

# OPINION

## The Behrend Beacon

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**THE BEHREND Beacon**  
"Professionalism with a personality"

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# Oil vs. ketchup : Vote for the viscous fluid of your choice!

Just as there are as many ways to skin a cat as there are cats, there are as many perceptions of America as there are persons perceiving America. Being a nation that values freedom of thought it is natural that the three hundred and some odd million of us Americans do not agree that every aspect of our government is on the up and up. Disagreement is inherent in our national character; however compromise, which preserves our nation, is as well. Presidents are important because they shape America based on how they see it and what they want it to become.



Chris Hvizdak

editorial columnist

The importance of this coming election is often stressed in vague sound bytes which do little to evidence why it is of such great concern. I believe that the factors determining this importance, as they truly stand, are either too delicate or not sexy enough for the candidates and the media to leverage to their respective political and financial advantages. This leaves us with the highly polarized, idealized and, most importantly, disfigured "talking points" around which the party lines of this election have been drawn.

What are these "true factors" which I cite?

**Globalization:** Our 20th century status as "big kid on the block" is fading fast and we're going to have to learn how to play nice. With the wealth of the world beginning to be spread more uniformly it is only logical that less of it will reside in America. We must act to retain the wealth we need to survive and progress, even if it means reducing corporate profit by limiting outsourcing and other practices, while building fair trade relations with the coming economic superpowers of China and the European Union that will, in this century, match and likely exceed our prosperity.

**Terrorism:** The threat of terrorism can never be eliminated as long as there exists an America to be threatened. No candidate or military action can return that blissful indifference to terrorism we enjoyed before Sept. 11th. We must take responsible precautions, but terrorism is simply something we must come to terms

with. Oil: The gas is running out, there are more people demanding it than ever and the price is NEVER going to go back down. An army moves on its stomach as the United States moves on oil (as well as natural gas and other fossil fuels.) We're not going to be living "Mad Max" by the end of the decade, but because our economy is based on fossil fuel energy, the price of everything will continue to inflate more rapidly because of the increased cost of fuel. There are no magic solutions; everything is going to cost more; we must learn to economically cope with the situation.

Bearing these points in mind it is obvious that the means by which America has survived over the last fifty years have become unviable today and impossible tomorrow. The true choice in this election is beyond the scope of one man versus another or one party versus another, but rather the choice between perceptions of America.

The choice with which we are faced is one between conservative extremism and what I consider by comparison moderate politics. George Bush is focused on conserving the questionable economics of an America which no longer exists and in terms of foreign relations and domestic social issues building an America which should never exist. These observations are evident in his economic policies which favor corporations rather than people, his social ini-

tiatives which limit stem cell research to appease fundamentalist Christians and his foreign policy which seeks to rebuild the world in our image.

When taken in conjunction with his my way or the highway "with us or against us" rhetoric and his administration's combative attitude toward Republican lawmakers who publicly disagree with his positions, it is obvious that George Bush is an inflexible extremist, incapable of developing a new America for a new century.

I could simply beat the anti-Bush drum and define George W. Bush as an ignorant puppet for a cadre of impossibly rich, absolutely amoral, big business elites (i.e. George H.W. Bush, Ken Lay of Enron, Dick Cheney) who hijacked the 2000 election through vile tactics and has used the presidency for no purpose other than to fuel his nihilistic agenda of reelection and the terrorization of the vast majority of Americans who do not make millions of dollars a year.

In so many words, I could say that Bush is a tool, an investment even, for the ultra-rich who have an unquenchable greed, but no value for human life. That's my perception of George Bush and by my judgment and that of many, many other Americans my perception would be absolutely correct.

However I realize that I am unlikely to get many people of moderate or right-wing political persuasion to agree on my negative perception of those points. I also recognize that it is my duty as an American to work for the betterment of all people while upholding the basic freedoms our nation is built upon. I both respect the right of those who disagree with me to do so and welcome the opportunity to pursue solutions which all parties find satisfactory. I am willing to compromise. If all Americans are to survive and prosper under the conditions which we now find ourselves subject, our leaders must be willing to do so as well.

Let's make sure that in 25 days we pick the leaders willing to do so.

## Stewart : No presents from Chavez this year

Dear Linda Chavez,

I am sorry I was unable to attend your Thursday presentation several weeks ago. I was glad to hear that you used my article as a rhetorical tool from which you could make your point.

I cannot disagree with you that bin Laden does want a world denomination—if he had his way we would all convert to his version of extremist Islam—just like if Christians had their way we would all be Christian.

But if that is all bin Laden wants, then why does he only attack the United States? What about China or Russia or France or Spain? How many followers of Islam are in these countries? Wouldn't he be attacking them as well? Wouldn't it be easier for Al Qaeda to blow up their buildings?

There must be very specific reasons why bin Laden focuses all his energy on the United States. There has to be more to his acts of violence than a simple desire for attention. Yes, the U.S. is the largest symbol of capitalism and materialism that bin Laden opposes, but wouldn't he get a lot more attention if he attacked multiple targets in multiple countries?

His personal vendetta with the US does not stem from an aim for world domination. His hatred stems from our entrance into his holy land, our smothering attitude of democracy for all, our attitude of: They're potentially a threat



Brad Stewart

news editor

to us, lets get them before they get us and ignore what other countries are saying.

I agree that the U.S. cannot withdraw all its troops from Israel and the Middle East. I am not sure what potential steps would best facilitate a lessening of hatred towards the U.S. But I still believe that if the U.S. tried to pay attention to why terrorists were so mad, we could potentially avoid a lot of needless deaths.

No one can truly believe that we can extinguish the fire of terrorism. For every terrorist the U.S. kills, two more take his/her place. If we spent more time improving the image of the U.S, maybe fewer would have such an easy time finding a reason to hate us.

## If apathy were fuel, gas would be a quarter

MTV's Rock The Vote was in Edinboro. There was just a debate at Case Western. Bush was here. Edwards was here. Cheney plans to be in Meadville soon. How many of you took the initiative to go see what it was all about?

What's that? You went to DebateWatch? Congratulations, you got your five points. Now how many of you went because you wanted to hear about the issues and have an intelligent conversation about the debate afterwards? How many of you were active participants?

Now that I have you ashamed of yourselves, what are you going to do about it? There are a ton of political events on campus this semester. The College Republicans and the Young Democrats are more active now than I ever remember them in my entire college career.

Political events are popping up everywhere off-campus, too. Remember that Bush and Kerry aren't the only ones running for office this year. Granted local politics aren't quite as exciting or controversial as national politics, but you would be at suprised how much local politics reflects the national scene.

For example, there were two re-counts in the Clarion County election for district attorney over the summer. (Does Florida ring a bell?) Guess which party insisted on the re-count. It was the Democratic Party.



Lacy Buzard

copy editor

The republican candidate won in the original tally of the votes, but the opposing candidate insisted that the count was biased. The republican was still sworn in by the governor, but the controversy continued.

In the first re-count, the result ended in a tie.

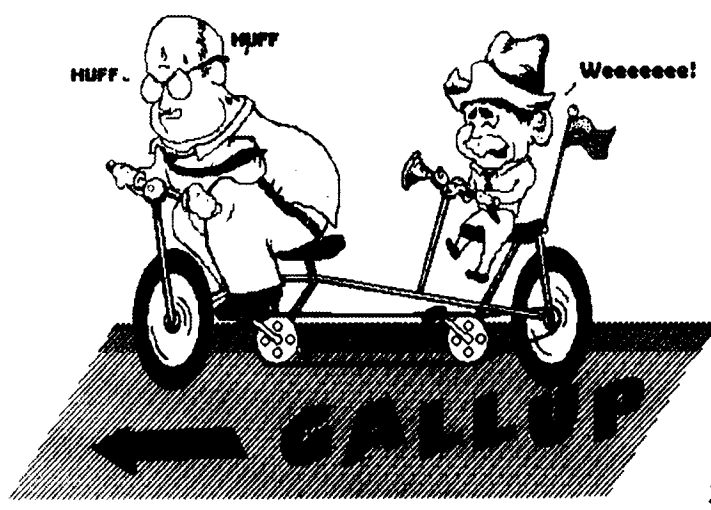
In the last re-count, the republican came out one vote ahead, but here's where it gets interesting. Just by chance, there was one ballot that was not properly filled out. The ballot was counted as a vote for the republican candidate. The voter had filled in the mark for the democratic candidate and then crossed it out and filled in the mark for the republican, much the same as when you

cross out an answer you made on a test and fill in a different circle. At any rate, this ballot was not counted in the end and the race was once again head-to-head.

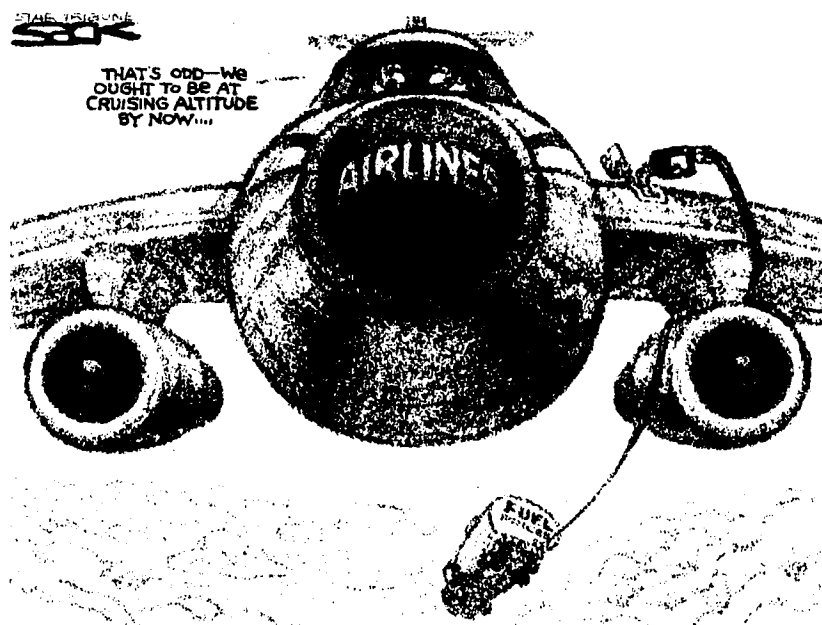
One last thing, the judge, who I believe is a democrat, decided to take one more vote away from the republican. The Clarion News didn't mention why this vote was taken away, so we can just make our own assumptions. Guess who won? When I came back to Behrend in August, the democratic candidate was just waiting for the governor to swear her in.

Of course this isn't the way the national election turned out in 2000. Luckily there is more than one judge on the Supreme Court to make decisions about the presidential elections. However, we can still see just how much the two circumstances resemble each other, even in a county as small and seemingly insignificant as Clarion.

So here's my point: If you want to take an active role, but can't make it to tonight's debate in St. Louis, look at what's going on in the local government. There just happens to be a race for Congress going on in Erie right now, look there for some coverage and maybe even some first-hand experience. Go out and get your questions answered!



Zach Mentz/BEHREND BEACON



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