



The Behrend College Collegian

Thursday, December 7, 1995

Erie, PA 16563

Vol XLIV, No. 12

Behrend prepares for holiday season with traditional celebration

Holiday season kicks off with 47th annual Hanging of the Greens

by Brian Harkins
Collegian Staff

Penn State-Behrend held its 47th annual Hanging of the Greens Friday, December 1. As Chris Rizzo, director of Student Activities said, "It's a kind of a holiday celebration in honor of the Behrend family."

"The Behrend family has given a lot to Behrend and they have a chapel in the Wintergreen cemetery," said Sister Anna Mae Kuzma, coordinator of the



Photo by Colleen Gritzer/Collegian Photographer

One of Behrend's oldest traditions: The 47th annual Hanging of the Greens was celebrated Friday in the Wintergreen Gorge Cemetery at the Behrend Chapel and Mausoleum. The event not only celebrates the holiday season but pays respect to the Behrend family.

RECEIVED
DEC 11 1995
BEHREND COLLEGE
LIBRARY



Photo by Colleen Gritzer/Collegian Photographer

Professor emeritus Benjamin Lane celebrated the 47th annual Hanging of the Greens last Friday evening.

Catholic Campus Ministry. This tradition was instated in 1948, is celebrated on the first Friday of the month. [Its purpose is] to remember what happened Christmas day and honor them [the Behrend family] by placing a wreath on the tomb," Sister Anna Mae said, and "you can't just go there and hang a wreath, you must have a ceremony."

Sister Anna Mae also said, "A son of the family was killed on Christmas day at a very young age and he has a plaque in the chapel." The wreath hung there is also specifically hung in memory of the son.

"It is a live wreath that is hung to keep the spirits alive," said Sister Anna Mae.

The event has always been organized and run by Student

Activities, but this year things were a little different. Sister Anna Mae said, "This year Catholic and Protestant Campus Ministry worked with Student Activities because they are trying to pass it on to Catholic and

"The focus was where Christmas really should be. It wasn't on shopping, or the worries of Christmas, but on the spiritual aspect."
-Sr. Anna Mae

Protestant Campus Ministry. This is because the hanging of the greens is a Christian event. In the future, it will be run by Campus Ministry."

The turnout for this year's hanging of the greens was impressive. According to Rizzo, "There are anywhere from about 40 to 50 people, on average." This year, there were 75 to 80 people.

"You drive up to the mausoleum where the Behrend family is and there are luminaries leading up to it," said Rizzo. "There are participants with candles inside the chapel." According to Sister Anna Mae, "The focus was where Christmas really should be. It wasn't on shopping, or the worries of Christmas, but on the spiritual aspect."

Living with AIDS...

Speaker shares her story as she struggles with disease

by Sean Siekkinen
Collegian Staff

Rae Lewis-Thornton, a 33 year old former political campaign staffer and AIDS victim, spoke to a packed house on Wednesday, December 8 in Reed Commons. Lewis-Thornton discussed HIV and AIDS with Behrend students, faculty, and staff as part of her widespread crusade against the disease through public speaking. The event was broadcast by two

radio stations, and was covered by ABC news for an upcoming edition of Nightline.

Lewis-Thornton shared every detail of her life with the audience. No question was too personal, she told the audience. She spoke about the emotional shock of suddenly finding out that she was HIV positive, and described her life through today.

"Ten years ago, I was diagnosed with HIV," she said. "I had no idea- none. I [had]

donated blood. In fact, I organized the blood drive... about three months later I received a letter."

In that letter, Lewis-Thornton was told that there was something wrong with her blood. She found out over the phone that she was HIV positive.

Lewis-Thornton does not know who infected her with HIV. None of her sexual partners ever admitted to carrying the virus.

"I don't know, and I really don't

care," she says. "I had the choice to have sex or not to have sex... I could have kept my legs closed."

At first, Lewis-Thornton had no intention of going public to educate about AIDS.

"I was embarrassed... society had been unkind to people with AIDS, so I basically kept it a secret."

Lewis-Thornton was an up and coming political staffer, who had worked on presidential campaigns for Michael Dukakis and Rev.

Jesse Jackson. Her biggest fears concerned her career. She was afraid that politicians would not want to be associated with someone carrying HIV, and that she would not be able to find a job.

She kept her condition a secret for seven years, but the stress and fatigue caused by the disease devastated her. She was constantly too tired to work, and

see AIDS page 3