

# Forum



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“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

## OUR VIEW

# Worthwhile search

**AT ISSUE:** University, SGA brought Google to Ball State’s Web site for everyone’s benefit

After only seven years of existence, Google has changed the world. Rather than search for information online, we “Google it.” Google Scholar helps users find academic sources, and Froogle helps online shoppers find deals. It seems like everything can be Googled.

Starting next semester, the Ball State University Web site will be Google-able straight from the university’s home page. It’s the latest step in Ball State’s technological initiative, which is always developing — as it should be.

For years, the search engine on Ball State’s Web site has been fairly slow, incom-

plete in its results and not particularly user-friendly. The search engine is one area Ball State’s technology services have been far from the cutting edge.

Between the combined efforts of Team Us, University Computing Services and Nancy Prater of University Communications, Ball State is working out a custom contract with Google. A faster and more effective search feature will be greatly appreciated by all Ball State Web site users.

These are the types of projects the university and Student Government Association must continue to focus on — those directly

benefiting students and employees, those everyone can appreciate. Also, this development is a perfect example of how cooperation between multiple student and university representatives can bring great things to the Ball State community. It goes to show, long-term planning can bring impressive results.

SGA members began talks with Google in Spring Semester 2005. After initial cost estimates were given, university staff members continued researching to find the most cost-effective option. Then, most importantly, UCS was able to find room in its budget to fund the Google partnership, so the charges

for the new search engine won’t show up in students’ pocketbooks.

That’s true cooperation in action. As exciting as the Google development is, we must consider the extensive planning and preparation this endeavor took and continue setting long-term goals. Perhaps in upcoming years, this Google partnership can lead to more benefits than a few faster searches.

In the interest of staying on the cusp of technological developments, the university must keep its eyes on the future, continuously searching — or Googling — for the latest tech features available.

**Tim Sukits:**  
**OH, AND BY THE WAY ...**

# Cooperation will be key for future of fraternities

It has become apparent over the past few weeks that the fraternities at Ball State University don’t really “know” each other.

Things are heard, and things are said, but things are rarely discussed. There is not one man, one fraternity or one council meeting that can solve this problem. The greek men of this campus must put an end to the lack of cooperation and social interaction because we might all soon be next-door neighbors. There has recently been a “fraternity shuffle” on campus. Theta Chi moved into the old Delta Chi house, Zeta Beta Tau moved into the old Theta Xi house, and Phi Gamma Delta has discussed moving into the old Beta Theta Pi house.

Don Park, vice president for University Advancement, believes once existing fraternities are stable financially and internally, the university can develop Riverside Avenue into a campus organization residential community.

Sigma Phi Epsilon is developing plans for a new chapter house where the old Sigma Tau Gamma and Theta Chi houses are located. This house will be a Residential Learning Community (RLC) — and 57 of the 260 Sigma Phi Epsilon chapters in the nation currently employ such a program. To uphold RLC status, the chapter will be required to maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.75, have at least one member of the university faculty maintaining office hours in the house — the Illinois Alpha chapter has three — and have a resident scholar residing in the house. The plans currently also include classroom space in which Ball State classes can be taught.

Modern-day fraternities, in general, are making a major transition from the “Animal House” ways of the past to a higher standard of achievement. It is important that chapters work together and with the university during the upcoming stabilization process because the fraternal community can’t afford to have any more charters revoked.

Cara Luyster, assistant director of Student Organizations and Activities, recognizes that the Ball State fraternity system has been stronger in the past than it is now. In 2002, fraternity men made up 9.2 percent of the Ball State male population, compared to the 6.7 percent in 2004. Also, there were 15 Interfraternity Council and four National Panhellenic Council fraternities in 2002, with three of them earning a chapter GPA above the all-Ball State average. In 2004, however, Ball State had only 10 Interfraternity Council and two National Panhellenic Council fraternities, with only one earning grades higher than the average Ball State student.

Luyster, however, is very hopeful and says the university is looking to bring in four new fraternities in the next six years. A committee with members from each fraternity and members of the Student Organizations and Activities staff has been meeting on a weekly basis to interview representatives from the other 58 national fraternities not represented on Ball State’s campus.

Fraternity men will continue to party and have social events, but fun can’t be a higher priority than the more important things like academics, service to the community and respect for women and other greeks.

True brotherhood is not turning a blind eye to members who are not living up to the ritual they swore an oath to uphold. True brotherhood is pushing all members — and other fraternities, as well — to better themselves, whether it be through competition or cooperation. Cocky journalists and “frat bashers” should motivate all fraternity men to strive for excellence.

Oh, and by the way ... the responses to my last column only proved my point. If anyone would like to know the truth about Sigma Phi Epsilon, I would be happy to discuss it with you.

Write to Tim at  
sige363s@yahoo.com



Patrick Hogan is a Ball State student. His views do not necessarily agree with those of the Daily News.

**David Swindle:** **SWIMMING IN BROKEN GLASS**

# Local businesses beat shopper burnout

On Nov. 25, millions across America stam-peded into stores, dashing through the aisles as if it were the running of the bulls. That Friday was the signal of this season’s celebration of our national religion. You know it — capitalism.

Come now, “In God We Trust” is on our currency for a reason.

But I write not to blaspheme our faith, nor to promote the sickening Satan of communism. Instead, let us consider an oft-neglected but crucial aspect of our economic spirituality.

Frustration with our financial system and its culture often comes because we’re too focused on only half of its species. When you deal primarily with the bulls — the large, monstrous corporations — occasionally you’ll get gored. Sorry, but many of these aggressive beasts just aren’t too interested in you personally.

For friendlier, more positive experiences, try the cow — the small business.

When I have a choice, I vastly prefer shopping at and showing support for small, locally owned businesses.

The consistently high quality of the service at two of the small businesses in the Village illustrates just how sweet the small business cow’s milk can be.

Elements Alternative Gifts is an eclectic store on University Avenue.

“We really have a very, very broad focus of things in here,” owner Carolyn Stellwag said. The shop’s inventory ranges from books, candles, Tarot cards, jewelry, herbs, novelties and incense to items like my recent purchase, a Magic 8-Ball.

“There’s very few stores like this in Indiana, and we knew there was a need for it,” Stellwag said.

Might you find something neat at Elements? “It is decidedly so,” says the 8-Ball. Across the street, there’s T.J.’s Great Burgers, a fast food restaurant specializing in delicious and addictive loose meat hamburgers. Manager and co-owner Thomas Bray is a seasoned small

business veteran, having owned various restaurants for two decades.

T.J.’s is “fast-paced,” Bray said. “You can come in and be out in just a matter of minutes. It’s very casual. ... We’re the kind of place to go and just relax, get a quick meal and have fun — as you can tell by the walls.”

The walls of T.J.’s are covered with the signatures, messages and doodles of satisfied customers.

It’s simple: Merchants like Bray and Stellwag reach out and try to form a stronger connection with their customers.

“You definitely have much more of a personal relationship with people. I’ve gotten to know a lot of people and formed friendships with a lot of customers,” Stellwag said.

Bray also said he takes a personal interest in meeting his customers’ needs, noting that upcoming items — chicken sandwiches, for example — are the result of customer requests.

**It’s simple: Merchants [of small businesses] reach out and try to form a stronger connection with their customers.**

Try asking the guy behind the McDonald’s counter to add new items to the menu.

Bray and Stellwag both have useful advice for students interested in opening their own businesses.

“Put a few years’ experience in your pocket,” Bray, who worked for three years as a general manager before buying his first restaurant, said.

“You have to have a very good business plan,” Stellwag said, noting that personal assets are also important for acquiring a business loan.

We should take a page from some of the eastern religions you can learn about at Elements: We should make the cow holy.

Respect and cherish the small business. And don’t worry, we can still eat beef — as long as it’s in the form of a T.J.’s burger.

Write to David at  
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## FORUM POLICY

The Daily News opinion page aims to stimulate discussion in the Ball State community. The Daily News welcomes reader viewpoints and offers four vehicles of expression for reader opinions: letters to the editor, guest columns, feedback on our Web site and phone responses. Letters must be signed and

appear as space permits each day. The limit for letter length is approximately 350 words. All letters must be typed. The editor reserves the right to edit and condense submissions for length as well as clarity.

The name of the author is usually published but may be withheld for compelling reasons, such as physical harm to the author. The editor

decides this on an individual basis and must consult the writer before withholding the name.

Lengthy letters that focus on an issue affecting students might be considered for “Your Turn” columns at the editor’s discretion. Those interested in submitting responses can submit a typed copy to the Daily News office, located in AJ 278.

**Michelle Long:**  
**POSTCARDS FROM MORELIA**

# Monopolies plague Mexican economy

Not everything is cheaper in Mexico. In fact, it is quite the contrary, thanks to one lovely word that eats away the pesos from the wallets of the Mexican people: privatization.

When there isn’t a privatized sector of the economy, monopolies leech on to the markets of public utilities. Current Mexican officials are making progress in efforts to privatize, but these monopolies accomplish the complete opposite of what the government says privatization will do. Instead of more investment opportunities and better service, people pay higher prices, and the money that should be used for public good — like public education and health care — instead further cushions the salaries of government officials.

For example, the national telephone service company is TelMex, which basically claims a monopoly in the market due to its privatization in 1990. Imagine paying for each local call, no matter the length, one peso — nearly equivalent to 10 cents in U.S. currency — and for national calls, paying two pesos per minute plus tax.

On cellular phones, local calls cost four pesos per minute plus tax, and national calls jump up to seven pesos per minute. This means, for an average five-minute local cell chat, you would ring up a bill of around the equivalent of \$2 in U.S. currency.

Although there are several cell phone companies in Mexico, the market is dominated by TelCel, owned by Carlos Slim, who also owns TelMex, and thereby the company claims a monopoly. The company’s slogan says it all: “Todo Mexico es territorio TelCel,” or “All of Mexico is TelCel territory.”

In Mexico, people have just one national gas company — PEMEX — so, unlike the stressful gas-price wars in the United States, auto owners pay a set price that only changes monthly. According to a PEMEX gas employee, the price at the pump increases by 20 pesos each month.

I am not an economics major but, frankly, it gives me a headache — if the pollution doesn’t first — to think of the problems in the government. And you don’t have to be an economics or government major to see the problems through the eyes of the people and experience them in daily living.

With the corruption in the government, Mexico’s own people no longer seem to have faith in the country’s ability to change its current predicaments. In fact, as one of my professors expressed, the only reason many people vote in the presidential elections is to have some kind of change; in other words, a different face to define corruption.

She said the Mexican people “preferen reirse que llorar” (“prefer to laugh than cry”) because there is no other option, no exit out of this slump, which one could argue doesn’t have an exact beginning nor a possible end.

Unlike the United States, Mexico does not allow reelections in the majority of its government. This is due to the more-than-30-year dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz before the Mexican Revolution.

It is also important to note that the elected president has the ability to lower the value of the peso during his six-year post in office. The devaluation of the peso through the course of history and the climbing external and internal debts have turned the Mexican economy into a nearly impossible disaster to recover from.

I have seen a trash truck driving around town with a poster pasted to the back saying, “Un gobierno diferente porque es un gobierno en contra de la gente” (“A government that is different because it is against the people”). This seems to capture the entire public opinion in one fell swoop.

What it all comes down to is a waiting period, an anxious hope that things will someday change, and a government that takes office to care for the people — not solely for its own welfare.

Write to Michelle at  
mllong2@bsu.edu



The Daily News encourages its readers to voice their views on legislative issues. The following legislators represent the Ball State community:

**U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar**  
306 Hart Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-4814

**U.S. Rep. Mike Pence**  
U.S. 6th District  
1208 Longworth Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-3021

**Rep. R. Tiny Adams**  
Indiana Dist. 34  
2105 N. Walnut St.  
Muncie, Ind. 47303  
(765) 288-7622

**Sen. Allie Craycraft Jr.**  
Indiana District 26  
200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, Ind. 46204  
1-800-382-9467

**U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh**  
B40-2 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-5623