

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

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This week in politics



By **Chris Brown**
copy editor

Imagine a world where a news publication not only doesn't reveal its anonymous sources, its reporters remain anonymous, and other news organizations repeat their rumors and tell them as fact. Well, that world isn't too far off; in fact, it's already here. On Jan. 30, *The New York Times* ran an article detailing the controversy surrounding a conservative on-line news publication that does just that. *Insight Magazine* (insightmag.com) ran a story that reported Hillary Clinton's campaign was seeking evidence that proved Barack Obama attended a fanatical Muslim school in Indonesia. Turns out it was a secular school and Obama went there for a few years as a youngster. That didn't stop CNN, FoxNews, other news organizations, and Clinton's campaign from running with the story. When journalism is reduced to repeating rumors as fact, with reporters that can't be held accountable nonetheless, then the line between reporting the news and spreading gossip becomes increasingly blurred. With conservatives already trying to breed ill will between Democratic candidates, I am not looking forward to a Presidential race that is beginning to

look and sound more like a high-school popularity contest and less like a serious competition to determine who our leader is for the next four years.

President George Bush has recently made some confusing statements on public policies. The same good ole' Texas boy that long supported energy policies that increased our reliance on oil through more exploration and increased trade with overseas suppliers made an about face, sort of, in his State of the Union Address. Bush said, "we must increase the supply of alternative fuels, by setting a mandatory fuels standard to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017... five times the current target." He went on to speak about "the serious challenge of global climate change," an issue Bush has avoided acknowledging throughout his administration. But the most recent shocker came the other day, when he scolded corporate executives on Wall Street for accepting millions of dollars in bonuses while their companies are failing. What is going on?! Maybe he has finally accepted that people disagree with him for good reason. Or, maybe he is trying to give a signal to his fellow Republicans on how they can win in next year's elections. Whatever the rationale is for his shifting views, I can't help but wonder, what happened to the George W. Bush that I didn't vote for?

Over the past few days, questions concerning Iran's involvement in Iraq have been raised as reports surface that Iranian agents have been behind attacks on coalition soldiers. Undersecretary of State for Political

Affairs, Nicholas Burns, stressed, "...we can have a diplomatic solution to these problems," in an interview on National Public Radio. But, that is becoming hard to believe with the deployment of another carrier battle group to the Persian Gulf and Bush vowing, "We will do what it takes to protect our troops." The worst thing the administration can do now is provoke the Iranians and unite them behind President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad when his grip is slipping in the country. Just last month, his radical party lost in local elections across Iran and he was recently jeered at by students at an Iranian university while speaking. The populace in Iran is growing increasingly discontent with his anti-west stance and failed economic policies. Now is our chance to stand back and let the populace dispose of their maniacal leader instead of allowing him to unite Iran against an aggressive United States.

In last week's issue, I wrote about the Erie County Council's public smoking ban. Since then I was able to get in touch with Doug Smith, Council Clerk, who confirmed my suspicions about its effect on private clubs and its ambiguity. According to Smith, smoking would be banned in private clubs if employees were present. As for its ambiguity, he went on to say, "it is legally unexplored as to whether or not a member-bartender would be different than an employee. Certain areas will remain open to interpretation for some time."

...what happened to the George W. Bush that I didn't vote for?

The evidence just isn't there. It doesn't say anything about global warming in Revelations.

WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON



Jerry Pohl

The hush on global warming

By **Jessica Samol**
staff writer

A recent report by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee revealed that federal scientists have been pressured by the White House to downplay global warming. Apparently, the Bush administration delayed and altered the findings of federal climate scientists, deleting terms such as "rapid warming" and in many cases avoiding the term "global warming" completely.

According to NASA scientist Drew Shindell, the Bush administration brushed off research findings that suggested Antarctica might warm rapidly in the future, causing melting ice and a sharp rise in sea-level. In addition, Shindell said that climate scientists had been urged not to talk about their research findings with the media.

For decades, the topic of global

warming has been an issue of controversy, when it should be an issue of concern. Perhaps most of the controversy on global warming revolves around how to deal with it. But even so, the Bush administration has made no effort to deal with future effects of global warming. The U.S. is not a member of the Kyoto Treaty, which is a treaty dedicated to reducing carbon emissions which scientists believe to be a major contributor to global warming. The irony is that the United States has the highest carbon emission rate. Yet, the public is constantly hearing from the media that scientists cannot directly link human activity or the current climate change to global warming.

A major U.N. climate report to be released within the next week, may confirm that global warming is happening and that humans are to blame. Perhaps then the Bush administration will make the public more aware of the threat of global warming, and take action to reduce future threats.

I want YOU to give your opinions. Don't be afraid to speak up! If something really bothers you, or makes you happy, let me know. Send letters and articles to jan219@psu.edu and they'll be printed right here. That's right; you can be heard! So don't be shy-- submit something today.

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Superbowl is on Sunday!
- Finding money in random pockets
- *Aqua Teen's* "bomb scare" in Boston
- Lewis Black coming to campus
- Fake newscasters

Beacon Thumbs Down



- People who text in class
- Salt stains on the bottoms of pants
- Leaky windows
- Slush
- People who can't drive in the snow



Have a Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

(check a box)



Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to jan219@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 3 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.

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