

Friday, January 16, 2004

The Behrend Beacon

The Behrend Beacon

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

Editor in Chief
Lauren M. Packer

Managing Editor
Daniel J. Stasiewski

Assistant Managing Editor
Scott Solits

News Editor
Justin Curry

Sports Editors
Kevin Fiorenza
Amy Frizzell

Editorial Page Editor
Amy Wilczynski

Features Editor
Dana Vaccaro

Greek Life Editor
Courtney Straub

Staff Photographers
Jeff Hankey
Heather Myers



**THE BEHREND
Beacon**

"Professionalism with a
personality"

Advertising Manager
Ryan Russell

Calendar Page Editor
Amy Wilczynski

A&E Editors
Daniel J. Stasiewski
Erka Jarvis

Supplemental Editor
Lauren M. Packer

Adviser
Cathy L. Roan, Ph.D.

Copy Editors
Carolyn M. Tellers
Kristin Bowers

Penn State Erie,
the Behrend College;
First Floor, The J. Elmer Reed Union Building,
Station Road, Erie, PA 16563.
Contact The Beacon at:
Telephone: (814) 898-6488
Fax: (814) 898-6019
ISSN 1071-9288.

OUR VIEW

University should close for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

It's about time the Pennsylvania State University comes out of the 1960s and recognize Martin Luther King Day as the national holiday that it is by closing the school. Government agencies, elementary and high schools, and many colleges and universities across this nation do so, so why don't we?

Granted, what PSU does now is a novel attempt to adequately recognize a great man's contribution to American life as well as the world. The MLK celebrations here at Behrend are very good and touching programs, but some do not even have the opportunity to attend them because of classes or sports.

Aside from enhancing the ability for students to celebrate, it is also a matter of respect. Not recognizing this or any other national holiday is disrespectful of the very reason why there is a holiday. Just as having school on the Fourth of July would be

disrespectful of our founding fathers and attending classes on Memorial Day is disrespectful of those who lost their lives in defense of our country, school on Martin Luther King Day is disrespectful of this great man.

Just as it is not an easy fight to have MLK Day off through the University it was also a battle to have it recognized as a national holiday. While the measure passed through the House of Representatives it faced an uphill battle in the Senate some 21 years ago.

If one of the reasons that our University has not fully recognized the holiday is financial, then they should definitely rethink this logic. Yes, paying the thousands of employees would be a great cost, but they should look back to the words of former Sen. Bob Dole when the Senate feared the costs.

According to Holidays On The Net (www.holidays.net), the senator said, "I

suggest they hurry back to their pocket calculators and estimate the cost of 300 years of slavery, followed by a century or more of economic, political and social exclusion and discrimination."

If another reason is the possible religious implications of having King's day off, then that would not hold weight either. If the University is worried about possible church-state implications of a public school having the day off then they need to realize the steps taken for the day to become a holiday. If this was a clear violation of the separation of church and state then the Bill would have been stopped by the Supreme Court and other public schools such as Edinboro University would not be able to legally have the day off.

So it's about time that our University step up and fully recognize Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a national holiday. By closing shop for the day it would not necessarily be just some day off but instead a time to "remember, celebrate, act; a day on, not a day off!"

The Beacon's View is determined by a majority of the board of opinions.

Bar bouncers need brains, not brawn

Unless you live in State College, you probably haven't heard of former Penn State student Peter Serrano. However, I do live in State College and it's one of the most unfortunate, shocking stories to come out of Happy Valley in a long time.

You never think bad things happen in your hometown. It's too Americana, too Norman Rockwell. But as our community found out, crime doesn't only happen in big cities.

On Oct. 26, 2003, Serrano had been drinking heavily. His last stop came at the All-American Rathskeller, 108 S. Pugh St. It was here that Serrano's friends became engaged in an alleged confrontation with two employees of the bar, the bouncer and the manager.

The two employees, brothers Jason and Chris Rosengrant, pinned Serrano down and kept him to the ground. When State College police arrived on the scene, Serrano was restrained yet unresponsive. The employees had pinned him down too hard and for too long.

The court documents revealed a BAC of .24 and the coroner ruled that because of the restraint placed by the Rosengrants, Serrano aspirated, vomited and then choked to death on his own vomit.

The Rosengrants are being charged with one count each of involuntary manslaughter, and rightly so.

Their actions that night should not have happened, but unfortunately they did. As a bouncer and manager, the

Rosengrants showed the poorest judgment possible. Not only did they forcibly restrain a very intoxicated Serrano to the point of death, they did so in an alley away from the entrance of the club.

Serrano's irresponsibility cannot take all blame. Yes, he was too intoxicated, but no, he wasn't in control of his actions. The Rosengrants may have been sober, but they surely were without control of their actions, otherwise Serrano might be alive today.

Why not call him a cab? Better yet, why not call him an ambulance? Why not even call the police? If I was a bouncer and someone was that intoxicated and in my club, I would throw them out. What I would not do is escort them down an alley and then proceed to have two people pin down a man with a BAC of .24 and keep him pinned down while he is having trouble breathing and foaming at the mouth.

This death is about the negligent and reckless behavior of bouncers who are there to protect the bar first, people second. Keep the drunks

spending the money. Bouncers are usually the biggest and broadest people you've ever seen, short of a World's Strongest Man competition on ESPN. Why? So they can easily and swiftly kick, carry or crush the intoxicated individual. Bars don't care if a bouncer knows that the fetal position is the safest for someone about to vomit.

And that is the saddest, most terrifying thing about this whole case.

Bouncers need alcohol safety classes in addition to their weight-lifting sessions. They need anger management, sensitivity training or non violent techniques to deal with the problems before they escalate into larger problems that really do require the use of force.

They need to realize they aren't there just to protect the bar, they are there to protect everyone inside, outside and around the bar.

I never thought about the bouncers at the bars I frequent until this happened.

It happened at the Rathskeller, but it could happen anywhere. Calamari's, Park Place, the Alibi or any other bar in small town America.

And now that I'm back in Erie, for a split second I thought I was safe. I thought, "Nah, that could never happen here."

But that's what I thought about State College, too.

Lauren Packer's column appears every three weeks.

The king is dead

Four years ago, I had the unfortunate experience of attending a Backstreet Boys concert in Pittsburgh. Beyond the sappy, disposable love songs and the flamboyant laser light show, I don't remember much. However, I cannot forget the four 13-year-old girls sitting behind me, tears running down their cheeks as they tried to convince themselves that Brian had looked right into their eyes.

Until recently, I thought that was going to be the most pathetic example of lost reality I would ever see. Then, Peter Jackson made "The Lord of the Rings."

Tolkien fanatics have convinced themselves that "The Return of the King" is destined to be crowned Best Picture of the Year at the annual Academy Awards ceremony on Feb. 29. True to form the mass media have run with the fans (and the money) to prematurely declare the finale of the momentous fantasy trilogy the winner, neglecting the presence of the adjective "fantasy."

Let's face it. "The Return of the King" stands as much a chance of winning the Oscar this year as "Star Wars" did when it was nominated in 1977 or the first installment of the trilogy, "The Fellowship of the Ring," did only two years ago. As a matter of fact, it has less of a chance, not because it isn't amazing or historic or whatever choice word a person uses to describe it. Instead, "The Return of the King" suffers from one thing above all else. It lacks clout.

Even if Academy members were to love the film, the thought of giving a B-movie director and a second-string studio the Oscar for Best Picture is strikingly uncharacteristic of a group that is as narcissistic and self-rewarding as any one person in Hollywood.

At the 1995 ceremony, Mel Gibson, an action star and Hollywood A-lister, took home the Best Picture Oscar for the big budget action epic, "Braveheart." It was a summer movie in competition with an adaptation of the literary classic "Sense and Sensibility" (which won the Golden Globe for Best Picture) by an unknown foreign filmmaker (Ang Lee), a children's film about a talking pig ("Babe"), and the space drama "Apollo 13" directed by Opie. He didn't win because his film was the best, or even the most popular. No, he won because he had friends and money as one of the most profitable actors in Hollywood history. To all the Tolkien fanatics out there, that's the reality of the Oscars.

The been-there-done-that attitude that destroyed all Oscar hopes for



Daniel J. Stasiewski

columnist

"The Two Towers" will probably have a built-in counter, because "The Return of the King" is De Mille-sized and, unlike the previous films, actually has an ending (sort of). Still, the fantasy film, despite the melodrama and special effects, will likely be tossed aside as juvenile fluff "Star Wars" or "Babe." And, of course, the other possible nominees are the most primed Oscar hopefuls I've ever seen.

Clint Eastwood's drama "Mystic River" has the best chance of winning. It's a masterpiece of American film that pushes the envelope just enough to be artistic, but in a Hollywood way. It has received the same critical praise as "The Return of the King," but it also flaunts the beloved Eastwood's above-mentioned clout. If "Mystic River" doesn't win, "Seabiscuit" will. If not "Seabiscuit," then "Cold Mountain." Hell, the indie hit "Lost in Translation" probably has more chance of winning Best Picture than "The Return of the King."

Even if the last film in Jackson's trilogy does win the Golden Globe, I'll still not be convinced the "King" will wear the Oscar crown. Even if the film scores another major nomination (in acting, directing, or writing), "King" has to fend off too many qualified Oscar contenders to reign supreme. Even if God himself were to cross his fingers, uh-uh.

If I'm wrong, I'll admit it in the March 19 issue of the Beacon and make some attempt at rationalizing the win by connecting it with the re-election campaign of George W. Bush, a massive international conspiracy, and the rise in popularity of dating shows. Until then, think about this. The only Best Picture winner to ever gross over \$200 million is James Cameron's epic love story "Titanic." The closest second is the epic love story "Gone with the Wind." The two films are unlikely blockbusters when compared to the usual popcorn moneymakers, such as "Independence Day," "Jurassic Park," and the other two "The Lord of the Rings" films.

Daniel J. Stasiewski's column appears every three weeks.

Winter brings out the best in me

So far this year it seems as though everyone has had their opportunity to share their opinions and/or complaints with the Beacon and those that actually read the newspaper. With winter declaring its dominance over Behrend, I've come up with a few complaints of my own. Just as those who came before me it's my turn to subject readers to my opinions and complaints.

First off, people who can't ice skate. Now I admit that I am no Michelle Kwan or even Mario Lemieux when I'm on the ice but I can skate. I've taken some time to study the patterns of people who are ice skating challenged and I've recorded some interesting observations.

One would think if you can't skate that sticking to the boards would be the best way to become acquainted with the joyous sport of skating on ice. Sadly, most people opt to ignore that option and head straight for the "inner circle" of skating traffic. This is where the skater creates a traffic jam and eventually an accident.

Once two people go down it's just a matter of time before there's a pile up, broken arms and severed fingers.

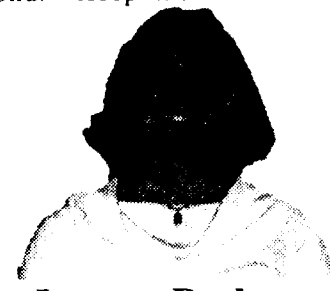
Think of it this way, do you really want to be the one car going 60 m.p.h. in the passing lane on Interstate 79? Everyone's passing you on the right, beeping their horn while old ladies three times your age are flipping you off as they pass by in their 1976 Cadillac. Would you really want to reach out to that old lady as you take the plunge at center ice?

Speaking of ice skating I should prob-

ably mention the Pittsburgh Penguins. I want to make it clear before I express my next opinion that I do in fact like the Pens. But let's face it they're not doing too good this year. With a record of 11-25-5-3, they're not exactly at the top of their division. But that's OK. They've stunk before. At least they won the Stanley Cup two years in a row.

It's not the fact that they've traded away their good players. It's the fact that now they have Penguin Dancers. What about these Penguin Dancers, you ask? There is no point to having them. It's not as if they add excitement to the game, because to be quite frank, they don't. It's that they don't really do anything.

Some people may say that in fact they do dance, but I don't consider standing in the aisle, blocking people from getting to their seats while following through with a 30 second sequence of arm movements dancing. I could be wrong about that but then again I did more "dancing" in first grade at the YMCA when we were required to walk in a straight line and roll on the floor.



Lauren Packer

editor in chief



Amy Frizzell

sports editor

SEND LETTERS

Letters must be signed and include a telephone number, major, semester standing and full name. Letters more than 350 words may be edited. Letters that are libelous or are personal attacks will not be published. Send to: The Behrend Beacon, Reed Union Building Club Mailbox, 5091 Station Rd, Erie, PA 16563. E-mail: behrroll2@aol.com