

# OPINION

## The Behrend Beacon

Published Weekly by the students of Penn State Erie



THE BEHREND  
Beacon

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## The party's over

It's all come down to this. Every test, every quiz, all the studying, as well as all the partying is about to be emblemized by a piece of paper that'll I'll spend way too much on a frame for. I'm graduating.

From here on in, I'll be forced to be a mature adult who wears a tie and shirt, that barely match may I add, on a regular basis except for designated days such as "Casual Friday." From here on in, I'll be spending my Saturday nights organizing my sock drawer and building a ship in a bottle. I'll read biographies about the wives of past presidents and the butlers of famous architects. The party's over.

Or is it? I don't feel any different. I still fell like the same guy who drunkenly slept on a loading dock in the rain on a Canadian adventure gone awry. I still felt like the same guy who just graduated high school and is ready for the wild possibilities of dorm life.

On a regular basis, my friend Dan, an account manager for a business that will remain nameless, reminds me that graduation isn't the end of fun. You may remember Dan from an article I wrote about a ghost attacking him in his sleep or the theoretical pizza shop brawl. He acts as a shining beacon of post-graduate fun for me to follow.

Dan recently met his hero James Dewees of Reggie and the Full Effect after the injury filled concert in the Junker a week ago. This five-minute conversation with the former Get Up Kids keyboardist has inspired Dan to take his "screw you" outlook to new heights. Last week, I called Dan and told him to come out for a party. He said it had been a rough workweek and that he was really tired. After calling him several expletives, I reminded him, "What would James do?"

"He'd say, [expletive] it. We're going to [expletive] party tonight."



**Andy McNeil**  
opinion editor

Dan roared. He promised to be at the party by 10. Was he there? Did he show with a keg in each arm shirtless covered in spray paint? No. Did he show at all? No. I can safely say that there is no possible way that a man of Dan's stature could have snuck into this crowded party. I was there until at least 3 a.m. and there was no sign of Dan.

I called him the next morning and inquired to his whereabouts on the previous night. "Dude, I went to take a nap and I feel asleep. I didn't wake up till three," he said in a bashful tone. After several brash and devastatingly cunning comments from me, I calmed down and began to realize my fate.

Maybe this really is the end. I'll have to start adding more fiber to my diet. I'll have to set down and find a wife. I'll have to learn to bear with my job even though the guy in the next cubicle sounds like Kermit the frog. The weight of an ever rising and falling capitalist system will be strewn onto my shoulders.

But why worry? Only 43 more years until my senior citizen discount kicks into effect.



This could be your last chance to have your voice heard in a public forum filled with important intellectuals!

[beaconletters@aol.com](mailto:beaconletters@aol.com)

All editorials are subject to editing for style, content, and brevity. Editors don't return the original or the final.

## Stem Cell: Do I want you to die?

After Chuck Pennacchio spoke to students on April 2 about how the Republican Party has been "hijacked" and how an unborn child is not a baby, multiple people came up to my friend and me to confront us about our conservative ideas. One person in particular looked us right in the eye and asked, "Do you want me to die?"

What do you say to that? We didn't have any clue what this person was talking about; but since the previous discussion had been about our pro-life stance, we easily made the transition into embryonic stem cell research.

Life begins at conception. A woman's body prepares itself to harbor another life in an ongoing month-long process. Once the body realizes that there is nothing to take care of, it expels all the nutrients that it has saved up and begins the process all over again.

In his article "Opinion: When are we obligated to human life," Prof. Steven S. Clark says, "During fertilization, two already living cells, a sperm and an egg, unite to form an embryo. This is a complex process, occurring over two days and involving multiple events..." (This article can be found on [www.stemcells.wisc.edu](http://www.stemcells.wisc.edu).)

So after only two days, the woman's body is set to take care of another life, one that was formed by "two already living cells." Voila! It's a life. So what if it's not completely grown yet; neither is a two-year-old, but we don't kill them for stem cells.



**Lacy Buzard**  
copy editor

What is the process for acquiring stem cells? "Following the termination of a pregnancy of about 5-9 weeks, some women donate the fetal material, which would otherwise be disposed of, to research. Pluripotent stem cells can then be extracted from the part of the fetus that would have developed into either testicles or ovaries." ([www.stemcellresearchfoundation.org/About/FAQ.htm#StemCells](http://www.stemcellresearchfoundation.org/About/FAQ.htm#StemCells))

Five to nine weeks is much longer than the two days it takes to create a life. And they take the cells from reproductive organs! A human beings reproductive organs!

Understandably, we want cures for Parkinson's, diabetes and heart disease, but should we really be willing to sacrifice a new life for the continuance of another?

"Most of what we think we know about human pancreatic development is merely extrapolated from mouse studies," said Jon Odorica, a transplant surgeon at UW-Madison Medical School in a release published in July of 2003. ([www.stemcells.wisc.edu](http://www.stemcells.wisc.edu))

The Stem Cell Research Foundation confirms that stem cell studies are built on the hope that human stem cells mimic those of mice. Mice are much easier to acquire than unborn babies.

Some may argue that women will get an abortion whether it helps someone or not, but abortion may start to rise as a result. On the Stem Cell Research Foundation's question board, some woman asked if she could get pregnant and donate her unborn child's cells specifically to help cure her father.

Situations such as these place women in more danger. They could now be forced to reproduce solely to provide medical treatment for others. Pharmaceutical corporations may someday have an entire branch employing only women in order to produce the necessary cells. It would be like the breeders in "The Giver" by Lois Lowry. Scary.

So, do I want you to die? It's not exactly in my nature to wish death on someone who I don't even know. The question should be are you willing to let unborn babies be disposed of (all except their testicle and ovary cells) just so you have a slim chance to live a few years longer?

## Evil is your only choice

Human nature is nasty, greedy and all around rotten. The core values of what it is to be human have changed very little since we crawled out of the slime or He blinked us into existence, whichever you prefer. In fact, the Old Testament is mostly about rotten old yahoos being punished by the guy in the sky for raping their sheep, daughters and other farm animals.

However the Old Testament isn't the only man made institution that encourages people not to be so awful, there's also the church as a whole, our glorious education system and the ever popular concept of government. All these things are intended to take the edge off the evil is that is mankind. Alas, all these institutions are carried out by members of the human race and thereby take on a personality of their own and become even more corrupt and self-interested than the people they are intended to lord over.

These are sad facts of human reality. We hijack the institutions we create to safe guard ourselves and end up worse off that we started in many ways. Some very smart people have recognized this fact in the past and acted on it.

Take for example, the founding fathers. Essentially, the founding fathers convinced rich people on this side of the ocean that they could make more money by violently taking over the big fat British investments that were the thirteen original colonies. The founders knew that they were indenturing themselves to the greed of those that monetarily backed the American Revolution, however they slipped one past the money men via the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

How so? We've got freedom of speech and the right to bear arms. If government officials stops serving us we can cry foul and fall back on the unspoken threat to point guns at said government officials if they fail to shape up. The founders knew that government inevitably becomes hijacked by the greediest, nastiest people with



**Chris Hvizdak**  
editorial columnist

the most money and they wisely afforded us a way to point that out. All our fellow citizens can be aware of the rampant disgustingness. Nine out of ten times the government can't lock you up for pointing out how corrupt they are. Sure, that doesn't mean a whole and almost always amounts to nothing; however, now and then it pays off. We did get Nixon. We got him good.

At any rate, human progress is a very, very slow thing. With enough time and pressure we can eventually cut the wild exploitation of ourselves by the wealthy elite and our government down to a minimum. Although such a reformation will probably take a few thousand more years and a couple rather nasty wars.

The thing to remember is that those who have hijacked our social institutions are no different than you and I; they just have the power to be rotten on a wider scale than we do. The rotten people are self-interested animals just like you and I. Don't think of them as Gods or holy men or deserving of special attention in any way shape or form.

The Great Hunter S. Thompson,

whom we tragically lost this year, contributed innumerable ideas to the advancement of mankind. Perhaps his most consistent idea is the humanization of authority figures. Take Hunter's word on that one. I can vouch for him.

Question your leaders at every turn, don't let them get away with anything and assume they have the worst intentions. That goes for anybody. Assume the worst and you're probably right. No matter who's the President, Pope or Librarian of Congress, if they've lied their way that far through the machine it's wise to assume that they're fairly evil.

To continue worshipping on the alter of the founders, I'll add that they roundly advocated being critical of one's own government, even in the most severe of situations. The George Bush's and other assorted evil jerks of the world will continue to do their thing and the people they exploit (i.e. you and I) will continue to do their thing. If we're responsible citizens and not ignorant idiots who take the easy way out, we'll accost them at every turn and force them to do what's best for us and not for them.

We're human, we're fallible and we like taking that easy way out. Some of us, however, are willing to do things the hard way, bear down and address the truly awful nature of the vast majority of our species. Let's all give ourselves a cookie. Eventually, over countless epochs of time our critical approach to authority will be adopted by the masses of sheeple who simply fall into line. When that far off day comes, George Bush and all the other monsters like him will fade into the darkness and no longer menace humanity. It'll be an awful lot of fun. Until then, the jerks will keep doing their thing and we'll keep doing ours. If we're lucky, we might score an early win. Here's to looking out for an upset.

Love,  
Viz

## Letter to the editor: Graduation process clarified

Dear Editor,

The graduation process followed this year is the same as past years.

Throughout the course of the year, students anticipating graduation for spring 2005 have been provided information in the following ways:

- Page 9 of the Spring 2005 Schedule of Courses booklet gives graduation information; this booklet was available on October 15, 2004

On Jan. 7, Carol Tobin in the registrar's office sent a personal e-mail to each student eligible to graduate reminding them to set their intent on

eLion; for an associate degree, or 38 credits for a masters degree were notified.

- During the week of March 7, commencement brochures containing information about time and location of the commencement ceremony, Senior Salute Days, the cost of cap and gown, the number of guest tickets available to each student, etc. were mailed to both the students' local and home addresses

- On April 1, 2005, Dr. David Christiansen, associate dean for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Administration, sent an e-mail to all graduating students about the May

2005 graduation

- Information has been available on the College Registrar's website since January.

Ultimately, students are responsible for filing their intent to graduate.

The Registrar's office staff welcomes anyone with questions to call us at 814-898-6104, visit us in 12 Erie Hall or e-mail us at [regbd@psu.edu](mailto:regbd@psu.edu)

Sincerely,  
Members of the Behrend Registrar's Office Staff