

The Behrend Beacon

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

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THE BEHREND
Beacon

"Professionalism with a personality"

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ISSN 1071-9288.

Don't blame the gun makers



AEROPOSTAL
Amy Wilczynski
editorial editor

As with any manufactured item, there are instructions provided that are directed to prevent improper use of the machinery. If someone chooses to misuse the product, it is not the fault of the manufacturer. We inevitably have free will. We can do what we want with our own possessions as long as it is not unlawful. Every person in the world has common sense and can do what he/she wants. If he/she misuses the product in a harmful way, he/she should be put to blame for any mishap or crime that stems from the decision.

In the poor economy that we live in today, finding a job is often a tough task. Many unemployed people will take any job that comes along, even if it is a gun manufacturer. Producing guns is not a crime. Most guns are not made with the intent to kill another human being. Guns are used for a variety of reasons.

Society has a one-track mind when it comes to controversial issues such as guns. If everyone involved in society who believes gun makers are to blame for crime would take a step back and look deeper, they will see that gun makers are absolutely not responsible for the rising crime rate.

We are responsible for our own actions. We choose to use guns in a harmful or practical way. We make our own decisions; gun makers do not force people to misuse guns. The people who commit crimes are to blame for crime; not the gun makers.

Amy Wilczynski's column appears every three weeks.

disagree? disagree? disagree?
disagree? disagree? disagree?

write your opinion to
The Beacon

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and make sure you include your name,
major, and semester standing

Lord of the Greenbacks

I was wrong. I said two months ago that "The Return of the King" didn't stand a chance in the Best Picture race, but the third "Lord of the Rings" film took home the Best Picture trophy. The fantasy film also won an award for each nomination as it became one of only three films to win 11 Academy Awards, the most in Oscar history. After a week's worth of contemplation, I'm willing to say the film deserved its awards, just as much as any other Oscar-winning epic. For the Academy, a billion dollar film and Hollywood's golden god was a match made in heaven.

The union of a popcorn blockbuster and the elusive Oscar is easily acceptable considering their special night was the most commercialized Oscar ceremony in history. While only Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson overtly advertised their film "Starsky and Hutch," other stars from Jennifer Garner to Julianne Moore were treated more like guests on "The Tonight Show" than Oscar presenters.

Blame it on declining ratings. That's what show producer Joe Roth will do, but the thought of Will Farrell and Jack Black presenting together only for comic relief, instead of advertising for "Anchorman" and "Envy," respectively, is something I'll question until next year's ceremony.

When you look at the money, it's really no wonder that "The Return of the King," the second film in history to gross over \$1 billion worldwide, stole the show. It's hard to ignore a billion dollars in Hollywood, even if the guy who directed the cinematic spectacular also made the morbid Muppet-parody "Meet the Feebles." The truth is if "The Lord of the Rings" wasn't a blockbuster, it merely made a half billion dollars over the run of



Daniel J. Stasiewski

A&E editor

the entire trilogy. Peter Jackson would have three nomination certificates instead of three Oscars.

I don't want to undercut the achievement of completing the trilogy. A project like "The Lord of the Rings" will likely never be undertaken again, but I stand by my reviews when I say these films weren't good enough to be taken as seriously as they have been. Fans were blinded by their utter devotion to J.R.R. Tolkien or the fantasy genre or the mindless spectacle. As for the Academy, it focused on the cash. Cash was also the reason Johnny Depp was nominated for "The Pirates of the Caribbean" and the reason "Finding Nemo" took the trophy for Best Animated Feature.

When great cinematic achievements are mixed with a \$300 million domestic gross, the truly exceptional achievements are overlooked. The cash-over-quality phenomenon is something most independent or foreign language film fans have become used to during the past 15 years, but now even studio masterpieces that bring under \$100 million can't compete with the flashy billion-dollar

blockbusters that other studios are releasing.

The trend isn't completely new. "Gladiator" took in \$187 million domestically on its way to being crowned the Academy's Best Picture of 2000. Its only challenger was the foreign language film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," which was nominated for Best Picture only after it proved to be a profitable film. Even Mel Gibson's "Braveheart" didn't have to come close to \$100 million in order to steal the Oscar from four superior candidates.

"Chicago," Best Picture of 2002, was well on its way to \$150 million when it won Best Picture (it eventually took \$170 million) and Universal's 2001 Best Picture winner "A Beautiful Mind" had \$154 million in the bank when it won the Oscar. Both films did beat out the first two installments of "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, but neither "The Fellowship of the Rings" or "The Two Towers" was the billion dollar juggernaut that eventually brought home the gold for the fantasy epic.

Some people might now claim that the arrogant Academy is simply over its contempt for the eccentric fantasy genre, but not every fantasy film is worth a billion bucks. What the Academy is over is its willingness to give a film that takes in less than \$100 million domestically the Oscar for Best Picture. Just think, if the same commercialized Academy that voted for "King" was voting back in 1994, Spielberg's \$96 million-grossing masterpiece "Schindler's List" may have seen its Best Picture trophy walk away with the \$184 million nominee, "The Fugitive."

Everyone has a plan

Sometimes, life can suck. Not in an "I missed the new *South Park*" kind of way, but in a real way. Everything seems to be going well enough, and then ka-pow, take that, you suddenly insignificant college kid. All the crap you usually complain about, not having a girlfriend/boyfriend, always being broke, the weather, suddenly doesn't amount to jack squat.

I'm sure not many of you know this, but my mom recently had open-heart surgery. Triple bypass; fun stuff. Now you all know what I mean when I say life can suck in a real way. She is a wonderful woman, who'd never done anything to deserve all the crap she had to go through.

She was at the doctor's office, and mentioned that her shoulder hurt her when she walked from her car into her workplace. The doctor, Dr. Price, whom I don't even have a clue how to begin to thank, ordered an EKG. Bang, the next day, she was at Saint Vincent having more extensive testing done. Bang, the next day, she had the surgery.

Thanks to the wonders of modern sciences, and the amazing doctors at Saint Vincent's, my mom was home a week later, and I'm happy to say she is on the road to recovery, and is doing great. Thanks to all the doctors, nurses, and family members who helped me then. I'm sure I was a wreck. And hey, go ahead and call me anytime you want, mom, I welcome every phone call now instead of wishing you would have stopped bugging me every day.

And much like the rest of the world, after that, I just tried to get back to normal. I helped my mom out around the house, finished up school work, and enjoyed spring break with my friends. It seemed like life was going back to normal, or at least as normal as one's life could be. Then, life decided to re-



Ryan Russell

advertising manager

member the good times she had with me and my family.

mind me again that sometimes, stuff happens, and there is nothing any of us can do about it.

It was one or two years ago, she came to visit us from Wisconsin. I managed to talk my cat, Peaches, who you all know from other articles, I'm sure, into coming home for the occasion. My Aunt Lynn, Uncle Bud, and all three cousins, Corey, Kristen and Peter, were coming home to visit. I can't remember if it was a holiday or not, but I didn't care, they were coming home. I'll never forget Kristen's face when she saw that cat. Never in a million years. You would think the Pirates and Red Sox had just won the World Series, the Bills had won the Super Bowl, and world peace had just been attained. Her face was better than that, but that's the best way I can think of to put it in words. The whole time she was home, she wanted to play with Peaches. I don't think I've ever seen anyone happier than her.

I could go on and on, but that's what I choose to remember. I'm sure that right now, wherever Kristen is, she's having an even better time, with an even better cat. No more pain, doctor visits, stares, surgeries or chemotherapy. Just pure, unadulterated happiness.

Some of you have probably been reading this and thinking that I should just remember that I'm still lucky to be here. No, sorry. I'm not lucky to be here; it's all just part of the plan. My cousin's plan called for her to leave us on Wednesday, and she's in a better place now. Am I sad she's gone? Of course. But at the same time, I couldn't be happier for her.

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