

The Behrend Beacon

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

Editor-in-Chief
Kevin Fallon

Managing Editors
Rebecca Weindorf
Robert Wynne

News Editor
Erin McCarty

Sports Editors
Scott Sollis
Zoe Rose

Editorial Page Editor
Paige Miles

Features Editor
Karl Benacci

Staff Photographers
Jeff Hankey
Heather Myers



THE BEHREND
BEACON

"A newspaper by the
students for the students"

Professional Publication Mgr.
Dave Richards

Advisor
Cathy Roan

Advertising Managers
Melissa Powell
Christine Kleck

Calendar Page Editor
Ennn Hansen

Humor Page Editor
Ross Lockwood

Associate Editor
Jen Henderson

Distribution Manager
Scott Sollis

Technical Support
Doug Butterworth

The eighties just called; they want Mr. T and Alf back

Alf and Mr. T are not cool anymore, and Carrot Top is just really annoying. Major long-distance telephone providers haven't quite grasped this fact. Rather, communication providers such as 1-800-COLLECT, AT&T, and 10-10-220 have decided to have an all-out eighties war with each other in which they pull icons and characters from the past two decades and make them perform 30-second skits about why their company allows the viewer to "save a buck or two."

Individually, I think, these companies have a good game plan. Dig up an icon of the eighties that the 18 to 23-year-old crowd (the group of people that are college students living away from home or that have moved out completely) will remember from their childhood - something that already has a place in our brain; and then lay an advertisement on top of it. In essence, these phone company commercials are a parasite on the human brain; you know, like how dogs have fleas. Those ads placed during prime-time on cable and local channels reach the target audience, and then someone decides out of the blue that their new favorite long-distance carrier is Sprint or AT&T. At least, that's what those companies hope.

Even during the small amount of time that I do watch TV each week, I am subjected to an overwhelming number of these ads. The problem is, even though the commercials are unique, so many of them make my head spin. If at some time I needed to dial long-distance, I'm sure I would remember the advertisements, but not necessarily which number went with what ad. "Hmm...I remember an ad with Alf, one with Alf and Hulk Hogan, and one with Alyssa Milano." But which

company had the best deal? How much was it per minute after the first 20? I remember the one with Alyssa Milano the best, though, no further comment.

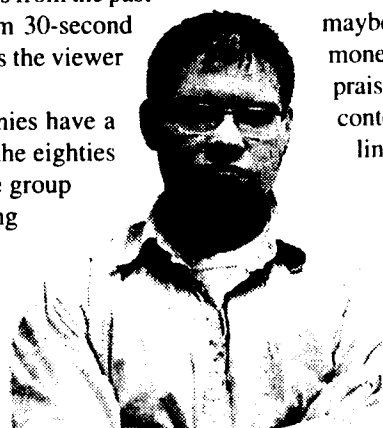
It all makes perfect sense. Obviously, since the media has such a profound impact on Americans, companies like AT&T and its competitors use that impact to their advantage. So maybe they can't afford (or are not willing to spend the money) on Vin Diesel or J-Lo to make a 30-second clip praising their cheap long-distance services. I guess they're content with searching the "eighties actors unemployment line" for help.

Personally, I don't trust any of them. Any company that can afford to have 20 prime-time ads has to pay for those slots somehow. I wonder how much of my "99 cents a minute" went towards the cost of the commercial? Don't get me wrong, I realize that any major brand name is going to sink money into ads to promote their product. Phone services, however, compete about pennies, and don't really have a tangible product to offer.

Also to their disadvantage, there is no "quality of product" to argue over. Regardless of whether you're using Sprint,

AT&T, or 1-800-COLLECT, you'll still be using the same phone talking to the same person who won't sound any different just because you "dialed down the center." In such a competitive communications market, I guess major companies are willing to pay the big bucks. I do not know, however, which long-distance carrier the eighties used when they called for Hulk Hogan and Alf.

Wynne's column appears every three weeks.



Rob Wynne

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.

All you have to do is want it: The Haitian immigrants now wait behind bars

I turned on the news to see an older man handing a baby girl to a younger man, down the side of an old red boat. Their faces looked tired, drained, spent, but satisfied. They had finally reached their long sought destination: America.

The individuals on TV were three of the 200 Haitians who landed in Miami two weeks past. All 200 made landfall and therefore qualified for "dry foot" status. This status allows them the ability to seek political asylum if they can prove they will be prosecuted for their political beliefs if sent back to Haiti. Some were lucky and able to hitch rides into Miami and start a new life; others were caught and are now being detained, waiting for their cases to be heard.

These men, women, and children risked their lives to make the voyage from Haiti to the US in the rugged old boat, Shu Shu Bay. They left behind homes, families, and friends, to come to the United States. Yet some of these men and women may be sent back to Haiti after all their hardships. Sadly, under U.S. law, if the Haitian immigrants cannot prove that they are seeking political asylum, not economic, they will be turned back to the poor island from which they came, an island where men and women eek out a living every day.

So what is the point? Who cares if a few Haitians will be sent back to home? Well, there are a few reasons why we should care and a few why the want-to-be Americans should be allowed to naturalize.

For starters, Haitians are treated differently from Cubans. If a Cuban lands on U.S. soil, if their "wet feet" meet dry American land, then they automatically are

considered political refugees and given citizenship within a year, due to the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act. This is because they are coming from a Communist state and are considered political refugees. But Haiti is democratic (at least in form). Their president, Roger Noriega, took the presidency in 2000 and has been a repressive campaign against his political rivals. The 2000 election was shady at best; utterly corrupt at worst. But we still consider the nation "democratic." Regardless, Haitians are seen as economic refugees who are just coming to the US to earn more money.

I say, "What's the difference?" Cubans, Haitians, Mexicans, people from Mars, whatever, if they are coming to the United States, they are coming to be Americans. We have a better political system, a better economy, and a better future, than their native lands. Who cares for what reasons they are seeking asylum in the United States as long as they are coming to the United States? Can we deprive others the right to seek a better life?

No one person in the United States descends from someone who did not immigrate to the U.S. Even the Native Americans immigrated to the United States across the Bering Strait. No human life ever "originated" in the Western Hemisphere. If a U.S. citizen is denying the right of another to immigrate, then that citizen is a hypocrite.

With every wave of immigration, there is resistance.

There was resistance to the Irish, the Germans, Southern Europeans, Asians, and etcetera. Every group successfully assimilated, despite native reluctance. We have a perfect track record in this area, so why stop now?

I'm not saying that the borders should be wide open and no questions should be asked, that we just let everyone become a citizen. We still need to screen immigrants and make sure they are not violent criminals, terrorists, or pose a threat to the citizenry. But at the same time, we cannot ban immigration or hinder it. We cannot continue to be a free nation, without free borders. Think of Berlin. I bet you thought of a big concrete wall. Now think of Ellis Island. I bet you thought of lines of immigrants entering New York. Oppressive borders are for oppressive regimes; free borders are for free states.

I feel that, one reason why America is such a great nation, why our technology is cutting-edge, and why our economy is robust, is in part due to our immigration. Every year, immigrants pour into our country. We are refreshed with new ideas, new

customs, and new ways of thinking. We are constantly being renewed. We are being reinvented with every wave of immigration. In a market, which thrives on entrepreneurial spirit, immigration boosts our production and innovation.

Germany is tough on immigration, like many European nations. Their economy and their culture stagnate. Because of immigration, the U.S. is less likely to suffer from such stagnation. We are always growing and expanding. We are taking all the good ideas, concepts, and ideals of other cultures and making them our own. America is constantly forging herself into a stronger state.

Some argue that immigrants drain our economy because some live on government handouts and take advantage of our social welfare programs, such as healthcare. This is especially the argument used in California, Arizona, and New Mexico. But maybe these states should reform their healthcare and welfare systems rather than seal the US border. It is easy to blame immigrants for failing government programs. They are easy targets for politicians trying to twist public opinion. But the truth is most immigrants come to the U.S. to work, not to become parasites, not to live off welfare programs.

Perhaps many Americans are losing sight of what it means to be an American. A lot of us go around putting labels on our nationality. How many people do you hear say they are Italian-American, Irish-American, African-American, etc? I hear it all the time. I bet if we ask one of the Haitians in detention what it means to be an American they would not say, "Being a Haitian-American means..." They would say, "Be-

ing an American means being free, being ones own man, being able to make a decent living, living under a stable democratic government..." The immigrants are trying to be Americans, not X-Americans.

All it takes to be an American is to want to be an American. That is what we are all about. We are a nation built not on ethnicity, or national heritage, but rather we are a nation built on ideals. We are forged together with principles and ideas. Anyone who believes in our ideology is an American. Believing and wanting to live like an American is all it takes to be an American. This is a great thing. Ronald Reagan once said what makes America great is that "we all come from somewhere else. We all have roots that reach somewhere far away." Not a common skin color, not a set of customs, not even a common language ties us together. We all bond as Americans under one vision, the American dream.

Look, here's how it is: it's about time that we open the doors to all who want to immigrate to the United States (given they do not pose any sort of threat). It is time to join together as Americans. If we shut down our borders because of terrorism, then the terrorists have won. If we do not accept foreigners as our own, then we have lost our ideals. It is time to stop labeling ourselves as "X-Americans." Let's drop the X and just be Americans. Let's think about those who want to become American, those not lucky enough to be born in the United States. Let's think about the Haitians sitting in jail.

Reschenthaler's column appears every three weeks.

Letters to the Editor

I am writing this letter in response to Mike Frawley's article, "Put Down the Gun, Heston." His article, for those who did not read it, was about guns and how they should not be a part of our society. He feels that we should give up our right to bear arms, because we do not use guns as the founders of our constitution originally intended. I suppose this means our freedom of speech, religion, etc. should be revised or banned as well, because our founders did not realize these rights would be interpreted in so many ways. However, I doubt any debate will ever occur over these rights because they are enjoyed by so many people. Yet, a lot of people also enjoy the right to bear arms.

Frawley's opinions about gun control were probably concocted after listening to Hilary Clinton babble about some new radical idea that should be made a law. Yet, most do not realize hard factual evidence that states if our guns are taken away, as

they were in England or Australia, our crime rate will sky rocket. In Australia armed robberies rose 73% AFTER guns were taken away and stricter gun laws were imposed. In some places, crime rose 300% after guns were taken away. Thus this columnist has decided to jump on the gun control wagon and try to get impressionable college students to sway his way.

I take the avid role of the person to inform you with FACTS not opinions. Frawley said he was more worried about normal people obtaining guns, not criminals. His example was the Arizona shootings, but I will give you one better: the Columbine shootings or recent sniper attacks. Contrary to popular belief more people die from intentional crimes than accidental shootings with registered guns. Yet he would rather take guns away and increase our society's crime. Also, most gun crime today occurs from those guns received on the black market, rather

than with registered guns. If guns are banned, this does not mean they will no longer be available. Take drugs for example, they are illegal, yet somehow I could get pretty much what ever I wanted with no hassle and for a cheaper price than if they were legalized. So next time you read someone's run away wet dream about control issues of the American people, whether it be guns, speech or even clothes, remember to get facts and not base your concluding ideas on someone else's opinion.

Ryan Joseph Hess, 03, MIS

I picked up a Beacon today just like I always do every Monday, except this time there was no humor page in it.

Looks like the only thing the Beacon is good for now is Pizza Hut coupons.

Kevin Kearney

