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INSIDE...

News

Mari Trenkle Lounge dedicated
...page 2

Question of the Week

Is Chief Wahoo racist?
...page 2

Editorial

Zoning on Station Road
...page 4

Campus news

Dartmouth celebrates 25 years
as coed
...page 7

World & Nation

Immigration rules change
...page 8

Features

Tinseltown comes to Erie
...page 9

Sports

Women's soccer wins AMCC
...page 11

Computer center calls Macs "waste of space"

by Anne Rajotte
managing editor

The computer labs have been simplified this year. All computers there have been or will be shortly switched to the Windows NT operating system. As result all Macintoshes and Macintosh support have been eliminated.

The decision to drop all Mac support was made by an academic computer committee of faculty members. They cited the extremely low usage of the Macs and the fact that it wasn't cost effective to maintain them. According to Ron Hoffman, Manager of network and information systems at the computer lab, 15-20% of the staff's time was being used to maintain the twelve Macs in the lab. Hoffman also stated that although the Macs were maintained and upgraded almost as often as IBM-compatible machines (PC's), the Macs were approximately one generation behind the PC's.

Hoffman states that the Macs in the dorms are being supported, "as best as we can." The only means of student support at this point is Roie Gat, a student consultant at the computer lab. He disagrees that the Macs were maintained and upgraded as readily as the PC's. He states that problems weren't handled quickly which accounts

for the machines' low usage. The times when the computers weren't being used because they weren't working translated into low usage.

Another possible reason for low usage could have been lack of knowledge about Macintoshes by the consultants in the lab. Chris Maguire, 03 Accounting, has a Macintosh in his dorm room on campus. He is frustrated with the lack of assistance regarding his Macintosh. He states that even last year before the Mac support was dropped, he ran into difficulties.

According to Maguire, when he was trying to access his email account for the first time last year, he decided to use one of the lab Macintoshes because he wasn't familiar with PC's. He states that none of the consultants in the lab knew how to access email on the Macintoshes. Maguire adds, "It's very frustrating sometimes when I have a problem with my computer and I don't receive help because of the kind of computer I have."

Maguire is transferring to University Park next semester and asserts, "One of the good things about going to UP is that if I have a problem with my Mac, it will be easier to solve."

There are an estimated five to ten student Macs at Behrend and about a dozen faculty Macs plus Macs that students organizations may use. Despite the low usage at

Behrend, there is a much greater proportion, fifty percent or more, of Macs at University Park. Penn State sells Macintoshes and University Park has an extensive support system for them. There is no such support at Behrend.

According to Hoffman, the advantage of having an all PC lab is that it is easier to support the computers when they are all operating on one system. As for the Mac operating system, "Generally, from what I've seen, Macs are being used less and less." Despite this, Macs are still used in the workforce. Desktop publishing and graphic arts rely heavily on Macintoshes. Gat states that without any Macs in the labs, and no opportunity to become familiar with the Mac operating system, students will be at a great disadvantage when competing for jobs.

The major areas of study at this college are science and engineering, and these majors rely on computers with Intel processors, states Hoffman. He adds that Windows NT will be the predominant configuration in the coming years.

Hoffman asserts that the "driving force as to what computers we have on campus is faculty." He goes on to say that universities all over the country are facing the same dilemma that Behrend has.



photo by Jessica Trzeciakowski

NO MACS ALLOWED: The all PC Hammermill lab makes no provisions for Mac users

Gat believes that Hoffman doesn't like Macintoshes and used the low usage due to poor maintenance as a technicality to eliminate them. Hoffman said that he feels that Macs used to be ahead of their time in terms of the graphic interface system; then Microsoft came out with Windows 3.0 to compete. He also thinks that they are difficult to maintain in a public lab, and are mostly, "a waste of space."

Reception to the changes in the computer lab as far as the PC's are

concerned has been good. Hoffman said that he "has seen more and more students using our labs... the major challenge has been having enough computers."

Despite the positive reaction to the new PC's, Mac users will soon be without a single means of support on this campus. When Gat graduates this spring, so does the last source of student Mac support. Hoffman states that there is no plan to hire another Mac consultant.

Behrend provides education for all ages



photo by Jessica Trzeciakowski

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION BUILDING: Located on Jordan road, where returning students begin their new academic career.

by Amy Seley
staff writer

College usually brings to mind images of students who have just left the halls of high school behind and are pursuing a degree before they hit the work force. However, there are an increasing number of adults who are coming back to the college atmosphere after having been a part of the working world for numerous years.

Many people in the work force are finding that more and more advanced knowledge is needed in our ever increasingly technological society. Many are returning to the

classroom to gain the necessary skills to procure the advancement they desire. Sometimes, their company is directing them back to class to achieve the awareness that companies need their employees to have in this age of fast paced changes.

For returning adult students, it is often not possible to return as a full time student, as they have families and jobs to maintain. Through the Continuing and Distance Education program, classes are offered during evening and weekend hours to accommodate those returning to complete, or even just begin, their education. Offered in their program

are certificate accreditation, and associate, baccalaureate, masters, and graduate degrees in various management, administrative, and professional fields.

The service area that Penn State Behrend has a responsibility for covering is the Erie, Warren, and Crawford counties. Their influences are also as wide reaching as Cleveland and Buffalo, as they are able to cross state lines with the programs and services that they offer.

Paul Newlin, the director of Continuing and Distance Education, is very satisfied with the direction and quality of the

program. "I really feel that people can gain a needed edge in the work force through completion of one of our degrees."

Tom Schuyler, currently enrolled in the Continuing Education program, has been out of high school now for 17 years. Schuyler came to Behrend to pursue his Baccalaureate degree in Management. He has completed two-thirds of his degree so far. He is here for the same reason as most returning students: to advance. "The support of the program has been a plus," he says, commenting on the helpfulness of the professors and staff.

All the services open to traditional college students are available to part time students as well, such as the learning assistance center and the library services. Schuyler thought that more variety in the types of courses offered would be great, that is expanding the program to include more regular baccalaureate classes.

College degrees are not the only programs offered by the Continuing and Distance Education division. Area businesses who would like to create on-site professional programs or build their management, can seek out the Continuing and Distance Education division, and have them not only develop a program tailored to that specific company's needs, but staff it with Penn State faculty as well.

The advantages of the program are numerous, including flexible scheduling and the opportunity for employees in companies to work together on issues. Some of the local businesses that have benefited are Saegertown Manufacturing, Lord Corporation, Zum Industries, and International Paper. Newlin said the corporations are really satisfied with the outcomes of the approaches implemented by Penn State.

Behrend gets \$9 million for multipurpose building

by Jen MacKinnon
staff writer

In July of 1998, a new Multi-Purpose Facility for the Behrend community will begin construction. Nine million dollars was appropriated by the state government for the construction of this facility. The total square feet that can be constructed is between 53,300 to

"When looking at a college this is an important facility."

-Dr. Chris Reber
Dean of Student Affairs

67,000. According to Brian Streeter, Director of Athletics, "the site of the building is still to be determined. Presently, it is planned to go between Jordan Rd. and Station Rd. (behind the Continuing Education Building)."

The building will consist of a large gymnasium, running track, recreation spaces, natatorium, training room, locker facilities, assembly spaces, and other support and instructional spaces. Streeter stated, "We hope to have three basketball courts (with a divider system) which will serve numerous badminton and volleyball courts. We hope to have an indoor running track, along with racquetball courts, weight room, aerobics room, cardiovascular room, and a swimming pool—and possibly a climbing wall."

The Multi-Purpose Facility will also attract more students to campus. Dr. Chris Reber, stated, "When

looking for a college this is an important facility. In the winter months students can still exercise." Streeter added, "the building will service the recreational needs of the entire campus while also contributing to better practice and competition facilities for our athletic teams."

Although tentative, plans for the facility include eleven areas. The Main Arena will accommodate basketball, volleyball, soccer, badminton, running, and other related activities. It will also be used to accommodate academic assemblies, graduation ceremonies, speakers, and concerts. The arena will provide seating for 1,000-2,000 spectators. The arena will also have a sound reinforcement system suitable for athletic events, commencements and lectures.

The second area will be the Alumni/Conference Room. The room will be used for social events, news media events, conferences and the recruitment of student athletics.

The Lobby Area will be provided for student and spectator entrance into the building. In the lobby there will be: a control desk, pay telephones, public bathrooms, trophy display area, building directory, ticket sales booth, concession room, and vending area.

The fourth area will consist of the locker and shower facilities. There will be male and female general locker rooms, and three male and three female team locker rooms. Team locker rooms will contain blackboard and tackboard areas as well as a place for lockers and general storage. Two coed visiting team locker rooms are also planned, as is a Training Room for both male and female participants, which will also include a whole-body whirlpool.

The strength training/weight room please see MONEY page 2