

## The Behrend Beacon

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

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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](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

by Carrie Rodgers  
contributing editorialist

"That's so gay!"  
Heard or said this a lot? Well, you're not alone. Using the term "gay" has now evolved into describing unpleasing situations, people or objects. When I am in the conversation, the speaker is quick to add, "Well, I wasn't referring to you. I hope that you're not mad."  
I'm not mad, but it does concern me that many people regularly use the term negatively. Is being gay wrong? Is it that unacceptable? As long as we continue this language, we are in danger of offending our best friend, brother, sister or co-worker. In most cases, I know people are not trying to directly offend me, however, many others may be offended and affected.  
Imagine yourself as a gay student—even better, a gay freshman. You have no idea what college life is about, let alone the opinions regarding sexual orientation. So, you just observe and listen to your peers. Overhear-

ing derogatory terms and jokes targeting gays and lesbians keeps you in the closet. This is where we fail. Even though the majority of the campus might be accepting, you will never know—you're too afraid. You believe revealing your sexual orientation will push you even further outside the campus community.  
Opting to stay in the closet seems to be the appealing answer for many gay youths. Most of them have good reasons. Fears of humiliation, separation and physical injury are among the top concerns. If we continue equating gay with an unpleasing subject or person, many students will continue hiding their orientation to "fit in". This can lead to lowered self-esteem. Defacing Trigon posters concerning GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered) issues further validate that being openly gay is unacceptable.  
We need to watch what we say. Using and accepting this language further separates gay and straight students. Given that in 10 people are gay, lesbian, bisexual or

transgendered, we encounter many everyday. Even in private conversations, people can overhear you on the way to class, at Brunos, in the classroom, in the dorms—everywhere. Nothing is really private at Behrend. Used in just casual conversation, your words can have a powerful and detrimental effect on a student who is concealing his or her identity.  
There is hope. Behrend is trying to find ways to embrace the GLBT community. Recently, I talked to a RA who told me part of training involves eliminating offensive language towards gays and lesbians. Complete change, however, needs to start within you. Being a GLBT ally is a great place to start. Educate yourself about all aspects of diversity. Use non-offensive and inclusive language—language that does not offend any race, gender, sexual orientation and so on. This allows students to feel comfortable with themselves and peers. Given today's world events, we need to look inward and embrace diversity within our own borders. Without acceptance, we are fighting ourselves.

## Pondering the word 'senior,' part two

All right. You knew there would be a pattern here, and this editorial is going to be about someone I don't know very well, and yet we share the same last name. Ah, no, it's not my third cousin twice removed, although I might have a few of those living in town, actually.  
Anyway, as I've said in my last editorial, being a senior doesn't always have to center around studies—it's a stage where I'm about to completely change. And though I can credit this change to my future husband and my parents and other big-name stars in the reality show that I call My Life, there are other key characters on the payroll that I'd like you to meet—one of whom I have already introduced in my Feb. 7 editorial. And as the big, tough, protective oldest sister that I am, I'm ready to share some of my editorial spotlight with my other younger siblings and, in a sense, let them take over the Eldest Sibling part that I have played so diligently in the last 22 years.



**Undressed from the neck up**  
Becky Weindorf

The second sibling in my family was used to being called 'the baby', because for six years, she was. She was the little sister that I lo-o-oved to pick on or dress up. She and her childhood friend would always be at our house and I would beg to brush their hair and braid it and all that stuff. I was that older sister who had that authority streak (I hesitate to say 'anal' because I don't think I am) and loved to dress them up in my weird, stylish clothes.  
When Cindy came along, she was the little daredevil. We have an infamous story in our house (actually, there are too many to count, but this is the one I remember right now). In our old house,

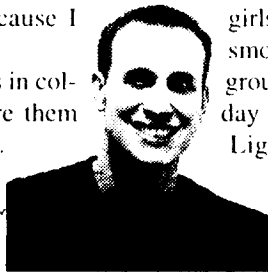
the one with the refinished basement, Cindy took one of her tricycles and decided to ride down the stairs into the basement. Can you imagine the noise we heard? THUDDA-THUDDA-THUDDA-THUDDA-BAM! She came out relatively unscathed on that one (note: I said 'that one.' There are others where we have a lovely assortment of broken bones, swollen joints, and a couple concussions.)  
So this sibling here, although we don't share a lot of our lives now, is also one of those instrumental pieces of my history here in Erie that I am about to leave for the new life that's awaiting me in four months. Cindy is six years younger than I, on the cusp of her sixteenth birthday

has talents for drawing and writing. Portraits are one of her specialties.  
As a powerful volleyball player for the local McDowell Trojans and an advocate for the Christian retreat program FootSteps, I think Cindy is going through life with a relaxed smile and a realistic outlook on her future. Sort of like the time she and I used to share a room when we were younger, and the realistic future that we shared was having our own rooms (and we made sure our mother heard that request every day.)  
Cindy will be one of my bridesmaids come July this year, and I think she's excited about it, even though she has to get her hair done and wear a dress (wink). And even though I had a tendency to overdramatize my femininity at her age, she's starting to discover who she is, and what she wants to be when she grows into a woman.  
I think there's a lot more common between us than I realize, too, because one of those discoveries that we both discovered at 16 was that we cut through the bullcrap and don't put up with it. It makes life a lot simpler. And we both are 'tough gals' (my father's words).  
For the last three years, I've been trying to complete school and focus most of my energies on either my future husband or my studies. Maybe this is not an editorial *per se*, but like I said, I'm changing parts. I have to make that transition as smooth as possible. It's a lot of responsibility coming first in a family like mine.  
P.S.: Special editorial preview! I look for 'Squirt' on April 11.

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

## Behrend Blahs

Wow. Where has the time gone? I only have three editorials left to write—this one, another one, and my final goodbye column to Penn State Behrend. It seems like only yesterday I was a timid, shy freshman. True, some people still think I'm shy, but that's just because I don't like them.  
I've learned a lot of things in college, and I am here to share them with my beautiful readers. Some of these things are cool, and most are not. Let's start with the nots.  
Things I dislike:  
- I get annoyed really easily and I'm really high strung, so there's nothing worse than sitting in class and being distracted by a cell phone some idiot forgot to turn off. The worst part is everyone looks around the room—including the tool that owns the cell phone.  
Why is this? Is the person hoping it's someone else's phone that coincidentally has the same Christina Aguilera ring tone? If so, I'll say this: The odds of two people in the same room having "Genie in a Bottle" as a ring tone is more minute than the odds of me marrying Christina Aguilera, and as everyone knows, I'm not going to marry Christina (My faithful readers are well aware I'm going to marry Britney Spears instead!).  
- My second Behrend pet peeve involves not pets, but people who are lazier than the fools who park next to the apartment dumpster, turning the road into a one lane deathfest. What could I be talking about? The million-dollar staircase's elevator abusers!  
There are actually people who are so unmotivated and sloth-like that they take the elevator not just up, but down, also. Yes, DOWN! Is it a coincidence these people are often corpulent and overweight? Nope! If anything, these people should be running the million-dollar staircase steps like Rocky Balboa. I understand some people are unable to use steps, so let's only use the elevator to go up so we don't wear the damn machine out for the people who actually need to use the elevator.  
However, there's nothing worse than a jabroni(ette) who sees a group of people walking behind them and decides to ride the elevator alone as opposed to being nice and waiting for the others. Personally, I don't use the elevator unless I'm weakened by sickness, which brings me to my next tirade.  
- To the people who come to class sick and spread germs: Everybody hates you. We hate your sniveling, gasping, nose-blowing ways. If you're sick, please stay home, or else you should come to my house and bring me chicken soup and Sucrets after you've infected me with your scummy germs.  
- Speaking of gasping, there's nothing worse than an attractive girl who smokes. Why? Because there aren't enough good-



**Oh, you didn't know?**  
Karl Benacci

looking Erie girls as it is, so the pretty girls shouldn't be smoking. Sure, lovely girls may still look good after a few puffs, but it all adds up and gives them yellow teeth and unhealthy skin. Of course, I don't care if unattractive girls or the entire male species smokes. In fact, either of these groups can light up six packs a day for all I care. It's all good. Light em' if you've got em,' fellas and beasts.  
Since I'm passing my word quota, I'll give a summary of other Behrend things that suck:  
-Guys who play Behrend intramural basketball with long nails. It's not the girls league! Cut them (This is especially close to my heart after a guy who calls himself Princess scratched me so deeply that blood dripped from both wrists! I felt like Kim—Eminem's ex-wife ☹).  
-Pulsive roommates—we all have a few of these, don't we?  
-People who have an audio system in their car that's worth more than the car itself. I will never understand these people. They buy a nice system when they don't have a window to throw it out of...  
-People who interrupt—No one likes you or what you have to say. Fill your mouth with some cigarettes and walk off the gorge.  
-Bad professors. We all hate them, even more than the people who come to class sick. One day, I even had a bad professor who taught sick. I hope she smokes.  
There's no space left, so I will list the things I enjoy about Behrend with little detail:  
-The painting of Bruno (in Bruno's). His eyes follow me wherever I go, whether it's to get some pizza or throw my lunch away.  
-Maintenance. There's nothing funnier than Behrend students getting sprayed with grass from a lawnmower.  
-The Junker Center. Why?  
-The Behrend Dance Team. They're all fine, and I assume none of them smoke. Maybe they will perform at my graduation party.

I am here to offer a final piece of Benacci wisdom. For everyone who is graduating this semester (myself included): After our one-week of vacation from our final Spring Break we'll be covering our eyes because of the glare from the light at the end of the tunnel. Make the final seven weeks (and finals week) an enjoyable time. I look back on my high school years and realize I didn't do anything cool (other than play than varsity sports). Carpe diem. After all, college is a time to remember; these are supposed to be our crazy days.

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

## Letter to the Editor

Kevin Fallon's column on Jack Burke as Provost in the Feb. 28 issue is one of his best. Burke is of course the best, best choice to continue the excellence that characterizes Behrend College and sets us apart from other locations in the system.  
But what if 'Sal and Rocko' answered? (They are Dr. Thomas Wortman, Special Assist. to Dean and Dr. Robert Light, Associate Provost). Feel free to publish their letter:

Dear K. Fallon,

We, the members of Burke's Posse, take exception to your recent column

about Dudley Dean Right.

Nobody asked us if he should be Dean. Either of us would have been a better pick cause we're the real power behind Burke.

When the guy comes running into the office every morning confused, it's us that points him to decaf or hi-test. Who do you think gets him into his tux correctly for all those fancy-smantzy affairs where we have to stand outside or park cars?

Boy, could we tell you stories. Like his insistence on yelling "Bingo!" before he has all the numbers.

We better get really cushy jobs outta all this.

Signed,

Sal and Rocko  
(aka Dr. Twortman, Chief of Trees and Dr. R.Light, Chief of Seas)

(Wortman was instrumental in having Behrend declared an arboretum—article in same issue; and Bob Light has among his duties heading up the Sea Grant program through Knowledge Park. Both are as good sports as Burke).

Have fun,

Mike Chiteman, Head  
Division of Undergraduate Studies  
20 Erie Hall

