

## STUDENT LIFE

## Tribute songs celebrate inspiration

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In Bob Dylan's "Song to Woody," he praised the artist, Woody Guthrie, who was his inspiration for becoming a musician. The last song on his debut self-titled album, "Song to Woody" is the ultimate dedication song, in which the humbled Dylan sings about the contributions of Guthrie to the music world. He sang:

"Hey, Woody Guthrie/but I know that you know/All the things that I'm a-sayin'/an' a-many times more/I'm a-singin' you the song/but I can't sing enough/Cause there's not many men/that done the things that you've done."

Music is one of the most frequently used avenues for delivering a message of praise. Many people have been sincerely touched by past generations and would not have the inspiration and motivation to perform. In recent music, there have been examples of this musical homage.

"Stuck Between Stations", the opening track of The Hold Steady's newest release *Boys and Girls in America*, pays tribute to the life, and untimely death of poet John Berryman. In the song, lead singer Craig Finn sings about Berryman's thought process in the moments before his suicide. Berryman, haunted by his father's suicide, took his own life by jumping from the Washington Avenue Bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota. According to the Minneapolis Star, Berryman missed the water and died from being smothered.

In "Stuck Between Stations," Finn sang:

"There was that night that we thought that John Berryman could fly/ But he didn't so he

died/You're pretty good with words but words won't save your life/ and they didn't so he died."

Clap Your Hands Say Yeah mentions Berryman in their song "Mama, Won't You Keep Them Castles in the Air and Burning?" In it, Alec Ounsworth sings "Like Berryman/Bed-wet poet fears/That better man drink taller beers."

One of Okkervil River's tracks on their album *The Stage Names* bears the deceased poet's name. The properly titled "John Allyn Smith Sails" references Berryman.

Suicide is very prevalent in the music industry. It has been the cause of death of many artists such as



Deceased musicians Elliott Smith and Woody Guthrie.

Nick Drake, Kurt Cobain, Michael Hutchence, Ian Curtis, and Phil Ochs. One recent artist that has been remembered in song is Elliott Smith. Two notable artists that have paid tribute to Smith are Ben Folds and Bright Eyes. On Folds' album, *Songs for Silverman*, he references the little things he knew about Smith. Folds, who claims he wished he knew

more about the fallen songwriter, sings, "Elliott, man you played a fine guitar and some dirty basketball/The songs you wrote got me through a lot/Just want to tell you that."

Bright Eyes' Connor Oberst, penned a song on his *Four Winds EP* about Smith. "Reinventing the Wheel" discusses how Smith was the model for artists in today's music industry.

Some of the tribute songs are devastating accounts of the artist's death. Jeff Buckley's tragic accidental death, swimming in Wolf River Harbor in the Mississippi River, led to the mourning of a generation of musicians that struggled to accept what happened.

One artist that was deeply affected was Duncan Shiek. In his song "A Body Goes Down," Shiek sings the tale of Buckley's tragic death: "In the Mississippi waters/ Weighted by a beauty/ Afraid of its light/ Notify your holy men/ Console your sons and daughters/ And tell me one more time/ What is just/ What is right."

Other artists that remember Buckley in their songs are Amy Correia, Chris Cornell, PJ Harvey, Heather Nova, Juliana Hatfield, Hole, Aimee Mann, Ron Sexsmith, and Beth Wood.

Inspiration comes from a variety of methods. Poets and past musicians have influenced many current musicians. It is necessary to cite sources for this inspiration. These tribute songs are tangible homages that directly display these artists' appreciation for the past and their influences.

## Gaffigan's hilar-ity short-lived

By Connor Sattely  
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In what many students are calling the event of the year, Jim Gaffigan brought his hilarious "Beyond the Pale" routine to a packed Junker Center gymnasium last Friday. After an opening act by Tennessee comedian Rich Brooks, Gaffigan took the stage amidst riotous applause and proceeded to bring tears to the eyes of many students who had never even heard his material.

Before the show, while students waited for the doors to open, the line to enter swelled to include hundreds of eager fans. Students were showing up as early as an hour and a half before the start of the show.

When the doors finally opened, the stream of students began to pack the gym, which included several hundred seats and bleachers on the side of the gymnasium and in the back. Lion Entertainment Board members guided students to their seats and kept a general order in the gymnasium.

Behrend freshman Matthew Alto arrived at 6:30 and sat in one of the front rows for the performance. He wasn't surprised to see the gym fill quickly.

"I loved his material. It would have been much better if he was on stage longer, for the amount of money paid for a ticket, but it was still great."

"Lots of people were talking about it," Alto says. "Everyone was pretty excited that he was coming, and I'm not too surprised that it filled up."

Alto, who had never heard any of Gaffigan's material before, was largely impressed by the comedian's routine. "He was great," Alto says. "I loved his material. It would have been much better if he was on stage longer, for the amount of money paid for a ticket, but it was still great."

Daniel Cardenas, also a freshman at Behrend, agrees. "I think the ticket price was a little high - it would have been better if it were lower for students, like \$15 maybe, but the guy was still hilarious," he says.

Both freshmen insist that their favorite part of the show was the Hot Pocket routine. "I didn't think he was going to do it, because of the way he opened his show," says Cardenas, who is familiar with Gaffigan's routine after seeing him several times on TV. "But when he did it, it was awesome."

Gaffigan's "Hot Pocket" joke, in which he calls out Hot Pockets for being responsible for calamities such as diarrhea, depression, and death, was met with enthusiastic applause from his fans. The crowd responded to Gaffigan's routine well, even amongst those who had never seen or heard him before.

After the show, Gaffigan stuck around to take photographs, sign autographs, and talk with fans. Several fans stood in line with empty boxes of Hot Pockets for the comedian to sign.

"It's a really cheap Christmas gift for someone who loves Jim Gaffigan," one fan said. "A dollar and sixty cents for an unforgettable present. Plus, I get two Hot Pockets out of the deal."

Meyer fans thrilled with *Eclipse*

By Krista Jones  
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Stephanie Meyer has really struck gold with her bestseller—originally intended not to be published per her own initial wishes. Meyer's books are now on the New York Times Bestseller list, including the most recent book of her ongoing series, *Eclipse*. Her newest book was met with huge anticipation and was eagerly devoured by her fans, who awaited the fourth installment in her exciting and fantastic book series. Meyer's fantasy world where vampires and werewolves hide themselves from the humans around them has taken readers by storm, so much so that there is a movie in the making for 2008 based off of her first book, *Twilight*.

*Eclipse*, the third installment of her series, continues the story of Isabella—Bella—Swan, a young human girl who fell in love with a vampire named Edward Cullen, and when she thought she lost him, in turn fell in love with her best friend, the werewolf Jacob Black. Bella is constantly in danger from other vampires who want her dead for one reason or another, and she is constantly being saved by Edward. In *Eclipse*, Meyer's characters are well developed, each having their own distinct personality. While the surreal characters may admittedly be a bit far-fetched in the believable department, the human characters are easily believable. They are characters we can all relate to, and we probably have one or more of them in our lives.

The relationships and the emotions that occur here are believable, despite the fictitious genre they were written for, and the romance that Bella and Edward have is not vulgar, and it is also something

that an outside reader can relate to on an emotional aspect. At the same time, you still need a suspension of belief to enter Meyer's world, being that the book is based on a feud between vampires and werewolves and the helpless ignorance of humans.

The story line is easy to follow in this book, and easy to keep up with as well. None of the characters in this book have a "God complex," which means they're not perfect and have flaws, but at the same time, they are still surreal and undefeatable. The story takes time to introduce itself and lets the reader ease into it without throwing him or her off a cliff. The biggest decision to be made in this book is whether or not to make Bella a vampire, and Meyer doesn't just make her one so that she and Edward can be together forever. She shows all of Bella's options, and gives Bella a reasonable conscience and believable emotions to accompany the weight of the decision she's supposed to make.

In addition to the well-developed story and characters, Meyer's vampires and werewolves were given a downside. In her books, she shows the readers that being a vampire or a werewolf might have fun benefits, but there are also great downsides to having the immortality, strength and speed. She shows the good aspects and the bad, leaving her books with a good balance. *Eclipse* and Meyer's other two preceding books are well written and appropriate for the age levels they are marketed for, as well as all ages. They are fun, exciting, and have a romantic edge that keeps readers riveted through the last page.



## Your Choice

Due to the graduation of Co-Editor-in-Chief Mike Sharkey, *the Beacon* is at a loss of what to do with the Humor page. We've decided to give our readers the chance to decide what they want us to print in the available space. Suggestions are welcome. Send your votes or page ideas to srm5082@psu.edu. Votes must be in by Dec. 21.

**Humor page:** A continuation of the humor page.

**Puzzle page:** A page full of puzzles for Beacon readers to solve (crosswords, word searches, sudoku etc.). This page could also include an advice column.

**New Journalism/Gonzo page:** A page where Beacon editors, staff and contributing writers cover events that they include themselves in. A storytelling approach to stories that diverts from traditional objective journalism.

**Local Food and Drink page:** An evaluation of area restaurants and bars, with food and/or drink recipes of the week.

## Top Five Sandwiches

By Ryan P. Gallagher and  
Scott R. Muska

5. Reuben

4. Chicken Salad

3. Dagwood

2. B.L.T.

1. The Fat Bitch

## Freshmen feel change after first semester

By Kayla Wright  
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As the semester nears its end many freshmen fail to see how much they have changed from the beginning of the year. Their initial fears, thoughts, and ideas of college have virtually disappeared and have been replaced with a more comfortable view of college and thoughts of next semester. Although many have complaints about the Behrend campus, most students plan on returning next semester.

Upon entering college, students had a variety of expectations. Freshman Alex Johnson stated, "I thought it would be less snowy and very time-consuming. The people are nicer than I expected and my professors turned out to be very nice and helpful."

Freshman Bridget Gutting expected "more work and fewer papers." She stated, "I didn't expect to be friends with everyone on the floor." She also expected "The horror stories about roommates getting drunk and peeing on the other person's bed to be true."

Freshman John Diziky stated, "I expected to have a lot of work." Contrary to most people's beliefs that they would have more work when attending college, freshman Steve Conroe said, "I expected to have a lot more free time and planned to spend it playing guitar but that didn't work out."

Initial expectations cause most people to feel anxiety. The majority of people seemed to be nervous about roommate issues, the workload, and making friends. Johnson stated, "I was nervous about meeting my roommate because I had never met her and I thought we wouldn't get along and that she'd probably be mean." Gutting feared that she

"wouldn't meet anyone." Unusually, Conroe was worried about not being able to "eat the right thing."

In high school, students usually look back at their freshman year and regret their actions because they seemed immature. When asked if they had any regrets Gutting, Johnson, Diziky, and Conroe all stated that they had "none."

During their first semester, students gain a general feel for the campus and know about classes and living on campus. Many have to make major adjustments. Johnson commented, "Trying to find a healthy alternative to Dobbin's food was my biggest adjustment."

Gutting's biggest adjustment was "getting used to sharing a room. At first it felt like we were always in each other's way."

Another thing with living arrangements that spurred adjustment was the rules and the location. Conroe complained that he was "not allowed to blast his music when he wanted." Diziky stated, "I have to walk a lot more because I live in Almy; I have to hike to get anywhere."

With adjustments come complaints. Students' complaints ranged from the food available to the state of the campus. Johnson stated, "They never clean off the walkways; they are always icy." Conroe complained about Jordan Road stating, "Cars don't slow down when students try to cross and the road is not paved so it messes up the bottom of my car."

Gutting complained about the food commenting, "Dobbin's is disgusting; I got a rotten apple from there once." Diziky added, "The food messes up my stomach." Despite all of the complaints most students still choose to return next semester. Gutting, Johnson, Diziky and Conroe agreed that they would be coming back to Behrend next semester.