


# 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 Behrend



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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 [klk5005@psu.edu](mailto:klk5005@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 All submissions are considered, but because of space limitations, some may not be published.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication.

## Twenty is just a number

**By Chris Brown**  
staff writer

In the United States, it is illegal to drink alcohol if someone is under the age of 21. This does not stop a large amount of teenagers from drinking it. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) recently published a report stating that over 87% of adults who consume alcohol began drinking when they were under 21.

This past week, when doing an investigative report for the Beacon, I was served alcohol at a bar despite the fact that I am not 21. Did this surprise me? No. Has it happened to me before? Yes. Will it happen again? Probably. Does it bother me? Absolutely not.

I'm a responsible college student, who has gone against the law and has had a drink, or two or three or...you get the point, before in my life. Let's be honest, I'm going to drink whether the government says I can or can't. Frankly, I don't care if the law says you must be 21 to drink, because it doesn't stop me.

It's safe to say that people will drink whether they are 21 or not. The question is, where would people rather have college kids drinking, at a house party or at a bar? At house parties there is no supervision or security. It is no wonder that people at these parties subscribe to drunk driving and other bad drinking habits. At a bar there is a bartender and security on staff. It's a more secure drinking environment with established norms. Not to mention the fact that cops know where bars are to begin with and can prevent drunk driving. It makes sense to create an environment for young adults to drink alcohol where they can witness older adults drinking responsibly and can learn for themselves how to drink responsibly. Right now, young adults don't get a chance to learn responsible drinking habits because it is against the law.

One of my least favorite side effects of the drinking law is the fact I can't go to many bars in order to see bands play. Docksider Tavern, Sherlock's and the King's Rook Club all feature bands that I would like to see but can't because I'm not 21. Putting a limit at 16 or 18 to prevent kids from getting hurt at music shows makes sense but 21 is an arbitrary number. My problem isn't so much that I want to drink there, I just want to be there. Give me a different wristband, stamp, or make me wear a funny hat, but a clear blanket ban on anyone under being 21 doesn't make sense for me or the owners who are losing money or for bands who can't draw large crowds because of such severe restrictions on customers.

I would have loved to drink that beer that I was served with my underage friends and enjoy a good conversation with them. I couldn't because I was on "assignment," but it hasn't stopped me in the past and it won't stop me in the future either.

### Letter to the editor

Dear Editor,

I am appalled that you would have put an article like "Things that annoy me" in the Beacon. The person who wrote it said how if you can afford to go to Behrend then you could afford not to have your roots show. Excuse me, I go to Behrend, I cannot really afford it but through grants and loans I was able to. I have two small kids so excuse me if my roots show and it makes you a little irritated. You know what irritates me, people like the one who submitted that article judging people for no reason and based on how they look. I was also offended by what the author said about girls and their eyebrows. Again, I cannot afford to get mine waxed so I do what I do to them so I don't look like a man. I think some students at Behrend need to take a look at themselves before they judge others. How can you judge someone by never hearing or seeing what they think?

Jessica Tyndall

## The United States' next resort: reinstating the draft?

**By Jordan Gilmore**  
sports editor

As more and more troops are needed to further U.S. interests overseas, new options must be explored to meet those demands. With increasing deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan and increasing disillusionment among the National Guard and reservists, U.S. troops are spread too thin around the globe to deal effectively with threats emanating from Korean and Iranian nuclear ambitions. Recruitment is down, which further exacerbates the situation. It may be time to reinstate the draft.

The immediate boost in numbers for the armed forces would be a boon for the current hawkish U.S. foreign policy. Currently, the threat of U.S. military intervention anywhere other than Iraq or Afghanistan lacks credibility due to the lack of troops. It would be almost impossible to amass enough U.S. strength on the Korean peninsula with the current enlistment numbers and demand of strategic operations. Without significant support of allied troops, something that seems very unlikely, the U.S. must rely on sanctions in dealing with Kim Jong-Il. Conscription would allow U.S. policymakers to flex a little muscle at the negotiating table and back up that posture with boots on the ground. Aside from the tactical goals that reinstating the draft would help to achieve, there will be ancillary effects as well. Voluntary enrollment may increase as young men opt to choose which branch of the military they would prefer to serve in rather than be forced into one arbitrarily by a draft board. This increase in enrollment may even limit the reach of the draft or suspend it earlier than originally anticipated, although this is unlikely. It may even make the annual Army vs. Navy game meaningful again.

There is one argument that may trump all of the others: as a political issue, the draft is more effective than any other as a cure for apathy. Prior to 1973, voter turnout rates were relatively stable. Since that year when the draft was phased out, voter turnout has continually declined, especially among the age group most directly affected by this issue. A return to the days of forced military service would certainly get people out to the polls, if for nothing other than to keep themselves out of a combat zone. Although this is an ethically suspect means to an end, the result would be a more responsible use of our armed forces by those who need our votes.

Whatever the end results of a draft would be, it is important to maintain a troop level that meets our obligations overseas. With the current success rates of recruitment efforts, a draft may be the only viable means of obtaining a sufficient number of troops. At any rate, to dismiss a tool without considering it would be irresponsible. We may find ourselves dealing with both Iran and North Korea at the same time and at that point, it will be too late for discussion and the draft may be forced upon us, like it or not.

## The problems with crossing Jordan

**By Miranda Krause**  
copy editor

It's raining, it's cold and I'm late for class as I wait to cross the infamous Jordan Road. There are types of drivers that can make a rainy day just a little more gloomy. There is the driver that speeds up Jordan Road so fast it splashes a little road water on you, which makes you regret the fact that you even bothered to shower that day.

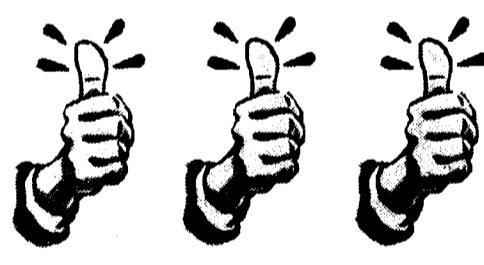
Then, there is the driver that speeds up the road just to slow down five feet away from you to let you cross. This type of driver really irritates me. I could have crossed the road already if you weren't driving so fast to begin with. Then they give you "the look." You know "the look." The look that says, "Could you walk a little faster and get the \*#@^ out of my way?!" I don't know what they are so angry about - they have a car! They are most likely warm and dry and I'm the one standing out in the rain.

Even though pedestrians have the right away, I've often heard of people saying, "I don't want to slow down just for them, I'd rather run them over." This perspective I find funny. See, when I'm in a car I don't want to slow down either. I may not even be driving - I may just be sitting in the passenger seat and telling the person who is driving to just pass the pedestrians. Then you play that game - don't even try to deny it - you've played the game where you decide how many points for the guy in the red hat, which is 50, but 100 for the girl in the ugly rain boots if you were to run them over. You wouldn't actually run them over - but still.



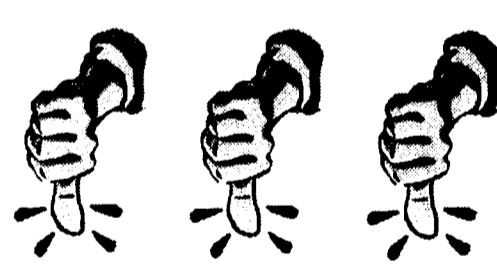
Mike Sharkey/ THE BEHREND BEACON

### Beacon Thumbs Up



- Breast cancer awareness
- Halloween parties
- Scented candles
- Hot chocolate
- Upcoming elections


### Beacon Thumbs Down




- Parking in the Junker lot
- No wireless internet in the REDC
- Student teaching assistants
- Inappropriate Halloween costumes
- Being "just friends"

### Have a Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

(check a box)





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**Submit it to the "Thumbs up-Thumbs Down" box at the RUB desk.**