

## LOVE ROB

*Butch throws a rock through a stained glass window*

by Rob Prindle

I've known Butch for a long time. He and I have been through a lot together. I know just about everything there is to know about him. I even remember the time back in high school when he almost got suspended for snapping girls' bras. I thought I knew him pretty well until last night.

Butch and I were having a few drinks together when he told me something strange. "Robbie," he said, "I think that organized religion sucks."

That was a strange thing to hear him say because he had always been a religious guy. His favorite TV character was Reverend Jim from Taxi, and on at least two occasions I had seen Butch leaving his house early on a Sunday morning and mumbling about God damming something. I always assumed that he was going to church, but I never asked because I know that in America, everyone is allowed to cast a secret ballot for the god of their choice.

You can imagine my surprise when Butch continued by saying "What the heck good has the church ever done for anyone? Did you hear about the church that just had all their expensive statues stolen? The church spokesman said that they were real valuable and it will take some heavy fund-raising to replace them. What in the world was a church doing with them statues that make 'em so important and why the heck did they have expensive statues in the first place? I would think that they could find a better reason for a fund raiser than to replace some stone deities."

I had to agree with him there. I told him that I too had heard that news story and was very upset by it. Certainly a church is made up of people and not statues. Certainly raising money for the community is more important than raising money for statues to worship. Isn't there something in the Bible about not worshipping images?

"That is part of what I'm trying to say," Butch continued, "but there's much more. It seems to me that churches are missing the point. They all have those routines they go through. In the Catholic church, the priest actually kisses things. The chalice, the Bible, just about everything he touches, he kisses. Why is he always kissin' things? In some Baptist churches that I've been to, they think that the "ceremony" of mass is so important, that if you get their late, you are not allowed to sit down. And in most every church I've been to, 90% of the time is taken up with the same old stuff every week. Does that make any sense?"

Of course it doesn't, I told Butch. Every once in a while someone will have something to say, but most of the time everyone sitting in the pews looks bored. People seem to go to church out of habit. They seem to give money as a way of buying a ticket to heaven. They drag their children in the door and tell them to be quiet and pay attention. Children are told to respect the person speaking without ever being shown a reason to respect them.

"You're darn right," Butch screamed, "and another thing, Bobby, people in traditional religions always look down at new religions, most of them not realizing that every religion was an up-start at some time. Every religion has the opinion that they are the real religion. It makes me sick."

I was starting to share Butch's nausea. I told him there was a time when I thought that organized religion had a place, but now I am starting to wonder. I now realize that throughout history people have been running into each other with knives and shooting each other in the head while fighting for some god. I use to think that religion was a safe haven for people in trouble, now I kind of think that it is a dangerous place to go if you are not thinking straight when you hear what they tell you.

Butch interrupted me and said "What do you think about God, Rob? Christmas is coming up and I think that I feel something, but I'm not sure that I feel like worshipping anything besides the comfort of my, you know, family and friends."

I told Butch that I have had a feeling for a long time that God was represented more in a family get together or a quiet talk between friends than he has ever been represented in a statue or a piece of stained glass. If all of the time and money that churches have used for their own good could have gone toward helping the world. If the money spent for shields and armor and bullets by the Israeli government were used to help the Palestinians. If the catholic church would stop spending money to heat huge stone churches and start spending money on the homeless. If the Pope would preach peace instead of crusading to keep women from being priests. If organized religion were intent on doing good, then much good would be done.

If God is in the church, then he is not the god that I want to admire. I don't think that God would create mindless followers. It seems that if he really wanted to create people in his image, he would create individuals.

Butch smiled and said "That is a gutsy thing to say, I just hope no religious types overheard you. They may just mess you up a little when you walk outside."



## A Look Back at a Long Semester

by Peter Weichlein  
Collegian Staff Writer

This is it. The end of this dreadful semester is in sight. One week of finals, and we're out of here. Time to reminisce? Time to lean back and think. Time to digest. What a semester it was.

There was that election. We survived it, Mike Dukakis didn't. Will we survive the next four years? Let's hope George Bush does. Penn State's first losing season in fifty years. Jopa was mad, I was amused. We can claim we attended Penn State during their one and only losing season. Quite a claim to fame. Vinni's was busted I was there. Didn't get arrested, didn't get in any trouble, actually I had a blast. My dancing's not that hot anyway. Penn State's cracking down on smokers. No more cigarette machines on campus, smoking a pervarsity rather than an

addiction. "The Last Temptation of Christ" wasn't allowed in Erie. Erie is above blasphemy. I'm not. I can't wait for the video.

There were summer Olympics in Korea. Television offered ten minutes of commercials for every two minutes of sports and still lost money.

### PETE'S PERSPECTIVE

Flojo is the new hero of this country. Eat your heart out, Ollie North. He's being punished by the President for trying to cover for the President. Kind of renews your faith in this government, doesn't it?

Being a liberal is now worse than being a communist, and the ACLU is picking up new members like crazy thanks to George Bush. Makes sense to me.

Playboy's Miss November is a Penn State alumni, so is the nerd on "Head of the Class".

Enrollment is up. So is tuition. The only thing that remains the same is the amount of parking spaces - no relation to the amount of cars. We survived another semester without anybody being killed by race drivers who always pick the time in between classes to drive on the campus' walkways.

I spent a whole semester trying to find a date, there will always be Spring of '89, and Susan is still the greatest. Kanty Village doesn't party anymore. Somebody pay for that damn door - my social life's a wreck.

Danny Quayle chickened out of the Vietnam War (nothing against the National Guard), did not sleep with Paula Parkinson (idiot!), had poor grades in school, and is just not a likable person. Now he's

Vice-President. What a country!

The new bookstore is finally a reality. So much room for books. Shelves and shelves ready to be filled with the accumulation of centuries of wisdom and knowledge written down for us to learn from. Not to mention a sweatshirt or two.

Geraldo Rivera had his nose broken on National T.V. and if you have to be a Nazi to get a shot at his face, please sign me up. We now call Kurt "Fuzzball", because he has chest hairs showing even while wearing a turtle neck. The Russians are leaving Afghanistan, and if we're not careful we might even have world peace somewhere in the near future.

I now have an earring and don't know why. The price of gasoline is rising, and altogether the future is looking pretty grim, especially with that History exam next Friday. What a long, strange semester it's been.

## OPINION

### Let's Talk Merry Christmas

by Pastor Ray Sines  
Collegian Staff Writer

Christmas is a holiday celebrated by more individuals nationwide than most of the other holidays combined.

I remember, as a child, I would get very excited during the last two weeks of December in anticipation of activities, gifts, pies, cookies, and Santa to come. Dad would always wait until Christmas Eve to put up the tree and then my three brothers and I would be allowed to hang the ornaments and icicles. We, individually, made most of the ornaments.

A few years later Santa turned out to be dad, but my high expectations remained unchanged.

As education molded me into its form, I learned that Christ was the forerunner of Claus. I learned that we were actually celebrating Christ's birthday. I was somewhat confused about how the shepherds abided with their flocks in the snow and how the three wise men traveled from the Far East in a few hours.

My young mind invented varying answers to these perplexing questions.

Years later, as I dug into muddy history, I discovered that Christ wasn't even born on December 25th. Surprisingly I found that he was born in the month of Abib (Jewish calendar) which turned out to be April the first on the Julian Calendar.

Some unbelievers in Christ



thought his birth to be foolish, therefore this date became tagged as all fools day. The Gregorian Calendar, adopted in 1582, later declared this date April Fools Day.

It is a bit ironic that we celebrate the birthday of an individual about which more literature has been written and published than any other man in history, on a pseudo-day. But this is no more ironic than referring to him as "X."

I used to get annoyed when seeing Merry X-mas on store windows and doors. One man, when asked why, told me Christ would not fit.

This makes sense. He doesn't seem to fit into many peoples lives either.

Nevertheless -- Merry Christmas.

### Avoiding Cliques A new book on an old problem

by Kevin Trenney  
Collegian Staff Writer

I thought it was just some bad movie or a night mare that would soon end. I was wrong. It continues to haunt me. You see, I have this problem. I am a Behrend major, with no hope for escape.

I have been told the first step in solving a problem is admitting you have one.

What could be so wrong with Behrend? The classes and course work don't bother me. Even the library doesn't bother me that much, (I must be delirious). I think that I have been followed to college by a large number of junior high school students.

They seem too physically developed to be junior high students. And junior high students don't go to college - unless they are exceptionally bright.

I know what it is. These people are the physical embodiment of the pre-pubescent, mall-combing junior high mind-set.

Yes, these students form little cliques to practice their petty snobbery. I love it!

You have your basic sports cliques, based on team membership, (itchie jockies).

Then you have your social group cliques, (the lovely letter lovers).

Then you have cliques based on wealth, (Gucci-Gucci-Goos).

Then there are those cliques based on physical appearance, (Aren't we just so, so, so pretty).

Yes, I love cliques. Snobbery is something which I hold dear. I love snobs so much that I wrote a book about them entitled, "Snobs Are Almost People Too."

Here are the names of a few of the chapters:

Chapter 5 - "How to Outsnob Snobs"

Chapter 7 - "The Top Ten Ways to Make a Snob Sweat"

Chapter 10 - "The Mind of the Snob (basically a void)"

Chapter 18 - "How They Keep Their Noses From Bleeding From the High Altitudes"

Yes, some of my favorite people are snobs. Buy my book and learn to be as mature as the average snob.

## Letters to the editor

### Disgusted With Theft

Dear editor,

Am I bitter? You bet I am. The members of the Barbell Club have worked so hard this semester with the Student Government Association, the Gym Staff, and the Maintenance Department, and the just completed Bench-A-Thon, with the sole purpose of making the weight room a nicer place to work out. Then, in one act of selfishness, some person (or persons) undermined all of our efforts by stealing an Olympic Bar and some weights.

Why should the Barbell Club members spend all of their time (which we all have precious little to spare) and energy in fund raising for equipment when one individual can ruin it for everyone? And why should the Gym Staff be in any hurry to replace expensive items like this when what has been purchased can't stay in place for even one semester (yes, they just bought it this fall!)? And how many people who have used the weight room can remember having to wait because there was only one bar?

I'm sure these ramifications for his actions were never considered by the perpetrator of this heinous deed, no, he probably acted out of pure self interest. And that makes me bitter. But I'm not writing this just to blow off steam. I sincerely hope that by reading this, people will realize that this was no harmless prank, that maybe even the person who did this will realize the harm that he has caused. I'm not foolish enough to believe that this will bring the equipment back, but if it will stop anyone from taking something else from all of us, my time will not have been wasted.

Craig A. Silvis  
President, Behrend College Barbell Club

### In Defense of HABIT

Dear editor,

I feel that being a resident senator and a young black woman that I can adequately respond to your editorial on the HABIT senator from a black student's point of view.

The fact that only minorities can represent minorities is just that, a fact, not a racist idea. If a minority student came to a white senator and told him of a racial encounter he experienced in the residence halls he would be represented effectively? I think not. When I hear ignorant statements like "It's not my fault God made you colored," or when speaking to someone they refer to a person as "that colored boy," it irks me. A white student could not possibly feel what it feels like to be a minority unless they were in an environment where they were the minority. They don't know how it feels when the majority makes them feel inferior because their skin color is dark. You spoke of equal representation. Well, I don't think that a minority senator would be represented effectively by a white student.

People may think, "Well Ala's a minority and a resident senator - so what do you need a HABIT senator for." I was elected to represent residents, not minorities. People can not assume that just because I'm black that I will accept that responsibility. I could be from an environment where I didn't experience racial prejudice or interact with other black students. So, I wouldn't want to accept the fact that people discriminate because of skin color. Therefore I wouldn't represent minorities because I don't feel I'm classified as one. Essentially, if I attended all the SGA meetings and spoke out for all minorities someone would say to me you were elected to represent residents not minorities.

The decision for the HABIT senator has not been driven by the guilt of wrong done in the past, but these wrongs have laid down the foundation of our society today. Many people have this preconceived notion that whites have always been on the top and blacks on the bottom. It is because of precedent history that people think this way. They don't want the majority rule upset, fearing that we (minorities) are moving up the ladder. They may say that they want equality, but equality the way it is today, which is far from equal. You said it yourself, "extra political power cannot be granted to one group without usurping the power of another." That statement proves, at least in your opinion, that the majority does in fact rule and they don't want their power lessened.

The situation about the homosexuals at University Park, in my opinion, is a totally isolated incident. Before someone looks at me and says that I am a homosexual, they will see that I'm black. My sexual preference doesn't show up externally but my race does.

There are several other issues that need to be addressed but they can't all be in this letter. I would like to give some advice to those who are leery on this topic and need to be enlightened. Go to the SGA meetings, listen to the opinions and speak your own. Talk to friends who are minorities and see how they feel. If you don't have any, start there by getting some.

The fact that we live in a society where everyone is equal is ideal, but realistically it does not exist. Ala Stanford  
First Semester biology major

Dear Ala,

I agree that I do not know what it is like to be a minority, but your idea of equality can only cause more discrimination. The idea of equal rights is the greatest concept ever conceived, but I cannot see how equality can be reached if certain types of segregation are continually allowed to throw a wrench into the works. Is equality a black person being able to represent a white person but the reverse not being true? Equality can never be reached through separatism.

Ed.

## GSL DEPARTMENT

...AND THAT'S JUST YOUR INTEREST PAYMENT...

