

THE EDITOR'S BLURB

How to stay cool during finals



NEIL PETERS
opinion editor

The school year is drawing to a much-awaited close, but that won't come without a little bit more pain. In order to finally be free, we all need to do battle with the dreaded finals week.

Regardless of your major, it's not a fun time and the stress alone can drive you nuts. The peculiar thing about finals is that no matter how hard you study, if you can't handle the stress of it all, you won't do so hot. So as my final gift to the student body of PSB, here is a list of tricks that might help you cope and excel.

1. **Exercise.** When you're being crushed under a butt ton of looming final exams, one of the best things you can do is hit the gym. Whether it's going for a run, a swim or just pumping iron, anything is helpful.

This is because exercise increases dopamine in the body, which heightens your endorphin levels, your body's natural "happy drug."

2. **Sleep at least seven hours a night.** It's really easy to brush off sleep when you NEED to pass your final. How-

ever, all the studying in the world won't mean jack if you don't get at least seven hours of sleep.

Think of your brain like a computer. Everything you do when you're awake is stored in your brains equivalent of RAM.

After a while, you simply run out of disk space and you need to reboot your hard drive. When you sleep, your brain takes all of your RAM memory and stores it in your permanent memory.

If you don't sleep, then you won't really remember anything you studied.

3. **Find a hobby to release stress:** Whether you game, read, run, or anything else, use it to unwind from a day of hard-core studying. I actually stress knit.

Last finals week, I knitted two hats to keep myself from flipping out. I'd study for three hours, then take a break and knit for 45 minutes.

As I'd knit, I'd think over the subject I just looked at as I worked my needles.

And before you judge me for my hobby, just remember this:

knitting takes balls (of yarn).

4. **Just say "No."** This is not about drugs or alcohol, but procrastination is just as addictive. If you really don't want to study, you will find a way out of it.

Whether your roommate wants to run to Sheetz for a late night snack or some guys down the hall are having a Call of Duty tournament, you will be bombarded by distractions during finals week.

While it's really easy to say, "I'll do it later," the exams will creep up on you.

Eventually, you just need to choose whether it's worth re-taking a class for a night of merry making. Trust me, it's not worth it.

Finals suck. There's no doubt about it. However, it is a necessary evil of college life.

The best advice I can give is to grit your teeth, put your head down, and just push through it.

Just think about the cool things you can do once you are home and officially on summer break. Unless you have a summer class, that is. In which case, good luck.

MISETA SAYS:

Poverty in America

ED MISETA
lecturer in economics

We often hear about poverty in America, and our minds are immediately filled with images of the poor, the downtrodden, and the homeless.

We picture the unfortunate adults and children who must live on the street and dig through dumpsters to find their next meal. But is that really an accurate picture of poverty in America?

I was thinking about this a few months ago while standing in line at the Country Fair. The young male in front of me, perhaps 20 years old, was chatting on his Blackberry while scanning through the songs on his iPod. Both the phone and the iPod were nicer than mine. When it came time to pay for his sub and Mountain Dew, he pulled out his handy Access card and paid for the items with my tax dollars. Afterwards I felt all warm and fuzzy inside knowing I was saving this poor rogue from certain starvation on the harsh streets of Erie.

By doing a little research, I discovered a 2004 study on poverty in America. The results were published in a paper titled *How Poor are America's Poor?* and revealed some surprising results. While most people would picture those in poverty as having no food, decent clothes, or shelter, we find that could not be further from the truth. Few of the 35 million classified as poor by the Census Bureau even come close to fitting that description.

A few of the findings: Almost half of all Americans in poverty own their own home. The average home owned by the poor is a three-bedroom house with 1.5 baths, a garage, and a patio. Coincidentally, I have a three-bedroom home with 1.5 baths and a garage. I don't have a patio but I do have a deck, so we'll call that even.

66 percent of poor house-

holds have air conditioning. My last home, which I lived in as recently as 5 years ago, did not have air conditioning. Only 6 percent of poor households are overcrowded, and 66 percent have more than two rooms per person. From this, the study concluded that the average poor American has more living space than the average (non-poor) individual living in Paris, London, Vienna, and Athens. So much for the homeless poor.

So what else do the poor in this country have? 75 percent own a car. 30 percent own two or more cars. 97 percent have a color television 78 percent a VCR or DVD player. 73 percent own a microwave and 33 percent an automatic dishwasher. Makes you long to be poor, doesn't it?

Shortly thereafter, I was surprised to learn that the majority of homeless children live in homes. Seriously. The AP reported on a story by researchers that looked into the living conditions of children classified as homeless. It turns out 56 percent of homeless children live in conditions described as "doubled-up". This means sharing housing with other persons due to economic hardship. If you watch the TV show *Two and a Half Men*, you'll know that Alan and his son live with Charlie in a beautiful beach-side home in Malibu, Cali. Yet according to this story, both would be considered homeless.

There are certainly Americans out there who truly are poor and need our help. But this really makes you wonder the extent of the problem and how much of all the information we hear is exaggerated or simply fabricated.

It makes me want to live in a cardboard house for three days to raise money for them. Heaven forbid that some poor person doesn't have the latest iPod or Droid.

MY VOICE

Skeptical of scheduling

A few months ago, I wrote an article about scheduling, mockingly suggesting a few new classes such as "Competitive Eating" and "Stick Figures and Finger Painting."

Maybe the schedule makers didn't get the point I was trying to make.

The scheduling opportunities are bad. No, that's making it too easy on them, unlike the difficulty I have faced in trying to put together a schedule I like.

The scheduling opportunities are downright terrible. If the people behind making the times and

opportunities to BRAN-
DON BOYD
senior writer

rious about making Behrend better, here's a few suggestions they might want to heed.

1. **Less morning classes, more mid-day classes.** As teenagers and young adults, we burrow into our blankets late at night and go into quite a slumber. How do you expect us to get up for an 8 a.m. class?

I want more classes in-between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Just because the teachers can't sleep in because their arthritic hips are acting up doesn't mean we want to get up with them (joking, of course. Don't want to ruin my chances at that A.)

2. **More exciting choices.** While looking for classes to schedule, I had to fight off the urge to doze off at the blandness of them all. Sure, we have an offered class called "Ameri-

can Comedy," but it needs more Larry the Cable Guy and less Mark Twain. I don't know about you, but I don't exactly bust out laughing while reading *Huckleberry Finn*.

They need to rename this class "American Literature that will sort of make you chuckle, but not really."

That's not even the worst of the classes, however. With snoozers such as "Contemporary Political Ideologies" and "Elementary Microbiology" on the board, I can't help but to feel discouraged with my choices.

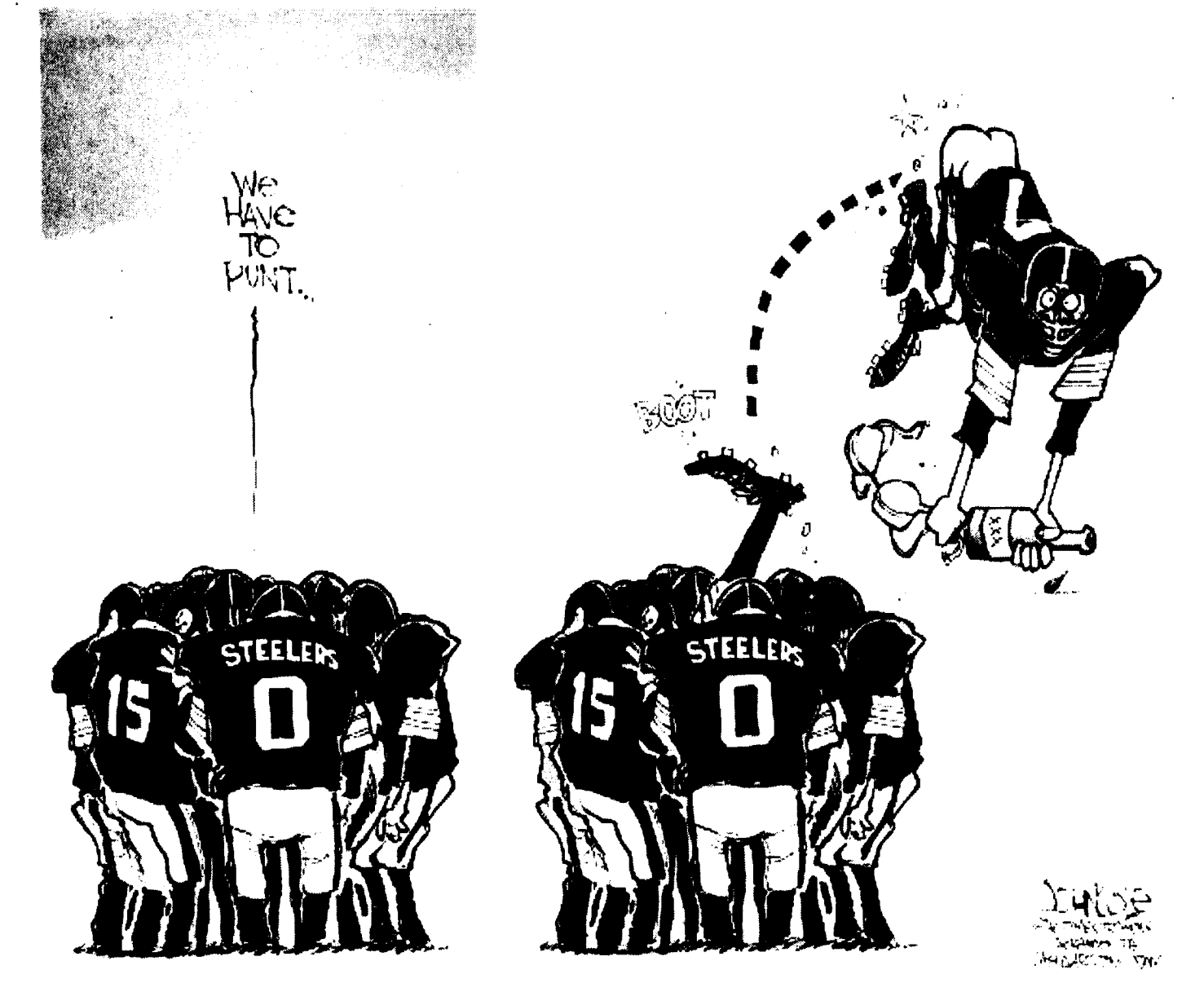
3. **Less time given to science classes for non-science majors.** When I'm in a science class, I

give off a charge similar to that of an electron - negative. Because I am forced to, I have started looking into taking a science class with a lab. These classes expect me to meet a few times a week, plus have a 2 1/2 hour lab.

Was there a leak somewhere in the chemistry department? Why would I, a communications major, want to spend so much time on science? I appreciate those that learn about science and help to discover new inventions and groundbreaking medicine, but that's just not for me.

It's not like I'm asking for much, really. A few changes here and there would go a long way towards improving the quality of a Penn State Erie education, as well as improving how much we enjoy it.

All profile photos taken by Daniel Smith / Behrend Beacon



MY VOICE

Round two ... fight!

CONNOR SATTELY
editor-in-chief

Tuesday, I accepted the position of Editor-in-Chief for the 2010-2011 year.

This probably comes to the dismay of a lot of people who I have angered, annoyed, and disappointed over the past year. One advantage of being a brand new editor-in-chief is the ability to blame the person before you for last year's mistakes - next year, I'll have nobody to blame but myself.

However, the advantages of having two years to accomplish long-term goals, set up the Beacon to continue to improve for years to come, and handle the changes happening within the school are enough to make me just as excited to have this position in fall as I was to have it this past year.

In this column, I want to toss

out a few of my goals for next year with the Beacon organization. Before I do so, I want to invite everyone reading to be a part of it.

We're going to need people who can shoot video, people who understand plastics engineering, people

Sorry:

Ed Miseta, John Moore, official Behrend fraternities and sororities, Stephen Burger, Kamille Watson, Amanda Miller, LEB, Jeffrey Pinto, Diane Parente, Connecticut, all of the unheard and unmentioned mistakes and misspellings.

need you. Next year, we want to involve as many students as possible to be a part of what the Beacon can be.

Over the last two years, the staff size of the Beacon has quadrupled. We want it to continue to rise.

The largest goal for next year is to cover this campus with immediate, quality video online.

We are re-working our website, and we hope to have breaking news coverage of every band, comedian, sporting event, speaker, fraternity or sorority event, and student organization outing.

To do this, we will need your help. Next year, with the help of OrgSync - a new organizational tool provided by Student Activities - we will host a campus calendar on our website. This will allow us to know about everything that organizations do quickly and easily, and will also help us highlight students' events to the community.

Our second main goal is to increase the efficiency and visibility of this newspaper. Already, we have held focus group meetings to find out how to improve. We plan to distribute a large survey at the begin-

ning of next year to find out what more students want.

We will also be completely re-examining our distribution system. Expect to see a whole lot more of the Beacon around campus next year.

Thanks:

Jack Burke, Ken Miller, Randy Geering, all Behrend administrators, all four School Directors, Rod Troester, Bob Williams, Ed Miseta, William Lasher, Eugene Cross, the incredible janitorial staff on Thursday nights in Reed, and each member of the four departments and eight sections of the Beacon.

Hopefully, next year, we will be able to avoid making the same mistakes.

I thank the Beacon Advisory Board for their trust in electing me to this position for a second year, and I look forward to seeing what next year's staff will be able to do.

4701 College Drive, Erie PA 16563
Room 10H

THE BEHREND BEACON

Telephone: (814) 898-6488
Fax: (814) 898-6019

Executive Board

Editor-in-Chief:
Connor Sattely
editor@psu.edu
Managing Editor:
Shawn Annarelli
sma5189@psu.edu
Web Editor:
Jeremy Korwek
jok5009@psu.edu

Business Manager:
Bethany Long
bjl5037@psu.edu
Faculty Advisor:
Kim Young
kly10@psu.edu
Marketing Manager:
Katie Cook
kic5293@psu.edu

News Editors:
Ally Orlando
aco5051@psu.edu
Rachelle Thompson
rt15065@psu.edu
Asst. News Editor:
Eric Peirce
ewp5052@psu.edu

Sports Editors:
Nick Blake
npb5041@psu.edu
Alec Italiano
aji5037@psu.edu
Opinion Editor:
Neil James
opinion@psu.edu

Editorial Board

Culture Editor:
Shannon Ehrin
sbe5017@psu.edu
Copy Editors:
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jsk5161@psu.edu
Marcus Yeagley
my5012@psu.edu
Videographer:
Mike Fultz
mf15204@psu.edu

Photo Editor:
Daniel J. Smith
photoeditor@psu.edu
Asst. Photo Editor:
Stephen Fylich
sif5026@psu.edu
Engineering Editor:
Ryan Frankowski
rfr5054@psu.edu

Business Editor:
Akeem McIntosh
aom5143@psu.edu
Humanities Editor:
Adam Spinelli
als5589@psu.edu
Science Editor:
Ryan Gula
rgg5029@psu.edu

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