

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.)

MY VOICE

Need money fast? Follow my guide!

As college students, we need a way to earn some cash. After tuition, food, and other expenses, we're left to be so poor that we're begging homeless people for some spare change.

What if I told you there was a way to change that? What if, by some chance, we could actually walk out of Penn State Behrend with more than a \$100,000 bill to our names? As Barack Obama would say, "yes we can!"

Step 1: Play the lottery.

Every one knows that the odds for winning the lottery are excellent, right? Okay, not so much. That being said, somebody has to win the thing. Why not you? Go to your local store and invest what you have in lottery tickets. That \$200 million jackpot would look awfully nice in your bank account, wouldn't it?

Step 2: Participate in clinical studies.

Why not become a human guinea pig? Scientists need a tester for a new shampoo? Volunteer! Someone needs to test a new vaccine? Volunteer! Psychologists want to see the impact of a person living with a tribe of cannibalistic savages? Volunteer! Sure, you might miss out on a few limbs, but you'll have the money, and

that's all that matters!

Step 3: Sell your body parts.

You only need one kidney to survive, right? Those sell for a couple thousand dollars on the black market. And as a plus for the ladies, you're sure to lose a few pounds from getting rid of that kidney!

I know for sure that you don't need your appendix. Sure, no one else technically needs one either, but I'm certain someone will shell out a few dollars for it.

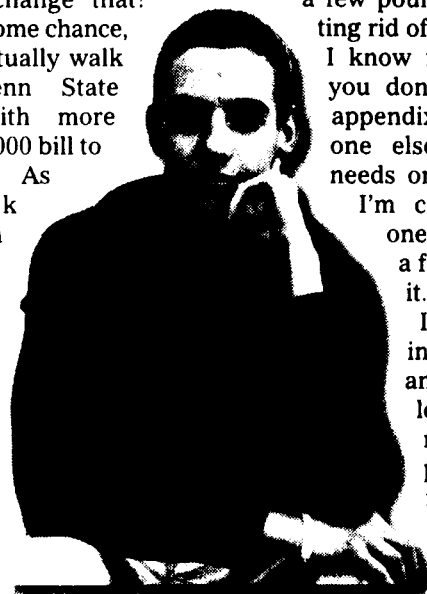
If you're willing to sacrifice an eye, arm, or leg for the glorious green paper, have at it! I'm sure there's a market for those, too.

Step 4: Always help Nigerian Princesses.

Now this, my friends, is the holy grail of making money. This gives you the opportunity to be like Mario and save the princess.

It's simple: help a wealthy foreigner move millions of dollars from their homeland, and you get a cut of it. If they ask for your credit card number and Social Security number, don't hesitate to give them it. After all, some of them are doctors. Who would doubt a doctor?

If you don't want to follow through with these steps, there's only one option: get a job. Just kidding. We all know that isn't an option.



BRANDON BOYD
senior writer

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 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
culture editor

MY VOICE

My second time around

Many students at Behrend partake in one of the biggest debates on campus: which is better, Behrend or University Park?

I like to think that I have some authority on the subject, since I have experienced both. I transferred to University Park for my junior year and spent all of last semester attending State College. And then I transferred back to Behrend.

So here is my declarative statement on the everlasting question: it depends.

For some people, University Park really is a good fit. If you know exactly what you want to do, University Park has a lot to offer. The wide range of classes covers anything you could ever want to know, and it offers majors that Behrend doesn't. If you grew up in a family where everyone went to University Park, there is a lot of tradition and a lot of good connections available to you at the big campus. And there is something to be said for Beaver Stadium being a short walk away, as opposed to a four-hour drive.

Personally, University Park just didn't make sense.

First of all, I tried to change my major from journalism to public relations over the summer, after the application to major process had already wrapped up. Although the Communications department at University Park is impressive, it is not very kind to anyone who changes their mind a little late in the game, or hasn't figured out exactly what they want to do with their lives.

It was also difficult to get used to the size. The communications program there is the largest in the nation. This means that classes for my major still had upwards of 300 people in them.

The first day I walked into my Public Relations class (population 370), the professor said, "Don't even ask for a letter of

recommendation at the end of the semester. I don't know you, and I never will."

That is a hard thing to deal with coming from classes of 30 and close relationships with professors at Behrend.

And then there is the reason that looks terrible on paper, but still counts for something in real life: I love Behrend.

I love the student organizations that all work so hard, and the mentors I have here. I love how beautiful the campus is, how great the housing is, and the closeness of the classes. I wouldn't trade my opportunities here for anything.

I'm a member of the concert committee, I work in the athletics department collecting stats, and I just took a job as an R.A. In a month, I am traveling to Boston for four days with the Lion Entertain-



RACHEL REEVES
staff writer

MISETA SAYS



Senseless census

ED MISETA
lecturer in economics

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 habla 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 billion to buy school supplies, instead of sending out hundreds of millions of pieces of paper.

MY VOICE

Why Edward Cullen will kill us all

Since 2005, Edward Cullen has penetrated the dreams of women across the country.

However, this is actually the worst thing that ever happened to the psyche of the teenage American girl.

Why? Because it takes the idea of a knight-in-shining-armor (skin in this case) and takes it to the extreme.

It's natural for people to believe in a "white knight." Man or woman, everyone wants to think that someone will come into their lives and make them happy.

The catch is that no person can do that. The only person who can make you happy is YOU.

But now, thanks to *Twilight*, a whole generation of girls are being conditioned to believe that Prince Charming actually exists.

Now the astute reader may think, "But people are smart. Any person of normal mental health is able to differentiate between reality and fantasy."

I completely agree. Readers know very well that vampires don't exist. However, it's very easy to believe that a man as perfect as Edward Cullen does.

This is a completely unrealistic expectation to place on men.

No one is going to ride up to you on a white steed and save

you from your problems. It is up to you to find the power within your own heart and make yourself happy.

Another problem that *Twilight* creates is that its protagonist, Bella Swan, is a terrible role model for impressionable teen girls.

Bella professes her undying love for him after seeing him for the third time.

This basically teaches girls that love is some magical force and True Love actually exists and that they are "destined" to be with Mr Perfect.

[Insert vomiting sound here.] In the first novel's climax, she willingly walks into a death trap because she wants to sacrifice herself for a man she's known for all of six months.

If you were like me, when you read that passage you stood up from your chair, threw the book across the room, kicked your pet and screamed "what the [expletive removed]!" Now, not only do inexperienced young girls think that someday some random jackass will solve all their problems, but that said jackass is worth dying for.

Damn it! Women are already too trusting of men as it is, and *Twilight* continues to make the issue worse because Bella and Edward don't actually have a

reason for being in love.

Bella's only characterization is that she loves Edward; and Edwards only characterization is that he's misunderstood and -guess what- he loves Bella too.

If you read their dialogue, you'll find that they don't actually talk about anything.

The dialogue consists of: "I love you," exclaimed Bella. "I love you more," mumbled Edward, sculpting his hair.

"OMG, let us frolic!"

Ready to claw your eyes out, yet? That's the entire saga. *New Moon* is even worse.

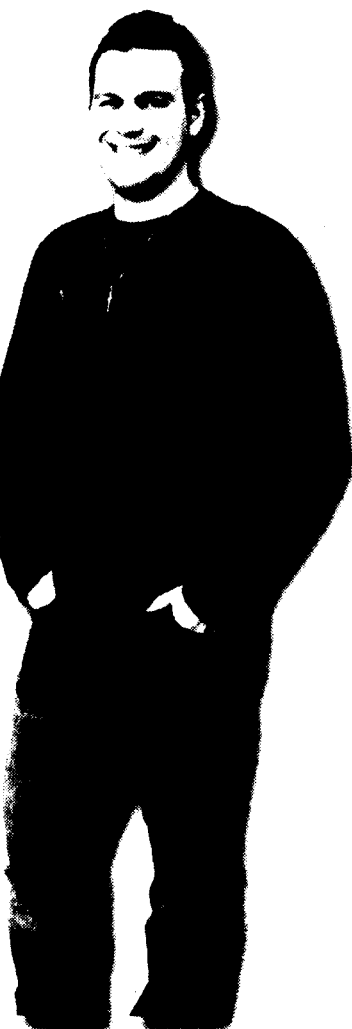
What does Edward do at the first sign of trouble? He leaves!

Partners are supposed to work through problems with each other, not leave you stranded in the woods.

New Moon's ending then proceeds to tell the reader that Mr. Perfect will come back after leaving them.

Fantastic. I should install a turnstyle in my doorway so I can console my female friends more efficiently.

Thanks to Edward and *Twilight*, the Personal Counseling Office better be expanding for a massive influx of people in the next few years, because when these teens get into college, they'll need all the help they can get.



NEIL PETERS
opinion editor