



# THE BEHREND BEACON

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## Obama's absence could cost him in the Pa. primary

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Over a week after Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) held a rally at Mercyhurst College, her opponent, Senator Barack Obama (D-IL), has yet to campaign in the Erie area.

Recently Obama held a bus tour across Pennsylvania, hitting the cities of Pittsburgh, Altoona, Johnstown, State College, Harrisburg, Scranton, Allentown and Philadelphia, missing the northwestern part of the state entirely.

But why? What reasons would the Obama campaign have for not touching on this important sector of the state, one that in the last few elections has swung more towards the Democrats?

"Part of it is probably a misreading of the politics of this area and part of it is just probably the state geography," answered the chair of the Political Science department at Behrend, Dr. Robert Speel.

"I'm not sure they fully understand the importance of the Erie region in the statewide vote totals and that Erie is a swing region," continued Speel. "If you look at the rest of the state, there is the potential there for it to be evenly divided and if that happens in the northwest quarter of the state, where Erie is the largest city, may make the difference."

He went on to mention that, because Erie is in the northwest, distanced from other prime targets, a day of driving to Erie and back from other locations may make it an inefficient itinerary for Obama.

See LACK on page 2.

Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) will speak in McGarvey Commons on Monday, April 14 in a town hall meeting at 1:30 p.m.

## County Executive DiVecchio talks community college



Jeremy Korwek/THE BEHREND BEACON  
County Executive Mark DiVecchio speaks at Behrend.

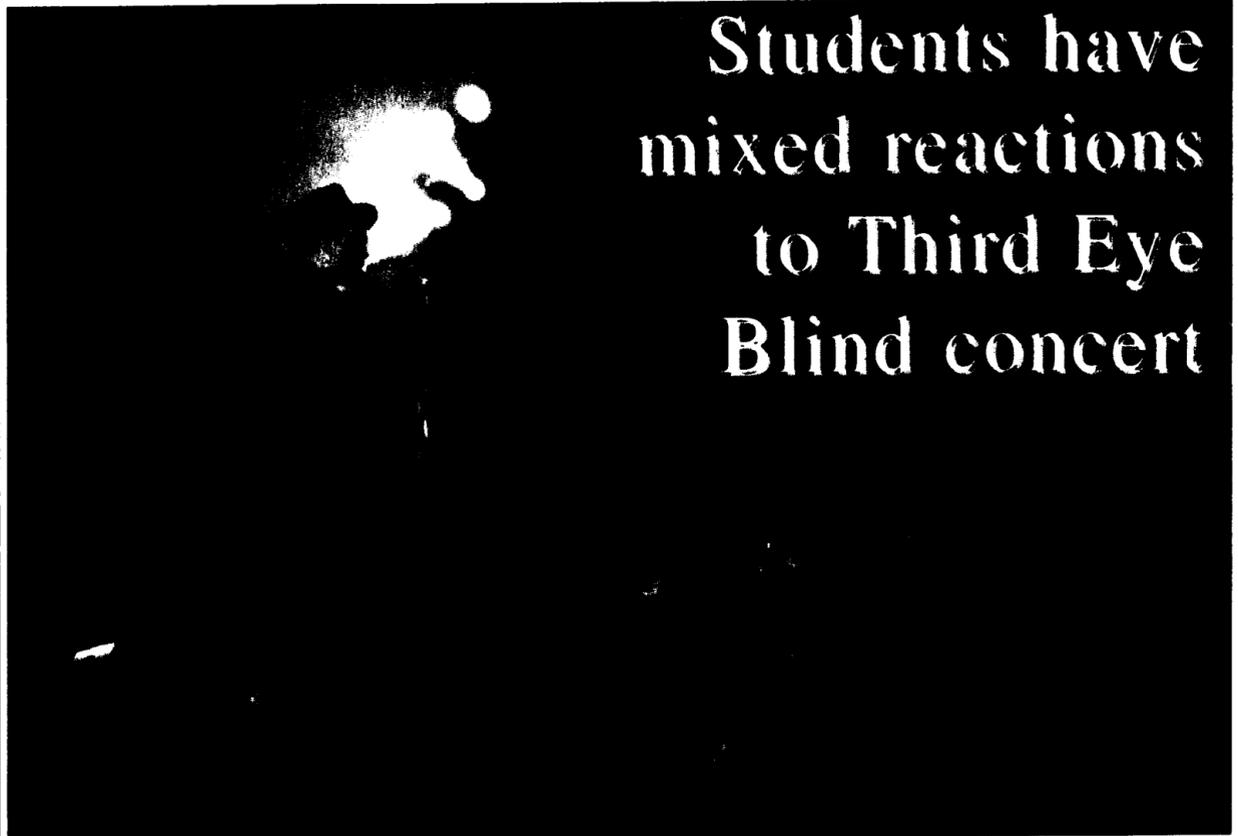
By Rachel Reeves  
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"If you are smart and poor in Erie county, you should quit school in ninth grade," Erie County Executive Mark DiVecchio tells a Behrend communications class. This comment, while extreme, illustrated Erie's need for a community college, which the county executive board is trying to establish by 2010.

It is true that Erie is aching for a step between a high school diploma and a college degree. The four-year colleges and universities in the area are expensive, and the closest community college is in Butler, Pa. The poverty rate in Erie is 16 percent, which is higher than the state average, and there are 2,000 jobs going unfilled, due to a lack of skilled workers.

As DiVecchio said, a community college would be able to provide Erie County with trained workers. "A community college takes on the flavor of the county as far as what companies need and what they're lacking." He estimated

See DIVECCHIO on page 2.



## Students have mixed reactions to Third Eye Blind concert

Daniel Smith/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Third Eye Blind lead singer Stephan Jenkins sings to a packed house in the Junker Center on April 4. The band played for approximately two hours.

By Lenny Smith  
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Penn State Behrend's Junker Center transformed from the home of intramural sports and basketball teams to the home of a high-energy rock concert on Friday, April 4.

Third Eye Blind, a popular group from the 1990s, played to a packed house full of fans of all ages, most noticeably drunk.

Despite the condition of many of the concertgoers, students had a mixed reaction to the show. They disliked a lot of things, such as the band's

appearance, the sound system, and how long the show was. Many agreed, however, that it was definitely worth the \$15 admission fee.

Absent Star took the stage as the opening act around 7:30 p.m. and played for about 45 minutes.

As the lights dimmed at 9:30 p.m., the crowd erupted into cheers and Third Eye Blind took the stage to begin their nearly two hour set.

"I was really excited for the concert to start," sophomore accounting major Adam Kaiser said. "They are one of my favorite bands."

The band began the concert with a lot of songs that were somewhat unfamiliar to the Third Eye

Blind fans.

"People were bored and wanted to leave by the time they played any of the good songs," sophomore speech pathology major Kayla McLauhlin said.

The audience did hear Third Eye Blind hits such as "Jumper," "How's It Going To Be" and "Semi-Charmed Kind of Life." The audience sang along with all of the favorite songs from the band.

As the concert progressed, security could be seen physically removing people after throwing

See THIRD on page 8.

## Virginia Tech: One year later Third Eye Blind lead singer Jenkins rallies for Obama



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mourners hug in front of makeshift memorial at Virginia Tech, after 32 students were killed.

By Matthew Schwabenbauer  
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April 16 marks the one year anniversary of the massacre at Virginia Tech. The tragedy in Blacksburg, Virginia is considered the deadliest school shooting ever, with 32 dead and many others wounded. The shooter, Seung-Hui Cho turned the gun on himself after the shooting, and, shortly after, NBC news received a package of him in the mail with various threatening pictures.

From the media repeatedly airing menacing images of Cho to many vigils and remembrances across the nation, Virginia Tech affected the lives of countless people.

The shootings at Virginia Tech sparked debate on numerous issues. From gun control, to privacy issues, to the responsibility of college administrations to police high-risk students, blame was never placed on just one factor. The tragedy even prompted the passing of new laws. In Virginia, laws were changed so that individuals with a history of mental instability, such as Cho,

would not be able to purchase firearms. Also, the first major federal law concerning gun control in 13 years was passed, which bolstered the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

Some have stated the shooter's past should have prompted intervention before the massacre. The perpetrator had been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder in middle school, but ended his therapy as a junior in high school. In college, Cho was declared mentally ill by a special justice, stalked two female students and was asked by professors to seek help. "The shooter should have received some sort of help before the tragedy. His history should have raised some red flags," said Mike Foerstner, a freshman majoring in Mechanical Engineering. "If someone is declared mentally ill and got caught stalking girls then something should have been done, man."

While some may blame negligence for the killings, others believe it's impossible to prevent shootings such as this. "There's no way to predict whether or not someone is going to go

See BEHREND on page 2.

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It seems to be a year of firsts – politically speaking. This is the first time that Pennsylvania's presidential primary will really matter. This is the first time that an African-American and a woman each have a viable chance of becoming the next president. This is the first presidential primary and general election that most Penn State Behrend students will have the opportunity to vote in. And, on April 4, Stephan Jenkins gave his first political speech in Behrend's Reed Union Building.

Jenkins is the lead singer for Third Eye Blind, who performed in the Junker Center later that night. Visibly nervous, Jenkins took a seat on a wooden stool just after the audience of about 50 people finished watching a promotional film for presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL).

Jenkins' main focus during his approximately 30-minute speech in support of Obama was a direct parallel to the Obama campaign's message, change.

As Jenkins read the first few sentences of the Declaration of Independence, he told the audience, "These words were written right here in Pennsylvania."

"Now, in Pennsylvania, there is an opportunity for you to make a huge, huge change in the country," he said. "This is our moment to help others understand the message Obama has."

Jenkins stressed that maybe policies are not the most important thing to take into account when considering a candidate. "Intelligence, judgment, and calmness all come into play," he said. He also told the crowd that Obama is the only one of the remaining three candidates that is uncompromised by special interest groups.

See JENKINS on page 2.

Contents	
News.....	1-3 Entertainment.....6
Opinion.....	4 Student Life.....7
Humor.....	5 Music.....8
Sports.....9-10	

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