

## The Behrend Beacon

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

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**THE BEHREND  
Beacon**

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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](mailto:behrcoll2@aol.com). Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue.

## In the diversity corner

Adult learners: beyond age

by Abbey Atkinson  
contributing editorialist

A friend of mine, about a year ago, told me that she wanted to return to college, but didn't want to be pin-pointed as one of those old students. "Non-Trad" was what they were called in her undergraduate years; the name just wasn't appealing.

However, being in a dead end job with a growing family, my friend really wanted to finish her college degree and advance in the working world. I informed her that these days such students were called "adult learners" or "returning adult students" and we agreed that sounded better.

Then we discussed what the adult learner brings to the college classroom rather than what a degree would bring to her life, for that would be obvious in her paychecks.

For that part of our conversation, you must understand that an adult learner is a category that encompasses many types of people. They're not just the people who professors point out when asking who remembers, or knows about, a certain historical event from the seventies or the men and women who could be mistaken for the professor as they dash to class directly after work in their business attire.

They are veterans, students enrolling after the ripe young age of 24, folks who fulfill multiple life roles such as parent or spouse, and those who maintain full-

time employment while earning their degree. Don't be shocked if you qualify and never knew it. Returning adult students are the least detectable population on campus, but now that you know, do something with it.

Currently, while in the midst of all the chaos of war talk, a veteran's insights in the classroom adds a great deal of reality and proximity to the situation. Suddenly a discussion about history and theory can evolve into facts, memories, and informed views.

Group projects researching the correlations between quality of life and college education can be profoundly astute when one member has taken at least 5 years off between high school and college. We learn through other's experiences as well as our own, and perhaps if you take the time to pay attention, you could pick up some tips for surviving after college when you're on your own.

Keep in mind, also, that a lot of students are going on to deal with the family in some way. Whether in psychology, education, or advocacy, the meaning behind your course of study could hold a different degree of authenticity when you, your friends, or your peers have children or are married.

If higher education were as restrictive as it used to be because of moral codes and ethics clauses, a lot could be lost in the rich learning environment our parents adult learners are able to offer.

And who can deny the invaluable lessons that can be gained from a person actually able to work at least a full 40 while taking classes. That person has a job, can keep a job, and firstly, found a job! As a graduating senior, those lessons are ones I sincerely hope to absorb and develop an ability to practice.

Although there are many more examples, only so much page space remains, so what is the point of exposing how adult learners enrich the college experience? I'll tell you - just as conventional students can learn from them, returning adult students learn from their classmates, as well. Sadly, what it seems they have learned is that they will be snubbed or marginalized because of a few differences.

Do your part to send your peers a different message and soon we can be on the way to a compassionate campus environment for everybody. Have you ever thought of joining RASO. (Returning Adult Student Organization) attending one of the sessions on computers and such, or contacting an advisor about your own status and what it means for your degree? Think about it; do it; encourage others to do the same.

Celebrate diversity, even when in the form of an older age, a different life role, a greater demand on time, or a military calling.

## MTV got it right: How MTV started reality TV and how the rest of the networks got it wrong

Remember when reality TV started? When MTV produced the "Real World." Back in those days, reality TV was pure. There were no games, or twists, or gimmicks, just a bunch of strangers living together for months on end in a sweet house in a large city.

The "Real World" was so simple. We watched to see real life unfold before us. We watched for Generation-X arguments, relationships, drama. We watched because we were in middle school and had no life of our own. But that was fine! We wanted to see what the real world was like, so we tuned into the first reality TV show.

Generation-Y lived vicariously every Wednesday night at 10 p.m., through the "Real World." It was harmless and fun. I still watch the "Real World," just because it is a great show, and maybe because I still don't have a life.

Yet out of the "Real World," Mark Burnett got the idea for a reality show that would pit man vs. man, man vs. the elements, and man verse himself: "Survivor." That show was great, the first season. It took all the great conflict, writers try to incorporate into a plot, and just set up the elements and let the players take it from there. The show was like watching "The Lord of the Flies" and "Robinson Crusoe" mixed with "Castaway" and "American Gladiators," with a dash of the "Real World" microcosm

idea. It was great! Then everything started to go down-hill.

Now we have "American Idol," "Joe Millionaire," "The Bachelor," "The Bachelorette," "Fear Factor," and countless others. The craze seems unstoppable and apparently is a great moneymaker for the networks. Everyone wins. Viewers get real world excitement, networks get shows that are easy and cheap to produce and easily marketable, and the contestants get...well let's talk about that for a while.

All these "Real World" rip offs have one thing in common. They all humiliate the individuals appearing in the show. With "Joe Millionaire," people turn in to watch gold-digging chicks grovel over a man who is not a multimillionaire, but a heavy equipment operator. Viewers love to watch this low witted man play off the role of Mr. Perfect. It is pathetic.

He and the women are all being used. I don't care how much money Fox gives this guy, the whole world sees he is stupid and the girls, wow, I can't imagine them going back to their jobs, friends, family, after having so blatantly tried to play the role of Little-Ms.-Perfect-Wife-For-A-Millionaire-Husband. They should all be ashamed.

The producers of "Fear Factor" should be ashamed, also. This show pays \$50,000 to the last contestant who can stomach anything thrown his/her way or can stand to do gross and stupid things. This show is pathetic. I watched one show and never dialed in again. On the one I saw, people had to drink liquefied pig liver, eat a bowl of crawling insects, and devour boiled goose eggs that were so mature you could see the baby geese in the fetal position, boiled and ready to be eaten. It was sick. These people sold their dignity for the chance, the chance, to win \$50,000. I'm speechless. Without dignity, what are you? And they sold it for that silly amount. It is sad, really sad. "American Idol" is even more disre-

spectful to human dignity. The show loves to put on people who think they can sing but have no business even humming in their own showers. They are that bad. And the show probably screens them to sort out the bad ones from the mediocre to the very talented. I'm willing to wager that the mediocre are told to go home, the pathetic are then fed to the lions, and then the show throws in some talent just to give the show some legitimacy. It's horrible.

Some of these people, I think, are a tad mentally ill. Remember the guy who thought he was Enrique? Yeah, that guy was nuts! And then we have Simon. This guy is a jerk. With all the talent he has as a singer and producer, it would be nice to see him help others achieve success as well, other than ripping apart the helpless.

One show does help its contestants. One show builds the contestant up and helps him or her. One show has saved the concept of reality TV. This show is "Made." "Made" is produced by MTV, the network that started it all. In "Made," a high school student writes to MTV that he or she has a dream and wants to be made into a cheerleader, basketball player, model, opera singer, etc. It is a great show. MTV gives these highschoolers coaches, trainers, and encouragement. The whole point is to see a young person achieve a goal, to live a

dream. It is a great show that builds the human up, not tears him or her down. While viewers of other shows are tuning in to see someone humiliate herself over some Joe-whatever, or eat something sick for a few bucks, or sing like a fool in front of the ever arrogant judges, we can now flip the channel to MTV and watch as someone gets to make his or her dream come true. We can watch someone achieve, watch someone be proud, rather than watch someone be torn to shreds and degraded.

Look, here's how it is: reality TV is a good and solid concept for TV when used correctly. When aimed at recording the real world as it happens, or to help individuals, it is truly quality TV, but when used to make money off the humiliation, failure, pain, and heartache of others, it is just junk.

All I can say is, thank God for MTV. Having created the "Real World" and then "Made," reality TV has been at best saved and at worst given a model to strive toward. Let's remember the human dignity factor next time we tune into "Fear Factor," "Joe-Millionaire," "American Idol," and other human devaluing shows. Let's support human dignity and the good spirit of human nature and watch shows like "Made."

**Resenthaler's column appears every three weeks.**



Look, here's how it is  
Guy Resenthaler

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to the numerous articles that have appeared on the Opinion Page over the past few weeks concerning President Bush, his articulate nature, and the possible war with Iraq.

First off, in response to Katie Sweeney and Derek Bledsoe's debate over G.W. Bush's intelligence, capabilities, and articulations, allow me to point out that in no immediate realm of the future will conservatives possibly ever escape the slanderous descriptions from liberals of being called 1.) dumb and 2.) crazy. Unfortunately, our President has not made it out of the dumb realm and upgraded to just plain crazy. So the man can't pronounce "peninsula" or "nuclear" in a speech that the whole world is hanging on to, word for word. At least it provides some comic relief as I spin in tiny circles clawing through my day as I ponder the mere raw terror reported in the liberal media.

As Kevin Fallon pointed out in his editorial, "politics are down-right confusion." Yes, they are reported as such. How about we organize the liberal hysteria at work here? Republicans say, "Let's bomb Saddam" and Democrats say "Yep, the evidence is in on global warming but NOT Iraq." And now I get to watch another three weeks of anti-war/anti-grooming fallies on C-SPAN. I'm still looking for the promo people from deodorant companies working through the crowds passing out tiny samples. Apparently no one is yet brave enough for that job.

Maybe we'll see one of the losing Democratic Presidential "hopeful" nominees in a "Sure Advantage" T-shirt going to work the crowd with a bag of samples.

As far as Kevin Fallon's comparison of the war situation to a pop culture episode of "American Idol," it can't help but to reaffirm my notion that this is exactly why American foreign policy should NOT be based on public opinion. Sorry to diss you "American Idol" style, Kevin.

The truth of the matter is that while I can poke fun at all stereotypes involved here, including myself, the realities of war are approaching. The U.S., with or without the support and "moral authority" of Germany and France, will take action in a matter of time. But we are not going at this alone. At last count, our allies included 42 nations, 10 of which are European. How would giving inspectors more time solve anything when Saddam would continue to run from full cooperation and disclosure? It's obvious suspicion here. I'd willingly fight for my country and I thank those who already are for protecting me and my family from the terrors of evil. I fully support the American troops abroad and my country's great American conservative leaders including Kevin Fallon's very own "American Idol," GW Bush.

-Aimee S. Peterson  
Political Science, 08

## Ventura's move to prime-time political arena will benefit, entertain younger voters

After four years as governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura is once again entering the political arena. During his Wednesday appearance on the "Tonight Show with Jay Leno," Ventura explained that he wants to entertain and educate younger adults in the realm of politics. He notes it was the strong support of young voters that helped him win his governor seat.

With his new prime-time show set to air five nights a week on MSNBC, I think Ventura is the right man to bring politics into the minds of the public.

Granted, there is already somewhat of a competition for prime-time political shows to not only debate important issues, but to entertain the audience as well. "The O'Reilly Factor" and "Hardball" are two good examples. But, as is the case most of the time, sometimes the politics are a bit hard to understand aside from the witty commentary. I'll be the first to admit that - even after taking a half-dozen or so political science courses here at Behrend. Hopefully Ventura will act as somewhat of a translator. After all, not everyone is old enough to have remembered the Reagan and Bush administrations, let alone analyze their policies.

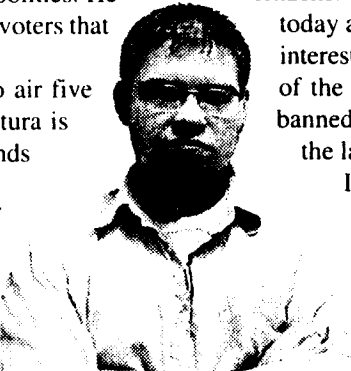
Aside from his intimidating appearance, Ventura also brings with him the attitude that he'll challenge anybody. He announced that political figures will be allowed on his show, only if they are brave enough. As a third party member who says "Republicans and Democrats are the problem," he'll also be a neutral moderator. He'll have the opportunity to challenge both parties at the same time from an outsider

standpoint, which doesn't happen too often on news TV anymore.

Ventura also stated some of his beliefs about politics and why the two-party system is detrimental to the lives of ordinary citizens. He believes that too many people in government today are "career politicians" who automatically put the interests of their career and political party over the interests of the people. Additionally, he said lawyers should be banned from running for office because they get to "make the laws that they will one day work under." Although I'm not completely sold on the last statement, I believe he has a great offense planned, with the Democrats and Republicans both playing defense.

Here's where I urge you, the public, to be careful. As with anything that is new or different, there's going to be a lot of criticism when Ventura hits the air. Think about it. He's going to have Republicans and Democrats in the spotlight, and they'll do anything to keep their party from looking bad. The Democrats will accuse him of siding too much with the Republican views and the Republicans will accuse him of siding with the Democrats' views. The problem is, the majority of the population is either one party or the other, so he's basically questioning the overwhelming majority of politicians as well as citizens.

My prediction is a love/hate relationship will develop with his some of his viewers. The same person who loves what Ventura has to say on Monday might despise him on Tuesday. As for myself, I was impressed with his preview, so I plan to give his show a try; to enjoy some entertainment and maybe learn something new.



Chew on this  
Rob Wynne