

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



THE BEHREND
Beacon

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

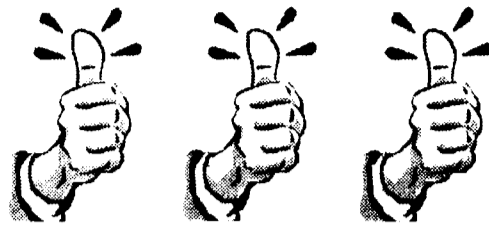


Send Suggestions to klk5005@psu.edu

Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to 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 All submissions are considered, but because of space limitations, some may not be published.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.

Beacon Thumbs Up



- 24/7 REDC computer lab
- New Lion Plaza
- Classes cancelled due to power outage
- Seniors having only one year left!

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Long walk from Science to REDC
- No clocks in REDC classrooms
- New parking arrangements
- Creepy new Facebook

It's too bad soap isn't flavored

By Christopher LaFuria
 news editor

I think the First Amendment should be amended. No, I think the First Amendment should be eradicated. Among the many freedoms promised to us by the Constitution framers, we, as Americans, have the privilege and the birthright to say just about anything that comes to our minds. Despite the many boundaries, such as censorship, that have been placed on free speech, the legislative branch has made it abundantly clear through the tenure of their existence that they shall make no laws "abridging the freedom of speech." Obviously none of the framers could anticipate life in the 21st Century.

America runs rampant with filthy diseases, filthy breathing air, filthy consumerism, and, to top it all off, filthy mouths. Whether it's a lack of a decent upbringing or just a lack of good taste, Americans better not be kissing their grandmas with the same mouths they use in everyday speech. From the government officials to the most genuine law-abiding citizens, everyone in America needs a speech adjustment. I can even recall a story about the pastor of a local church who, during a charity golf tournament, had a mouth like Tony Montana.

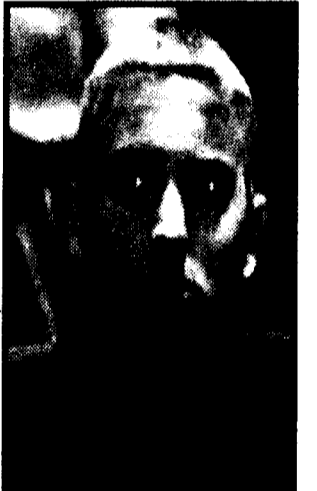
"...Americans better not be kissing their grandmas with the same mouths they use in everyday speech."

The intention of the Constitution framers was to create a free government in which people could voice important and significant opinions about the government and the actions of the country. Twenty-first century Americans use the same right to make a mockery of fellow citizens and blaspheme all that is capable of being blasphemed.

Example: Eminem. While he has avoided the pop-culture scene for some months now, the echo of his criticism still loudly resounds when issues of free speech in lyrical content

arise. While filtering through his content, critics came upon the abundant and blatant use of the word "faggot," which Eminem claims was not meant to be derogatory towards homosexual people. What Mr. Mathers neglected to realize is that any word, regardless of its context, that is insulting to a group of people, should be avoided. While the concept and practice of homosexuality is accepted in society, the gratuitous use of the word is unnecessary.

In a society of compromise, I think it is possible to keep the First Amendment. However, some adjustment should be made to put a bar of soap in the mouths of our citizens. Similar to the Amendments dealing with the right to bear arms and the right to vote, laws should be made so that, in case of violation of laws of decency, rights can be taken away. Convicted felons can't vote. Some crimes eliminate your right to bear arms. Likewise, some speech should have citizens' First Amendment rights taken away.



Penn State President Graham Spanier made the problem of unethical speech known to the university community. "The problem goes beyond simple lack of respect for others to more serious matters such as racial discrimination, hate mail, anti-Semitism and other forms of religious intolerance, harassment of gays and lesbians, rock throwing, and alcohol-fueled acts of disorderly conduct," Spanier says, "Actions that threaten the dignity or safety of any one of us represent threats to us all."

Of the many forms of incivility mentioned by Spanier, verbal abuse ranks in the upper echelon of problems. The United States needs to take a stand against hateful, derogatory or just plain rude speech. If America cannot conform, actions need to be taken in the area of amending Amendments. Or, simply, people in America need to know when to be quiet.

Crisis of creativity

By Patrick Webster
 managing editor

Hollywood producers seem to be at a loss to explain why movie ticket sales have declined steadily over the last five years, leading to an overall drop in ticket sales of almost 13 percent. Many like to point their fingers at satellite and digital television, internet videos, content piracy, and an increased availability of independently produced films. I think they couldn't be farther from the real causes. Nor do I understand why I am being asked to pay increasingly exorbitant prices for one-time big screen releases that can be purchased permanently for roughly the same price a few months later. Movies just aren't as good as they used to be.

When you examine the great classic movies of all time, the dramas, comedies, action and even horror films that captivate large audiences, there are a few common threads that link them together. While a few of the greatest cinematic works depend on big name ensemble casts, unique cinematography, or groundbreaking special effects, most boil down to one thing: a great story. A great story captivates an audience in a way that will stand the test of time and be enjoyed by several generations because it includes themes that almost anyone can identify with.

A lot of that has to do with great source material. Many movies based on classic literature, historical events, and amazing sports stories succeed not because a certain actor is in the movie or because it has great special effects, but because the story itself interests the viewers. Classic movies have depth. Two of the biggest movies in recent years have been based on theme park rides in Disneyworld.

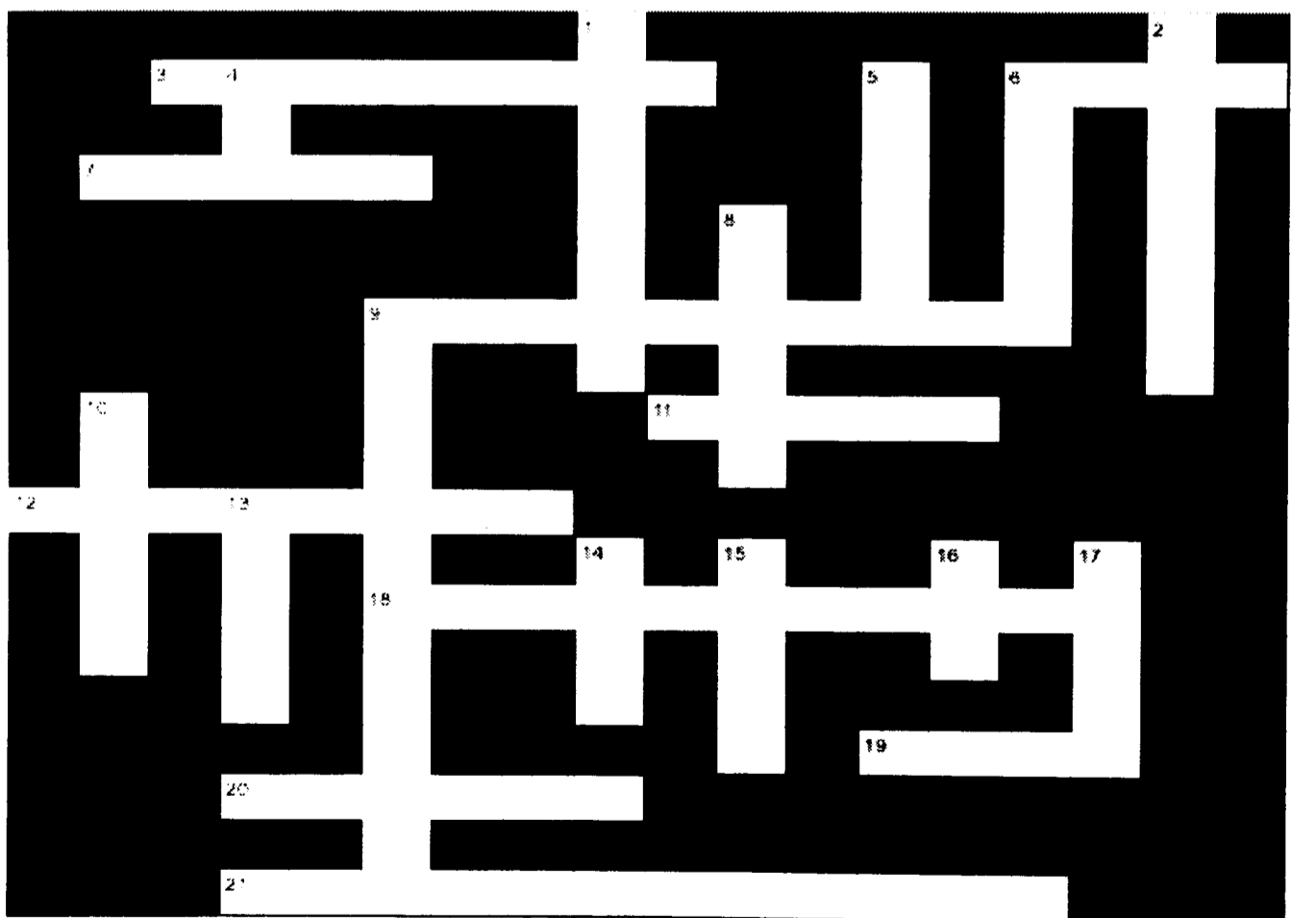
Several critics and self-styled movie buffs describe movies that have been made recently as "escapist;" that is, viewers use the movies to escape the monotony and normalcy of their daily lives. I like to call truly great movies something else. They're immersive. People do not watch great movies to escape their lives, but to enter the lives of others. It is truly enjoyable and moving to immerse yourself in events and plots so real that you can feel yourself there, observing Pickett's charge at Gettysburg or marching with the Earp brothers and Doc Holiday as they head towards the OK Corral.

This applies in a similar fashion to modern music. It seems that some modern artists, perhaps devoid of original ideas and inspiration, like to "borrow" classic works of music and put their own lyrics or minor spin on it.

The only thing that bothers me more than hearing a classic work of Mozart being played as the background for a lyrically obscene piece of rap or pop music is hearing people say how great that music is, having no idea who the original artist even was. This applies also, to a lesser extent, to new covers and interpretations of classic music. And by classic music, I don't just mean old, dead European composers, but also artists who were popular between the 1950's-1980's, who seem to be increasingly targeted by unscrupulous music samplers.

While I have no doubt that the entertainment industry wants my hard-earned dollars, they won't be getting them until they start putting out new and original work worth my investment.

The Niedenberger and Kelecseny: Government Edition



- Across**
3. a process held to determine officials
 6. a draft of a law presented to legislature
 7. the ability to get someone to do something they wouldn't do otherwise
 9. a generic word used to describe the formal part of the state
 11. individuals and institutions that make public policy
 12. man who developed the communist theory
 18. policy of colonizing other countries
 19. hanging or pregnant
 20. a critical turning point

21. basic political document that lays out procedures for a country to follow
- Down**
1. process through which a community, state, or organization governs itself
 2. principles and policies of a political party
 4. a rule enforced by authority
 5. the institutions and practices that endure from government to government
 6. this is used to cast a vote
 8. upper house of legislature in the United States
 9. term used to describe how interna-

10. legislative, e.g.
13. a group seeking to influence the passage or defeat of legislation
14. the refusal to approve 6 across
15. amendment that grants U.S. citizens the freedom of speech
16. "Vote or ____"; 2004 campaign run by P. Diddy to reach younger voters
17. to change or modify policies for the better

Solution next week