

Editorials

The Behrend College Collegian

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

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Letter Policy: The Collegian encourages letters to the editor on news coverage, editorial content and University affairs. Letters should be no longer than 400 words. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer.

Marijuana is a hard drug

By Joseph A. Califano (c) 1997, The Washington Post

This fall citizens of some states will consider proposals to make marijuana available for a variety of ailments. Before following the Pied Pipers of medical marijuana, voters should take into account recent research that reveals some sharp edges of smoking pot that undermine its popular status as a "soft" drug and underscore the need for a major biomedical research program.

This year the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA) for the first time established the statistical relationship between use of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana - in and of themselves - and use of harder drugs such as cocaine, heroin and acid. (Virtually all teens who smoke marijuana also smoke nicotine cigarettes and drink alcohol.)

Examining data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 1995 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 11,000 ninth-through 12th-graders, CASA isolated teen use of these gateway drugs from other problem behaviors, such as fighting, drunk driving, truancy, promiscuous sexual activity, carrying a weapon and attempting suicide. The correlations are compelling:

Among teens who report no other problem behaviors, those who drank and smoked cigarettes at least once in the past month are 30 times likelier to smoke marijuana than those who didn't.

Among teens with no other problem behaviors, those who used cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana at least once in the past month are almost 17 times likelier to use another drug like cocaine, heroin or acid.

Though only statistical, those relationships are powerful. For perspective, remember that in 1964 the first Surgeon General's Report on smoking and health found a nine to 10 times greater risk of lung cancer among smokers, and the early results of the Framingham heart study found that individuals with high cholesterol were two to four times likelier to suffer heart disease. Most who smoke marijuana do not move on to other drugs, just as most who smoke cigarettes do not get lung cancer; but both kinds of smokers enormously increase their risks.

And those risks rise with teen use: The earlier and more often an individual uses marijuana, the likelier that individual is to use cocaine.

Recent biomedical research suggests the reasons why. Studies in Italy reveal that marijuana affects levels of dopamine (the substance that gives pleasure) in the brain in a manner similar to heroin. Gaetana DiChiara, who led this work at the University of Cagliari, indicates that marijuana may prime the brain to seek substances such as heroin and cocaine that act in a similar way. Studies in the United States have found that nicotine and cocaine also affect dopamine levels.

While psychological dependence on marijuana has been widely recognized, the drug's potential for physical addiction is only recently becoming clear. A team at Scripps Research Institute in California and Complutense University in Madrid found that rats subjected to immediate cannabis withdrawal exhibited changes in behavior similar to those seen after withdrawal of cocaine, alcohol and opiates. Science magazine called this "the first neurological basis for a marijuana withdrawal syndrome, and one with a strong emotional component that is shared by other drugs." Dr. Alan Leshner, the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, estimates that more than 100,000 individuals are in treatment because of marijuana use. Most are believed to be teen-agers.

The statistical link between smoking pot and using heroin, cocaine and acid, the indications that marijuana acts on dopamine levels in the brain in a manner similar to harder drugs and nicotine, and mounting evidence of marijuana's addictive power present a convincing case for a billion-dollar-a-year investment to move biomedical research on substance abuse and

addiction into the big leagues at the National Institutes of Health, along with heart disease, cancer and AIDS. Such an investment is essential for more effective prevention and treatment and greater understanding of the risks and benefits of any medical potential marijuana might have.

The writer is president of the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. He was secretary of Health, Education and Welfare from 1977 to 1979.

Eye on Erie

by Andrea Zaffino
Editor in Chief

The Erie Mill gave notification to forty-two employees Tuesday that as of December 1st they will no longer have jobs with the company.

The mill, which is traditionally referred to as Hammermill Paper Company, was established by Moritz Behrend and his sons Ernst and Otto Behrend, the family for whom Penn State Erie campus is named. Ernst, especially, was well-known throughout the Erie community for his progressive views of the workplace. Thanks to Ernst and his brother Otto, Hammermill was one of the first companies in the United States to offer paid vacations and medical benefits to its employees.

Even during the Depression, the Behrends tried to keep as many people employed as possible. Employees for whom there was no work at Hammermill, Ernst Behrend would employ as landscapers on the Behrend estate, which is now the Penn State Erie campus.

The employees of the mill today do not enjoy the same job security. The layoffs announced Tuesday were the result of a decision to shut down the mill's number one paper machine - ahead of schedule - because of the lack of demand for fine grade paper.

Three of the mill's six machines are scheduled to cease production. The number one and number seven machines are now set to shut down on October 27th 1997. The third shut down has yet to be scheduled, but will definitely occur by the end of 1998. Management claims the third shut down will not result in further layoffs.

These shutdowns are part of an overall restructuring of the company. Hammermill has added two other former independent paper printers, Beckett and Strathmore.

The three companies now all work as divisions of the International Paper Company (IP). The three are known collectively as the Erie Mill which fits into the fine grade paper division of IP's printing paper sector.

Anne Miller, spokesperson for the Erie Mill, said of the recent changes, "There is a lot of work to be done. However the Erie Mill can have a very bright future and is considered the cornerstone of the International Paper Company's fine paper division."

Yet even with visions of a promising future, after a layoff like yesterday's, morale tends to break down, and workers become anxious, as they look for reassurances that no more layoffs will follow. To help with this uneasiness, both the managers of fine papers and mill management will meet with employees this Thursday and Friday, in order to discuss future operations, and job security.

For those who have been laid off, the Erie mill has offered a three year time frame for recall rights. As a result, if the Erie Mill does any hiring within the next three years, first priority will be given to those affected by Tuesday's layoffs.

The Behrend family affiliation with the paper mill shows a certain irony to the mill's struggle to restructure when compared with the recent expansions and future plans for improvement of the Penn State Erie campus.

Both the campus and the mill are a part of the Erie community thanks to the Behrend family. There is certainly no complaint concerning the improvements of the campus. However at the same time the recent setbacks of the mill, which started off as a symbol of security and beneficial employment to the Erie community, lends a sad note to the Behrend family's contributions.

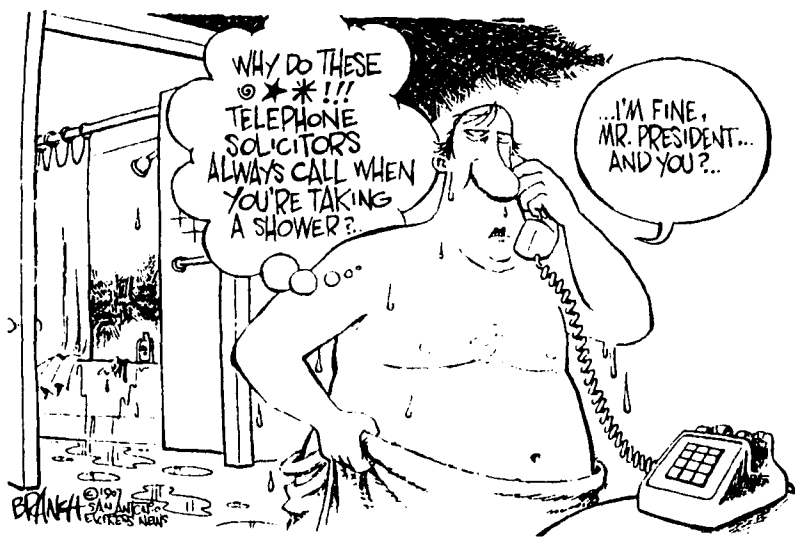
Editorial

The Penn State Behrend Speaker Series is off to a great start. Tuesday night's speech by George Stephanopoulos, Politics: The Art of the Impossible, is an excellent example of how beneficial the program is, not only to students, but to the entire Erie community. The Reed Commons was filled with intrigued students, professors and the general public interested in what George Stephanopoulos had to say about working with the Clinton administration.

There were however, a couple of problems with the organization of the presentation. The foliage which was apparently meant to add to the decor and to camouflage the audio equipment ended up being a distraction to the audience and surely to the speaker.

Another thing that could have been handled more effectively was the audience participation portion of the speech. It could have been reiterated after the speech and possibly on the radio broadcast, that those who have questions of the speaker must address the speaker. However, under the circumstances, Stephanopoulos was very accommodating to those too shy to come forward.

Overall this was a delightful occasion which can be credited not only to Mr. Stephanopoulos but to the Offices of Student Activities and Student Affairs. The fact that the Behrend Speaker Series is free and open to the public gives the students of Behrend and the Erie community a chance to see and hear prominent figures in our society and get a more personal look at today's issues.



Behrend Life...

by Mike DeSantis



Little does everyone know, Police and Safety actually did find a bomb last Monday...they just didn't know it.

Politics never looked so good

by Anne Rajotte
Managing Editor
by Andrea Zaffino
Editor in Chief

For two political science majors, the chance to meet George Stephanopoulos was a great experience and unforgettable opportunity. We were lucky enough to be invited to the dinner in the Logan House before the speech. At two huge tables, students sat with administrators and Behrend contributors, anxious about talking to the honorable guest.

Mr. Stephanopoulos, who was suffering from a cold, was unable to eat due to his sickness and the fact that he is nervous about public speaking. However, we saw this as a little impolite considering that the dinner was in his honor. Despite being catered by Housing and Food service, the same people who serve us each night at Dobbins, the food was fairly good and even creative. The salad even had pistachios in it.

Although his stunning appearance was apparent, his intelligence and ease of conversation merely added to his charisma. We were very interested in his liberal views and traditional Democratic outlook. After days of thinking of things to say to him, we pretty much clammed up when the conversation turned to us. We did, however, establish ourselves as self proclaimed Hooters and devolution experts.

Though we were too nervous to get in our questions about Whitewater, James Carville and future plans of the Democratic party, we felt that we had the chance to learn a lot more than we would have merely listening to a speech. At dinner we both felt like we were in a class that we hadn't prepared for. Any knowledge we believed we had about politics completely disappeared when he would his turn his knowing eyes upon us.

Though the serious side of Stephanopoulos' visit was intriguing, his smashing good looks were like the cherry on top of the political sundae. After the speech, when it was time for pictures and handshakes, our giggly junior high personas emerged. To our delight he stood in the middle of us, because as he put it, "It's more fun for me this way."

On Tuesday night it seemed that we became unofficial members of a George Stephanopoulos fan club. His incredible knowledge of politics combined with his boyish good looks led to a night that was pleasing to the ears and easy on the eyes.