

PERSPECTIVES

THE BEHREND BEACON

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Letters should be limited to 350 words and commentaries 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 it.

The Beacon does not publish anonymous letters. Please include your major, faculty, or administration position and semester standing. Deadline for any submission is 3 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 jdj5061@psu.edu or drop them off at the Beacon office.

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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



- Backyard football
- Heat lamps by elevator
- *The Bee Gees*
- Poorly labeled bathrooms

Beacon Thumbs Down



- *Grey's Anatomy* premiere
- Code Red on sheets
- *Harry Potter 5* postponed
- Bad boys finishing first

Why I will vote for Obama

By Christopher Brown
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Voters are a fickle breed, each subjecting the candidates to their own criteria, switching on a whim or deeply entrenched. I write this not expecting to necessarily sway many voters, realizing that the reason I support Obama may not translate very well to many others. However, I hope to highlight something overlooked in the main stream media. A president's personality and decision-making style is just as important as their policies. It affects how they make decisions and what those decisions will be.

Over the length of this campaign we've seen McCain's inability to control his message or his advisors. And as noted by The Washington Post, his campaign is "now run largely by skilled operatives who learned their crafts in successive Bush campaigns and various jobs across the Bush government over the past eight years," including seven former lobbyists. McCain has come across as irascible, testy and erratic in the debates and on the campaign trail.

In contrast, Obama has no former lobbyists on his payroll and has pledged to never hire a former registered lobbyist in his administration. His policy team includes a smattering of seasoned Democratic advisors, including Tony Lake, Susan Rice and Samantha Sewall, co-author of The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual with General Petraeus, in addition to a number of outsiders including Austan Goolsbee, an economics professor from the University of Chicago, and retired Air Force general Scott Gratton.

Noam Scheiber, senior editor of *The New Republic*, described Obama's advisers in March "as decidedly non-ideological...just as comfortable with ideological diversity as the candidate they advise."

After the last eight years, I don't think our country could withstand another president so driven and blinded by ideology. I want a president willing and able to listen to opposing views, assess their merits and then make a decision. So far, that president should be Barack Obama.

Each candidate's reaction to the economic crisis has reaffirmed my feelings on this subject. McCain seemed scattered and flustered, lacking a coherent story about a subject that he admits to know little about. He injected himself into tenuous negotiations on the rescue bill in Congress, hoping to score political points. Like a starfish, he was pointed in every direction, carried by currents out of his control.

Obama, on the other hand, stayed calm. He called his advisors, congressional leaders, Treasury Secretary Paulson and others. He knew that the only way to come up with a good plan was to first figure out how we got into this mess, that assigning blame and injecting presidential politics into Washington at this time could only hurt the country.

On Monday, Republicans in the House of Representatives rejected the economic rescue bill, despite McCain's "best" efforts. Then, after the stock market dropped almost 800 points on the previous day, George W. Bush offered a meager speech to rally Congress and the nation. I have never seen a president look like Bush did—dejected and glum: it looked as if a stiff breeze could send him tumbling from the podium when his nation needed him most.

On Wednesday, when the bill came to the Senate floor, McCain couldn't even muster a few words in support of a bill for which he "suspended" his campaign. Bush and McCain didn't rally their party, let alone the nation.

As the Senate debated the economic rescue bill, Obama gave a speech. Channeling his inner FDR, Obama said, "let us unite in banishing fear. Together we cannot fail. We cannot fail, not now, not tomorrow, not next year. This is a nation that's faced down war and depression, great challenges and great threats. And at each and every moment, we have risen to meet up these challenges, not as Democrats, not as Republicans, but as Americans, with resolve and with confidence, with that fundamental belief that, here in America, our destiny is not written for us, it's written by us."

Some people say that these are only words. But if convincing the American people and Congress to pass a bill that may prevent, or at worst, lessen our impending economic doom, isn't something, then I don't know what is.

The United States has been in crisis mode since 9/11. Declining income during an economic boom for the first time since World War II, Hurricane Katrina, nuclear proliferation, economic collapse wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with no end in sight.

Unfortunately, the list could go on. Historians debate whether the times make a leader or a leader makes the time. Would Lincoln still be Lincoln without the Civil War? FDR without the Great Depression? Churchill without WWII? I don't know the answer to that, but if the United States has ever needed a president to rise to the occasion, to inspire Americans to fulfill their greatness, it is now. I believe that President will be Barack Obama.

Why I will not vote for Obama

By Evan Koser
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If elected, Obama plans to cut taxes, create and abolish government-funded programs and balance the budget, which would hopefully help to lower our \$10.6 trillion debt.

Obama wants to lower the unemployment rate—honestly, who doesn't? The unemployment rate measures the proportion of the labor force 16 years or older currently seeking a means of employment. However, the rate can be overstated or understated due to discouraged workers, part-time workers, and unreported legal or illegal employment. Even at 6.1 percent, the unemployment statistic is relatively low.

The census taken by the Bureau of Labor Statistics isn't necessarily precise nor is it wrong.

With every statistic, there are discrepancies. For example, take those who are simply laid off because their job is seasonal; or those who are in the midst of switching jobs—a process that can sometimes take much longer than necessary—though often not longer than the lasting duration of funds one receives from unemployment pay. Again, the numbers are skewed by those who live in America illegally and submit to the census anyway. There are also those who do not report their employment status for the purpose of tax-evasion and CPF-evasion.

Let's be serious though: Obama wants to create more jobs, but he wants to cut pork barrel spending (which sometimes includes the dismantling of a specific job market) and cut redundant government programs—basically, "cut jobs."

Even worse is his idea to bail out homeowners. While he's at it, shouldn't the government also bail out the people who speculate on the stock market and lose money? The government should provide an insurance policy to gamblers—if you lose all of your money, you can just get it back through a little "bailout" (paid for by the government with funds provided by the American tax payers). Is he prepared to spend \$50 billion a day to make up for losses in the housing market?

Universal healthcare? Really? Under a system like Canada's, just an example of a universal plan, people are often stuck in a waiting process. Do you have any idea the implications that could have for someone who might need a cat scan ASAP, in the case of a brain tumor that may or may not be malignant? That's bad. People die constantly due to their unfortunate lack of haste. Yes, they get the best coverage

possible and no one gets anything better. Yes, they're equal. But what does it matter when equality for all does not ensure quality for all? If you have the money to pay into our capitalistic medical industry, then why shouldn't you? You know how people get in debt from medical insurance? They buy into plans they know they cannot afford.

Sure, it's bad that 47 million people are uninsured. But let's take a look at those numbers. Figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics suggest that around 45 percent of those without insurance will, within four months of being uninsured, once again have insurance after job transitions. The census also includes 9.87 million people who aren't even legal citizens of the United States: since when did they qualify for anything the government can provide (even if we did have a socialistic healthcare policy)? Nine million of those uninsured are also children, most of whom are eligible for Medicaid. And according to Cheryl Hill Lee, co-author of the Census Bureau study, the census "underreported the number of people actually covered" by Medicaid, Medicare and privatized health care.

According to the same census, roughly 17 million of these people make more than \$50k a year, which experts suggest is more than enough for even the simplest of coverage. It's not that we can't provide, on the contrary, those who actually want some type of insurance get it. Some don't even want it. Some make enough money and just choose not to bother with it; some are children who are eligible for Medicaid but whose parents refuse or don't care to sign them up. It's not the system that's dysfunctional—it's the people who use it. That is the problem that needs to be fixed.

So how do we fix our problem? One answer is to make generic drugs cheaper. How? Allow U.S. citizens to buy drugs from overseas. Obama's plan to socialize healthcare will cause the bankruptcy of the pharmaceutical industry, which is bad. You can't take a free market, capitalistic system, socialize it, and expect it to be just as good.

How can we keep the industry a free market, capitalist industry if it doesn't remain privatized? Answer: we can't, because what Obama's talking about is socialism. I don't know about you but I don't want our next president to believe in the "redistribution of wealth," or the socialization of government programs. This is America, and when I work hard to earn something, I expect those around me to do the same if they want to experience a quality of life.

An outsider's opinion

By Jeff Kramer
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I'm a freshman at Penn State Behrend, but more importantly, I'm a Vermonter at Penn State Behrend. I do "Vermont" things like hike, listen to music, eat Ben & Jerry's, burn incense, support the political left and do assignments an hour before the deadline. This column is here to inform you flatlanders how good us woodchucks have it back in the Green Mountain state.

How long have you gone without, say, checking your Facebook? How long can you go without looking at your phone? What would you do if you had to do everything by candlelight?

Here's a story: I have a friend called Rick. He graduated from Middlebury College, a college so prestigious it turned down Ivy League status, with a degree in philosophy and religion. After he graduated, he had this thought: "what can I do with a degree in philosophy and religion? Nothing. I can't

hang a slate on my door that says 'philosopher,' so what can I do?" Here's what Rick did. He purchased 23 acres in between Lincoln and Ritpon, literally the middle of nowhere, so he could be a lumberjack.

As an aside, Ripton actually is in the middle of nowhere. It's a four-mile drive over the treacherous Middlebury Gap. It's a town lost in the mountains. People make jokes when they hear about Ripton. They say, "oh you're from Ripton? I'm so sorry!" The town consists of a convenience store and a church that doubles as a coffee house.

Anyway, Rick purchased 23 acres seven miles outside of Ripton so he could become a lumberjack. On that land he built a cabin, sauna, forge (for layering steel, which he can do), a place

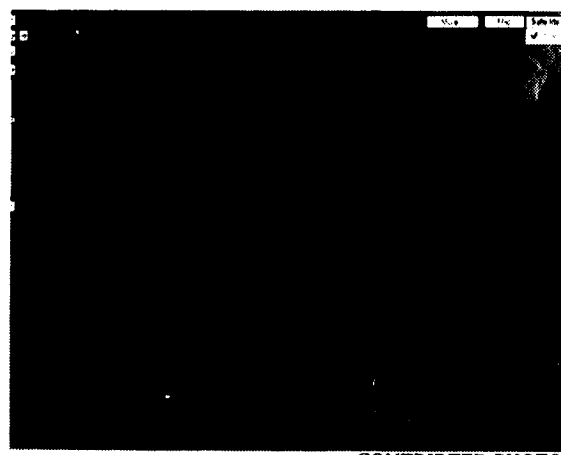
to bathe in a river and a bunch of other things. The thing about this land is that you can be as loud as you want - do, anything and nobody will hear it. After all, there's no electricity or phone service.

Two of my friends and I went up there about twice a week overnight, just to hang out. People here have their rooms, a certain friend's house, or what have you—a hangout place. We had the cabin. One

of my buddies wrote a poem about it: *neath the forest is a place of great wonder it holds many fond memories of god, buddha, and jesus all colliding to make the forest alive to the three of us by fire light we light tiny fires on sticks and we drink a special secret holy liquid, and stumble round the forest floor and other such things.... and such (The "special holy secret liquid" he refers to is Coca-Cola.)*

The cabin was (and is) our getaway place. Crappy day at work? Oh well, we're going to the cabin tonight. There's a party next Thursday? Oh, sorry, Jim, Seth and I are taking Noah up to the cabin (that was a bad idea, Noah wasted so much Jesus and he was always wanting more of Seth's Buddha).

The cabin is our getaway place where we didn't have to deal with the real world, our parents, girlfriends, jobs, or anything else. After all, there's no cell phone reception.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Satellite image of the cabin

In my opinion:

We need to get ready for winter. Today the heat lamps by the "glass elevator" were on all day which means it was cold enough...all day. Also I saw my breath while walking to and from my dorm. It's heeeeeeere.

Have an opinion? e-mail jdj5061@psu.edu