

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 behrcol2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue.

'Cool' stuff sucks

First of all, I think that I should explain that I hate pop culture. I took the class pop culture of the 70s and I totally sucked while everyone did well. I'm taking pop media arts next fall; some people just don't get it.

Pop culture sucks, man. It takes the greatest things ever and exploits them. Like things that should have never been cool that eventually died out and then came back. Let's just put it this way, the original pop culture is like acid, and when it comes back like five years later, it's the flashback. Everyone knows acid is better the first time.

Certain stuff will never be cool again. Things such as "Rebel Rock," "skinny ties," and "bandanas," wait, those were never cool. But some things died away and came back that shouldn't have; not that they were bad, they just shouldn't have gotten exploited again. Here are a few key samples.

Denim jackets - These were all the rage 10 years ago and for whatever reason they came back. It must be the comfort of lugging around a 35-pound, uncomfortable jacket or the whole "indy rock-Eurotrash" following. I had two, back in the day. And Eurotrash is still kinda cool. Like

the Stones suck but Supergrass is kinda cool and David Bowie is god. Needless to say, denim jackets suck.

They were kinda cool when like one dude would wear one and people would say, "I remember those!" Now you can't escape 'em.



Mike Butala

Assistant Editor

Thick-rimmed glasses - My dad had these things and I thought they were awesome when I was 8 years old and always wanted them, but ya know, where could you find them? It's sad that I had to wait until they were popular before I

could sport them. By the way, for all who care, since Pitt lost my dad locked himself in the bathroom with a bucket of fudge and Fig Newtons. Doctors say it's just a phase.

Handkerchiefs - Okay, I don't know who down the line brought these back but whoever it was needs a beating by yours truly in a dark, deserted alley. I mean these things are ridiculous. I think it's the whole emo movement. I heard they go well with denim jackets.

Obesity - Back in the day, men used to pick their women according to how

curvy they were. Not like stacked, but like being obese. Well, this is like the newest, greatest thing because EVERYONE is getting on this. I remember in the early 90s Slim-Fast used to be really cool. I liked those days.

Chuck Taylors - Give me a break. I mean these, things AREN'T comfortable. "Yes, they are!" cries the little emo kid in the corner, and to that kid I say this: "You've let pop culture take over your life so much that you've convinced yourselves these shoes ARE comfortable. You know what? You're just about the lamest group of people in the world. You took something so personal and great and exploited it to be mainstream and 'different.'" I might add I want a pair of these shoes. I'm a size 10.

With all of that said, I have a few predictions of things that will be pop culture within the next year. Starter jackets, flannel shirts, Bugs Bunny, beer, anything with a rattlesnake on it, Harley-Davidson, whiskey, John Denver, Fireball Island, the movie "The Wizard," mob movies, Fruit Roll-Ups, cottage cheese, the Vengaboys, Boy George, the Barryobstwickband, Pitt basketball, and Magic Cards.

So before they all become pop culture, stack up on all this stuff and be the trendy, lame piece of feces that makes you a Behrend student.

I learned nothing

Because this is my final normal editorial, excluding the goodbye editorial I will be writing in the last Beacon, I've decided to spend some time on something that won't be covered in my goodbye piece. Don't worry, I won't be writing about war, because I think that subject has been beaten like a dead mongoose hanging from a rope.

Instead, I will write about a few of the things I learned in college. Yes, this sounds like a cliché, but this is what I learned, and not what anyone else has learned. In my four years at Behrend, I've acquired lots of educational ideas, but no one wants to hear about that. They want to hear about parties, dancing, and chaos. Well, if you want that sort of thing, talk to a real party stud like Jack Burke.

Like I said, I'm here to talk about the clean things, because if I talk about bad things, my father will disown me and my mother will make me sleep in the garage.

To begin, I've learned that Lion Cash is the stupidest thing in the world. Please get rid of it. My roommate, Mike, can't wash his clothes because the Lion Cash machine won't break his bills. This is rough, because my roommate has to wear a toga to class because everything else of his is dirty.

Speaking of unclean, I think it's safe to say that even if a person is a pig, his or her roommates will be worse. I'm a messy guy—I said messy, not dirty. I'll have papers everywhere and CDs all over my desk, but there won't be dirt anywhere near my things. My roommate, Mike, is the same way. We keep our room messy, but clean. Unfortunately, our two roommates act like disgusting slob. They cook and leave a mess, urinate on the bathroom floor, and blow food up in my microwave. Would anyone like to live with people like that? If so, please let me know, and Mike and I will gladly trade our roommates for yours.

My favorite observation: the more innocent someone is at the beginning of college life, the worse they will become. I

know a number of individuals who came to college with souls as white as snow, but now their lives revolve around sex, drugs and other things we dare not speak of. It's these people who make life interesting, though. I thank them all because they make me feel like my life is wonderful.

Moving on, I've learned if anyone comes to a class sick, they will sit next to you. This happens to me all the time. These people make college a germ cesspool, and before one knows it, everyone is sick.

I've also discovered people are quite apathetic toward many things. I say this in part because I've never received a letter from the editor concerning one of my editorials or stories. Perhaps this is because nobody reads what I write except for my mother, but I digress. Another example involves doing something nice for someone. One can give an individual a ride to campus or help them out in some other way, but will rarely receive a 'thank-you' from anyone. This makes me frown.

I never knew people loved breaking and pillaging things until I attended Behrend, either. Last Halloween, I bought a cardboard scarecrow and put him in the grass in front of my apartment. What happened? Someone stole my damn scarecrow! I ask you, why?! He was my friend.

One can also see all of the broken bottles around campus. I admit, it may be funny to watch people smash a bottle and run off, especially when they're intoxicated, but it's not cool to live in a quad with broken bottles everywhere. I've also seen a tree ripped in half, cement blocks busted everywhere, smashed windows, and lots more. It's crazy.

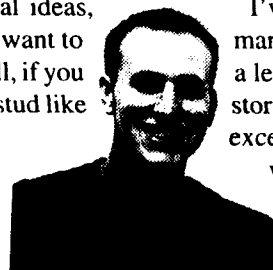
Finally, Rob Wynne, the managing editor, states a valid point when he says that the freshmen class looks younger and younger every year. Before long, there will be rows and rows of Huffy bicycles in front of the Reed Union Building as opposed to cars.

Well, this editorial took me 20 minutes to write. Can anyone tell? Enjoy the rest of the semester, everyone.

Oh, you didn't know?

Karl Benacci

Assistant Editor



Pondering the word 'senior,' part 3: 'Squirt'

I told you 'Squirt' would be in the next editorial. Ah yes, it is the baby of the Weindorf family, the little sister who is 12 years younger than I am. She gets everything she wants.

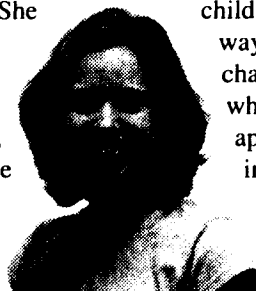
Okay, maybe not everything. Perhaps more than I do, but when you are an anal, firstborn perfectionist like myself, you tend to look at your younger siblings that way.

Part of my job as a non-fiction and editorial writer is to bring together two dissimilar things and make some sense out of them. I hope that in my meanderings that I find something in common with 'senior' and 'squirt,' other than they both start with the letter 'S.'

Sara (her real name) kicked my hand when she was about six months old in my mother's womb, and she's been kicking ever since. That is, she decided to take up soccer about a year ago: scoring goals here, giving a little defense there, and always doing it with a huge, buck-toothed smile. She is often seen tagging around the house on my sister Cindy's heels, asking to come into her room and

sometimes crashing a sleepover or two.

But this little kid is like my half-child, half-sibling because I always volunteered to baby-sit, change diapers, give baths, or whatever else that my mother appreciated. It made me feel important, like I was really doing something around the house. I had a baby sister to take care of



Undressed from the neck up

Becky Weindorf

Managing Editor

Perhaps this is where the senior part comes in: if I never had a little sister at home, I would have never learned the responsibility of taking care of one, especially when I could stay in bed when it was time for her 2 a.m. feeding. And if I never learned the responsibility, I might have made a few straying decisions and not ended up with a bachelor's degree. I made it my own goal to finish college no matter what, since I was one of the reasons my parents weren't able to finish their degrees - I attended my parent's wedding five

months before I was born.

My parents are happily married and quite successful; a college education wasn't what it is today. In experience, my father could very well have a master's degree in software engineering. The point is, little Sara was one of my adolescent inspirations to behave and get myself to this day, this moment, sitting in front of my computer at midnight on Wednesday pounding out an editorial. One of my last editorials.

I'm not going to get too mushy here since I have one more column at the end of the year, and that's when I'll pour on the sentimentalism. And many, many people had a role in why I am about to complete my BIGGEST GOAL EVER (emphasis on BIGGEST here). But Sara, just like my other siblings, had a role in how I came to this moment.

I guess this is my way of saying thank you to my siblings. There are other ways to say thank you, of course, but everyone has their own way. So go find your own way and thank you to the people who helped you to where you are today, sitting in your room or on one of the Reed couches. You might brighten their day - their week!

P.S. - This is for those who will celebrate this April 20: Happy Easter.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

After reading Erik Woods' Letter to the Editor in last week's *Beacon* (April 4, 2003), I realized Mr. Woods and I have something in common: we both support the attack on Iraq led by the United States and Great Britain. Our similarities, however, end there.

I confront Mr. Woods with his own words from last week's letter: What is your malfunction? Are you not an American citizen? If your response to that is yes, then I am embarrassed of you. I am embarrassed because in his statement, Mr. Woods expresses his complete misunderstanding, or possibly unawareness, of our First Amendment, which expressly grants all Americans the freedom to voice disagreements with our government in peaceful assembly. Under Saddam Hussein's rule, Iraqis do not have this freedom Mr. Woods has chosen to attack.

Mr. Woods calls Behrend's protestors "un-American" and asks them to think about the message they are sending to our troops. I think their message can be interpreted as one of confirmation. By exercising their right to protest, protestors are reminding the Coalition soldiers of the democratic freedoms they are fighting to give to the Iraqis.

Woods wrote, "They fought with their lives for freedom while you stood out-

side holding signs saying what they were doing was wrong." Yes, many soldiers sacrificed their lives in the name of freedom, but protestors will often admit that while they do not support the attacks, they do support the U.S. soldiers. As unlikely as war may seem at the time, every soldier knows when they enlist there is a chance he or she may be called to combat. It is President Bush who called for the attacks, but it is then enlisted soldiers who must do as their Commander-In-Chief orders. I do not dismiss the significance of the possibility of Mr. Woods' own friend being deployed, but I remind him that a dozen Behrend students have already been called to active duty.

As absurd and disorganized as his argument is, Mr. Woods himself, like Behrend's protestors, is demonstrating his undeniably American right to speak out. I hope he realizes while he has falsely dubbed Behrend's protestors as "un-American" through his negligent words and immature ideas, Mr. Woods has categorized himself as an "un-American" as well. Although I support the attack against Iraq, I also respect the opinions of those who do not.

Ryan Anthony
Research Technologist

To Whom it May Concern:

We are completely appalled at the idea that people who protest war are un-American. The fact that people are voicing their opinions about what the government is doing is exactly what the Constitution encourages us to do and protects for us.

When people say, "Have you forgotten 9-11?" do they also forget that it was not completely an attack on the United States? Do they forget that it was an attack on capitalism, and the world? It was an attack on the SYMBOL of economic stability and the expansion of Western Capitalism, along with universalism. The closed-mindedness of the apparent majority in the United States is sickening when we think back to the ideas that this country was founded on. Do you also forget that what Hitler did to the Jews, gypsies, blacks, mentally handicapped, and such people is an act of genocide, exactly what we did to the Native Americans? If you're a Native American in the United States you face oppression in so many forms other than racial; you cannot even get a driver's license unless you deny your own heritage. Huzzah for the melting pot!

You say Hussein is a bully, but do you realize that the United States of America is also a bully? Who stuck their nose into Vietnam and fought a fruitless war only to stop an idea from spreading? It just couldn't have been the United States, where we put people on trial just because they believe in something called "communism" and blacklist people for things that have nothing to do with how good or bad a

person is. How about that Red Scare, guys? Can't have a commie running around here! And as for "Saddam funding the Sept. 11th bombing"—actually based out of Afghanistan; the evidence fingering Saddam turned out to be U.S. fabrications.

Now, we're not saying that war-supporters are not valid in their thinking; we're only saying that you have no right ridiculing us for our beliefs, calling us un-American and such just because we support peace. Sending our troops home is a GOOD thing; it means that our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, cousins, uncles, aunts, and so on are "safe" from harm. Harm happens when force is used. We don't particularly care to spend millions of dollars on weapons of mass destruction, just so we can go in and smash someone else's weapons of mass destruction. Napalm and Agent Orange were used in Vietnam, but I didn't see anyone bombing D.C. or New York.

We're sorry if you disagree with us, but we cannot condone something that could have been stopped years ago. Personal vendettas are fun and all, but I don't think it's very wise to carry on Daddy's war just because he didn't end it when he could've. We hope that people reading this think about why they do or do not support this war, but please realize: the fact that we are exercising our rights as Americans by protesting does not make us un-American in any way. Honestly, it makes us more American than the silent supporters.

Brittany Hess
English, 06

Chris Strayer
English, 02