

The Behrend Beacon

Professionalism with a Personality

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"Professionalism
with a Personality"



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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. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue.

A paradox in Iraq

I've been thinking about war. It seems like we may very well be on our way to declaring war with Saddam Hussein. As of now, for those that did not know, Iraq has agreed to allow U.N. weapons inspectors back into the country. This leads me to believe one of two things: either the United States' threats of declaring war scared some sense into Hussein, or perhaps this is merely another ploy in their ultimate goal to simply baffle the United Nations. I really do not think that Saddam would stoop to anything so low as to fear the United States. People of this nature have no fear; they simply convert it to rage.



Derek Bledsoe

editorial columnist

This brings to mind another question that I was planning to bring up had Iraq not had a change of heart. Do we, the United States, consider Saddam a terrorist or a dictator? This is something that we as a nation need to decide, and perhaps the UN needs to decide this, as well. If he is a dictator, then we take into account the fact that he has millions of people under his whim; that he blinds them with propaganda and completely brainwashes them into believing what he wants so that he can continue his anti-U.S. campaign. If he is a terrorist, then we recognize him as simply a madman

who aims his crosshairs with no goal of peace, just the desire for destruction to make a point.

Both points of view could be pinned on Saddam, however each presents itself with a very different approach as to exactly how we deal with him. If he is a dictator, then I think we need United Nations support. I worry that sometimes, in our arrogance, the United States takes upon itself to always know what the right thing is, and to be able to take the undeniable power that we have and use it to get things done. If we do declare war on Iraq, we need our U.N. allies. War is a terrible thing, and to my knowledge, no war has been won without the help of allies. We need to realize that in starting a war with Saddam Hussein, we are taking on a power to the likes of which we can not fully comprehend.

Taking direct action may eliminate Iraq's threat for now, but is that worth undermining a board of nations that we have come to rely on and trust for support? I do not mean to imply that I do not think declaring war is necessarily the wrong decision, just that I think we need diplomatic support around the world if we want to continue our image

as a father nation.

However, the flip side of that coin is if we view Saddam Hussein as a terrorist, then that is a different story. In this case, I think there is no contest as to what we should do- to be blunt, bomb the hell out of him. We stated in a creed shortly after the 9/11 attacks that we will not tolerate, negotiate, nor associate with terrorists or anyone who aids or tolerates them. I think it is sad how politics can cloud such a simple article of faith. The lines begin to blur and then the exceptions come into play.

I realize that my two opinions may seem to conflict, however if you look closely, they are one and the same. Basically, we need to decide how we are approaching this situation in Iraq. Is it a global fight that we are trying to head in the hope of peace? Or, is it a personal threat that we are trying to eliminate? We can not play both sides of this argument, we must chose either one or the other. Then, while perhaps people may not agree with our actions, they will be able to understand them as our time simply becomes a chapter in a history book.

Bledsoe's column appears every three weeks.

Brown nosing your way to the top

It may be a bit late in the school year to write a welcome back article, but I am Kevin Fallon and I can do what ever I want. So, welcome back.

If you are here it means you survived a summer of killer mosquitoes, raging forest fires, and worst of all, another horrible "Star Wars" movie. But surviving summer vacation was the easy part, now we have to survive the fall semester. For all you freshmen, listen up, because I am about to give you the secrets on how to get through college. I should know, I've been here long enough.

The best advice I can give on how to survive college can be summed up in two words: brown nose. That's right. Maybe in high school it wasn't cool to be the teacher's pet. Well, in college it's no different. But, unlike high school, in college no one really cares if you are cool. So be a dork and make a friend with a teacher. See, professors have these things called "office hours." This means that the school requires them to sit in their little cave-like offices for hours. And

what is the point of this? Is it a cruel form of solitary confinement designed to make college professors even weirder than they already are? No, they do it to benefit the students by providing a time when they can meet one on one with their teachers.

So what Behrend has done is create a situation where the teachers are forced to spend hours a day in a cramped little room that used to be a janitor's closet (and in some cases still is) to benefit their students who never come see them anyhow.

So, by now, you must be wondering, what then, do the professors do with all these free hours? They become bitter.

But Behrend does not want to pay teachers to sit around waiting for students and becoming bitter, so they make them fill up those office hours with busy work. You know those little pencils they give you to take tests? Well, that's what they do, they make those. They

sit in their offices for hours taking normal pencils, cutting them in half, and sharpening them. All professors must fill a certain quota set by Penn State University. This is all very hush-hush information and I only know it because of my investigative reporting for the *Beacon*. This is why whenever you actually do stop by a teacher's office he looks up at you as if he is in the middle of some big important work. Nope, he's just busy making miniature pencils like a sweat shop worker.

By the way, the conspiracy grows; they sell the excess pencils to golf courses. The miniature pencil business is a very lucrative and secret business controlled by college campuses. How do you think this school makes its money?

Anyhow, how does all this help you survive the fall semester? Simple. The only break teachers are allowed to have is when a student comes to the office. This brightens their day. I know you are thinking, "I don't even like spending three hours a week with this person. Why would I want to go visit them?"

I understand, it is a valid point. But teachers make great friends. They have

the power to make your life much easier, plus give you good grades. Tell them things like, "Wow, have you been working out?" or "Gee, is that a new pocket protector?" It really brings out your eyes." Then ask them for answers to the test. Works like a charm.

But don't make friends with a teacher

to use them. Do it because college professors are the most noble, kind, and wise people on this earth. I personally love all of my professors and am honored to be in their classes.

Fallon's column appears every three weeks.



Kevin Fallon

asst. managing editor



Letters to the Editor

Abercrombie? The American dream?

Dear Editor,
This letter is in reaction to "I think somebody needs a nap," by Guy Reschenthaler, editorial columnist. I think that the columnist was out of line in his way expressing himself on the topic of a guest editorialist. The motto of the *Beacon* puts it best, "Professionalism with a Personality." The aforementioned article seemed a little personal-heavy.
Having read the article that he chose to write about, I can understand where he is coming from in some of his arguments. That is also not the purpose of this letter. The aspect of his column that irritated me the most was the delivery of his point of view. He may have disagreed with Ms. Prischak's arguments on the topic of mainstream American/College cultures, but this is no reason to begin taunting the writer in a less-than mature fashion.
Mr. Reschenthaler began by describing her whole article as "a piece of editorial junk food." This comment may have been intended to be humorous, but it simply is not the way to start off a persuasive column.
After the introduction, he got into the body of the column, which posed good arguments, but seemed to bleed immaturity throughout its devices. A few examples include, "Amanda's whiny assault on American culture," and "Wow, Amanda you sound a tad bitter." One of his arguments was that Ms. Prischak was being ironically judgmental. It appears she is not the only one to appear this way because the immature execution of the

column made his argument that not all frat boys are "dumb drunks" fall flat in irony. Immediately after this argument, he challenges her to call and get to know him, but from the way the article was written, insultingly and condescendingly, Ms. Prischak may very well have already learned more than she wanted to know about Mr. Reschenthaler.
The problem with these methods of persuasion, are that the ideas are lost amidst the taunts. It is truly distracting to have to read, "Do yourself a favor and accept it," during a serious debate. An adept writer would know that it is his/her job to show the person why they should be accepting a point, not an "I'm right, you're wrong; there's nothing you can do about it."
Lastly, we come to the conclusion of the column, which may have been the most offensive portion. In this section, the writer threw out all reservations and "stuck it to her." The insults can be quoted as, "Look, here's how it is, Amanda. You need a nap. You remind me of a small child who is tired and cranky." True, this is an editorial, so some of the formalities can be ignored, but this is just plain condescension. I don't think it furthers the argument and I think the Sophists would agree with me. It is once again, ironic. In calling Ms. Prischak a child, the columnist is making himself appear to be a child. I found it most amusing that the title of the column came from this section. Perhaps it grabs the attention of the reader, but it also portrays the very nature of the article, which in this case is not something

you'd want to raise.
In the latter half of the conclusion, the writer starts comparing the American dream to all of the things that Ms. Prischak wrote out against. This section was insulting to the reader. "If Amanda and others don't like this, they can move to France..." Isn't it true that dreams are different from person to person? It would then follow that the American dream would differ from person to person. Now, I never said I was completely mature so allow me this: to state that everyone must like his idea of the American dream is simply laughable. I honestly have never shopped at Abercrombie; does this mean I am refusing to take part in the American dream? In the end, Americans are just people and they all have their own dreams. Some dream of Abercrombie, and some dream of the individual. Who is to say that the American dream is about the white picket fence and a big house, and not simply about having a dream?
The tragedy is that the American dream had to be brought up in such deep ironies as, "While you run off for 'quiet time,' I'll address our audience in a serious, logical, and practical manner."

Michael Oey
DUS

Want to be heard?
Write a letter to the editor! E-mail
Behrcoll2@aol.com.
Please include your name, major, and semester standing.

Outdoors Fest and SAF

Despite it being Friday the thirteenth, despite there only being two teams signed up, despite the fact that it was planned in four weeks, the Outdoors Festival went extremely well.
The Festival was held to benefit the Make-a-Wish Foundation, and helped a little girl realize her dream to go to Disneyland. Commuter Council and the Behrend Outdoors Club raised approximately \$300 to go towards this girl's dream. I would like to personally thank all of those Behrend students and others that contributed to this cause.
There were a total of five teams that participated in the event which consisted of a tent building competition, a bridge crossing exercise, a car wash, and a race through the Gorge. We had a very diverse group of people attending, with participants from groups such as ABC, Alpha Phi Omega, Delta Chi, MCC, OLAS, and Delta Sigma Pi. It was a very successful event, in my eyes, and I believe that those involved enjoyed participating very much.
The reason I am writing is based on a rumor, and I apologize preemptively for basing an argument on a rumor.
The Outdoors Club and Commuter Council requested \$200 for food to be served at the dance after the festival.
It was brought to my attention that the money we had requested from the SAF fund was not granted, and that the logic behind the turnout was that only two teams had signed up for the event. It was also brought to my attention that Tau Kappa Epsilon and Theta Phi Alpha were granted approximately \$10,000 to have the Clarks come to campus. Don't get me wrong, I am a Clarks fan, and am glad to hear they will be at Behrend.

I would just like to go over the logistics of the money allotted. If 200 people go to the Clarks, SAF will have provided about \$50 per student. Even if only two teams had participated in the Outdoors Festival, SAF would have only spent \$17 per person.
Personally, I feel that those who make the decisions for SAF should take into account that this large sum of money should be distributed more evenly amongst student organizations who are making and honest effort to provide programming that a wide variety of students can enjoy.
Perhaps I am in error. Perhaps there was some other logic behind not funding us, and if that is the case then, once again, I apologize.
If we (SAF) are going to not distribute money on the account of people not being signed up, then maybe we should have a sign up sheet for every event on campus. How many people were signed up to go see the Clarks?
SAF's goal in providing funding is to "promote diversity among students from a variety of backgrounds and belief systems", and they expect the program to be marketed to all students. The Outdoors Festival fulfilled both of those qualifications, so my question is: What more does a club have to do to get funding?
I guess that from now on, our on-campus groups should include a petition of people interested in the event, and maybe in doing so they will convince the SAF board that the event is worthwhile.

Keenan Hansen
President of Behrend Outdoors Club