

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	Advertising Managers Melissa Powell Christine Kleck
Sports Editors Scott Soltis Zoe Rose	Calendar Page Editor Erinn Hansen
Editorial Page Editor Paige Miles	Humor Page Editor Ross Lockwood
Features Editor Karl Benacci	Associate Editor Jen Henderson
Staff Photographers Jeff Hankey Heather Myers	Distribution Manager Scott Soltis
	Technical Support Doug Butterworth

Professional Publication Mgr.
Dave Richards

Advisor
Cathy Roan

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. Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue.

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.



Send Letters to the Editor!
Include your name, major, and semester standing and send to:
Behrcol2@aol.com

To a young girl

To a certain young girl, Christmas meant dolls, letters to Santa, chocolate chip cookies, and other "fun" things. As that little girl grew up and the toys and dolls faded away, she began to see the real reason for the Christmas season.

With a life currently surrounded by midterms, papers, car payments and plenty of other "not so fun" things, it's important now more than ever for me to seek out and hold on tight to the real reason for the season. As I celebrate my 21st Christmas, I am reminded of so many Christmas memories that have taught me the true meaning of Christmas.

One of my fondest holiday memories includes a particular Christmas that I will always keep close to my heart. It is what my mother likes to call "Our Christmas of Firsts and Lasts."

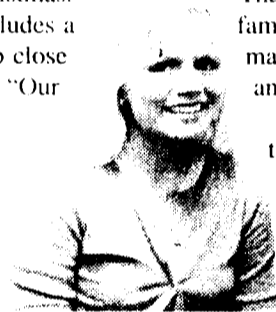
The 1989 holiday season brought my mother's entire family together, along with endless snowstorms. My southern, out-of-town relatives came to Erie from very warm, snow-free climates. The fact that our weather forecast was very new to them made for an interesting holiday season. It was the first time many of them had ever experienced snow!

Coats and boots had to be borrowed, and lots of hot chocolate was consumed that season as the Erie area (again) experienced and my relatives witnessed (for the first time) record snowstorms. Even the warmest clothes that some of my relatives brought with them weren't enough. We "Erie natives" all insisted that they dress in "more layers" - something that was a first for most of them.

My other aunt, who is from Erie, was 8 months pregnant with her first child. Technically, it was his first snow experience, as well. My cousin, Andrew, was born in January - right in the middle of his first (but certainly not his only) Erie winter snowstorm.

We all gathered at my home for a Christmas Eve celebration. So many people in one house made the cold outside melt away from the warmth of all of our hearts. We were all happy, safe, healthy and together for the first time in years.

That was my immediate family's last Christmas in our old house. That spring we were scheduled to break ground for our new home.



Christine Kleck

In some ways it felt like my last Christmas as a child. Little did I know that my next Christmas would feel so different. I felt more mature because I wasn't spending the holiday season in the home that held all of my best childhood memories within its walls.

My great aunt also celebrated her 75th Christmas with us that night in 1989. It was the last Christmas she celebrated with us, and certainly one of the most special Christmases that we ever spent together.

That made for a grand total of 14 (and one on the way) family members joined together for that very special Christmas Eve Celebration in 1989. We sat down to a large meal and all joined hands in prayer.

All 14 of us had many blessings bestowed upon us that year. We all had so much to be thankful for. With glowing faces and sparkling eyes we all joined together to thank God. We thanked Him for letting us all be together to join hands before Him on that holy Christmas Eve.

At that time, I probably could have told you every little last thing that I received from Santa and my family that year. Looking back now on that Christmas, I don't remember one material gift that I received. On that same note, the details that I described above may not have even crossed my mind as an 8-year-old.

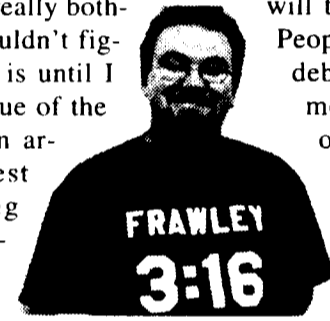
No matter your age, ethnicity or background, it is your family that makes Christmas such a special time of year. Material gifts come and go without much remembrance at all. It is your family, and the memories that you create and share together that you never forget. Moments like these are what Christmas is all about, and make the season so special.

I know that life is busy; I experience a hectic lifestyle every single day of my life. But if you took the time to read my little Christmas memory just now, then you have the time to make a phone call, write an e-mail, talk on an Instant Message Service - whatever it takes to keep in touch with the best part of Christmas - your family. Think of your own memory and share it with a relative or two. And remember, enjoy your holiday season - create memories and share them for years to come.

Kleck's column appears every three weeks.

To Jeff

Well, it's that time of year again. Time to get out all of the decorations and start spreading good cheer. And while I normally enjoy this time of year, lately I've seemed a little down about it. But what really bothered me is that I couldn't figure out why. That is until I read last week's issue of the *Beacon* and saw an article about my best friend spending Christmas in Afghanistan while I'm here at home writing another edito-



Mike Frawley

I was like most Americans. I spent the holiday season watching the ads on TV to remember our servicemen who were overseas and away from their families for the holidays. After saying to myself how sad that was, I flipped the channel to something more interesting and never gave it a second thought. I won't be able to do that ever again. While I sit here with my family and friends, Jeff Miller is protecting our country in a place most Americans can't point out on a map.

I find myself watching CNN and reading the paper with a new urgency. Hunting for news about what is going on over there. Was there a bombing, a sniper attack, was anyone hurt? But because of Americans' limited attention span, events in Afghanistan are getting less and less

coverage. So I wonder to myself is it all worth it? Did Bush make the right decision in sending our boys overseas? If he decides to invade Iraq, will that be the right decision? People all over the country are debating this right now, and most people have a strong opinion about it, as I myself do. But who gets lost in all of this? Our military personnel do.

I know this sounds amazingly sappy and nostalgic, and maybe because I have a family of my own now I appreciate things a little better. But I don't think I'll be so quick to flip the channel this year. So to all of our servicemen and women who are overseas this year (and I know you all read the *Beacon*!) I wish you the best. This holiday season when I'm opening a present, or toasting in the New Year it will be with a little sadness. While I am with my friends and family, a great number of people serving there country are not. In a perfect world they all will come back, safe and sound.

Frawley's column appears every three weeks.

Letter to the Editor

In the November 22nd article on the Behrend Card-board Box City, the author neglected to mention one of the most active community service organizations on campus. Omicron Delta Kappa, a national junior/senior Honors and Leadership Society, also "manned" its cardboard box for 24 hours in the freezing cold. ODK raised over \$120 for the Kid's Cafe at the Emmaus Soup Kitchen. I would like to thank all the members who participated for their dedication!

Nicole Dirling, 07,
Political Science
Community Service Liaison,
ODK

In the diversity corner

A case for the feminists

by Banchi Dessalegn
contributing editorialist

I remember reading several *Beacon* articles where the necessity of the feminist movement was questioned. At the time, I was rather perturbed, to say the least. But then, I kept hearing the same sentiments from other individuals, women included, who said "women are no longer oppressed, hence there is no need for the feminist movement." Well, I beg to differ. So bear with me as I make a case for a "Global Women's Liberation Movement."

I believe those individuals who believe the feminist movement is no longer needed suffer from two basic misperceptions about the current status of women in the U.S., and the purpose and intended scope of the feminist movement. Due to space limitations, I will address only the second point although the first one is also very important and needs to be addressed in full.

Most of those who question the need for a comprehensive feminist movement believe that the feminist movement is an "American movement." In truth, the feminist movement

is larger in its intended scope than the U.S. and those who question the necessity of this movement seem unaware of the global aspect of the feminist movement.

In a world where women have to cover their faces by law, women are not allowed to go to school by law, women are murdered in the name of honor, women's genitalia are mutilated as a service to men (currently, it is estimated that 100 to 132 million women are victims of this practice) etc., how can one question the need for a women's liberation movement? If there is no need for feminism, why then do we still have women being mistreated and persecuted around the globe?

To give a current example of persecution of women, I present the case of Amina Lawal Kurami, a Nigerian woman who has been sentenced to death by stoning for having sex out of wedlock.

A few years back, 12 states in northern Nigeria implemented the Sharia, which is an extremist interpretation of the Islamic law. According to the Sharia, sex out of wedlock is considered a crime punishable by death. If the accused is a man, he can get the charges dropped just by claiming that he was not involved. His words are good enough unless

four reputable individuals catch him in the act and testify against him (what are the chances?).

The man who Amina claims to be the father of her child denied the allegations and is a free man. On the other hand, she waits for the day her child stops nursing, for that is the day she will be stoned to death. The death sentence will be carried out by first burying Amina up to her neck, and then the townsmen will stone her until she dies. I ask you, where is justice for this woman? Does the punishment fit the 'crime'?

Those in the so called 'land of the free' are more concerned about the merits of an obviously needed movement, while millions of women are used, abused, and murdered. Although this example is that of a Nigerian woman, do NOT delude yourself thinking that atrocity is present only in Nigeria or Africa. Women all around the world, the U.S. included, are maltreated everyday (look at the rate of rape and domestic violence in the U.S.).

I say let us put the pettiness aside and work together to bring about real changes for the women of the globe. I call for a Global Women's Liberation Movement, a move-

ment where all people come together to free all oppressed groups in the world, starting with women. This is a call for action and not rhetoric. For instance, at Behrend, we can start out by paying attention to the language we use when we address women, by denouncing objectification of women by the media, fellow students, and the school paper.

In closing, I will modify an African saying to make my point: "If you free a woman, you have freed a population." Let us come together to free a population! And please, the next time you or someone you know questions the value of the feminist movement, think of Amina and others like her.

For those who want to do something to help Amina, there are petitions floating around that will be sent to the president of Nigeria, and the Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S. Here are the links, it will only take a minute but might save her life so please sign these petitions:
Nigerian President: <http://www.petitiononline.com/aminal/>
Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S.: <http://www.amnestyusa.org/amina/index.html>