

EDITORIAL

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The Behrend Beacon

The Behrend Beacon

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THE BEHREND
Beacon

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students for the students"

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Dance steps on other organizations' toes

by Eileen Falkenberg
editorial page editor

Snaps to Ohio Hall Council for trying to pull off a Homecoming this year. Good idea, but it's not, and should not, work. This is why.

The number one reason is that Ohio Hall Council did not do their homework. Hundreds of colleges across the United States have Homecoming events each year local colleges included. Who puts on these events each year? I'm no scientist and I couldn't find any solid numbers, but from personal experience I can tell you that Homecoming is usually put on by social Greek organizations.

Why? It is because one single organization, especially a hall council, would have a hard and stressful time planning such a big event. With a homecoming organized with Greek help, there would not only be two councils but seven chapters that would be able to pick up some of the workload and stress.

I'm certainly am not saying Greeks could do it better. I am saying that there are more Greeks than Hall Council members. Within these large numbers are people that plan semi-formals, date auctions, Greek Fair, Greek Week, High on the Hill, Greek Awards and formals

each year which leads to more event planning experience. Ohio Hall Council plans...okay, point made.

Did Ohio Hall Council, knowing how well-versed in this planning Greeks are, and knowing other colleges' traditions, ask or even consult any Greek organization on-campus? No, they sent around a general questionnaire to all clubs asking how they "feel" about Homecoming. The Greek organizations have gotten the message, loud and clear; Ohio Hall Council doesn't want help.

But, they do want to infringe on other traditional Greek programming in the process. One of Ohio Hall Council's goals is to crown a Homecoming King and Queen. Which, in and of itself, sounds like a good idea- until you do your research.

Alpha Sigma Tau has, over the past few years, rebuilt its sorority and begun to put an amazing amount of effort into its on-campus programs, such as the Mr. and Miss Penn State Behrend Pageant. This program is not only a vital one for the sorority but also a fun event for all Behrend students, especially including those who are not in Greek organizations.

When does the Mr. and Miss Penn State Behrend Pageant occur? Every spring semester. When does Ohio Hall

Council want to crown their King and Queen? This spring semester.

Effectively, Ohio Hall Council has ignored another organization's event to promote their own. OLAS practically owns Friday Fiesta. If another organization put on an event with a different name, but with the same purpose, just a few weeks before Friday Fiesta, how would OLAS react? Alpha Sigma Alpha has Date Auction, Sig Tau Gamma has an annual volleyball tournament, SGA has THON same situation.

Personally, I support any organization working to create effective programming for the Behrend community. What I do not support is ignorance. Stepping on other people's toes for your organization's own personal programming gain is not only unethical but ludicrous.

Why couldn't Homecoming be in the fall? We have athletic teams in the fall that are just as important as those that play in the winter and spring. Why couldn't Homecoming be an event like it has in past years at Behrend an alumni and student event promoting unity?

Have a Homecoming dance. Boogie all night long. Just don't crown and wonder why you're getting frowned upon.

Top 10 most underpaid jobs in the United States

by Chris Pummer
CBS MarketWatch

Many Americans complain they're not paid enough, but most of us are nowhere near as shortchanged as the country's severely underpaid workers.

The degree to which someone is underpaid isn't just a matter of how much money he or she earns: Two of the 10 jobs below pay more than the U.S. median of \$37,500 a year. Rather, it's a function of how valuable, or loathsome, the work is relative to the earnings.

To suggest elementary school teachers are underpaid is to risk being branded "anti-education," but they earn \$38,000 a year on average- the equivalent of \$48,000 based on a full year, for a potentially fulfilling and enjoyable job.

The same holds for nurses, who are in fierce demand. While median income is about \$49,000 for staff jobs, experienced RNs who scale back during child-rearing years can earn up to \$40,000 a year or more working two 12-hour per diem shifts a week. Not bad for part-time work with the flexibility to set your own hours.

Some underpaid jobs are just transitional. College teaching assistants (\$12,665 a year) are the Sherpas who carry the load for tenured professors lecturing to auditorium classes, whose claim to fame may be a 20-year-old published text. They move on from there.

Stay-at-home parents earn nothing for all they contribute, including cooking, housekeeping, accounting, tutoring, chauffeuring and crisis intervention. It's their household that ultimately is underpaid for the lifestyle choice they made.

The underpaid are more like the hospital and nursing-home assistants who serve meals to and encourage sick and old people to eat, help them to the bathroom and wipe them when not emptying bedpans, and extend a bit of humanity to those whom the medical system often treats antiseptically.

What follows is a list of 10 of the most underpaid jobs in the United States, with salary and wage figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Salary.com. They are in no particular order, since one could argue any of these is the single-most underpaid:

***Restaurant dishwashers** (\$7.25 an hour): The germs and bacteria these people are exposed to are scary enough to make a cat walk backward up a wall hissing the whole time. The mountains of garbage they scrape off plates, the grease that permeates pores opened wide by steaming commercial dishwashers and the general thanklessness of the job make it horrible work at twice the pay.

***Consumer Loan Collection Agents** (\$22,826): The financial-services industry enriches a lot of its employees, and then pays these people peanuts to lean on deadbeats. If they've got you on the line, don't blame them for applying some pressure and unload a verbal assault on them. Blame the last zero-percent financing offer you bought hook, line and sinker.

***Pest Controller** (\$24,120): In eradicating vermin from rats to cockroaches, they must crawl into the dark recesses that rodents inhabit, administer all manner of chemical "treatments" and retrieve rotting

carcasses on their periodic service calls. We pay them a pittance to make the noises in the wall go away, and rid our kitchens of creepy crawlers we don't want to admit to hosting.

***Slaughterers and Meatpackers** (\$20,010): Unlike their often well-paid counterparts unionized supermarket butchers these heavy lifters of the meat-processing industry are doing the work that we never want to think about as we're marinating our strip steaks or searing our baby backs on the grill.

***Police Officers** (\$41,950): For all the strain the job puts on their psyches, cops don't earn nearly enough, never mind that they're always in harm's way. We pay them to be society's voice of authority, and then shy away from them. No man is an island except for a police officer.

***Substance Abuse Counselors** (\$31,300): This is the real missionary work of the social-service system, trying to rehabilitate lost souls. Many are former abusers who can't find gainful work from suspicious employers and risk falling backward from being around dopers and drunks. They generally fail to save a population most of us have written off, including relatives and friends we've abandoned but persevere for that one they'll help recover.

***Medical residents** (\$40,000): These doctors in training work 60 to 100 hours a week the equivalent of the dishwasher's hourly wage. The medical industry skirts overtime laws because the pay is deemed a "stipend." Sure, they move on from four years of residency into six-figure jobs, but if we paid them more at this stage, maybe they wouldn't feel so entitled and anxious for the hefty income awaiting them.

***Funeral Home Attendants** (\$19,200) and **Morgue Attendants** (\$26,167): They see dead people, in the flesh every day. They check in corpses and comfort grieving relatives in the most depressing work environment short of the front lines of a battlefield. A cancer ward is cheery by comparison.

***Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics** (\$25,450): Down the road, their patients will be treated by well-compensated doctors if they survive; it's these front-line medical experts who greatly enhance survival chances. Look for their pay to increase as overweight Baby Boomers discover their maintenance meds failing them in the damndest of places.

***Preschool Teacher** (\$21,907): Day-care workers (\$19,900) are notoriously underpaid, but the real dishonor is paid to the preschool teachers who lead our 3- and 4-year-olds in ABCs and 1-2-3s in our vast, dual-income absence. Birth to age 5 are critical years in the development of a child's personality and intelligence, yet we pay these people little more than we fork out for a babysitter on a Saturday night.

The vast majority of Americans would never consider doing these 10 jobs, either because of the poor pay or what's involved. Still, in every case, they're performing an indispensable service, and we all owe them a debt of gratitude for it.

Serving up a cup of cheer

by Erika Jarvis
features page editor

The holiday break is coming up and I don't know about you, but I am ridiculously excited to get home. Everyone has been talking about all the food they'll be eating over Thanksgiving and how nice it will be to get away from the food served at Dobbins and Bruno's. Not me. The holiday season for me means holiday drinks at Starbucks!

Yes, Thanksgiving will be nice, but for some reason I'm not a big fan of traditional Thanksgiving food. Hold the turkey, stuffing, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie; I'll have an eggnog latte.

When you enter Starbucks during the holiday season, the store is filled with the aroma of fresh brewed coffee and cinnamon spices. The store is decked out in holiday decorations and people are gathered around catching up over Frappuccinos or just leisurely sipping their hot cider and reading the paper. How does one not feel merry just being in the presence of all this holiday goodness?

What I don't understand is why Erie doesn't have more Starbucks. The only one in Erie is near Gannon, and then they have that faux Starbucks in Barnes & Noble. How can one possibly make it through their day without passing at the very least two Starbucks?

From my house a Starbucks is just about 5 miles away every direction you drive. Remember 'Cheers' and the song "Where every body knows your name?" That song reminds me of the employees at the Starbucks in Wexford. I love going in there before I head to work. They already have my Iced Venti Soy Latte ready and waiting for me, and we're all on a first name basis. You may be thinking that that is so stupid and cliché, but hey, knowing the employees has it perks.

When I order a tall chai, I'm presented with a venti chai. The employees often up my beverage size free of charge. When these fabulous people are in the holiday spirit, I'm often handed free beverage coupons and even given a discount sometimes. Man, the holidays are so great!

I know many other people don't entirely see my viewpoint of how when I think of the holidays, I think Starbucks. Blame it on society. We're stuck in a world where image is everything and brand names are the only way to go. Starbucks is the bandwagon of the new millennium and I encourage everyone to jump on board.

Not feeling the holiday spirit just quite yet? That's fine, take a trip to Starbucks and indulge in their gingerbread latte. I promise you, you won't be disappointed. If you can manage to escape Starbucks not humming one of the many holiday songs they have playing, or even feeling that twinge of holiday cheer then I congratulate you. They have got me hook, line and sinker. I've been a Starbucks-aholic for a good 5 or 6 years now. I'm thinking I need a support group.

So when you're home over break and still a little hungry after your Thanksgiving feast, head on over to Starbucks for an after dinner coffee. If you're in Wexford over Thanksgiving break you'll be sure to find me soaking in all the holiday cheer the employees have to offer.

Giving thanks for family ties

by Amy Wilczynski
calendar page editor

Since I began college I have really developed an appreciation for my family. I still live at home with my parents and siblings, and the thought of moving away from "the nest" is both exciting and scary as hell. I remember when I was in high school and how embarrassed I was by taking family trips to the mall or movies. I prayed no one would see me hanging out with my whole family. I was at the age when no one ever was seen with their family; it just wasn't cool. Looking back I feel that is the stupidest excuse to be cool. I wouldn't even be here today if it weren't for my family. I can go one step further than that: if my parents did not fall in love with each other, I would not be here, nor would my brother or sister.

My family means the world to me. I may not tell or show them enough, but they know that they are what have helped me develop into the woman I am today. Every bit of sibling rivalry or arguments with my parents has in some profound way had an effect on me. My parents have taught me to respect others; my siblings have taught me how to handle the difficult people in the world that I will inevitably face. I cannot imagine a life without my family.

I can make fun of my brother and sister all I want, but the second someone outside the family makes fun of them, big sis will step in and save the day. I can't stand it when someone else picks on my siblings, because I take it offensively. I love my brother and sister so much that I can feel their pain. If my brother is ticked off at his roommate in college, I also feel upset about

the situation. If my sister is crying about the jerk that made a nasty comment to her, I feel just as sad. Maybe it's because they are the only people I can truly say I have grown up with. As I get older, I realize that I need my siblings as my support, my backbone, and my confidants.

We all remember times when our little brother did something to embarrass us in front of someone important, like the time little bro listened in on a private phone conversation with my boyfriend and I, then made fun of me for the way I sweet talked for the next 3 months. It's aggravating; however, those are the things I remember. Or the time when my little sis decided to try out all my makeup and pretend she was innocent. Did she think I wouldn't notice the tooth mark in my lipstick of the broken eyeliner tip?

As the old saying goes, 'you never know what you have, until it's gone'. I don't believe this saying holds true for me because I still spend a good amount of quality time with my family and I love it. I get excited when my parents ask if I want to go to the movies with them. When I am in a bad mood, a good shopping trip with mom always cheers me up.

This Thanksgiving I am more thankful for my family than ever. This may be my last Thanksgiving at home. Of course that doesn't mean I won't come home for the holidays, because I vow right now to make coming home for the holidays top on my list of priorities. Family is the most important thing in my life, and they are not something I plan on putting on the back burner.

Whether I stay in Erie after graduation or move a couple states away, I will carry with me the values I learned from my family, after all, that's what made me who I am today!

Our View: Rules are rules Maryland students deserve suspension for kiss

Recently two Maryland high school students were suspended for kissing in a cafeteria. This sounds normal enough, but there's a major wrinkle in this story. The two students, Katherine Pecore and Stephanie Haaser kissed in order to protest. They leaped up onto a table in the cafeteria, shouted "end homophobia now" and kissed.

The Beacon feels that their suspension was warranted. The students are not being suspended because their act was homosexual, but because it was inappropriate. It is important not to confuse this action by the school as anti-homosexual.

If a guy and a gal would have jumped up onto a table in most high schools across this country, shouted something, and then started making out, they would

have likely received a similar punishment.

While the two girls do have a noble cause, there were many ways they could express their view without violating school policy. The two girls avert very proud of the attention drawn to their cause, and it is a good discussion to have.

However, the school's Gay-Straight Alliance club could have easily organized something within the parameters of school policy to bring the issue to the forefront.

It is important to discuss as many issues facing students as possible, as long as they are approached in the right way. Acts that violate policies or laws under the guise of a good cause are just as wrong and punishable as those done for the wrong reasons.