-6488 or (814) 898-6019 (FAX). ISSN 1071-9288.

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.



Hot Debate of the Week
The Pretzel: Friend or Foe?

Let's face it: The mass media is engaging in a smear campaign against pretzels. Ever since President Bush had that little run-in with the pretzel while watching football, news contains anti-pretzel overtones. All are blaming pretzels for conspiring to take out the president and other members of his administration.

The other day I saw Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on Fox News claiming that the military is planning strategic bombings of pretzel factories suspected to be in league with the rogue pretzel who was responsible for the Bush incident. Come on now people, that is ridiculous!

Where will this stop? Will it continue until all pretzels have been wiped from the snacking menu of people everywhere? When is enough enough?

I speak for all pretzels when I say that pretzels are good and honest

snacks. They are low fat and delicious. Just because one bad pretzel had to go and choke the leader of the free world (obviously an Al Qaeda pretzel) all pretzels are given a bum rap.

As military tribunals are set up to prosecute pretzels, as pretzels are being sent to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as people everywhere look on pretzels with suspicion, anger, and hatred, I say enough. Pretzels are an integral part of the American snacking community. They have been in our living rooms for years. Why has the American public and the American media singled pretzels out? Why are pretzels suddenly "the bad guy snack?" I'd sure like to know.

Please help the cause and buy some pretzels. Do not let this low fat and tasty snack go by the way side. Let us make pretzels our number one snack.

- Guy Reschenthaler

I'm sure everyone will take the side of the Pretzel and claim it was an innocent accident. Everyone thinks they're so soft and chewy (or in some cases crunchy and ideal for party mix.) Make no mistake. These lethal contraptions of deedly dough are everywhere. And it's got to stop.

I suppose you don't think much of it when you buy a soft pretzel at Bruno's and get the cheese for 20 cents extra. You are paying for MURDER, my friends. Consider that also goes mysteriously well with salsa, a suspect of heartburn. Think it coincidence? You're fooling yourself.

Many of you will say this pretzel was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. I don't claim to know all the details.

Maybe it was a Taliban Pretzel. Maybe it was sent by Dick Cheney from an "undisclosed location." Maybe it was a pretzel from Florida. I don't know. But whatever the case, it better have a pretty good story. The fact is that soft pretzels also make excellent sandwiches. Perhaps, then, this rebel pretzel, tired of his race being digested by

us "big people" decided to go on a suicide mission to assassinate the President.

"But Tony," you might say, "pretzels aren't animals, they are baked goods." Oh the government would really like you to think that. But they hide things from us. Like the great Pretzel War of '52. I'm not supposed to be telling you any of this. There was a riot of Pretzel attacks, and the government decided to dispatch secret agents to take them. Yes, for an extended period of time, cops were known for stuffing dough into the head of donuts. Oh, they stayed quiet.

For a while. But now they're back, with a vengeance. Bush was lucky to survive. I'll admit pretzels aren't all bad. We can torture them by removing their salt, and then put it on Bin Laden when we shave his hide. However, I'm sure that if for some reason you are pro-pretzel, my thoughts will not change yours. I'll let you get back to your meal.

Just be sure to get a Sub.

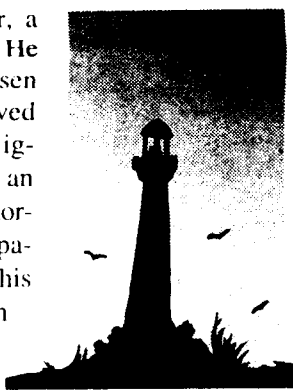
- Tony DiPlacido

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

The View From the Lighthouse

Martin Luther King: an inspiration to all of us

This week, we celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: a preacher, a scholar, an activist, and an inspiration. He fought an unjust system with well-chosen words, and a nation listened. Many loved him, some hated him, but none could ignore his compelling message. He was an extraordinary person who made an extraordinary impact. We see the fruits of his patient labors as we walk the halls of this campus each day, enveloped in the rich diversity of America, diversity that King helped the populace to appreciate.



And yet he was also an ordinary person. A person who grew up in a middle class family and who struggled to fit in. A person who got angry. A person who fell in love. A person with doubts and insecurities. A person with faults. An ordinary person who carved out his extraordinary destiny through the choices he made. A person not so very different from any student here at Behrend.

That knowledge is both inspiring and humbling, for it compels us to realize that we, too, are capable of greatness, yet it reminds us that we may not be making the most of the opportunities granted to us. We need not graduate from college at the age of 19, speak to crowds of thousands, or turn the tide of American society in order to walk the path that King walked. We can each follow King's example by noticing situations in which change is needed and rising to the challenge in a positive, productive manner.

A generation stands between King and us, and we have become painfully aware that our world is not as idyllic as we had once imagined. We live in a world of shattered dreams and crushed hopes. And yet, we are the members of a generation poised to make our mark upon the world, to leave it a better place than it was when we arrived. We rise together from the ashes of hatred as we never could have before King's day. We stand on the edge of a new horizon, gazing into the distance at the Promised Land that King helped us to envision.

And so as we celebrate Dr. King, we celebrate the potential within ourselves. We seek to awaken the young heart that beats fiercely in the face of tribulation, striving for triumph and achieving it. The torch of freedom has passed into our hands, and we carry it onward to a brighter day when King's dream can at last be realized. His legacy lives on.

Put your mouth to good use



Undressed from the neck up
Becky Weindorf

When you look at all the crap that every single one of us has to go through (and of course, it's all different for everyone,) you wonder how anyone can simply live. Yeah, we all have our jobs that suck. We all have that one class in which the professor's voice is torture, like a drill between the eyes. And there's always someone's opinion to gripe about. You know you've said the following at one time or another: "What does she/he know about that, anyway?"

But griping, a close cousin of freedom of speech, is a privilege. Not a right. You earn your privilege to

gripe about something. For example (this is a purely hypothetical situation) I am given (or voted) the privilege to head a committee in a particular organization. All right, that's cool. But my committee members are slackers. Big time. One even gets high every day of the week and forgets to schedule his classes by the first week of school. They all conveniently forget meeting times, assignments, and commitments to the organization. What do I do?

Here's where the privilege thing kicks in. In a purely professional way, I go to the president of an organization and I gripe. I tell the president that I have a lazy-ass, sorry excuse for a committee and demand that a) I get a new committee or b) that the president tells me what to do about it.

If the president tells me to deal with it, that's fine. I get what I get to work

with. I am using this example not because of lazy committees (all the people in committees I've served on have been good, hardworking and honest), but because there is a certain portion of this fine college community that kicks back and bitches about what others do. I'm not talking about those who have written a letter to the editor; they've earned their right to gripe. Most of the time, the authors of those letters are heads of organizations on campus and take advantage of their privilege to write to the paper. That is something I like to see in our mailbox.

However, you got something to say about the job someone's doing? You think there's something missing on campus? GET OFF YOUR BUTT AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. Anyone who's ever gotten involved in anything had a desire to make a difference or fix something that's

wrong. I didn't join the paper just because I want my resume to look great; I joined because there was a need. I didn't volunteer to run for the APO president position because I was having a power trip; I did it because I believed that the brothers have huge potential. I don't tell the cashiers at Wegman's to stay on task because I have an ego; I do it because it improves overall performance for the front end.

The flip side to this, Behrend, is not to complain at all. And what would we have? I'd be a transfer student. This place would get shot to hell and no one would care about it. You need complainants to get things going, so here's what I'll tell you: You got gripes? You've got the answers. Do something about it.

Weindorf's column appears every three weeks.

The grass is always greener (unless you're in turf management)



Amanda Prischak
editorial columnist

Upon arriving at Penn State Behrend, I have quickly become aware of a certain mindset concerning Main Campus. It seems that Behrend students perceive the University Park campus as being more academically challenging and offering a more fulfilling social agenda than Behrend and the other respective branch campuses across the state. As a recent transfer from the venerated University Park, I feel a need to expose what I view as the false impressions many students have of our mother campus in central Pennsylvania.

It seems to me that many students at Behrend see themselves as academically inferior to students at

University Park. While it is true that some applicants who are not initially accepted to Main Campus are relegated to branch campuses, it is not true that branch campuses are simply refuges for University Park rejects. Rather, I have discovered that most students willingly choose to attend a branch campus because of a certain major offered or the proximity to home. But the most common reason to forgo Main Campus that I have encountered has certainly been the size factor.

There is no getting around it; Main Campus is huge. As the fourth largest university in the country, it is easy to feel overwhelmed by the almost entirely student population in State College. I will never forget walking into my 360-person psychology class the first day. It is a strange feeling to be a part of a class containing more than half the number of the people in

your high school while a teacher with a microphone dictates notes to you. Resist believing that if you sit in front you do not notice the hundreds of others you share the class with. You do.

Because of University Park's small city population, I feel that Behrend is the more academically rigorous school. This semester, class attendance is not as much of a choice as it was the previous semester. Attendance, as well as participation, is a significant portion of the grade for most of my classes.

No longer can I attend class only on test days or sit in the middle of a large mass of students while I aimlessly decorate my planner.

What amuses me most is that students perceive Main Campus as a mecca of fun and entertainment. Student life there revolves around the same things - frats, apartment parties,

movies, and sitting around with friends. The difference? More frats, more apartments, but the same cheap beer.

My report may seem negative, but do not let it have much impact on your decision to attend Main Campus. It is a great place to go for graduate research or if you are considering a rare major such as turfgrass science. And while I am certainly happy to escape the anonymity of a large university, I understand that not everyone welcomes as much attention as I do in the classroom and just about everywhere else. Just remember not to act as surprised when you encounter those of us who found the glory of Old State not to be so great.

Prischak's column appears every three weeks.

