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The Behrend Beacon

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Letters to the Editor

The hassles of having the name Mohammed

Dear Editor,

The name Mohammed is probably the most prevalent in the muslim world. At least 2 million Muslims in this world go by the name Mohammed. Not all of them accept and practice the guidance, commands or leadership accurately of the prophet, Mohammed (PBUH), the prophet of Islam.

After the 9/11 attack, the condemnation for that act was not only confined to the hijackers and their sponsors, but also the religion they demanded to have entered and practiced, which by the way, is the religion of 1/5 population of this world. Threatening criticism of Islam and misinterpretation of the Quran (the holy book for Muslims) are now common topics in all the news media. This effort of news media to mislead people by falsifying information about Islam has put all the Muslims in the world in an awkward position, particularly the ones living in the United States.

People are injected with so much bitterness towards Islam that Muslims are now hesitant to name their kids Mohammed. Some people with that name are considering changing their names to something else to avoid discrimination towards Muslims, if it exists. I, myself as a graduating senior, am concerned about whether my first name Mohammed will create a negative impact to employers.

Worst of all, my name literally took away my freedom of speech. After 9/11, I have been advised by my well wishers to be cautious about my opinions. My sympathy towards those innocent Iraqi

cent Iraqi people who died in a war based on no proof, may portray terrorism, and make people fail to notice my tears for those fire fighters of 9/11.

But I am optimistic that in a place like United States where diversity is always appreciated, a volatile situation like that will not persist for long. Normal people will gradually be interested to derive knowledge from authentic sources instead of tuning biased TV channels for truth. I myself will be comfortable conveying an opinion knowing that it is not judged as an opinion coming from a Muslim, rather from a human being.

My prayer to god everyday is:

Dear God,

Grant the media wisdom and courage and guard them from pomposity and megalomania.

Remind them of the moral practical value of the simple truth of humility, liveliness and humor so that they may serve as the spirit of all living things and abandon the need to have power over us. Grant them the common and uncommon touch in perfect proportion and guide them to aspects of life which are truly important.

Protect too the earth and the creatures from all harm of the media, so that we may continue to read and listen to the nature, our most reliable source of truth.

Amen

Mohammed E. Hoque
Computer Engineering, 07

Behrend failing at education?

Dear Editor,

I would like to comment on Guy Reschenthaler's column that appeared on the September 12 issue of The Behrend Beacon. I am not going to disagree with him about the fact that "diversity" is sometimes carried too far. With "too far" I mean to the point that it starts splintering the strength of a nation, instead of coloring it with different hues.

But I strongly resent his statement that basically every other country "sucks." As a professor at Behrend, this statement makes me feel that we fail to educate our students, if they can make statements like this after spending several years with us. Either that, or on some people education is just wasted.

As an immigrant, yes, I come from Italy, that "sucked even more and still does," I feel that Mr. Reschenthaler just does not know what he is talking about.

Has he been in the countries he trashed? Has he learned about them more than the average American press/books present to him? And what does he know about the reasons that make people leave their country of birth (even if it sucks) to live in a completely different place? Some of these people in the past had to choose between mere survival and family, between freedom of speech and thought and the places they loved. Today the issues behind immigration are in some cases even more subtle and the choices are just as hard.

Mr. Reschenthaler's final conclusion that America has "the best culture" is in contradiction with most of what he writes and it is extremely shortsighted. America has a lot to offer and it has a great culture, but it is hardly "the best," and it has been built on the diversity of its people.

If American culture is the best, how can he accuse people of not knowing history? Why so few American people vote? Why so few people get involved in politics that he has to talk about Arnold Schwarzenegger? This man, who is upheld in the article as an example of a man with a social conscience, was born in one of the countries that suck. So, how can he be a decent person (whether you agree or not with him) who would even consider "giving back to his nation"?

How can Mr. Reschenthaler feel that American culture is so great when he write "I am surprised that I'm the first editorialist to point out to this hypocrisy, on our campus and in our nation"? How can a society as blind and timid as the one he describes have "the best" culture? How can a society that accepts a press afraid of pointing out the shortcomings of multiculturalism have "the best" culture? This society has a great culture that gives most of the people who want to voice an opinion a chance to do so, but the title of "best" is still a far cry.

The stereotypes that "enrich" Mr. Reschenthaler's article end up reinforcing the stereotypical figure of the swash-buckling, coarse, and uneducated American that people in the countries that suck have, the American who has a lot of money (that they might want to share) but cannot see past his cowboy hat. And this is a real disservice to the many Americans who are truly part of the great aspects of American culture, the ones Mr. Reschenthaler left out when he decided to use the "hamburger" as his example of American ability to assimilate other civilizations.

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The Beacon encourages letters to the editor. All letters must contain at most 300 words and include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer. Writers can email letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5 p.m. Monday for inclusion in that week's issue. The Beacon reserves the right to edit letters for length, content, spelling and grammar.

Look, this is how it's really done

by Erika Jarvis
features editor

I was asked to write an editorial. After all, I don't have enough to do with being the features editor of the Beacon, social chair of AΣA, RA in Niagara, caterer and oh yeah--a student, too. Yet, I do need some articles for my portfolio and realized that sleep is just too overrated.

I wasn't too sure what to write about as an editorial so I flipped through some past issues of the Beacon to try and find ideas. I came across a few things that made me start to think.

I saw the box on top of the Editorial page talking about our rights as journalists. As one of the editors on this paper we have the right to edit any article. We are allowed to edit any article we receive for content, length, libel, spelling and grammar. Well, we have the right to, and we often do edit.

Lately, Beacon editing has become controversial. We all work really hard on the paper for the students here at Behrend and we are starting to get tired of being attacked for every little edit we make.

This brings to me to another thing. The content of the Beacon has also been talked about. I often hear how The Behrend Beacon content isn't up to par with other publications. I encourage those who find the paper not up to snuff to feel free to come to a meeting. We're always looking for more staff writers and even contributing writers.

It's not always fun for us to cover the Speaker Series or the newest event at McGarvey Commons. I personally flip through University Park's paper The Collegian and wish that we had more exciting events and on goings here at Behrend. Yet, that's the role of the journalist; you deal with what you have and you try to make your article seem interesting and newsworthy.

Feel free to come on down and visit us in the Beacon Office. When we're not in class or have a free moment we all can be found down there. We're even there late into the night on Thursdays laying out the paper and sending it to the press. Oh yeah we get free dinner then, too!

As I work hard on the Beacon and attempt to get my degree in jour-

nalism, I'm also starting to get tired of hearing people make fun of any kind of communication major. I'm not sure if all other majors realize this, but your world depends on communication.

I know it's funny to make fun of us, but do you make fun of the reporters who travel overseas to report about the war in Iraq? They have degrees in journalism, broadcasting and other realms of communication. Think of it. Everything from the daily paper to the nightly news even to MTV's TRL took the hard work of journalists and communication majors. You don't realize how much of your life is affected by communication of all sorts.

I do realize that the communication majors sound easy compared to something like plastic engineering, and Lord knows I could never do engineering. Yet, I'm not sure everyone can handle an interview and writing an article and striving to make it appealing to the mass public. I'm not bashing other majors; I just don't think that it's fair to judge communication majors because we're not slaving over calculus. I'm taking Math 21 and Meteorology

right now for general education credit. Sound easy? Yeah, it definitely is. I'm banking on a good GPA this semester. Good luck with Physics 824 or whatever it is you take.

See, I don't even know what other majors require, class wise. I do, however, totally applaud other majors for their hard work and dedication to those classes, they would put me straight to sleep.

I guess I'm not mad that I get made fun of for being a journalism major or being called bland, it's just so repetitive. I mean I interned for VH1 this summer. Not many Psych or Engineering majors can land that one, so I'm pretty happy with where I'm going.

So, I said my piece--this is a hard gig, just like everyone else's major. Yet, if you still don't believe me, our office is in the bottom of Reed by Boiler Hall. Listen, Guy, this is how it REALLY is, my article is about 800 words and took me all of 20 minutes to write! I hope I made you proud and that I showed you how it's done by a professional...next time, I'm saying "no!"

It's hard trying not to get screwed

by Amy Wilczynski
calendar page editor

Last April, the Career Development Center (CDC) sent out a mass e-mail about a job opening at a local Erie business. I was in need of a job that would provide me some experience in my related field of study: Communications. The e-mail stated that this was only a "temporary, 2-3 week position." I sent my resume, got an interview, and was hired on the spot. The communication related job turned out to be telesales. I initially thought to myself, "I didn't go to college for 3 years to learn how to make phone calls." Regardless, I took the job and it ended up lasting 4 months. I felt like a real professional at the company; well, for the first 2 weeks.

During these 4 months, I learned

many valuable lessons about working for a company--things I never would have even thought of. Here is the biggest lesson I learned while being involved with this company. This is important for anyone entering into the workforce. I learned the hard way and will never forget:

GET EVERYTHING IN WRITING. As an employee, request that your salary, wages, commission value and any other pertinent information be written in a formal document that is signed by whoever the agreement was set between.

I got screwed out of this work deal but I am a firm believer that we learn from our mistakes. I did not get anything in writing because I have never been in a situation like that. I figured they would stay true to their word and

pay me what was promised. They gave me an office, my own phone line with extension and computer. When I told them school would be starting up again, they made arrangements for me to work remotely from home. I was given a company cell phone and was able to do my work away from the office.

Sounds pretty good, huh? That's what I thought. As it turned out, they expected me to still be available at any time of the business day. I explained and wrote out my schedule for them, but they still seemed not to understand that my life consisted of more than just telesales.

Realizing just how much time this job was taking up in my very busy schedule, I decided it was time to call it quits. On Monday, Sept. 8, I met with my boss and told him I was having a hard time handling the workload of school and my

job. He replied, "Yeah, no kidding. I knew from the beginning you wouldn't be able to do it." I told him that I gave it an honest effort but felt the best way to handle it was to tell him my situation. He then replied, "I already put an ad in the newspaper." I can't help but wonder where his work morals are. How can he post my job when I haven't even quit or been fired yet?

The whole point of this editorial is to let everyone know that there are people in the work world who can really screw you over if you are not careful. Hopefully by reading this, you will be more aware of similar situations that many of us will run into someday in our careers. If you remember anything from this editorial, remember this: GET EVERYTHING IN WRITING!