

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

Behrend's computers work too slow

By Logan Stack
staff writer
ASCII@psu.edu

Want to print out a cheat sheet between classes? Too bad: it will take you 10 minutes to log in, open Word and print it out. That's ridiculous. When you click on "Word" in the start menu, the computer doesn't actually start Word. It starts a script to check the version of Word, and download it if nobody's used Word on that computer before. Last week's Ask ASCII explained how to get around that, but you shouldn't have to. The computers at Penn State U.P. don't take that long to start programs; the students there don't have to learn tricks if they want to get work done quickly. Why should we?

Every Sunday, all the lab computers are updated remotely and then rebooted. Why can't we apply the new version of Word then? Why can't we install Word when we set up the computers for the first time? Then you don't need to wait if you're using a program esoteric enough that nobody's used it on your computer yet.

The wireless VPN here is severely lacking as well. At U.P. campus, the VPN works. Here, it disconnects everyone every 15 minutes. When you're disconnected, all downloads stop, streaming music fizzles, and your AIM messages get redirected back to your other sign-on location (like back at the dorm.)

The dorm connections, at least in Ohio, are poor too. My testing showed more than a one percent down time - about 15 minutes a day. That could be acceptable, except that it's at random intervals in the middle of the day, not scheduled outages for a 3 a.m. network upgrade.

The network problems may not be an easy fix. Tracking down a failing component can be hard. The slow programs on lab computers are easy to fix. It could even be done with the weekly upgrade. The computer center should do it next week, so that they can have extra techs stay through the upgrade to make sure everything is working. Bring us up to par with the other big campus of Penn State.

Journalism is troubled but significant

By John Bigus
jtb244@psu.edu
staff writer

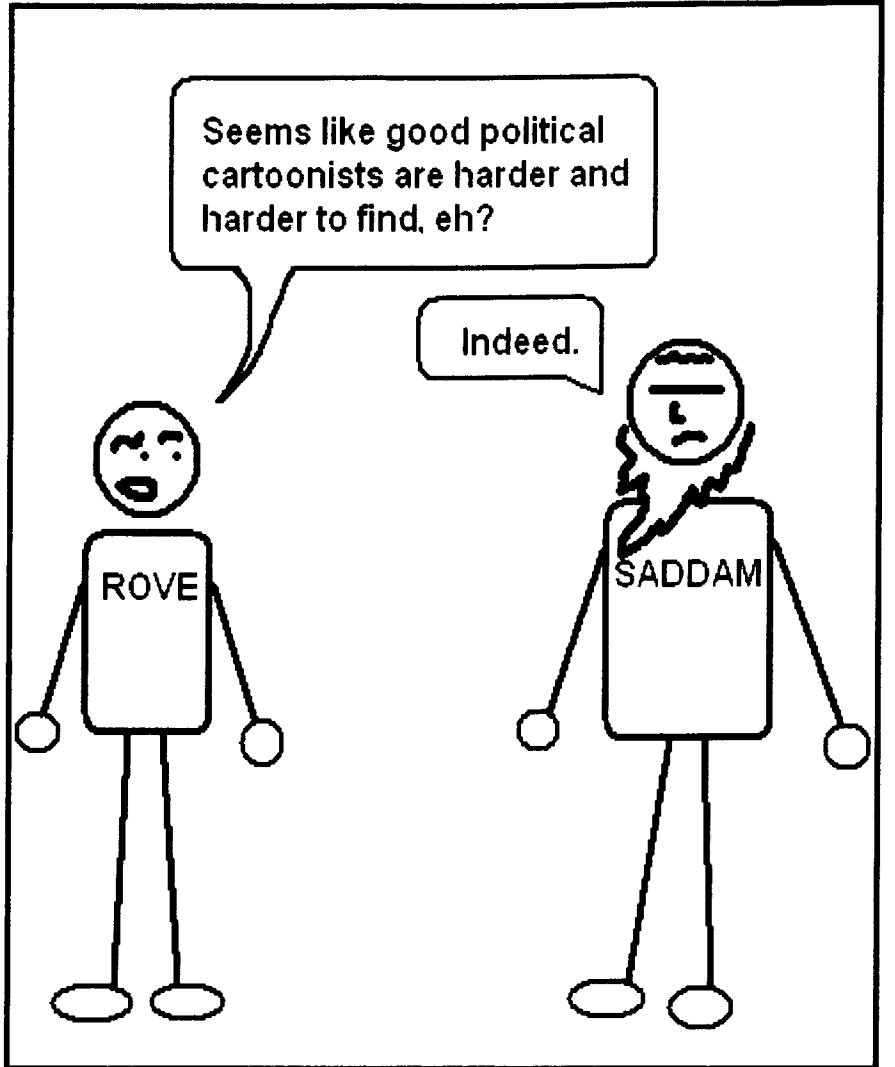
Journalism is a profession that is of immense significance in a democratic republic. The "fourth estate" has a responsibility to hold the government by the throat and demand integrity, transparency or both; and to protect the people from unjust attack by advocating the cause of the defensible. In the evolution of media communications, readership now represents profit; the success of tactics which increase readership without fulfilling media responsibilities has led to a decline in the American people's capability for oversight.

One appeal to readership is the manufacturing of conflict misrepresented as the presentation of alternate opinions. In many cases to this point, the media has brought to light some of the most on-the-fringe and extremist contributors who may or may not have had substantial claims, and whose substantial claims have many times been ignored. Florida's Terry Schiavo case, a case of the rights of guardianship and the determination of the extent of life due to documented brain inactivity, became the caricature of debate when, despite the non-presence of most of that woman's brain, "experts" were propped up by the side in support of moral concern. Outright lies replaced debate in that case and also have in the case of politics in recent times. An outstanding event was the "gay marriage debate" presented not as a case of equal protection under the 14th amendment but instead as a terrible threat to the virtue of America and the daily life of Americans.

A second appeal to readership has been the utilization of sensationalism to draw the crowd from increasingly more extreme and unique fictions portrayed in television and print. The most obvious evidence of this is the delivery of immense volumes of "fluff" such as articles relating to interesting sights in the local area, totally irrelevant in their iniquity and having no effect on the reader. The second proof is the heart-wrenching, the gut-twisting, and the non-representative extremist stories presented as "major" during the slowest news periods and as filler across the board. The kidnapping stories, which tend to appear all over major cable news during late summer, are a disgusting example of misrepresentation and a bid at gaining viewership: the most recent extensive Justice Department study stated, "in the year 1999, an estimated 797,500 children were reported missing; 58,200 children were abducted by nonfamily members; 115 children were the victims of the most serious, long-term nonfamily abductions called 'stereotypical kidnappings'; and 203,900 children were the victims of family abductions." While these are tragic, reporting on tragedy, family experiences and the lives of a handful of children is not the hardcore journalism might be represented by an unbelievable number of other stories: statistical facts, actions toward justice nationwide, and what can be done to improve the system, among other things. Books can and have been written about sensationalism.

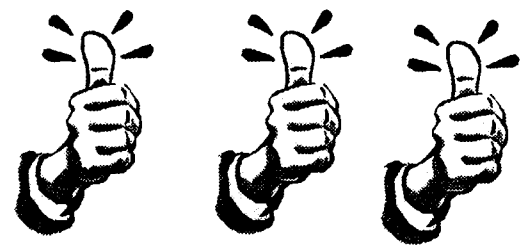
Terry Schiavo was not a case of advocacy in its lack of connection to the rights of citizens; gay marriage did not present insight into the actions a corrupt judicial system; fire trucks on Saltzman Road do not affect the lives of students here at Behrend, despite being constructed in 1964 by GM, having a house built on the back, and being run in parades every few years. Journalism is an invaluable tool of the citizens of a democratic republic and the media as the avatar of the people has responsibilities to uphold.

Terry Schiavo was not a case of advocacy in its lack of connection to the rights of citizens; gay marriage did not present insight into the actions a corrupt judicial system; fire trucks on Saltzman Road do not affect the lives of students here at Behrend, despite being constructed in 1964 by GM, having a house built on the back, and being run in parades every few years. Journalism is an invaluable tool of the citizens of a democratic republic and the media as the avatar of the people has responsibilities to uphold.



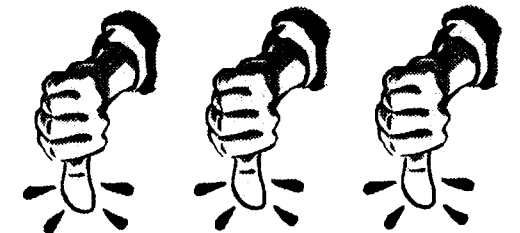
ZACK MENTZ

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Geri - Bruno's cashier extrordinaire
- Journey to a Hate Free Millenium.
- The "Million Dollar Elevator" being on the same level of your arrival.

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Loud roommate keystrokes in wee hours.
- Classroom clocks not adjusted for daylight savings.
- Lack of a crosswalk between the library and the Junker Center.

Quote of the Week

"What country before ever existed a century and a half without a rebellion? What country can preserve its liberties if their rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure."

~Thomas Jefferson

Letter to the Editor

From now until February, you will hear people talking about THON. You will see THON signs around the campus asking for your help. What exactly is THON? THON is the Penn State University IFC/Panhellenic Dance MaraTHON. It is the largest student-run philanthropy in the world and a Penn State tradition. THON is a year round fundraising event benefiting The Four Diamonds Fund, Conquering Childhood Cancer at the Penn State Children's Hospital in Hershey, PA.

After students raise money all year for kids with cancer and their families, that is when the real fun begins. The fundraising year ends with 700 dancers from all over the Penn State campuses and thousands of other supporters packed into Rec Hall at University Park for a 48-hour non sitting, no sleeping dance marathon. I was one of the four dancers from Behrend last year, and it was a very emotional and eye-opening experience.

Now I have stayed up for 48 hours before, but having to be up and moving for those hours was the most difficult task I have ever performed. I couldn't even complain about being sick, tired, in pain, or wanting to sit down and relax though because it just seemed so trivial compared to what these kids are going through. When I was six, I was thinking about what I was going to do at recess and when my parents were going to take me to Toys 'R Us. At six, these kids are thinking about their next chemotherapy treatment and wonder why they can't do things like the "normal kids." And when they are on the floor with you and the parents are crying because their child is happy and laughing for once, the pain turns into the best feeling in the world knowing that you are making a difference in a child's life. Last year, after 48 hours of dancing was over, the total was revealed. After students from all over spent hours in the freezing cold with cans on the street, after going door to door in every neighborhood, after millions of donation letters, and after 48 hours of dancing, we broke the record. \$4,122,486.85 for the kids in the 2004-2005 school year.

THON is a big piece of my heart, and I encourage each and every one of you reading this to let it be a part of yours. You won't regret it.

For the kids,
Deanna (Dee) Sieberkrob

Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to opinion@psu.edu 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 to be edited before they can be edited for publication.

The Behrend Beacon

Published Weekly by the students of Penn State Erie



Annie Sevin, Editor in Chief
Rob Frank, Managing Editor
Courtney Kaplin, Advertising Manager
Randy Martell, Public Relations Manager
Kim Young, Adviser

News Editor Jennifer Haight	Student Life Editor KJ Margraff Jr.
Assistant News Editor Patrick Webster	Calendar Editor Siobhan Conway
Sports Editor Chris LaFuria	Humor Editor Jerry Pohl
Opinion Editor Chris Hvizdak	Copy Editors Kate Kelecseny Rachael Conway Allison Gray Tracie Kendziora Justin Plansinis
Cartoonist Zack Mentz	Photography Editor Michelle Vera Suroviev

**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**