

EDITORIAL

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The Behrend Beacon

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Watch out, 'American Idol', here I come

If you live under a rock then you have not noticed that we're in the third season of FOX's acclaimed reality show "American Idol." I, for one, have noticed and am quite excited that it's back. While I do miss last season's 12 contestants, especially Clay Aiken, this year's gang is entertaining me so far.

I have realized that this season there are a lot younger contestants. There are about five or so who are all under the age of 19. This impresses me but has me thinking at the same time. With more young'uns in the competition I'm thinking one of them just might win. How fantastic, American "Teen" Idol ... because we don't have enough of those!

First season of "American Idol" we had our first winner, Kelly Clarkson, a female. Second season, we had Clay Aiken as the winner. Whoops! I mean Ruben Studdard. Sorry, my fault, since Clay has been having better album sales, more hit singles, and more exposure I forgot that he was actually the underdog and that Ruben had won. Anyway, we've covered the basics, a guy and a girl both won the competition. Who hasn't won so far, though? A teenager. So here I am again proving my point that one of the six (now five;



Erika Jarvis

teens. Not sure where a few of those people are today, but most are still holding strong on the charts as they enter their early 20s.

If you don't like my opinion, let's hope that John Stevens wins. He's 16 years old, so he fits my mold of being a teenager, yet at the same time, he has the distinct sound of those Rat Pack gentlemen. That sounds like a fair and even trade, I think. Yet, when it comes down to the end of this grueling competition, it's going to be the contestant with the all around "it" factor, as Simon Cowell calls it. They're going to have that on-stage charisma, the talent, the drive and the personality, and all of the votes obviously.

While, I would like a younger contestant to win, my money is on any of these three contestants: Diana DeGarmo, Jasmine Trias or John Peter Lewis.

Next year, I'm trying out and blowing everyone out of the water and showing FOX viewers what it really means to be an American Idol! Watch out Simon, Paula and Randy ... I'm a comin'!

Erika Jarvis's column appears every three weeks.

one of the teens got the boot) will dominate this competition.

I've been seeing articles online and in magazines and most people think that LaToya London will take the competition. She's too old in my book to win; she's at the ripe old age of 25. Last time I checked, 25 was almost mid- 20s (Thank Jessica Simpson for that brilliant moment!) and we all know, that's just too old for the music business.

If you look at the way the music business goes, you either start out young, or you break into the business when you're older. Britney, Christina, Mandy and even the NSYNC and BackStreet Boys all started out in their

Morning-after pill: yay or nay?

There's every indication that the Food and Drug Administration is struggling over whether to allow the so-called morning-after pill to be sold over the counter. After an advisory panel overwhelmingly recommended that move in December, the FDA, under intense pressure from conservative and religious groups, recently announced that it would delay the decision for 90 days to gather more information on the pill.

Last month an Illinois House committee approved a proposal that would allow such pills, which prevent pregnancy in the first hours and days after intercourse, to be sold without a doctor's prescription by pharmacists.

Unlike the broad FDA plan that would allow the pills to be stocked on drugstore shelves, under the proposed Illinois law the pills would still be kept behind the pharmacy counter.

Several states already allow pharmacists to sell the pills without a doctor's prescription, and Illinois should join them. Absent FDA approval of over-the-counter sales the best outcome the state should be doing everything it can to lower the barriers that prevent women from

using safe and effective morning-after pills. The potential benefits are significant. By avoiding unwanted pregnancies at the earliest possible stage, the pill can reduce the number of abortion procedures that are performed.

In recent months the debate over the FDA proposal has veered from science and policy into the realm of religion and abortion politics. Some supporters fear that even with the lopsided advisory committee vote, the FDA will reject the recommendation.

That would be a shame. The morning-after pill, first approved in 1998, is essentially safe and effective with minimal side effects, the FDA has said. The "Plan B" brand pill, which is under FDA scrutiny, contains a higher dose of the same hormones found in regular birth-control pills. The pill is most effective if taken within 24 hours of intercourse, although it's still largely effective up to 72 hours. In some instances, it delays ovulation and prevents fertilization of an egg. In other instances, it prevents the implantation of a fertilized egg in the uterus.

Some argue that since a doctor's prescription is required for birth-control pills, it should also be re-

quired for morning-after pills. But the nature of emergency contraception suggests that a doctor might not be readily available to write a prescription.

What also worries many opponents is that the morning-after pill would be more available to teen-agers, without parental consent or a prescription. That's a real concern. The availability of the morning-after pill will not, and should not, change the messages to teens from parents, mentors and other adults: Do not engage in sex until you are mature enough to assess and to handle the physical, emotional and moral ramifications of that. Do not engage in unsafe sex. The morning-after pill is not a routine substitute for birth control; it does not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases.

Will the pill encourage unprotected sex, particularly among teens? That seems unlikely, given that condoms are as readily available now over the counter. Whatever risk there might be is significantly outweighed by the potential benefit of reducing unwanted pregnancies and abortion procedures.

That's why it's time for Illinois to act, even if the FDA doesn't.

The Chicago Tribune



OUR VIEW

The Reed renovations are a much needed and welcomed change. The current state of student club offices are below par and are not easily accessible. Nor are they easily spotted. The Lion Entertainment Board, Commuter Council and Beacon, all influential clubs that serve a great amount of students, are located in Suite B, a long hallway behind the Backroom and next to the boiler room. The current plans to create a student office loop around an improved and expanded mail room will create a more welcoming atmosphere

for potential club members and allow increased visibility for all students.

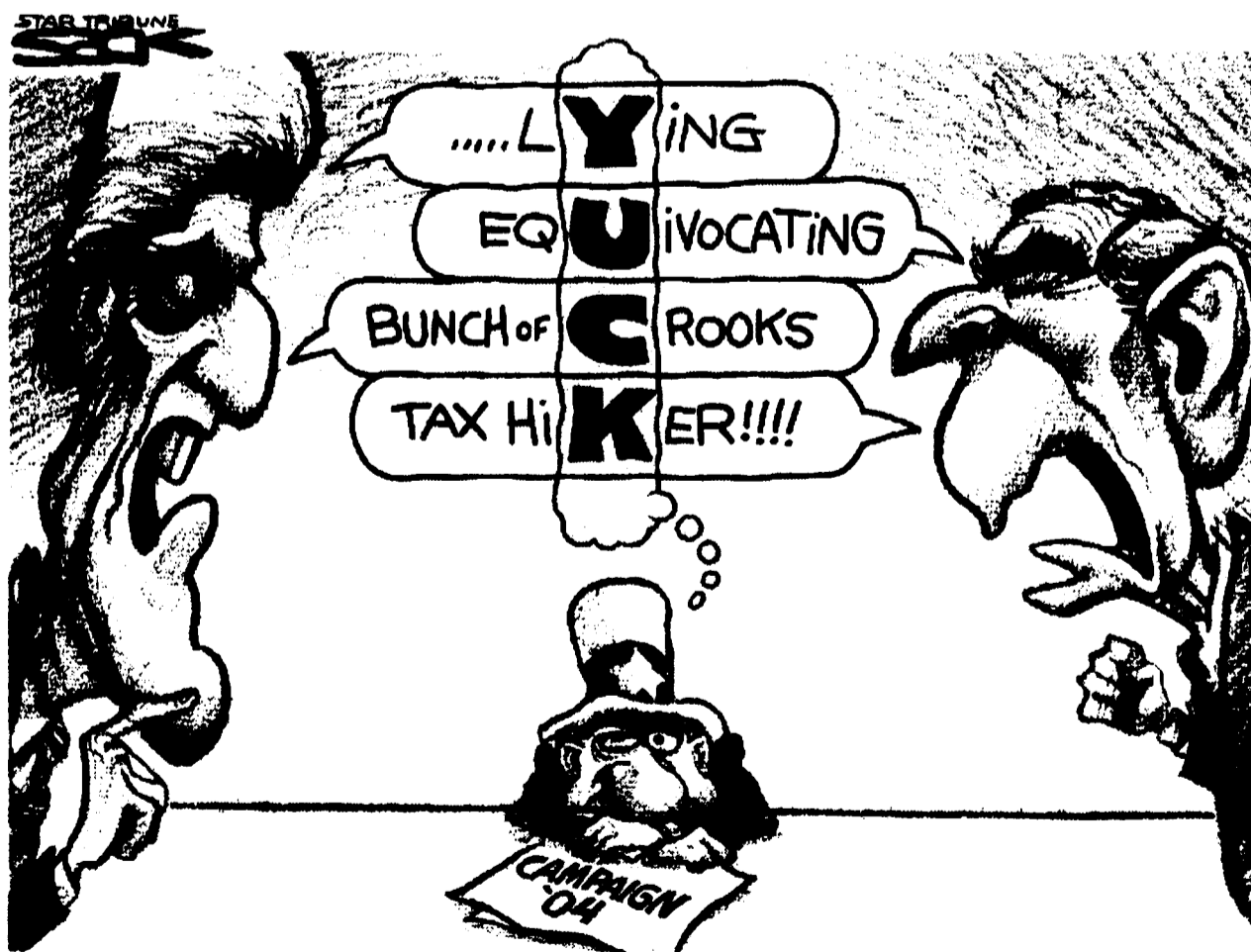
Any improvement right now will create an awareness for club and organization life that is in a critical state on campus. The declining numbers in clubs and organizations, as well as attendance at club and organization events, have the opportunity to improve because of this renovation.

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

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

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