

MY VOICE

Life's a roadtrip

JEN SLANE
Staff writer

Life is one big road map; your life is one big road trip.

Get in your car, turn the key, roll the windows down, and hit the road.

Everyone's life is a big mess of street signs, unmarked highways, detours, pit stops, car accidents, and everything else you could imagine. The point is this: Life is not about the end, because we all wind up with the same ending, the same destination.

It is about the process in which you take to get to that end. Life is about which highways you take and where you stop along the way.

Every flat tire, failed relationship, and broken heart is just a little detour and stop you're going to have to make along the way. The trick is getting back on the road and knowing how to change a tire along the way.

Sometimes you pick up hitch hikers or bring along friends. Some only stay for a little bit and others stay for the long haul. Sometimes you just have to leave one at a sleazy motel.

Not everyone chooses the major highways and interstates. A few of us take the unmarked roads, the spooky highways, and sometimes we just drive aimlessly.

A lot of time, you get lost. You're usually too stubborn to stop and ask for help, and you

don't find your way back for awhile.

You occasionally get in an accident or two, maybe you make it out fine and don't learn anything; but you might be more careful the next time. However, sometimes people don't get that second chance and if the accident is bad enough, you end up stuck with the consequences.

Sometimes you're stopped in traffic and sometimes you drive by a car wreck. You see your friend's car and all you can do is sit and look in horror. You think that you should pull over for awhile. Maybe you step on the gas, realize it can happen to anyone at anytime, and you've just got to keep on going.

Not everyone has insurance and AAA, which makes things harder, and some people's parents pay their insurance their whole lives, and buy them nicer cars every time they wreck one. Some people pile up speeding and no seatbelt tickets, but that's just how they drive. It works for some and not so much for others.

A couple people find themselves driving the same old city streets over and over, driving in circles.

The point is, don't be afraid to stray off of the main roads, and don't be afraid to get a speeding ticket every once in awhile, or to drive aimlessly for a night or two.

All of your unpaid tickets won't matter in the end.

MY VOICE

Grade my professor

BRANDON BOYD
Staff writer

Throughout schooling, students have faced five letters that determine how well they did. They, of course, are A, B, C, D, and F. An "A" usually meant a reward, whether it was the satisfaction of a job well done, or perhaps some money from your parents. A "C" says you're average, and we all know that being average is just fine. An "F," however, is treated like flatulence in a mini-cooper. Too many of those "F's," and you're grounded, or, in the case of college (and the mini-cooper), kicked out.

What if the tables were turned? What if you no longer had to face the tensions of tests, the quirks of quizzes, and hellacious homework? Alright, while that isn't happening any-

time soon, a (somewhat) reasonable change could be to grade teachers everyday. "I'm sorry, professor. While the lecture was decent, nine out of sixteen students fell asleep. You're a math teacher, so I'm pretty sure you know what percent that is. Enjoy your F." How fun would that be? Seeing professors on the edge of their seats, anxiously awaiting their grade. They can feel what we feel now. One site that provides the possibility of this is ratemyprofessors.com. By being anonymous, students can say what they want, how they want. If you want to say your professor has breath that could drop a fly, you can say it. If you think an infant could teach the class as well as your teacher, you can say it.

However, I can't support this site completely, as it allows for

people to be rude, like the comments above. It's one thing to give a teacher an "F"; it's another thing to berate them. How would a student feel if a teacher's feedback on a painting said that their fifth-grader could do better blindfolded on a unicycle? I'm sorry your painting sucks, and now that you see that the truth hurts, let's keep it simply by letters, shall we?

If we are to implement this new grading scale, professors should also have a GPA. If a professor has under a 2.0 GPA, they don't get credit, much like students. Better get to bribing! Teachers can even have their own version of the Dean's List; we'll call it Boyd's List (I'll be way more famous than this Dean guy). Teachers with a 3.5 GPA make this prestigious and well-named list, and are given

first pick on choosing what classes they want to teach, and at what times they want to teach them.

Through this new system, teachers and professors around the world will be motivated to do their best. On the contrary, they will probably worry more about their grades than ours, but maybe to get their good grades, they will give us good ones. Little work, big reward. It's the way of students, right? This works out for everyone! Of course, I'm always open to hearing a teacher's argument. I do have office hours. Drop by and we'll have a friendly game of Madden '10. Win as the Cleveland Browns, and we'll talk.

Talk about a harsh grader.

...WE IN THE G20 NEEDED TO STUDY THE FLIGHT OF THE POOR...



...OF THE HELPLESS...



...OF THE FORLORN.



...FORTUNATELY, THE PIRATES WERE INTOWN!



Have something on your mind?
Want to give your two cents?
Send an email to opinion@psu.edu

Submissions must be less than 350 words in length.

Check every week for our new section:
-Letters to the Editor-

Response: Plans for a Convenience Store

In response to Raul Montejo's opinion article last week, I want to ensure students that plans for a convenience store have not changed. There is a lot of data, information, and ideas that are going into this project, and I will attempt to explain them as best I can in the space provided.

First, it is important for students to realize that the suggestions provided at the open forum that the SGA hosted is not the end all, be all of data collected. We were hoping to get some additional student feedback and, most importantly, use their responses to the automated questions to help foster open discussion. Just because students at the forum said that they would like to see the Convenience Store open until midnight does not mean it will close at that time. In fact, key administrators want to see it open until at least one, if not later.

Also, just because snacks were the highest ranked item does not mean it will be the only item carried. The stock list is well over 10,000 items long, and we wanted to get an idea of some of the things students would like to see. The biggest driving force of what will be stocked if a store is built would be what items students bought most frequently. The store will surely carry necessities like toothpaste, Tylenol, and shampoo. Also, "misc. hygiene" did not refer to condoms, but things more along the lines of deodorant and feminine hygiene products, and while things like laundry supplies are offered in the bookstore, research showed that they only had one brand and size of detergent in stock.

While it's true that Bruno's carries some of the mentioned

items like pre-prepared food and snacks, if these things were moved to the store and discontinued in Bruno's, it would open up space for additions of nonexistent options or areas for students to see in the cafe. One suggestion for an addition to Bruno's was a "build your own salad" bar that could be sold by weight. Also, the inclusion of snacks and pre-prepared foods in the convenience store would allow students to get something to eat late at night instead of having to find a way to Sheetz.

I promise that if a convenience store were to be recommended by the Student Facility Fee Committee and built, there would be a large selection of items and reasonable hours. I also promise that it wouldn't be deemed infeasible simply because of the selection of items students at the forum suggested. If you have any further ideas, suggestions, or questions, please feel free to contact me.

BRAD KOVALCIK
Senior - General Arts and
Sciences Major

Response: Behrend vs. Main

Dear Editor,

I recently had the opportunity to examine the Beacon Online and am very impressed with the new site. As a Beacon Alum (former managing editor and sports editor) I am excited with the direction the paper is going in finally embracing this medium. I am disappointed, however, with one particular piece of content that I stumbled across while navigating the site in the editorial entitled "Behrend vs. Main".

First, according to the operational definition Ms. Lanich is using all Penn State campuses are part of a greater central organization (Penn State University). I thought this was an excellent way to frame the arti-

YOUR VOICE

-Letters to the Editor-

All letters must be received by 5:00 on Wednesday for inclusion in that week's issue. Letters must be less than 350 words; submissions over the limit may not run or may be edited for length. See Editorial Policies (Opinion, page 9) for full requirements.

ALL LETTERS ARE PRINTED AS-IS AND WILL BE EDITED ONLY FOR LENGTH IF NECESSARY.

As by this logic we are all branch campuses, but instead she deviates from this definition to turn the central organization into a central campus. This is analogous to stating that Erie is a branch of Pennsylvania as it is part of the greater system of municipalities in the Commonwealth and then switching to say that Harrisburg (by virtue of being the primary administrative center of state government) would be the main municipality that Erie is truly a branch of. Therefore, we could relegate Erie, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia to be branches of Harrisburg despite the unique benefits that each provides to the Commonwealth.

Second, the editorial states that Behrend is not equal to University Park and lists all of the ways that University Park is bigger than Behrend. I don't think anyone who objects to the use of 'main' would dispute these facts, however, they acknowledge that bigger is not always better and that each campus is better than the other in different ways to different people. To this end, Ms. Lanich suggests that students at Behrend are suffering from a superiority complex which would mean that they think their campus is much better than University Park. If this is truly the case then this is a sea

change in the life of the University as it has typically been an inferiority complex that has been difficult to overcome thanks to phrases like 'branch' and 'main'. Just like at any campus there are students who think theirs is the best, and others who long to move on to new places.

I applaud Ms. Lanich for bringing attention to this issue and once again allowing people to think about the origins and logic of the 'branch' and 'main' terms. I am a proud alumni of Penn State University, regardless of if I went to a branch or the trunk of the system.

SCOTT SOLTIS
Penn State Alumnus

Response: Behrend vs. Main

Last week, staff writer Marissa Lanich wrote an opinion article titled "Behrend vs. Main" in which she attempted to prove that Penn State Behrend was a "branch" of University Park. The definition she gave in the first sentence of her article, however, completely negates her entire argument.

If you think of Behrend as a "separate but dependent part" of University Park, then you're misinformed of the politics and operations of this school system. Behrend does not gain

funding from UP. Unlike other schools, Penn State receives a lump sum from the state, all of which stays at UP. In fact, Behrend loses money from being part of the Penn State system. Portions of Behrend students IT Fee is sent to UP, as well as tuition dollars, and our students see no return. In some Behrend circles, this is referred to as the "franchise fee."

Franchise, from Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, is defined as "the right or license granted to an individual or group to market a company's goods or services in a particular territory." This term is more closely related to the true nature of Behrend's relationship to University Park.

What does Behrend gain from its affiliation to Penn State? The first is that Behrend students receive a Penn State degree upon graduation, which has "brand name" status. The second is enrollment. UP has many more applicants each year than it has available space, so UP tries to use the commonwealth campuses as a sort of waiting room. The idea is that students can spend two years at one of these campuses and transfer to UP as an upper-classman. Statistics show, however, that Behrend retains at least 80% of its students.

Does Behrend actually get the benefit of an "increased enrollment"? People are attracted to the Penn State degree, and UP does refer students to Behrend, but the drawback is that Behrend is only allowed to recruit from certain counties rather than anywhere. Since Behrend's name is not exposed as freely as UP's, isn't it a safe guess that we're almost a secret which is being kept?

The issue is much deeper than can be expressed in a letter on the opinion page of the Beacon. If you would like more insights on this issue, Ms. Lanich, please contact me and we can do lunch sometime. I

promise not to show a superiority complex, but just explain the source of my Pride.

BRAD KOVALCIK
General Arts and Sciences Major

Parking Assessment

I'm a rational kind of guy. I get that money is not easy to come by these days. Income needed to operate this school and to pay for programs, activities, and the function of student organizations comes via an intricate web of connections created and modified over decades of time by numerous proponents. However there came a point when the web could no longer serve its purpose, when its strands became tangled and stretched to their limit. I say this because \$270 per year is an unacceptable price to use what might be the most deficient network of roads and parking lots among area colleges.

Parking permit revenues fund interests beyond parking lot maintenance. Maybe that explains why our parking lots aren't in better shape, why the REDC parking garage serves only faculty and staff, and why we pay over seven times as much as Gannon residents, who park in a densely populated downtown Erie and still have cheaper ticket fees. Why are policymakers forcing students to fund undisclosed interests with their purchase of parking permits? Why do they make us pay six times what Edinboro charges, then watch us suffer through twenty minute waits in line to get out, idling our gas and time away, when they have the resources to build a better traffic system?

Before we can see a fair parking system, the school must tie up its loose ends, and there's no catalyst for change like good ol' transparency and accountability. Ideas welcome.

RAUL MONTEJO
Senior - Mathematics major