

Drugs at the Math Seminar

by Daniel D. Ester
Guest Columnist

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: This column may be hazardous to your sense of good taste. Pregnant women should only read this with a cigarette in one hand and a cocktail in the other!

Yes, I smoke cigarettes. I am trying to quit, but I live right across the street from a convenience store which is open (conveniently enough) from 6 am to 12 midnight JUST to sell ME cigarettes.

My doctor told me that if I quit smoking now, I could add three years to my life. That is exactly what I need: another three years of Depends Undergarments and wearing that thing around my neck so I can cry out, "Help! I've fallen and I can't get up! . . . and I can't reach my Nicorette Gum!"

I tried to quit to once again last week, but to no avail. I had a test and several quizzes, and I was so tense I could have eaten a piece of coal and shot a diamond out of my you-know-what.

Speaking of smoking, it has come to my attention that it can be hazardous to your legal standing to

tell certain people that you smoke. If you smoke, you should always say, "I smoke cigarettes," or they might think you are talking about Wacky Tobacoy. Not that I would know anything about that!

Anyway, without further ado, the purpose of this column is to review the fourth in the Division of Science Seminar Series, "The Visions of Shamans and Saints: What does Ancient Art Tell Us About the Visual System?" by Dr. Bard Ermentrout which was October 17.

Ermentrout is a Professor of Mathematics at the University of Pittsburgh. He holds a Ph.D in biophysics and theoretical biology which he earned at the University of Chicago in 1979.

Do not let that scare you! I, too, was ready for a short, fat, balding, man with thick glasses and a drab, monotone voice that would put Satan himself/herself, whichever the case may be, into a deep sleep. But I was DEAD WRONG!

Ermentrout's topic revolved around hallucinations and what they tell scientists about the visual cortex. He told the audience everything we needed to know

about how LSD and other hallucinogens cause surfaces to appear to be covered with geometric designs.

Throughout history, man has been fortunate enough to find numerous ways of placing himself in trance-like states, most of which can be brought about by isolation, self-induced starvation, or hallucinogenic compounds (a.k.a. DRUGS).

We can see an obvious correlation between the ancient shamans (medicine men) who performed these activities and the typical hippie of the modern 1960's, and the more recent--and disturbing--grunge pseudo-hippies of the 90's.

- 1.) Isolation:
Shaman - meditation
Hippie - no one will let him around because of the smell
- 2.) Self-induced starvation
Shaman - religious rite
Hippie - cannot afford food
- 3.) Hallucinogenic compounds:
Shaman - diversion from the realities of married life
Hippie - diversions from not having a life!

Ermentrout's presentation was laced (no pun intended) with humor. He captured the audience with style and wit, right from the first overhead which showed an ancient cave drawing of some type of lizard that had a very large phallic unit. I repeat, he showed the audience a picture of a male lizard that had A Big One! Most of the men in the audience immediately cringed with feelings of inadequacy, while the ladies (and a few men, *gasp*) seemed to smile with barely-concealed desire.

For those of you who would rather run naked through rose bushes screaming, "Dole for president!" than go to a mathematics/biology seminar, you truly missed an excellent speech!

To rate this seminar, I have stolen the rating system used by a few of the organizations at Behrend:

- Math Club:* €€€ (4 epsilons)
- Matchbox Players:* 4 standing ovations
- Campus Ministry:* 3 Amens and a "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord!"
- Accounting Club:* 3 perfect audits and an undetected tax fraud
- Roundtable Society:* 4 "Wow, man, that was deep poetry. . ."
- Trigon:* 4 snaps up, girlfriend!
- Smoker's Club:* 3 cartons of smokes and a brand new lighter
- West Virginia Student's Coalition:* 3 young sheep and a Swingin' singles Night at the family reunion!

Do not miss the sixth in the series, "The Dynamics of Life: An Introduction to Mathematical Biology," presented by Behrend's dynamic trio Dr. Richard Bertam, Dr. Carl Panetta and Dr. Joseph Paultet. The seminar will be on Thursday, November 7, at 3 p.m. in the Reed Lecture Hall, and, as always, FREE COOKIES will be served!

Religious Affairs is sponsoring a "mock election".
Monday, October 28
Wintergreen Lobby
9a.m.-3p.m.
Students, faculty and staff are all invited to cast a vote.

East Timor

by Kevin Schoolcraft
Collegian Staff

The 1996 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to two peace keepers fighting for the independence of East Timor from the Indonesian government. Roman Catholic Bishop Carlos Belo and resistance leader Jose Ramos -Horta were selected by the Nobel Committee for their struggle against the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975.

Both of these gentleman will share \$1.12 million for their efforts against this unjust occupation that has left within its wake more than 200,000 East Timorees dead, and many others imprisoned. The Indonesian government has approximately eight other Islands in that part of the world under total Indonesian control. Indonesia did not want a small island like East Timor to see an example of independence to the region.

This Nobel Peace Prize brings along with it the awakening of a world which one asks the same question that the East Timorees had more than two decades ago, which is, Why? Why doesn't the United Nations and the rest of the world care about the invasion which has brought destruction to the Nations of East Timor? The problem wasn't that the United States people didn't care. The fact is the majority didn't know about the invasion to begin with. Why didn't most of the people in take United States know about the East Timor crisis? This is a very simple question that can be answered with one sentence: the social forces in charge of national and world medias did not want the invasion covered. A closer look at the event will be needed in order to clearly see the entire picture.

Currently our media consists of a huge concentration of media

ownership. There are twenty-three corporations that control more than 50 percent of the business in each medium. In somecases they have a virtual monopoly. In having the concentration of media power, these corporations can wield great amounts of influence upon our society. Through television, magazines, books, software, movies, compact discs, and newspapers they can influence our decisions about ideas, events and products that are in their best interests.

One can conclude that our nation's media for all intentional purposes can be considered the custodians, or gate keepers of news. They make the decisions on whether or not to make us aware or keep us ignorant of events. This is the primary reason why so many people never heard of the 1975 invasion of East Timor. The media was a tool used by the predominant influences of the time to close our eyes to what was occurring in East Timor.

level the coverage in the United States and Canada dropped to zero."

Like stated before, it just so happens all this was going on exactly the same time as the great protest of Cambodia. The levels of atrocities were comparable. So why was very little known about East Timor from 1975-1979? One can only come to the conclusion that the social forces in charge of the media had vested interests with the Indonesian government at the time of the invasion. It is also likely considering now that East Timor has been striped of it's once large oil reserve that the social forces who initially sided with the Indonesians have now moved on, and no longer need Indonesia. This may be why we now see the Nobel Prize being awarded to activists who denounce Indonesia's ill-reputed and unjustified claim to East Timor.



Race for the House

by Mike Coursey
Collegian Staff

The race for the White House has reached its final week. The campaign has focused primarily on Bob Dole's 15 percent tax cut plan and on President Clinton's vision for a "Bridge to the Future."

Unlike the 1992 election, Ross Perot has not really been a factor in this election. President Clinton has held a commanding lead, 15-25 percent, in the polls for the last six months.

It seems apparent, to the casual observer, that the media has played up the fact that Dole is 73. They have treated Dole's age as a handicap that will hinder his ability to lead the country. However, due to the advances in health care and healthier lifestyles, many CEOs, academics, and other leaders work well into their eighties.

Clinton also promised tax relief for the middle class and broadened health care as a "Bridge to the Future," a reference to Bob Dole's "simpler life" plan.

With less than three weeks left until the election, and with Dole down by 20 plus points, it seems all but obvious that President Clinton will be re-elected to another four years.

Although President Clinton's administration has been plagued with many scandals, such as Whitewater and Travel-gate, his "character" has not really been an issue for most voters.

The question for all concerned, be it a Democratic, Republican, Liberal, or Conservative, is what direction will President Clinton take? Will there be a Democratic Congress or a Republican Congress to assist President Clinton? Healthcare, education, economy, budget deficits are all real issues that should matter to all Americans. Be it college student, professor, truck driver, or factory worker.

This country is going to need to take cohesive, positive steps to end the divisions and schisms in our society. I am an American of European descent and a veteran. I have never been to Europe; the U.S. is my home. I believe it is about time that we all look at ourselves as Americans first. We must relay this to our

lected leaders, whatever their party, so they can rebuild this country in the image of Lincoln and Jefferson.

Whether you believe or respect the officials elected, we must get the message out that the status quo in Washington must end. The Republicans must reach out to the inner city and the dis-enfranchised. The Democrats should focus their views so that their guidelines, of what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable, are more concise.

If all of this happens, then in the year 2000 we will be able to look to a unified nation. A nation where a Senator Bill Bradley, Jack Kemp, or, possibly, Dan Quayle could take control and lead us into the 21st century.

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