


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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Keeping memories close

By Christopher LaFuria
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Pictures capture moments in time and display memories, good and bad, from any given time period. One of my fondest pastimes was flipping through old photo albums and cataloging my family's history. There were pictures of my three brothers and me on Christmas morning. There were pictures from our first days of school, waiting for that big yellow bus to deliver us to evil. There were even pictures that were used when my grandfather died, as memorial of earlier, happier times.

My favorite pictures, of course, were the ones of my brothers and me. Many of them were of us playing in our yard. We would pretend to be our favorite athletes while playing baseball. My oldest brother, Matt, would always pretend to be Jim Kelly, his favorite football player.

I remember pictures of my twin brother, Dan, and I right before the local festival parade, where we waved and waved to the audience upon the twin float. Pat is my youngest brother. He always wanted to be the center of attention, so most of the pictures displayed his face with the biggest, ingratiating smile on it.

Whatever the occasion, we captured the moments on camera. A photograph is the palette to secure these moments. But unfortunately, they do not last forever.

Recently, however, the photographs have changed. Last week, my mother received pictures of my brother at his base in Iraq. One of the photos showed Matt wearing his combat gear and carrying an enormous weapon. We used to play cops and robbers in the back yard, but this sort of conflict is much more serious, more dangerous.

Although I'm reluctant to admit it, I was cruising on Facebook and I came across pictures of my twin brother playing a show at a local bar. Ever since junior high, he was always obsessed with music. Through much of high school, I would come home to his guitar playing.

Some of it sounded like Dylan's reincarnation. Some of it sounded like a car that wouldn't start. However, seeing him play his guitar on stage just proved how much he has come along. People that were truly interested in his music took these pictures. Even though he was down at University Park most of the year, I was able to be in the front row thanks to these photos.

Pat, the youngest of the troop, has been in his fair share of photographs. We would always tease him when he was younger for his goofy smiles. My older brother, twin brother and myself were at least four years older than him. Most of the photos were taken when he was much younger. The local photographer in my hometown recently gave my mother pictures of my brother playing varsity soccer in high school. Also, I have seen YouTube videos of him slam dunking a basketball over his opponents. I'm not able to see all of his games, but these photos allow me to see his progress and continue to be proud of his accomplishments.

As people become more and more busy, they tend to not have time for important events in the lives of their loved ones. Personally, I have missed out on much of the happy and sad times of my close family. Thankfully, through pictures I am able to forever look at the ups and downs and still am able to smile. While these photos fail to compare to being a first-hand witness, they still represent one important idea. As the photographs do not last forever, the people and places within the frames endure.

Quote of the Week
 "I guess that's the price of freedom."
 - Jesse Benton, campaign spokesman for Ron Paul, commenting on support from *Hookers for Paul*

Too worried to exercise

By Rachel Reeves
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Sunday night, in the midst of watching Philadelphia actually giving New England a run for their money, I witnessed a disturbing commercial. The NFL was battling childhood obesity by encouraging kids to engage in physical activity for at least 60 minutes each day. They were interviewing random children about their favorite activities, and I expected to hear about the classic playgrounds and parks, playing tag with the neighborhood kids, and climbing trees. Instead I watched in horror as 10 year olds talked about going to the gym and lifting weights.

No wonder children tend to be overweight! You could not have paid my 10 year old self enough to spend an hour every day at the gym, lifting weights and running on the treadmill. It took my arrival at college to start visiting the gym regularly, and then for more adult reasons. I have half of a 150 square-foot shoebox to live in, and spend far too large a portion of my life just sitting and reading. If I don't blow off some steam somehow, it's going to get ugly. I should also mention that since I attend a school that is populated mostly by males, catching the after-class gym rush is not exactly the worst part of my day.

Anyways, whatever happened to playgrounds, sledding, and climbing trees in the average American child's life? The Surgeon General, for one, blames the new evils of TV, computers and video games for keeping kids inside and stationary even on the sunniest of days. But I, having visited old childhood haunts over Thanksgiving break with new eyes, have reached another conclusion. Grown-ups are well on their way to removing every fun activity that has ever existed.

I discovered a new sign posted at the base of my favorite sledding hill, warning people to stay away and avoid the eminent danger of the seemingly innocent pastime. If you know a better way to burn calories than trudging up a steep hill in snow pants and chunky boots, dragging behind you a sled, possibly loaded with a younger sibling, let me know. Also, it is impossible to find new merry-go-rounds, seesaws, jungle gyms, or

tire swings on the playgrounds of today. Those that remain are coated in rust, and their days are numbered. You can send your kid to the gym all you want, but 12 reps on the bench press is not any more effective than climbing the jungle gym, or swinging for an hour. And ask any child under the age of 16 which they would prefer: a tire swing, or gym equipment sized for adults.

Yes, the old-fashioned activities are more dangerous. But a childhood without scraped knees, sunburn, a couple broken bones and scars to boast over is no childhood at all. As a kid I climbed trees and fell out, I played on slides and fell off, I got tangled up in tire swings and hammocks, and I survived. I dangled from the top rung of the jungle gym by my knees, admiring the world six feet away and upside down. I fashioned a slip n' slide out of an old tarp in the garage, and got all of the brush-burns a kid could want. I spent an entire summer flying down my steep driveway in my red wagon, careening across the street, and crash-landing in the neighbor's ditch across the way.

Playing tag in third grade, I cut my lip in a head-on collision and had to get stitches. I still boast the scar. Sledding on a frozen-over hill, I broke my tailbone. I couldn't wear a backpack for two months, and my friends and family cracked every joke you could imagine. I have broken too many fingers and toes to count, I have small scars of forgotten origin, and I have my classic nightmare sunburn story.

Yes, American children are getting heavier. But that is only half of the tragedy. Where is the adventure, the danger in their lives? What stories will they tell, what scars will they brag about? Everyone needs a little bit of risk, overcoming terror just for the sake of overcoming it. Save the gym for adulthood.

There will be plenty of time to worry about calories and heart rate, plenty of hours spent on the stationary bike while reading a textbook in order to be as efficient as possible. Let's go back to the days of throwing kids out of the house, to the days of "walk it off," "rub some dirt in it," and "honey, would you grab the steak out of the freezer?" And don't even get me started on the supposed dangers of drinking out of the garden hose. Everyone knows you just wait until it runs cold.

Letter To the Editor

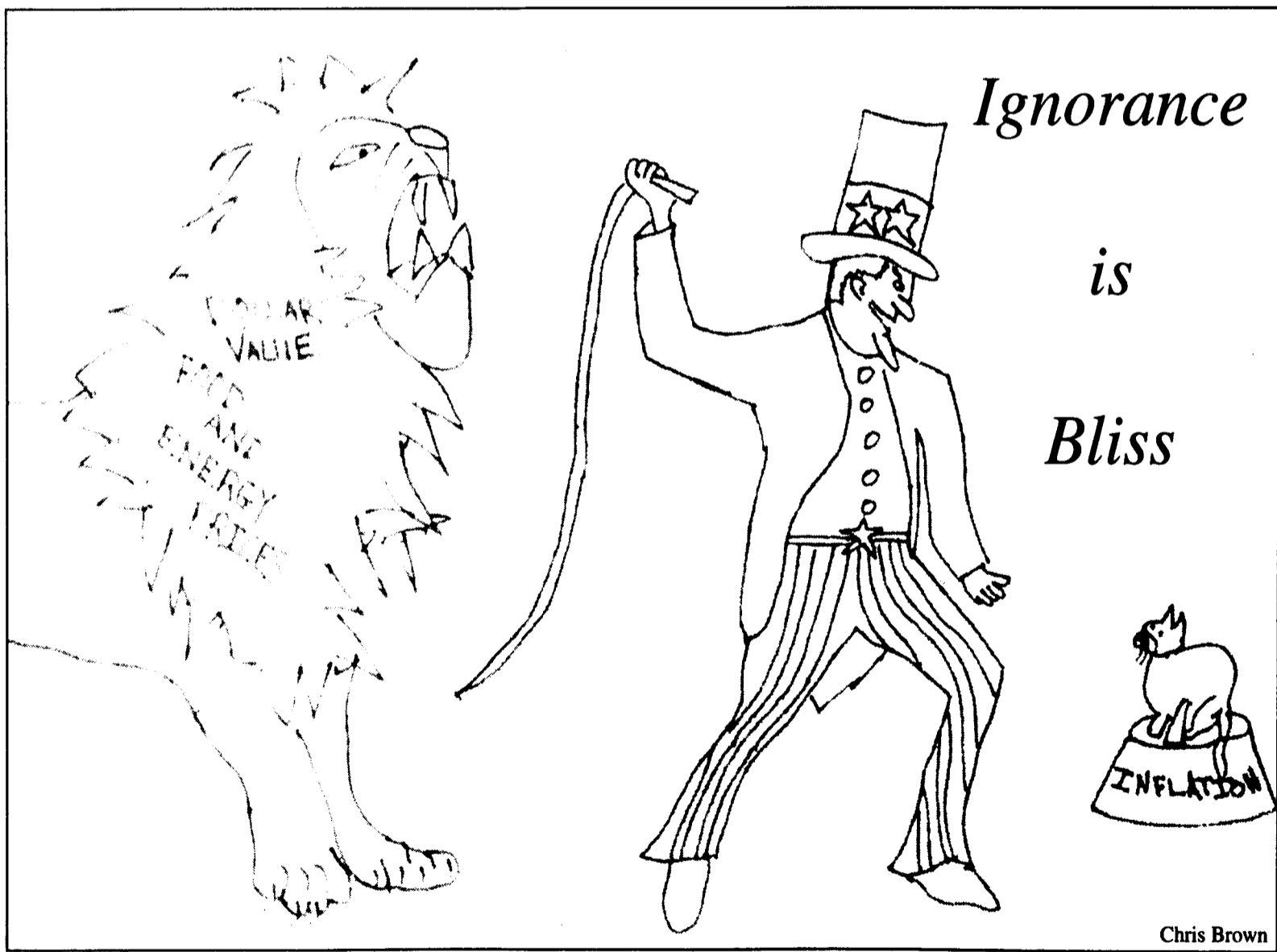
re: "What I'm not thankful for"

As I initially read Mr. DeBello's opinion peice, I was immediately astounded that Sean Hannity had taken up a pseudonym and is publishing in our humble little paper. It is really a testament to our school that someone of such stature, albeit a dubious one, would take such an interest in our political climate. He hit all his usual talking points: Michael Moore is a liar and a blowhard, Hillary Clinton this, Al Gore that. Complaint after complaint about left-wing talking heads, yet conspicuously no mention of the equally vitriolic Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, and Hannity himself. It is nice to see that "fair and balanced" reporting has finally come to the Behrend Beacon.

Of course we should all just forget about global warming because it might inconvenience Mr. DeBello's enjoyment of NBC's primetime lineup. Is it possible for someone to get that self righteously indignant over missing out on the lighting of the Sunday Night Football halftime show?? Yet Michael Moore is the blowhard... Oh and by the way, if you had actually taken the time to see the movie you astutely labeled as "very bad," you would have seen that in "Sicko," Moore lambastes your nemesis Hillary Clinton as "spineless" in her handling of the great boogie man that is nationalized health care. It is a great movie by the way. I highly recommend it the next time a halftime show is darkened by left-wing nuts.

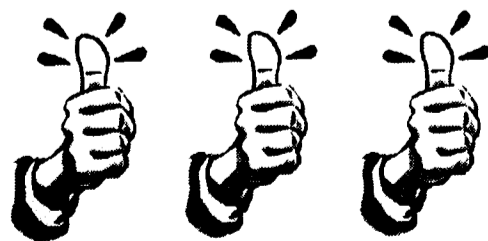
All in all, thank you for the article. Although next time you might want to consider getting off of your soapbox to rant against people on soapboxes.

Chris Meals
 Nursing Major
 Sophomore
 Iraq Veteran



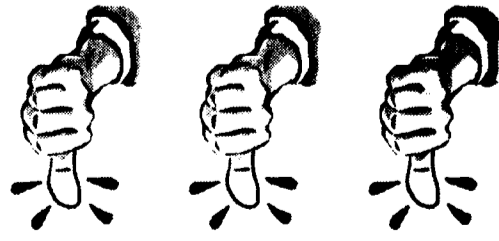
Chris Brown

Beacon Thumbs Up



- Black Friday sales
- Open mic night
- Cookies that stay chewy
- Pizza

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Egnog Latte
- Broken coffee dispenser
- Sparking computer cords
- Rude shoppers

Submission Guide

Letters should be limited to 350 words and op-eds should be limited to 700 words. The more concise the letter, the more likely 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 administration position with your submission. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. the day of inclusion in the Friday issue.

The Behrend Beacon reserves the right to edit any submission prior to publication.

Please keep comments to specific issues and avoid generalizations.

Email submissions to cs15005@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.