

OPINION

The Behrend Beacon

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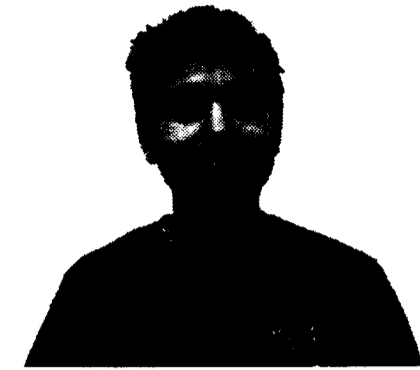
Get that kid a beer

In yesterday's New York Times, Patrick O'Gilfoil Healy wrote an article on how some school districts are implementing the use of breathalyzers into a regular high school day—not just saving the alcohol detectors for special events such as proms and pep rallies. Of course, opinions on the addition of the breath-testing device were varied.

For those in favor of the breathalyzers, the reasoning behind the integration of the tests is simple: provide a safe and drug-free environment for students, which is what, the last time I checked, school is all about. For those against the tests, the integration of the devices are an infringement on the privacy of students.

Alcohol has become an accepted and necessary part of America's social scene. The normal age of drinkers continues to drop as younger and younger people are spending their weekends with friends and booze. As students prepare to spend their Spring Breaks in exotic locations, one of the main goals for many is to visit a place where alcohol will be present in vast quantities.

Part of the allure of alcohol is the illegality of underage drinking. Young people rebel against the controlling



Bradley Stewart
 news editor

agents in their lives by breaking the law. In other countries where the drinking age is lower, often there are fewer youth booze related problems.

Also, alcohol helps teens relax and release tension. High school and college are hard—going to all those classes and taking all those tests—who wouldn't take a shot now or then? Or is alcohol really just a cop-out for the uncreative teen that can't deal with daily pressures? No. Of course not.

Drinking is cool.

Few take the time to question why a drinking-age law is in place. It isn't because the man is trying to smother the youth of America. It isn't because the government is composed of old oppressive conservatives who seek to control every aspect of a society's daily routine. It's because those under 21 years of age are often too immature to properly use and enjoy alcohol.

How many individuals know at least one story of a friend or acquaintance that was killed because of driving under the influence? How many people know of someone that was harassed or raped because of alcohol? Who knows of a family torn apart by an alcoholic and abusive parent? Why are young people in such a hurry to consume a toxin that depresses brain activity and could potentially lead to death, liver disease and a variety of other health problems?

Whether you're for or against teens drinking, according to Princeton's Best 357 Colleges Rankings, Penn State University Park ranks 18th for lots of beer and 20th for parties—so, if you're attending PSU for the social scene, don't forget to put in your transfer to University Park.

The road to equality: A long way to go

by **Kristen Comstock**
 editorial columnist

Equality. Why are we still working towards equality in the United States of America? How, after so many centuries of struggling, are people in this country still not equal?

It is time for everyone to become a feminist. One who works and toils to create a society and culture where we are all equal and since March is Women's History Month, let us focus on the inequalities that still exist amongst genders.

The Declaration of Independence states, "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal..." The main doctrine our country was founded on, in the very sentence that calls for equality, still manages to be sexist and almost purposefully excludes women. Maybe that was not our founding fathers intention, but it certainly appears that way.

The activists at the first Women's Movement Convention felt and thought the same. In Seneca Falls, New York on July 20, 1848, the women and men convention attendants all signed the "Declaration of Sentiments," which called for women to have equal rights in education, property, voting and other matters.

The organizer of the convention, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, housed the convention in her home and wore a controversial bloomer outfit during one of her speeches.

It is amazing to think of all the hard work the abolitionists and suffragists went through to get the present-day citizens their taken-for-granted rights and freedoms.

Most of today's women do not even think that only 85 years ago they were not allowed to vote in this country. And men do not think that, if it were not for the suffragists of the 19th century, today's women may still have been wearing girdles and dresses down to their ankles, not push-up bras and miniskirts.

We owe a lot to the women heroines of the turn of the century. If it were not for women's freedoms, they would not be able to flash their boobs at Mardi Gras or wear the bikinis on Spring Break. We have come a long way since

the controversial bloomers of 1848, but we still have a long way to go.

Susan B. Anthony would have been ecstatic to know that 56 percent of the nation's college students are women and that women's enrollment in universities has been in the majority since 1979. It is promising, but still we have a long way to go.

For instance, in the political scene, women make up only 11 percent of the U.S. Senate and 14 percent of the U.S. House of Representatives. Hattie Wyatt Caraway (the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in 1932) would not be pleased to hear that.

In the business world, the news is also grim. Since Hewlett-Packard's firing of Carly Fiorina, in February, only seven female CEOs remain among Fortune 500 companies.

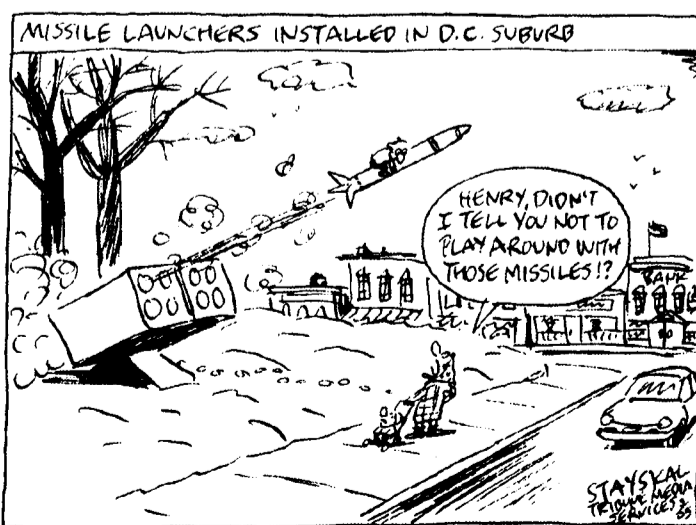
Women still make 76 cents to every man's dollar. And this means that women make 24 percent less than men (I just thought I would do the math to prove that as a female, I have that ability).

In January, the president of Harvard University made some controversial comments (and has since apologized) that women may not have the same natural ability in math and sciences as men.

An argument against his claim is that psycho-social factors may have some impact as to how many women become involved in math or sciences. Another argument is that the education practices now in place are gauged more towards the way males learn verses the way females learn.

There is no doubt that women and men are different. And thank goodness for that! But socially and culturally we do need to strive for equity and equality.

In order for women and girls to aspire to be President of the United States, CEO of Microsoft or the scientist to cure AIDS, they need to have role models. And even though, like the women suffragists and activists, we are still working towards equality, our goals are much different. Girls need to see women in power and leadership. Not just because they need to have high ambitions, but also because women should be leaders just like their male counterparts.



Fading ink toners create uproar

by **Aimee Pogson**
 editorial columnist

It was a Monday afternoon when the confrontation took place. The professor stood at the front of the room, held up a piece of paper that had black ink blotches along the bottom, and announced that work brought to her in this condition was unacceptable. She went on to explain that assignments printed out in very faint ink were also unacceptable. She had spent part of her weekend reading, squinting at the words and as far as she was concerned, she wasn't going to damage her eyes for our homework.

She had a point, but the battle lines were drawn. This professor's policy on the appearance of printed assignments had been a bone of contention for many of my classmates throughout the course of the semester. She took off points for papers with faint printing; she lowered grades, grades that, these students reasoned, would be higher if they had a decent printer and their work was judged solely on content and not on appearance. Besides, they pointed out, it wasn't their fault. They used the printers in the school's various computer labs and these could always be trusted to print faintly and illegibly.

Angered by the lecture, irritable because of the sleep deprivation that is common in the busyness of the week before spring break, a couple of the students in this particular class refused to let the subject drop. An injustice was occurring, both on the side of the students who wanted to pass the class and on the side of the professor who wanted to preserve her eyesight. The issue had to be probed.

"We can't help the way the papers

look!" one girl protested. "That's the way the printers in the computer lab print them out."

"Well," replied the professor. "All you have to do is go up to whoever is working, show him or her the paper, and ask the person to change the toner. Say that your professor expects it to look a certain way."

"I've already tried that," the girl explained. "They won't change the toner. They said that it is against the rules. The school only gets so much money per year for its printing supplies and they have to use each toner completely. If they don't, it could affect our tuition."

The professor stared at her, perplexed. From the other side of the room, someone called out, "That's not true. They can change the toner before it's completely empty. That's simply not true."

"Yes, it is," the girl argued.

"Wrong," the other person replied.

Obviously they are using two different computer labs.

Still, the fighting didn't solve the problem. Sighing, the professor said, "I guess you can just do the best you can."

Suddenly someone exclaimed, "Maybe the Beacon could do an article on it! Investigate the problem, draw some attention to it!"

I felt like I had a duty, like I had a responsibility to investigate the problem, to get the "scoop." I picked up the phone and called the computer center.

"Is it true," I asked. "That you're not allowed to change the ink toner until the ink is completely gone, even if the printing is hard to see?"

The person working in the computer lab was very helpful. "We try to con-

serve the ink," he explained thoughtfully. "We do shake the toners when they are getting low to try to get the most out of them. Generally, we try to use as much of the ink as possible."

I considered this. "How expensive are they?" I asked.

He paused, thinking. "Somewhere in the hundreds of dollars," he said. "I'm not exactly sure how much, but it's a lot."

So there it is, the truth behind the toners. I told him about the predicament with our professor and her eyes, and he was sympathetic, agreeing that it sounded like a bad situation, but on the other hand, the toners were expensive. We didn't really come up with a solution.

And yet, I don't believe that all hope is lost. Where there is a will, or a strong desire to pass a class, there is a way. Once there was a world without computers and we survived. Surely, we can survive Behrend, the land of the faint printers.

For instance, a class could pitch in twenty dollars to buy a professor a new ink cartridge for his or her personal printer and then e-mail assignments. Students could trace over their printed assignments with a black pen to make the letters bolder. Of course, this would mean that the professor would automatically have to give them an A for all of the extra effort and time this mundane task would entail. Or, we could just stop writing papers. That would save on both ink and paper.

But then we would have to give oral presentations to demonstrate knowledge.

And what if someone was losing his voice?

Sometimes you just can't win.

Letter to the editor

Dear editor,

In response to Chris Hvizdak's editorial "George Bush is worse than Hitler", we feel that Hvizdak and the Beacon have gone too far. The weekly articles found on the Editorial Page attacking President Bush moves into a clear area of bad taste with last week's article.

Obviously the ludicrous comparison made by the title offends that conservative community on campus. These radical comments of an extreme leftist represent the worst side of politics. Comments this absurd have no place in any legitimate discussion of politics.

Additionally, any rational person who realizes the ridiculousness of the claim is offended, particularly the Jewish community. This rhetoric trivializes the evil atrocities of Adolph Hitler and belittles the sacrifice made by many great soldiers to stop him.

While we hold the right to freedom of the press dearly, we urge the Beacon to use editorial discretion in the titles and content of articles that are in poor taste.

Signed,
 The Penn State Behrend College Republicans &
 The Jewish Association of Behrend

