

# Letters to the editor

February 18, 1997

To the editor:

Here I am, one cheesy, unethical lunatic. Well at least that's what one Collegian reporter considers me to be. I am one of the members of the Activities Fee Allocation Committee and unethical I am not. I wonder if this collegian reporter even knows who I, or any of the other members of the committee are. The committee consisted of seven students and three faculty/staff members. I am absolutely positive that the only reason any of these people gave up their free time was to make sure they could benefit the most from your activity fee money. Wait a minute, I am a student and so are six of the other members of the committee. Yes, that means it was our money too! It's okay that you didn't realize that you're not the only one paying this fee, because we did. As a matter of fact we went to great lengths to consider the interests of the 3200 students who pay the activity fee. What about the

three staff members? Well of course they were only there to be sure their personal interests were funded. Since there were only three of them and seven students, they probably got everything they wanted, and as a matter of fact I'm almost sure they had the majority for every vote that was taken. Seriously, with those odds it is evident that the staff members also had the interest of the students in mind.

I know many of the students aren't happy about paying the fee, and we as students certainly have the right to know where the money is going. The activities fee allocation committee has taken this into consideration by giving us the opportunity to submit proposals to the committee. Maybe that reporter's time would have been more productive had she used it to fill out the activities fee suggestion flyer that was mailed to every student, instead of making judgements and accusations towards the committee. The committee has also submitted a full page advertisement to the Collegian

that should appear in the Thursday, February 20th edition. This advertisement will outline the areas that are to be funded by the activities fee, it will also contain the names of the members of the activities fee allocation committee. I and other members of the committee would be more than pleased to answer any questions you may have about the proposal.

Behrend's community is growing faster than anyone can keep up with and I'm very proud to be a part of it. I, like the rest of you don't have all the time in the world to spend on frivolous enterprises. I agreed to give up my free time to sit on the activities fee allocation committee because I felt I could help express the attitudes and opinions of the students on our campus. It disturbs me greatly that someone who has never met me and knows close to nothing about me has the audacity to judge my character. I hope that the fact I took time to express my opinion in this letter shows the students at Behrend that I am more than a cheesy lunatic.

Sincerely,  
Lara M. Herrman  
06, Biology

The above letter to the editor was inadvertently delayed for publication. The Collegian regrets any inconvenience caused by the late publication of Ms. Herrmann's letter.

As many of you may know Alpha Sigma Tau Sorority recently organized and held a Dance-A-Thon to benefit the Emmaus Soup Kitchen. The event was held in Reed Commons from 7 p.m. March 1st to 7 a.m. March 2nd. we publicized the event heavily on campus during the weeks preceding the actual event. Concern regarding our last wave of publicity is the purpose of this letter. In our effort to help this event reach a large audience we created flyers, one of which contained a graphic of an African American couple dancing. The graphic came from a computerized clip art package. We included a multi-cultural image intentionally to be as inclusive as possible and reach out to as much of the Behrend community as possible. We learned though that our choice of graphic was insensitive and we had unintentionally offended some members of the Behrend community. Our problem was that we had not really examined the graphic, we simply used it. On closer inspection, we recognized where the problems had arisen. The individuals depicted in the graphic perpetuate many of the negative stereotypes people have about African Americans. The individuals in the graphic are overweight, have exaggerated lips and are extremely dark with large eyes. We did not really look at the graphic until too late, after it had already offended.

Our intention was certainly not to offend and we would like to take this opportunity to publicly say that we are very sorry to those we offended and that we truly did not know how insensitive the graphic was. We, as a sorority, have discussed the issue and have learned a great deal about the importance of being aware and sensitive to others' perspectives and viewpoints. We heartily thank those who came forward for this opportunity, otherwise we would have unknowingly offended still more people and not learned what we have. As it happened, we were able to remove the flyers and remove the graphic from a mailing before it went out.

We are writing the letter to share what we have learned so other student organizations can avoid the problems we encountered. We must try to see things from others' perspectives if we are going to work together to make Behrend a better place. We must learn from each other.

Sincerely,

Nicole Campbell, President  
Nicole Pepicello, Dance-A-Thon  
Chairperson and  
The Sisters of the Alpha Sigma Tau  
Sorority

## BOOKS



# Priorities: Problems with housing

by John Amorose  
Collegian Staff

'Twas a couple of nights before classes in my temporary house, not a creature was stirring, not even a...Wait a second, there is a mouse! That's right, a mouse in Tiffany Hall. I know what you are all thinking, toughen up, sissy-boy. It's only a small, disgusting, disease-carrying rodent that roots through your food and personal possessions. So grow up! But a mouse is just another addition to the long list of complaints that will soon be circulating throughout Tiffany Hall, to be turned in to the housing Office at the end of this semester.

From the first day of my arrival at Behrend this semester, things have been going wrong in my room in Tiffany Hall. To start off with, the desk lamps in my room don't work very well. I depend on these lights because the ceiling lights are

placed poorly in relation to the room (back corner of the room, the farthest possible location from the two desks). But this is small potatoes compared to some of the other problems with the room, especially the insects. As we moved into early fall, our room was visited by some very special guests, a small flock of ladybugs. That's right, ladybugs! Ladybugs traveled throughout our room and covered the window screen; we were unable to open the window. When I called the Housing Office, I was given some good advice. The person on the phone, who shall remain nameless for his own protection, told me to open the screen and let the ladybugs out. He also told me not to be afraid, they wouldn't hurt me. So after fearlessly following these instructions, there weren't any more ladybugs on the screen, which was good. But the number of ladybugs in my room increased, which was not good. This mild infestation lasted for a good month or so, but they eventually left us alone, and all was well with the world.

Another major problem came with the first major rain in the fall. Flooding. This is not just a problem with my room, it's a complaint with the majority of

residents in my hallway. Water leaks along the eastern wall facing the area of construction on Almy Hall (which you'll hear about later). The area of soaked carpet extends to about two feet from the wall. Water also seeps in the hallway, which in turn comes underneath the wall and into my room. On one occasion, water leaked dangerously close to the hard-drive of my computer, which could have caused a serious problem for me. So after being told that there was nothing the University could do about these problems, I put all of my valuable electronic equipment either off of the ground or on top of garbage bags. But that's not the final round in the battle against nature. Water began to leak from the top of the window frame, splashing on the heating unit. This water could have easily shorted out the heater and caused a fire. So after plugging up the leak with a spare washcloth, I finally won the fight against the elements.

These are just the problems in one building for less than one school year. There are definitely more. Try driving through the upper parking lot a day or two after it snows (not that there's room to park anywhere else!). First there's the

obstacle course of potholes one must maneuver around to get into the actual lot. Oddly enough, these holes are found right in front of the maintenance building. Very interesting. As for the condition of the lots, the snow and ice are very poorly handled, sometimes remaining more than a week after the snow falls. This makes the drive quite hazardous.

My point here, besides venting some festering frustrations, is to talk about priorities. I realize the necessity for campus expansion; with the student population increasing annually, the need for more housing is desperate. But I believe before the University renovates buildings which are located off campus, such as the Mack house, or begins construction of the elaborate Almy Hall, maybe some area of the existing housing facilities could have been looked at in terms of repair. No, I'm not just another disgruntled non-honors student complaining about the fancy, predominately honors, Almy Hall. I just think students that are already here should receive some sort of precedence over students who have yet to grace the halls of Behrend.

# History day

By Colleen Fromknecht  
Collegian Staff

Saturday morning a group of school students are coming to Behrend for History Day. They will be here in order to participate in the History Day Competition. The students work on preparing a project which is based on a broad theme each year.

Since I am a member of Respicimus (otherwise known as the History Club) I have attended the last two year's events. What really amazes me about the event is that these high school kids really know their stuff. Each year I am amazed at the hard work and dedication of the students.

There is a lot of interesting information presented at History Day in papers, media presentations, and exhibits. These kids do a wonderful job and they are not going to get any compensation (or college credit) which I think is a shame. They are doing it because they love history. (They even love history more than the members of Respicimus!)

The event will also feature a Civil War reenactment which will give spectators a glimpse of what it was like to serve in the army. This year's group, the Weidrich I Battery is an artillery unit which is based in Waterford, Pennsylvania. Respicimus will man a table with artifacts of historical interest also.

So if you're up early on Saturday, and want to see some interesting stuff, be entertained by a Civil War group, and be impressed by a group of high school students, come over to the Reed Building and look at the projects. You are more than welcome, and maybe you'll even notice that history people are fun as well as interesting.

## Veterans Post

by Freddy Groves

I once heard a great definition of the Jewish expression "chutzpah." It's when a man kills his parents and then asks the judge for mercy on the grounds that he's an orphan.

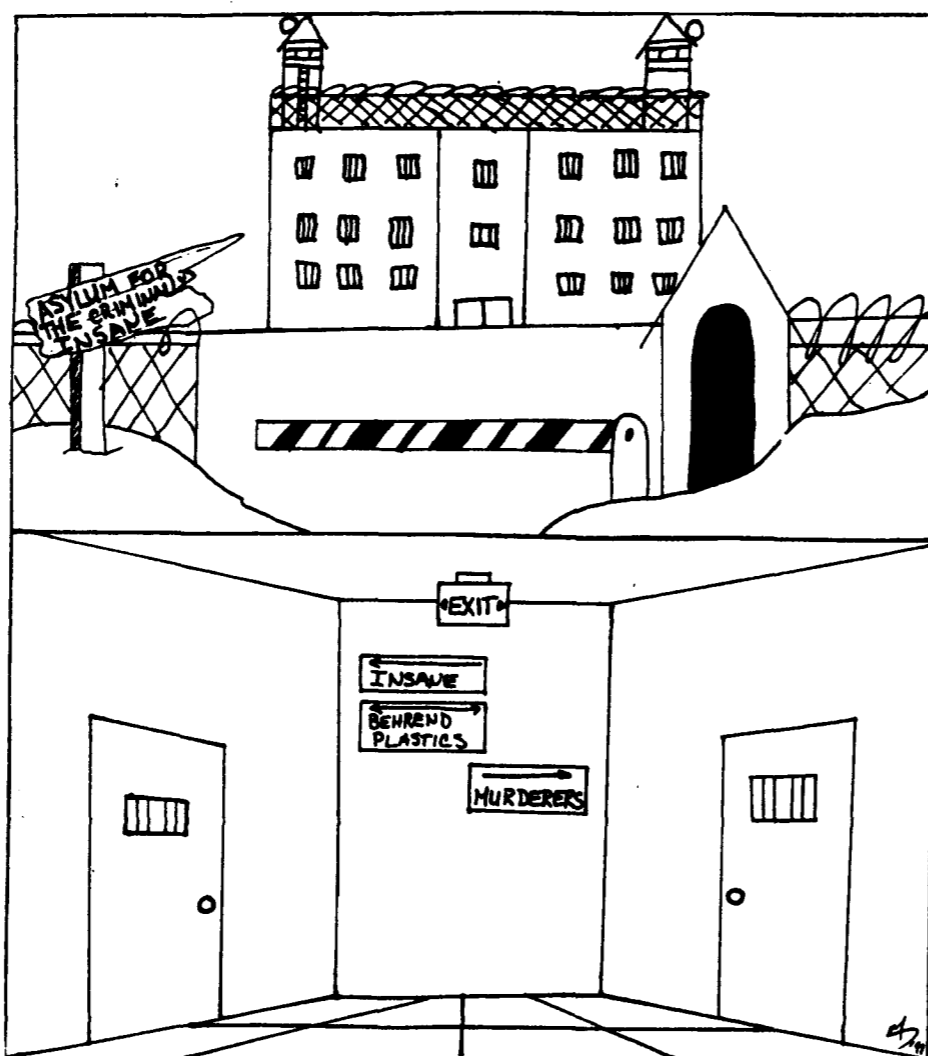
Chutzpah would seem to apply to the Pentagon these days. They're blaming a computer virus as the most possible explanation for the loss of vital data regarding chemical weapons in Iraq that put our troops at risk. The Pentagon's honchos did know about the possibility of chemical weapons at the installation later blown up by U.S. soldiers. But the information was never passed on. But the Department of Defense isn't alone in this mess-up; the CIA also had information in 1991 but said nothing until last year.

As for General Schwarzkopf, he's sticking to his story that no one complained of illness until later. The general needs a refresher course in delayed onset syndromes.

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IF YOU LISTEN, YOU CAN HEAR THE SOUND OF \$4 BILLION AT WORK MODERNIZING IRS COMPUTERS.

## Behrend Life... by Mike DeSantis



In the "Where are They Now" section of the Behrend Quarterly, the university decided to give an update on the status of some of its Plastics Program's students.



## The Behrend College Collegian

published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College

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Postal Information: The Collegian is published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College; First Floor, The J. Elmer Reed Union Building, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563. The Collegian can be reached by calling (814) 898-6488 or (814) 898-6019 (fax). ISSN 1071-8288

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