

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

THE BEHREND Beacon

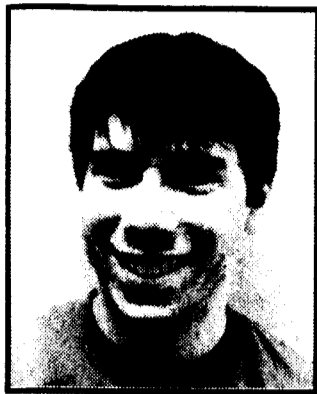


Christopher LaFuria, Editor in Chief
Patrick Webster, Managing Editor
Lindsay Snyder, Advertising Manager
Kim Young, Adviser

News Editor Ashley Bressler	Humor Editor Ben Raymond
Assistant News Editors Lenny Smith	Assistant Humor Editor Jerry Pohl
Sports Editors Danielle Brown Kara Struski	Head Copy Editor Rachael Conway
Student Life Editor Joshua Lane Scott Muska	Copy Editors Chris Brown Janet Niedenberger Jessica Samol
Opinion Editor Janet Niedenberger	Photography Editor Mike Sharkey

Penn State Erie,
The Behrend College
First Floor, The J. Elmer Reed Union Building
Station Road, Erie, PA 16563
Contact the Beacon at:
Telephone: (814) 898-6488
Fax: (814) 898-6019

This week in politics



By Chris Brown
copy editor

Sometime in the near future students will be able to enjoy 24-hour gambling only two exits away on Interstate-90. Finally, Pennsylvanians will have the opportunity to gamble in-state. The only downside to Presque Isle Downs is that Pennsylvania law prohibits casinos from operating table games and limits the downs to slot machines only. Neighboring states are already passing legislation to ease casino laws in their states to try and keep as many gamblers coming to them as possible. If Pennsylvania wants to enjoy not only the fun, but the property tax relief that comes with casino revenues, then they must pass legislation allowing card and table games. A few legislators in Harrisburg have voiced their support for allowing more types of gambling but no new bills have been introduced yet. If you

share my opinion and want card and table games then I encourage you to call your state representative and show that you care.

The end is near for a humanitarian intervention the United States started over nine years ago. No, I did not get my facts wrong: I am not talking about Iraq, although it may seem like we have been there forever. I am talking about Kosovo. Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Serbians started final negotiations for settlement on Feb. 21 with a deadline for a deal set in March. As this intervention ends and another is still raging, I think some perspective and lessons can be gained.

After eight years it is surprising how opinions change, and stay the same, in Congress. In 1999, when President Clinton authorized airstrikes against Serbia to protect Albanians in Kosovo from ethnic cleansing, the speeches and

will have to commit thousands of men and women from our armed forces once again and billions more in expenditures for an undetermined period of time." That quote could have easily been taken from last week's debate in Congress over the resolution against President Bush's troop surge in Iraq, but it wasn't. That quote can be attributed to Republican Senator Olympia Snowe in reference to Clinton's troop deployment to Kosovo in 1999. Dennis Hastert, Trent Lott, and many other Republicans in Congress said similar things about the US intervention in Kosovo.

Fast forward to today. According to Republicans in Congress, every time a politician speaks out against troop deployment they "embolden our enemies and hurt the morale of the troops," but, the problem is, they questioned US interests and threatened to cut off funds eight years ago in Kosovo.

To be fair, Democrats are just as hypocritical, after all when Republicans filibustered their court nominees in the Senate over the years they cried foul, but that didn't stop them from doing the same thing to President Bush's nominees. But still, I don't know who to be angrier at. Republicans for their hypocrisy? Democrats for letting them get away with it? Or the public and the media for ignoring the contradiction?

Maybe I am just sick of the politicking in Washington. All of this has taught me that there are only two truths to politics. First, opinions don't change, just the names and faces attached to them. And second, those in power want to keep it and those out of power want to get it.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Slot machines are just one part of the soon-to-open Presque Isle Downs.

resolutions in Congress were not all that different from the ones heard last week over the Iraq war.

"I don't think that we are prepared to acknowledge the extent to which we

Letter to the Editor

Students:

This week the Diversity Committee of your Student Government Association organized a "Culture Week" designed to help promote greater awareness and tolerance of the many cultures here on campus. Events have ranged from a diversity table outside Bruno's to a comedian to a celebration of Black History (February is Black History Month), among others.

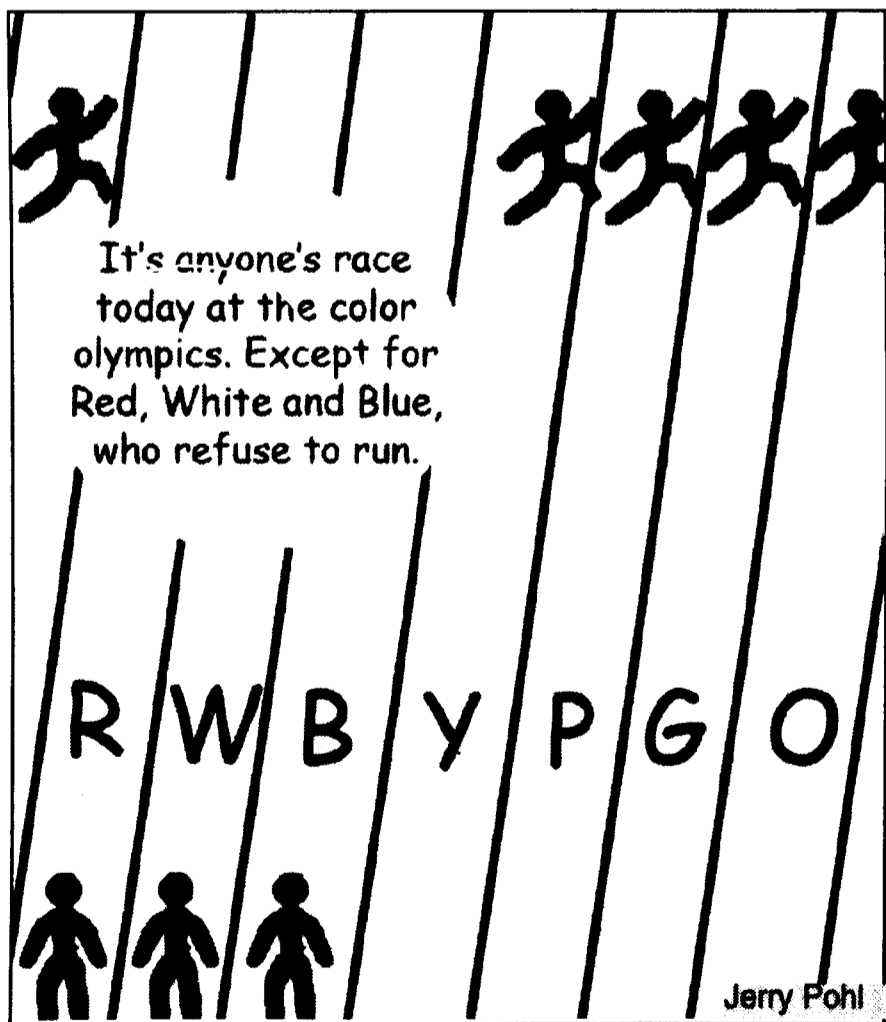
Unfortunately, someone decided to re-make the table tents advertising the programs with derogatory titles.

Whether it's a joke that went too far or sheer ignorance, acts such as this have no place at Penn State Behrend. The first Penn State Principle states that "I will respect the dignity of all individuals within the Penn State community." Clearly the person(s) responsible should take a step back and reevaluate their decision to do this.

Acts such as this are uncommon at Behrend and I hope this is an isolated incident. I believe we promote a welcoming environment where students from many backgrounds and interests can be successful.

Let's work together to keep it that way.

Dr. Ken Miller
Director of Student Affairs



It's anyone's race today at the color olympics. Except for Red, White and Blue, who refuse to run.

Jerry Pohl

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 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.



Janet Niedenberger

...and I'm really gonna love it when I have diabetes and heart disease at a very young age. I'll also probably never have self-esteem, and my life span is probably about half of what it used to be.
Thanks McDonald's, for bringing me the gift of childhood obesity.

Celebrities > Everyone else

By Christopher LaFuria
editor in chief

Hollywood's lawyers are back from the squash courts as they are set to take on their newest celebrity case. Mario Lavandeira, alias Perez Hilton, is being sued for using stolen topless pictures of Jennifer Aniston. According to the U.S. District Court, Lavandeira "posted all or parts of the stolen footage from the motion picture on his website." The pictures were stolen from the production of *The Break Up*, which boasted sales of more than \$118 million in the box office.

Before the world and Elton John said "goodbye Norma Jean," the American society began their obsession with actors and actresses such as Marilyn Monroe. From the stalkerazzi to reading about celebs in the news, the American public could not get enough of the newfound celebrity-obsession, which took the nation by storm. On every street corner, people could grab newspapers or magazines with their favorite celeb on the cover.

Onto the 20th Century, where the obsession with celebrities has become a disease. Media outlets like MTV, VH1

and E! constantly track celebrities, whether they are in vicious love triangles or taking their dogs out for a mid-afternoon dookie. Even major news networks like FOX and CNN are shifting their coverage to include celebrities and their lives.

During much of 2006 and into '07, it was natural to turn your console television to VH1 and watch the latest installment of "Celebrity Fit Club," where overweight and morbidly obese former celebrities lost minimal weight from pointless activities, or "Surreal Life," where has-been stars portray their own version of MTV's "The Real World."

On Feb. 8, the world gathered together to mourn the loss of an American icon. Anna Nicole Smith, famous for doing nothing and getting paid for making a fool out of herself, died from complications unknown to everyone. With this startling and mysterious death, the world sat in confusion and amazement that something like this happened. As this was happening, I sat in confusion and amazement since I was

watching the news, FOX to be exact, and they could not stop talking about the tragedy. Later, I was reading online about how four American soldiers and over 20 Iraqi soldiers were killed in combat overseas.

Let's get this straight. American soldiers dying or American celebrities dying? Clearly Americans have their priorities messed up. Since when is the death of an American celebrity covered more by the news than the death of soldiers fighting overseas?

Since when is the death of an American celebrity covered more by the news than the death of soldiers fighting overseas?

more by the news than the death of soldiers fighting overseas? Mind-boggling. Simply mind-boggling. It's bad enough that we need to see Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes walk their baby Suri in her stroller. It's even worse when we need to give such celebrity couples single-entity names like TomKat. But to publicize Anna Nicole Smith's death more than the death of marines is unacceptable.

We, as a nation, need to figure out what is important so that we can continue to be informed and up to date with what is happening outside of our television comfort zone.