

## News Briefs

### Earn a degree in four years?

Completing an undergraduate degree in four years used to be taken for granted. But now many college students are lucky to graduate in five years.

Many universities--particularly large public institutions--face shortages of classroom space and space due to budget cuts and increased enrollment. This leads to fewer sections and required classes filling up before registration is complete. This means students may take five or six years to complete requirements for graduation--all while paying extra tuition and delaying entrance into the job market. For some universities, the number of incoming students overlaps students who should have graduated.

Universities and state governments are attempting new strategies to decrease the time it takes to earn a bachelor's degree. Attempts include streamlining graduation requirements and offering incentives to students who graduate on time.

By graduating on time, students not only save money but costs are reduced for taxpayers, say legislators. Some schools offer money-back guarantees to students who do not graduate on time and some colleges are cutting back on general education requirements.

Students say other circumstances are to blame for graduation delays. For example, cuts in financial aid have forced students to work while attending school, causing them to take fewer credits per semester.

### Welfare reform passes Senate

The US Senate passed a welfare reform bill Tuesday in a 87-12 vote, sending the bill to committee to be reconciled with a more conservative bill passed by the House in March.

The bill, which had Democrat support, would dismantle the federal welfare system and the New Deal which provides income for millions of single mothers and their children. Federal welfare funds would be dispersed to state governments in block grants giving states greater control over the welfare system.

Before being sent to President Clinton, House and Senate negotiators must resolve differences between the two bills. The most controversial points are over child care funding, how much of its own money a state must spend on welfare programs, whether school lunches and foster care programs should be returned to the states as block grants, and aid to unmarried mothers.

Both houses agree that welfare recipients should be required to work in increasing numbers, that their checks should end after a maximum of five years, and that legal immigrants should no longer receive public assistance.

### Popcorn mogul dies at 88

Orville Redenbacher, popcorn king and bow-tied advertising icon, has died at the age 88. Redenbacher was found dead Tuesday morning in his whirlpool spa in his condominium in Coronado, California. The cause and exact time of his death are under investigation.

Redenbacher, famous for his commercials for the popcorn named after him, had an image so wholesome and middle-America, that many people thought he was a media creation. However, William E. Smith, executive director of The Popcorn Institute in Chicago and friend of Redenbacher said, "What people saw on television, that was him."

"In all of our industry," said Smith. "He was one of the great gentlemen and great personalities."

### Dr. Gary Alt:

## Bear naked

BEHREND-The Penn State Behrend division of science and the Science Club will sponsor a National Geographic Speaker, Gary Alt, Ph.D. Dr. Alt will present "The Bears of North America" slide show and lecture on Thursday, September 21 in the Reed Lecture Hall at 7:30 p.m.

One of the nation's leading black bear experts, Dr. Alt, will give the natural history and general ecology of North America's three bear species: polar bears, brown bears, and black bears. During the one hour presentation, Dr. Alt will share not only his expertise, but his sense of humor and personal experiences with bears.

During the presentation, Dr. Alt will explain how polar bears are so uniquely adapted to the frozen arctic environment. He will explain the differences between black bears and grizzly bears, and what makes grizzlies so aggressive. Dr. Alt will also discuss what can be done when encountering a bear in the wild.



Dr. Alt's slide show includes rare photographs of a polar bear charging a sled dog, a brown bear catching a salmon in midair and newborn black bear cubs.

Bears, the largest land carnivores in the world, are the subjects of many myths. They are also the most misrepresented and misunderstood mammals. Dr. Alt separates fact from fiction in his presentation.

"The Bears of North America" is free and open to the public.



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of resources within the center," Ward says.

Tirado is optimistic about MCC this year. "[MCC] is motivated this year to get things done. We have a lot of new people, a driven executive board, and a strong committee system within MCC," she said.

Tirado continues, "Organization presidents in MCC are doing a great job meeting the needs of their representative groups."

When questioned about problems occurring last year, Tirado and Ward expressed optimism and pride in the progress of administration in addressing their concerns.

"Although MCC started the boycott of administrative sponsored programs, we opened the door for other organizations to approach administration with their concerns," Tirado reasons.

### "MCC is motivated this year to get things done."

-Lourdes Tirado

Among the concerns expressed last year that have produced results this year are:

1. Better coordination between Student Life, Student Activities, Student Affairs and student organizations in planning events and programs on campus.
2. The hiring of an additional minority faculty member.
3. More student involvement in the planning of the Speaker Series.
4. The return of the "Blue Bus."

If anyone has any questions about MCC, the Resource Center, or any of the eight member organizations of MCC, they can reach MCC at ext. 6098.

Interested in making some money? Then *The Collegian* wants you.

We are currently in need of a courier. For this position, you would need a car to deliver *The Collegian* to Corry, PA Wednesday night and bring it back to Behrend in the morning.

If you are interested, please call the Editor, at x6488.

## Volunteer opportunities...

### Tutors needed for Adopt-A-School

by Doreen Foutz  
Collegian Staff

Penn State Behrend, in conjunction with Diehl Elementary School, has organized an Adopt-A-School program in order to provide a safe, structured environment in which students can learn and Behrend students can become involved in the Erie community.

In the Adopt-A-School program, there are three ways for students to participate.

Individual students can participate in the tutoring program, which requires a one hour a week commitment for the semester.

In the past, "anywhere from forty to eighty students have tutored at Diehl; I'm hoping the tutoring program is stronger this

year. I'd like to see eighty to one hundred tutors down [at Diehl] this year," said Mari Trenkle, Academic Support Programs Coordinator.

The tutoring program starts September 26 and applications are available in the Office of Student Activities.

After-school tutors are needed on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Transportation is provided from the Reed parking lot on these days, and tutors are desperately needed for Wednesday and Thursday. Tutors are also needed Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Volunteers must supply their own transportation on these days.

"The tutors make the most

difference," said Trenkle. "Children who have participated in tutoring have improved."

Adopt-A-Class is an option for student groups and organizations to volunteer at Diehl. This program is for organizations who agree to provide a minimum of four activities for the grade they adopt. Two activities are to be held in the fall semester and two in the spring semester.

Adopt-A-Class provides an excellent opportunity for leadership development, but has had a disappointing turnout in the past two years. According to Trenkle, three grades were adopted last year. The reason for this lack of interest may be the commitment. "Many groups just don't want to commit for the whole year," said Trenkle.

Because many groups did not participate in the Adopt-A-Class program, Diehl created a new, third program.

The newest program is for special events and fundraisers. Student organizations can sponsor or co-sponsor a special event or fundraiser for the students and teachers at Diehl.

Due to budget cuts, the teachers are forced to cut back on supplies, leaving some needs unmet. Each teacher at the elementary school has made a wish list of things they need for their class.

Organizations can help meet these needs by holding fundraisers and donating the profits. The types of special events are limitless. In the past students have helped children carve

pumpkins, gone on tree identification walks, organized safety programs, played computer games, and held poetry and writing contests.

For groups and organizations wanting to help out in the Erie community, Diehl provides an excellent opportunity. Trenkle said, "These are the kids the teachers have identified as having potential. What they need most is encouragement; that's the most important thing we are providing for them."

Applications for the Adopt-A-Class program and tutoring are available in the Office of Student Activities. For more information contact Mari Trenkle at x6230, Patty Conboy x6160, or Tom Gardner at x6014.