

OUR VOICE: The majority opinion of the Behrend Beacon editorial board

New chancellor must focus on students

As the search begins for a new chancellor at Behrend, many of us have just begun to realize how lucky we were to have Chancellor Jack Burke during our entire college careers. While we realize there are many elements to the search for a chancellor – business, faculty relations, academics, donors – we hope that the most important part of a college will be kept in mind: the students.

Many of us at the Beacon have had the opportunity to personally interview Dr. Burke for stories. An appointment – and this is for everyone, not just journalists – with the person in charge of our university is as easy as three minutes and

a phone call. He has been more than willing to level with us many times, on the college's plans, and explain his decisions as its leader.

He has also shown commitment to seeking out the student base, holding events every year such as Cookies with the Chancellor, in which students are encouraged to come to the lobby of a building and just ask questions. Dr. Burke has been exactly what a chancellor should be to our students – an open, honest administrator that is visible, rather than secluded behind an office door.

While we know not everyone has agreed with Dr. Burke's decisions during his time at Behrend, it is indisputable that

he showed a constant effort to articulate student interests.

We feel that our search committee, as they assemble throughout the year, should keep this in mind above all else.

There are a plethora of other concerns that the committee will be evaluating, of course. While we don't pretend to be experts on even half of the qualities that must be sought, we know that the candidate's skill at handling donors, finances, academics, and faculty are very important capabilities.

The most integral part to a university, though, above all of these, are its students.

Because a university is defined by its students, when it gets time to sit down with these

people and interview them, the question must be asked: how will this person interact with our students both en masse and individually? If they show any less commitment than our current chancellor, they are underserving to hold the position.

The only two Behrend students on the search committee are Brad Kovalcik, an undergraduate student and SGA President; and Adam Gilmore, a graduate student. We implore these two students to keep their fellow classmates in mind above all else when evaluating candidates.

Connor Sattely for the Behrend Beacon editorial staff

MY VOICE

Fear no flu

CARA DALLENBACH
staff writer

Oh yes, it is that time of the year again; the changing of seasons, where the everyday walk to class somehow seems more intimate as the signs of fall surround us. There are the ever so pleasant colors of trickling leaves, the sweet aroma of hot apple cider brewing, and the understood notion that you will, at some point, be confronted with almost every variation of pie by Christmas time.

Combine that wholesome thought with the sounds of football marching bands harmonizing in the distance, and I could just end this article here and now, knowing that everything is right in the world. However, this picturesque description of fall at its finest is not standard for everyone. For some, fall brings with it a menacing trait. Dare I say it? Two hair-raising words for you: "THE SWINE!"

Now, I probably lost a few readers just now because upon seeing the word "swine" some undoubtedly dropped the paper and ran frantically to the closest hand sanitizing station. For those of you who can bear with me throughout the duration of this article, despite this horrific topic, allow me to share with you a comforting and very detailed piece of advice: everything's going to be okay.

Let us just accept the fact that swine flu is serious and can, heaven forbid, cause fatality. That fact alone is without question, worrisome. However, there is no need to live our lives in perpetual anguish and fear over something we cannot fully control.

With the increasing cases of swine flu transpiring in the

community, I notice people becoming more and more fidgety and panicky. My word, if someone lets out even the slightest utterance of a cough these days, everyone collectively gasps and runs in sporadic directions towards the Health & Wellness Center. It's the swine flu for Pete's sake, not leprosy.

There is no need for us to become crazed swine flu extremists. All we simply need to do is utilize the strategies suggested to us by doctors and professionals. The strategies are rather juvenile, yet work effectively if implemented into our daily lifestyle and routine. Wash your hands, get rest, don't share drinks, and get vaccinated; these aren't mind-boggling concepts here, it's more or less common sense. However, this does not mean we need to go crazy with these strategies and blow them completely out of proportion. There is a fine line between being proactively cautious, and just plain being spastic.

Make those frequent stops to the hand sanitizing station, but please don't let me catch a student lathering it over the entirety of their bodies and attempting to drink the hand sanitizer in hopes of being eternally cured. "You, hand sanitizer, are now in and around my body, fulfill me with your cleansing spirits!" Let's avoid scaring people in process of protecting our immune systems.

So when you see a peer in a sneezing frenzy, don't roll a can of Clorox their way from a safe and precautionary eight yards away. Instead, go up to them, place a friendly hand on their shoulder, look them deeply in eye and say, "You're going to be okay."

MY VOICE

The real investment sham

ED MISETA
contributing faculty writer

Investors duped out of their money. Retirement dreams smashed. Billions of dollars missing. Bernie Madoff? Nope. The US Government.

If New York investor Bernie Madoff belongs in prison, then there is a long list of former and current senators and congressmen who should be right behind him. Never has there been an investment scam that will plunder more hard-earned dollars from American workers than Social Security. The system will rob you of millions in retirement dollars while most likely giving you nothing in return.

Social Security did not start

out as the monstrosity it is today. At one time our politicians felt it was not good for a society to have its senior citizens living on the street. A safety net was needed to keep seniors afloat if they had no income to live on in retirement. Few Americans would disagree. Taking a few bucks from the checks of workers to support the truly needed is not a terrible thing, even if it does seem unconstitutional.

We called the new program Social Security Insurance, or SSI. We all know how insurance works: You and many others purchase insurance on your homes. If your house burns down, the insurance company will rebuild it for you. If you are lucky and your house doesn't

burn down, you are simply out the money. That is the fee you pay to get the insurance company to accept the risk for you.

Our politicians had a better idea: If you retire and don't have an income to live on, we will make payments to you. But if you are one of the lucky ones who don't need it, we will pay you anyway. Any insurance company that operated on this type of business plan would be bankrupt in a year. With the backing of the government, it just took Social Security a little longer to get there.

Assume Sally graduates from Penn State Erie and takes a job earning \$55,000 per year. She will pay approximately \$270 per month into the Social Security abyss. If Sally were instead

allowed to invest that money into a growth stock fund, she would amass a nest egg of approximately \$2.5 million by the time she retires.

Instead she is forced to put the money into a system that will give the money to someone else, while promising that others will pay her back when she retires. If this sounds like a pyramid scheme, it's because it is. And that system is now headed straight into bankruptcy with no fix on the horizon. That means Sally is very likely to get nothing for her thousands of dollars, along with many others.

This is a scam that should put Bernie Madoff to shame.

Ed Miseta is a lecturer in economics at Penn State Behrend



MY VOICE

Choices of a college student

BRANDON BOYD
staff writer

I have a confession to make: I am the Brett Favre of decision making. I make choosing a pair of shoes seem like a quadruple bypass. So when it comes to my future, you can only imagine how I feel. I know what I want to be, but I have no idea of what road I will take to get there, or where that road will end. It is hard not to think about the future; it is, after all, the rest of my life.

This is not about me, though. This is about the decisions that so many college students have

to make, and how to make them. With more majors than bubble gum flavors, it's almost impossible to pinpoint just what the choice should be. Once you choose a major, you have to decide whether or not you want to keep it, how long you want to study, what you want to do after college, and of course, decide what you want to eat for dinner that night.

Making a decision is like listening to country music; there is no easy way to do it. However, if you don't make a decision, life makes it for you. That being said, it's still important to take time and think out your decisions. There does need to

be a happy medium - don't be as slow as an old lady on the freeway, yet don't rush your decision.

If you just cannot make a decision, there are a few tricks to help. Look at it from other people's perspectives. How would your parents feel? How would your grandma feel? How would the person who takes your order at McDonalds feel? Keep in mind what type of person you are. If you are a risk taker, go ahead and try something different. If you are cautious, do not do anything stupid. A cautious person making a risky decision is like seeing Rocky Balboa losing.

It shouldn't happen.

Also, when it comes to decision making, try not to fall into the treacherous trap that I'm in. Treat the big decisions like royalty, and don't sweat the small stuff; after all, there will be thousands of decisions to make in life. If lunch comes down to a hamburger or a cheeseburger, your decision won't end the world. However, if you cannot decide between becoming a history teacher or an accountant, maybe it's time to sit down and take a look at what's important. When it comes down to it, cheese doesn't matter; a career does.

MY VOICE

Civility: DOA?

TALIA FINOTTI
contributing writer

People who show genuine respect to others are a dying breed. As an individual I respect everyone I interact with. However, from watching the media and even seeing a few people around doing very disrespectful things could make anyone think that civility is dead. I'm almost certain that if not everyone, most people have either seen or heard about the Serena Williams' outburst at a referee, or Kanye West interrupting Taylor Swifts' award speech, or even Obama being rudely heckled by Representative Joe Wilson.

Those are just a few examples of the disrespect shown today, but does anyone care about respect or dignity for others and even our own selves? That is the question I frequently ask myself.

I've watched a male in my classroom talk while the professor was talking. I've watched a young high school student purposely saunter in front of a car I was in, and I've seen people not do the common courtesy of holding a door.

I've had a great many of difficult jobs. Once, I was a waitress, then I was a telemarketer, loathed my many, and finally, a cashier.

From these jobs I've witnessed some of the most foul and rude behaviors from people. I've been called horrible names for doing my job, awful slurs that would make even the dirtiest mouthed college student cringe. I've had people shout at me because they didn't like how much an order cost, knowing quite well that I had no influence on the price. This makes me think: Do we really care about others? The fact that we belittle them and purposefully disregard the truth

that they gave feeling too, is disgusting. I'm not speaking for everyone, but from what I can see from either watching the media or even seeing day to day people they seem almost "cavalier."

The other day, my grandmother started with another of her "back in my day" stories, and though I was anticipating the end of the speech about how she had to hike through three feet of snow up a steep hill, I was surprised that I didn't get another lecture.

She said to me, "I remember when people had manners, and boys and sometimes girls would hold the doors for you, and boys would walk you to your home." Almost in a sort of dramatic way, she shook her head, "you just don't see that anymore."

Gosh, was she right? Are people today so terribly tactless? I try to brush off disrespectful actions by people because I try to think that maybe it's a bad day for them or maybe they just don't realize what they are doing. Maybe it's exactly just that, the fact that people don't think about what they are doing, that they don't think about the people around them. That dignity is all lost; respect and civility are thrown in the crash can as to say "the heck with it."

My point is that, we need to start treating each other with the respect and dignity that every person is entitled to. We need to follow the Golden Rule or simply stop interacting with people all together.

I'm not sure if this is mankind slipping into a downward spiral and turning into a case of survival of the fittest. I certainly hope this is not the case, but if dignity is all lost and respect is turned into a door-mat, bring in Charles Darwin because we'll need a specialist.

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