

The "Godfather": Lee Gutkind

by Ina Ashton
News Editor

"The Godfather," as Vanity Fair chooses to describe Lee Gutkind, spoke in Reed Lecture Hall Wednesday night as part of the Smith Creative Writing Speaker Series. Gutkind, a native of Pittsburgh, is an immersion journalist. He has performed as a clown with Ringling Brothers, traveled with major league umpires, scrubbed with heart surgeons and toured the country on motorcycle. He believes that these life experiences are necessary for the writing of his eight books, essays and films.

In one of his newest releases, "An Unspoken Art," Gutkind writes about veterinarians and their patients. Gutkind is also the editor of creative nonfiction. In yet another new publication, "Surviving Crisis," Gutkind offers essays of other writers and more personal experience to his readers.

Surviving a recent divorce, Gutkind seems to be doing some healing of his own through his creative writing style. Gutkind shared two essays on Wednesday night, "The Low Clearance" was about his son Sam's infatuation with road signs but more importantly it is about the closeness they share. "Greenhorns" is a story about a family trip to New Jersey. The trip, despite many trials and tribulations brought the family closer together. It is evident in these writings that Gutkind is still learning about himself and his family. Gutkind stated, "writers

find their way into a subject but I'm still trying to find my way."

As a professor at University of Pittsburgh, Lee Gutkind suggests to students interested in writing to always carry a journal. He keeps his with him at all times, "coffeehouses, bookstores, everywhere." Gutkind also suggests taking part-time writing courses if not involved in an MFA program already and if dedicated enough, thinks you can possibly publish a book before others are even done with their MFA.

One of the most touching accomplishments of Gutkind's life is the adoption of his six year old son, Sam, who is mentioned as often as possible in his essays. Gutkind said of traveling to Erie, "I felt anxious, couldn't find I-79 and kept making wrong turns. What was keeping me away?" He realized the answer was that the last time he was in town was for Sam's custody hearing. All of his trembling and worrying would pay off.; Gutkind became a father.

by Tammy Freeman
staff writer

"The pathetic, lack of caring attitude of students, faculty and staff at Behrend." This is how one student explained the low turnout at the performance Monday night by Alma, a Latin American musical group. Only about thirty people showed up, two of which were staff members. By the final part of the performance only half of that total remained.

Chicano: 500 Years of Struggle, traced Latino roots back to the Indian civilizations. Through

songs, stories and poetry Chicano told the story of an oppressed and exploited people.

The performers, Ravi Kynpstra, Agustin Lira and Patricia Wells Solarzana, opened their performance with the lyrics, "I still remember what it is like to be free," as they sang a song of a people who were her hundreds of years before Columbus. This song was entitled "I Have Been Here Forever."

As the performance progressed, the audience was immersed in a sea of historical recollection, and some felt as if they were there even though some of were not

born at the time of these events. The songs and stories sung in Spanish and English ranged from tales of love and pain, joy and happiness, poverty and wealth.

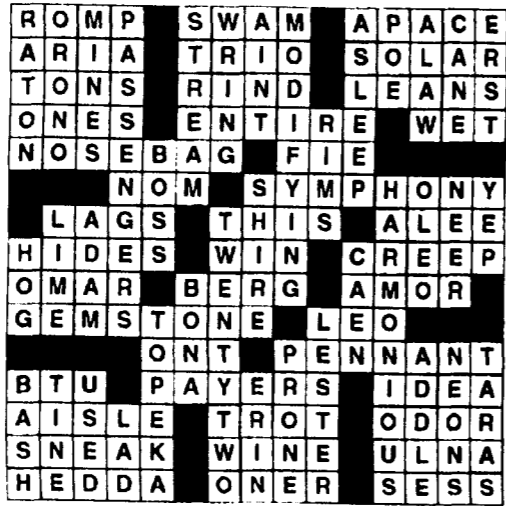
Both beautiful and touching, Chicano presented a variety of topics which reflected how Mexicans were and still are treated in America. Chicano told of how Americans took their land deceived and abused them. Throughout this, Chicanos were able to preserve their heritage and culture.

The intent of this program was to provide entertainment as well as help students faculty and staff

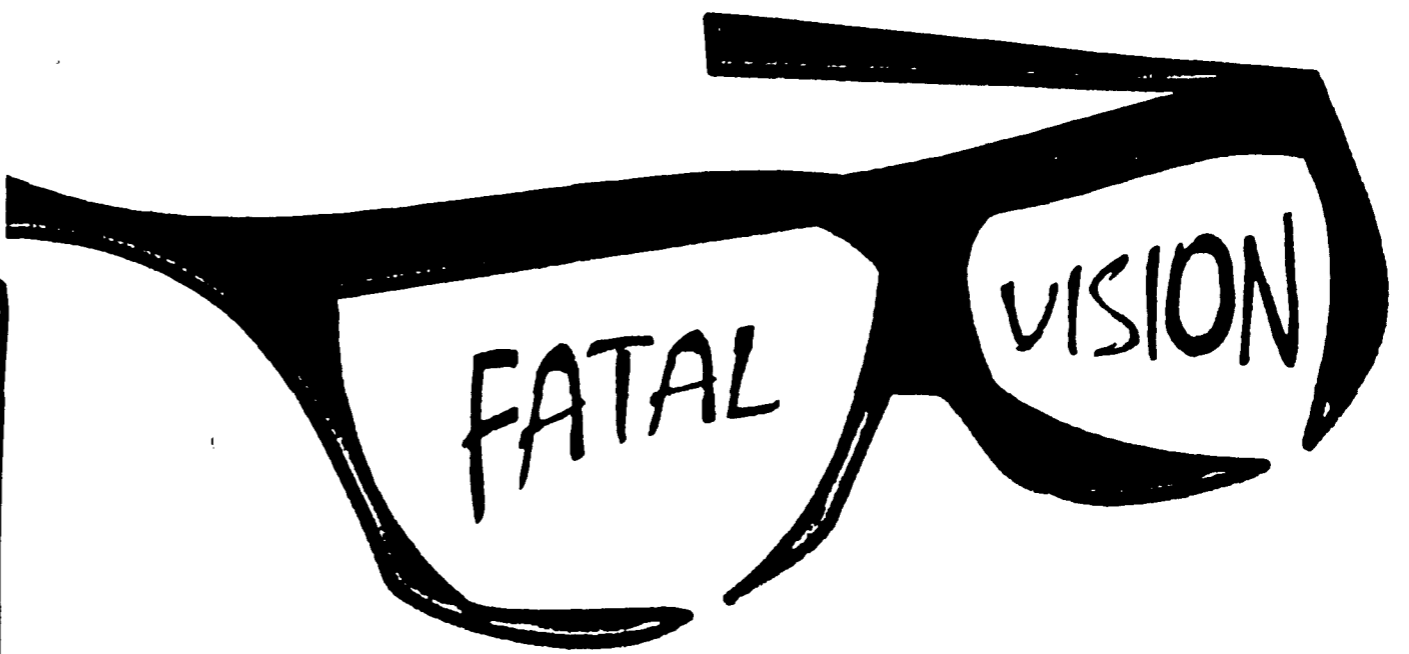
learn about other cultures.

Shana Johnson vice president of MCC stated that, because of the turnout, she was "very disappointed in faculty staff and

students as a whole." she continued to say that "It is a shame that more students did not take the opportunity to benefit and learn." One of the performers commented that out of all the colleges that he had toured that Behrend had the "lowest turnout." He further questioned: is this an indication that there is "something wrong with America?"



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