

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

Quote of the week

He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life.

~Muhammad Ali

Politics is a risky business

By Annie Sevin
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We live in a democratic society. In all forms of government that Americans implement, from Sewage Treatment Plant Community Associations, we model our small governments after the United States Government for obvious reasons. It is unfortunate when the people being governed do not get to voice their opinions. It's unfortunate, but perhaps in a college setting it isn't always destructable.

Monday morning there were rumors that Deepti Soni had dropped out of the SGA Presidential Election. By Wednesday, those rumors had been officially confirmed. With the Soni/Zambanini ticket officially off the ballot, Meredith Straub and Ken Middlemiss were ready to be voted the next SGA president and vice president. Straub and Middlemiss would only need 10 votes to win the "election."

Last week, the current SGA President Alexander Henderson made remarks regarding his decision for not vetoing the blind vote from the week before. That was the week wherein the senate voted to overturn the recommendation that Soni and Zambanini not be allowed to run due to "lack of experience." Henderson said he did not want to see the election come down to one man's vote, so he refused his power of veto.

However, that is essentially what has happened now because of Soni's withdrawal. The election came down to 12 students: Soni, Zambanini, and the 10 required votes for Straub and Middlemiss. The student body of Behrend has been handed a president. The question is, will this directly affect next year's presidency? Will students be able to follow a president they did not vote for?

Those questions bring another to mind: had Soni stayed in the race and won, would her presidency have been a peaceful one? One certainly wouldn't think so if they took into account all of the controversy surrounding this year's campaign. Rumors were spread, threats were made, and reputations were dragged through the mud, and for what? An election in a student organization? Soni and Zambanini's campaign wasn't even over yet - no one had even voted, and rumors were flying around Behrend about impeaching Soni if she were to win the election.

Soni was mulling over the decision of whether or not to stay at Behrend another year or go to grad school. Zambanini had just returned from Spain and was still in the process of returning to his old life. They decided to run because they felt the students should have a choice. It was not fair to Soni and Zambanini that students did everything in their power to stop them from running in the election. It was not fair to Straub and Middlemiss that those same students wanted an uncontested race, therefore allowing them to win by default.

It is unfortunate that students did not have a choice in the presidential election because that is after all the crux of democracy - having choices. As citizens of the U.S., we pride ourselves on being a democratic society. However, most of us don't even think about the right to vote and why we have that right until it is taken away.

Although it is regrettable that we were not afforded the right to choose a president, it is not regrettable that Straub and Middlemiss will succeed President Henderson and Vice President Soni. They both have very good leadership skills and creative qualities that will serve them, and the student body, well next year. Good luck Meredith and Ken.

The Behrend Beacon

Published Weekly by the students of Penn State Erie



Annie Sevin, Mom
Patrick Webster, Dad
Courtney Kaplin, Rich Aunt
Randy Martell, Dog walker
Kim Young, Grandma

Obnoxious Older Sister Jennifer Haight	Prodigal Son Sean Mihlo
Illiterate Brother Chris LaFuria	Long Lost Sister Siobhan Conway
Drunk Uncle Daniel Mitchell	Family Psychoanalyst Kate Kelecseny
The Mistake Jerry Pohl	Family Pediatrician Rachael Conway
Neighborhood Paperboy Robert Frank	Family OBGYN Justin Plansinis
Estranged Ex-wife Michelle Vera Surovic	Family Proctologist Jordan Gilmore

Get your pranks in. Happy April Fool's Day!

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Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to dgm147@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.

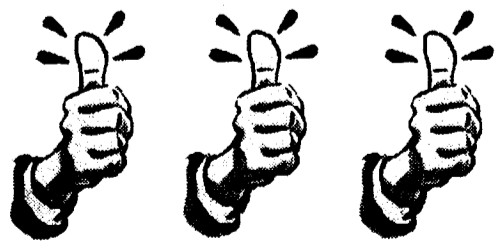
All submissions must include consent to be edited before they can be edited for publication.

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



Send Suggestions to opinion@psu.edu

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Warm weather
- Excelling spring sports teams
- Summer's just over the horizon
- Foaming soap dispensers
- Cinderella teams in the Final Four

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Professors who pile on the work at the last minute
- Scheduling for next semester
- Uncontested SGA election
- Unsquirtable relish packets in Bruno's

Letter to the Editor

Irony versus Ignorance

Jerry Pohl needs to stick to comedy, at least a few people think that he is funny. His editorial about the irony in Ken Middlemiss' question about quorum is a gleaming display of ignorance.

First of all, it is possible to suspend quorum or any part of the SGA Constitution. Check Robert's Rules of Order; it takes a two-thirds majority vote and must be temporary. The quirk is, you must have quorum to suspend quorum. A motion to suspend quorum has a purpose in several occasions. The meeting on March 20th would have been a good occasion. If a meeting is about to lose quorum and will no longer be able to conduct business, then it would be wise to suspend quorum. Likewise, if there were a group of vot-

ing members who refuse to come to a meeting to ensure that business cannot take place, as was attempted two years ago at CCSG, it would also be wise to suspend quorum.

If there has been a perceived breach of the Constitution, it should be addressed and discussed. Ken's question was in that spirit. I would expect anyone who is dedicated to the SGA to try and get an issue such as this resolved. Those knowledgeable of the situation, SGA Constitution, the people involved, and Robert's Rules know that Ken's actions show a great deal of congruency with his character and should be expected.

Thank you,
Scott Soltis '05