

THE PROFESSOR'S CORNER

Answering questions from Democrats

ED MISETA
lecturer in economics

According to a recent article on Politico, Democrats are looking for someone to blame for their electoral woes, and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) Chairman Robert Menendez wants to make sure it is not him.

In the aftermath of the earth-shaking election in Massachusetts, the DSCC has distributed a memo that advises Democrats to try to drive a wedge between moderate voters and Tea-Party-style conservatives.

The DSCC believes that many Republicans will be afraid of associating themselves with some of the views of the Tea Party and will therefore not garner that support. Without Tea Party support, some of these Republicans may fail in their election bids.

Therefore, getting these Republican candidates on the record is suddenly of paramount importance.

The memo urges Democratic candidates to ask their opponents the questions below. A "no" answer on any of them may put an end to Tea Party support, while a "yes" answer will presumably scare away

more moderate voters.

I have to admit that the first time I read the questions I laughed. However, since Menendez seems to be taking them seriously, I decided I would as well.

In the 1980s I was a Republican and supporter of Ronald Reagan. In the 1990s I became a Libertarian and today consider myself a Tea Party patriot. I would certainly love to see both Democrats and Republicans thrown out in November, so here is my advice to any candidate hoping to replace them: Simply answer the questions as I do below. You will maintain the Tea Party support, get the respect and votes of the moderate voters and possibly even some Democrats, and allow incumbents to be shown the door.

Question 1: Do you believe that Barack Obama is a U.S. citizen?

Answer: "Yes."

There are certainly some insane people in the conservative movement who believe he is not and therefore shouldn't be president. But most Republicans and Tea Partiers do not. This is the dumbest question of all and will be a non-issue.

Question 2: Do you think the 10th Amendment bars Congress from issuing regulations

like minimum health care coverage standards?

Answer: "I would be offended if the government came to me and forced me to buy anchovies, cauliflower, Wal-Mart clothing, pornography or anything else I did not want. Do YOU believe Obama should be allowed to put on his communist dictator hat and tell people what they have to buy?"

This should end all discussion on that question. In fact, I'm not even sure why the DSCC is asking this question.

I guess they assume that Tea Partiers do not want government run health care, but that moderates do. The DSCC may want to look at some recent polling numbers.

Question 3: Do you think programs like Social Security and Medicare represent socialism and should never have been created in the first place?

Ahhhh...finally a question that actually gets somewhere.

The thinking here is that Tea Party candidates are anti-Social Security, and by forcing them to take a stand against it they will alienate some moderate voters (i.e. old people).

It's hard to believe that Democrats would even want to broach this subject, being that most Americans know that So-

cial Security and Medicare (and Medicaid) are heading headlong into bankruptcy. So answer the question firmly but fairly.

Answer: "Both programs allow the government to take money from one person and give it to another, which by definition is socialism. They were done to keep the elderly from living in poverty, a truly noble goal, which is why it's so sad that the Democrats saw fit to bankrupt them." 'Nuff said.

Question 4: Do you think President Obama is a socialist?

Answer: "ABSOLUTELY."

I thought everyone already knew he was. When the government redistributes the income of workers, owns banks, insurance companies, and car manufacturers, and gives special favors to union workers but not others, what else would you call it?

By confidently answering this question in the affirmative, you are merely stating what everyone already knows, and gaining the support of Republicans, Tea Partiers and moderates at the same time.

Even socialists know he's a socialist, so who knows... maybe you'll get a few of their

votes as well.

Question 5: Do you think America should return to a gold standard?

Answer: "How would you define the term 'gold standard?'"

If there is anything that anyone should know about Democrats, it's that they generally seem to know nothing about economics. Therefore, if they are asking a question about it, they most likely do not know the answer.

By throwing it back in their face, they will be the ones looking silly. And, since most Americans have no idea whether we should return to it or not, it hardly matters how you answer.

You can always try this: "The President has

I think that is wrong, so yeah, maybe some standard other than worthless paper would be a good thing."



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MY VOICE

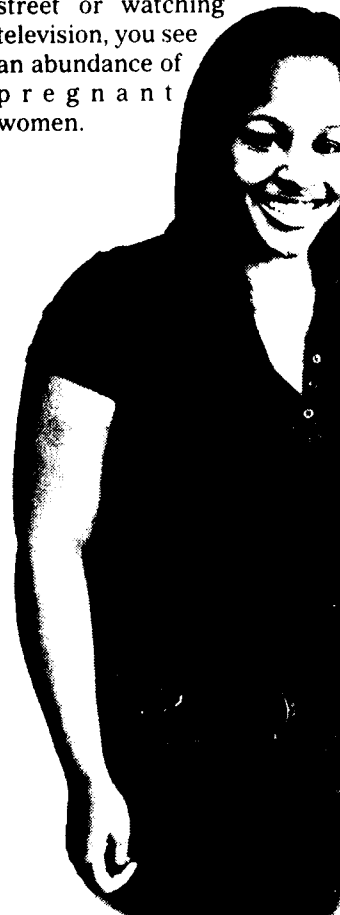
Teen pregnancy and TV

In 2007, 4,317,119 people were born. This topped the 1950s baby boom with the number still climbing. Among those 4,317,119 children were 435,436 babies born to women between the ages of 15 to 19-year-old. This is the largest increase in teen birth rates since 1990.

Why are all women, young woman specifically, having children?

Maybe it's the lack of contraception or lack of knowledge about proper contraception. Maybe it's because they want to be eco-friendly and help to repopulate the Earth! Either way, when will it stop?

While walking down the street or watching television, you see an abundance of pregnant women.



KAMILLE WATSON
staff writer

From personal experience, a little less than half of my graduating class now have kids and my graduation was just two years ago.

When does it stop?

Television shows such as *Teen Mom* and *16 & Pregnant*, both of which are on MTV, depict teenage mothers and all of the things they have to endure while being young parents. Some of the girls on these shows have a hard time raising their children on their own. They struggle with having to grow up and be a parent. Teens on the show have their parents and significant others there to help them with the child.

What is the message being portrayed here? The message is skewed in a way to say, "while one person has it hard, another person can have it easy and parenthood isn't so bad." Though this may be true in certain cases, it would be a more valid message if the shows taught teens not to have children at such an early age.

Maybe it could teach them how to be abstinent or the proper use of contraception because, while having a baby looks fun on television, it isn't so fun in real life.

Instead of making these teenage moms pseudo-celebrities, tell girls and young couples to alter their train of thought, and teach them how to avoid the life of having to be a parent while they are children themselves.

MTV isn't the only television network showing the abundance of pregnant women popping up all over the place. The TLC network has two popular shows that follow large families around.

19 and Counting, where a

woman and her husband have been having kids since 1990, 19 children in all.

Jon and Kate Plus 8, a man and his wife have eight children.

While these shows do have high emphasis on family and the importance of love, they essentially have the same message: "Have babies!"

Recently, on the show *19 and Counting*, the woman had another child, making this one her 20th child, and during the birth she almost died because the baby was severely premature and its blood pressure was too high.

Simply put, this woman could have died from the effect that having 20 kids put on her body.

These television shows present the cuteness of the children and the happiness of the family, but in the real world they may be miserable. With so many kids, they may run risk of dying while giving birth, or infidelity may play a role in their relationships, such as *Jon and Kate*.

Networks like Lifetime, show movies such as *The Pregnancy Pact*. This causes young woman to rethink the meaning of being a teenage mom. Networks that have more emphasis on the teen crowd, like that of MTV and TLC, have shows that relay the same message of irresponsible sex.

Networks such as MTV and TLC are extremely popular and hold strong emphasis on what teens do and what they believe in. Those networks should teach them how to protect themselves and be careful.

Instead of glorifying these teen moms or a woman that has had an abundance of children, teach them how to avoid these situations and be young and healthy for as long as possible.

MY VOICE

Issues with Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day.

Two words that either make people giddy with excitement or cringe in disgust. I'm one of the cringers.

What is it with this so-called "holiday" anyway? I've never understood why men feel the need to buy their special someone a dozen roses or chocolates specifically on this day when they could do it any day of the year.

It's preposterous that guys even need a reason to buy their girlfriends or wives flowers to begin with. Why can't they be spontaneous for once in their lives and give flowers on a day that isn't a holiday, birthday or silly one-month anniversary?

What also bothers me is that the male population always seems to go for the stereotypical red roses.

Really, guys? You can't be a tiny bit more creative than that and go the extra mile? You can't aim a little higher and at least make an effort to try and personalize the flowers? Granted, showing up with red roses is a grand gesture since they are rather expensive, but that's an even better reason for trying something different.

I really don't hate Valentine's Day that much, but I hate what it has become.

What used to be a day for simply showing affection has turned into another gimmicky holiday, another reason to spend money.

I won't deny that chocolates and flowers are very nice and I enjoy them.

I seriously don't see the need to go all crazy with spending money on lavish gifts. Every year, though, there seems to be extra pressure to have someone to buy something for and spend the day with.

If you don't have someone,

the world makes you feel pretty shitty about yourself by over-advertising for teddy bears and Hallmark cards.

There are also those ridiculous jewelry commercials with the melodramatic actors giving the actress some type of diamond heart necklace.

Maybe it's just me, but I cannot stand the silver heart jewelry that is so popular around this time of year.

This is not what pretty jewelry looks like to me. This is what "I was lazy and couldn't think of what else to buy" jewelry looks like. I'd like to see a guy go out and search for something original that no one else owns. This makes a gift rather special and important, to me at least.

Even better, how about putting forth some effort and make a gift? Homemade gifts are more memorable and meaningful anyway. This doesn't just apply to guys either. Girls can just as easily create something nice, but I think that most of the time guys do not appreciate it or just refuse to show any appreciation, so there is no point in taking the time to make it.

I once saw a gift of 100 folded hearts that came with a note saying: "I folded a hundred paper hearts, a heart for each day my heart has belonged to yours."

I would love to see a guy make an origami flower or, even better, an origami bouquet.

A) It is free, and B) It will last longer than any real flower.

There are maybe a million and two other things that guys could do for Valentine's Day, but it seems that they always take the easy way out by conforming to society's idea of Valentine's Day.

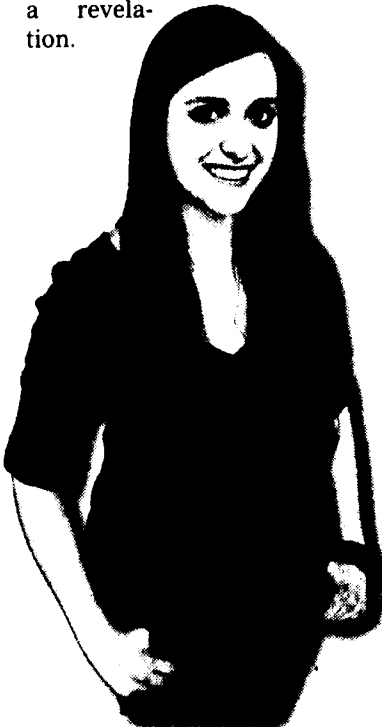
Maybe another reason that I

dislike Valentine's Day so much is because I've lost hope that guys can do something out of the ordinary or creative for once. I don't want to generalize, because there probably are those guys out there, somewhere who know what they are doing, but I've yet to encounter one of them.

I've come to learn that the best way to get through this day is to not have any expectations. My shell has grown hard from all of the years that I've been let down on this day, so no longer do I hope for anything.

But I still feel like guys don't know what they are doing, and most girls expect more than they will get in the end.

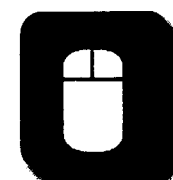
It's kind of absurd thinking about how much time people put into this holiday anyway. Gifts are not the only things that matter, and sometimes words can mean more than anything money can buy. What a revelation.



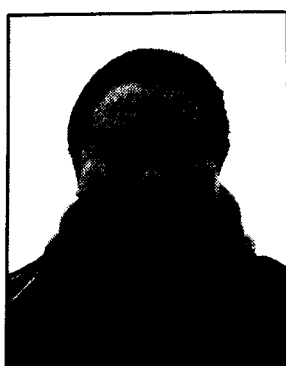
SHANNON EHRIN
assistant culture editor

Have Your Say:

How do you feel about the reappearance of Erie snow after the region's brief warm respite?

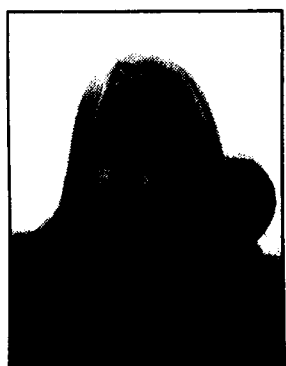


To see video footage of the interviews on Have Your Say, go to www.thebehrendbeacon.com



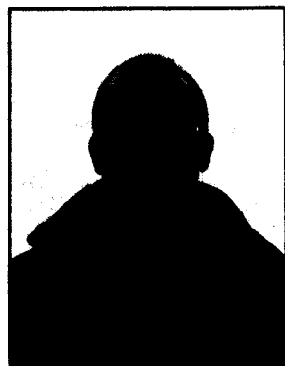
Ray Walken
sophomore psychology

I think it's kind of weird that Pittsburgh has more snow than we do, but I'm thankful that we don't have their snow.



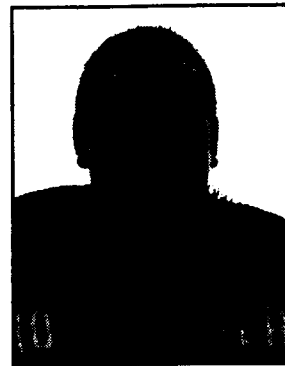
Jess Scott
sophomore psychology

The Erie weather right now is kind of crazy, and I liked it a couple weeks ago when it was really warm. It was beginning to feel like summer.



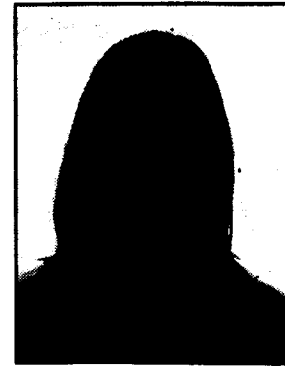
Dan Klanica
junior psychology

I don't like walking to class because I live across the street in U-Gates. My socks get wet.



Caleb Rodgers
junior finance

Unfortunately, it's hit us again, and I'm hoping that it goes away as soon as possible because I don't want to see it anymore.



Samantha Wilcox
sophomore political science

I like the warm weather, and it wouldn't be so bad if the driveways, sidewalks and parking lots were actually plowed around campus.



Luis Fernandez
senior psychology

Erie weather is bloody awful and, as a Cuban, I'm not meant to survive this powdery stuff falling out of the sky.