

OPINION

Common sensinomics

By Christopher Brown
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 Feb. 8, 2008

A recession for the U.S. economy seems to be inevitable. Soaring energy costs, the declining dollar value, the drying up of capital for businesses, the increasing number of bankruptcies, and the growing number of foreclosures in the United States add up to a long road ahead for the economy. Congress has stalled on a stimulus package that will most likely end up being too little and too late for any real effect anyways. While the talking-heads on T.V. can't agree on what all this means for the future of the economy, almost all agree we have not seen the worst of it yet.

I was watching MTV's serial documentary program True Life the other day. This episode followed young Americans in their early 20s who had forgotten too far in debt and were struggling to pay their bills or were going through bankruptcy. One of them had bought a house she couldn't afford and expensive furniture she didn't need. Another was living in her parent's garage because she had no money. At one point she visited her bankruptcy lawyer to go over paperwork, and of all things she could have had in her hand, she had that oh-so-needed status symbol of a Starbuck's cup. I was shocked. This image stuck out to me more than anything else.

Here was a person who couldn't make rent, didn't have a steady job, and was filing bankruptcy, but she somehow managed to scrounge up enough money to buy a cup of over-priced, sugary, coffee. I suspect this was not an isolated incident. This example illustrates an important point about the state of our economy that the numbers don't reflect: for all practical purposes the words 'need' and 'want' are now synonyms in American vernacular.

Today, if one person gets a new car, all of their neighbors need one also. As soon as the latest gadgets come out, everyone needs to get one. Today's spending habits are driven more by greed and attempts to define one's self-worth through their material possessions. I'm not quite sure who to blame, the predatory lender and savvy salesperson or the person who spends beyond their means. Do we blame drug dealers or the drug addicts? Both, drug dealers and greedy corporations, sell instant gratification that require people borrow against their future in order to purchase.

Yesterday, retailers released figures that showed consumer spending dropped precipitously over the last few months, dealing the latest blow to the American economy. As reported by the New York Times, consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of economic growth; a decline almost guarantees a recession. I can almost hear the blame game beginning. Democrats will blame Republicans, Republicans-Democrats.

Bush will blame Congress, Congress-Bush. Current Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke will blame former Chairman Alan Greenspan.

I think there will be enough blaming to go around. But, I want to take my own share of responsibility for the decline, cause you see, I'm one of those consumers that refuses to buy things I don't need or spend money I don't have. So partly the decline in consumer spending is my fault; sorry.

After almost every economic recession economists develop a 'new' theory so past mistakes don't repeat themselves. After the Great Depression, Classical economics gave way to Keynesian macroeconomics. Stagflation in the 1960's gave way to Monetarism. Declining productivity in the late 1970s brought Reaganomics and trickle-down economics. And the economic recession of the early 1990s led to even more ideas on how to think about economics. No doubt, economists will come up with some hot-new theory to explain the lessons learned from this most recent economic decline.

However, I think the next economic theory will be called Common-Sensinomics. It's main premise: don't spend money you don't have on things you don't need; don't sell things people don't need. I know, it goes against everything we've been taught from birth, but I think it just might work.

Whatever happened to ice cream trucks?

By Chris LaFuria
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 Feb. 22, 2008

- What ever happened to ice cream trucks, window washers and milkmen?
- I wonder if the mothers of cowboys ever told them not to horse around?
- If 18-wheelers are considered the biggest trucks on the road, then why are they always called "semi-trucks"?
- I went to Moscow and people were always in a hurry. I asked a woman why and all she could say is, "I'm Russian."
- I couldn't be the president of the United States because I was not born in a state. I was born in a commonwealth of the United States.
- People who developed film were always in a bad mood from being around so many negatives.
- Someone once told me to quit smoking. I told them, "I'm not the one smoking. The cigarette is."
- When Gary Paulsen dies, I wonder if he is going to bury the "Hatchet."
- When did pennies become worthless?
- Genghis Khan is a faker, so is James Caan.
- Why is it called "heartburn" if it has nothing to do with the heart or fire?
- I would probably die if I went to a Beijing preschool because there is way too much Euthanasia.
- The guy who installed my windows was full of himself. He was way too caulky.
- Were werewolves called such because they were half man/half wolf or because they were incognizant of their location?
- I would let Dr. Pepper do surgery on me to repair my taste buds.
- Some people have a common hobby of building a ship-in-a-bottle. It's much more difficult to build a pirate-in-a-bottle.
- The word "phlegm" has way too much of the letter "g."
- I went on a blind date and I can't remember what she looked like.
- Middle names are about as useful as male nipples.
- If I were to be friends with the Rice Krispies guys, I think I would be ok with Crackle and Pop, but I would definitely have a problem with Snap.
- Coyotes would be much more friendly if they didn't howl so much at night. People are trying to sleep.
- I got a headache when I was trying to put my No. 2 pencils in numerical order.
- The reason we do not have a pickle brand called Britney Spears is because we would have to get rid of the baby dolls.
- I wonder if the hood is the most dangerous place on the coat.
- If I were a book, I would be found in the Skinback section.
- I had a glass of trout juice, but it all spilled when I tried to tip the scales.
- Mrs. Vinyl left her husband because he was a record player.
- Tigers would be so much better at sneaking up to their prey if they weren't bright orange... And didn't growl and roar.
- I used to scream for ice cream. Now I scream for environmental conservation laws.
- I will never, ever, ever have to actually use the Quadratic Formula..
- I'm leaving Behrend with my pants down so that everyone can see my bare end.

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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.

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



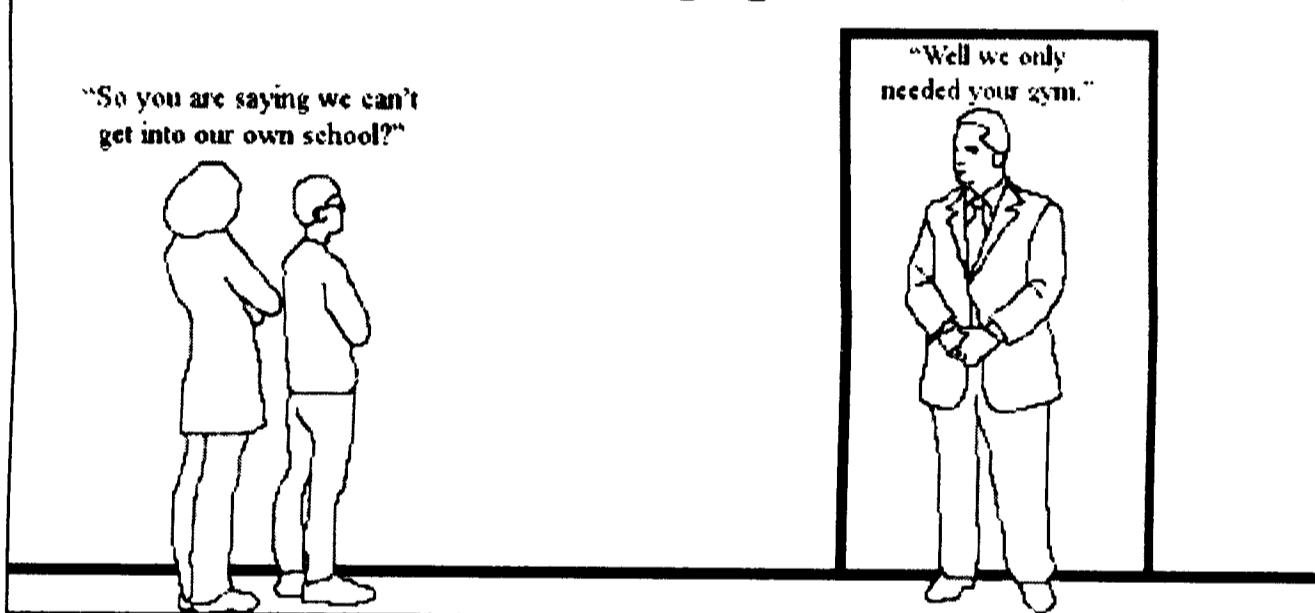
- Sloths
- Catered dinners
- Tribute videos
- The end of the year

Beacon Thumbs Down



- De-icing the freezer
- Finals
- Cleaning and packing
- The end of the year

OBAMA '08



Cartoon by Jennifer Juncosa April 19, 2008

There's only one kind of Nittany Lion

By Lenny Smith
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 Oct. 19, 2007

Let's take a journey back to your senior year of high school when you made your college decision. You were probably very excited about being accepted into Penn State Behrend and couldn't wait to graduate from high school and get away from all that drama.

"Hey Len, where are you going to college next year?" a friend asks. "Penn State Behrend," I reply. To my dismay, I am not met with any congratulations. No, I simply get the look of discomfort and then the response, "Oh, you couldn't get into Main, huh?"

Yes, I didn't get accepted into University Park for my freshman year, but that doesn't mean that because I go to a commonwealth campus I am any less intelligent. This seems to be one of the worst misconceptions among Penn State students, primarily those in State College.

There are numerous reasons why a student would choose Behrend over University Park. Behrend has a lot to offer on its own right, aside from the Penn State degree.

They have smaller class sizes, which means a smaller student to faculty

ratio, award-winning professors and programs, as well as the greater opportunity to participate in athletic programs.

University Park also has its highlights, too. You are right in the midst of everything that is Penn State. All your needs are met within walking distance, and there is a greater opportunity to find who you are in the very diverse environment.

I initially had my heart set on University Park and after I was diverted to Behrend I was pretty upset. However, I have grown to really like it here in Erie. I have been involved in a large number of programs and clubs and academically, the smaller class setting has definitely been an advantage. However, I do plan on transferring because I cannot finish my degree at Behrend.

What really makes me mad is when the students at University Park feel like they have the right to demean all the students at commonwealth campuses. A remarkable 60 percent of first year students start their degrees at a campus other than University Park. Any of these students that are in good academic standing have the option of changing their campus assignment to University Park.

Behrend students deserve the respect of their fellow Penn State students. We

have some of the best academic programs in the nation, including our Plastics Engineering Technology major.

This year, one of UP students' main argument against commonwealth students is their right to football tickets. They think that they should have first dibs on student section seating because there are in State College. They believe that we should not even have to option to purchase tickets because all we supposedly do is sell our tickets for a profit. I was fortunate enough to buy season tickets and have attended every game that I can. Over the course of the season, I will have only sold two tickets. I know a lot of people at University Park that have student tickets, but have not felt like going to the game and have left their ticket to go unused. What is worse, a ticket going unused or a ticket from a commonwealth student being sold?

At the end of our tenure, we will all have a diploma that reads "The Pennsylvania State University." There will be no way for anyone to know where you began or even finished your degree. The commonwealth campus system gives students from all campuses valuable resources from all over the state. We are all one Penn State.

Write for the Beacon next year:

It's what the cool kids do.

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