

OPINION

The Behrend Beacon

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



THE BEHREND Beacon
"Professionalism with a personality"

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

News Editor
Brad Stewart

Calendar Page Editor
Rob Frank

Assistant News Editor
Dan Snedden

Copy Editor
Lacy Buzard
Jenn Haight
Sarah Weber

Sports Editors
Sam Cibula
Sara Kamber

Opinion Page Editor
Andy McNeil

Beacon Assistant
Carolyn M. Tellers

Photography Editor
Danielle Faulkner

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.

Fie On All You Jack Jawed Rube-Publicans

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

-Jeremiah 8:20

Man is an inherently greedy, fearful and bigoted animal. Men who rise to power generally do so on the back of this trifecta of weakness while those who fail to do so fill the gap of inferiority by other means. Some placate themselves with aspirations for the future and hope that they'll be lorded over in a livable manner while others are convinced that the tyrant of the moment is in line with their own views. Some even voted for Richard Nixon. Twice.

The sum of human history shows that rarely is the best interest of the governed tended to by those who govern and therefore it is no surprise that current figures indicate George W. Bush was selected by a slight majority of voters (3%) to serve his first elected term as president this past November.

In such times, issuing an unfulfilled call to arms is simply insufficient to relieve the horror. Propositions of "hugging and healing" and pledges to make friends in the darkness fail at the same at the task of reconciling the poor realities of the moment and of human nature with the cognizance that the greater good of all mankind can yet be served. Whether one lives life as a valiant opponent of these unacceptable constants or merely exists as a static chawbacon in perfect complacency with the greed and tyranny wrought in their name, the lives of all are deeply reshaped by the presence of such an extensive and unrestrained dictatorial evil.

What do all Americans have to look forward to in the next four years and be-



Chris Hvizdak
editorial columnist

yond? Terrorism tops the list. "The Terrorists" are rarely dormant for long - just ask your President: he'll tell you that. Looking back at '93 and 2001 it is apparent that the Terrorists tend to play hardball in the year immediately following a U.S. Presidential election. If it's a ChemBio or Nuclear attack this time, expect a draft - as plenty of bodies will be needed to spread democracy to all the nations of the Mid-east.

War is a definite. Cheney tells us that this is in fact "a war that will not end within our lifetimes." The immediate concern is how wide of a conflict America will be plunged into in the immediate future. Iran is already being eyed up quite intently as a potential nuclear threat. Iraq was invaded following the midterm elections of 2002 - unless something big happens between now and 2006, expect to be conquering another country come March 2007.

What's that? Do I hear further economic stratification? America is in the

midst of a silent class war, or, more accurately a class slaughter, which although eternal, has in the past two decades committed itself to the remodeling of the middle class into an even more desperate state than what was typically enjoyed following World War II, a state of perpetual poverty induced by consistent inflation, sky high prices of staples such as food and transportation and far below living wages. A desperate population is easily exploited and controlled.

Will government be desecularized? Not likely to any significant degree. Will abortion rights be completely revoked? Not likely either. If the current theocratic jackals were robbed of their most powerful sway over the vast and zealous religious base, said vast and zealous base might start to come around and recognize the damage being done elsewhere by the Neo-con movement; a classic and tragic irony. What they want most they will never receive - and they can never be convinced of it.

Unreasonability, greed, bigotry, evil; these are the prime forces which shape the U.S. Government today and so set the tone for all life under its influence. Self-induced ignorance is tempting for many. The fight will be carried on and likely cause great duress to those who perceive it as of greater significance than simple political jockeying - i.e. non-politicians. Surrender is weakness in step with the Great Greed that shadows our land and right out, literally and figuratively. What remains is awareness and opposition. They won't get away with it unscathed.

BAADASS LIBERALS COMING BACK TO COLLECT SOME DUES !!!



ZACK MENTZ/BEHREND BEACON

A time and place Iraqi candidates risk it all to build a better tomorrow

by Kristen Comstock
editorial columnist

This textbook contains material on evolution. Evolution is a theory, not a fact, regarding the origin of living things. This material should be approached with an open mind, studied carefully and critically considered." This is what the disclaimer stickers say on the science textbooks in Marietta, Ga.

The Cobb County school board argues the disclaimers show tolerance, not religious activism, but a U.S. federal judge felt the stickers were an unconstitutional endorsement of religion and ruled to remove the stickers from the textbooks.

This is just one of many events nationwide that shows the battle that is being waged about what role evolution should play in science curriculum. The most recent event happened in Dover, Pa.

In October, the Dover school board voted to add a brief passage to the science curriculum that suggests evolution may not explain how we all got here.

Since this addition, 11 citizens have teamed up with the American Civil Liberties Union and now are suing the school board for teaching religion in school.

This is not the first time the evolution debate has been brought up by the Dover school board. Last year the board proposed the inclusion in the curriculum of the book "Of Pandas and People," which raises the "intelligent design" theory.

Philip Johnson, a law professor at University of California at Berkley, launched this theory in 1991. The "intelligent design" theory basically states that life could only be the work of an intelligent designer - not evolution - because of the intricate complexity of plants and animals.

The theory stops short of claiming who or what that intelligent designer is, but many believe this "theory" opens the door for teaching biblical creationism.

So, if evolution is a theory and this "intelligent design" idea is a theory, then what is creationism? Creationism is definitely not a theory and it is definitely not a fact.

Creationism defined by Webster is "a doctrine holding that matter, the various forms of life and the world were created by God out of nothing and usually in the way described in Genesis."

So here is where the debate begins. Creationism is a Christian belief, but this is the United States founded on religious freedom. Jefferson wrote very adamantly about the separation of church and state and the first amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

Religion should be taught in schools, but as soon as the Bible, Koran or Torah is opened and the passages are interpreted, that is where the line has been crossed. Religious history is a fascinating subject and one that should be taught for us to understand how religious beliefs originated.

However, if teachers and administrative figures start to interpret religious events and teach them as truths that is when the first amendment is broken. That is when the students' young and impressionable minds are interfered with.

Religion has its place in churches, synagogues, temples, mosques and many other places. Religion has a right to be taught to parishioners by religious leaders, but not in public schools by teachers. There is a time and place for everything. People go to church to worship and people go to school to learn.

By Amiee Pogson
editorial columnist

When my family was watching the news the other night, an interview came on with an Iraqi woman who is a candidate in the election scheduled for Jan. 30. The woman explained how dangerous it is becoming for candidates to campaign, many of them have received death threats, there have been assassination attempts, some of them are even in hiding.

The woman went on to explain that her 17-year-old son was killed in an assassination attempt on her. Still, she had no intention of giving up her campaign, stating that her son would have wanted her to see it through until the end.

As we watched the interview, my mom asked, "Why would anyone take a chance like that? Why would someone run for office and risk getting killed? It just doesn't seem worth it."

My dad was quiet for a moment, then he said, "Believe it or not, some people aren't in it for the power. They're running because they believe in something."

My dad's comment caught my attention, not because it was so idealistic, but

because the motivations he suggested for the Iraqi candidates contrasted so sharply with the motivations of candidates here in the United States.

While Iraqi candidates are risking their lives for the chance to help better their country, American candidates treat the election like a game, waging a war of negative campaign ads and meeting for debates where they answer as few questions as possible. It may be possible that both Bush and Kerry did on some level want to better the country, but it seems more likely that both candidates were more concerned about themselves and their acquisition of power than about the people they were elected to serve. It seems that in the United States, this sense of duty, this civic obligation even at a personal expense, is missing, at least in the higher levels of government.

And I have to admit that it is impossible to know the motivations of the Iraqi candidates. It is likely that some of them are primarily concerned with the power that comes with holding office, but it is also likely that just as many, if not more candidates are concerned with rebuilding their country, taking it from foreign hands

and making it their own again. As my mom pointed out, in a country where participating in an American supported government could mean death, the power is not worth the risk. As my dad pointed out, that's how you know that the people who are running really care.

It seems interesting that a country modeled on the United States could come so much closer than the United States to civic duty. Maybe it is because in Iraq, the people have so much more to lose if the election goes wrong. But don't Americans also have much to lose under the leadership of a bad President?

The situation in Iraq makes me wonder: what if running for office in the United States required some sort of personal sacrifice? What if all the perks of holding office were taken away? Would the quality of our candidates change? Would we see fewer candidates out to better themselves and more candidates with the best interest of the people in mind? In the end, would we have better quality leaders?

Perhaps for the answers to these questions we should turn our attention to Iraq.

Icy conditions lead to ill behavior

By Carolyn M. Tellers
Beacon assistant

Normally I drive home during the three hour gap I have between classes, but today Old Man Winter prevented me. I spent time in the Beacon office doing some work as well as homework.

Today there was a Greek sponsored event with various activities such as palm and tarot readings, caricatures, free food, etc. I thought I'd give the palm reading a try. I stood in line, where a friend had indicated the end was. After twenty minutes, when I was next in line, a girl stated it was her turn and that she was in the proper line.

I was tired, didn't care to deal with the attitude she was giving me. I left. I have never had any problems with Greeks before. I felt her manners only

help add to the negative stereotype I've heard about some Greeks. Perhaps such problems could be avoided in future events by having clearly marked lines. It would be nice to see a little common courtesy.

Perhaps she is one of the many who are annoyed with the January Erie weather and how poorly the sidewalks are kept clear of snow, slush and ice on campus. Perhaps she was merely showing her frustrations about that on others such as myself. I feel that the walks have been dangerous at times, and heard several students complaining because they slipped or fell. I was impressed with how the parking lots were kept clear today.

Another, more appealing, way to deal with that problem would be hibernation during winter. It seems that with the longer nights and cold

weather many people naturally have the urge to sleep more and stay indoors. Those who wish to enjoy the outdoor winter activities could do so. Those of us who wish to could sleep from December through March, waking to eat and take care of certain necessities. That would also help resolve the depression and stress caused by the holidays and lack of daylight, as well as prevent accidents due to unsafe weather conditions and improper snow removal. And finally, those in favor of the hibernation would have three less months to deal with annoying people. I don't think the government or school would pass a bill for three months of sleep, so I will make do with the four or five hours I get each night.



CHARLIE GAGLIONE

What did you call my mother?

beaconletters@aol.com

send to:

Letters are subject to editing for content and brevity.