

## The Behrend Beacon

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

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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 [behrcol2@aol.com](mailto:behrcol2@aol.com). Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue.

## What is an American? Religion of 9/11

by Derek Pangallo  
staff writer

On Tuesday, members of assorted creeds gathered together in the Smith Chapel for an Interfaith Prayer Service, reflecting on the events of Sept. 11.

The varied list of speakers included: Michael Allison, Charles Wertz, Mary C. Connerty, Abdu Nafi, Hema Deshumukh, and Dr. Jeffrey (Digging Bear) Nelson.

Those belief systems represented were the Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, and Native American. Although all present had different ideas about how the world works, the common thread for the evening remained peace and tolerance, achieved through understanding.

Allison began the evening in prayer, and reminded those present that as told in the bible, the death for one's brothers is the ultimate act of discipleship. This belief may have been shared in a mutated form in the minds of the terrorists.

Sept. 11, as illustrated by the service, is one of those events which change the whole feeling and connotation of living in the United States. What it means to be an American is different

today than it was before 9/11/2001. When the radical few resort to acts of extreme horror to make a point against us, one can only question why?

Upon asking, most often the answer comes back to faith. It is the unfortunate tendency of mankind to use faith as justification in committing acts of atrocity. Ultimately, these acts always prove to have a selfish underlying. It is both righteous and highly profitable to crusade around converting people in order to assimilate and control them. In the case of Sept. 11, political and religious fanatics manipulated a religion and it's ignorant faithful to serve their own ends.

Most likely, the entire objective was not only to destroy the buildings which make America: the Towers, the Pentagon, the White House. They were trying to destroy our sense of self. It is possible that in the distorted minds of our enemies, with those icons in ruins, we would lose our sense of unity, anarchy would result, and America would be ripe for a new rule. Of course, this is conjecture, no one but those responsible know the real logic, though it undoubtedly fits the pattern.

Representing Erie's Muslim community was Abdu Nafi. He read an excerpt from the Koran, and showed that in no way does the teachings of the nation of Islam glorify or condone this kind of act.

We can see today that phase two of our invisible enemy's plan has gone terribly awry. While devastatingly tragic, the events of 9/11 have uplifted the spirit and soul of America to a level not known in most of our lifetimes. We are many, we are one.

Thoughts now turn to patriotism, and our newfound unity. I wish it did not seem that people need a common enemy to find harmony. After all, Christians, Jews, Iraqis, Americans, Eskimos, are just people. Traditions and border lines are man-made; the differences are inconsequential. An American is a person who lives between two big bodies of water, and a couple particular lines of latitude. One nation under God is good, but what about... One World, One Mind?

## I think somebody needs a nap

This column is a rebuttal to an editorial, which ran in the first *Beacon* issue of this school year. If you missed it, fear not, I will enlighten you. The column was by Amanda Prischak and titled, "Not an Abercrombie girl." In case you failed to digest this piece of editorial junk food let me fill you in on the greasy contents.



Guy Reschenthaler  
editorial columnist

Ms. Prischak began her column with a list of complaints. She knocked people who "try to follow age-old stereotypes" (whatever the hell that means) and people who buy into mainstream America. Somehow fraternity brothers, Madonna, boy bands, Abercrombie clothing, and slim blonde-haired American girls became targets of Amanda's whiny assault on American

culture. Let me now address Prischak's complaints one at a time.

First complaint—fraternity brothers. Wow Amanda, you sound a tad bitter. This "guest columnist" said that fraternity brothers try to model themselves after the Animal House ideal, get sub-2.0 GPAs, and fall asleep "in drunken stupors." I think someone needs to lighten up and look at the facts. Amanda, you claimed in your opening paragraph that you hate people who try to fit into stereotypes. Yet it seems you are the one who is labeling others with the stereotypes you supposedly despise.

Take the time to meet a fraternity brother instead of instantly dismissing them all as dumb drunks. You can start by getting to know me. My extension is 2416. Give me a ring and we can talk about fraternity life, my alleged "sub 2.0 GPA," and how

I fall asleep at night. Maybe then you'll see what a fraternity brother is like, a TKE brother in this instance, instead of writing insults about me, my brothers, and all other fraters. Is this a challenge? Yes. And do yourself a favor and accept it. Maybe then you won't be so quick to dismiss others as moronic alcoholics.

Second—pop stars. Amanda, you have a point on this one. Many stars lack talent and are simply puppets for producers and agents targeting young teens. Many top selling "artists" are not artists at all but pretty cookie-cutter faces with mediocre voices. But so what? This is America. Our business is business and if this music makes money, then it should keep on making money. I am sorry to see that a lot of people are so idealistic that they fail to recognize that money means almost everything—yes, even in music.

Third—Abercrombie and Fitch. This complaint really hurt. It really did. Abercrombie is a great company. Its clothes may be pricey but they are of a spectacular quality. I am still wearing Abercrombie

clothes that I bought when in the ninth grade. But somehow I believe it is Abercrombie's marketing that bothers you. The company tries not only to sell clothes, but also a lifestyle. The lifestyle just happens to be the one that most teens desire—the All-American one. All Abercrombie adds depict (like you said) blonde, blue-eyed good-looking teens, who appear to be well off financially and seemingly in love and having fun. Man, wonder why they use this "stereotype?" Could it be that this is what we all want? It is called marketing, Amanda.

When we buy Abercrombie we buy good quality, fashionable clothes. We also buy into the American dream. And what is wrong with that? I cannot think of anything that would be better than living the American dream, save for, living the American dream in a pair of well-fitting comfortable Abercrombie jeans.

Look, here's how it is, Amanda. You need a nap. You remind me of a small child who is tired and cranky. Why don't you go to your room and relax?

While you run off for "quiet time" I'll address our audience in a serious, logical, and practical manner. Look, here's how it is. Amanda attacked college Americana. She dismissed fraters without getting to know any. She idealistically dismissed our pop music. Sure, it isn't that artistic but it makes money and that is what we are all about. If Amanda and others don't like this they can move to France where art is just art and takes a higher priority than defense, the economy, and other big-boy issues. She knocked the American image.

I don't know about you but I love the American image and the American dream. I like being able to watch "Animal House" and say, "I've been there." I love good-looking blonde girls and Corvettes and Jeep Wranglers and Coca-Cola and pick-up football games and fraternity parties and college and rock and roll and Abercrombie and Fitch.

YOU ROCK, AMERICA!!!

Reschenthaler's column appears every three weeks.

## Letters to the Editor

### On the anniversary of 9/11 be a force of change: Denounce war!

Dear Editor,  
I was extremely appalled and mortified to read the editorial entitled "Let's Dance, Saddam!" by Guy Reschenthaler (August 30, 2002). I would like to address some of his statements.

Mr. Reschenthaler claimed that the international community and the UN are cowards for not backing the U.S. on its recent adventure called "war on Iraq." According to Mr. Reschenthaler, "... both the international community and Saddam are completely nuts." I will tell you who is a nut, a complete loose head, the person who dares put peaceful nations of the world in the same category as Saddam and call them nuts. Is it so irrational to ask the Bush administration to present evidence of Saddam's threat? Is it so unreasonable for Americans and other citizens of the world to request the exhaustion of diplomatic venues before declaring war? I don't think Mr. Reschenthaler understands what he is advocating. If a war is declared, it will inevitably be a slaughter-fest of millions of innocent Iraqis (and thousands of Americans). If we are willing to massacre innocent Iraqis, what makes us so different from the demented and vicious Saddam Hussein?

Mr. Reschenthaler stated why he believed Saddam should be destroyed: "he has used biological weapons.... he rules with an iron fist, etc." Well, if these are

the criteria for being demonized and destroyed by the U.S., I urge us all to come up with a more complete list of countries that fall under this category (at this moment I can think of China, Korea, U.S., Germany, many African countries and South American countries). Is the U.S. going after all of these countries?

It was also infuriating to read Mr. Reschenthaler's "you are with us or against us" sentiments (in any case, aren't these junior high sentiments?). According to him, those countries that are not "with us," meaning countries that do not support war, should be "taken out." I beg your pardon! Is the U.S. so "right" that no nation or international organization should dare question it for fear of being "taken out?" If so, what is the difference between this attitude and a dictatorship? The leading democratic country in the world is becoming a dictator and, if we don't take an anti-war, pro-peace stand, we are aiding in this transformation.

The writer of the editorial summarized his points as follows: "...We need to take on Saddam. The Iraqi government needs to be destroyed and replaced with a pro-U.S. government...let's go into that glorified sandbox, slap some anti-Americans around, prop up a puppet government, and start pumping oil." Let us not forget bin Laden was once a tool in creating the "pro-U.S." government in Afghanistan-

has history taught us nothing?

Mr. Reschenthaler also claimed that it will be "glorious for the American people" because the war on Iraq will "crush the Desert Stalin." I don't think Mr. Reschenthaler understands the concept of war. It would not be just Saddam, if he at all, that will die in this war. Millions of innocent women and men, boys and girls, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, wives and husbands will die before Saddam's fingernail is touched! **War is not a concept. It is a reality!** Have we completely lost our humanity that we are willing to sit in front of a computer and condemn the whole nation of Iraq? Condemn millions of fellow human beings? Also, for the sake of humanity, I hope massacre is not the kind of "glory" the American people desire.

On the one year anniversary of 9/11, I implore all of you to advocate an anti-war, pro-peace position. I challenge you to denounce war! War is not necessary. War is especially not necessary in this case. The U.S. has enough diplomatic power in the world to get the weapon inspectors back in Iraq without war. Contrary to what Mr. Reschenthaler claimed, the reason other nations do not support an invasion of Iraq is because they understand an invasion will only result in the massacre of millions of people and a World War III. Again, has history taught

### Co-ed Perry Hall?

us nothing? Besides, as Mahatma Gandhi's words remind us, "Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side." Let's listen to the world!

-Banchi Dessaleg  
Psychology/Biology, 09

Say, what's all this about Perry Hall being all-male? Having lived there last year, I know that Perry Hall is by far the greatest of all the lower residence halls; I'd even be annoyed by it if it were all-female. Everyone should have at least a chance of living there. I can't think of any good reason for this change.

-Karen Niemla

