

OPINION

THE BEHREND BEACON

FOUNDED IN 1948

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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 administration position and semester standing. Deadline for any submission is 5 p.m. Thursday 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 rcr5057@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.

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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.

Beacon Thumbs Up



- The phrase "cool beans"
- Sarcasm
- New roly chairs
- Lenny laughs

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Consciences
- One of those days...
- Duct tape dresses
- Pronouncing "duct"

Hockey deserves some love, too

By Ryan Gallagher
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Baseball. Basketball. Football. Hockey. The major sports of the United States. Each sport has respectable qualities, which the average sport enthusiast is well aware of, so I will not dim this article with a boring list. I would like to say that I respect each sport entirely and I am not bashing any of them, but I will enhance the fine aspects of hockey through some words of my own. (P.S. the primary focus of this article is on watching the sport - playing the sport is a completely different issue. And if you disagree with my views, please don't validate your critiques by saying that I am just a lazy guy that could never play sports, because I do.)

Hockey, in my mind, is the greatest sport out there (besides Ultimate Frisbee, naturally). It is the only sport that continuously treats us with unique ways which differentiate at each passing moment. Baseball is based on tradition. The object is either to make contact with the ball and ultimately score a run, or to eliminate this event if you are in the field. Each play is similar, providing us with little variation each time. Again, I would like to reiterate that I'm not bashing it - it's a terrific sport - I'm just pointing out a few minor flaws.

Football is also a huge attraction for most Americans, as it grants us with the opportunity of watching big guys getting hit real hard. An amazing sport in theory, however, the average play lasts around six to seven seconds, leaving the audience in a state of boredom typically for 30-40 seconds (that's without the ads for crappy beer).

Basketball would be the final major sport and, while March Madness is a crucial part of any sport addict's life, the NBA tends to be a bit boring for me. Dribble the ball down, pass it around, find the open big guy, an open lane or just flat-out shoot from downtown.

Now my favorite part: talking about hockey. Hockey is always moving. Fast. I mean, the guys are on skates so it's hard not to, but it provides us with an energetic state of viewing where boredom hardly appears. Each play has the potential to completely differ from the last. You can almost make the comparison that it is a faster-paced, more creative form of basketball or soccer - on ice.

Saying that it's too hard to follow the puck is a weak excuse for not enjoying the sport. If you pay attention long enough, you'll get the hang of it. When three players are soaring down the rink on one meager defenseman and the lone keeper, the intensity rises to levels that

are absolutely insane. The reasoning: either the offense is going to develop and capitalize on a jaw-dropping play of the most excitement, or the goalie is going to pull out a bigger save than Bruce Campbell in *Army of Darkness*. Sorry, I was watching it last night.

Anyways, the amazing amount of creative potential that lies in hockey is clear as invisible and this is demonstrated in each and every game. Powerplays, penalty kills, shootouts, fights. Even if you don't enjoy the sport, you have to love the fighting. One fight can turn the entire game around and make it even more physical than football in a way. It leads to hits, hits, and more fights. The amount of hitting in a typical game adds to the sport because most people aren't aware of how legal a lot of hits actually are.

So, essentially, we're taking the game of basketball, adding the hits from football, throwing it all on ice, and occasionally we get to see some of the best fighting in any modern sport. Sounds good to me.

As I said earlier, I love most of our sporting events in America. For baseball, football and basketball players reading this - I love your sport. I just rank hockey higher because it personally appeals more to me. The playoffs begin April 9. I'm ready.

One new member for the Eric Clapton Club

By Rachel Reeves
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I fell in love this week. LastFM.com stumbled across Eric Clapton's "White Room" while I was packing for the weekend, and I remember how the music filled my room up like a tangible, physical thing instead of the weightless sound I was used to hearing. The guitar, the lyrics and the sounds of words were overwhelming and I was introduced to a new part of myself.

It was just so different. Like when you're listening to the radio and some one turns up the bass or when a black and white channel on TV flips over to one in color. It was more like food than art; I could feel it like nourishment. Then the song ended and I wanted more.

This weekend I learned about Clapton and all of the bands he was involved in, from Derek and the Dominoes to Cream. I also learned about similar artists like Jeff Beck, Stevie Ray Vaughan, The Animals, Santana and The Allman Brothers. I wandered off into other genres, starting with Neil Young and Van Morrison and working my way into Ryan Adams, Josh Ritter and Ray Lamontagne. The Rolling Stones and The Who I've heard before, but never like this.

I feel like a starving child seated at a banquet table - I can't fill up on all of this goodness as quickly as I want to. It's hard to take it one song at a time when each seems better than the first. I have to remind myself that I have a whole lifetime for music and that most of it isn't going anywhere.

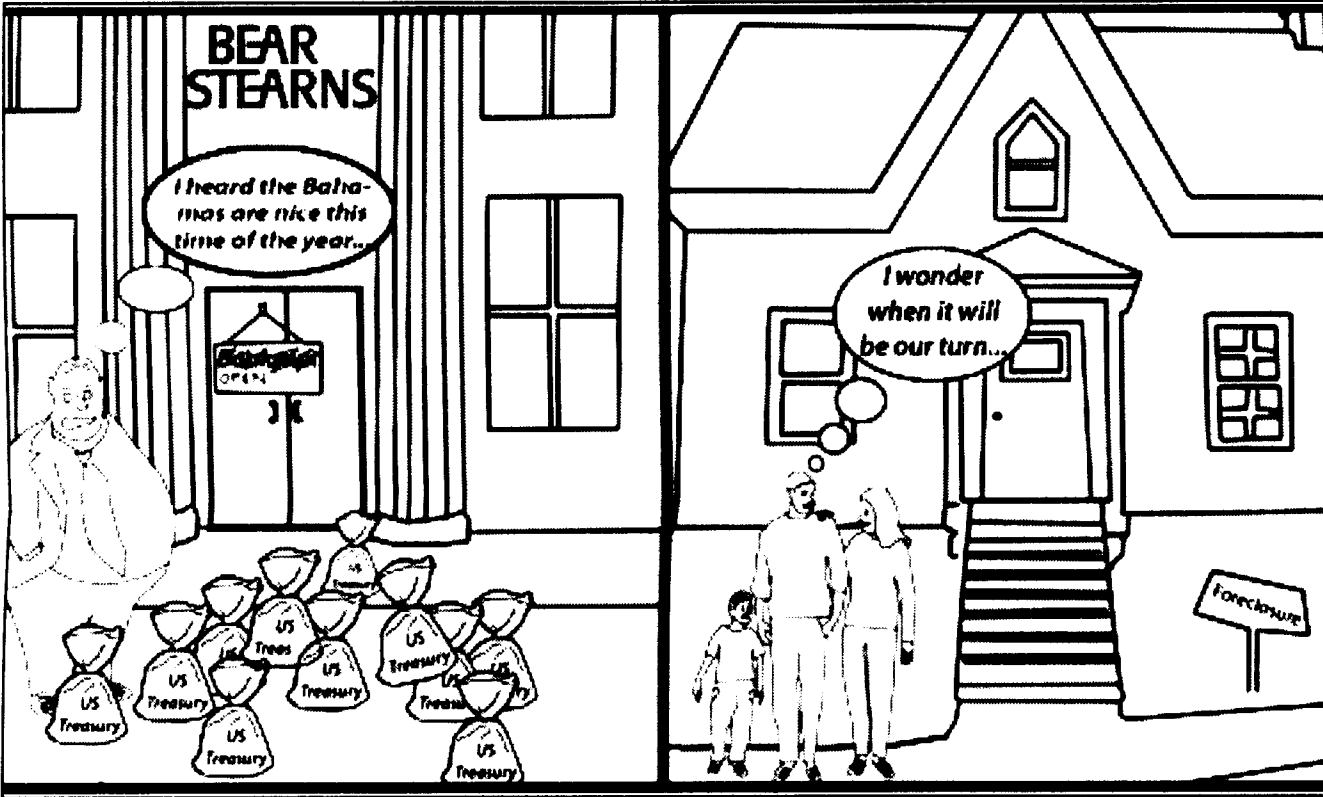
Everything is different. The blues make me not afraid of being hurt and I wonder how I ever got through anything hard without them. Folk makes me sit still for a minute and just be what I am - young, overwhelmed, up and down every second. Classic rock n' roll makes life just plain fun again. But overall, I feel more comfortable with just being a human. If anything can string together the imperfections of living in general and make it good and worthwhile, it is this.

The best and most surprising thing in all of this is the unofficial club I seem to have stumbled into. At the mention of Clapton's name, people of every age, from best friend to near stranger, have been popping out of the woodwork. A friend's brother suggests buying Clapton's *Unplugged* to tide me over until I can get more albums. A coworker takes me through the history of Clapton's bluesiest songs. A friend begins to pull her extensive collection together into a mix to burn. Those who love Clapton do so passionately and are incredibly enthusiastic about sharing it with others.

I'm afraid I will soon become a music snob. The girl that can't be separated from her iPod even to walk to class and who sits by her speakers, head bowed, saying things like, "it communes with my soul, you know?" How much of my sparse and painfully-earned money will now go for album after album? How disdainful will I be of radio, movie soundtracks, and the songs that seep out into the dorm hallways?

But how many things like this do we meet in our lives? Something that makes the same old world a little bit bigger and more wonderful, something that makes the wanting part of ourselves stop wanting so much. Something that belongs to us so perfectly.

It doesn't happen nearly as often as it should. So, snob or not, I am going to love this.



Cartoon by Chris Brown

Olympics more political than athletic

By Rachel Reeves
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Just four months from the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Summer Olympics, China is struggling with their controversial foreign affairs, and the impact they may have on the success of this year's Games.

Uprisings began in Tibet on March 14; just two days after the United States dropped China from its list of the Top Ten Violators of Human Rights. China's strong response sparked controversy from most of the free world. So far 660 people involved in Tibetan revolt have been arrested, and the Chinese government reports that 19 people have been killed and more than 600 wounded. However, the Tibetan government has said that at least 140 people have died in the violence.

The Chinese government has also instituted roadblocks and house searches in the region. Foreign journalists are no longer allowed in Tibet and YouTube has been completely blocked in China since it began showing footage of the strife. BBC, CNN, Google News and Yahoo have also experienced blackouts. These actions are in direct conflict with China's previous promise to allow greater media

access in light of the upcoming Games.

President Nicolas Sarkozy of France has threatened boycotting the opening ceremonies unless the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, meets with the Tibetan leader, the Dalai Lama. Since his term for leading the European Union begins in July before the Games, Sarkozy wants to establish Europe's stance with China as soon as possible.

President Bush, however, has taken a more lenient approach. Although he made a phone call to Hu about taking up conversation with the Dalai Lama, Bush has no intention of boycotting any part of this summer's Olympics. He would prefer to remain on good terms with China, even after their questionable course of action.

Using the Olympics for political leverage is not a new trick. Even though the original intent of the Olympics was to bring the world together in peaceful competition, the Games have historically been a massive reflection of political conflict.

It began in 1936 when Berlin hosted the Olympics and Hitler used the Games for his own propaganda. America voted two and half votes short to boycott the games, and President Roosevelt wanted America to attend to maintain polit-

ical neutrality.

Moscow hosted the Olympics in 1980 and the US led a boycott due to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Four years later, when the Olympics were in Los Angeles, Calif. the Soviet Union returned the favor and led their own boycott. The participating countries in each boycott clearly reflected the Cold War divide between east and west.

In 1988, North Korea boycotted the Olympics held in South Korea. South Korea hoped to gain global respect by hosting the event, and North Korea aimed to bring attention to the conflict by way of their boycott.

Now, the supposedly neutral Olympics continue to have powerful political influence. Issues vary from where the torch will run, to how much coverage is appropriate in the host country. Attending the games is becoming congruent with supporting the host country's affairs and a boycott is the perfect symbol of opposition. Hosting the Olympics is a show of stability and many countries that are striving to become world powers make taking on the event a priority.

By all means, watch the Olympics for the swimming and the soccer. But don't discount how accurately it reflects the political climate, and even predicts major world events.

Imagine this page is white, empty space.

Now fill it.

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I think the world needs...

to take care of our environment. To love more and hate less. To let people ahead of you when traffic is backed up. To tip a good server when you're out for dinner. To read good books. To give money to charities. To vote. To try to agree with people as much as you disagree with them. To make a choice, and then stick to it.