

MAJORITY OPINION OF THE BEHREND BEACON EDITORIAL STAFF

First Amendment requires uniform application

The Behrend Beacon is in its definition a function of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. It is particularly worrying, then, to see such bipolar defenses, and attacks on, that amendment.

The rights to free speech, press, religion, petition, and assembly embody some of the most important rights American citizens hold. Many people hold strong defenses of the First Amendment, and often times, it is very easy, particularly when it comes

to the right of someone to dissent. If someone redresses the government over an infringed right, everyone immediately jumps to their defense.

It is not easy to defend the First Amendment when you don't agree with it. When a group of people wants to build a mosque next to Ground Zero, for example, it's fairly pre-

dictable that some would object.

We support the right of those citizens to object. We also support the religious freedom of the Muslims involved to build a place of worship where they please. In the eyes of the Constitution, a mosque is the exact same structure as a church, or as a synagogue. It is not

the government's right to prohibit its construction.

However, that support of the First Amendment must apply to all situations within its scope. A Florida pastor that wants to burn Qurans, for example, has as much right to express himself in that way as another citizen who wants to start an anti-war blog. Or a citizen who wants to

send an angry letter to a representative.

We do not necessarily agree with the tact used by Pastor Jones and the Dove World Outreach Center, and we readily admit that the event is a bad idea. The fact that the pastor on Thursday announced that the event is "on hold" is definitely the right choice.

We support, though, the

right of this citizen to express his First Amendment rights.

It is impossible and irresponsible to support the First Amendment in cases with which one agrees and to tear it down for cases that make people too uncomfortable. The Constitution is written, our rights are on paper in ink, and they must apply to a situation whether or not we agree with the case at hand.

Connor Sattely on behalf of the Behrend Beacon editorial staff.

WEIGH IN:

9 after 9/11

JENNI BOLSTROFF
staff writer

Year after year Americans are asked to remember "Where you were that Tuesday morning?" followed by, "What are your reflections 'X' years later?" As we mark the ninth Anniversary of 9/11, Americans are facing economic crisis, natural disasters, political unrest and escalating national debt. It seems as though the tragedy of that day set off a near decade-long game of chutes and ladders.

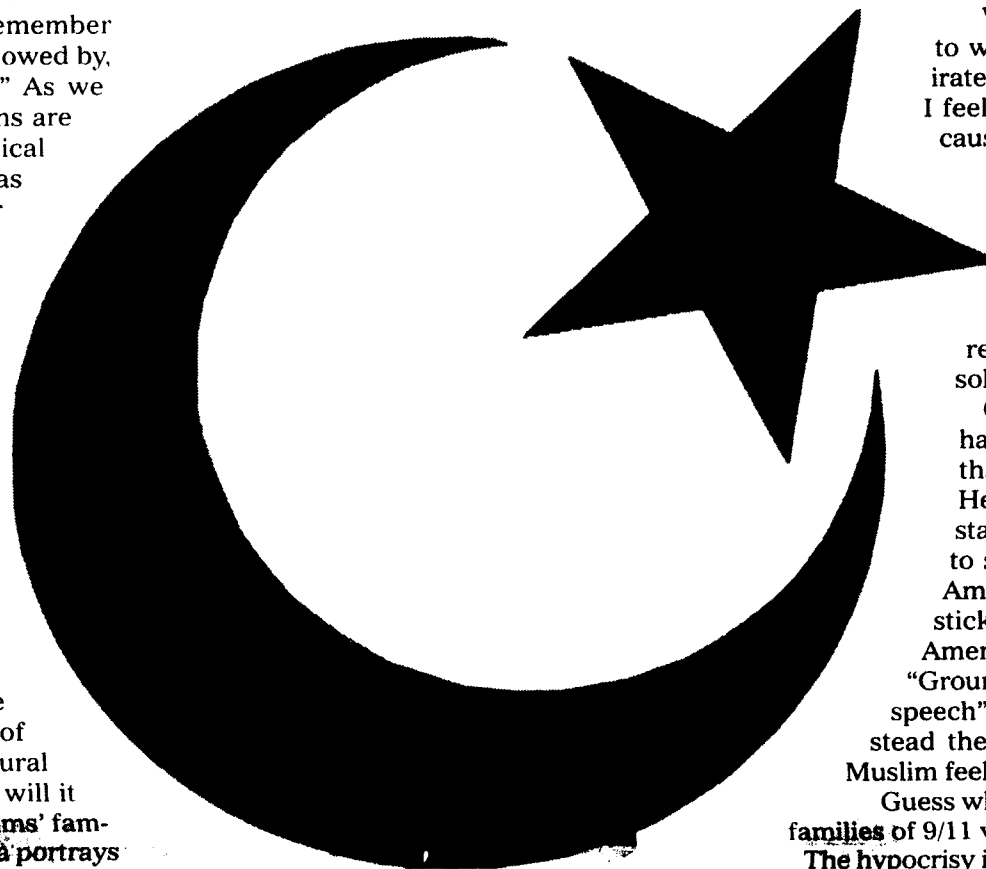
The construction of an Islamic cultural center and Mosque, two blocks from Ground Zero, in New York City, has taken the hot seat throughout the press; even Donald Trump felt compelled to become involved. Allegations against US soldiers and Pastor Jones' threats to burn the holy Quran further negate the uproar. But Americans need to sort through the garbage and drama the press is selling and ask two new questions, "What current issues do we need to tackle, now?" and, "How can we re-unify our country while doing what's right for America?"

Fear and the media are driving forces of the debate over the mosque. People are afraid of what might happen if we build the Islamic cultural center and mosque so close to Ground Zero; will it inspire more terrorism? Is it respectful to victims' families? Weren't the hijackers Muslim? The media portrays a radical Quran burning-pastor as the patron of public opinion; President Obama fears the incident will stem a growth in al-Qaida members.

This "fear of what might happen" caused the crash of the American Airline industry. Fear in the economy fuels recession. I feel that if we [Americans] don't protest, because we fear "what might happen", we are letting terrorism shake America's foundations.

COMMUNITY CENTER /

QURAN BURNING



What do you think?

E-mail us at bmb5290@psu.edu to respond to any opinions on this page.

Free Expression

EVAN KOSER
senior layout editor

When I read the news about Pastor Jones' plans to withdraw from burning the Quran, I was pretty irate. Not because I agree with him (because I don't - I feel the book-burning is anti-intellectual), but because it showed me that even those with a stake in the upheaval of cultural boundaries ultimately cave in to whiney, butthurt Americans.

Imagine, then, my reaction when I then found out that mam Feisal Abdul Rauf and those involved with the construction of the Islamic cultural center and mosque decided to relocate their proposed building. I was livid. Absolutely livid.

Once again, both heavily-dramatized situations had the chance to prove this country stood for more than political peer pressure and strategic gains. Here were two perfectly and highly publicized instances where the American people had a chance to show the world that no matter the issue, we're Americans. Tea Party members had a real chance to stick to the constitution by supporting the First Amendment in both cases. Those who supported the "Ground Zero Mosque" on the grounds of "freedom of speech" had the opportunity to stick to their guns. Instead they whined that the Quran-burning would hurt Muslim feelings.

Guess what? The Islamic center hurt the feelings of some families of 9/11 victims.

The hypocrisy in this country is astounding and I won't stand for it. Instead, I'm standing for my rights as an American citizen to speak, practice and demonstrate as I see fit. To prove that I have this right I should burn an American Flag this September 11.

I don't hate this country, I love this country and the rights granted to me. Am I going to get blasted by dissenters? Hell yes I will. But unless they have a fantastic argument as to why I don't have a right to do so (hint: they won't) then there is no reason I, Pastor Jones or the Muslim community should have ever backed down.

Peace should prevail throughout

SHAWN ANNARELLI
contributing writer

The Koran (018:021) states: "Build a building over them, their Lord knows best about them;" and those who prevailed in their affair said, "We will surely make a mosque over them."

However, the erecting of the Ground Zero mosque is not a triumph of radical Islam, but rather a potential symbol of American union.

The Quran, for anyone that does not know, is the central religious text of Islam. And, really, ignorance is the reason we are having this discussion.

The Quran passage above reflects how a victory in Jihad, (Holy War), works. A triumph constitutes a built mosque over the ground in which the victory was won.

However, in the case of the impending Ground Zero mosque, the site of the structure will not even be built on Ground Zero.

The mosque is being built two blocks away from Ground Zero at 45 and 51 Park Place, which, if you would walk those two blocks in New York city, is about two minutes walking distance apart from each other. So if two blocks away is too close to Ground Zero, how far away is acceptable? Three, four, ten or outside of New York?

It is also apparently difficult for those opposing the construction of the Cordoba Center to accept that this mosque and recreation center is being built for New York Muslims. These people are not gun yielding, air plane crashing, American hating Muslims - though some may not be fond of their fellow Americans after en-

during nine years of ignorant non-Muslims.

You see, the extremist, radical Muslims of al-Qaida that caused 9/11 are approximately 1,000 in full out of the world's 1.57 billion Muslims. al-Qaida is dwarfed by the 600,000 Muslims living in New York City, who could potentially utilize the Cordoba Center which plans to have a capacity for 2,000 worshippers. Calculate those numbers and get back to me on what the likelihood is of an al-Qaida member ever entering the Cordoba Center is. I'm waiting.

There have also been questions circulating about the men wanting to build the mosque. Meanwhile, one of the leading men behind the Cordoba Centers construction is a confidant of sorts to the FBI and George W. Bush. His name is Feisal

Abdul Rauf, and he has been a feature speaker for the FBI in New York City to improve relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims.

"We condemn terrorists," Rauf said. "We recognize it exists in our faith community but we are committed to eradicate it."

All of the above factors lead to a common purpose for not only New York Muslims but also non-Muslim America. Peace.

Peace translated means Islam. The men heading up the project to build the Cordoba Center have never swayed from their message that the mosque is a means to a peaceful end among Muslims and non-Muslims of New York and America.

There are two options here.

One is to give peace the opportunity to flourish, and the other is to create enemies amongst ourselves.

Enjoying the summer without regrets

MARISSA LANICH
staff writer

It's that time of year again. Over the last several weeks we have all spent hundreds on textbooks, gotten accustomed to new schedules, and already figured out which professors are out to completely rip our social lives into pieces this semester.

However, if you're anything like me, you've also spent the last several weeks coming to terms with the end of our summer.

Every September since the start of my academic career, I have mourned the loss of my fa-

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vorite season - wishing that my afternoons could still be spent in the sun at the beach and that late nights could still just as easily become early mornings.

Although most of us have traded the innocence of sleepovers with our best friends and swimming in backyard pools during the summers of our childhoods for sleepovers with our summer hook-ups and drinking at the local bars during the summers of our young adulthood, there is still an excitement surrounding summer vacation that remains the same.

Sadly though, as a senior who

will be graduating next spring and entering the "real world" soon after, the days of my care-free summer vacations are nearly over.

While I realize that spending my summer doing something resume-enhancing would have been advantageous, I also realize that I would've missed out on something far more important.

As Tom Petty once said, "The work never ends, but college does." While I absolutely believe in making the most of one's education, I also firmly believe that making the most of one's life takes priority.

I spent the last three months having incredibly fun experiences and becoming close with a group of incredible people. We lived spontaneously and outrageously together, and I can't imagine spending our summer any other way.

Many of us become so consumed with our professional and academic lives that we often allow the stress and the work to take us over.

Furthermore, for me and for the senior class, next summer will be the beginning of our new lives. Most of us will be moving out into the real world, moving

on to our new jobs or preparing for graduate school, and these experiences will give us plenty of opportunities to take ourselves too seriously.

At this age, we still have opportunity to be crazy - to drink too much, to dance on bars, to lose our clothes, to be too loud - so why not enjoy it? Experience everything you can, form your closest friendships, and make the craziest memories, because like I've come to find, you will never regret the time you spend having fun.

THE BEHREND BEACON

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