

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



- Country Fair dark roast
- Baseball season starting
- Pinstripe
- The first robins of spring

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Mud
- Interruptions
- Parking laws
- The human need for sleep

A more embarrassing aspect of college life

By Scott Muska
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Throughout my first two years of college, I've gone to a number of parties and have seen many instances of absolute debauchery. I've seen teenagers participate in all sorts of events that, under normal circumstances, would be considered downright embarrassing. I've even participated in some—well, most—of them myself, but I haven't felt bad about it, because I'm a college student, which means that I can make an absolute fool of myself without any consequences and without any sign of disapproval from my peers.

There's one aspect of the party scene that I will not only refuse to participate in, but will never understand.

That would be the dancing. Okay, not dancing altogether, because girls that like to go to parties and cut rug don't bother me in the slightest. It's the guys that disturb me.

Not guys that just stand on the floor

and move back and forth, but the guys that have dance-offs. You know what I'm talking about. They get out on the floor, usually in front of a girl, and commence the "body shake." This is when they move around like they're having a seizure while somehow managing to stay upright. This is more often than not accompanied by a lower body movement that makes them appear bow-legged.

I'm not sure how everyone reacts to a spectacle like this, but I do know that the guys doing it usually believe that the vast majority of women at the party will immediately fall in love with them, and I know that I immediately burst into fits of uncontrollable laughter.

Once I'm done laughing and have some time to actually analyze what exactly had just transpired, I wonder what these alleged "dancers" are thinking. Do they sincerely believe that what they've just done was not only graceful and a successful mating call, but that they've won the respect of the rest of the party-goers with their smooth moves?

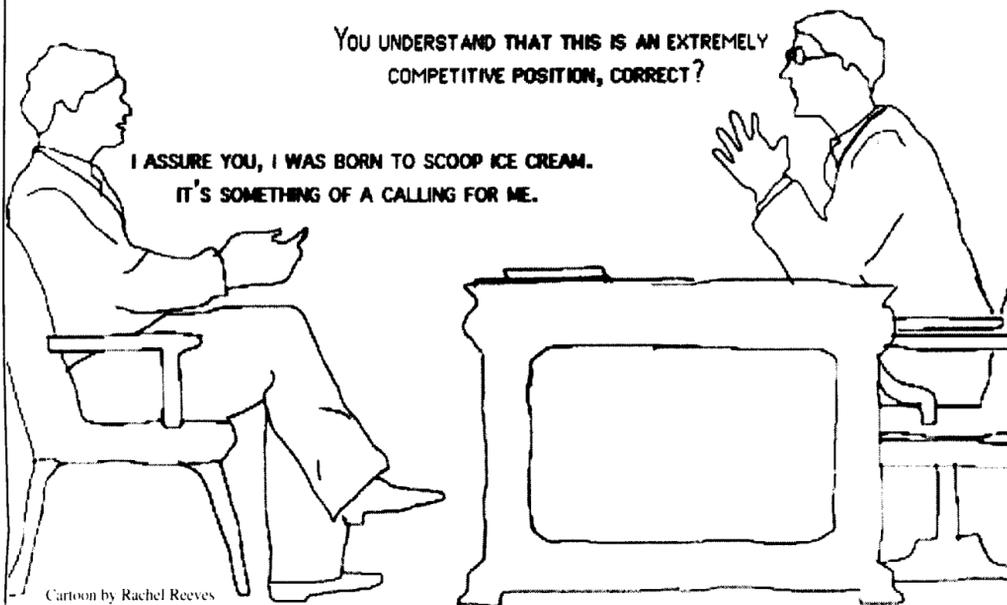
I imagine that when some of these

guys I've been talking about read this (if indeed any of them do, which is a long shot), they'll dismiss me as some uptight hack that is jealous of their sexual prowess, but that's not the case. I'm just as outgoing as anyone. I just really think that this particular brand of dancing is stupid.

If there are people out there that find something like this attractive, though, it will deal a crushing blow to my hopes that society is not drastically declining. I truly hope that these gentlemen's assumptions that dancing like idiots will improve their chances of taking a dime-piece home are ultimately wrong, because I firmly believe that that is a terrible way to go about searching for a significant other.

Maybe this works for some people, and maybe some people are attracted to it, but I know one thing for sure: when I grow up, if I'm lucky enough to get married and have children, I will not tell them that I met my wife while dancing to "Shake it like a Salt Shaker" at a frat party.

The joys of finding summer employment:



The denounce and reject shuffle

By Chris Brown
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There's a new dance sweeping the country. No you won't see it on "Dancing with the Stars" or in the club on a Friday night; instead, the most likely place you will find it is the campaign trail. It is called the Denounce and Reject Shuffle. While candidate flip-flops are inevitable in politics, however this year comes with its own unique verbiage. It all started during Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama's debate in Ohio when she insisted that Obama denounce and reject the support Louis Farrakhan. Since then, the bug has bitten all the candidates, even the geriatric John McCain has tried his hand at the shuffle.

Clinton has had to deal with Geraldine Ferraro, who has since left the campaign, when she said "If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position." Inevitably, with Clinton trying to gain the support of blue-collar union workers she will have to start answering questions about her relationship with Wal-Mart from 1986-1992 when she served on their board, despite its campaigning against unions.

She participated in large shareholder meetings and spoke on Wal-Mart's behalf. At a meeting in 1990 she said, "I'm always proud of Wal-Mart, what we do, and the way we do it better than everyone else." Since then, Clinton has changed her tune and even omitted mention of her career at Wal-Mart from her official biography. Today she denounces Wal-Mart's anti-union practices and even returned money donated

to her campaign by Wal-Mart.

Meanwhile, John McCain accepted the endorsement of controversial evangelical minister John Hagee. McCain said, "all I can tell you is that I am very proud to have Pastor John Hagee's support." A surprising statement given Hagee's bigoted prejudice against the Catholics, an important Republican constituency according to Karl Rove. In a video on YouTube, Hagee described the Catholic Church as the "Great whore of Revelation 17." Not to be outdone by the other candidates, McCain did his own, though diminished, version of the Denounce and Reject Shuffle. He said, "in no way did I intend for his endorsement to suggest that I in turn agree with all of Pastor Hagee's views, which I obviously do not." At least he was trying.

All three candidates have been forced to shift their stance, either on an issue or supporter, during this campaign. Just as each candidate has their unique stance on the issues, they all handled these controversies very differently. Hillary tried to ignore it and brushed it under the carpet. McCain openly accepted it. Obama confronted it head-on with a major speech. And while each controversy varies in its seriousness, I think the responses from the candidates give us a clue on how they will handle the presidency.

For McCain, I think the endorsement of Hagee, and his acceptance of it, displayed his willingness to sacrifice his image as a self-proclaimed Maverick in order to ingratiate a constituency that has traditionally balked at supporting him. His stance on the War on Terror and Bush's tax cuts are only two more examples of McCain

groveling for support. Will the Straight Talk Express get derailed before it leaves the station?

Clinton's waffle on Wal-Mart, Iraq and NAFTA worry me. While she was able to eventually come to the right conclusion on all these issues, I can't help but wonder why she couldn't get it right the first time around like many others. Will she be able to answer that phone at 3 am when there will be no opportunity to second guess later on?

Obama's handling of the Rev. Wright controversy revealed his skill in turning what looked like a handicap to an advantage. He handled the situation without forfeiting the principles he chose to base his campaign on, using it as an opportunity to start a dialogue, listening to all the sides. Unfortunately, politics isn't a Disney movie, and the good guys don't always win. Obama's failure to identify this problem early in the campaign revealed his lack of political acumen.

People need to come to grips with politics. Politicians aren't perfect, they are people. Under a powerful enough microscope even the smoothest surface has holes in it. At the end of the day, all politicians will look for ways to further their interests, to get elected. That could mean joining a well-known church in your district to garner local support (Obama); serving on the board of the largest company in the state your husband is governor to curry favor with Sam Walton (Hillary); or it could mean accepting the support of a well known minister from one of your weakest constituencies (McCain). We just have to pick our poison.

Election starts coming close to home - finally

By Rachel Reeves
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It wasn't until I was getting sniffed by Rocky, the police dog, that I realized how historical this election really is. I was trying to get into the Mercyhurst Athletic Center, along with 3,000 other people, to see a presidential candidate speak. Not just speak, but actually campaign in Pennsylvania - something that has not happened in years.

Since I attended the event to cover it for the paper, my ever-handy press pass allowed me to bypass the line and get into the building as soon as they opened the doors. While I was waiting outside of the media door I was able to watch Clinton's security sweep the parking lot just before she arrived. "If you come back outside during the next twenty minutes," a secret agent-type man warned us, intermittently cocking his head and pressing his earpiece further into his skull, "we will have good enough reason to be concerned. And you don't want us to be concerned."

I remember wondering what it would be like to be this important, either while I was getting poked at with the security wand, or trying not to meet Rocky's eyes in case the half-German Shepard, half-wolf thought it was a challenge for a death match. The feeling of awe continued as I entered the arena, took my seat, and started shaking hands with Clinton's staff. The press secretary, the person who was in charge of dinner for the traveling press, even the person whose job it was to run the music until the event started.

I never could understand how a campaign managed to cost so much until that night.

After the people started filing in to watch, I lost track of the campaign managers. The doors opened at 5:30 p.m., and at 7:30 p.m. people were still coming in. People waited two, three, even four or five hours just to be a part of this. Their eyes were streaming from the cold, their noses red. Most were rubbing their hands together to try and warm them. There were students standing in excited clumps, and parents who were trying to explain to their young children the significance of what they were seeing.

"What a great thing, to be a college student during this election," is something that your parents say - and that you never take very seriously. But here was a woman, contending with an African-American, for the Democratic nomination. And many of the people in the room were first-time voters, and they were excited to learn about the decision they had to make.

Being from New York, which is a Super Tuesday state, I am used to the race coming close to home, and I never imagined I would have the same experience in Erie. Like most, I assumed that the campaign would be over long before it got to Pennsylvania. I planned on missing out.

Instead I found myself in a packed gym, listening to the Governor of Pennsylvania tell his residents, "We all said - someday we wish that Pennsylvania would matter. This year Pennsylvania matters, western Pennsylvania matters; you're going to matter."

So, the campaign commercials are going to be coming fast and thick. Just about the only news on every front page is going to be election-related. And honestly, we are all going to get sick of it. But don't forget - this really is a big deal; Pennsylvania has waited a long time for this. And it is a good race.

How crazy would it be if you opened up the newspaper, started reading, and found your own words?

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I think the world needs...

to share the love. Buy a pint of ice cream? Grab some extra spoons and share the love. Tape your favorite TV drama? Pop some popcorn, call your neighbors, and share the love. Stumble across the powerpoint slides for your most hated class? Make some copies and share the love!