

# 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



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## Editor's note: On taking risks

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I've never been skydiving before. Chances are I never will. On my first trip to Darien Lake in New York, it took an hour-long stare-down with "The Superman," one of the tallest, fastest rides at the amusement park, which included many prayers and curses, before I mustered up the courage to take the plunge. And, even though it was out of my comfort zone, I did it. I looked the ride straight in its mechanical eyes and said, "Look, you bastard. It's go time."

Taking risks was never part of my repertoire. I was a safety-first, hyper-cautious momma's boy that looked both ways (and looked again) before I crossed the street. Granted, when I was younger I never was faced with anything of great danger, but I was a play-it-safer nonetheless. However, after graduation from high school and acceptance to college, I knew I had to take off the helmet and kneepads and jump into new, challenging endeavors.

The moment I knew it was time to make a change was when I was sitting in my freshman English class, innocently eavesdropping on two students'

conversation. It was only the first day of classes and people were already talking about the previous weekend's events filled with partying and standard college merriment. As the two talked on, my mind drifted into thought with many questions still unanswered. Why don't I have friends already? Am I ever going to fit in? Will people at Behrend like me? And so on; just like a scene out of a Lindsey Lohan tween-flick.

Weeks went on and I still didn't notice a change. I witnessed new friendships form, new relationships blossom, new gossip, new parties, and I wasn't part of any of it. In an English class of roughly 30 students, I think only two people knew my name. One was a person with whom I attended high school and the second was a person who knew my name solely because I gave him a ride during Erie's first monsoon of the fall.

In high school I never approached people. I waited until a girl proved interest in me before making any sort of small talk. I had a lot of friends, but that was courtesy of knowing people since Little League and Boy Scouts. Maybe I was too nervous or maybe I

was unsure of myself. Whatever the case may be, I missed out on valuable and irreplaceable relationships due to my own reluctance to take risks.

During the spring of my freshman year, I unexpectedly received an email from a classmate. In the email, he told me that we shared the same music tastes and would probably get along. Throughout the last three years, we have demonstrably proven that he was correct. Knowing that someone took notice of me was just the boost I needed to shake off any preconceived inaccurate notion of myself and start doing things for me. Later that year I began greeting people, starting small talk and even going out on the weekends.

I consider this my own skydiving. There were no major physical consequences to doing so. But, for me, it was reaching beyond my own conceptual "safety" and entering into the real world. Freshman year at any university is about establishing a firm foundation and building a structure of friendships and relationships upon that ground. Don't let your first year at Behrend become ruins. Take a risk. Maybe even jump out of a plane.

## Letter from the Director of Student Affairs

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When this year's Opinion Editor Chris Brown invited me to author a welcome message to students, my only question was "What's your deadline?" The start of a new academic year is always incredibly busy but it is also the most exciting time of year. In my opinion, there's been no better time to be a Penn State Behrend student than now.

This fall we welcome nearly 1,250 first-year students to Behrend, the largest class in Behrend history, breaking the previous record that dates way back to 2006. That's over 1,300 new faces when you add in students who have transferred from non-Penn State schools. We've also set a new all-time enrollment record this fall with nearly 4,500 students. Why do we have so many students despite Erie winters? I could cite many factors including faculty who are national (and in some cases international) authorities in their field, first-rate classroom facilities for students in all four of our schools, and a staff dedicated to helping young adults (and returning adults) fulfill their hopes and dreams. But there's more to it than that.

The truth is we have a very talented group of students who attract other talented students who want a Penn State degree in a personalized environment. We have students who want to get the most out of their college experience both in and out of the classroom. Students like Danielle Brown, this year's Senior Sophister, who has a perfect gpa at the start of her senior year (congratulations on your recent engagement by the way), or Annemarie Priester and Brad Kovalcik, the co-directors of this year's New Student Orientation program. Or SGA President Ben Gilson who was in a serious car accident three weeks before classes started and was determined not to miss this semester (give him a hand when you see him, it's uphill both ways to class around here). I could go on, but you get the point. Penn

State Behrend is special because of its students and this year's record enrollment means there's more depth to the talent pool. More students means a greater diversity of thought, new ideas for improving life on campus, and the possibility of more friends on Facebook.

If you asked Chancellor Burke how Behrend got to where it is now (and I encourage you to ask him when you see him in Bruno's), he'd tell you that we strive to be better today than we were yesterday, and better tomorrow than we are today. With this thought in mind I'd like to encourage you to do three things this year:

**Show Your Spirit** - Attend an athletic event in the Junker Center or on the Behrend Fields. Cheer on the volleyball teams or the soccer teams or the basketball teams or any of our 21 varsity sports. The players are students and athletes who work hard to represent us well. Show them your support.

**Show Your Pride** - Wear the Blue and White. Every student should have at least one piece of clothing with either Penn State or, better yet, Penn State Behrend written on it. Whether it's a SWE t-shirt (my vote for the best t-shirt last year), a Behrend sweatshirt, or Penn State gloves (you'll need them soon enough), show your pride in one of the world's best institutions of higher learning.

**Show Your Face** - Come to a Speaker Series event (Jeff Corwin on 11/1 should be fun) or a comedian (remember Lewis Black anyone?) or Club Rush (9/6 on the Reed lawn—yes, a shameless plug). Better yet, show your face at a meeting of one of the 112 clubs and organizations that plan events for you or report on them. Did you know *The Behrend Beacon* is the only weekly student newspaper at a Penn State campus?

And remember to show your face at class. Woody Allen said, "eighty percent of success is showing up."

Have a great year!

Schools in the United States are so bad...



## This Week in Politics

By Chris Brown  
opinion editor  
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Senator Larry E. Craig (R-Idaho) is facing some tough questions. He pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of soliciting sex in a Minneapolis airport restroom after being caught in the act by an undercover police officer in June. This is disturbing on a few levels.

During a press conference he said that the plea was a mistake. As a Senator he should not only be fully aware of the laws on the books, but be aware of what exactly a guilty plea means. Even a passive viewer of the television show *Law and Order* can explain exactly what a guilty plea implies...guilt. If anyone should know that I think it would be a Senator, whose job it is to inspect laws and make them. Maybe America's education crisis runs deeper than previously thought?

Later in the press conference, Craig also vehemently denied being gay. Is he implying that only homosexuals solicit sex in public restrooms? That being a homosexual somehow affects his ability to legislate? This is not only irrelevant to his problems with the law, but also offensive. The issue of his sexual preference is a private matter, or at least it was until he decided to make it public.

ings of U.S. attorneys and recent testimony by FBI Director Robert Mueller that contradicted sworn testimony by Gonzales.

Gonzales has been with President Bush since the early days of Bush's tenure as Governor of Texas and even served as White House counsel before being nominated to Attorney General after the beginning of Bush's second term. His resignation could not have come a moment too soon. He supported illegal spying on American citizens, the torture and indefinite detainment of terrorist suspects in Guantanamo,

defied Congressional subpoenas, warrantless wiretaps, and helped destroy America's moral high ground in the War on Terror. Time and again Gonzales demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice precedent and justice in the name of furthering the Republican Party or Bush's Agenda. Hopefully President Bush has learned his lesson and will nominate an Attorney General that upholds the Constitution and has the interests of the American people at heart and not the President.

This week a military jury acquitted Lt. Col. Steven Jordan of wrongdoing in the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal. He was found guilty of a lesser charge, discussing the scandal when ordered not to do so. This is a sad end to a terrible tragedy and certainly leaves Iraqis without justice being served. It is hard to believe that almost no one in charge is being held responsible for the torture and mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Not only does this look poorly on the military in here, but one can only imagine what foreign news agencies like Al-Jazeera are making of the verdict.

## 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](mailto: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.

Employment Application			
Full Name:	Gonzalez	Alberto R.	Date 8/31/2007
Have you ever been convicted of a felony?	YES	NO	MAYBE
If yes, explain:	I do not recall		
Company:	United States Government	Supervisor:	George W. Bush
Job Title:	Attorney General, Department of Justice		
Responsibilities:	Serving as US citizen without warrants, approving torture of suspects through use of euphemisms and legalese, furthering the Republican Party's agenda by sacrificing due process and justice, breaking precedent in over 200 years of tradition, loyal to the President no matter what...		
From:	11/11/04	To:	08/27/07
Reason for Leaving:	Possible criminal investigation		
May we contact your previous supervisor for a reference?	YES	NO	
I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my very incomplete knowledge and memory. If this application leads to employment, I understand that false or misleading information on my application, interview or later dates may result in my release, questioning or reward depending on my loyalty to my supervisor.			
Signature:	Alberto R. Gonzalez		

CHRIS BROWN