

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 1071-9288

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.

Eye on Erie

profile...

by Ina Ashton
News Editor

Returning from the former Soviet Republic nations of Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan, Judge Stephanie Domitrovich joins the Behrend faculty as lecturer of Business Administration 243. Judge Domitrovich is a faculty member of The National Judicial College and recently participated in a program for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). She was able to visit

Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan, along with other U.S. judges in order to educate the judges of Kazakhstan and Kyrgystan in developing their judicial systems.

Judge Domitrovich is currently the Administrative Judge of Family/Orphan's Court Division here in Erie County where she has served in this capacity since April 1996. Prior to this, Her Honor served as the Criminal Court Judge and Family Court Judge.

In a recent interview Judge Domitrovich attributed her interest

in the law to "influences of positive role models who encouraged my interest in the law by providing reading lists which included biographies of lawyers."

Judge Domitrovich also said that although she identified more with female role models, she "was helped by teachers especially, and of both genders." While she experienced sexism on her way up to the bench, "with hard work and diligence, those barriers or difficulties became platforms for achievements instead of obstacles." Attitude, Domitrovich believes, is a very effective resource. The "no stopping her" attribute is one of which she is proud.

Judge Domitrovich noted that typical cases involving women in her courtroom were those of domestic violence and that there is certainly a "cycle of violence from the abused to the abuser." Also, when alcohol and drugs are involved, the difficulties escalate.

"The most difficult cases are not homicide ones but custody cases involving charting out children's

futures," she adds.

On the controversial issue of sexual harassment in the workplace Judge Domitrovich says, "we cannot deny that those issues exist and that those aggrieved must follow the process at work to bring attention to the difficulties in order to prevent reoccurrence."

Domitrovich believes that people are pleasantly surprised when they are assigned a female judge. "Gender of the court is an asset and makes a difference in their perception of the court."

The judge is very excited to be back at Behrend this fall. She said, "teaching encourages me to continue to research areas that I could not see in court perhaps because of the nature of the cases assigned. Teaching provides variety and diversity in my life."

Judge Domitrovich is not only a judge and teacher. She also holds positions as wife and mother. Her success with managing all of these is due to her organization and time management. "Recognizing family needs first is vital to my ability to do all of the rest."

Editorial

Behrend: Penn State's northwest bloc

While socialism is dying in the rest of the world, it seems to be alive and well at Behrend in the form of zoning regulations and Housing and Food Services.

Turning onto Station Road for the first time may be a dismal experience for a prospective student. How are they to know that they are merely a mile away from a major state university? One would expect that the street would be lined with many establishments catering to students' needs.

Alas, the closest convenience store is more than a mile away. Many students take this long walk down a dangerous road because they simply have no other choice.

Most colleges are surrounded by businesses seeing the great opportunities that come with a population of college students with money to spend. Because of zoning regulations and the Housing and Food monopoly on campus, businesses have not been able to take advantage of this.

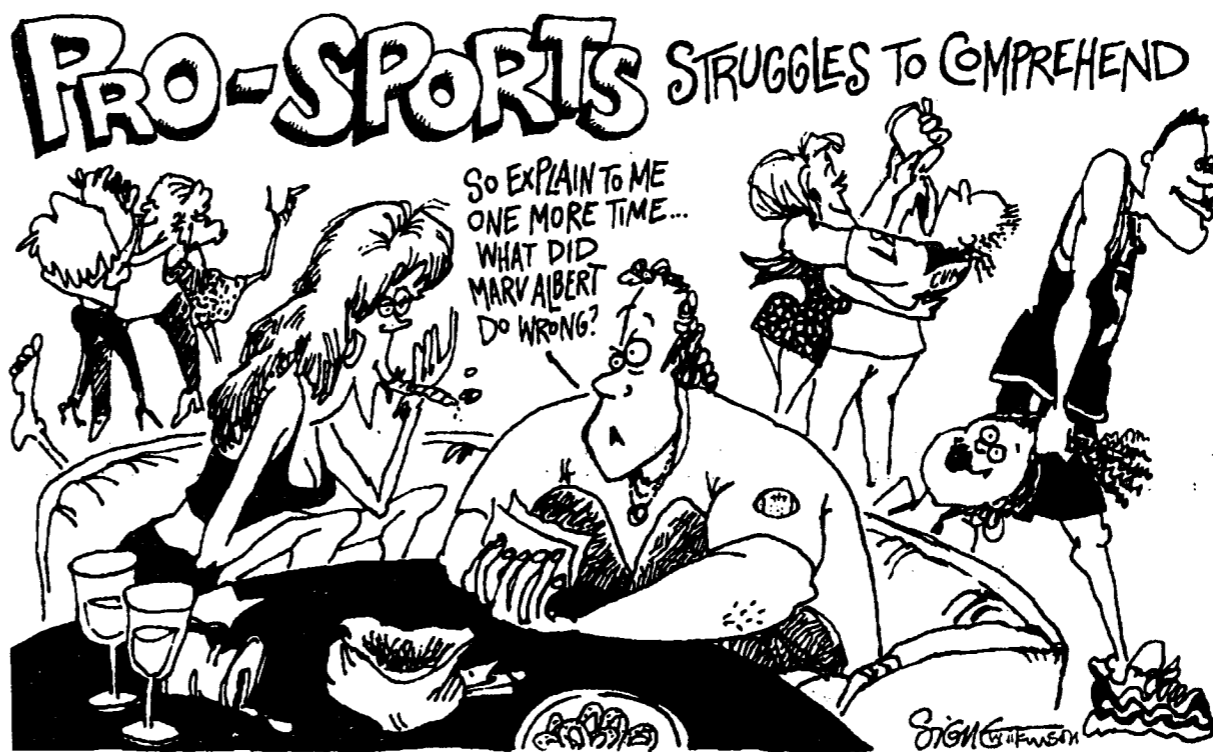
The lack of businesses contributes to the claim by many students that there is a lack of social opportunities on campus.

For a student who isn't lucky enough to own a car, being virtually trapped on campus is a force in the inevitable decision between transferring to University Park or staying at Behrend to finish their degree.

Having restaurants and convenience stores near campus would pressure the food services on campus to reevaluate their prices and food variety in order to compete. It is not fair to students to give them only one food option, especially when that option has no incentive to improve.

Stores close to campus would also do their part to alleviate the major parking and traffic problems. If there were no need to drive off campus for food and other necessities, many students would rethink the decision to pay over one hundred dollars to park.

There is nothing wrong with introducing competition to Housing and Food services at Behrend. The de facto socialism at this campus is a major downfall to student life and student recruitment.



Reform needed to rein in funding of campaigns

By Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford

When we ran against each other in 1976, the modern campaign-finance system was in its infancy; it was the first presidential election governed by strict limits and public financing. Looking back, it is easy to recognize why the reforms of the 1970s were so essential. Today it is disheartening to witness changes that have distorted those reforms and shaken Americans' faith in their democracy.

We have watched as elections have grown more controversial, more expensive, riddled with soft money and less understandable to the average voter. We have watched as participation in presidential elections has declined - plummeting during the last election to the lowest levels since 1924.

Less than half of the voting-age population cast their ballots for president in 1996, and while there are many factors that might contribute to this disturbing figure, we believe that a lack of public trust in government and in our system of democratic elections is a major part of the problem.

When people feel disenfranchised from their political system, they stop participating in it. And when that happens, democracy suffers.

We have both worked in our public lives toward the goal of exporting our democratic system to other nations. Our model (or "the U.S. model") must be fundamentally reformed in terms of campaign financing to warrant the faith of other countries.

We can both personally attest that there is no greater honor than to serve your country. Yet the honor of public service is being tarnished by a system of campaign

funding that has made many Americans lose faith in the concept of public service as a virtue. That service is diminished when elected officials are forced to spend so much time raising money instead of focusing on the many important issues they were elected to address.

We firmly believe that now is the time to restore Americans' faith in their democracy, their government and their democratically elected institutions. Meaningful, bipartisan campaign-finance reform is needed to rein in a system that is out of control.

As a minimal first step, Congress and the president should approve legislation that bans soft money, enhances enforcement of existing campaign-finance laws and creates a more-accountable disclosure system that informs rather than obfuscates. These are the areas identified by former Vice President Walter Mondale and former Sen. Nancy Kassebaum Baker in their effort to promote reform. It is particularly important to seize this opportunity for reform now so it can improve the next presidential election.

In order to accomplish this goal, both parties must lay down their partisanship and rise to meet this challenge together.

Leaders of both parties have demonstrated their ability to work together on critical and contentious issues to do what is right for the country. This is another such issue where cooperation is the only road to results. It is impossible to expect one side to disarm unilaterally in this massive arms race for funds. Rather, both sides must agree that bilateral limits are

the only rational course of action to preserve the moral integrity of our electoral system.

One item that we should all agree on is a ban of so-called "soft money" for national parties and their campaign committees. Soft money was initially intended exclusively for "party building" activities but has metamorphosed into a huge supplemental source of cash for campaigns and candidates. It is one of the most corrupting influences in modern elections because there is no limit on the size of donations - thus giving disproportionate influence to those with the deepest pockets.

According to the Federal Elections Commission, both parties raised a record-breaking \$262 million in soft money during the 1996 elections. Recent news reports showed that figure will be shattered again in 2000 if current fund-raising rates continue.

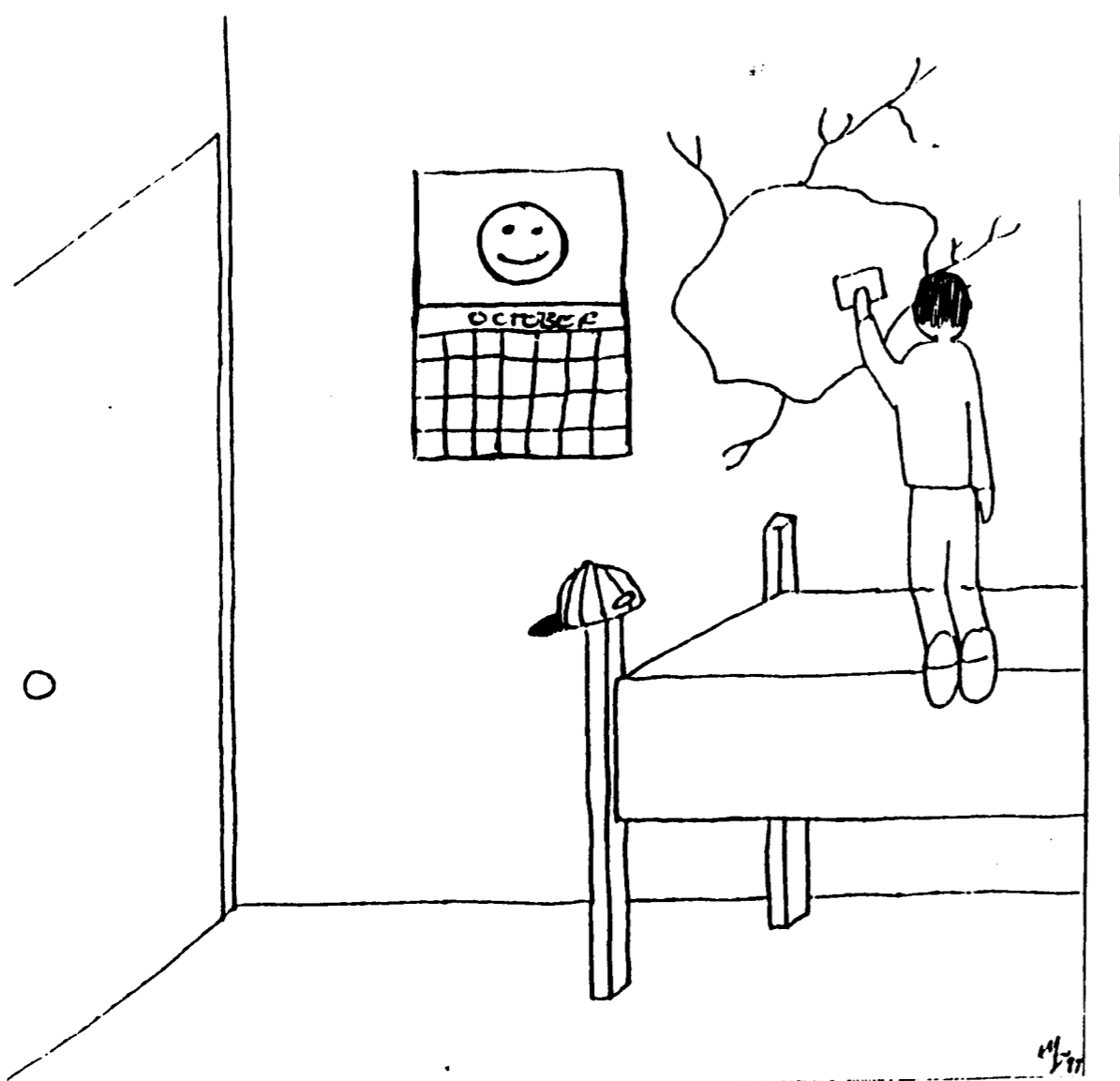
These figures make it absolutely clear what is at stake. If Congress does not act now to stem this massive flow of soft money, Americans' cynicism and mistrust of government will only increase. And that step is only the beginning of needed fundamental reform.

We must demonstrate that a government of the people, by the people and for the people is not a thing of the past. We must redouble our efforts to assure voters that public policy is determined by the checks on their ballots rather than the checks from powerful interests.

Jimmy Carter was president from 1977 to 1981. Gerald Ford was president from 1974 to 1977.

Behrend Life...

by Mike DeSantis



Bob, the engineer that he was, knew exactly what to do with the cafeteria's supposed "mashed potatoes."