

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 Ammendment to the U.S. Constitution

The Behrend Beacon

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



Send Suggestions to opinion@psu.edu

Cherish the good times

By KJ Margraff Jr.
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There are several moments in life that seem to stick out as benchmarks and cornerstones. It's a lot like the song "100 Years" by Five for Fighting: "I'm 22 for a moment..." Last week I had a rare chance to get a view of all these points in life at the same time. It was as if I was watching a movie picking out all the important scenes, and it made me realize just how short life is.

I made the six hour drive to the Allentown area on wednesday for my sister's wedding. It was a unique experience for me because my sister had never been much of the "girlfriend type," yet she now acted with a new purpose and motivation in life; it was evident in everything she was doing, even the small things. I was able to see all the elements of selflessness and love in her, in a way renewing my trust in the idea that, for lack of better terms, everything is supposed to 'work out' in the end. My sister had changed herself, and some of her characteristics, for this man who was to become her husband. I was proud to share in the moment with her as one of the groomsmen, and besides, the food at the wedding was phenomenal.

The wedding also had a profound effect on my parents. My mother and I had always been extremely close, so I wasn't surprised by how marrying off her first child, her baby girl, was exciting and happy to the point of tears. It brought me great pride to escort her in and out of the church for the ceremony. But my father and I have had our differences. I've never really had the chance to see his more emotional side except when he and I bashed heads. The wedding brought out a sort of calmness in his face that made me sort of relax more, watching him interact with my new brother-in-law, Randy, accepting him into the family whole heartedly. As I stood at the front of the church watching him escort my sister to the alter, and then sitting with my mother, I saw him start to well up with emotions, and start to tear. All the small indifference that he and I have had from time to time seemed to melt away and not matter to me for the moment.

Friday morning, before setting up the church and going to the rehearsal, I made the extra effort to drive down to Philly where I grew up; I went to visit my grandparents, Nan and Pop, who I'm very close to. Every holiday, especially

Christmas day, has been spent at their house, which I account for giving me my strong family values. Unfortunately, my grandfather's health is not at its best, having a long list of heart problems and double kidney failure. Pop relies on dialysis treatments to live, and the whole family can see its effect on him. Recently the hospital found an infection in his blood requiring extra caution with his regular treatments, and personally, it scares me because I do not want to lose this important person in my life. My grandfather has always been a strong example for me throughout my life. He was the typical Italian man who enjoyed working in his garden and spending time with his family, so it hurts me to see him in pain. Despite the pain he is in, the same strength and love I remember as a child glows brightly in his eyes like fire. I can only hope that when I reach his age that I will be like him, still loving and strong despite personal difficulties, always giving in any way possible.

The last moment in time I was able to witness was the joy and excitement of a new baby. One of the other groomsmen was Randy's brother Ryan. Ryan and his wife were recently blessed with another child, and watching them interacting with this tiny little baby at the reception made me realize not only how innocently we begin our journey through life, but also how much a new child can affect a family. While I never had the chance to meet Ryan or his wife before that day, I felt that their marriage and love seemed to have a fresh renewal due to this new child.

I guess what I'm trying to say in this mess of memories and emotions is that life is short, and these moments in life need to be cherished; time is fleeting. A lot of times we, as college students, can lose sight of the big picture and get caught up with the stress and worry of classes, exams and projects. This is a point in our lives where we are not kids anymore, but we are still not quite adults it's good to focus the fact that there is so much in store for us in the future, and we should enjoy this time we have in college as a step in that direction. I also hope that, as dumb as this may sound, we can all remember how important our families are and remember to tell our loved ones just how much they mean to us. Personally, I got a recharge from the trip home, despite the ungodly amount of driving that I had to do, and the memories of the week will stay with me for a long time.

Jeers to gym jocks

By Justin Plansinis
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Despite external evidence to the contrary, I go to the gym a lot. However, one cannot simply workout on the equipment at the gym; Penn State Erie, in its infinite wisdom, opened the Jageman Fitness Center to all students. Such an open policy means that I have to share the gym with other people, and a lot of these people really irritate me for some reason.

First we have the hardcore lifter. This guy isn't doing the flat bench; he's there hefting giant weights from the floor over his head and grunting like a Neanderthal attacking a mastodon. The hardcore lifter usually has a pal with him who is just as into it as he is. They both compliment each other on how hardcore they are and try to one-up each other on their grunting display of masculinity. My flabby form is awestruck by their skills. Oddly enough, these are the same people who don't pick up their trash at Bruno's. I thought you guys were tough!

One group of people doesn't irritate me as much as they just weird me out. These are the professors who come in to workout wearing antiquated athletic wear. They wear these short shorts and goofy shirts that look like something out of a 60s health video. "I say, let us travel to the gymnasium and toss around ye olde medicine ball, old sport!" "Capital idea, gents!"

While jock professors simply creep me out, this next group really makes me want to start shoving cutlery into my eye sockets: the people who monopolize the equipment. Who do these people think they are? Yes, Hercules, you really need to

have that bench press for an hour and a half. Those two benches were specifically ordered for you and your knuckle-dragging pals to use for as long as you like. Don't mind me. I really have nothing better to do than to watch you. And I do watch. I always hope that somehow the entire contraption will collapse. They'll be trapped under a barbell forever.

The treadmills are a source of a lot of trouble as well. I had this one guy get on the treadmill next to me once, and he had his little iPod with him. Of course, he wasn't just listening to the music; he had to make sure I appreciated that music too by cranking up the volume and singing along. I have to say, I really don't want to listen to "Total Eclipse of the Heart" while I'm jogging. (Okay, it wasn't really Bonnie Tyler, but let's say it was; it makes the guy seem like more of a tool.) Besides, if I have to listen to stuff like "Don't you wish your girlfriend was hot like me," then so should everyone else.

As an equal opportunity complainant, I can't overlook the women. Women, stop wearing sexy clothes to the gym! Now don't get me wrong here; I like the ladies (not that there's anything wrong with the contrary), but the gym is not the place to mix sex and athletics. It's a biological impossibility to operate the muscles in the extremities if all blood flow has been redirected to one area of the body.

Most people I know (myself included) are obnoxious in some way, but we all do the right thing: we repress our more asinine tendencies until they fester into a painful kidney stone. That's the American way! Get with the program gym jocks! Disclaimer: If you happen to be one the gym jocks that I'm talking about, congratulations! I didn't know you could read! Also, I am simply pointing this out so that you can improve yourself. Isn't that what any good friend should do?

While jock professors simply creep me out, this next group really makes me want to start shoving cutlery into my eye sockets...

Mr. Kimmitt,
we'll be giving
control of major
U.S. ports to a
state owned
company in
Dubai.

This wire
tapping is really
paying off.

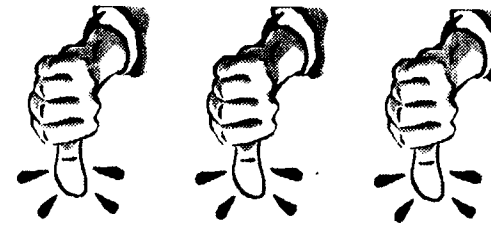


Beacon Thumbs Up



- It's FRIDAY
- Mardi Gras Parties around town
- Lion cash at Quiznos, UPS and Sheetz
- St. Patrick's Day is around the corner

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Horrible drivers
- Reed machines being sold out
- NCAA banning Native American Mascots and slogans
- Missing Bruno's Balcony Chairs

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.