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## Senseless census

So, if you haven't heard, it's U.S. Census time! That event that comes along about every 10 years or so and enables the U.S. government to waste even more taxpayer dollars than they normally do.

The total lifecycle cost of the 2010 census is now expected to top \$15 billion dollars, or approximately \$48 for each person counted. It cost only \$16 per person in 2000 and a measly 1 cent for the first census in 1790 (24 cents today, adjusting for inflation).

I'm not sure where all of that money is going, but I know where some of it went.

I received two letters in the mail telling me the census was coming. I then received two census forms (both to the EXACT same address). And a few days later I received two postcards reminding me to fill out my two census forms. Sheesh. And then of course there's all the money we had to pay for those stupid Super Bowl ads and those even stupider Franco Harris ads.

Hey - I don't mind a former Steeler raking in a little extra cash; I just prefer that it not be my cash. Couldn't we have gotten Icky Woods to do it for less? He wasn't nearly as good as Franco.

The commercials on TV lead you to believe that we need an accurate count of Americans so that we know how many roads and schools to build. So it seems like we could have saved a lot of money by just sending everyone a postcard that says "write down the number of people in your house with their ages." Drop it in a mailbox and the job is done.

But it's not that simple. Apparently the government also needs to know my race and whether or not I'm Hispanic.

This left me a little confused.

Is the government planning to build African-American roads and Caucasian roads? Are we going to suddenly have Hispanic schools and non-Hispanic schools?

If not, why do they need this information? Why does it seem that we are always trying to build a color-blind society, except when it comes to anything the government does?

Regardless, the government will be disappointed with my form. I did not complete the race section or the Hispanic section. And I did not provide my phone number so that they can call me to verify it. If they stop me in my driveway, I will give them my best "No hablas ingles."

In all, the U.S. Census Bureau has sent out over 425 million pieces of mail. They acknowledge that approximately 7%, or 28 million pieces, are simply thrown away. Coincidentally, that is precisely what is also happening with our tax dollars.

But then another thought occurred to me.

Why is it that we need a census to decide how many schools to build, but we do not need one to determine how many Wal-Marts, FedEx offices or how many restaurants to build?

Why is it that almost every business in this country can answer these questions without the census, but the government can't?

It seems to me that by looking at the birth rates in any city, we could determine how many schools we need. And then we could use that \$15 million to buy school supplies, instead of sending out hundreds of millions of pieces of paper.

### MY VOICE

## A hard decision for the right reasons

With the year quickly winding down, I have begun to think back on the first two years of my college education and how much I have learned here at Penn State Behrend.

For most of my life, I knew I wanted to go to Penn State. My mom, my dad and a number of other family members are Penn State graduates, and I knew it was where I belonged.

I wanted to go to University Park right away, but I knew that going to such a large campus after graduating from a small school would make it hard to adjust to college life.

After taking some time to think about it, I decided to start my college education at Behrend. I knew that the close location to home and the small campus would help me better prepare myself for University Park.

As I prepare to transfer to State College to finish my last two years, I am beginning to realize how much I have learned and how much Behrend has prepared me to go on to University Park.

My most rewarding experience, by far, has been my opportunity to work as a sports editor for the Beacon.

As a journalism major, I have learned an invaluable amount of skills that will help me in my career as a sports journalist.

I have seen my writing improve dramatically over the last two years, and I have learned how to edit and layout a newspaper. I have started the foundation I need to have a successful career in the journalism field.

Although the journalism experience I have gained is irreplaceable, it is the relationships that I have made that I will truly remember as I continue on to University Park.

For everyone who knows what it is like to be in the Beacon newsroom on Thursday night, it is hard to believe that it could be missed.

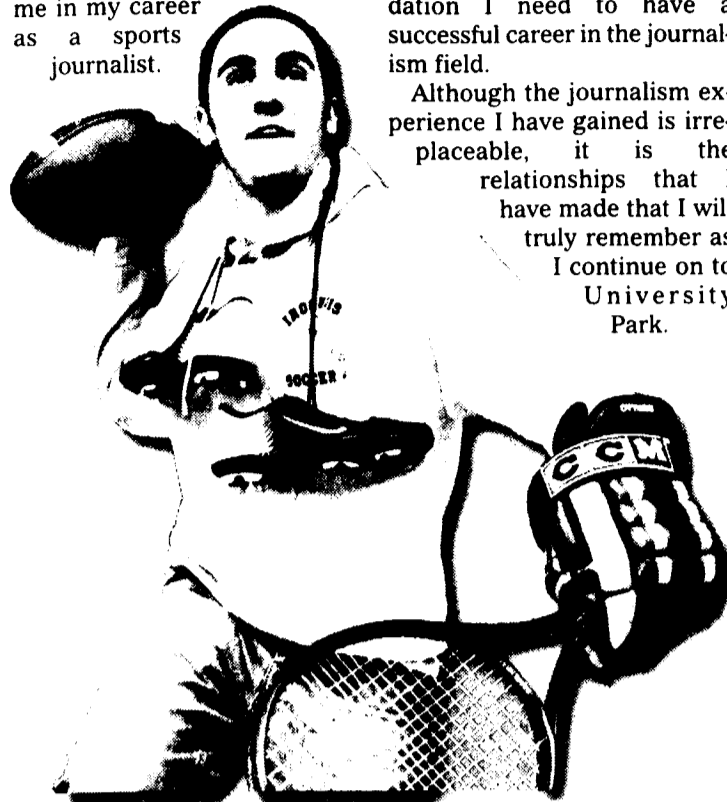
Even though some long, sleepless nights were spent in that room, some of my most memorable experiences at Behrend happened there as well.

The small group of people that I work with on a weekly basis is easily going to be what I miss the most from Behrend.

I have learned so much from the group of editors that I work with, and that is just as valuable as anything else that I have learned.

As I go on to University Park, I will be diving into the broadcast side of journalism, and there will be a number of new experiences that come with that.

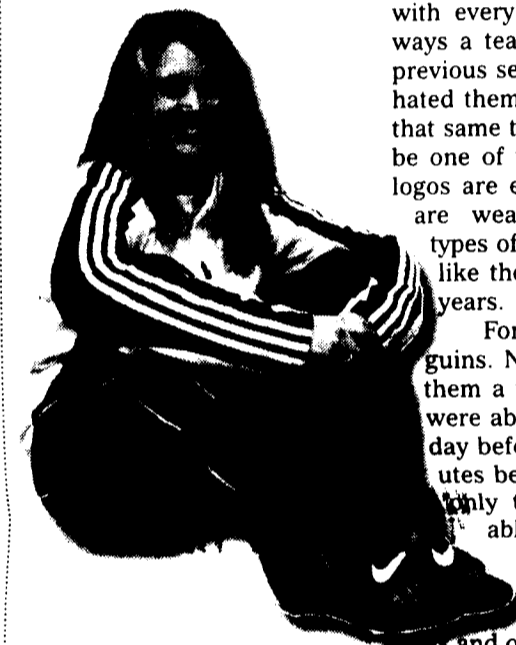
I will not forget all the things that I have learned here at Behrend, though, and I am very proud to have worked with everyone on the Beacon staff. I am glad that I am able to call them my friends, and I could not have imagined working with any other group.



NICK BLAKE  
 sports editor

### MY VOICE

## Why I hate bandwagon fans



RACHELLE THOMPSON  
 news editor

Bandwagon fans come along with every sport. There's always a team that sucked the previous season and everyone hated them. The next season, that same team is predicted to be one of the best, and their logos are everywhere. People are wearing all different types of apparel and acting like they've been fans for years.

For example, the Penguins. No one cared about them a few years ago. You were able to get tickets the day before or even 10 minutes before the game. Not only that, but you were able to get tickets for a cheap price. I still remember when I sat right behind the glass and only paid \$75 for my ticket. That was until Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin

came around in 2006. No one watched the games before that or had to sit outside Mellon Arena because they couldn't get in the Igloo. Now you're lucky to get tickets, or you have to pay an arm or a leg for a ticket.

Even when the Pens have a game, just look around and you basically only see two names on the back of jerseys-Crosby and Malkin. It's a rare occasion to see any other name, except sometimes you see a Mario Lemieux jersey.

One way to tell a true fan and a bandwagon apart: people who can tell you who the Pens beat to win the Stanley Cup, usually they can't. They don't necessarily have to know hard facts, but at least know when they play.

What's most frustrating is that the loyal fans who went to every game can barely get a

ticket to see a game.

One of the most embarrassing things is when Sidney Crosby played for the Canadian Olympic hockey team. The young athlete ended up scoring the winning goal against the United States, clinching a gold medal win. Instead of cheering for him so called, "Penguin fans" were calling him a traitor and were unhappy with the outcome. The point is, who cares. He's a Penguin.

I'm not saying that no one is a true fan. I know many people who have been supporting the Pens, and they wear their jerseys all year long or have old school T-shirts. They talk about the season to come way before others. What kills me the most is that these people are suffering because bandwagon fans come in and make it impossible for us to see a game.

### MY VOICE

## If life was more like a video game

Life is tough, tedious and often rather mundane. It's no wonder that video games have become so popular in recent years.

But what if life was more like a video game? It wouldn't be nearly as boring, but what other cool things would happen? Here are a few ideas.

**Item Upgrades:** Say you started out as a freshman with a lame TI-30 calculator. However, when you passed your first math test, it got upgraded for a TI-81. The next one would be an 89, then a 93. Then you could max out the item with a laser cannon!

**Medkits solve everything:** Regardless of the game or genre, medkits always save the day. It won't matter if you need open heart surgery or just had

a limb crippled, just touch a first aid kit and you'll be back in top shape. Imagine how this would help our country. We wouldn't even need universal health care. Hospitals could just install a drive-through "first aid kit pick up window."

**Everyone's a "chosen one":** Everybody loves a hero. If life was more like a video game, then everyone could be one!

Imagine what an esteem booster it would be if you became the savior of the entire human race.

**Level up to Stat Boost:** Okay, say that you really can't wrap your brain around a certain subject. Differential Equations is just too complicated or that 10 page essay is no coming along well.

If college were more like a game, with every problem you worked or sentence you wrote, you would gain some experience. Eventually you'd level up and be able to put a bunch of points into your intelligence. Suddenly, you are way smarter and can have a larger pool of AP for your other abilities!

**Saves/Respawns give us an opportunity to correct our mistakes:** Say goodbye to failed exams. From now on, you just get to "Save" before each test, and if you fail, you just get to start over and try again. Saves have nearly infinite uses. Let's say that you are going on a date with that special person who you've liked for a long time. You'd never need to worry about saying the wrong thing or making a fool of yourself. If things went bad, just reload from your last save and try again.

**Breaking random objects to find items and money:** You're desperately in need of cash or food. Don't worry - all you need to do is break every vase or crate you see.



NEIL PETERS  
 opinion editor



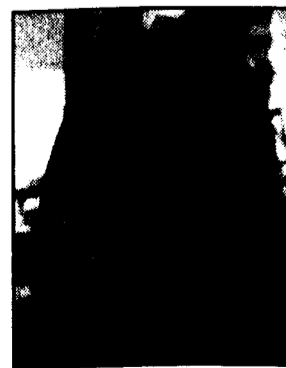
### Have Your Say:

### What were your thoughts on the "Bare End Bacon"?



Kimberly McClellan  
 freshman  
 biology

"I'm too busy to pick up newspapers nowadays. I did see the front page and thought it was funny, though."



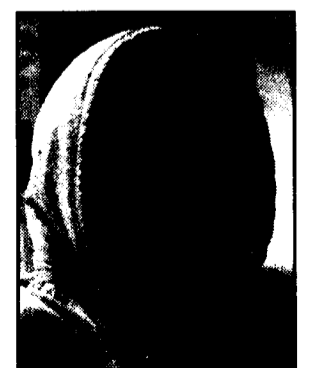
Rebecca Coombs  
 sophomore  
 MIS

"I saw it was the 'Bare End Bacon' and thought it was funny. It caught my attention."



Jeff Keeler  
 freshman  
 undecided

"I loved the article on Eugene Cross. You downplayed his beauty, though."



Chris Marchini  
 freshman  
 undecided

"I liked the Eugene Cross article. The rest of it sucked."