

BEHREND BEACON YEAR IN REVIEW

A look back at the stories that define the 2009-2010 academic year at Penn State Behrend

(ALL STORIES PRINTED WITH AUTHOR, THEIR STAFF TITLE AT THE TIME AT WHICH THE ARTICLE WAS PUBLISHED, AND DATE THE ARTICLE ORIGINALLY RAN IN THE BEHREND BEACON)



effects alone would have been \$400 million. The film was therefore pushed back ten years. The wait was certainly worth it as it is bound to take home countless awards for the effects alone and is one of the major drawing points that keep filling up the theater seats. It is definitely a theater film, too. Not even Blu-Ray will be able to capture the experience. This is the kind of film 40-foot movie screens are made for.

While the film could be easily picked apart and examined for all its flaws, such as generic and cheesy dialogue and cliché plot points - *Avatar* isn't about that. It is about being taken and transported to an entirely new world and being treated to a visual extravaganza unlike anything ever put on the screen.

Here's another part of Cameron's brilliance: he manages to transport people into his films where the viewer becomes blind to any flaws that may be present. They become invested in what they are viewing and become another character themselves.

Despite the film only being 40 per cent live action and the rest CGI, the live characters still play a strong role and all manage to bring life and believability to their roles. Sam Worthington does a well enough job playing the lead, but he may be there for looks. The supporting cast holds the film together very well, however. The love interest, Zoe Saldana, gives a very solid performance as do Sigourney Weaver and Stephen Lang.

Avatar is being touted as a film that will change how Hollywood approaches filmmaking. It has already pushed so many visual boundaries. It definitely set the criterion for effects-reliant films and is pretty pointless to examine in any way other than entertainment. That's what Cameron is going for with this film and with all his previous films: he sets out to push the boundaries of films in a visual sense but also to entertain the masses and he is one of the best at doing so.

DAN KINEM
culture reporter
January 15, 2010

Anyone who has paid attention to James Cameron shouldn't be surprised that his latest film *Avatar* has become a worldwide phenomenon. Approaching its fourth week in theaters, *Avatar* has already surpassed other movies at the box office and is coming close to breaking the record set by *Titanic*. Cameron's previous feature film.

The plot is simple. It follows a paraplegic ex-marine who is given a chance to walk again through the use of a unique alien body called an avatar. It is his job to gain the trust of the natives of the planet Pandora so that a greedy corporation can steal their precious metal. It feels very much like a *Dances With Wolves*-style story that takes place in a futuristic world. *Avatar* was intended to be Cameron's direct follow-up to *Titanic* in 1999, but with special effects at the time being much more primitive than today the budget for

student film debuts in reed

EVAN KOSER
culture editor
October 30, 2009

From the art galleries all around campus, to *The Lake Effect*, students are presented a number of opportunities to produce and publish their own work.

Big Rock Butchering was written, directed, and produced by Sean Perry. Perry, a sophomore majoring in economics, debuted the film Wednesday to a crowd anticipating the blood, obscenity, and laughs it presented.

While the movie may come off as offensive and over-the-top, Perry explained that he "really tried to exaggerate the cliches."

Of course, with the archetypical horror movie roles present, the typical revenge-driven killer wasn't far behind.

The movie, an intentionally funny horror film, tells the short tale of some young teens partying in the woods. While inebriated, they face a vengeful, Native American terror.

Throughout the film, audience members were subjected to the typical horror-movie stereotypes, such as the stoner, sex-addict, and self-proclaimed "badass." Perry says that it was his intention to make the film so comedic.

"I think the best horror films are the ones that don't take themselves too seriously," Perry said. "The ones that can laugh at the stereotypes are the funniest."

Perry has been working on his independent film since the summer.

"I started writing the script this past June," Perry said. "Our first day of shooting was on July 4. By the time I was done shooting and editing, it was mid-August."

Altogether, the process Perry described took about three months.

"[Making films] is what I love and do," Perry said. "Though, the beautiful scenery and babes in bikinis didn't hurt either."

Though the movie was made with a budget of under \$20, Perry hopes that the sales of his DVDs will provide him with enough funds to shoot a new, higher budget film.

"Looking back now, I feel like I could have done about 20 times better," Perry said. "It's funny because when I was done with everything, I thought it was perfect, but that's the journey to becoming a great filmmaker."

Perry says that being a student and a director is hard, especially in balancing the responsibilities that come with both.

"It's honestly pretty damn tough," Perry said. "I shoot sketch comedies every other weekend and try to find time to edit during the week."

While the homework may pile on, Perry says that he has the process down "for the most part."

Of course, Perry isn't the only student director on campus, but he is the first this semester to premiere his movie. To prospective directors, Perry says: "Write and make movies all the time."

"It's that simple," Perry said. "The more practice you get, the better you know the process."

Students on campus can receive the same guidance and support Perry received through particular faculty members of Behrend.

Though he is an economics major, Perry says that he'll further his education in learning to make movies.

"I want to go to graduate school for film out west," Perry said. "I would love to spend the rest of my life making badass movies with badass people."

Perry's entrepreneurship stretches past the theatre space of Reed 117 and onto the internet as well. His YouTube channel, he explained, also holds a number of videos, including a Penn State Rap.

EVAN KOSER
culture editor
February 5, 2010

A thick haze of harmful contaminants often cloud the two main entrances to the Reed Union Building, Kochel and sometimes many of the residence halls. But the question is: is this a problem?

The nation is full of smokers and ranks second only to China, whose government sees no issue with how its population chooses to live.

Compare that apathy to the U.S. government. Tobacco lobbyists lobby for rights to advertise and sell how they want and to keep regulations as lax as possible.

Anti-smoking campaigns nationwide do just the opposite. In fact, the latter organizations have often succeeded in the past - the last television advertisement for cigarettes aired on January 1, 1971. Since then, most ads have been seen in magazines.

Campus-wide, that doesn't stop students from smoking or even voicing concern about the availability of cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products on campus. Nor does it prevent students of the other end of the spectrum from championing their case against the lax restrictions of smoking. While Behrend is host to many smokers, just as many (if not more) nonsmokers share the air.

With plans for a convenience store in the works, many students wonder if tobacco products will be sold. However, last semester a poll of students showed that tobacco sale was "not very important."

"I'd be happy about it," said Jevois Harrigan, a sophomore majoring in astronomy and astrophysics. "It'd be convenient. I mean, I don't smoke all the time, but it's nice."

Harrigan, like many smokers (casual or habitual), appreciates

the idea of selling tobacco products on campus. However, not everyone agrees.

Steel Flynn, a junior mechanical engineering major, says that he "wouldn't like it."

"I don't like receiving second-hand smoke walking to and from class everyday," Flynn said.

Anti-smoking lobbyists have certainly left their mark. Many restaurants nationwide have done away with their "smoking" sections together in favor of more "health-friendly" environments. In Pennsylvania, The Clean Indoor Air Act banned smoking from every public establishment, including and many bars and restaurants.

Throughout the Penn State campuses, smoking is tolerated only indoors and within personally owned vehicles.

While some of the major campuses have strict no-smoking policies, those of University Park and State College students are allowed to smoke on the side of buildings with a certain distance from entrances.

"I don't mind smoking," said Dan Hilde, a junior political science major. "I think it's better than people smoke in front of each other, people walk through. They [the campus] should have designated smoking areas away from the buildings."

One idea that has been tossed around was to install heat exchangers, much like those seen in the movie, to some of the many large buildings would give smokers the ability to smoke away from people in the trancesways.

"If they did that, I'd stand under it," said Jeff Barber, a senior political science major.

"I would definitely use that," said Zack Goncz, a junior political science major. "I've heard of people using

but I'm not gonna stand in the smoke and I won't blow smoke in people's faces."

At the University of Iowa, smoking is banned altogether. Students are fined for any violation of the policy. Penn State, however, has no plans for such a ban.

Still, many students feel that it's their right to smoke, and that any such ban is an infringement on their rights.

"I think there's a big moral question about whether or not we should have a ban on smoking on campus," said Taylor, a junior political science major.

"I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus," said Taylor, a junior political science major. "I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus."

"I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus," said Taylor, a junior political science major. "I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus."

"I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus," said Taylor, a junior political science major. "I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus."

"I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus," said Taylor, a junior political science major. "I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus."

"I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus," said Taylor, a junior political science major. "I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus."

"I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus," said Taylor, a junior political science major. "I don't think we should have a ban on smoking on campus."

Smoking on campus:



a hazy future...