

# STUDENT LIFE

## Political apathy prevalent on campus

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A quick look around campus reveals a vibrant and youthful community, a community with an extremely diverse student body, encompassing many different backgrounds and walks of life. From students playing Frisbee outside of their dorms, studying at the library or passing around fliers outside of Bruno's, Behrend has an extremely individualistic student body.

With any collection of diverse young people usually comes an equally diverse collection of political views, but political affiliations are not readily communicated around campus. At most universities, political signs are a common sight—especially so close to a presidential election. Unfortunately, Behrend is severely lacking in any form of political expression.

However, it is impossible to say that there is no political awareness on campus. There is the occasional button on someone's clothing, and tables supporting candidates and distributing pamphlets outside of Bruno's have garnered some attention, but most students are not actively supporting any of the presidential candidates.

An explanation for this political passiveness is difficult to locate. For some students, the current presidential candidates are to blame. "I don't support any of the candidates, and I really don't have an explanation why. I guess none of them stick out to me," said Gary Cooper, a freshman Plastics Engineering major. "I'm not too happy with the choices for this election."

Apathy may be an excuse for some, but during an election with such extreme supporters for each candidate it can't be the sole explanation for the lack of politics on campus. Some students are simply too unfamiliar with the current candidates to make a decision one way or the other. "I don't really know too much about any of the current candidates," said freshman Shane Appel, a Plastics Engineering major. "I don't think anyone should support a politician unless they are one hundred percent sure about them. Even if someone knows nothing about a certain politician, their vote counts as much as some-

one who knows politics inside and out."

A lack of an outlet to support a certain candidate is causing detriment to some. "I would put up signs for a candidate, but I just don't know where to get them," said freshman James Svolos, a Psychology major.

With politics so scarce on campus, and many students clearly uninformed on the current election, it's surprising that student political organizations are not campaigning more aggressively. One way for politically uninformed students to get more involved with the current election is to subscribe to mailing lists for College Democrats or Republicans. Signup sheets for each organization can sometimes

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~Shane Appel

be found outside of Bruno's, but other than that there are few opportunities to get involved.

At many universities, members of student political organizations are frequently informing students on the current election. Whether it be giving out buttons, or pamphlets of information, or having rallies in support of candidates, the word is being spread about the

candidates. Recently, interest in certain candidates has drawn small groups of people to booths outside of Bruno's, but nothing on the level of a rally.

Student political organizations meet weekly, but many students are completely unaware of where or when these meetings take place. "I had no idea that College Democrats or College Republicans had meetings," said Matt Kirkpatrick, a freshman Plastics Engineering major. "I've never seen any information on how to get involved with these organizations. You'd think things like that would have a bigger presence on campus."

With any luck, the political apathy currently plaguing our campus should end as the election approaches. As more students become educated about the candidates, hopefully that will be reflected around Behrend. If enough people decide to start projecting their political views by putting up signs, distributing pamphlets or organizing rallies, then eventually Behrend may look like a typical college campus. More people supporting their candidates will inspire others to air their political views and take an active stance on the future of their country.

## Brett Favre: the man, the myth, the legend

By Scott Muska  
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On a Sunday two weeks ago I witnessed history. I was sitting on the couch with my roommates watching the Packers game, a game in which Brett Favre broke the record previously held by Dan Marino for the most touchdown passes thrown by a quarterback in the history of the NFL.

This, to some people, is very significant. To me, though, it is just a record, but it did get me thinking about other issues, like politics.

A new president will be elected a little less than 13 months from now, and George Bush will leave the office with his tail between his legs and having been deemed by some the worst president to ever run our country. I won't say that he was the worst, but I can definitely see that there is room for improvement.

But who? As of now there are so many candidates, it's hard to have a definitive idea of whom I should vote for. It's going to be a unique race, at least compared to the other elections I have been alive for, in that there is such a diverse selection of candidates.

It's very plausible that the next leader of our country could be the first woman (Hillary Rodham Clinton), Mormon (Mitt Romney), or black (Barak Obama) president. There's even a chance that our next Commander-In-Chief could be the first actor since Reagan (Fred Thompson).

Since there are so many potential firsts in the upcoming race, I started to wonder why not the first former professional quarterback president? Gerald

Ford played college football for the University of Michigan, and as far as I know he did a decent job during his presidential term.

I truly believe that Brett Favre would make a good Commander in Chief, for a number of reasons that I feel I should describe, because if you're to this point in the article, you probably think that I'm just a kid trying to be funny, but I assure you my reasoning is sensible.

Firstly, Favre is arguably the greatest leader to run a football team in the last two decades, and to be a president you obviously must have above average leadership skills. I don't want to compare what happens on a football field to the catastrophes and responsibilities that presidents continuously have to deal with, because know they are extremely different, but there are certain parallels. He is also considered to be a great leader off of the field as well, and he is a very articulate speaker during interviews, which is something that can't—by no fault of his own—be said about President Bush.

To go along with his leadership skills, he's been noted to consider his teammates very highly in the decisions that he makes. When he was considering retiring after last season, he consulted with his coaches and teammates to get their input, and he's been repeatedly rumored to consult his receivers on areas that he could improve. It seems as though he's always putting others before himself, a trait that could help the condition in Iraq and the war on terror, probably the most argued issue in current American politics. If president, Favre would undoubtedly consult with the soldiers, govern-

ments, and countries involved, without worrying about his own agenda.

A big black mark on the Bush Administration's legacy is how he supposedly dealt with the New Orleans area in the time immediately following Hurricane Katrina. I don't feel that this would be a problem with Favre. I believe that he would respond to natural disasters quickly and efficiently, and as a matter of fact, he already has. In the days following Katrina's destruction of the south, Favre formed the Brett Favre Fourward Foundation, a charity organization designed to give aid to those who were negatively affected by the hurricane.

If you watch a Favre interview, or if you've seen him in a public setting, it's not difficult to figure out that he is not pretentious when it comes to public image. Not only will he say exactly what he's feeling, but he also seems not to be worried about people judging his mode of dress. In the press conference following his record breaking game, he showed up in a black pocket t-shirt, khaki cargo shorts and a pair of hiking boots.

I know it's impossible for Favre to become the president in 2008, because it is too late now to declare to run, but I'm holding onto hope for 2012. I've seen Favre throw countless touchdown passes, and his celebration is always the same. He sprints to the endzone, and picks up the receiver that caught the pass. He runs around carrying them on his back, mimicking how he carries his team on his back.

And that's exactly what he could do for this country.

### "Top Five Reasons to Work for The Beacon"

By Scott Muska

5. Stipends at the end of the semester
4. Will aid in winning the elusive pride of parents
3. Investigative journalism attracts the opposite sex
2. Free pizza, weekly
1. The opportunity to fill Lenny Smith's shoes

## Finals Week Library Schedule

Monday, April 21 ---- Thursday, May 8

- Monday - Thursday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Friday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.
- Saturday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.
- Sunday, 10 a.m.-1 a.m.

Friday, May 9 ---- 8 a.m. -5 p.m.

## Protest songs raise political awareness among college students

By Scott Muska  
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Aug. 31, 2007

Since the tragic attacks on September 11, 2001, the collective population of the United States has become increasingly politically aware. The country has become divided on many different topics, but the most fervently debated has been the war in Iraq.

An increasingly popular way for these arguments and opinions to be voiced to a vast audience has been through music recordings and performances, and such songs have been dubbed "protest songs."

Protest songs are currently making their way into mainstream pop culture in a way that mirrors the Vietnam War era, when they reached an astounding popularity and influenced the minds and opinions of youths all over the country. Now, just as then, they have to do mainly with the current war and the alleged lack of justification for it.

Neil Young and John Lennon were some of the more popularized advocates of protest songs in the

'60s and '70s, and they are still impacting the genre today. Last year, Young released an album titled *Living With War* that was basically an entire protest record on which he attacked the Bush administration over many of the highly-debated current political topics. He included the Iraq War, steroids in baseball, the destruction of New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina, the Patriot Act, and other supposed fallacies.

Lennon became known as one of the most politically aware musicians of his or any other time, and his work with The Beatles and as a solo artist live on with much popularity to this day. A cover album of some of Lennon's songs, called *Instant Karma*, was recently released as part of Amnesty International's effort to stop the genocide in Darfur, Sudan. It includes covers by such popular artists as Christina Aguilera, Green Day, U2, REM, and Snow Patrol.

Along with many of the other songs, Green Day's cover of "Working Class Hero" has garnered

immense publicity, and its video features Sudanese refugees speaking about life in Darfur and the hardships their countrymen endure.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO  
Tom Morello performs solo.

Tom Morello, has recently released a solo album under the name The Nightwatchman called *One Man Revolution* on which he vehemently denounces the government.

The vast majority of the protest songs that are coming out have a very pacifistic tone, and they often attack George Bush in very merciless ways. The single from Neil Young's *Living With War* is titled "Let's Impeach the President," and the increasingly popular Conor Oberst of Bright Eyes has come out with a song called, "When the President Talks to God." Maroon 5 has admitted that they are speaking out against President Bush at times in their newly released album, *It Won't Be Soon Before Long*, and Rage Against the Machine guitarist,

Not only are artists penning protest songs, they are also speaking out between songs during concerts and events about the way they feel things are being mishandled. Shortly after Hurricane Katrina, Kanye West said that George Bush "doesn't care about black people," and Dave Matthews has spoken out openly against the treatment of the soldiers in Iraq and the war in general saying that he "fears that our true motivation is about oil and our own flailing economy; about the failure to destroy Al Qaeda and about revenge."

Whether the war in Iraq is justified or not is an extremely debatable issue that has become subject to many schools of thought. Whether the artists who put out these songs are inherently right or not has become an afterthought. What has come to the forefront of the protest songs as of late has not been that the ideals presented through them are sound or righteous, but that political opinion is being spread in the popular culture mainstream, which is getting more of the nation involved in deciding its political direction. This will grow increasingly more important in the coming year, when a new president will be elected and the direction of the nation will definitely change.