

Student Opinion: Apartment residents don't need RA's supervision

I am a senior here at Behrend and have never written an article for *The Collegian*, probably because I was convinced they would never publish it. I was shocked to see a 'student opinion' on, of all things, party habits, published. I have been a commuter, dorm student and apartment resident and over the years I have felt prompted to write about many injustices done to the students faculty and staff. Now I think I can sum up one of the major injustices against students properly.

Coming from a fast-paced city environment I find Behrend's tranquility very satisfying. That's why I'm a senior here. There is, however, a lot of oppression going on. I'm referring to our social lives and disciplinary system. This does include the staff's archaic views on alcohol.

Let's start at the top, the apart-

ments. We started the year with six RAs, so out of 192 spaces six were filled at a cost to the university of \$4,500 plus utilities. Since the university furnished their rent, this sum is trivial on our tuition bill, but if those six spaces were filled, housing would make \$4,500 more and logically could lower rent \$24.19 per person per semester. They already have plans to cut the number of RAs down to two next year.

I say, "Why have any?" Apartment dwellers are supposed to be mature upperclassmen and, from what I have seen, are more mature in years and class standing than most all the RAs. The only purpose they serve is to bust parties and let people in when they are locked out. I think that another arrangement can be made for the latter and as for busting parties-why? Noise is their excuse. If my neighbors were to noisy I would

say something. If that doesn't help I'm sure that security could deal with the situation without the expense of having live-in baby sitters (RAs).

"Well," you might say, "what about damage to the apartments?" There is a certain pride in living in one and if it gets damaged, the student has the responsibility to pay for it. I would never let someone ruin my apartment. Upperclassmen should be responsible drinkers anyway.

If upperclassmen are not responsible drinkers they probably came from the dorms. OK, so underclassmen do not have the maturity to live together and respect each other's rights. But the way RAs hunt down parties is ridiculous sometimes. I was sitting in a room once with five other guys waiting to watch Monday Night Football and got busted. We were neither drunk nor loud, so you have to ask-why? Maybe is because RAs are jealous. I mean do you know a single RA who had a social life before he became an RA? I know a couple but they were financially desperate.

I know that I felt very oppressed when I lived in the dorms. Sometimes it was more like a prison or monastery and the food

doesn't help the atmosphere. I can't really blame the underclassmen, the staff has set a strict system and beating this system means you get totally trashed and do something that everyone in the cafeteria will be talking about the next day. That's not what I would call setting the environment for responsible drinking. It's sort of like turning twenty-one, it takes the fun out of beating the system. I talked to a former student off the same floor in the dorms but years ago. He said they had keg parties on the floor with the off-the-record consent of the staff. The students controlled the tap and likewise the damage. Nobody wants to pay damage for some drunk jerk and that's the best type of discipline going. The staff can oppress all they want but peer groups really decide the conduct of individuals. As long as the staff is the enemy, its a major victory to have a party in your room. If being irresponsible makes you important, this school is going to have a social problem.

I can tell you that being a commuter has its decided advantages. Being able to pop a beer open and not have to close your curtains, lock the door and ask who's there,

is great. Maybe that's because as a commuter you can live in an adult world and you're treated with respect and act accordingly. Maybe that's what growing up is about, but Behrend College certainly doesn't give you the chance to socially grow into a responsible adult. That's why everyone calls Behrend a 'suitcase college' and one look at the student resident parking lot on the weekend and you know this is true-

Why did I write this? I think Behrend is ready for a change and I challenge the current staff and administration to change the suitcase college image Behrend has.

Another concerned student,
Eric Bryant

Eric,

Thanks for the letter. But I've been a commuter in my Behrend career, and from what I hear, I would not want it any other way.

Off the subject though, the only reason the Collegian hardly has any letters to the editor is because we don't receive many. To date, we've published everything received. The purpose of the "Opinion Page" is just what it says--it's for you, the students--to voice your opinion. pm

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way to deal with the problem was to put a quota on the number of citizens each tiger could eat. Or to make illegal the allowing of one's self to be eaten by a tiger.

Provinces in India don't do that. When they experience a tiger crisis they go right to the heart of the problem, which is a surplus of tigers. They stage a tiger hunt.

In somewhat the same way, the root cause of our liability crisis is that we have too many lawyers. Possibly you've heard the story about the fellow who opened a law office in a town that had no lawyers and found he wasn't making a living? Until a second lawyer started a practice across the street, and there was more than enough business for both of them. That's lawyers; the more of them there are, the merrier they get.

You think that's an exaggeration, don't you? Let me give you an example: About a year ago a fellow in Washington, D.C., bought a new BMW sedan from a dealer for \$19,600. Shortly thereafter the FBI showed up at his house and confiscated the car. It had been stolen. The man sued the dealer and was awarded \$28,000, which covered his loss the cost of renting a substitute car and...his lawyer. The dealer then sued the man who sold it the car and got \$3,000, the 28 grand...plus attorneys' fees. That

man has sued the man who sold him the car, who has sued a dealer who sold him the car, who was planning on suing the rent-a-car company from which it bought the car. At each point, a lawyer will rake in a bit of the pot. Before it was over, that BMW will be a \$60,000 car: \$20,000 in transportation and \$40,000 in lawyers. Is that any way to run a country?

Japan certainly isn't run that way. Japan hardly has any lawyers, at least not in comparison to the United States. That's the secret of its success. They'll try to make you believe the Japanese are so efficient because the Japanese have a spirit of cooperation and everybody sings the company song, but don't believe it. It's because they don't encourage their best and brightest to enter a profession that divides up pies rather than bakes them. Japan, by the way, doesn't have a liability insurance crisis.

We have to get rid of some of our lawyers. I don't suggest a lawyer hunt, except perhaps as a last resort, but there are some intermediate measures that might be taken:

--Close all law schools at publically-supported universities. There is no good reason for tax money going toward the training of people who, for the most part, will spend their lives helping peo-

ple and corporations escape justice and evade taxes. What little legitimate call there is for that sort of thing can be answered by private schools. If we found ourselves running short of prosecutors, we might open up a few "legal service academies" at public schools for the express purpose of training prosecutors and give the students a free education in return for a commitment to work for a time putting bad guys in jail.

--Make ethics mandatory. Fully a third of the profession could be eliminated if you pulled licenses from lawyers who failed to live up to even the loosest definition of honesty and fair play.

--Put the U.S. Attorney General's office under the Department of Agriculture. If the USDA could do for lawyers what it's done for farmers, our lawyer problem could be over within the decade.

Perhaps you think you detect a flaw in this plan. Wouldn't it create a shortage of lawyers, you ask, which would have the effect of jacking up legal prices?

No, it wouldn't. Remember the rule: More lawyers, more legal work. Fewer lawyers, less work.

The legal profession doesn't respond to the laws of supply and demand. With lawyers, supply is demand.

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