


OPINION

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



Daniel J. Stasiewski, Editor in Chief
Amy Frizzell, Managing Editor
Courtney Kaplin, Advertising Manager
Alyssa Peconi, Public Relations Manager
Dr. Cathy Roan, Adviser

Student Life Editor
Lori DeFabio

Calendar Page Editor
Rob Frank

Copy Editor
Lacy Buzard
Jenn Haight
Sarah Weber

Opinion Page Editor
Andy McNeil

News Editor
Brad Stewart

Assistant News Editor
Dan Snedden

Sports Editors
Sam Cibula
Sarah Kamber

Beacon Assistant
Carolyn M. Tellers

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
ISSN 1071-9288.

Getting ready to move on, it's time to deal

Isn't it time to start living responsibly? If you're a freshman, then the answer is probably no, but, if you're a senior, it's time to shape up!

Graduation is only a few months away and a lot of real-world-facing students are starting to feel the pressure. There is a lot of stress involved in these last few weeks of student life with the job search and sweeping up final credits; that's taken for granted.

Remember that there are other people with those same pressures. This campus is small enough that it really doesn't take much to find a couple of them that will sympathize with you. Your closest friends, although always available, may not be the best bet.

Your friends are so connected to you but they are in the process of drifting away. They are the ones that are most likely to get you to try to hold on or try to make you pack a whole four years into one semester. Although this sounds like a good idea, it's probably not the best for prepping yourself for your new life.

This doesn't mean that you should start alienating your friends right now, far from it! At this point, the best thing to do is to focus deeply on your core values and what



Lacy Buzard
copy editor

you will want later and get yourself ready to accept those things.

Naturally, this is a confusing time and no one's ever 100 percent sure of their goals. Even if you have a general idea of what you want your life to be like, you should start getting ready for that.

The key here is flexibility. No one knows the future, but you need to be able to deal with what may come, especially emotionally.

There are professional counselors

available on campus. Your tuition dollars pay for them to be here, so get your money's worth and make use of them.

If you're still having a hard time, think about this. After school you're going to have all the freedom you've ever dreamed of. You're not going to be living with your parents or having them write you off on their taxes.

You'll have your own place wherever you want it to be. You can come and go as you please and not be stuck in your room because you have too much homework. You'll have at least 16 free hours everyday to either live it up or waste at your leisure.

Maybe you thought you were "independent" for the past three and a half years, but you still had someone else structuring your day. Soon you won't have anyone but yourself to tell you what to do and when. You may argue that your boss will, but you'll choose your boss, so that's not a valid argument.

Growing up isn't a bad thing. This next stage of life will be where you really find out who you are. People say that's what college is for, but in reality college is just preparation for life.

Inaugural party: Am I invited?

Next Thursday, George W. Bush will be inaugurated into his second term as president of the United States. Bush will travel from the White House, down 15th Street, along Pennsylvania Avenue, ultimately ending at the Capital Building and the inauguration site. Between the White House to the Capital building is approximately a mile of street. For an average motorist driving along the same route on any other given day of the year, the drive would take about five minutes—depending on traffic and time of day. For the president, the drive will take about two hours ending with a few speeches, a hand on a bible and a poem. The estimated cost of this short trip—somewhere between \$30 and \$40 million.

The inauguration's theme is "Celebrating Freedom, Honoring Service," which has an amusing ring to it as security forces close off streets and close down subway stations and designate restricted areas to protestors—a measure never before taken. They are allowed to protest, just in a place where they won't hurt the president's feelings.

Is a two-hour drive and short inauguration ceremony worth such a hefty price tag? I guess \$40 million is just an insignificant and laughable drop in the giant



Brad Stewart
news editor

sloppy bucket of our budget deficit that continues to grow into the billions of dollars. I don't mean to put all the blame on Bush. Every president has had an inauguration celebration and millions have been spent, but maybe the tradition should be changed.

Hundreds of thousands of people in South-East Asia are struggling to survive and rebuild. If the U.S. government skipped the huge inauguration event and bought bottle of water for victims affected by the tsunami—at two dollars a bottle, we could send 20 million bottles and po-

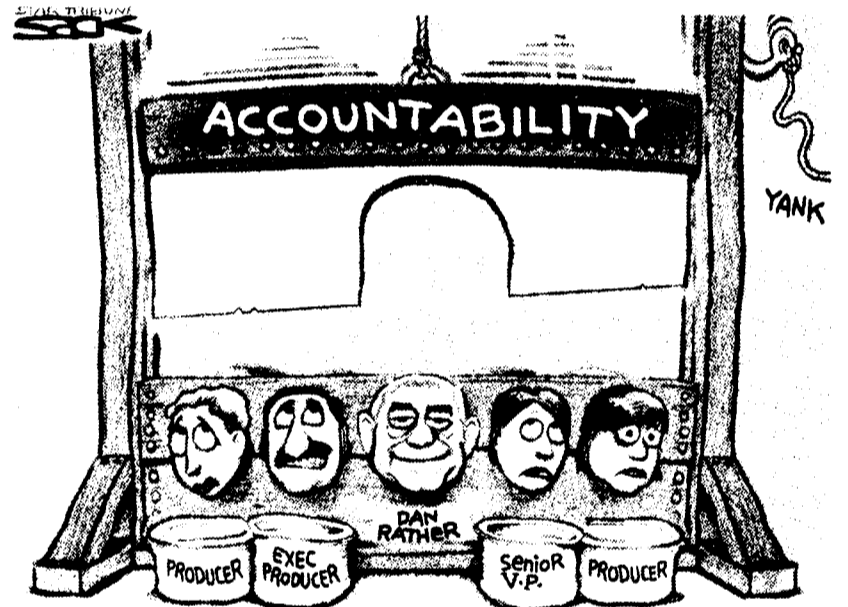
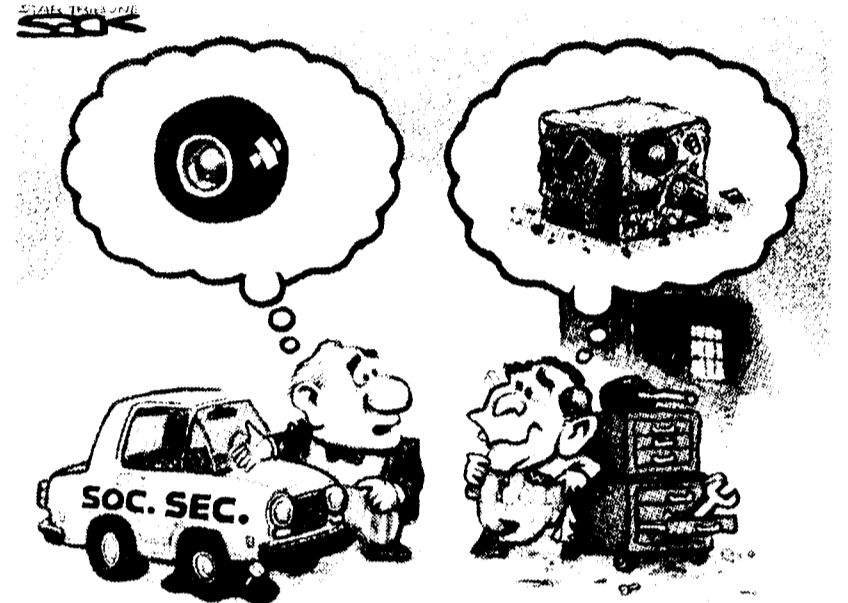
tentially save thousands of lives.

The government could focus their efforts in La Conchita, California, where on Monday a mudslide destroyed 15 homes and claimed the lives of at least 10 people. More than 6,000 civilian and military personnel will be working at the president's inauguration—these extra hands could be used for digging out homes and victims.

The \$40 million could be given to the CIA to aid them with their intelligence gathering—the hunt for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq officially ended yesterday and no weapons were found—oops. Why did we go to war again?

The security plans are higher than they've ever been, but intelligence has no word of any specific threat. I guess it's better to be safe than sorry.

Also, the District of Columbia has been asked to pick up \$17.3 million of the cost, federal grant money that would normally go towards protecting buildings, bridges, subways, as well as emergencies and other special events. It is the first time that the federal government has not covered all of the expenses. City residents may end up paying the price—taxes might be raised to cover costs.



Staff Editorial

Classes on MLK Day

If Penn State wants to claim Diversity as one of the features of this University then they need to start listening to its students. We want school canceled on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day – plain and simple. That day has been reserved by the government as a National Holiday and a time of celebration. It is a day when banks, post offices and schools are supposed to close.

Yes, it's true that there are other National Holidays that we don't request a day off for, but this one seems particularly important especially these days. With so much violence, destruction and discrimination in our country today we as intelligent, educated people should make time for understanding, reflection and remembrance amidst the chaos.

Dr. King had a very clear message: stop the violence and live in peace with your neighbors no matter who they are. It is very apparent that in this country we do not follow his plea. Violence abounds in every state and city and is perpetually carried over seas by our government.

There are so many voices praising and perpetuating violence in the world that it is hard to hear the voices begging for peace. That's why we should all have a day to celebrate and reflect upon the messages of a man of reason and peace.

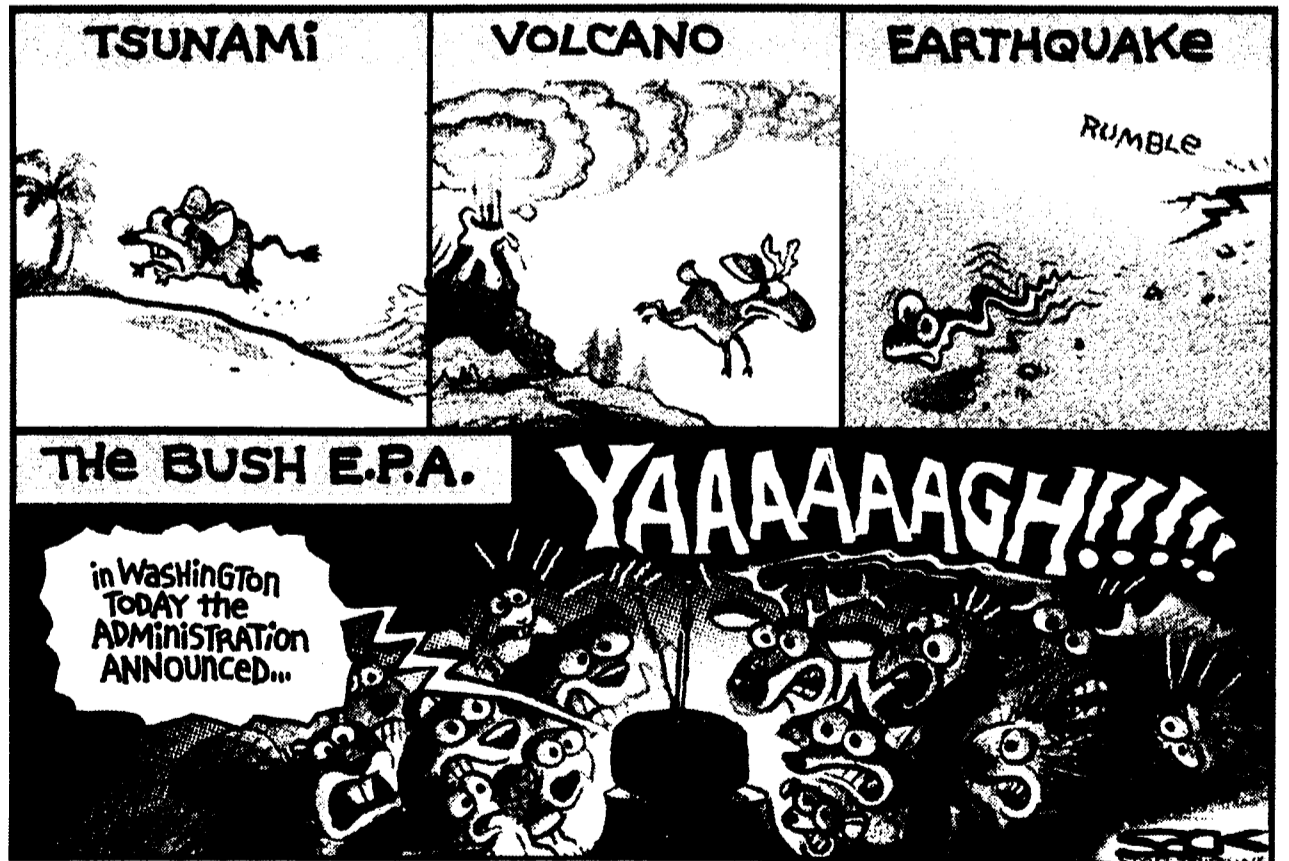
If we are forced to go to school on Martin Luther King Day we are also forced to turn down opportunities to participate in events held at this campus. On Monday there are several events scheduled to commemorate this holiday including the Campus Family Brunch, and a

play by James H. Chapmyn called "Martin and Me." In order to attend events on that day and hopefully learn more about Dr. King or why we celebrate his life, students would have to miss classes. Professors do not readily allow students to skip out for such reasons. In fact, two absences during the semester are all that's usually allotted for most classes. There are hardly any students who would skip class to go watch Chapmyn's play or take time for reflection at the candlelight observance afterward.

However, if all classes on campus were cancelled for the day students would be more inclined to check out the events that are being held at Behrend. Besides going to events that day, students would also enjoy being able to breathe for one more day before the next long week settled in. Understandably, we have just returned from break, but there are eight straight weeks of rigorous classes before Spring Break (and we'll still have homework) and it would be a nice change of pace to relax a little.

Basically, in this academic crazy world we live in we need a little time off every now and then. By canceling classes on MLK Day, it would be giving students the opportunity for reflection, celebration, remembrance and God willing relaxation. Our minds will be worked overtime this semester, our health will deplete, and we will be pushed to our academic limit – just give us another day to prepare for it!

CAN ANIMALS SENSE DISASTERS?



Have an opinion you want to express?
Want to lash out against "the man?"
Want to see your name in the Beacon?
Send letters to beaconletter@aol.com
It's my last semester...bring it on!