

EDITORIAL

The Behrend Beacon

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



THE BEHREND Beacon
"Professionalism with a personality"

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ISSN 1071-9288.

A little lesson from grammie Frizzell

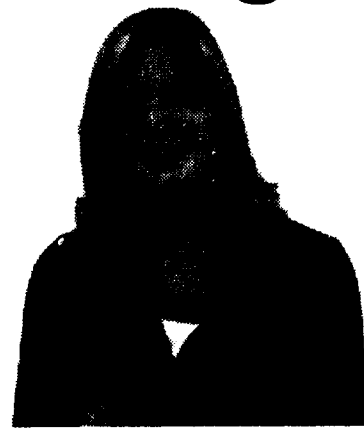
I've been sitting here for at least twenty minutes staring at a blank screen. This is a lot of pressure. I'm suppose to write a 500 word editorial about what I think for the consideration of the entire student body.

The last time someone wrote a bad editorial it was mailed back to us with "You're an idiot" written on it in red marker. To say that people probably won't read this or even care is an understatement.

The last time I was under this much pressure was when I registered to vote. Republican or Democrat? Democrat or Republican? And then everyone asks you what you are. Right then you start freak-ing out, "Oh man did I pick the right one?"

It's this enormous production that gets thrown at you pretty fast. My best friend's dad is a state representative and for my 18th birthday, I didn't get a card - I got a voter registration packet. Trust me, it can be confusing.

You think things would get easier after you register, but NO! Things only



Amy J. Frizzell

managing editor

get more confusing. All of a sudden campaigners are sending letters and pictures out to sway you to vote for them. But sometimes that just doesn't work.

Take for instance the time my grandmother received a picture of George W. Bush in the mail along with a letter asking for money, even though my grandma has a certain dislike for the president. Of course, they only found that out af-

ter she replied. Grandpa says she's looking forward to an early parole.

Okay that's not true, my grandmother isn't getting early parole. In fact, she's not even in jail. Though she really did write a nasty letter back. But it's things like that that make me think about my own stance. I don't even know what the issues are! Okay, well, I know a few: the war in Iraq, outsourcing jobs, and ummm yeah, the other ones. A little worried about someone like me getting to vote? Yeah, me too!

I guess the point is to get out and find something out. Heaven knows I need to. It's never too late. Picking up a paper, turning on CNN, talking to someone who knows the issues, just paying attention are all great ways to find the information you're looking for.

Many people are deciding not to vote. Even a certain someone I live with isn't planning on it. But just consider this...we're at school working to build a future for ourselves. Why not use your right to vote to help elect someone that's working just as hard for our future?

Wal-Marts add to Erie's suburban atmosphere

Corry, Pa. was a boomtown that until a few years ago was still charming in its own Small Town, U.S.A. way.

But my memories of downtown Corry were shattered during a mid-summer visit.

I walked along Center Street (the city's main downtown thoroughfare) and saw a few restaurants, a salon, a Dollar General store, a bank and empty windows that had once been filled with book stores and variety shops.

It's a dying place despite the positive image city developers insist on feeding the citizens.

It's a dying place because Wal-Mart moved in.

There are many reasons I don't like Wal-Mart. Labor violations and discrimination lawsuits are just two concerns.

My main complaint is that Wal-Mart, which has a new store opening in Erie on Monday, will stomp out small businesses just as the city claims it is actually bringing jobs to the area.

Wal-Mart already has three stores in Erie suburbs. The fourth store in the city, which opens only eight months after the Harborcreek Wal-Mart, is nothing more than a chance for the city officials to say they created jobs by replacing unemployment with underemployment.

Erie is one of the only cities in the country that didn't fight tooth and nail to keep a Wal-Mart out of city limits.



Daniel J. Stasiewski

columnist

Rosemead, Ca. in L.A. County just yesterday approved a Wal-Mart Supercenter after months of debate, citing the lower wages for grocery workers.

Hillsboro, Ore. successfully kept the world's largest retailer from building a Supercenter because of traffic concerns.

Chicago scared Wal-Mart away with threats that it would set wages for the retail giant.

Each city's reasoning is different, but it shows that the retailer doesn't have the time to put up a fight. And Erie's fight could have easily been won with three other Wal-Marts already creating a retail loop around the city.

Am I saying Wal-Mart isn't welcome anywhere in Erie County? Not at all. The Harborcreek Wal-Mart already

proved its worth with two new restaurants, a bank expansion and a new gaming store being added to the Buffalo Rd. retail district.

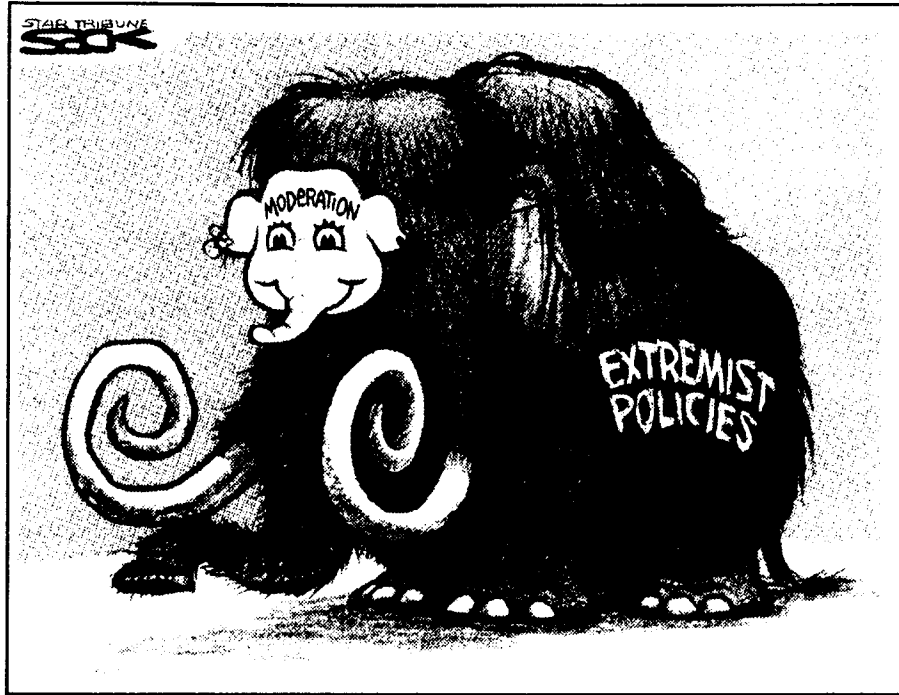
The fight in the city of Erie, however, is still trying to prove that Erie is a city, not a suburb.

Just because artists in Erie paint a few hundred frogs doesn't make this place a vibrant city. And just because the mayor calls State Street a "cultural district" doesn't make it so.

With the real arts in Erie facing dire circumstances and no room to improve, Erie is well on its way to becoming a comfortable place to buy things, but not to live.

The city's desperation to get MTR Gaming to build a horse track on the old International Paper site, rather than in Summit, underscores the city's lack of focus on the real issues. Erie needs more businesses like GE and Erie Insurance and fewer low paying retail and service giants. What happened to the days when community leaders went after National Fuel Gas?

Wal-Mart is just an extension of the take-what-we-can-get attitude that will eventually close even the historic Kraus' Department Store. As long as the city takes the side of any developer over its citizens, the Wal-Marts and MTR Gamings are going to create a vibrant retail community where no one could buy anything.



Sitcks, Stones and Spam

As I checked my email today, I laid my head on my desk and shook it. I received 53 messages, only five of them were the least bit relevant. Everyday I receive from 60 to 80 emails, almost all of which are trash. They come pouring into my PSU account as if dynamite had just taken out the Hoover Dam. The junk mail is addressed from normal names, often ones that sound familiar, attempting to trick you into opening them. Where do these emails come from? Who is this Tommy Spears who alerts me that "There is relief from menopause?" And why has this scamp, Alfonzo Skaggs, sent me an advertisement for pain killer with the subject line: "monkey consanguineous backboard Suzanne handling Carlton courageous perfuse cognition debauchery...?"

The answer lies beyond the grave. The PC grave that is. As it turns out these emails can be sent from normal folks computers who have turned to spyware zombies.

The other day in the USA Today, I read an article detailing how a Jersey grandmother's average PC had been hacked and was sending out nearly 70,000 pieces of spam a day.

So why isn't this being stopped? For one, it's difficult to find the initial attackers because they usually employ zombie servers based in another country. They bounce their evil attack off other computers linked to its network worldwide. The result is hundreds of thousands of useless annoying emails being distributed everyday.

The emails aren't just annoying either; they're down right dangerous. I've received several emails supposedly sent from Microsoft with patches to fix viruses. Of course, when I dropped my guard and opened them I found a phalanx of virtual spears and a Trojan horse to boot. Once a Trojan virus is up and running, it's game over for your PC unless you're friends with Wormser.

Now as terrible as spyware and Trojan vi-



Andy McNeil

opinion editor

ruses are, I can understand the thieves' motivation for sending them. Credit cards equal money. But what I don't understand is all the other junk mail for pornography, Viagra, pain killers, male enhancement pills, digital camcorders, etc. that I receive everyday. Who in their right mind is going to reply to a message with the subject line: "ToM, Please your wife *ChEap Viag%era 2754*?" Could that look any more professional I ask? I'd like to personally shake the hand of the man that says: "Wow, this sloppy email that's been randomly sent to me has some really great values on prescription drugs!"

My solution comes with some swift, Old Western style judgment. The government needs spend some of our ill-placed war funds into a war on spamsters. Once we catch up with these perps, I suggest an ironic twist in their punishment: Stoning. No free cable in a posh, white-collar penitentiary. Since their crime is high tech, the punishment must be a low tech one. Now, we needn't always stone spamsters to death; I feel one stone per 1,000 emails will do. So for those who send thousands of junk emails a day, I suggest you prepare yourself with a baseball glove blessed by St. Stephen.

DON'T LIKE WHAT WE HAVE TO SAY

NOW THERE ARE TWO WAYS GET YOUR VOICE HEARD

1.) Write to us at beaconletters@aol.com. All letters to the editor should be no more than 300 words.

2.) Join the staff Meetings are held every Monday at 5 p.m. in Libarary 12.

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