

# OPINION

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. - The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution*

## New year, same grease

The food choices being offered by elementary schools, high schools and colleges are not as conducive to a healthy lifestyle as they could be. Most elementary schools and high schools across America, however, are attempting to change the menus offered to their students.

Citizens and lawmakers are pulling for changes in kids' diets mainly so America won't be considered the fattest country in the world any longer. However, just because more attention is paid to the younger generations of America's eaters doesn't mean that college students should have to suffer - but we are suffering.

The choices we make now will shape our eating habits for the rest of our lives and quite possibly our children's lives. This past week I have attempted to hold to my "diet" while eating at Bruno's. Although Bruno's introduced some "new faces" (i.e. Stouffer's Lean Cuisine) this year, they have stuck with the same old unhealthy choices. New to the scene is Stouffer's Macaroni and Cheese (as if college students don't eat enough of that), DiGiorno's pizza, HaganDaaz ice cream, and Peet's brand coffee.

Of the new additions, only one out of five happens to be considered healthy (or rather less fattening) food, but let's face it, eating a frozen dinner is like eating cardboard no matter what its brand name is.

I have been disappointed by the lack of selection of fresh foods. Other than the deli line that offers freshly made subs, bagels, sandwiches and wraps,

there is little to choose from. Oranges, apples and salads are available in one of the coolers along with some yogurt, but trying to eat on the go makes those options a little less than desirable.

The meat choices aren't any better: if it doesn't come as a pizza topping, it comes fried or chargrilled and encrusted with soft white buns (basically pure sugar), covered in cheese. When I get hungry for some chicken I don't get hungry for all the added stuff that comes on it, especially the bread. And since meat is consumed for protein as well as taste, why aren't various kinds of nuts offered? All kinds of nuts, including unsalted, unsweetened, natural pistachios, almonds, peanuts and walnuts are full of protein and good fats and oils. Nuts are small and crunchy - a perfect snack and much healthier than potato chips or Keebler cookies.

Drinks are another issue - water is the healthiest (and least flavorful) liquid I have found gracing the Bruno's cooler. All of the Dole 100% juice choices are loaded with sugar, making Diet Pepsi a better choice because it is made with a sugar substitute. However, it is still not as healthy as drinks like vegetable juice, tomato juice or unsweetened green tea, but those choices are not offered.

Last year, I like many Behrend students, gave in to the tastier choices like the whole wheat subs, pizza, diet Pepsi, and chips. I gave in to those temptations and I paid for it weight-wise. I didn't gain a lot, but I gained enough to realize that I was hurting my future and myself. So I changed my diet over the summer and I am still trying to make



ZACK MENTZ

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conscious eating decisions. However, since I have returned to school, making good choices has proved difficult because of the lack of options presented. The hardest thing about sticking to a healthier eating plan for anyone is lack of variety. Without variety we end up reverting back to our old unhealthy eating habits.

If a wider variety of fast, easy, good-for-you choices and less of the

unhealthy choices were offered, I think students would be much happier and healthier, thus helping America progress into a healthier generation rather than a super-sized one.

Of course, students, as consumers, are primarily responsible for what they eat. However, food service employees also carry a lot of responsibility because they are the individuals in charge of providing students with food options, healthy

or otherwise. The students are relying on Bruno's for a primary source of sustenance and therefore the use of good judgment in your decision making as well.

Annie Sevin  
Editor In Chief

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### Beacon Thumbs Up

- New blinky light movie signs.
- New 'House Blend' coffee in Bruno's.
- Testing out of classes whenever possible.



### Beacon Thumbs Down

- Random fire alarms that force you to leave the dorm.
- Teachers who teach on the first day.
- The Reed Kiosk Laser Printer that is perpetually out of toner and paper.



## Prepare for many unpopular opinions

Let's get down to brass tacks. Many past readers of the Opinion page do not particularly like me. I don't mind - at least it shows that they're reading. Why don't they like me? I express unpopular opinions. If you're familiar with my writing, you know what I'm talking about. I also do not water down my unpopular opinions or in any way reduce them to vague innuendo. That is a quality that we are rarely treated to in mainstream television and print media and you should enjoy the opportunity to read such potentially inflammatory content while you have it.

No, I am not suggesting that you should all be thankful for my presence on the Beacon staff. Rather I am highlighting the simple fact that most national media is biased. Biased not to the "right" or "left" but unto its own corporate profit minded interests. The 24 hour news networks and national papers don't want to offend anyone. They might alienate viewers and lose profits; and as I'm certain you business majors could tell me, that is the most deadly sin imaginable in the "Faith of the Almighty Dollar." Or is it the "Faith of the Almighty Euro" these days?

But what of Fox News? But what of the New York Times? "Those are perfect examples of unpopular opinion in the media" you might exclaim. I would disagree and cite both outlets as being targeted to their audiences rather than expressive of unpopular opinion. Liberal editorials in the New York

Times and conservative editorializing by Bill O'Reily are unlikely to offend or even be evaluated by persons who may disagree with them in the first place.



Chris Hvizdak

That fact spotlights a problem with the media as a whole and an, albeit minor, opportunity we have with The Beacon. The problem being that because of the vast expansion in the sheer number of news outlets that has occurred over the last three decades, a person today can choose a news outlet that is generally in 100% agreement with their own views.

"Freedom of choice ...mumble ... manifest destiny...blarg..!" you might interject. Yes, it is true that you, as an American, have the right to read or watch whatever it is you want to. However, it is also true that you have an obligation to make informed decisions about the operation and management of this government and therefore must be knowledgeable enough to make what you consider to be adequate decisions. Getting one side of the story isn't enough to make a proper decision.

When most of America uses the media as a tool to reinforce their own pre-existing beliefs rather than as a means of reaching the best solutions, it does not function as "The Fourth Estate," rather it is simply a push button feel good machine no more prestigious than crack or cheap prostitutes. It

is my opinion that persons who do not attempt to use our over-specialized media to determine the best course for our nation are neglecting their duty as Americans and paving the way to Washington for politicians who behave like crack-addicted prostitutes.

So that brings us to the opportunity we have with the Beacon. The Beacon is the only news outlet which directly serves the Behrend community. Sure, you get free USA Today, New York Times and Erie Times News from those lovely machines in the lobby, but chances are, if you want to see your picture in the paper, you're going to open up the Beacon. Consequently, we have a decent market share and the opportunity to foster discussion on a scale almost impossible in a national community. So, I'm extending the opportunity to each and every Beacon reader to express their unpopular opinions, bring up the hard questions and engage in a communicative behavior that, hopefully, you all can carry over into the national and world communities.

Here are some unpopular opinions of mine to get you started: I love Bill Clinton as a person but hate his trade policies. Globalism is bad and protectionism is the only way to retain anything similar to an economy on this continent. Iraq is eventually doomed to end up in a state of civil war between the various factions of its government and their insurgently vivacious supporters.

## The Behrend Beacon

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### Letters to the Editor

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page.

Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to chrisvzidak@gmail.com or directly to the Beacon office, located in the Reed Building.

Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries should be limited to 700 words. The more concise the submission, the less we will be forced to edit it for space concerns and the more likely we are to run the submission.

All submissions must include the writer's year in school, major and name as The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters.

Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon for inclusion in the Friday issue. All submissions are considered, but because of space limitations, some may not be published.

All submissions must include consent for editing to be considered for publication.