

OPINION

THE BEHREND BEACON

FOUNDED IN 1948

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Submission Guidelines:

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.

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: 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



- Caddyshack
- Greg
- Fedoras
- The Pulitzer Prize

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Final projects looming
- Spreading illnesses
- PMS
- Running out of staples

DWT could mean more than a fine

By Jennifer Juncosa
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This past June, five cheerleaders from upstate New York piled into a car and drove to a lake house five days after graduation. Hannah Congdon, Bailey Goodman, Meredith McClure, Sara Monnat and Katherine Shirley went to Goodman's parent's lake house to celebrate the past school year which included a graduation, a cheerleading championship, college acceptances and their last summer together before going off to school. Half an hour into the trip, Goodman passed a van on the right, completely legally, but the car veered into oncoming traffic and the five girls were in a head on collision with a semi truck. The Goodman family Trailblazer was crushed under the truck and immediately caught fire. The girls died on impact. Hannah, Bailey, Meredith, Sara and Katherine were all members of my senior class.

While most officials accused the driver and passengers to be under the influence, after further investigation alcohol and drugs were ruled out. According to records, Bailey's phone sent out a text

message seconds before the first 911 phone call. While it may have been the person in the passenger's seat who had the sent the text, texting was declared the reason for the accident.

According to iii.org, 19 percent of drivers admit to text-messaging while driving. The state of Washington, as of January of this year, is the only state who has successfully banned texting while driving. If caught DWT, you will be charged with a \$101 fine. New York, along with at least nine other states, is trying to pass a law banning DWT.

There are many ways a teen driver can be distracted while driving. The music is up and a good song comes on the radio, the car holds four but so-and-so can sit on your lap, or the party you planned on going to was busted and your friend is calling you to give a heads up. It could even be worse: the party you were at is a dud, you had four beers but you feel you can still drive. It is almost impossible to change the minds of stubborn teens who are about to get behind the wheel. As a passenger, a friend or an innocent bystander, it is your responsibility to stop them.

As terrible as the story of the Fairport tragedy sounds, it gets worse. Four of

the cheerleaders' friends were in a car behind them and saw their friends lose their lives in a matter of seconds. I was not one of them but the thought of seeing the crash must haunt them continuously. As part of the community it was obvious that the tragedy had a huge affect. Magnets were made in the honor of the girls, at least two candle vigils were held at the high school that had thousand of attendees, and a memorial on the high school football field, specifically for friends, family, and the 2007 senior class, was broadcasted due to the high interest the community had to attend. The tragedy brought the community together and was made aware of a serious problem that could cost lives.

It's an experience I will never forget. All I can do is pray that my friends, family and previous and present classmates are remembering to drive safe. I hate to have a tragedy like this one repeat itself, so please, just put the phone down, turn the radio off, and just get from point A to point B as safely as you can.

For more information about the five girls, the accident, and memorial funds go to angelsalways.wordpress.com.

Because life just isn't stressful enough...

By Rachel Reeves
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Scheduling at Penn State Behrend is a nightmare. Now, I understand that it has improved intensely in the past 20-30 years, due to my parents' walk-uphill-both-ways stories about hundreds of students scheduling on one computer. But although the actual process of signing up for classes has much improved, figuring out which classes to take when is still agony. Once you figure out which classes to take in order to graduate on time, nail down a major and a concentration, leave the door open for a minor, and consider prerequisites, fall/spring schedules, and time slots, all you have to do is wait until the clock strikes midnight on your determined scheduling day.

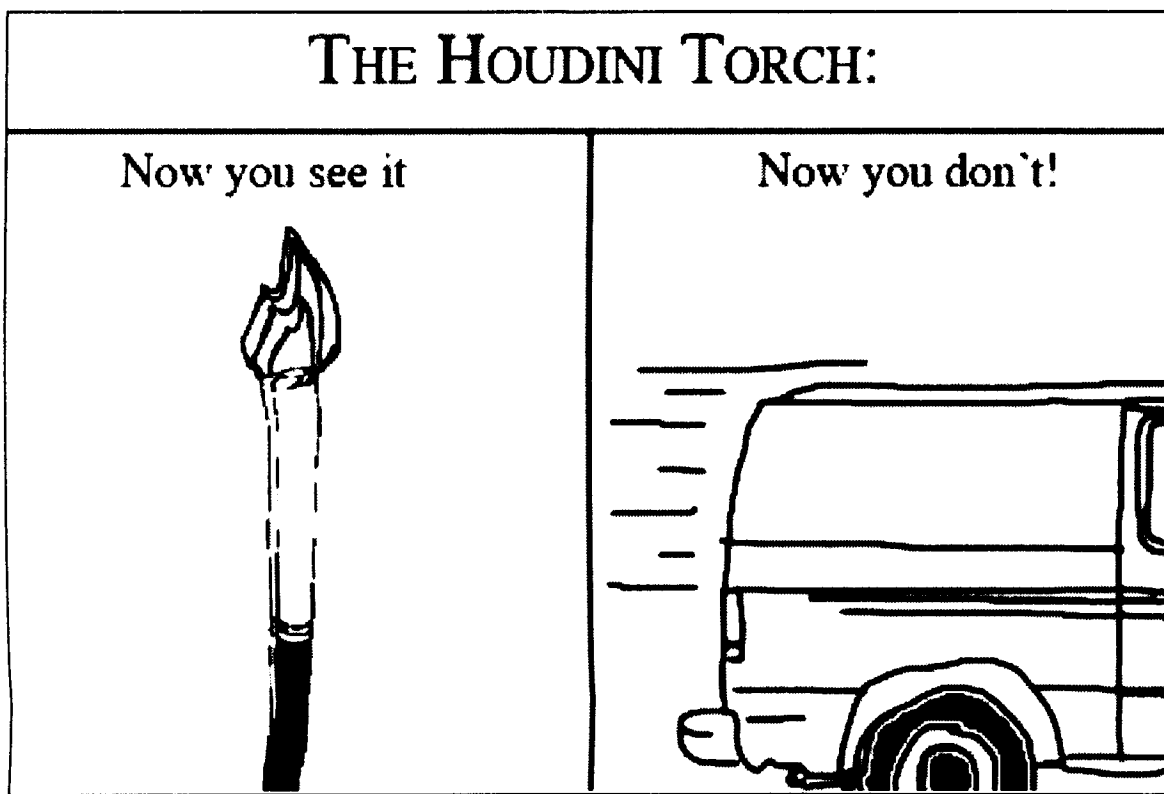
One useful tip I have recently discovered is Ratemyprofessors.com. This website lists every professor at Behrend and ranks them by easiness, helpfulness and clarity. You can even evaluate their sexiness, although this doesn't factor into the average quality rating. This is a particularly useful tool when scheduling for your gen-ed credits. Since you aren't going to be interested in the subject matter anyways, a good teacher can make the class a worthwhile experience.

Fifteen minutes to midnight the other night, I was logged into my student account, with my class registration numbers typed in, waiting to click "submit." Out of curiosity, I clicked submit right away to see what would happen, and it was accepted. See, the scheduling dates were slotted by how many credits you have taken. At college I've only taken 30, which put me in the second-to-last slot. But evidently, Behrend counted my high school AP credits, which would have allowed me to schedule three days earlier. I would have been upset, but I got my classes in before all of the 30-credit students could access them, which meant that I got all of my choice classes. It also meant that I could sit back and watch the much-anticipated event unfold.

From an hour up to 10 minutes before scheduling, everyone in the dorm is running around in sweats, frantically clutching the spring 2008 catalog and asking whether we click "Student Schedule," or "Drop/Add," or "Registration." When it starts getting close to midnight, the building falls silent. No music, no talking, no phones, no laughter. Just steady clicking, typing, and the occasional desperate prayer. When witching hour finally strikes, over 200 people in one building breathlessly click "SUBMIT." There is a three-second lull, and the results come back. I begin to hear yells from neighboring rooms. "It's full? It had 74 seats open!" "8 a.m.? Are you kidding me?" "No, no, I will not take fitness walking! It just won't happen!" "I got the last seat in US History!" "That was YOU?"

It's reminiscent of a vicious shoe sale. The whole ordeal is over in five minutes, and afterwards people walk around for days with either a triumphant, gloating air, or a dark, slightly homicidal expression. I admit I am one of the triumphant ones. It probably didn't help that while my neighbors were engaged in a short yet intense bloodbath, I was writing my schedule out on my pastel-colored index cards and cutting and pasting them into a cheerful yellow, green and pink arrangement. Then asking around if anyone had a thumbtack.

I suppose I could have been more sensitive.



Cartoon by Rachel Reeves

An ode to the election

By Bryce Alexander Sayers
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I have caught myself thinking about the four remaining presidential candidates and musing over whom in the entertainment industry they most resemble. These comparisons likely have no relevancy, or even accuracy, but it's my opinion that it's fun to think about regardless.

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY): Miley Cyrus. Both are American sweethearts in their own regards, both have family ties to accomplished people in their respective careers: Hillary is married to a former president, Miley is the daughter of a famous country singer. Both can claim connections to the American South and are proud of it, yet their appeal has transcended regions of the continental United States. Urban or rural, they hold a place in the heart of America.

Runner-up - Beth Ditto. An outspoken feminist and controversial punk rocker with ties to Arkansas. Hillary's comparison to Ditto falls short mostly due to Beth's uncompromising radicalism and pride of being overweight.

Sen. John McCain (R-AZ): Rolling Stones. In this day and age both seem like they should be losing steam. While Obama is criticized for being inexperienced, McCain and "the Stones" have received no end of jeers for their age. It doesn't help McCain that he's the Republican candidate in an age when the party is associated with elitism and set to run against

either a woman or African-American. But McCain is dedicated to his fans. So long as someone is grooving to "Sympathy for the Devil," you can bet he'll be trying to get his satisfaction.

Runner-up - Duke Ellington Orchestra. McCain's the new frontman for a band that lost its star ages ago, but they can still hold a note... "I...ra...q!"

Ron Paul (R-TX): Soulja Boy. The internet's decentralization opened up fantastic new social avenues: virtual worlds, blogs of all flavors, grassroots political movements and cheap video production. As the haven and mouthpiece for an assortment of oddities and misfits, it became the springboard for Governor and Medical Dr. Ron Paul. As Soulja Boy's single "Crank That" became a hip-hop sensation, Paul's "State's Rights" caught a fever among Libertarians and other voters disillusioned by mainstream politics. Coincidentally, explaining both "superman dat ho" and "reverting to the gold standard" are almost pavlovian triggers for head-shaking.

Runner-up - Gary Brotsma. Another internet sensation who quickly found fame in the online community but was little more than a cute act to those in the real world. Gary attempted to revive his fame years later with "New Numa" which had lukewarm reception. We have yet to see what Paul will attempt four years from now.

Barack Obama (D-IL): Johnny Cash. What intrigues me most about Obama is his ability to evoke both universal controversy and appeal. My sentiments about Johnny Cash are no

different. Obama won over my neoconservative grandparents and is the official candidate for Behrend's College Democrats. Cash was a country singer, but was - and still is - beloved by a broad spectrum of music fans. These include hip-hop artist Snoop Dogg and college atheists who may or may not be aware of his devout Christian beliefs. Both radiated personalities with an everyman aura, yet are so unique they are characters unto themselves. No matter the outcome of the presidential race we can bet Hollywood will produce a biopic on the life and career of Obama. Hopefully his *Walk the Line* won't have to detail a seedy lifestyle of drug use and womanizing. Perhaps it would behoove Obama's campaign to cover a Nine Inch Nails song?

Runner-up - Wesley Willis. Both came from the state of Illinois, so it wouldn't be out of character for Barack to end his speeches with "Rock over London, rock on Chicago," followed by a random slogan. Obama may not wrestle with demonic voices spawned by schizophrenia, but he has had to overcome vicious counter-campaigns claiming he "wasn't black enough" one day then associating him with a highly controversial African-American preacher the next.

There may be controversy over the ideal of separation of Church and State, but the intertwining of Music and State is undeniable. This election we have the potential to make the race into the show of the century.

Marco.

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I think the world needs...

Wheely chair races. Remember when you were a kid and you had to spend a few hours at your mom or dad's work during the summer? The answer to the impending boredom usually was a nice wheely chair and a momentarily empty hallway. Bring those days back with a chair, a friend, and maybe a helmet.