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The Behrend Beacon

The Behrend Beacon

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One out of 60 sunny days

As many avid Beacon readers know, sunshine is not one of Erie's strong points. I still say if I could go back in time, I would have applied to some southern state and majored in surfing with a minor in bong rips.

But finally spring is coming to embrace Erie County with clammy hands and a 40 percent chance of snow throughout the week. Instead of enjoying a rare sunny-day Erie experiences, I am bound by invisible chains inside a computer lab being a slave to a modern day type of castration, the tip of the skin being my brain, staring blankly at screen staring back both wondering who's the one controlling who.

I used to blame the horrible weather or the horrible town for feeling miserable and with a town as crappy as Erie and the weather being so bad as to only receive 60 days of sunshine per year, it was a pretty safe bet. But now it's a sunny day and there's an indoor water park off of I-90 so now what's my excuse?

It would be really easy to point the finger at people and say, "Hey man, you're the reason I feel bad!" Or get in some girl's face and say, "You're the reason my life sucks!" That is easy to do. But I look around and I'm not sure anyone is having a good life.

For example, I was at the bar a few Thursdays ago and heard something about a war going. Now I have a few friends overseas fighting and I checked with their families and they're not happy and I know a few people who don't that the war period; go figure. Now we can blame Saddam Hussein, Afghani terrorists and yes, even Erie weather for feeling like crap, but I don't think that's the problem.

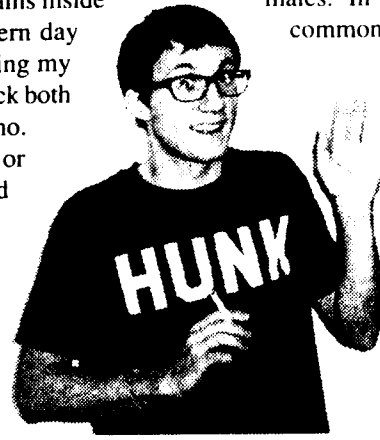
I was driving up Nagle Road, windows down, blasting EMF and saw a boy wearing glasses, jumping in mud puddles, having the time of this life and thought about the last time I

was that happy. I think I was at the bar on a Thursday night bitching about Erie and Erie weather. But there was a time when jumping in puddles amused me. It made me sadder. Sadder to realize that the more naïve I was, the happier I was. How many kids do you know who are clinically depressed? It was estimated that over 36 percent of all males over 21 have some sort of depression disorder, which was the most common disease in males. In women it was like 24 percent and like fourth most common behind PMS and dishwasherhands or something.

It depressing looking at these numbers and turning on the television to see that anti-depressants are available practically through mail-order. If the world is so goddamn depressed. I think something should be done about the world that didn't involve a written subscription by your local doctor. Something like pony rides or everyone gets a free kitten because as much fun as getting wasted, wasted off of booze that is, is that it's still a depressant. I used to have a friend that we called "Doc" and he'd tell him, "I have a bruised knee" and he'd say, "Drink 5 beers". He basically remedied our pain by subscribing beer and it worked. But alcohol is one of those things that only works if you take it all the time because after the buzz is worn off your back where you started.

I'm not advocating the sustaining of alcoholic beverages by any means, I'd be a hypocrite. All I'm saying is this. Quit blaming other people, places, and things for your life sucking, you control your decisions and the paths you take but Erie does suck on an unrelated note.

Butala's column
appears every three weeks.



Mike Butala

Let's listen to France

Why is everyone giving France a hard time? The French are just trying to do what is right for the world. I think we should give France a chance and listen to their advice. If the French want to give Saddam more time to disarm then so be it. If France does not want the U.S. to act unilaterally in defending itself against Iraqi and terrorist aggression, then let's not. France is right! The U.S., as a sovereign nation and the world's superpower, has no business protecting itself against a dictator who's sworn mission in life is to destroy America.

When all the evidence is weighed and the facts are examined, France's stand will prevail. French judgment and intellect is just superior to America's. We simply cannot rebut many of France's good points. What would the world do if individual countries tried to remove totalitarian governments and liberate innocent people? The world would be a crazy and dangerous place.

What would the world do if nations moved to eliminate threats of nuclear, biological, and chemical attacks?

World order would be out of control! Thank God for France and its attempt to help the United States rationalize action against the Kurd butcher, Saddam Hussein. Without French opposition,

President Bush might do something ridiculous like carry on a war against terrorism!

The global community should rally with France and let the French gov-



Look, here's how it is
Guy Reschenthaler

ernment direct international affairs. France is such a world power and an economic powerhouse, that I see no other choice. If Earth is a "global village," I'd nominate Chirac for mayor. That is how strongly I back the French.

Besides always having an enlight-

ened view of global politics, France has a great military record and a splendid history of common sense. For starters, France gave a 14-year old girl control of its military. Now that was a smart move. France slaughtered its monarchy and half of its civilians during the French Revolution in pursuit of a democratic form of government. Man, were they successful. Napoleon did a great job as dictator and leader of a free France. Yep, from a king to an emperor, France made a move in the right direction.

Lets not forget to give France its kudos for WWI. Good thing the French Army didn't let the Brits and Americans hold them back, or else Germany would have ran roughshod over Europe. And there we have it, France's resume of greatness. That is enough for this humble editorialist to follow French leadership. Oh wheezers-geezers, I almost forgot WWII. Sometimes I just get on such a kick talking about my favorite nation France that I lose myself in France's glory.

WWII—The French crushed the Nazis. The French Army held the Germans back for years with the mighty Maginot line. And then they didn't take German occupation lying down. They formed the Vichy Regime and really shoved it in Hitler's face. Gotta love French will power. Maybe all the other nations of the world

should nickname France, "Fierce France." I can just hear it in the UN. "Would the distinguished ambassador from "Fierce" France please raise and address the humble globe as we all listen to the voice of reason from "Fierce" France on what to do?" That is like music to my ears.

Today, we should look upon France for leadership and sound advice. Without it the United States could go and do something very selfish like liberate Iraq. The U.S. might make a blunder and bring greater rights to Iraqi women, peace of mind to Iraq's neighboring nations, give Kurds and other minority groups in Iraq freedom. God forbid we do such a noble and courageous thing! Without Fierce France, George Bush may go nuts and try to protect American citizens from Saddam Hussein: even worse, the U.S. may try to create a democratic government in the Middle East. How foolish! I sleep so soundly at night knowing that France is doing the right thing.

Look, here's how it is; enough of this nonsense, Marie Antoinette had it right when she said, "Let them eat cake," because the French are a bunch of cake eaters. France is one of the most blundering nations of all time. I cannot wait till we invade Iraq and find that Saddam

has violated United Nations policy and France is proven wrong. I cannot wait for us to free the Iraqi people despite France's opposition.

I'd love to see Colin Powell step up in the UN and say, "How can the United Nations expect France to man up and fight to liberate Iraq when they would not stand up and liberate themselves from Hitler?" That would be awesome.

My thoughts—the U.S. going to the UN Security Council is just a ploy to give us more time to make sure our special forces have secured Iraqi oil bases, propagandized the military, and rallied opposition to Saddam. I think that all the talk about Iraq may even be a decoy for us storming Iran first, then moving into Iraq or liberating the two nations simultaneously.

No matter what the reason, it is too good know who is with us and who is against us. France is definitely not with us and I believe we should slap France with every economic stick we have. If the U.S. does this, France could easily slide into a recession. Their economy is pathetic, their people are a bunch of Nancies, and their political leaders are of an even more spineless lot. When the dust over Baghdad settles, France is going to be humiliated and its international credibility and influence will lay in ruin.

Show your
parents
that you
actually
did
something
in college.

Send a letter to
the editor!

Behrcoll2
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Include your
name, major, and
semester standing.

Everyone else is doing it

Yeah, everyone has his or her opinion about the war with Iraq. Most do not make sense, though. I hear people discussing politics (or trying) and saying, "Yeah, the economy is bad, what we need is a war," or "All we're going to do is kill innocent civilians if we go to war!" These are typical bandwagon phrases, one-liners that people use to try to look half-way intelligent. I hear futile attempts at critical analyses of the American government. "If Clinton was still in office, none of this would be happening," is another popular bandwagon phrase.

The problem is, this small talk spreads like wildfire – ignorance becomes unleashed. I'm going to explain a few things, some about the war and some about where you should get your information from. Hell, if everyone else can offer an opinion, then why can't I?

First, one of the most important things to understand about Iraq is that its citizens do not enjoy even the simple freedoms that people in the United States and elsewhere do. There is no regard for human rights, the government can harass, kill, and/or torture anyone it chooses. Iraqi citizens know what Saddam wants them to know, which is very little. I like to think of Iraq as a fishbowl of people who don't really know the danger of their leader, and don't really know that we're trying to help them. The problem is, they're not allowed to know. Many times we forget that the Iraqi population is virtually brainwashed. We, on the other hand, live in a land where any and all information is available for us to know, where all points of a matter can be considered, and dissent does not equal death.

Second, to elaborate on the first point, Saddam kills his own people. For example, during the Gulf War, the U.S. was accused of shooting at bunkers that housed civilians and refugees. What many don't realize is that Saddam ordered to have some of his military buildings set up as shelters; military targets as far as the U.S. was concerned, propaganda points as far as Saddam was concerned. He wanted to portray the U.S. as murderers, but used his own people to complete the task. This is who we are going up against. Yes, there are many rulers like him, but he is the worst. Many Americans are worried that too many Iraqi citizens will be killed in

the war; but I say there are too many being killed even without war.

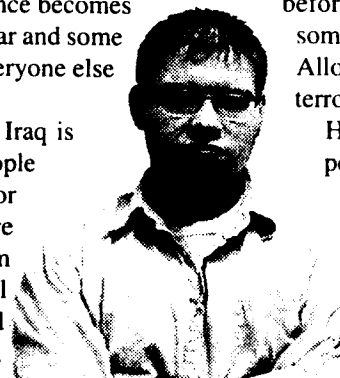
Third, there is one major enemy in this war – terror. What the United Nations and many people fail to understand is that Iraq is loaded with terrorists and money for terrorist organizations – and terror doesn't adhere to any U.N. inspection guidelines, or any rules for that matter. This isn't going to be a war between civilized nations, it's going to be a war against an unpredictable regime who moves their deadly weapons on an hourly basis to avoid the United Nations. Colin Powell announced before the U.N. the proven connections between Al-Qaeda and Hussein, something the Iraqi foreign minister denied and lied about weeks before. Allowing U.N. inspections to continue is just buying Saddam, as well as terrorists, more time.

However, those are my opinions – opinions based on studying history and political science for the last four years here at Behrend, with a lot of attention devoted to watching and reading the news – and I still know very little about global politics.

Like I said before, there are many bandwagon talkers out there proclaiming that they know what's going on. But, a good way to begin to understand something is to study it heavily. I urge you to watch lots of news, particularly interviews with government officials, and lots of PBS. There are a number of informative documentaries on this station that interview individuals who work in the upper levels of government that have helped shape foreign policy decision making. Also, news magazines contain lots of information about politics and profiles on important individuals.

This is where you will really find the facts.

Lastly, regardless of whether or not you approve of this war, it is inevitable. To that extent, we must now back our President, and more so, our troops. The best method for winning this war is going to be providing a united front, and a lot of support for our troops. We saw a tremendous boost in American pride after 9/11 – we need to continue this pride for the fathers, mothers, teachers, and all of the friends that have been sent out to wage this confrontation. If our country is not united going into this war, then indeed, everyone will lose.



Chew on this
Rob Wynne