

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



- Teacher evaluations
- The hamster dance
- The Behrend Beacon
- Sunburns

Beacon Thumbs Down



- Finals
- Chocolate Skittles
- "Mom" jokes
- Inappropriatism

The four year to-do list:

By Chris LaFuria

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Take a hike in the Gorge. Watch an LEB movie on a Friday night. Jog a couple laps around Junker Center. Watch a baseball game. Play tennis at 10 p.m. Sit in the grass outside of Reed Union Building and watch people walk in.

Go to a Logan Series Music at Noon performance. Attend an improv night, hosted by Matchbox Players. Visit the Smith Chapel and listen to a poet read his latest collection.

Stop by a professor's office just to shoot the breeze. Hang an interesting poster about an upcoming event. Play in a Friday night pickup soccer game in Erie Hall. Listen to a visiting scientist speaking about a new telescope. Contribute an article for *The Beacon* or some literary art for the *Lake Effect*.

Ride a bike to class instead of struggling with the parking labyrinth. Eat some free food at a volleyball or soccer game. Watch people on the balcony enjoy the company of their friends and play some *Magic: the Gathering*.

Stop for a couple seconds and listen to the Carillon Bells. Sit with the administration at noon in Bruno's and talk about

Behrend in general. Take part in LEB open mic night at Bruno's.

Bring coffee to someone that looks like they're going to fall asleep in the Library computer lab. Eat a bagel or two at the Clark Café in REDC. Let somebody cross the street without hesitation. Turn down your radio and bass when you're driving to class.

Memorize the names of all the buildings in the Apartment complex. Eat lunch in the Wilson Picnic Grove. Pick up an empty cardboard beer box outside of Ohio Hall and throw it in the dumpster.

Get some coffee in the Bruno's café. Avoid the coffee from the vending machine in Kochel Building. Peruse the display of books written by professors and maybe ask to read one. Rent some dvds for FREE from the library. Take off your iPod headphones and listen to the natural sound of the campus.

Check out the jazz band take on a difficult number. Attend the Behrend's chorus' holiday concert. Ride along with the Police and Safety and see what their job's about. If, for some reason, you're in Reed after midnight, help a maintenance worker pick up some garbage.

Put on a Behrend t-shirt. Buy a Behrend bumper sticker. Don't say,

"Well, it's just Behrend. Who cares?"

Don't deface the signs that preach of inequality. Don't throw trash in the elevators. Walk down from your dorm instead of driving down. Donate your textbooks in one of the bins. Visit the MCC, hang out and tell stories.

As I reflect on the last four years I have spent at Behrend, I have been able to compile this list of activities. Roughly 90 percent of the items on here I have done. Surprisingly, I have done all of these in the last two years.

The first two years, I lived at home. I went to class, came home, ate, then went to work. That was my routine until I moved closer to campus and discovered the many things that are available on campus. To those who go home every weekend and stay in their dorms during the week, read this list and then picture yourself doing the activities. I think you'll find some time to fit them in.

When I walk to get my diploma, ending my four-year career at one of the best colleges in the area, I'm not going to think of all the things I regret missing out on: I don't have that kind of time. Rather, what I'm going to remember is the people that changed my life by simple contact or conversation, and, hopefully the people that I have impacted through such experiences.

Packing up the year...

By Rachel Reeves

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I'm starting to pack up my room already. Well, there is a pile in the back of my closet that stands about three feet tall, which consists of all of the winter stuff I no longer need. When I go home for the weekend, my car will be riding low. It's a strange feeling. I packed up a little bit for winter break, but I knew that I would be unpacking right back into the same room. This time I don't know where I'll be unloading everything again.

At the very beginning of this year I wrote an article about being a new freshman. Struggling to figure out dinner, wandering to classes, sitting in a strange box of a dorm room with a stranger of a roommate. Everything was so foreign, like a language you only barely knew.

I remember the first time I was comfortable in my room. It was early in November, and it was the first really cold day. It had been raining, and I came in from math soaking wet. I flicked on the lights, heated up a cup of coffee, and put on some jazz. After grabbing a book and hunkering onto my bed, I realized that I was actually content to be there.

I remember the first time I missed something about Behrend. Rather, realizing that I would be missing something. I decided to pack up for winter break in one night, so it was a four-hour marathon packing session including Chinese food and *John Tucker Must Die*. I had taken a break to eat, and I was sitting in the middle of my floor surrounded by half-full totes and clothes that were thrown everywhere. It occurred to me that for the next three weeks, I would not be able to go next door to watch a movie and have a good laugh. For once it felt like I was leaving something behind.

And I remember the first time I felt completely at home here. I was walking to the library not too long ago, and it was warm and the sun was out. I kept walking past people that I knew, friends that I had made. I kept seeing things on campus that made me remember things that made me laugh. It was one of those moments when you can actually see how far you've come.

I have made good friends here, some I hope that I'll be friends with for life. I've established patterns of living, traditions. One, for example, is the fish quotes board my roommate and I have. The whiteboard on the inside of our door used to be for messages, and somehow it evolved into someplace to write quotes pertaining only to fish. It takes time to build a tradition as weird as that.

I know what the bad food is at Dobbins and the mostly safe food. I haven't tripped over the stairs in the science building for the longest time. I can walk to any destination without thinking about it. Scheduling I have down to a science, and I even know some of the classes and professors to avoid. I have places I like to be and places I dread walking into. There are people I avoid, and there are people I like bumping into.

Yesterday I was throwing the football on the grass in front of my dorm with a good friend. The sun was warm, and my flip flops were abandoned a few feet away. And I was proud at what I have done. I'm not a lost freshman anymore. I'm a person. I'm me.



Cartoon by Rachel Reeves

Two weeks

By Matthew Schwabenbauer

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Two weeks. The words flying out of everyone's mouth. Two more weeks of school. Two weeks and all of this is over.

It's almost like switching lives, leaving a new one for an old one. Everything that has happened during the past eight months gets put on hold, but just for a little while.

It seems like just yesterday I was moving in. It felt like a dream, at the time. The bed I woke up in that morning wasn't the one I slept in that night. Despite a large number of people coming here from my high school, Behrend felt like a whole new world. There I was, a dumb, nervous kid that was completely unsure of himself, surrounded by thousands of other new people his same age. I was terrified and enamored at the same time.

The first day of school was a scramble to meet girls. I had just broken up with my girlfriend of over a year and was ready to get myself out there. Looking back on it, it was almost sad. Actually, it was very sad.

The highlight of the day was when

one of my friends and I were corralling members of the opposite sex to go to a party his brother was throwing at his house. At the time, there was an ice cream social going on in front of one of the dorms.

"Hey ladies, where you headed?" my stouthearted friend asked a couple of girls. "We're going to the ice cream social," they replied. My friend saw his opportunity and blurted, "Well I know about a keg social down the street if you're interested!" Needless to say, we sunk faster than the Titanic.

Now that the initial awkwardness of school is over, this place feels like home. Not the tiny redneck town south of here where I was born. At home, it seems like the only person I have anything in common with is my mother, but here, I've met countless people who share the same interests as me, the friends I've been waiting to meet for what seems like my entire life.

After nine months of getting to meet new people, try new things, hear new music and go to classes that actually interest me, it's time to leave. Time to leave the faces I've seen daily for the past eight months and accept the fact that I won't be seeing many of them for a while.

Looking back on it all, the real things I'm taking away from my first year of college aren't the things I learned in my classes, they're the times I had with my friends. From getting absolutely hammered drunk in dorm rooms and hiding from RAs, to walking for miles in the woods and laughing at the kid who just jumped in the creek naked but is so drunk he doesn't put his clothes back on, there are just some things you need to do that you don't get taught in class.

Looking back even harder, I can't believe how many things I did that my mother told me not to. I hope she doesn't read this.

Two weeks. In two weeks there will be another day that I wake up in a bed different than the one I'll be sleeping in that night. Although Behrend was a place that took a while for me to warm up to (partly due to the fact that I was freezing to death the majority of the time), I have to say this has been one of the best years of my life. I'm going to miss all the new friends I've made, but at least I get to do a lot of visiting this summer. I'm dreading only having two more weeks of this, but next year can only be better.

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I think the world needs...

Ceremony. A celebration of past accomplishments and what is to come. Especially as another school year is coming to a close, and some of us are heading out into the wide world. Everyone needs a minute to be able to step back and see just how far they've come.