

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

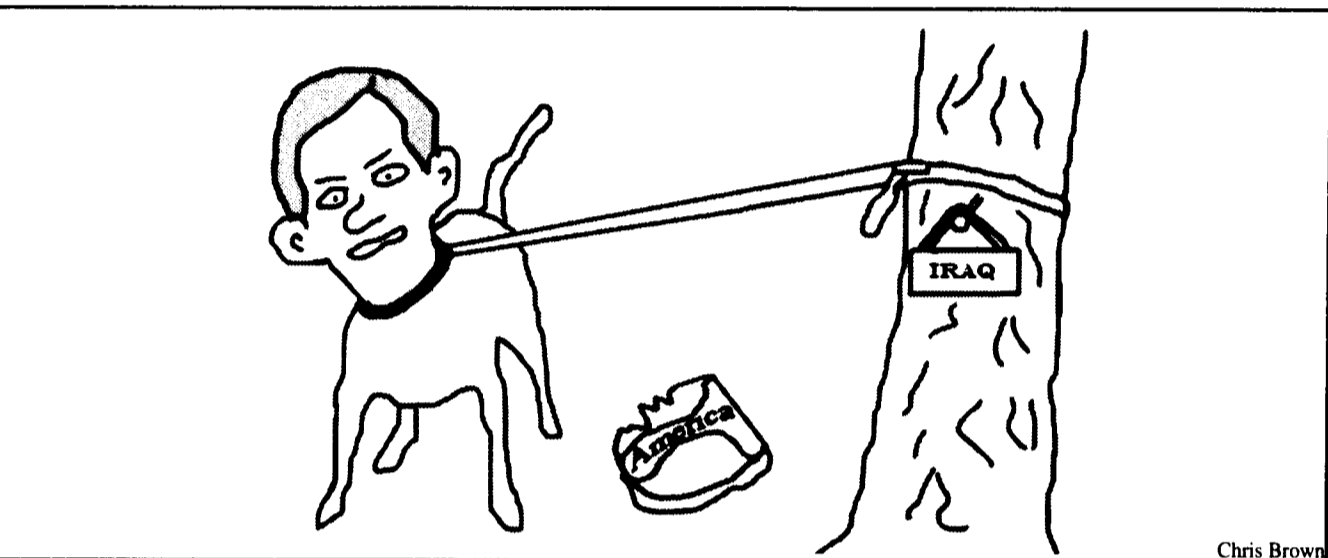
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Submission Guidelines

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.

The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Please include your major, faculty, or administrative position and semester standing. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Tuesday afternoon for inclusion in the Friday issue.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submissions prior to publication. Please keep complaints as specific as possible. Email submissions to cmb5313@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.



When people used to matter...

By Chris Brown
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The moral weakness of the United States is on display for all to see now after the last few weeks. We've seen monks in Burma get slaughtered by the military dictatorship there, while America did nothing. Congress then just this week came close to passing a non-binding resolution to recognize the Turkish genocide of Armenians, only to bow to pressure from Turkey and back away.

Last week Congress seemed ready to pass a legislation acknowledging the genocide of Armenians. In 1915 over 1.5 million Armenians died as Turkey forced them to relocate from eastern Turkey. The resolution passed out of committee and the next step after that is to get it on the floor of the House where it can pass for a vote.

President Bush urged Congress not to pass the resolution after Turkey's government issued warnings of reprisal if Congress passed. What happened to the President Bush of old? The one who characterized the killing of Armenians as, "a genocidal campaign that defies comprehension." It now seems almost certain that the resolution won't even come up for a vote - an embarrassment not only for its supporters, but for America.

Why is America so fearful of Turkey's reprisals in the first place? This is the same country that refused to let us in before the invasion of Iraq in April 2003. Our military commanders wanted to invade from the North and the South, but Turkey refused despite our pressure and our aid and suddenly they have become so essential and important to the war in Iraq. Bush's greatest concern is with the war in Iraq right now and this is just the latest display of how he has been unable to pursue America's foreign policy agenda because he has to worry about its implications with the war.

Bush has been ineffective at stopping Iran from building nuclear weapons because of the power they have to make

things more difficult, and maybe easier, in Iraq. America has ignored authoritarian regimes that actively oppress and kill supporters of democracy. He has ignored the growing problem of Russian President Vladimir Putin's consolidation of power and inroads made into democracy.

The politics surrounding genocide and human rights has always been one of opportunity and convenience. The United States, despite setting lofty goals and flowery rhetoric of supporting democracy and human rights, has never been a country that takes itself too seriously. When it comes down to it America is more talk than anything else. If America was serious, and absolutely serious about genocide and standing up for the principles of freedom and democracy this country was founded on we would act on it.

Threats from foreign governments have not stopped Congress from acknowledging injustices in the past. Tom Lantos, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and a Holocaust survivor, pointed out that Japan did not want Congress to debate the issue of Japanese atrocities in World War II, and warned it would harm our relations. He said, "the current Japanese government went to great length to attempt to prevent debate on that matter, and dire predictions were made that passage of such a resolution would harm U.S.-Japan relations. Those dire consequences never materialized."

Every death should be a tragedy, not just the ones that are politically convenient to acknowledge. This includes deaths from poverty, war, starvation, illness, or any death that could have been prevented. One only needs to look at the way we view the deaths of Iraqis compared to the deaths of Americans in the current war there to see how far we need to go before we look at everyone as our fellow human being. An MIT study estimates that over 650,000 excess deaths can be attributed to the conflict in Iraq, but American media, and more importantly Americans, don't seem to really care. It's a shame because cause as in my book, those deaths are American deaths, those people are the same. When it all comes down to it, we're all on the same team.

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Coffee - making life possible

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I am not a coffee snob. I am a coffee connoisseur. It is simply coincidence that "connoisseur" is French for "you only wish that you knew and appreciated as much concerning this art as I do," which some say loosely translates to "snob."

My love affair with coffee began in my junior year of high school, during a college visit. It was a local college in Rochester, NY, and after lunch my parents stopped by the coffee bar. I discovered the mocha - espresso, milk, and chocolate. The powerful, bitter espresso only complimented the chocolate, without being too strong. Soon I was frequenting the little café by my house, treating myself to mochas for the slightest excuse. "I'm kind of chilly, a mocha would be nice."

I quickly learned to steer clear of mild breakfast blends, which were so acidic I thought my mouth would turn inside out.

"This project is going to take at least two hours. I need a mocha." Or, "Wow, that was a crappy day. I should revive myself with a mocha," or "What a good day. I should celebrate it with a mocha."

However, it was a school trip to Europe that really got me hooked. When you are running on four hours of sleep per night for two weeks, you learn to take whatever form of caffeine you can find. In Europe, that form happens to be coffee so strong that half of your cup is essentially coffee grounds. I soon got used to choking down terrifyingly potent coffee every morning, and coffee emerged as a staple to daily survival, instead of a once-in-a-while treat.

I returned home to be revolted by relatively weak and watered-down coffee. Cream or sugar was an absolute no, whereas before my overseas excursion I had added so many sweeteners to my coffee it was hardly recognizable. I discovered the French press, which prepared coffee by pouring boiling water directly over the coffee and letting it seep before straining the grounds out. Now the bottom of my coffee cup was once again lined with residual grounds, just

the way I had become accustomed to.

I also discovered that different roasts have different flavors. I quickly learned to steer clear of mild breakfast blends, which were so acidic I thought my mouth would turn inside out. But the Italian and French roasts were the heaviest, darkest roasts and had the smooth bitterness that I so craved.

Preparing coffee is now cemented into my morning regimen. After grooming and breakfast, I boil water in my microwave, and select one of the three roasts I keep in my room: Italian, French, or Kenya AA. I pour four scoops into my French press, and the second the hot water hits the grounds, it releases a delicious smell so powerful that people passing by my window have to wipe their streaming eyes. After letting it seep, I strain it and pour it, hot and black, into my red to-go mug.

Coffee trumps all other aspects of getting ready for my day. If I am running late, I will forgo shower, hair, make-up, and breakfast for coffee. It is inevitable; one of these mornings will find me sitting in my 9 a.m. class in pajamas, my hair askew, stomach growling, clutching a fresh mug of piping hot coffee as though my very life depends on it.

The simple truth is that life is just not worth living without coffee. My roommate has learned that



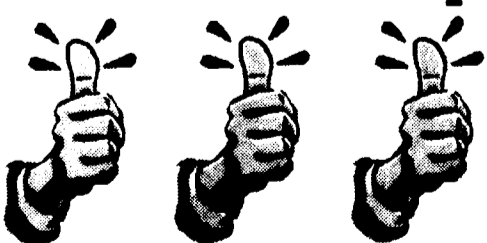
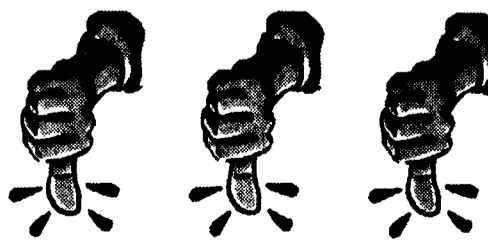
talking to me before my first cup is completely pointless. Not only am I completely incapable of normal human interaction, I can never even remember the conversation later. I could swear that the sun does not actually come up until that first drop of coffee hits my bloodstream, although others tell me that this is not true. From what I can dimly remember from my mornings before coffee, it feels like my brain is starved of oxygen, like it is trying to sprint the 100-yard dash through a field full of Jello.

I consider the benefits of coffee worth risking high blood pressure, anxiety, insomnia, stained teeth, and, of course, stunted growth. As I constantly assure my overly concerned friends- I'm not addicted; I'm just in love.

Quote of the Week

"I really believe that there is a diabolic plan by satanist groups who take aim at priests."

Monsignor Tommaso Stenico, a section head at the Vatican responsible for the clergy to Italian Media after he was filmed propositioning sex from a young man

<p>Beacon Thumbs Up</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stephen Colbert - Dalai Lama - Disney Movies - Warm weather 	<p>Beacon Thumbs Down</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Turkish Government - War - No regular Pepsi in vending machines - Spiders
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