

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

The Behrend Beacon

Published Weekly by the students of Penn State Erie



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Photography Editor Michelle Vera Surovic	

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

Stop punching me, paddles aren't funny

By **Annie Sevin**
 editor in chief
 editorinchief@psu.edu

My sister called me last Wednesday to ask if I had spoken to my mother that day. When I said that I hadn't, she told me I had better call her. Immediately I knew something was wrong, so I pressed my sister to tell me. I was expecting to hear bad news about my father because he's always in and out of the hospital for heart problems. However, she told me that our grandma had found a lump in her breast.

My grandmother is 83 years old; she's always been the sane constant in my life. She and I are very much alike; we're both very stubborn, and we both have a natural tendency to want to feed those who come into our homes. I love my grandmother very, very much, and news of the malignancy is just too overwhelming to think about.

However, there is something that I cannot stop thinking about: an event that happened just the day after I heard that my grandma was dying. A close friend of mine made a mini-website for me (or maybe it was *about* me, I'm not really sure; I didn't bother to ask).

This friend knew that over winter break I had had a breast reduction (if you want to know why, read Michelle Vera Surovic's article featured on page 8 of last week's Beacon).

Anyway, some other friends had nicknamed me "One Headlight" prior to the surgery in case the doctor screwed up. I thought the name was mildly amusing, but my friend with

the mini-website thought it was really funny because "one headlight" was the theme he fashioned the site after.

He used The Wallflowers song, "One Headlight," as background music for a still image of a naked woman with one breast. At first I was taken aback by the image. Then I realized the photo was of an elderly woman (shown from the waist to the neck) that appeared to be a victim of cancer.

The style of the photo looked like it had been taken for insurance purposes. I had similar photos taken before and after my surgery; having pictures of that nature taken is traumatic in and of itself. Seeing the exploitation of that cancer patient's photo was so unbearable I had to leave the room. I was so upset that I couldn't even think of what to say or shout at this friend who was under the impression that he had made an amusing site for people to gawk at.

And gawk they did. He didn't show the site to just me - almost everyone who saw it thought it was just hilarious. I didn't tell them about my grandmother; I shouldn't have had to.

Penn State implemented a civility program last year that was meant to teach us more about being civilized people. I can clearly see that time and money has been wasted on that project. Some people can be inhumane monsters and not give a damn about who they hurt or offend as long as they get their jollies off in the process. That is not civility. And civility wasn't what my friend was practicing.

Behrend preaches peace between different cultures and understanding or

tolerating those who are different from you. It's hard to stomach the notion that disgusting acts like the one my friend committed are going unnoticed as acts of incivility. What he did wasn't peaceful. It wasn't a tool of understanding or tolerance. It was meant to be a "friendly" joke. It was meant to get a few laughs.

It turned out to be an abhorrent disfigurement of our friendship. This so-called funny gag was nothing if not cruel and unwarranted. Yes, this was an isolated incident, and it involved very few people, but things of this nature happen all the time - everywhere. The most unpleasant thing about that incident was that it happened between friends, not enemies. How are we, as young Americans, supposed to learn how to fix the problems in this world if we can't even learn to be civil and respectful to our friends?

I'm not one to tell people to tiptoe around others because they might get upset - I'm a journalist, it's my job to push buttons and make people uncomfortable. However, there are some situations that should be handled with a little more couth and class than was presented last Thursday. In short, all of us need to grow up, get cultured, be civilized and learn sensitivity!

When I was a senior in high school, my mother's best friend told me, "Sometimes in life, my dear, you must learn to suffer fools." There are enough fools and suffering in mine and my grandmother's world - don't make us suffer you, *my friend*.

Have a "Thumbs Up" or "Thumbs Down" ?



Send Suggestions to opinion@psu.edu

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 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.

American Idle

By **Chris LaFuria**
 sports editor
 csl5005@psu.edu

It may seem rather ambiguous, but fast food "Drive-Thru" menus and remote controls have a world of similarities. In a world full of Internet shopping malls and overnight video rental deliveries, it seems as if the world has developed a pandemic of laziness that is rewinding evolution and sending the human race back about a 1000 years physically and mentally (obviously excluding technologically).

If one traces back the history of scientific evolution, humankind has adapted fully capable legs and a straight back to make the act of walking much easier. Thousands of years ago, the first humans would have traded anything to have the physical capabilities of modern-day humans. However, thanks to such devices as the Internet and delivery, our contemporary society fails to utilize such natural benefits.

Whether it is a lack of motivation or simple laziness, many Americans are less active than suggested by doctors and psychologists. The famous Lebanese author Kahlil Gibran once said, "The lust for comfort, that stealthy thing that enters the house a guest and then becomes a host, and then a master." Gibran talks about how laziness starts with getting a ride up to Ohio Hall from Reed Union Building, turns into calling the cell phone of your friend who lives down the hall and ultimately turns into Instant Messaging your roommate. And anybody who claims to have not done any of the aforementioned actions is lying to himself or herself.

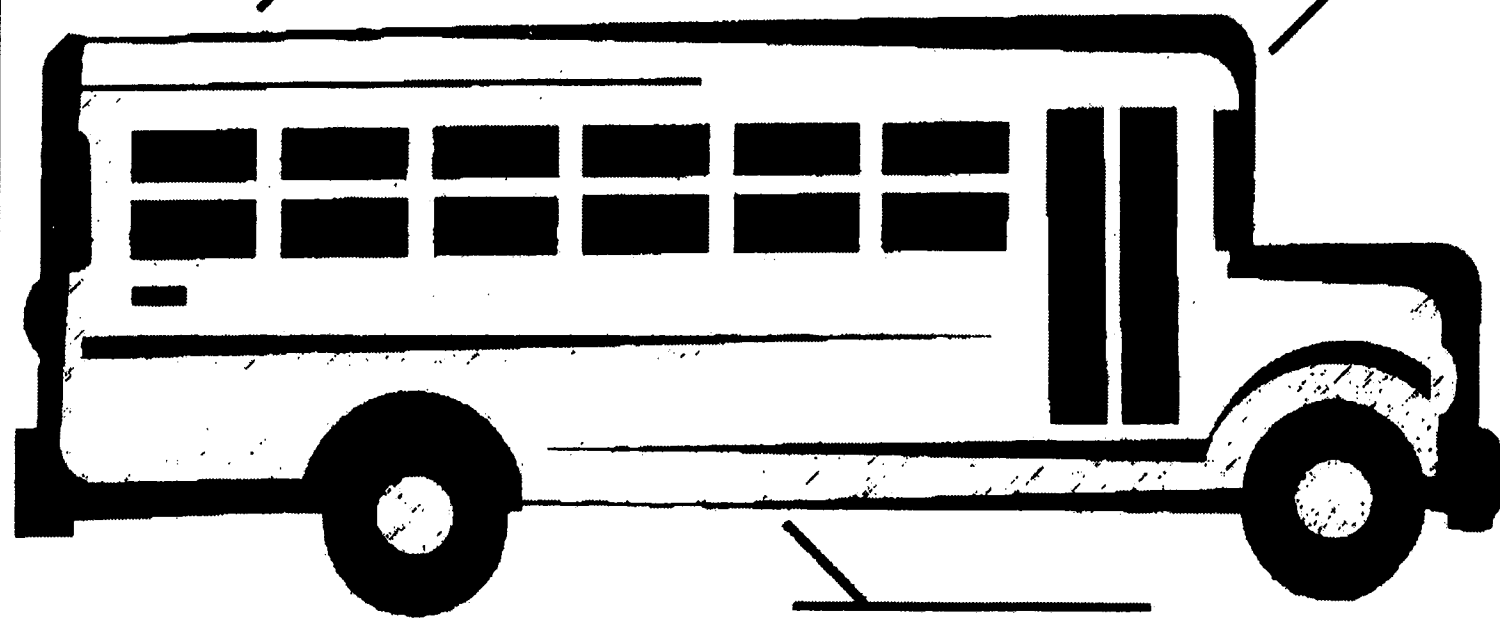
Being lazy and inactive has many effects on daily life. How many times have you put off studying for an exam or finishing a lab because you "just don't feel like doing it"? By letting laziness obstruct the completion of their goals, people can find themselves struggling to stay ahead of the game and in control of their personal destinies. Also, there is a health factor dealing with such indolence and immobility. The absence of exercising and staying active can take a toll on people's heart and physical state of being.

Another aspect of eliminating laziness that most people are incognizant to is that many ideas and significant events can occur when a person is doing something. As former president Thomas Jefferson said, "Determine never to be idle... It is wonderful how much may be done if we are always doing." Electricity wasn't discovered when Benjamin Franklin was sitting on his couch. Gravity wasn't discovered when Newton was lying in his bed. Most of the famous and significant events in our country and throughout the world occurred when people put forth the effort and weren't struck by lethargy and laziness.

The only way to overcome laziness is to start on a small scale. I'm almost positive that hitching a ride from Reed to Ohio is not necessary. Every time I see someone standing and waiting at the base of the elevator behind Perry Hall, I just want to point out the fact that placed next to the elevator is a set of stairs that gets one from place to place. Implementing physical exertion in place of mechanical methods will make people ultimately healthier and more disciplined. Keep this in mind the next time you go to send a text message to someone on the other side of Bruno's.

Busdriver, we need to get to school.

Billy isn't here yet, we can't leave any child behind.



But if none of us get to school, no one will get an education.

Jerry Pohl, Bryce Sayers, Randy Martell

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Return of the Reed printer
- Keeping your New Year's resolutions
- Ramen Noodles being so cheap
- Winter on again

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Paying \$1.75 to do a load of laundry
- Salt lines on pants
- Over crowded fitness rooms
- Winter off again