

The Behrend College Collegian

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

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

We are writing in response to the article printed in the September 18 edition of the Collegian entitled "Greek Rush Time a Hazy Situation." As presidents of our respective organizations, we find this article to be disturbing, and at the same time, a little amusing.

We find this disturbing because it portrays fraternities and sororities in a negative manner that does not reflect the way that we conduct ourselves. We are not a bunch of mafia hitmen who run around campus looking for students who left our organizations to try and rub them out, or gangs of drunk, out of control lunatics who shove live fish down our pledges' throats and force them to strip down to their birthday suits and run around the apartment quad in the middle of the night.

Believe it or not, these statements make everyone who is part of a fraternity or sorority chuckle a little, because only we know what the greek experience is really like. It has nothing to do with "hazing" students who will eventually become our brothers and sisters. What it does have to do with is the closeness of a bond that you can only understand if you are one of the ones lucky enough to become part of these organizations. We do not, however, find it amusing that someone who is not a member of a greek organization feels that they can judge us in such a way as to try and demean who we are and what we stand for.

What we stand for is, again, not an issue of hazing, but rather one of developing strong ties with each other, and through this achieving an atmosphere that promotes friendship, leadership, and scholarship. Maybe if you take time to ponder this last statement you may want to consider writing an article on the things that we really do for this campus and the community surrounding us.

For example, Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity and Theta Phi Alpha sorority do an annual blood drive, Zeta Beta Tau has a walk to Pittsburgh to benefit charity, and the Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority helped out with the Special Olympics. We also sponsor events that have become annual favorites: among the student body here on campus such as Greek Week, Battle of the Bands, and a fall concert with popular bands like Brownie Mary and Jake's Blues.

We can only hope that those who read the article will not be influenced by the obvious one-sidedness of the piece, but rather consider some of the things that were said in this letter before forming an opinion about the members of greek organizations and of the greek system as a whole.

Sincerely,

Matt Boarts,
Interfraternity Council President
Dawn Holzer,
Panhellenic Council President

Eye on Erie

Last independently owned television station in Erie sold

by Andrea Zaffino
Editor-in-Chief

This week it was announced that the Erie television station, WJET, is being sold. The station which has been under local control since it was established about 30 years ago, is the last in Erie to be purchased by a commercialized broadcasting company.

Myron Jones and John Kanzius decided to sell because of a monetary problem concerning a new federal government mandate from Congress. The mandate states that by 2006 all television stations throughout the United States must broadcast on High Definition television (HDTV). Any station that does not comply will have its license pulled. HDTV is a digital signal that will eventually replace the current analog signal. This new digital signal will include a sharper more clear picture, and more important to the Federal government, will have all channels operating between 2-50 instead of what is now spread out on a span of channels 2-83. This condensing of the channels will shrink the spectrum of signals and save money in the future because the frequencies left over from 51-83 could be used for other things like 2-way radios.

The downside to this for local owners of television stations is that the costs of switching to HDTV reach to anywhere between \$6-10 million, a cost the people at Jet can not possibly afford. HDTV also requires a new kind of digital

television set which will be available for purchase and will cost somewhere between \$8,000-\$10,000 per set at first. Next year the digital set begins mass production and will then cost \$2,000-\$3,000 which is still significantly more than the traditional set. These costs will be borne by consumers. Less expensive converter boxes will be available for owners of traditional analog signal televisions.

John Kanzius, current co-owner of WJET, is for the most part saddened by the whole situation. He said, "It's been like an emotional rollercoaster for me...like watching a child grow and nurturing it...and to let it go is very hard."

This shift in ownership should not however affect current management at WJET-TV. Kanzius and Jones researched both Nextstar and the company's CEO, Perry Sook. They found that in the past, Sook has handled station purchases very well in regard to personnel.

The purchase is pending approval of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). But if all goes according to plan, closing of the sale should occur anytime between January and August 1998. After the deal has been finalized, Jones and Kanzius will still own the radio station WJET-FM 102 and are leasing Froggy 94 FM, the oldies station. They will most likely buy Froggy and perhaps purchase other radio stations.

EDITORIAL

The Student Government Association's unanimous vote to call on the administration to take action on the PNC bank fees being charged to students on the only ATM machine on campus was the right decision to make.

The monopoly of the PNC teller machine poses an unfair dilemma for all students not in the PNC system. The campus offers no other choice for these students but to make withdrawals from an outlet that bleeds \$1.00 for each transaction from their account. This fee drains the pockets of already financially struggling students, and with the

isolation of the Behrend campus, it is either inconvenient or impossible to use an alternative ATM. If another bank machine with no service charge is brought to campus, it may pressure PNC to rethink their service charge.

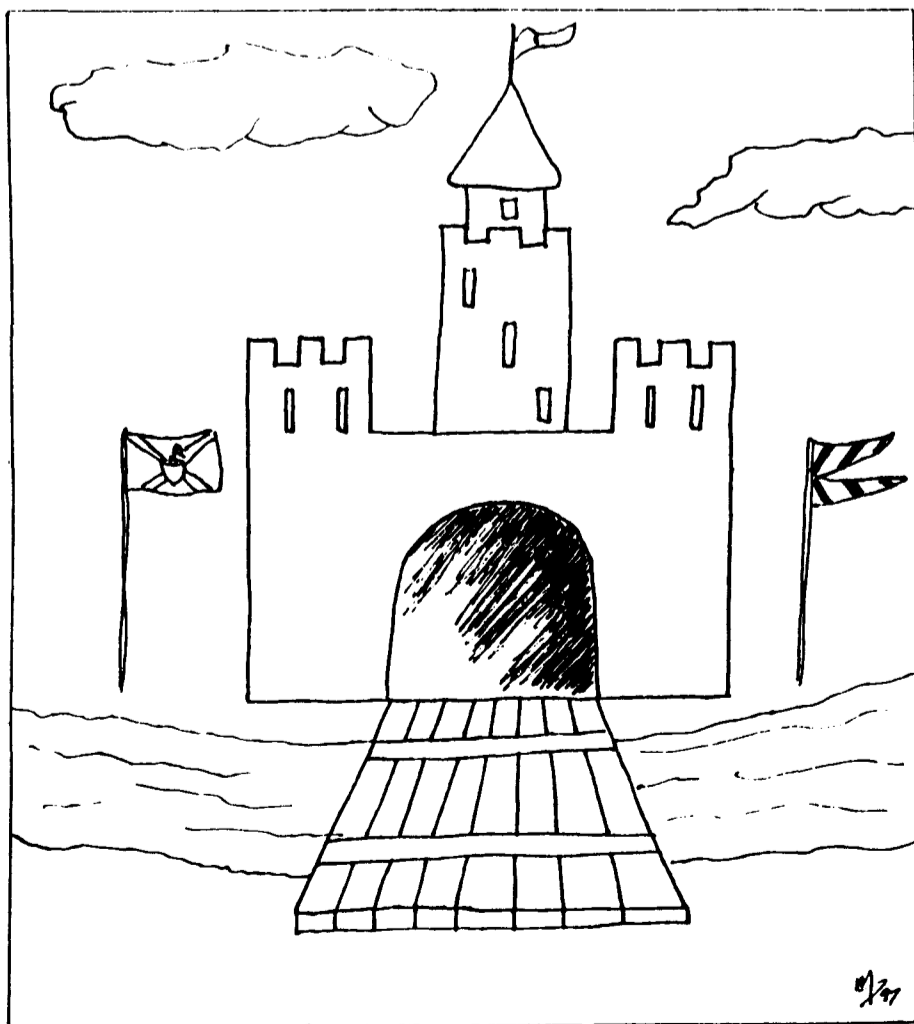
The other SGA proposal to ban or severely restrict smoking on campus did not in fact pass - we agree with the SGA vote. Even from a non-smoker's viewpoint, it is difficult to justify taking these privileges from those students who do smoke.



Sex-segregated education a step backward

Behrend Life

by Mike DeSantis



Tiffany Hall transforms when it rains.

Perhaps, because I grew up in the South, I get nervous when people extol the virtues of segregation. When I hear about schools "designed for girls" and programs that segregate girls and boys for math and science, it's unsettling. The promotion of such policies, coupled with my recent return from Doha, Qatar, where women are not allowed to be in the company of men unless they are covered from head to toe in black, make me want to ask the question: Where are we going with these recent "advances?"

In the Harlem Girls' Leadership School in New York City, the environment is one of small classrooms with Oriental rugs, rocking chairs, tea, croissants and photos of every girl in the school lining the walls. We are told that girls learn better in this positive environment, free from the outbursts of confident and aggressive young men.

Despite contradictory research, we hear repeatedly that girls have lower math aptitudes and that boys dominate the classroom. A recent article about Miss Porter's School stated that when boys and girls come together, "life tends to be on boys' terms... girls are socialized to be accommodating and in a coed setting, girls tend to defer to their boys rather than focusing on their own development." What is wrong with this mind-set?

One thing that's wrong is the notion that boys are bad and girls are weak. Why not teach better manners to the boys who are exhibiting rude behavior? And why not teach the girls who feel silenced by all the big noise to speak up?

The women of Doha told me that the cover they wear is for their protection from the uncontrollable

lust of men. In Doha, there are no coed schools; the university has a Berlin-like wall to keep the sexes separate. Even the grocery stores are segregated; women are not allowed to drive. The Doha women are trying to break out of this "protection" by acquiring unprecedented levels of education and entering the labor market. They're fighting for integration.

In their recent book, "The Futures of Women," Pamela McCorduck and Nancy Ramsey present four scenarios about the possibilities for our collective future. One - "Separate and Doing Just Fine, Thanks!" - represents the Zeitgeist of the moment. Women's "frustration and impatience with intractable bias pushes many of them into de facto separatism." In so doing, women psychologically check out of the economy, out of the day-to-day political debates, even out of traditional worship and the arts, while devoting their energies to women's versions of these enterprises.

Separatism takes us backward, toward a way of life that the Qatari women have been trying to break out of for more than 100 years. Perhaps, as McCorduck and Ramsey note, we've become fatigued and are retreating to separate camps.

But, do we really want to live in a segregated world? Shouldn't we be using our educational process to learn better ways of working together? We need to do more to foster integration, to work on inclusion and to discuss difficulties; we need to raise our expectations. No one ever said that social change is easy. Why can't discrimination be remedied in a mixed-sex setting? "Separate and doing fine" provides justification for separate

spheres - women in the private sphere and men in the public. It denies women access to some of the well-worn paths to prestigious and remunerative positions. It perpetuates stereotypes, obstructs interaction and prevents boys and girls, men and women, from becoming comfortable and confident with each other. And as we learned in the South, separate is never equal.

Sure, sometimes we need to retreat to an enclave of like-minded women in the same way that ethnic groups sometimes withdraw to their communities to think together, to refuel and to create strategies for social change. And yes, of course, there is a place for single-sex institutions for those who prefer them. At least for now, the courts have ruled that single-sex institutions designed to compensate for past discrimination are legal. But let's be careful that single-sex schools are not the only choice or promoted as the best choice for all girls.

In a recent issue of the Duke Law Review, Cynthia Fuchs Epstein put it succinctly: "The few advantages women receive from the social assignments that confine, isolate and shelter them are no consolation for the overwhelming disadvantages they suffer from being designated second-class citizens."

James is the assistant director of Radcliffe College's Murray Research Center, which studies issues affecting women.