

## The Behrend Beacon

Published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

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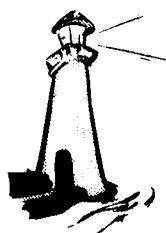
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**THE BEHREND  
Beacon**

"A newspaper by the  
students for the students"

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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](mailto:behrcol2@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, libel, spelling, and grammar.

## That's all, folks!

If you want to earn a degree, come to Behrend. If you want to actually learn something, get involved with the community around you. As my graduation in the spring approaches, I think it's time to reflect on what it is exactly that I did in college and learned at the Beacon over the last four years.

So, after contributing to 126 issues of our campus newspaper, here is a small list of things that I've picked up on - not only in the classroom, but also from experiences with the people and community around me.

**1. There is no such thing as freedom of speech:**

I made this statement No. 1 to correlate with the amendment that it represents. I learned this lesson quickly when I was editor of the Beacon two years ago. Whether it's here at Beacon or any other publication, someone is always out to censor you. There will always be a special interest group or a "liberal-minded" individual that says, "You can't say that, it offends me." That ties into the popular oxymoron that I heard day in and day out - "I believe in freedom of speech, but..."

Now, obviously you can't just make up stuff about people or places and publish it, but it's when people take offense to every little thing that doesn't fit their personal idea of being politically correct that really bugs me. It's like walking on eggshells when talking about gender, other cultures and people. One word taken the wrong way could make you a sexist or racist for life because now you have "offended" someone.

Here's my advice - deal with it. If people would worry more about themselves and less about what other

people are saying, an individual would probably accomplish more for his/her self. If you want to cry about being called a name, let me give you a quarter so you can call someone who cares.

**2. Ignorance is bliss - and I've met a lot of happy people:**

It's amazing when I hear people trying to talk a lot about something they don't know a lot about. A good example is people talking about the government - like about politics and the state of global affairs when they probably don't even know who the

vice-president of the United States is, or who's who in the president's cabinet.

No one wants to hear you say, "Yeah, that Bush, he doesn't know what he's doing, blah, blah, blah." When was the last time you were president of a world superpower? If you're just going to talk handwagon BS, then do everyone around you a favor and shut up. As with anything in life, take a few minutes to learn about something before you criticize it.

**3. Diversity means separation:**

Where exactly are we going with equal rights these days? One thing that continues to baffle me is the need for minority groups. Now, before you call me a stupid cracker or ignorant white boy, let me pose a few questions. If America is the giant melting pot, why are we sitting in different pans on the stove?

I thought the best part about being American was having opportunities and the freedom to allow an individual to make the most out of his/her own life. Meeting quotas and getting rewarded for being a particular minority seems

to be a step in the wrong direction. What ever happened to being the best man for the job? Job applications and any application in general should not have the word "race" anywhere on it. What would happen if I decided to start the Caucasian-American club on campus?

Sadly, our "diverse" culture that we live in would probably not allow me to do this. I'm sorry, people; there are no African-Americans, Asian-Americans, or Latino-Americans. You're American.

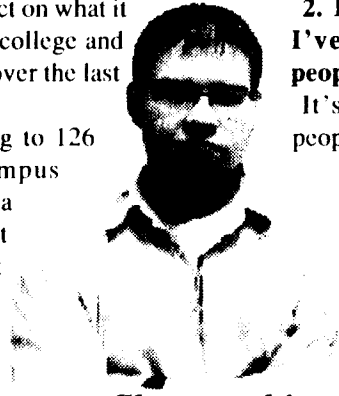
**4. People don't know the difference between fact and opinion:**

This one ties into the other three a little bit and is probably the paramount thing I've come to know about people in general. It's amazing, the idea of "freedom of speech." It's where everyone harasses you for harassing them, because you have different beliefs than they do.

"I can't believe you [the Beacon] published Jane Doe's editorial last week! She is so wrong about the things she talked about!" Honestly, and I do mean honestly, if I had a dollar for every time I heard this phrase, I wouldn't have to go to school anymore because I would be retired by now. I worry when people begin to attack their own freedoms, it doesn't say much for the overall intelligence of our society.

I suppose that these issues were the ones that I dealt with the most during my stay at Behrend, and I probably wrote the most editorials (you know, opinions) about them. Obviously, you have your own ideas about the way things are and should be in our society - so what are you going to do about it? Most of you reading this will graduate with a degree from Behrend at some point in time.

Remember that anyone can get a degree, but it's those individuals who apply their experience and education to their everyday situations who will be successful in life.



Chew on this Rob Wynne

## Sharpton for President

by Adam Massaro  
staff writer

After hosting "Saturday Night Live," over the weekend the Rev. Al Sharpton merely reaffirmed his status as class clown of the 2004 democratic presidential candidates. During the show, Sharpton played lawyer Johnnie Cochran, a sushi salesman and one of the three wise men, about as well as he plays a presidential candidate - comical.

Sharpton's most laughable comment of the night came in his opening monologue, "Maybe tonight, people can finally get to know the real Al Sharpton. President Al Sharpton."

I'd recommend historians scribe this statement into the history books immediately, for the odds are "real," "President" and "Sharpton" will never be uttered in the same breath again.

Now one might ask "what makes Sharpton a pretender in this race of contenders?" Well, for starters, credentials. Like any job, an individual's prerequisites and previous experience are of grave concern in the evaluation process.

Unfortunately, for Sharpton under the "political experience" box he would have to reluctantly check NONE. Now, I would venture to guess that to become president of the United States it would be helpful to have some previous experience, when making decisions that affect both our nation and the entire world.

Under "prerequisites," Sharpton could boast his status as founder/director of the National Action Network from (1991 to present) or being an ordained minister, but arguing his background is sufficient to become the next president is tenuous at best.

Finally, the box that would truly hurt Sharpton the most would be "college

education," since dropouts from Brooklyn College, don't exactly earn the right to check that box.

Hypothetically speaking, if Sharpton did win, what's to say that in a time of controversy he would not just dropout and shirk the responsibility? Who's to say he would even know when he was in too deep, considering he has no previous experience?

Certainly, someone this unqualified should have faded away or at least been booted off the stage by now, but he hasn't. Why not? Because he's good for a few laughs. His shticks are easier to sell to Americans than Howard Dean hosting a re-enactment battle of the Civil War in Georgia.

The media continues to focus on Sharpton, yet he is dead last in fund raising - \$121,315 to Howard Dean's \$12,839,514 - has less than 1 percent of support in polls and is frankly about as qualified to run for president as I am.

He detracts from the qualified candidates, who actually have meaningful things to say. The candidates with the experience and knowledge to foreseeably vie for the Presidency, should be the one's receiving the most face time. Instead, the microphone is placed in front of Sharpton, who never fails to give a good performance as he throws in his 2 cents.

The presidency should be viewed just like any other job, and no candidate should be exempt from the criticism.

Until the media decides to stop keeping a time slot open for Weird Al, he will continue to be a distraction from the real candidates.

Nevertheless, for people out there who are still enamored with the minister, caught up in his gospel, I suggest you go help the man and donate to his cause at <http://www.sharpton2004.org>. I know I'll throw my two cents in.

## Calm down everyone...it is just sex

People have sex, and Paula Carmicino, a film student at New York University, recently told the New York Times she wanted to make a film about, "how we censor ourselves during the day when we're not having sex."

Last week, however, NYU administrators nixed the idea, which would have required student actors to have sex in front of a willing film class.

It would be easy to blame administrators for the censorship, but with famed directors Spike Lee, Ang Lee, and Martin Scorsese as well as independent film hall-of-famer Todd Solondz in their alumni records, I can't imagine artistic expression being regularly stifled.

The only explanation for NYU's response is the fear of conservative groups attacking their policies on sexuality in the classroom. And NYU wouldn't be the first institution of higher education to face such an attack from parenting groups who are in denial about their 20-year-old child's sex life.

The University of Michigan recently came under fire for offering a course titled "How to be Gay: Male Homosexuality and Initiation," which investigated the sub-culture and the development of a gay man's identity. Of course, "family-

values" organizations; including the American Family Association, objected, saying the class was an exercise in state-sponsored homosexual recruitment. Forget the idea of promoting tolerance and understanding, any class that has to do with a gay man's sexuality can only result in students giving hand jobs in a restroom stall.

And yes, human sexuality classes may require the viewing of pornography. The University of Kansas was criticized for allowing a professor to show "obscene" material in his "Human Sexuality in Everyday Life" course. A student was offended because she didn't realize a sexuality class discusses going past second-base, and now the professor is being under constant attack by a state representative with an if-we-don't-talk-about-it-it-doesn't-happen mentality.

If we were talking about showing hardcore gang-bang videos to elementary school kids, I might be concerned. But the idea of college students choosing to take a class in sexuality, only to get remedial sex education classes that promote abstinence and claim AIDS is the disease of a vengeful God, is ridicu-

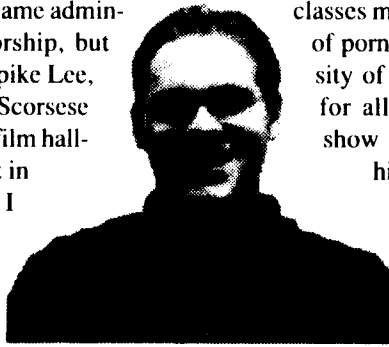
lous. Taking sexuality out of humanity is like removing the keg from a frat party. It may not mean the party's over, but it certainly makes it less interesting.

The people who don't want to have their kids exposed to sex are the same people who are shocked when their 19-year-old daughter ends up on "Girls Gone Wild." If you know it exists, then you have to know people are doing it. Its better for students to understand the psychology of sexuality than to assume that repressing the urge is what keeps a person safe.

Intellectualizing sex makes a whole lot more sense than spiritualizing and then concealing the most carnal human behavior. Is a lesson on sexuality intended to promote promiscuity? No, but the health of any monogamous relationship relies on the type of frankness and tolerance taught in these classes.

Dr. Judith Riesman, president of the Institute for Media Education, doesn't agree, saying this "sexual abuse" in colleges is directly responsible for the rise in divorce. Doubtful. Honest discussion of sexuality encourages people seek out a partner who isn't sexually repressed from years of social and religious indoctrination. Let's put it this way. I'd leave, too, if I had to have sex with a block of ice.

(Note: My last comment was not intended to offend anyone with an ice fetish)



Daniel J. Stasiewski

## Letters to the Editor

### Bah, Humbug, Scott (aka Scrooge)

Dear Editor:

We are extremely concerned that the president of our SGA and champion supporter of THON, Scott Soltis aka Scrooge, would write an editorial to the student body giving them "guilt free" advice to avoid donating to the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army benefits people of all ages through donations of meals and clothes, programs of disaster relief and rehabilitation and providing low cost medical care to those in need. The Salvation Army and other charities are already struggling to receive donations in a depressed economy - and there is a guilt free advice article to avoid

helping this?

If people do not want to give money that is their choice; but, the article presented in the Behrend Beacon was depressing in the fact that it encouraged students to lie. "Act like you are Canadian," "fake a cell phone call" and "act like there is something to get back to" are all forms of flagrant falsehoods. With all the drama that already exists in the world, these suggestions from our fearless president make us truly wonder about the quality of his leadership.

Second to Harvard, Penn State alumni give the most donations to their alma mater. Imagine if Graham Spanier wrote to all the alumni

encouraging them "guilt free ways not to give back to Penn State." Our tuition would rise, the campus infrastructure would deteriorate, and the sense of Penn State community would be ruined. These probable outcomes are comparable to the advice the SGA president gave to the student body concerning charitable donations.

We did not find the article humorous, even if that was its original intent - it is just sad. We will end with one final question to Scott - what is the "Sally Army"?

Lauren Piera, PLSC 07, Katie Sweeny, PLSC 07

### Book store's buy back gives false hopes

Dear Editor:

When classes were starting, I purchased a book that I would supposedly need for one of my classes. That book has never even been unwrapped, as it was never used in the class.

When I went to the bookstore today I was told that although it was brand new, I couldn't get any more than half of what I paid.

The clerk told me that I should have returned it during the first week of class, to which I replied that I would have, had I known I wouldn't need it.

I told him that I'll just sell it online, where friends told me I would be able to get full price.

I think that policy is absurd, and really needs to be changed. I also feel that if professors are going to have us spend \$53 on a book, we better use it in class.

I refuse to sell any of my books back to them because of this incident, and if I can avoid getting books there in the future, I will take my business elsewhere.

Carolyn M. Tellers, ENGL 07