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THE BEHREND BEACON

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NOV 04 2005

Friday, November 4, 2005

A Penn State Erie Student Publication

Vol. LIII No. 11

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Ben Stein shares wisdom with Behrend community

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Ben Stein's visit to Penn State Erie this past Tuesday featured an impassioned speech delivered to hundreds in McGarvey Commons, as well as a dinner at the Logan House. However, perhaps the most enlightening event of Stein's visit was his casual address to a group of freshman prior to these more formal events. Stein was questioned on topics ranging from the White House to the "Wonder Years" and provided many fascinating responses.

"Journalism is one of the best jobs. There is no question, if all jobs paid equally, there'd be no question that journalism is the best job in the country.

"The problem with Hollywood work is that it's very uncertain; you never know if you're going to have a job, which is why it's good to have a diversified career and do lots of different things.

"I strongly recommend all of you make friends with [Phil English] and get a job as a summer intern on Capitol Hill. Probably the most fun way to spend the summer. Lots and lots of parties every night, a really lively town, lots and lots of ambitious young men and women."

Stein was asked how he managed to get two jobs at the White House and explained, "I got into the White House largely because my father was an influential person in the White House.

"Then I went back to being a trial lawyer and I wrote and wrote and wrote about how Nixon was being persecuted and treated unfairly by the media and the people at the White House said, 'Well, gee, there aren't that many people defending us in the media today, plus he's Stein's son so we know we can trust him.' So they gave me a (second) job at the Whitehouse. "My father didn't get me that job, but he certainly was influential in inspiring them to give me the job because they thought they could trust me."

Stein was asked to explain how he became involved in the entertainment industry and responded, "How did I get into Hollywood? Largely through family connections. My father was close friends with a very important New York Times columnist named Bill Sapphire. He had, as a college roommate, a guy who was a high executive at Warner. I met that guy from Warner at Bill Sapphires' house and he offered me a job writing a script for an idea I had for sequel to "Rebel Without a Cause"...later on, through another per-

son, I met Norman Lear, a very successful TV producer, and he thought I was the funniest conservative he ever met; he offered me a job.

"I was very blessed. I had an extremely influential and powerful father who helped a lot. My father had no one to help him; he did it all by sheer energy and brain power."

When questioned about his acting career, Stein commented on a number of projects, "Some of the 'Wonder Years', I thought, were as well written as anything I've been in. There was one in particular "Last Day of School," which I love beyond words. I, to this day, get tears thinking about it.

"The best time I had with [voice acting] was with two shows. One,

'Animaniacs' and two, a wonderful, wonderful show, 'Fairly Odd Parents,' where I've been doing voices for a few years now, and I just love it.

"If I could choose just one job to do and never do any others it would be voice overs. Best work in the world."

When asked how he felt about George Bush, Stein said,

"I love Bush.... I think he made a very serious mistake going into Iraq...I think he was fed a line of fake intelligence by the CIA...that would have made any intelligent, sensible person want to go into Iraq...."

~Ben Stein

"I love Bush. I have complicated feelings about him. I think he made a very serious mistake going into Iraq, but I don't blame him for it personally because I think he was fed a line of fake intelligence by the CIA and by other intelligence agencies that would have made any intelligent sensible person want to go into Iraq. The one thing I find about Mr. Bush that really distressed me incredibly is that his father had written a book about the Iraq war, which explains in detail the reasons for not going into Iraq, which turn out to be exactly what's happened in Iraq, and Bush never read the book his father wrote, and a lot of people are dying because of that.

"That said, Saddam Hussein is a brutal, Hitlerian, Stalin-esque type of person who killed a great, great many innocent people, and

the world is better for his not being in power. What the end of this nightmare in Iraq is going to be I have no idea."

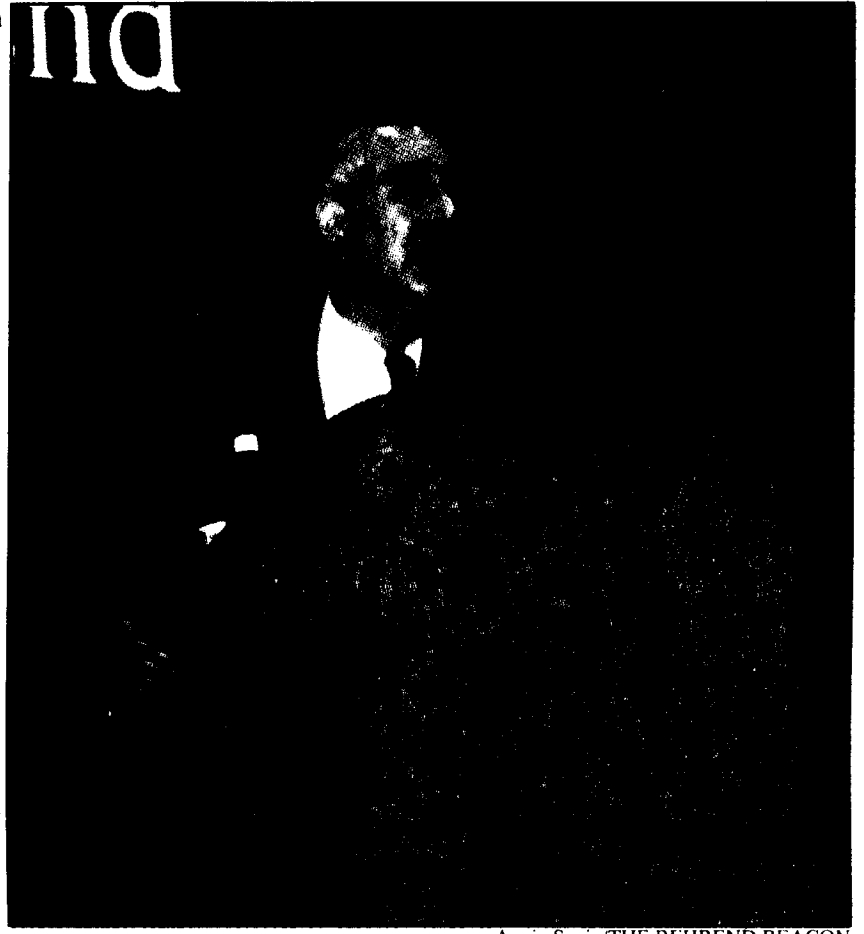
When asked about Richard Nixon, Stein responded that, "He lied about fairly serious things, and he lied in a way that subverted confidence in the institution. Very serious. But he was a peacemaker, and I will never turn my back on a peacemaker.

"He was clearly a liar, but so are we all."

Stein was asked if he felt that the Water Gate era offered any insight into contemporary America and responded, "I think we can learn a lot from studying any history. The basic history of the world is human beings are poor, fallible weak creatures dealing with enormous, imponderable, tremendously difficult problems,

and none of us does very well at it.

"Every administration, they come into office thinking 'oh we're going to be different, we're gonna solve all our problems, we're going to have everything on neat, 3x5 cards, we're going to have everything indexed and figured out. And they never do. They never, never, never do. The problems of life are far greater than the ability of humans to deal with them. That is the sad but inevitable truth.



Ben Stein captivates the audience as he shares his many diverse experiences

"There's a lot

of learning from the past. But the main thing to learn is humility. It will allow you to realize that you're going to screw up. Everybody's going to screw up. There's no doubt about it."

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Harassment, respect challenge professors

Teachers learn what to do in difficult situations

By Emily Zimmerman
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The Behrend College Liaison Committee to the Commission for Women held an event on Nov. 2 entitled, "It's Not All Fun and Games: Dealing with Difficult Personalities." Mary Ellen Bayuk from the Registrar's Office put this event together for teachers, faculty and students to address sexual harassment, difficult personalities, female authority and how to handle these different situations in the classroom.

The first speaker was Mary Beth Peterson of the Career Development Center. She spoke about sexual harassment and what someone should do if found in that situation. She said, "There is a lot of sexual harassment in this country." The challenge is to know what to do if the situation occurs. Peterson said, "Most people who are accused of sexual harassment have no idea what they are doing. They are displaying learned behavior that they think is okay." Because of that, the first step against harassment is to talk to the perpetrator and tell him or her that what he or she is doing is offending you and making you uncomfortable. If the first step does not work and the other party is continuing the unwanted actions, then that is harassment. Peterson explained that she and Ken Miller are the sexual harassment contacts for Penn State Erie and are available to give advice on the matter.

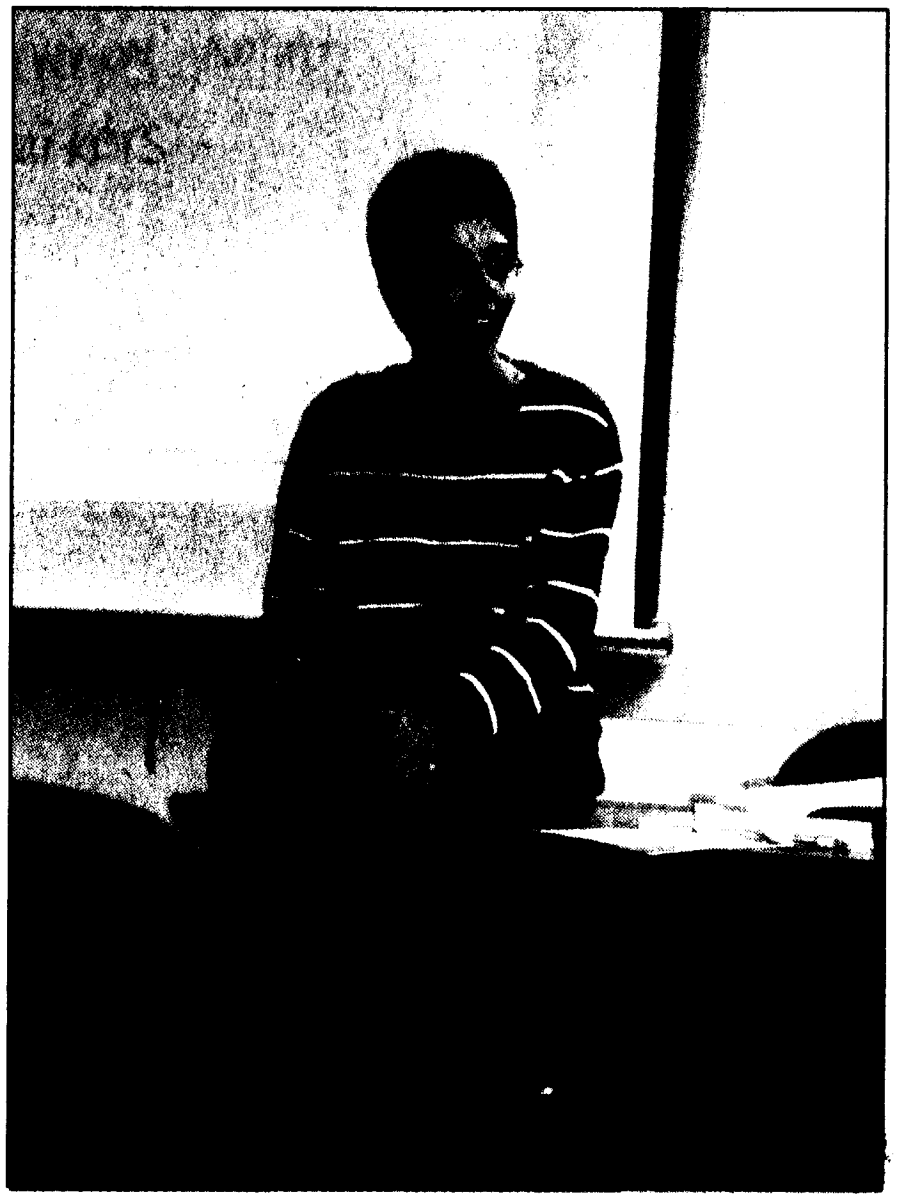
Step two in taking care of sexual harassment is to document the fact that one has confronted the perpetrator on the act. This is followed by step three, judicial action. However, a common misconception that many people have is that when someone is accused of sexual harassment, that person loses his or her job. Peterson stated, "There is more grey area than there is black and white," when dealing with sexual harassment. Unintentional harassment is mostly taken care of when the offended person tells the offender. Communication is the key to solving this kind of problem. However, intentional harassment is regarded with severity. Then, depending on the severity of the situation, the severity of the judicial act against the harassment will be determined.

Carla Torgerson spoke next about difficult personalities in the classroom and how to handle difficult and disturbing situations. The five different personalities that she observed are the arguer, grade grubber, attention seeker, quiet student and students with excuses. Torgerson had tips on what to do with the disturbing behaviors. She said for the arguer, or overtly hostile student, listen to what he or she has to say and acknowledge they might be right. And for the attention seekers in the room to make it clear that you want input from the entire class. Torgerson also observed mental illnesses on college campuses as a major issue in disruptive classroom behaviors.

The event ended with a discussion of the authority female teachers hold in the classroom, particularly in all or mostly male classrooms. While it is known that the male to female student ratio is three to one, the male to female teacher ratio is one to 12 on the Behrend campus. One male professor brought up that he is referred to as "professor," while his female counterparts mentioned they were referred to by their first name or with the title "Mrs." While it is recognized that

some teachers request their titles and some do not, it raises the issue of whether our academic society is losing its grasp on respect towards authoritative figures. Peterson mentioned that this is similar to sexual harassment in that sometimes when students disrespect their teachers in this way, "They don't know they are being inappropriate." Torgerson spoke of how she wears a suit to class every day and requires her students to refer to her as Professor Torgerson to maintain the authority she should have as the teacher.

The next event for the Liaison Committee is on Thursday, Dec. 1, and will focus on caregiving.



Emily Zimmerman/THE BEHREND BEACON

Torgerson discusses the difficult personalities in the college classroom.