

The Behrend Beacon

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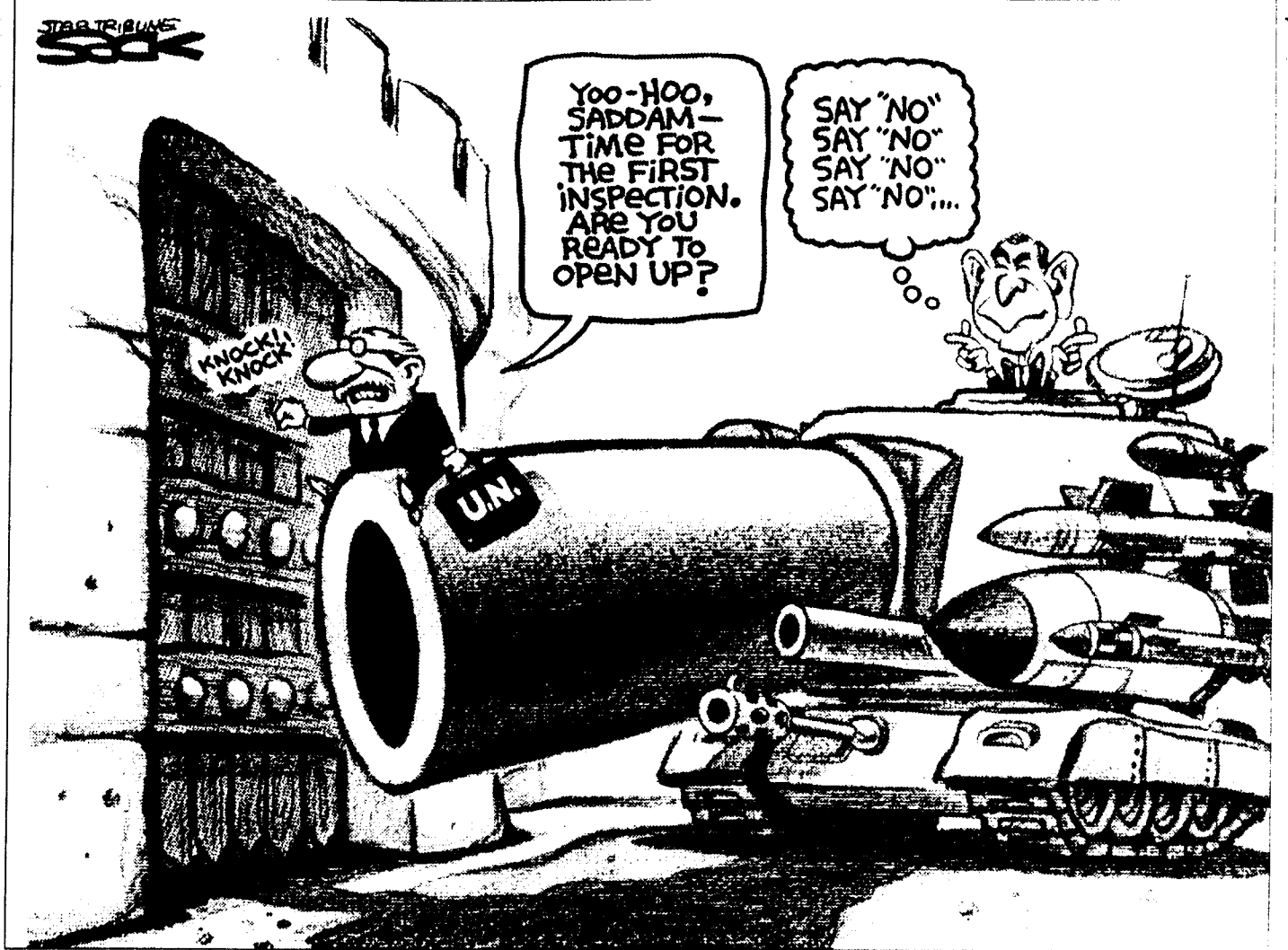
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"Professionalism
with a Personality"

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Speak up. Speak out.
Send your letters to the editor to
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Include your name, semester standing, and major.

Staff Editorial

Record companies should throw in the towel

The battle between record companies and file sharing websites has been much like a fight between two heavyweight boxers. With every website that the recording industry has been able to shut down or alter dramatically, it seems that it's coming back with about three more. Now, with the new version of the overwhelmingly popular Kazaa out, it appears that once again the recording industry is two steps behind technology.

According to MSNBC.com, Kazaa has been downloaded more than 120 million times in the last year, making it one of the most downloaded programs in the history of the World Wide Web. Now, a new version of the popular software is out, and open to the public, bringing the fight of the music versus record companies to the forefront once again.

This version of Kazaa may possibly be the best file-sharing program out on the market today. The program keeps the peer-to-peer sharing the old version had, but has added new functions that downloaders will rave about. The software allows users to search and download "playlists," or groups of songs, as one single item. In other words, if a user finds somebody who shares in the exact same taste of music he does, then a board of songs can be compiled into one group and be downloaded simultaneously.

The new Kazaa adds another new feature, which is the most controversial and is causing an uproar in the record industry. The program contains a basic Web search function, allowing people to sift through ordinary Web pages as well as other user's computers.

The recording industry once again brings up the same argument of file-sharing being illegal and considered stealing and blah, blah, blah. The simple fact is that programs like Kazaa just aren't going to go away. The industry now faces a question of whether or not to even bother continuing fighting companies that support free file-sharing.

Most likely, Kazaa will eventually be shut down, just as many of the other programs were. Kazaa will either have to start charging users money to use its product, or alter the program to contain music from only those artists who allow them to, or completely eliminate itself. Of course, by the time that happens, how many programs will be out on the market just like it?

The industry has won its battles against companies just like Kazaa before, but when it comes to the war, it is a completely different story. By now, almost everybody has heard of the parent and idol of all file-sharers, the all-mighty Napster. Along with Scour Exchange and Audiogalaxy, Napster eventually succumbed to complaints and lawsuits from record companies. These three were the most popular and arguably the most reliable sources for Internet users to obtain music from their favorite artists for no charge.

Little did the industry realize, however, that the fall of programs would spawn the creation of countless more. Napster users went right on sharing with Scour, who then were forced to vacate to Audiogalaxy, who now reside at Kazaa.

And, of course, these aren't the only available file-sharing programs out there. WinMX and Morpheus are alternatives to those who just might not find Kazaa all that appealing.

The fact is easy enough to understand. Record companies are spending millions of dollars on a fight that they just cannot win. Perhaps file-sharers and the recording industry can come up with some kind of compromise. Allow file-sharing over the Internet, but only keep one program, and dissolve the others. Let either Kazaa or WinMX or whom ever wants to take the reigns to lead the way.

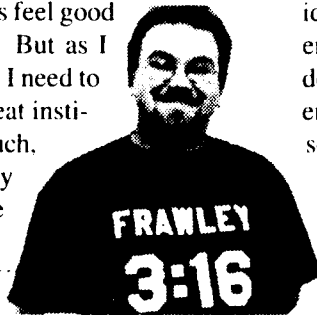
Kazaa's day in court is set for Dec. 2, but it seems clear that whatever is settled by the case is obsolete. Record companies have lost their fight. Now it's up to them to admit defeat.

Guess who's back? Back again

Well, it's been two years, anyone miss me? I didn't think so, but in case you didn't notice I'm back!!!

It's been a fun-filled two years in the real world, but it does feel good to be back at Behrend. But as I returned to campus I felt I need to do something for the great institution that gave me so much, so I figured I'd spread my newfound wisdom in the form of a few witty editorials this semester.

So sit back, strap in, and enjoy the ride!



Mike Frawley

How many of you out there realize that an election is about to take place? Guess what? There is! But how many people on this campus really care? Very few. Politics in this country has become like a bad rerun of the Jerry Springer show. And with the new piece of stupidity that comes out of Washington each week, we find more and more reasons not to care.

Florida proved yet again that it put more thought into setting up a bingo game than it did in its election system. After spending millions of dollars on new voting equipment and training for new personnel at the polling sites, they still found a way to mess things up. At some sites they could not even figure out how to turn the machines on!

And people wonder why no one comes out to vote anymore?

We have elected officials on the floor of Congress trying to spread panic by putting forth the idea that West Nile is a terrorist attack. Apparently, terrorists are now recruiting mosquitoes to do their dirty work. As if people are not scared enough we have government officials trying to scare us more. And we are the ones who elected these morons!

Now I understand why politics turns off many Americans. After reading things like this in the newspaper, I have to admit that I was pretty disgusted with the entire system myself. But that is the reason that we all need to become more involved, not less. If we don't do anything, things like this will continue to happen. And the easiest thing for a person to get involved is vote.

Why should our government officials make any effort to change things. They keep getting elected, so why should they rock the boat? You will not find a person in government right now who truly wants to change things, they like things the way they are. The only way things will change is if we vote people into office that will make those changes.

I constantly hear people complaining about how horrible of a president George W. is and how the country is going to hell under his leadership. Well, we elected him (sort of) and now we are

stuck with him whether you like him or not. But if you don't like him, there is something that you can do. Vote in the midterm election that is coming up for Democrats, help them take over Congress, send a message to "W."

And, closer to home, there is an election for governor going on in our own state. Now, with Ridge not around any more people in this area don't really care about this election, but we should. The people we elect will have control over future financial aid for college. They'll control how much in taxes we will have to pay when we join the work force (or how much we currently pay in taxes for those of us already in the work force). They'll have a say in if we are going to have to go to war with Iraq.

Now, I for one, would like to have a say on how much I pay in taxes and whether we are going to go fight a war, so every election I trot out to the polls and place my vote. Even if there is no one I want to vote for, there is always someone I want to vote against. By casting my vote I give myself the right to moan, groan, and complain about how awful our government is. To those of you who don't vote but moan, groan, and gripe about the government anyway, shut up. Why should you have any voice in a system you don't participate in?

Frawley's column appears every three weeks.

Autumn in Erie: Celebrating life in the midst of death

Although the crisp autumn wind has only begun to carry with it the memories of this year's trees and plant life, 2002 has presented my family with many celebrations of life and death, thus far.

With the passing of my father, Michael Kleck, just this past August, and the celebration of the golden anniversary of my mother's parents, Raymond and Mary Lou Osiecki, just in the last few weeks, my family has learned how precious life can be and how important it is to celebrate life even in the midst of death.

My dad was born just five and a half months before my maternal grandparents were married, although they didn't meet him until he started dating my mother when they met at General Electric in Erie in 1975. My dad graduated from Penn State University in 1974 with a bachelor's degree in computer science, and moved to Erie to begin a career at GE. He would be so proud to know that the Penn State tradition continues on in our family, as his two older children (my brother Matt, and myself) are currently a freshman and senior at Penn State - Behrend.

Coming from a long tradition of "great planners," the amazing connections and coincidences that have been made in my family over the last 50 years have brought me comfort in the last few months.

When my mother was making her wedding plans, she wanted to make her wedding date as close to her parents' as possible. My grandparents were married on Sept. 13, 1952 and my parents were married on Oct. 1, 1977 - 25 years apart from each other.

Within a few weeks of my parents' 20th wedding anniversary in October of 1997, my father had open-heart surgery to replace a valve in his heart. Because of poor care and a very strong dosage of medication (as prescribed by the doctors) he had a stroke, went into a coma and was like that until his death on Aug. 3.

Every evening, my dedicated and loving grandparents would visit him and sit with him at his nursing home, Brevillier Village. They just wanted to make sure that he was OK and that he was well taken care of. So many people thought that they were his parents. We would simply say, "yes," because he never looked at them as in-laws, but rather as a second set of parents. My great aunts and uncles visited him often to keep my father and grandparents company.

My mother's family had plans to celebrate my grandparents' wedding anniversary the week of August 5-9, so my mother's brothers and their families from Texas and South Carolina were already in town when he passed away. My father's oldest sister, my Aunt Judy and her husband from South Carolina were also in the Oil City area for a family reunion, so his passing almost seemed as though he had planned it that way.

Within five minutes of my last relative arriving in Erie for the wedding anniversary celebration, we got the phone call from the nursing home that he had passed away. The only relative that had to do any kind of traveling was another one of his older sisters, my Aunt Cathy, who is on a special nursing assignment in California.

My father was also very involved in Saint James Church, especially the annual summer festival. He passed away right in the middle of this year's festival. Many people have commented, that my dad knew that the festival needed some "heavenly help."



Christine Kleck

contributing columnist

Kleck's column appears every three weeks.