

## EDITORIALS

On Voting

### To Cast or Not To Cast

By Claire DeSantis

Greetings again from the Editor's Desk in the Collegian office. It's been a hectic week, but well worth the time spent to put out eight pages instead of four. It's been sort of a "dream come true" to be able to consistently put out an issue double the size that we were accustomed to. But we seem to be pulling through, and we anxiously await any student feedback we could possibly receive. After all, it's your ideas that make us tick. Stop in and see us sometime. Believe me, we are always here.

On to a more pressing issue ...

I voted the other day, and I was just wondering how many others exercised their right to vote on Tuesday. I realize that many of you are away from home, but a whole lot of you aren't. I don't mean to assume that none of you voted, because that would offend those of you who did. But for those of you who did not, maybe it's time to do some serious introspection. If it is the only say we have, we should, by all means, exercise that right.

I often wonder why so many people are apathetic on election day. If you were running for office, wouldn't you get the impression that nobody really cared either way what you did if, in fact, you did happen to win? The politicians themselves are not solely responsible for the corruption and exploitation of the people. It is a combined effort with the uncaring attitude of the people that make it so easy to get away with just about anything. Saying nothing at all often implies agreement and by not even bothering to vote, you say nothing at all.

If, as I said, you did vote, then maybe this is a case that should be presented to those you know who don't vote. I feel it is valid and I welcome criticism or opposing views on the issue.

The reason I do vote is simple. I have this little tiny grandmother who lives next door to me. She is eighty-three this year, and ever since she came to the United States, which is some sixty years ago, she has never missed an election. I find that interesting. I guess that is the way she exercises her citizenship in her adopted country and I find that something to be proud of. She is a real fireball — she even knows all of the candidates and what they are running for. I can't believe she always understands their platforms, but she can tell you whether or not they are honest — just by looking at their faces, I think. Most likely, she knew their parents. Whatever the reason, she is there on every election day and I can honestly say, I'm very proud of her. She is one of the reasons I vote consistently. The other is the argument I presented earlier in the issue. Both are worth the trip to the polls.

And so it goes, until next week ...

## Behrend Collegian

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Mailing Address-Behrend College, Station Road, Erie, Pa. 16510  
 Office-Student Offices, Reed Building  
 Office Phone: 898-1511 Ext. 221

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## Letters To The Editor

To the Editor:

I'm feeling thoughtful about Collegian reporter Michael Kitchen's letter to the editor in the October 28 issue. I refer to both "feeling" and "thought" here because few other social issues evoke such impassioned mixtures of mind and heart, and those that do are usually concerned with the boundaries between life and death: euthanasia, suicide, and capital punishment.

Michael Kitchen's standpoint on the abortion issue is opposite to mine. I am a pro-choice feminist, deeply concerned about abortion for reasons both moral and political. I am glad that young women on this campus have access to information and services that can aid them if they feel they must make the enormously painful decision to seek an abortion.

I strongly disagree with Mr. Kitchen's implication that such organizations as the one that advertises in the Collegian are staffed by profit-hungry cynics, "preying" on innocents abroad. Very often, the doctors who service such organizations do so for minimal fees, and the never-well-paid support staffs of women's health care centers are, for the most part, very caring and committed people. The implied analogy with Nazis and the Klan is inflammatory and inappropriate.

More importantly, I disagree with Mr. Kitchen's implication that the Collegian should avoid running ads that "may be offensive to many;" it's not a newspaper's job to make sure that nothing between its covers pro-

vokes offense or controversy. The fact that the Collegian does not run alternative ads does not make the acceptance of this one "tantamount to an endorsement." The rejection of submitted ad copy offering services to a readership would indeed constitute a moral stand, but the acceptance merely makes the readers aware of services they may or may not wish to investigate.

As far as I know, the Collegian has not turned down ads from "alternative" agencies. In fact, I know that you would accept such ads eagerly, in the interests of promoting diversity. I join Mr. Kitchen in the hope that alternative agencies will run ads, in response to this healthy controversy.

And the healthiness of this controversy is the real reason for my letter. Michael Kitchen's letter made me do some hard thinking on this issue. Because he cared enough to write, because he is a person of deep convictions, he has roused me from a sleepy complacency, and caused me to examine my positions on a number of important issues, only one of which is abortion.

The opinions I present summarily above, are not ones I came to immediately. Mr. Kitchen's thoughtfulness provoked my own on subjects such as freedom of the press, the purpose of college newspapers, and the implications of advertising. If my conclusions are finally predictable for a person of my general political outlook, I had at least to wrestle with some noisy demons in the process of reaching them. For that, I can thank Michael Kitchen.

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### Role Taking Advocated

In a recent issue of the Behrend Collegian, I read an article in which a young lady asked the question, "Why is this teacher taking roll at all?" She argued that being in college, "on her own," gave her the choice of whether to go to class or not. She also argued that she should only be graded on her exam results, not her class attendance. I disagree.

College is the first step in becoming an adult. We are suddenly given free rein to do as we choose, to accept the responsibility for our actions. Attending class is part of that responsibility. Professors who take attendance and use that as part of your grade are only being fair to those students who do show up for class. These students, who may or may not find the class interesting, educational, or fun, deserve to be rewarded for their attendance, their effort, and their responsibility. Grades are not lowered for absence, but raised for attendance. Effort should be rewarded.

I'm not trying to say that you should never miss a single class. I am saying that if you decide to miss a class, you should be responsible enough to accept the consequences. Part of being an "adult" and living on your own is taking the responsibility to accept the outcome of your own decisions. Our whole society is based on a system of task and rewards and the sooner one accepts responsibilities that life gives him/her, the sooner one receives life's rewards.

C.F. Lupine

## Semester System Woes

by Risa Glick

Last year at this time, I was completing my first term as a college student. We were under the trimester system at the time, beginning to prepare ourselves for the change over to semesters.

I am now a sophomore awaiting the completion of my third semester as a college student. I wonder if this semester will ever end. It has been a long ten weeks and the thought of having five more weeks until winter break is not very appetizing. It would be nice to be able to abolish this semester system and bring back trimesters.

I have pondered quite a bit about the pros and cons of the present system. Allow me to share these thoughts with you.

The semester system allows for a longer winter vacation at one time, however, trimesters allow two weeks vacation at Thanksgiving and an additional two weeks over New Year's.

While on trimesters, I had to endure only ten weeks of my least favorable class, but the semester system is forcing me to put up with 15 weeks of a class that I have very little likeness for. I am becoming bored with some of my classes. My schedule is so routine that monotony is setting in. I have noticed that a large number of students have been skipping their classes quite frequently. Maybe this is their way of breaking up their same old everyday schedule.

Instructors are teaching the same material that they taught last year, however, this year they have an additional five weeks to teach it. I will chalk this one up as an advantage to the semester system.

I have heard that some instructors are having difficulties in slowing down their teaching speed. We have completed a "trimester" already and some professors have completed their entire course outline too soon. What will they do for the next four weeks? Luckily, I have not had this problem. The professors I have have made the adjustment from trimesters to semesters.

I am currently enrolled in six classes. I took an average of four courses during a trimester. Having to take two additional classes during a semester is understandable, considering we have five more weeks of classes than we did last year. One would tend to think that the amount of work to do for four classes would be relatively the same as for six classes, due to the additional five weeks. I do not find this to be true. I have twice as much work to do now. At first, I blamed it on the fact that my classes are more difficult now than they have been in the past, but this is not the reason. The reason is that the work is not spread out. Instead of having two tests one week and two the next, I have four in one week.

I am having the same amount of exams in a course under the semester system as I did under trimesters. Obviously the exams are much more comprehensive.

Due to the failure of many instructors to spread out their lecture material, I for one, am not getting as much out of some of my classes now as I did under the trimester system. There is so much more material to know at one time.

Maybe instructors are not aware of their own faults. Maybe we as students are not making them aware. I do not view this as a problem. I view it as an adjustment that has to be made. Adjustments take time to make. Eleven weeks should be sufficient, if it isn't, there is still four weeks remaining. Believe me, that is a long time.