Friday, May 2, 2003

The Behrend Beacon

Doyle rules! And so do

coming to Behrend to take my freshman test when I was a senior in high school. It seems like yesterday, as does the Saturday I moved into Perry Hall. Those were the days, weren't they? Answer: No, they were not. It's been my experience that college gets better with age-"like a fine wine," as Finch finely put it in the movie "American Pie." Of course, he was talking about women, and I am referring to college, but I digress.

I came to Behrend a shy, awkward teenager, and I am leaving Behrend as a less-shy, lessawkward non-teen-

ager. I guess that counts as something,

Do you remember my editorials? Anything I wrote involving Bruno or Britney Spears was cool, wasn't it? I can make a countdown of my three sweetest: My Valentine's Day piece, titled "I think Valentine's Day is Stupid," gets the third spot. My Christmas editorial I wrote sophomore year about the guy with the wreath on his car who flicked off my friends and I finishes second. Don't let a bastard ruin your day is the winner! Kermit the Frog enters, throwing his arms around, screaming YAAAAY!

I have so many memories that I could spout off, including the time I slipped and fell down the apartment hill trying to carry a picnic table, or the time I jump kicked a hole in the fraternity house wall, but I know a majority of my readers are probably uninterested in my escapades. But you know what? This is my final

Time flies, doesn't it? I remember editorial, and I'll do whatever the hell I please!

-During my freshman year, my room-

mate and I found a tube of toothpaste and we squeezed it all over our fraternity brothers' door and lock. One of them tried unlocking his door the next day, which sent the toothpaste into the lock. This messed up the lock and the two couldn't get into their room for hours. One of the guys knocked

on my door Oh, you didn't know? that morning and asked me Kool' Karl Benacci if I knew who performed the act. Gatures editor I said no, pretending

I was sleepy, as my roommate buried his head in his pillow, attempting not to laugh. I guess you had to have been there. *Silence* Stop looking at me swan!

- -The Danielle incident J
- -The Steph incident J
- -The Angela incident L

-Halloween night, senior year. My roommate and I had a little too much beer and invaded the campus with my karaoke system-all from the comfort of our room. A few people who were having a party heckled us, so we went into their apartment and drank their beer. A chick from Edinboro gave me her number that night-maybe I should call her.

-The day I was sad because my dog was put asleep. This ended up being a cool night because the doorbell to my apartment rang, and when I went to see who it was there was a huge cake sitting on my doorstep. After I said, "What is this?" the cake opened up and Britney

Spears hopped out, waving sparklers around, and wearing a captain's cap. She yelled, "Whooooo, Karl! Don't be sad! Time to party!" I smiled. We played Twister and drank orange juice together.

-So many stories unfit for printing. There are a few people I would like to

-My parents. Thanks for supporting me and sending me off to college. If it weren't for you two, I wouldn't be born!

-Professor Sean Thomas Dougherty. Sean, you've been a GREAT help to me. When I took your class I thought you were a goofy fellow, but I soon learned you're a great professor and a great friend. If it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be going to graduate school-you did everything, from letters of recommendation to discussing which schools were worth my time. You're the only professor I've ever taken who told me I had any creative writing talent, whatsoever. I am also gracious you helped me on my senior thesis—If it weren't for, you my thesis might be boring, but now it's a weird, twisted and dark collection of works that I can be proud of! Plus, you went to high school with Adam Sandler. I thank you for everything.

-Professor Archie Loss. I thank you for reading my thesis stories and for teaching me popular culture. I think you'll definitely notice the popular culture influence in my thesis. Also, I'd like to thank you for complimenting me on my Beacon editorials.

-Professor George Looney. Yes, you get props, as well. You helped me with graduate schools and letters of recommendation. Plus, your classes were cool, too. Thank you.

-Allegheny and Mercyhurst College.

I'm glad Allegheny put me on their waiting list and Mercyhurst wanted me to go to Mercyhurst North East. Thanks to them, I didn't go to their schools and I came to Behrend! Thanks guys, you saved me from a big mistake!

-I'm sorry if I forgot anyone from my list. If I did, you can add yourself in the space provided with the help of an ink pen. ____ helped Karl with

I learned so many things at Behrend, but the most important lessons come outside of the classroom. I learned that most people don't know what the hell they're talking about. Take, for example, graduate schools. I applied to eight places and I got rejected from the lesseresteemed programs (for the most part), and I got accepted to the better programs. Go figure.

I also learned that some people don't want you to succeed. I don't know why this is. In some instances it might be jealousy, while in others it could merely be the person doesn't like you. At any rate, one must work harder and ignore such criticism, and if the person or organization isn't worth your time you should evaluate the situation and invest yourself elsewhere.

Related to the above illustration is the matter of worrying about what other people think. When I arrived at Behrend, I cared what others thought about me. I don't know why, but through my years here I've realized it doesn't matter what other people think. After all, no one knows you like yourself, and if you don't care about the criticizer, you shouldn't care what he or she thinks or says about

Before I go, I will tell my readers what's cool and what's not, here at Behrend and beyond.

What's cool about Behrend?

Police and Safety.

-The band that plays at the basketball games.

Band camp.

-RC Cola

-Nothing on this list.

What's not cool about Behrend? -The 'machine' in the apartment laundry room that sells expired merchandise. Go check it out to see what I'm talking about.

-Behrend girls. Alternative: Gannon and Mercyhurst girls-at times, Edinboro girls. Anyone who gets offended by this joke is siiillllyyyyyy.

-Those who don't like my editorials. These people like the things that are 'cool about Behrend, along with the things that aren't cool about Behrend, too, and they wouldn't understand the laundry room

What makes Behrend a good place (seriously):

- -Bruno's
- -The Junker Center
- -Jack Burke
- -This year's Alumni Fellow of the
- -The maintenance golf cart.
- -The restaurants that deliver to cam-

-Me

Some of my readers might be curious about what's next for Karl after graduation. Well, I am the smartest man alive! I'm going to graduate school in the beautiful state of Georgia, which is chalk full of peaches, Confederate soldiers, and sweeeeeet talking ladies who live in nice enough weather to exercise 365 days a year. Mmmmm-mmmm-mmmmm.

student's holiday back agaii There and

I am in a unique position as a Behrend graduate because this campus has been a home away from home for me for as long as I can remember. Long before I was a student here, "Behrend" conjured up images of swimming at the Behrend pool; tromping through Four-Mile Creek; scanning the skies atop Devil's Backbone; picnicking in the gazebo; sledding down the hill by the Science building; and attending Astronomy Open House lectures. It was a place where, in Dad's little corner of campus, everybody knew my name. Now that I am leaving in my capacity as a student, it will be a little like going back to my pre-college days. I know I will never be far away.

I have been shaped most profoundly in my college career by people and the experiences they helped to create. It is these relationships that have pulled me through those times - and they have been many - when I was awash in frustration and wondering why I ever came to college in the first place. It is these friendships that I will remember long after I have forgotten the formula for the quadratic equation; the difference between modernism, post-modernism and post-colonialism; and the critical commentary of Harold Bloom regarding "Henry IV, Part I." (On second thought, I doubt I will ever be able to forget that.)

And so I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to some of the people who have made such an impression upon me, knowing that I haven't anywhere near the room to mention you all. First of all, I thank my parents, who have seen the dark side of Erin many more times than anyone should. Thanks for putting up with all my 3 a.m. hyperventilating, my throwing of books across the room, my "I'm-never-goingback-to-school-again-in-my-life" temper tantrums. Dad, thanks for making your office a haven for me and for joining me for lunch on so many occasions. I don't care what anyone says, you can't beat Bruno's chicken ranch pizza!

Thank you to all of the faculty and staff who have known me for years, whether you helped me with my water wings as a 4-year-old; gave me ceramic figurines as a 6-year-old; took me bird banding as an 8-year-old; watched the solar eclipse with me as a 12-year-old; or hired me as a babysitter as a 16-yearold. Thanks for letting me crash all your Christmas parties and always making me feel a part of the Behrend family.

I am grateful for all of the wonderful professors I have had at Behrend, and I wish I could acknowledge them all here. A few to whom I am especially indebted...

Mr. Looney, I've worked more closely with you than any other professor at Behrend, with four classes, four semesters of "Lake Effect," and two semesters of my thesis. Thank you so much for all your instruction and encouragement and loads of laughs along the way.

Dr. Morris, yours are the most educational and entertaining class discussions I have ever taken part in. Although I have stumbled in your classes from time to time, you have always lifted me up; you are one of the most edifying people I know. Thank you for everything, even Harold Bloom.

Ms. Connerty, you taught the very first class I had at Behrend, and you put a very nervous freshman immediately at ease. Since then, you have remained a ray of sunshine, both in class and out. Your joie de vivre and affection are infectious. Thank you.

Dr. Baldwin, my fellow Lake Wobegon-loving Lutheran, thank you for giving me that extra nudge I needed to go to England and for keeping an eye on me while I was there. I've grown to know the Bard better than I ever wanted to, and, thanks to your passion, enjoyed him more than I ever thought possible.

I have been a part of the Beacon for seven of my eight semesters at Behrend and spent countless hours in the Beacon office writing, editing, and laying out articles. Although I am generally tearing my hair out at some point during the week, thanks to the Beacon, it has brought me a great sense of community and accomplishment. I am actually going to miss those 12hour-long stints in the office on Thursdays.

Becky, we've been through the Erin McCarty Beacon and the English program together. How many Thursdays

have we spent in the office fretting over the same assignments? I've gotten to know you very well as a person and as a writer, and I think both are wonderful. I wish you the best of luck in the final preparations for your wedding, and I will be there to cheer you on when the big day comes!

Karl, you too have gone through the English program with me. You may have stolen my thunder as the quietest student in our classes together, but that hasn't stopped me from discovering that the "Kool" so often accompanying your name is well deserved. One day I will

see you and Becky signing your books at Barnes and Noble.

Rob, I assumed my role as news editor under your watch. Thanks for your patience and your flexibility. It has been a pleasure working with you. And, for the last time, you did not make me cry! Kevin, you've brought an incredible zeal and commitment with you when you joined the Beacon, and the paper has benefited greatly. You went from my assistant to my boss in just

one semester, and you've done a super job. Paige, you are a genu-

sweet person, and I have loved working alongside you over the past several semesters. Good luck with your remaining semesters. Jen, thank you for all of your help this past year. I don't know what I would have done without you. Erinn, I don't know what I would have done without you either. You're always willing to take on an article, no matter how much work you have to do. Thanks for all the movie nights. I'll sing karaoke with you any time!

Courtney, the mantle of news editor passes to you next semester. You are a very good-natured and responsible per-

son, and I know the section will flourish with you as my successor. Scott, you've done a super job with sports, and you will make an outstanding SGA president. Keep up the great work. Lauren, it's been great getting to know you this year. You are a great person and you will do a fine job as editor-in-chief. Christine, I have known you since ninth grade, and your kind-heartedness has always struck me. Good luck in all that you do. Earl, I will miss seeing you on Thursday nights. Thanks for burning the midnight oil with us!

Dave, I have been a huge fan of yours for years. When I learned I would be working with you on the Beacon, I couldn't believe my luck. It's been a genuine joy getting to know the man behind the name and an honor to have my articles tweaked by your master hand. You'll always be my favorite journal-

Dan, I have only had the pleasure of knowing you for a semester and a half, but I can sincerely say that you are the classiest guy I have met in my four years at Behrend. You are the calm in the chaos that is Thursday. Don't ever change. Keep raising the caliber of the Beacon with your top-notch reviews. I will read them one day in the New York

I have now gone on far longer than I should have, and said far less than I wanted to. I hope you will forgive me on both counts. Let me just say, in an approximation of the words of my beloved Bilbo Baggins, that "[four] years is too short a time to live among such excellent and admirable [people]." God bless you all.

Goodbye, farewell

Well, what can I say, the time to transfer is finally here. Two years have flown by here at Behrend, and now it is off to University Park to complete my education. It will be good to get out of Erie, for I have lived here all my life, and it will be great to witness new challenges. However, there are a lot of things I am going to miss here at Behrend, as well as Erie.

First of all, it will be good to get away from the folks for a while, but I am going to miss them a little bit. They have always been there for me, and it won't be the same, not being able to see my cousins when I want to, or just have a conversation. Although, I know once I get

down there things will probably change, for I will realize that they are only a phone call or an IM Message away.

Second, I am going to miss the social life here at Behrend. All of the frat parties, apartment parties, and going into bars with your friends, just because you want to have fun, and possibly have a drink or two, or more depending on your mood. I will miss the fun times at Midnight Bingo, and the sound of people getting irritated

because other people are winning and not them.

Third, I am going to miss all the times spent with the Beacon; the funfilled meetings, writing the stories, making scenes with the clip art on the Calendar Page, and being there on Thursday nights 'till all hours laying out the entire paper

and making sure

things are right. I

will miss the fight Erinn Hansen over who has Photoshop calendar page editor open, as well

as many other things.

Last but certainly not least, I am going to miss all of my friends here at Behrend, including the sisters of Alpha Sigma Alpha. You girls mean a whole lot to me, and I will miss all of the times we have spent together; formal, social events, even just being there at the table in Bruno's to have lunch and/or a little chat. I will miss the times I sang karaoke for all of you, just because it is fun and I want to do it. I will miss the fashion show staff and the hard times we spent preparing for the show, and will miss not being able to do it again next

I would like to say thank you to

all those who have cared so much about me and the time for being your Calendar Page Editor, as well as your friend. Of course, there are some things I will not miss at Behrend, like the tasty food at Bruno's, and other things, but on the whole, I will miss Behrend a lot. Don't you worry though, I will keep in touch with people, and I will be back to visit as often as I can, and also remember that I am "only" four hours away, for the people who decide to take a little road trip. Well, in my last words at Behrend, I would just like to say thanks to everyone, good-bye, and farewell.