

# 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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**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

## The costs of war cont.

By Chris Brown  
opinion editor  
cmb5313@psu.edu

By the numbers, the war in Iraq is staggering, but also a departure from previous wars. A group of Massachusetts Institute of Technology researchers estimate that over 600,000 Iraqis have been killed, millions have fled the country, and that the Iraqis left have to deal with unreliable power and water supplies.

Since the war began, over 3,700 servicemen and women have been killed in combat and over 27,000 have been injured in combat. Due to medical advances, over 97 percent of soldiers who receive injuries survive them, far more than any previous war. Many of these soldiers will be scarred for life and have to live with those scars or without limbs. Head trauma and other brain-related injuries are exorbitantly high among soldiers and many of our veterans will require constant care throughout their lives as a result of their injuries.

The prevalence of mental illness is also staggering; studies in the Journal of the American Medical Association indicate that over 19 percent of returning veterans exhibit symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse and a host of

other conditions. A statistic not so surprising considering the workload put on soldiers and the frequency of combat experienced by soldiers compared to Vietnam and World War II.

Extended deployments and rapid re-deployments among soldiers have stressed the personal lives of many soldiers. Increased divorce rates, child abuse and domestic abuse all provide concrete evidence that the effects of the war are going to be felt for a long time.

Mission accomplished. Support the troops. Missed benchmarks. No military solution. Quick withdrawal. No surrender. It's either over there or here. End the war. It is in the hands of the

*The Iraq war has become a war of punchlines and soundbytes.*

Iraqis. General Betray Us. Git 'r done. Forget the numbers; this is what the war in Iraq has been reduced to. The Iraq war has become a war of punchlines and soundbytes. To a great extent, those punchlines and soundbytes represent the extent of understanding many Americans have on the war in Iraq and nothing scares me more.

Because the debate and discussions of the war focus on these sound-bites,

we forget that there is a human face to this war. People are dying every day. At the end of the day we need to ask ourselves was this war worth it; do the costs outweigh the benefits?

Technology gives us the ability to wage two simultaneous wars without demanding anything of anyone besides the soldiers and their families serving. I am thankful for this, for it means that I don't have to worry about my family and friends going over and risking their lives. But at the same time it fills me with guilt and worry. Without feeling the effects of the war firsthand for the most part, is my generation going to learn the lessons my parents' generation learned from Vietnam and my grandparents' generation learned from World War II? War should only be waged as a necessity, never as a choice because the costs are too high and the benefits too low. I believe history will judge this war as just that, a war of choice.

War is horrible; the numbers don't begin to describe the suffering experienced by soldiers and civilians in the middle of a warzone. But, because this war has been reduced to who has the most colorful and plentiful "support-the-troops" bumper stickers, to the catchiest slogan, and most politically correct stance, I fear my generation will remain oblivious to the lessons learned from Iraq.

## Pop culture fizzles

By Ryan P. Gallagher  
student life editor  
rpg5004@psu.edu

Music. Movies. Television. Most can say that at least one of the three plays a significant role in their life. Sadly, all three have taken a turn for the worst in the past few years.

It's not our fault. It's almost not even the fault of the major record labels and networks that have dumbed down the majority of America's young people. But most of it is.

Reality shows. Popular music. Dumb comedies. Flavor Flav.

Each is an example of how the creativity has been sucked from the entertainment industry in recent years. It is partly our fault because we continue to throw time away by watching the shows and buying the top albums of the month. But more and more, it seems that we only participate in this because the media and MTV tell us it's cool. I'm not saying they haven't dominated this specific area in the past, I'm just saying that what they're telling us to do now is actually the definition of foolish.

It's not hard to realize that every beat to each pop-rap-some-type-of-terrible-noise song that comes out is way too similar to the last one. It's also not hard to realize that the words to these songs could've been written by Miss South Carolina. But it seems like no one cares. Not the way we cared 30 years ago.

And MTV. Honestly. Who is watching? That's really all I can print about that one.

All people care about anymore, it seems to me, is watching people act stupid on national television. That's what it's all about. How stupid is the Flava Flav show? Think about it. What if that was some random dude that wasn't a rapper 10 years ago. I mean, really think about the stuff that goes on in that show. The guy is an

idiot. If people can't realize how fake all the girls are, then I feel sorry for you. But it's true. Each day, I hear people having serious concerns for what could potentially happen on "Flava of Love."

It seems like the cool thing to do these days is to just sell out. Does everyone remember how hilarious Dane Cook was five years ago? Now look at what he is doing. Making crappy chick flicks with the occasional crime thriller. Even his stand-up is lame.

The only films that are actually funny anymore are either any that are released by Judd Apatow or Seth Rogan and their hilarious acting brigade, or any movie that features Will Ferrell. Everything else is based off of the same clichéd humor that is fueled by lame, physical comedy or jokes that I could tell you the punchline to before they're even "written."

Writing, for the most part, is dead. It's hard to be original when writing these days simply because people have been writing for hundreds of years, and most of it has been said. However, you have to look for the creative shows such as "Family Guy", which is easily the funniest representation of America on television, or a show like "Scrubs", where Zach Braff and John C. McGinley can make you cry from laughter, or from dramatic, real-life representations that the average person simply doesn't think about.

So stop caring about which hip-hop artists are going to quit based off of how many albums they sell, and start exploring musical culture to find artists that play for the love of music because those are the bands that are real and strive for original, meaningful songs.

And make sure you keep an eye out for the comedy *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, set to come out in May, because it most likely will make the normal comedy look like a drama like "Superbad" did (if you haven't seen it yet, I have dibs on calling you stupid). All you need to do is read the cast list.

### Beacon Thumbs Up



- Cool weather
- Football season
- Oreo Cakesters
- Jokes
- Mitch Hedberg

### Beacon Thumbs Down



- Car wrecks
- Keys that don't work
- Nickleback
- Smelly garbage
- Gravity

Have an opinion? Want to see something changed on campus? Share it with the rest of the student body. The Behrend Beacon is always accepting articles for submission. E-mail Chris LaFuria at [csl5005@psu.edu](mailto:csl5005@psu.edu) if you are interested in writing.

## iVote for Jobs in '08

By Chris LaFuria  
editor in chief  
csl5005@psu.edu

In the history of politics, we have had lawyers, actors and governors lead our country as President. We've even stolen the village idiot from a town in Texas. In 2008, it's about time for the American people to join together and cast their votes for a man who could totally transform the country (as he already is doing). My vote for the 2008 election is none other than Apple CEO Steve Jobs.

Although Jobs has had very little political movement in the last decade, the reason he should be elected is simple- we do not need another "political president." Jobs is an idea man, a thinker. He's an innovator and a leader. He took a struggling Apple Company under his wing and totally catapulted it into the forerunner of our economy. His products, such as the iPod and the iPhone, have swept the nation into an electronic frenzy.

If Jobs has the intelligence and leadership capabilities to lead an electronic empire, imagine what the guy can do for a struggling nation on

the verge of being torn apart over the issues it faces. His action as CEO of Apple is a direct metaphor for what he can do as a leader. He is a problem solver. Think back to the time Jobs and his Apple crew unleashed the G4 Cube. The computer, which was popular in 2001, was basically a failure. From the start there were many problems. It lacked the necessary memory to efficiently run and had heating

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issues which led to its demise. That year, Jobs recovered, fixing his computer problems and unveiling the iPod (and we all know how that ended).

In a conversation with *Businessweek*, Jobs was discussing how Apple sees to its customers needs. "It's really hard to design products by focus groups. A lot of times, people don't know what they

want until you show it to them," he said. President Bush could learn a thing or two about designing policy according to the people. Instead of following Apple's own itinerary, Jobs uses his customers' feedback to design products to fit peoples' needs. Thinking of American citizens ranks just behind changing the sheets in the Lincoln Bedroom to George.

Jobs does have a history of political activity. He has been a longtime supporter for the Democratic Party. According to the Center of Responsive Politics, Jobs and his wife have donated over \$250,000 to the Democratic cause. It is even cited that Jobs and Clinton have had dinner with each other. Jobs has stayed in the Lincoln Bedroom (the same room Bush is still redesigning).

What it all comes down to is deciding who we Americans trust. Steve Jobs is a problem-solver and an innovator. Given the challenge, Jobs can deliver the country from its struggle and lead us into a revolution to a more efficient machine. The only challenge left for Steve Jobs is to make a more comfortable pair of earbuds.

## Submission Guidelines

The Beacon welcomes readers to share their views on this page. Letters and commentary pieces can be submitted by email to [cmb5313@psu.edu](mailto:cmb5313@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.