

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 Editor Lenny Smith	Assistant Humor Editor Jerry Pohl
Sports Editors Danielle Brown Kara Struski	Head Copy Editor Rachael Conway
Opinion Editor Janet Niedenberger	Copy Editors Chris Brown Janet Niedenberger Jessica Samol
Food & Drink Editor Chris Brown	Student Life Editors Joshua Lane Scott Muska
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

Gun control became an issue again after a student went on a killing spree at Virginia Tech and killed over 30 of his fellow classmates. My prayers and thoughts go out to the students and family members at Virginia Tech. Nobody will ever really understand why the gunman did what he did, but it is important to gain some understanding of how such a tragedy was able to happen.

In the days and weeks following the killings, a number of investigations will surely be conducted and finished to try and ascertain exactly what went wrong, but no doubt they will all offer up the same excuses and scapegoats everyone expects them to: the College President and the Campus Police at Virginia Tech. Everyone is quick to question why the campus wasn't closed down after the first shooting and why students weren't notified. While those are important questions to ask in order to prevent another tragedy at another campus in the future, I'm sure all the administrators acted in compliance with their own rules; no one could have expected the carnage that took place.

Unfortunately, no investigation will

look into the larger effect question and cause of our nation's gun control laws. We had a real opportunity after the last major school shooting in Columbine High School to enact meaningful gun control legislation, but over the past eight years a Republican-controlled Congress has rolled back those laws and stopped new ones.

Now it looks like the Democrats are taking a page out of the Republican playbook and will not make gun control an issue. Democrats fear that all of those seats they fought so hard to gain in the last election will be lost if gun control comes up because those swing districts and states are all against gun control. In every politician's defense I guess, they are just representing our interests which they are supposed to do as representatives.

If that is true, then what are we thinking? Gun control is not about banning

times we live in. That is why I don't understand people who preach on the Second Amendment right to bear arms till their faces turn blue. If the same logic they use to justify gun ownership was applied to the whole constitution, women wouldn't be able to vote and owning slaves would still be legal, because, with their logic, changing the constitution would violate its sanctity. Not only is this logic historically inaccurate and corrupt, it is causing a great deal of harm to Americans.

Only in America can we spend billions of dollars on a war in Iraq and on anti-terrorism efforts, two of the supposedly greatest threats to our security when over 30,000 people die every year from firearms, a number far greater than the amount of people killed from terrorists. If politicians really want to be pro-security, then they would get serious on gun control.

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reed (D-NV) met with President Bush on April 18 to try and work out a deal for the passage of a war spending bill. Bush has urged lawmakers to stop delaying the necessary funding for the troops. Bush has chided congress for dragging its feet on the issue, but so far the Democrats have been remarkably quick to pass the legislation compared to their Republican predecessors who took almost 120 days to pass their spending bill in 2006.

Both the House and Senate spending bills in Congress have those timetables that Bush is so vehemently opposed to in their texts, but Bush has vowed to veto them because of the attachments of timetables for troop withdrawal. Bush may unwittingly hand Democrats a major victory by delaying the 'necessary' troop funding with his very own veto.

Gun control is about getting guns that have no use for hunting off the streets, stopping criminals from getting guns, and keeping people safe.

guns or prying them from hunters' "cold dead hands." Gun control is about getting guns that have no use for hunting off the streets, stopping criminals from getting guns, and keeping people safe.

Our constitution is a living document, meant to be changed and adapted to the

This Virginia Tech shooting is all the result of glorified violence in our children's video games.

Jerry Pohl

Jack Thompson

FOX NEWS
ops heroically defeat Iraq forces in glorious fight

The Beacon is looking for editors and writers for next semester!! Interested? Email Chris LaFuria at csl5005@psu.edu for more information! Get involved!

Letter to the Editor

I am writing in response to Ms. Theresa Di Buono's comments on Definition of Diversity? [April 6]. Her claims that Behrend is one of the most "inaccessible campuses for handicapped people," that the college "lacks concern" and that we are somehow denying an education because of our "horrible conditions" are unfounded, irresponsible and plain wrong!

Let me first note that the preferred term is "people" or "student with disabilities"—putting the emphasis on "people" or "student" first. "Handicapped people" as referred to in the piece has a demeaning tone. I encourage her to research the reasons why.

Indeed, the physical characteristics of this campus present challenges for a student in a wheelchair. We are very well aware of these challenges and have continuously explored and put into place ways to make flow and access easier for all students. We have established a system of elevators and ramps that enable a student in a wheelchair to reach the uppermost part of the campus, from Erie Hall through Senat, the elevator tower, to the apartments and so on, as well as safely return to the lower level.

Colleges and universities face many challenges providing complete access to all of their buildings for individuals with limited mobility. Some of the older universities struggle greatly in this respect. We certainly confront some of those challenges here with a couple of our older buildings. The majority of the buildings on this campus, however, are fairly new and provide more than adequate accessibility. Close attention has been paid during the design period to assure that buildings not only comply with ADA regulations, but that they also provide the best access possible for our students with disabilities. This not only applies to buildings, but also parking lots and other structures.

Our Maintenance and Operations staff

work very hard to assure that sidewalks and other pathways are plowed and accessible for all on campus. This process starts very early in the morning and throughout the day. Unfortunately, many students don't notice a lot of the work that takes place around campus at 6 a.m. or earlier in order to get the campus ready to operate. In fact, we discuss among the staff and many times with the students themselves, the routes taken by students in wheelchairs in order to assure a clear pathway when they are in route to class. Needless to say, the weather in Erie presents many challenges in this regard, but we do our best to manage its impact.

There's a difference between the topography of the campus and "horrible accommodations." The fact that someone feels guilty because of their own mobility and/or capability to move about the campus has nothing to do with the effort the college has made to provide equal access for all of its students.

I would also like to point out that the piece refers to "handicapped people" only in terms of mobility and comparing our services to a "small undertone... almost to the point of pathetic in its 'meeting its requirements' standards." I wonder if this individual is aware of how many students with documented disabilities exist on this campus? Does she have any idea of what the largest disability group is here? Does she know the services these students receive? Does she know who oversees services for students with disabilities at Behrend? Has she contacted that office and asked for their perspective? I don't believe she has. Supporting and providing services for these students involves great coordination and interaction among a number of staff and faculty members. We all do it gladly and have received very positive responses in surveys given to this student population.

In terms of the definition of diversity,

the college offers this definition on its web site: www.pserie.psu.edu/diversity. This web site includes information and resources for students with disabilities among others. In the past, I have invited students (via a college-wide e-mail) to peruse this web site. I offer that invitation again.

I admire and appreciate the fact that your staff cares for our students with disabilities and have a passion for diversity issues. I suggest, however, that they expand on their research in order to ensure that they have a complete picture of an issue before they reach insufficient conclusions and make speculative accusations on a public forum such as the Beacon.

We are certainly not perfect and know that we face many challenges on this campus. Some we can manage and improve upon, some are beyond our control. Nonetheless, I can assure you that we care deeply about all of our students and strive to provide them with the best experience and service we can. We welcome their ideas and input if there are things they feel we must address.

This is not the first time the Beacon has made speculative accusations or reported wrong facts. Just as we strive to improve our services, I encourage you to more carefully monitor what your paper is putting into view to make sure that information and opinions are presented in impartial and just manner.

I would be happy to discuss this and any other concern you or your staff may have about diversity issues on our beloved campus.

Thank you!

Andy A. Herrera
Director of Educational Equity and Diversity Programs

THUMBS UP



- The sun has come out!
- Only two weeks of classes left
- Ice cream
- Blue & White weekend
- Good finds at Salvation Army

THUMBS DOWN

- Wall Street Journals put where they don't belong
- Vehicles that can't go over 15 mph
- Senseless tragedies
- Webmail and its many faces
- Cellphoners who talk during meals in public places



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.