

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ERIE, PA.
PERMIT #282

Collegian

Thursday, April 4, 1996

Erie, PA 16563

Vol XLIV, No. 22

Graduation & Convocation:

Prayer threatened; diversity questioned

by Sean Siekkinen
Collegian Staff

The typically mellow, serene Behrend College promises to remain that way—but not for very long. A potentially explosive issue of debate has emerged on campus.

The issue concerns prayer at graduation and convocation. The crusade to ban prayer at school ceremonies is being led by Michael Zampetti, a Student Government Association senator. The Behrend College is the only Penn State campus to have prayer at school ceremonies.

Zampetti believes prayer at school ceremonies like graduation and convocation may put many students in an awkward and unfair situation.

"I know that it would offend some people to have to listen to a prayer either that mention some sort of a deity if they don't believe in a deity, or a God that isn't their God," Zampetti explained.

While supporters of prayer at school ceremonies point out that attendance at graduation and convocation is not mandatory, Zampetti believes skipping the ceremonies is not an option for many students.

"It's your graduation. Most people...don't want to miss it. I feel that the students shouldn't have to be offended by having a prayer there. I personally would be offended if I had to listen to it," Zampetti said.

Dr. John Lilley, provost and dean, who is in favor of the 48-year-old tradition, sees prayer as a practice in diversity and tolerance.

"I would feel like we had failed that person if that person was so intolerant that he or

she was unwilling ever to hear a prayer offered in a tradition different from [their] own," he said. "I don't think it should be scrapped in the name of intolerance."

But Lilley said that widespread community appeal could propel him to reluctantly discontinue prayer at graduation.

"I'm not out selling prayer," Lilley said. "I think I'm out selling a sense of gratitude; a sense of thanksgiving; a sense of congratulations; a sense of best wishes. That doesn't have to be done through prayer."

"We could continue the prayer or not continue the prayer but I would just hope we would do it for all the right reasons and not for reasons of intolerance of lack of diversity."

Dr. Chris Reber, dean of students, is responsible for selecting clergy speakers through Campus Ministry.

Reber admits that in past years speakers have been strictly Christian, but says recent efforts to improve diversity have yielded a wide range of denominations.

In the past five years, two rabbis have given benedictions at convocation ceremonies. In comparison, the Catholic denomination, which encompasses 60 percent of Behrend's student body, has been represented three times.

"I like what we're doing," Reber said of the current policy.

But he added, "If in fact there's consensus that it's not appropriate then I think we would discontinue doing it."

see PRAYER page 3

Happy Easter!



That wascally wabbit: Shane Weidler, 5, is ready for the hunt—The Easter Egg Hunt, that is. The Multi-Cultural Council and associates is sponsoring the second annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday. Free food, pictures, candy and of course the Easter Bunny will be there! The Easter Egg Hunt is from 10 a.m. and noon. For more information call MCC at 898-6098.

President's veto power questioned

by Bryan Harkins
Collegian Staff

Members the Student Government Association have passed into and issue of concern: veto power. How much time should the SGA President have to veto a passed proposal?

In the SGA meeting that was held two weeks ago, Lourdes Trade, Multi-Cultural Council President, put forth a proposal to restrict the amount of time that the SGA President has to veto a passed proposal.

If passed, the bill would limit the SGA President's veto power so that he/she could only veto a bill at the meeting where the proposal was initiated, or at the following meeting. Tim Mallon, SGA president, and Dave Miller, vice-president, have no objection to proposal.

"I agree with the motion that was given [two weeks ago], said Miller.

Miller went on to explain how the President of the United States has ten days to veto a bill and that the SGA ought to adopt a similar policy.

Doreen Fouts, an SGA senator, explained the advantage of the bill.

"I think it's a good idea. It would give the Senate the opportunity to know exactly what the President is thinking, instead of finding out a few days later and having to call an emergency meeting to override the veto," said Fouts.

The questions concerning the SGA President's veto power was stirred up after an SGA meeting

see VETO page 4

Start saving lives: Blood drive Wednesday

by Kyra Kindon
Collegian Staff

On Wednesday, April 10, the Community Blood Bank of Erie County in conjunction with Health and Wellness is sponsoring a Spring Blood Drive. The drive will be held in Reed Commons between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Past blood drives at Behrend have proven successful. According to Patty Pasky McMahon, director of the Health and Wellness Center, student involvement has always been high at the drives.

"Students are always supportive of our campus blood drives," said McMahon.

The Community Blood Bank tries to sponsor one blood drive per semester. Blood Bank administrators hope this drive

will be as successful as past blood drives.

Stacy Wygant, public relations director for the Blood Bank, said, "Since we had such a great draw of people who donated last time [October 18, 1995], we hope to have the same turn out."

The Blood Bank is preparing for crowds of donors and hopes to shorten the time it takes to donate blood.

"We are expecting a 100 to 150 donors and will be prepared for a crowd," said Lisa Graff, Mobile Drive Coordinator at the Community Blood Bank. "We are bringing more equipment and staff to help donors move more quickly through the donation process. Waiting time will be decreased significantly."

Everyone is encouraged to come and take part in the drive.

Donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 100 lbs. and be in general health. All who donate are asked to eat well before donating blood.

The donation process involves four steps and takes about 45 minutes.

First, the donor registers, completes a short health history questionnaire and reviews it with a nurse.

The second step is a mini physical. The donor's pulse, blood pressure, temperature and iron level are checked.

Donating the pint of blood in next and it takes approximately five to seven minutes. The last step is the refreshment area for a snack and a cold drink.

see BANK page 2