

OPINION

The Behrend Beacon

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THE BEHREND Beacon
"Professionalism with a personality"

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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
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Chicken war: Tso would whoop Sanders

Last night I watched Jet Li's action packed "Hero," oddly "presented" but not directed by Quentin Tarantino. What that sly straight shooting dog had to do with this film, the world will never know. Among the swirl of seizure inducing colors and flying Chinamen twirling about brandishing swords and spears at about mach ten, I actually learned something.

Ying Zheng, King of Qin Empire, was the first true emperor of China who both conquered and united the people. This spurred a chain of thoughts, as it often does, which lead me to ponder the greatest and most misunderstood Chinaman in history: General Tso.

As I mused, I concluded that General Tso was probably the Chinese equivalent of Colonel Sanders, who, according to KFC, did have a short military career and served in Cuba (at the age of 16), but never even came close to a rank like colonel. Even though he wasn't a real colonel, I salute the man for his awesome heart-attack inducing chicken. I assumed "General" Tso was just an affectionate name attached to some delightfully jolly



Andy McNeil

opinion editor

chef who dreamed up the tasty concoction. Boy was I wrong.

General Tso Tsungtang, also known as Zuo Zongtang, was a real military leader during the Qing dynasty. Tso served during China's greatest civil war spanning over the second half of the nineteenth century, which claimed millions of lives. Tso rose to power during the Taiping Rebellion around 1850. The rebellion was

started by Hong Xiuquan, who believed he was the younger brother of Jesus (DNA tests still pending of course). Tso, or General-tasty-chicken-man as I call him, put down various revolts from various Chinese and Muslim rebel forces.

But where did the name come from you ask? We're getting there.

Tso had the top leaders of the Nian Rebellion executed in the grimly named "death of 10,000 cuts" fiasco which may have lead to the naming of the dish.

Overseas expatriates are said to have named the dish in dark-humor for their old enemy? The famed chopped-up chicken dish may have indeed recieved the name "General Tso's" from the diced up victims of Tso's campaign.

Is this going to change my love for the spicy and sweet dish? Hell no, but I do think it's ironic that we glorify a rather gory military leader and don't even know it. We certainly wouldn't want to eat Castro cookies with Milosevic milk, yet we definitely dig General Tso's and if they made a Che Guevera Guacamole dip, I'd be all over it.

Parking on campus is a risky business

By Colleen Applebaugh
contributing writer

An unsuspecting student walks to his vehicle on a Wednesday afternoon with no concern other than the amount of food he intends to buy. To his surprise, and dismay, he finds his side view mirrors smashed off, roof caved in, and windshield shattered. The student has just become yet another victim of car vandalism.

In the last three years, there have been over 90 reported incidents of car sabotage on campus. Since the start of the semester, 14 cars recorded damaged, some to the impressive tune of \$3,000 dollars. 'Tis the season again for these acts of delinquency to appear and it is only a matter of time till there is another target of destruction.

What is the school prepared to do about these deeds of careless defacement? Well according to a recently published article, Police and Safety aim to continue with their current method of supervision. One police officer surveying 14 parking lots, maybe three or four times a night, will hardly stop these criminals from their trade.

Mentioned in that same article is the proposal for surveillance equipment. The chief of Police and Safety explained that cameras would not help the situation, nor does the department have the funds for

adequate camera security kits.

The chief of Police and Safety must sleep well at night knowing he does not have to foot a bill for \$3,000 in car vandalism. How can cameras not help the victims of these crimes? With the video clips provided, regardless of the quality, an investigation can at least be launched. Further information about trends, patterns within chosen cars and any relevant information are better than the common "we're sorry" routine.

Where does the money from each student's parking permit go? With \$220 times the increasing amount of students with cars, the department could surely find some monies for campus security. Students ought to feel secure enough in leaving their parked vehicle when they pay to park. The fear of returning to a thousand dollar mess is too high of a concern for the already stressed out college student.

Responsibility is the greatest discouragement in reviewing these crimes. Who is ultimately responsible for the protection of student vehicles? Why pay to stay if there is no guarantee that your car is safe and sound. The school does not mention their policy on car vandalism. It is rather taboo in the eyes of many officers on campus. Who should pay the damages if the school cannot properly secure all parking lots? The insurance companies are not always willing to cover such ne-

glect.

Therefore, students are forced to scrap up funds from elsewhere in order to pay for the repairs.

My fellow students, why is this even happening in the first place? The fact that someone is actually capable of literally destroying another person's car is curious. Those persons are also sleeping peacefully knowing that they are at low risk of being caught and they too are free of a costly bill.

Many students comment about the ruthless pursuits on innocent people and the newly developed recreation of a few random heartless people, but are they willing to report them?

Honestly ask yourself if in fact you would turn in the culprits. Students withholding any supporting information about the people involved or schedule of attacks are silent accomplices of the offenders. These people are considered co-conspirators of the "serial vandals" and since these crimes are in fact against the law, these individuals should be held to the same punishment.

The school should purchase or develop a more efficient way of securing cars on campus. Quite frankly, this is a problem, not a fluke coincidence or fad. In case people did not notice, money these days is hard to come by, so why should we have to waste it on public disregard for personal property?



'I'm going to have to ask you to pee in a cup...'

Brophy puts her foot down on bad manners

by Megan Brophy
contributing writer

What ever happened to politeness and manners? Is it really that hard to smile and say "thank-you" when someone holds the door for you (especially those heavy ones in Kochel)? Civility is on a steady decline everywhere, but most importantly, it's happening here at Behrend.

So what can the students at Behrend do about it? Well if everyone starts with themselves, it should be a pretty smooth process. The fact is, the issue of civility is so big that Penn State has taken action. They have launched a college wide campaign to rid the school of rude behavior and hopefully we can all just get along.

The fact that the big guys that run this school have noticed a problem means that there is really something wrong here. They haven't noticed that we don't have enough parking or that the food at Bruno's could be at the least slightly tastier. They have noticed the rudeness.

They're not the only ones. Many students on campus have complained about the lack of manners. "It's like there is no sense of community here," says Nate Snyder, MANGT 09, "Other schools have places to meet people."

Maybe if we had a chance to get to know everyone better, we wouldn't be so mean. Think about it. If you knew the person whose parking spot you were about to steal would you still be as likely to do it? Hopefully not. If you would, shame on you. Walking a little farther to

class is inconvenient but it's not going to kill any of us.

There is actually a course taught here that deals strictly with civility. Last year it was taught by Mrs. Cathy Mester, one of the heads of the civility campaign on campus. It dealt with everything from ringing cell phones in the movie theaters, to telemarketers, to swearing.

Yes swearing. Okay, we've all used colorful language when we've dropped something on our toes or gotten a bad grade on a test, but is it needed? Well, what about the First Amendment you say? It's true, we aren't breaking any laws by swearing, nor are we if we decide to do cartwheels down the hallway, but we don't do that do we? There's simply a time and a place for everything and those places rarely public.

So why cut back on the swearing? Why say "thank you" when someone holds the door for you? Why not? This is a challenge. This is a dare for all of you Behrend students out there. Do one civil thing a day. Start with one a week if you want, but do something. Next time you are going to leave your garbage at the table in Bruno's, throw it away. Next time that girl you kind of know from class smiles and says hello, don't ignore her, say "hi" back. Prove everyone wrong. Show the big guys up in the offices that Behrend students do actually care about one another.

Walking, driving on campus proves to be risky business as well

By Alyssa Peconi
staff writer

As we all know, the ground will soon be covered with a thin layer of ice and a mound of snow. Therefore, conditions on the Penn State Behrend campus will only worsen as the winter season goes on.

Snow might be a blessing for skiers and snowboarders, but for Behrend students, it usually means a treacherous walk and or drive to class. It would be an obvious solution that class would be cancelled or delayed on days that outside conditions made it virtually impossible to leave your home or dorm room, but that would be too easy.

Remember when it snowed in grade school or even high school? We were all excited because we knew school would at least be delayed a few hours or even cancelled. However, we are now at Penn State Behrend where we see more snow than grass year round. Therefore, the chance of getting class cancelled because of a 9 foot snow squall is slim to none. Erie is used to the snow, so we, as students, just do not have that luxury of "snow days" anymore. However, faculty does.

As stated in the Human Resources Guidelines, "staff may charge their absence to vacation time when weather conditions cause a concern for personal safety."

It seems only fair that faculty should be allowed to take "weather day absences" to take responsibility for their own safety during inclement weather, while we have to brave our lives trying to get to class during a snow storm only to find out that the professor left a note that "class is cancelled." That seems fair right?

Where is our "weather day absence" when we can barely see an inch in front of our faces as we attempt to walk to class in the midst of a blizzard, with a foot of snow covered in an inch of ice under our feet?

Students simply do not have the power to use an excused absence due to the weather situations that often occur during the winter. Do we not have the choice to be responsible for our own personal safety just because we are lower on the rung of power in the higher education ladder at Behrend?

As students, we should also have the opportunity to take responsibility for our

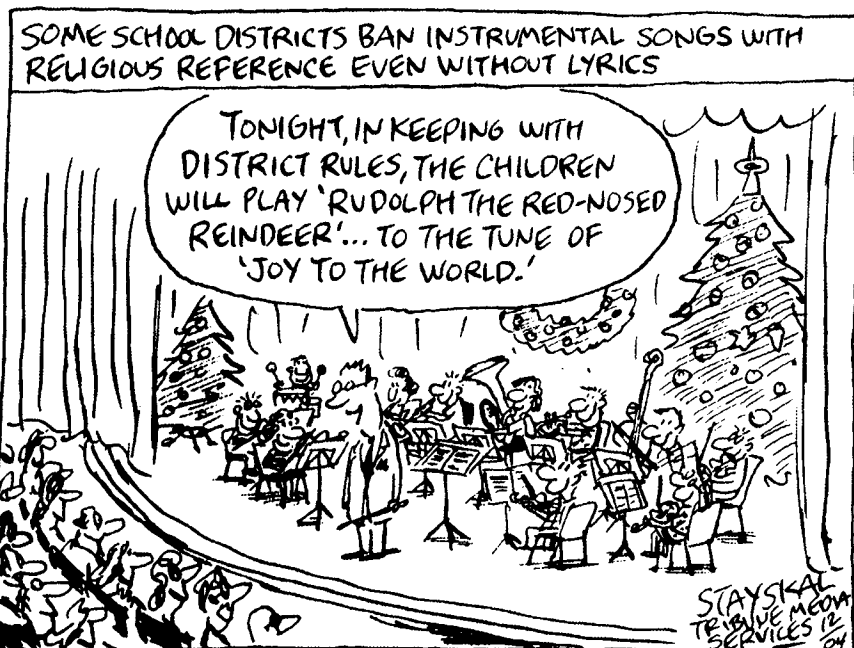
own safety while we are on this campus. After all, we do pay thousands of dollars for our education, not to fall on a patch of ice trying to get to our education.

It would not be so bad if the plow trucks would actually clear the snow and salt the walkways so that we could attempt to make it to class in the event that a snowstorm is occurring. Instead, the trucks can often be found parked, waiting for the snowfall to lighten up or stop before driving, while we are slipping, sliding and falling all over campus.

So, how are students supposed to avoid taking a spill down the icy stairs by the Reed Building or getting their cars stuck trying to brave the hill on Jordan Road? Should we all just stay in our rooms, comfortably lying in our warm beds until the snow season is over?

That solution would be easy, but it just would not work if students want to pass their classes and eventually graduate. So, what should we all do?

Maybe we can all buy our own shovels and bags of salt to use while on our journeys to class. Now there is a good way to be responsible for our own safety.



Have a very opinionated holiday break!
Santa not get you everything you wanted?
beaconletters@aol.com