

# EDITORIAL

Friday, February 15, 2002

The Behrend Beacon

behrcoll2@aol.com

## 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 Levdansky Petrikis

**Editorial Page Editor**  
Ben Kundman

**Features Editor**  
Karl Benacci

**A&E Editor**  
Jeanine Noco

**Wire Service Editor**  
Guy Reschenhalter

**Staff Photographer**  
Jeff Hankey

**Business Manager**  
Paige Miles

**Advertising Managers**  
Libbie Johnson  
Melissa Powell  
Angela Rush

**Public Relations Manager**  
Kelly Walsh

**Distribution Manager**  
Eric Kiser

**Calendar Page Editor**  
Erinn Hunsen

**Health Page Editor**  
Sarah Orr

**Humor Page Editor**  
Ben Kundman

**Office Manager**  
Jason Alward

**Technical Support**  
Doug Butterworth

**Professional Publication Mgr.**  
Dave Richards

**Advisor**  
Mr. John Kerwin



"Professionalism with a Personality"

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.

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.



## The View From the Lighthouse

### The Olympics or America's Games?

Watching the opening ceremony last Friday night really made one think. Aren't the Olympics defined as international athletic contests? It seemed as though the opening ceremony at Salt Lake City was about the U.S. and no one else.

As the host of the Olympic Games, the U.S. was in charge of the opening ceremonies. But it was not really necessary, however, to focus on the tragedy of Sept. 11 the entire time. People all around the world were tuned in to the opening ceremony and were most likely expecting to see an array of performances and songs pertaining to the vast variety of countries and participants, but instead viewed a one-sided program.

"The Olympics belong to the world, a point that was sharpened by recent negotiations about how to fly a unique American flag - the one raised by firefighters over the ruins of the World Trade Center," said an editorialist from the New York Times newspaper.

Strict Olympic rules prohibit athletes from any political displays during the official procession. The International Olympic Committee initially said that American athletes would not be allowed to carry the flag because that might be taken by the world as a political act.

Everyone in the world has heard about Sept. 11 by now, and yes, it was important to emphasize that the Olympic Games were able to go on in spite of what happened. However, devoting the entire program to the United States' problems just made our country look more conceited and one-sided.

Yes, Sept. 11 was a tragedy. But, for the past five months this country has been caught up in its patriotism. We asked the rest of the world to join us in attacking terrorism and most of the world is on our side.

"But many other countries have experienced tragedies that resonate as strongly with them as Sept. 11

does with us," stated the New York Times.

"The Olympics rightly, ask athletes from around the world to leave their national scars behind them for a brief period of time, and to attempt to create a small but universal world that transcends politics and even history," the Times added.

The Games' theme, "Light the Fire Within," was meant to represent the inspirational power of the Olympics and its athletes, and the opening ceremony reflected this. The theme was supposedly established long before Sept. 11, but according to the International Herald Tribune, "the phrase's meaning has grown in the aftermath."

The use of an honor guard of U.S. athletes, accompanied by New York police and firefighters, entering Rice-Eccles Olympic Stadium clutching the tattered flag that was recovered from the World Trade Center, was a significant symbol. The torn flag allowed the other 76 countries to see how the United States was able to overcome the tragedy and compete in the Games and, in turn, was used to show the hope for international unity.

"Your nation is overcoming a horrific tragedy - a tragedy that has affected the whole world," said Taiwan's president. "We stand united with you in the promotion of our common ideals, and hope for world peace."

Just a few months ago it was questionable to whether the games were going to be held at all. For all of the countries to come together to compete in such a phenomenal event that promotes unity is one of the best cures for world conflict.

The U.S. may be hosting the Olympics, but it is still a guest and should play by the rules at all times and should have included the other 76 countries in the opening ceremony.



### Attitude problem Paige Miles

Business Manager

My favorite pastime is eating. Angel hair pasta with oregano, garlic, butter, and just a splash of chardonnay is my specialty dish. But shouldn't I be worrying about the calories? I'm a 20-year-old college girl in America. I should be counting every calorie and watching every gram of fat. I should look at myself every time I pass a mirror and complain about my fat thighs, wide hips, and large behind. Do I? Nope. I don't give a rat's behind.

This editorial may come off as shallow, superficial, or mean. It's not meant that way; take it how you like it.

I was born a healthy weight—around six pounds and so many ounces. I don't remember anyone really noticing that I was smaller than all of the other kids until about first grade. It was about that time that

the teasing began. I remember coming home in tears because I wasn't like the other kids. I was a few inches shorter, a few pounds lighter. Since I was short, it was assumed automatically that I had no athletic skill whatsoever, hence, I was always picked last in gym class. Even my Little Gridders soccer coaches chose the tall boys and girls over the smaller kids. Did it ever occur to him that we were faster?

In high school, the teasing continued, but it was of a more friendly nature. I didn't mind it anymore. I don't mind it now. I'm very petite, to be politically correct.

Though the teasing never got to me in my teenage years, the criticism did. I remember a girl, a good friend, telling me that I'm anorexic and really need to eat something. It set me off. For a small person, I have one hell of a temper and big mouth.

The girl quickly learned the error of her ways and never again made any comments about my weight. My true friends know that there is nothing I love more than a burger from

Wendy's. I find diet pop disgusting. Salad with fat-free dressing only goes so far—the garbage.

Maybe I'm blessed to be naturally small. I really don't pay much attention to my weight. I step on a scale maybe once every two months. However, you may see me at the ARC...excuse me, Junker Center, every night sweating my butt off on the treadmill or elliptical trainer. Am I trying to lose weight? Am I that worried about my figure that I would take a large chunk of my day to burn calories? Nope. In fact, I go home after every workout and have dinner with my roomies. I work so hard every single day on the treadmills because I love it. I love to run. I can't sit still. I get antsy if I skip a day or two. I'm not in search of the perfect body when I'm running. I'm not thinking about how much I can eat that night in order to lose a half pound. Rather, my mind is focused on the muscle I'm gaining. I'm thinking about how much tougher I'm getting with every step. I run for no one else but me. And damn straight I'm thinking about that

Wendy's burger I'm going to have when I'm done.

It isn't easy being small. Try finding jeans in my size. All the stupid 11-year-olds scoop them up before I even get a chance to step into the mall. Often, the small shirt sizes are still too large. I'm often mistaken for a 14-year-old. In fact, later this month, I have a spot in a commercial as a teenager learning to drive. But really, I don't mind.

Honestly, I can't help that I'm small. Tell me to eat, I guarantee you I will. Please don't follow me into the bathroom thinking I'm going to throw up my meal. My own mother has questioned my weight lately, and it hurt me. Of all people, she should know that I have more important things on my mind than my weight.

Let me be with my bacon cheeseburger and large Coke. Let me run my three miles on the treadmill. Anorexia is disgusting. I'm not anorexic.

Miles's column appears every three weeks.

## Don't call me Miss Perfect



### Chit chat for change Christine Kleck

Editorial Columnist

No one is perfect; I of all people can vouch for that fact. That is what makes us all human - we all make mistakes (or at least that is the excuse that I find myself using every time I "mess up.") Where this whole idea goes amuck is when we all start destructively calling each other on every mistake in a manner that is out of proportion to the mishap itself. For lack of a better way to describe it, if one more person blows any more little flub-ups out of proportion, I am going to get really MAD.

There is a fine line between constructive and destructive criticisms. Being the "human" that I am, I have crossed that line several times myself. Having been the unfortunate victim of some very blunt and brutal destructive criticisms has made me aware that constructive criticism is better than destructive.

Not that I am an expert in the field - I don't have my PhD in criticism management - but I can assure you

that sometimes the best way to learn is to experience and to make a few mistakes every once in a while.

Based on my "extensive research" I have come up with three key areas of concentration in the science of the criticism, that one should consider before overreacting to someone's flub-ups.

First and foremost, consider your source and everything about that source. To us Comm. majors, consider the messenger and their personality, their lifestyle, the ways that they have handled past situations that may be very similar or even very different from the current mishap at hand. If a person repeatedly commits a "heinous" flub-up, knowing a little more about this person may surface some roots as to why the heck this keeps happening. Although this is impossible to do for every person that has ever messed up - try your best to look for those verbal and nonverbal clues (there I go regurgitating that Comm vocab again). They can tell you a lot.

Secondly, consider the context and the situation in which that mishap

took place, and who or what was around, that may have contributed to that person's moment of mayhem.

Although not every piece of technology is responsible for every mistake ever made in this world, it is possible that outside elements (that is the mistaken individual's surroundings) may have played a part in the mistake itself or the events leading up to that "goof." While the "dog ate my homework" is a time-honored lie in the library of excuses, did anyone ever stop and think that it is possible that our pooches might just have a paper fetish?

Another area that seems to get overlooked is the mistake itself. If everyone is so good at finding them, I would think that a little analyzing of the mistake wouldn't be that difficult. Everyone (myself included) tends to merely recognize the "crime" without really "analyzing" its content. This may be true because society has become very fast moving and always on the go. Analyzing every element of everything wouldn't fall under the category of "kosher" in this fast-food generation. Also, many feel that when you look too deep into something (as I have with this entire

column), people tend to make up excuses. Whining and analyzing are two very different things, but be careful to not cross that thin line.

Now I am sure you are all thinking, I make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. People even make mistakes when correcting my mistakes. Who cares, right? Well, that is only partially true but you can't judge a book by its cover, and the way you handle yourself when faced with dealing with your own mishaps, or someone else's may make or break you. One final thought - it is all in the delivery. How you react to any mistake takes tact, consideration, common courtesy, and just the right amount. So if this wordy column has totally put you to sleep and you think that I have just over-analyzed something that is too minor to care about, remember - I AM ONLY HUMAN. You may tactfully and constructively criticize, just don't hurt my feelings too much.

Kleck's column appears every three weeks.

