

The Behrend College Collegian

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

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Editorial

When Behrend students and faculty returned to the Behrend campus this fall, they may at first glance have been overwhelmed by the architectural improvements made to what used to be known as the Wintergreen, but is now Bruno's cafeteria. First there is the coffee bar which offers not only a much larger selection than last year's regular or decaf and other small things like frozen yogurt or a bagel, but also a more convenient outlet for purchasing with its location not more than twenty feet from the back entrance to the Reed building. The decor of the seating area gives the same pleasant surprise through the much needed improvements it received over the summer.

However, all the improvements made to Bruno's since last year leave out certain qualities in, perhaps, the most vital areas of food service. These include things like the overall food selection, the difference between the advertised time of closing and the actual time things begin to shut down, and price.

Burgers, french fries, pizza and chicken wraps are regular features,

but for those interested in avoiding fat and cholesterol, there is little to choose from. The salad bar is no longer offered and other than the apples and oranges in the refrigerator section there is little else in the way of fruits and vegetables.

Also, Bruno's advertises that it stays open and serves food until 11:00 pm on a nightly basis, however, most nights the submarine sandwich buffet line is shut down between 10:00 and 10:30 and the only things left out to be purchased are the bags of pretzels and chips in the racks at the far side of the kitchen area. This does not qualify as remaining open.

The final problem which has been under much discussion during the current semester is the issue of the food's price. The prices of the food are not paying for the renovations made over the summer, so they cannot be justified by this.

The renovations at Bruno's seem to be appreciated by the students, but the diminished convenience and variety and the higher prices will be a complaint until they are properly addressed.

Avoid The Credit Monsters

Beware of the cost of that free T-shirt

Ed Fletcher
The Digest
Southern University.

Students nationwide are suckered into signing up for student-rate credit cards for the candy, T-shirt, or other cheap gifts. After all, getting credit is so easy, plus you get free stuff.

Free? To pay off a debt of \$1,000 over one year at 21 percent annual finance rate, which is typical among credit companies that frequent colleges, you could buy 30 shirts at \$7 per T-shirt, or \$210 total.

Many students fail to realize what long-term damage they can do to their credit record by abusing a credit card. Your credit record is permanent and follows you where ever you may go.

Why do so many students end up in credit hell?

1. Many students lie about their income. Since the company, rarely

if ever check your information, it is easy to slip buy. Since the employees get paid based on the number of forms people sign up they don't care if you really can't pay the bill.

2. Students don't read the fine print. Many cards offer an "introductory rate." Introductory means that rate will end, and the permanent rate usually will rise after this period is over.

3. Students don't shop around. Other companies offer better rates but they won't find them knocking down your door to give you a card.

Companies that seek college students often charge exorbitant interest rates. They figure students are not smart enough to shop around or don't have enough income for another company to issue them a card.

4. Companies figure that most parents will pick up the bill if their kids fall into debt.

Why do colleges allow credit companies to set up their lair? Universities get paid.

Republicans look more and more like Clinton

By Marie Cocco=(c) 1997, Newsday

Election results in the few high-profile contests decided on Tuesday say everything about where the United States might be headed politically as the 1990s draw to a close.

Mostly, they confirmed three of the most familiar aphorisms in politics: when times are good, incumbents win. All politics is local. Money talks.

More intriguing than the results is the subtext to be found in voter attitudes as depicted in exit polls and other surveys. They reveal an electorate still deeply divided- by class, race and sex- just as it has been throughout the Clinton era. And these divisions seem best negotiated by candidates who, like the president they so often have reviled, manage to maneuver within them.

That Republicans held the two governorships that were up for grabs is no surprise, given that voters in Virginia and New Jersey expressed satisfaction with the economy. It matters not whether the good times were brought about by the economic stewardship of Democrat Bill Clinton, the incumbent Republican governors or the mysterious hand of the marketplace. Why rock the boat when the tide seems to be rising?

As always in sleepy election years, quirky local issues came to the fore. In Virginia, Republican Jim Gilmore led what amounted to a populist revolt against a state property tax on cars that costs average families hundreds of dollars- and just happens to be due four weeks before Election Day. In New Jersey, an obscure Democrat, Jim McGreevey, came from nowhere to within an eyelash of toppling Republican Gov. Christine Todd Whitman by, of all things, making high car-insurance rates a dominant issue.

Amid this local mayhem, one certainty emerged. This election obliterated any hope for meaningful campaign-finance reform.

Unregulated soft money from national Republicans and from Republican interest groups poured

into New Jersey, Virginia and especially the New York congressional race in which Republican Vito Fossella easily beat conservative Democrat Eric Vitaliano. Nationally, Republicans outspent the debt-burdened Democrats by about 5-1. Union muscle flexed on behalf of Democrats proved an insufficient counterweight.

With Republicans who seek to retain their narrow hold on the House in the 1998 congressional elections enjoying such a huge advantage, there isn't a chance their leaders in Congress will throw it away in a spasm of civic duty. The triumph of dollars is the only undiluted message of this election.

Notwithstanding Republican boasts of clear ideological hegemony, there is ample evidence that blurring ideological differences helped their candidates substantially.

The most obvious example is found in New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, a Republican who describes himself as being closest, politically, to a "moderate Democrat." He has supported not only rent control but Mario Cuomo, too. He is tough on crime and welfare mothers, but easier on immigrants and sometimes even unions.

In New Jersey, where Whitman came under assault from social conservatives for her refusal to sign a ban on certain late-term abortions, exit polls show support from self-described liberal voters gave her a helpful edge. Twenty-seven percent of liberals cast their ballots for Whitman, and she won among white women- a showing that helped her all but erase the gender gap that usually benefits Democrats. McGreevey, meanwhile, won among moderates and independents.

In Virginia, where Gilmore ran, and won, on the signature Republican issue of lower taxes, he cannily left out the other part of the equation- calls for dramatically less government. In fact, Gilmore's other campaign promise was a pledge to hire 4,000 new schoolteachers and reduce public-school class sizes- a

Eye on Erie Racism in Erie

by Nathan Mitchell
layout editor

Violence is a universal problem. However when it occurs close to home and as a result of racial prejudice and hatred, people become desensitized to the issue.

Gary Horton, who is an African American and the assistant to Erie Mayor Joyce Savocchio, was called a "nigger" by a white man in a wheel

Their lack of experience doesn't allow them to put themselves in other people's shoes

Greg Fowler
Behrend Lecturer

chair who came to the mayor's office to dispute a ticket.

Greg Fowler is a lecturer of English at Behrend and an African American who addresses issues of race and ethnicity in his classes. He finds that there is a frustration among his students, particularly the freshman class, when facing racial issues.

"Their lack of experience doesn't allow them to put themselves in other

people's shoes," comments Fowler.

For the most part, Fowler believes that trends among students regarding their understanding and perceptions of racism are changing for the better. He considers their intentions good and their writing optimistic. "The ultimate trend seems to be towards improvement. The hard part for a lot of them to understand is that in general, most people are good people."

Tommie Stoval, an African American student at Behrend, has lived in Erie his entire life. In reference to racial tension, Stoval comments, "I really haven't experienced that much. My high school was really diverse."

Stoval attended Central High School before coming to Behrend. Because of its more than two thousand students, the school accommodated people from Hispanic, Asian, and African American cultures. Stoval believes that growing up with so many different races help people get along and that other schools in Erie are in the same position.

For a lot of minorities living in the Erie community, life has not been as accepting as it was in Stoval's case. As we can see in Horton's case, racism is prevalent in Erie, even though it may not be as obvious at Behrend.

gambit meant to offset Democrat Don Beyer's overwhelming support among voters who said education was their chief concern.

Gilmore didn't dent education-minded voters' support for Beyer. But he did keep most moderate suburbanites- who like their tax cuts and their government services, too- from being spooked. He never did

explain how he would spend more on schools while simultaneously cutting taxes. But presumably, he'll bring to bear all the Clintonesque skills he showed in his campaign. That is, apparently, what voters now expect.

Distributed by the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service Cocco is a columnist for Newsday.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editors,

While I applaud the efforts of the Collegian to report responsibly on the dangers of STD's, I would want to draw attention to Sandra M. Decker's statement in the article "Avoiding STD's" that AIDS is often contracted "through high-risk behavior like gay sex." This statement is not only homophobic; it is empirically wrong, and gives people dangerous misinformation about the HIV virus.

First, one cannot contract AIDS, as it is a syndrome, not a disease. One can, however, contract the HIV virus. The distinction may seem irrelevant; it is not. For example, the symptoms of a syndrome are sometimes visible to the naked eye; the presence of a virus in the bloodstream is not. People should not be fooled into thinking, for example, that they don't need to use condoms just because their partners appear to be physically healthy. A person can have the HIV virus and exhibit no external symptoms.

Second: gay sex is in itself and of itself not high

risk behavior. Like heterosexuals, gay and lesbian people engage in a variety of different sexual acts. Some of these are more capable than others of transmitting the HIV virus. Gay sex is not intrinsically "diseased," and heterosexuals are not immune to contracting HIV, as the unfortunate situation in nearby Mayville reminds us. Given that particular sex acts are more likely to transmit the virus than others, people need to be aware of these behaviors, and protect themselves and their partners accordingly. As the co-advisor of TRIGON, Behrend's group for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual people and their allies, I am particularly troubled that some young gay or lesbian person might read Decker's comments and conclude that there is something "diseased" in homosexual activity. What makes Decker's statement homophobic is that it equates gay sex with AIDS, despite the fact that the HIV virus can be transmitted through heterosexual activity, too. Why, then, doesn't Decker call

heterosexual activity a "high risk behavior"? Given the fact that unprotected anal sex is a particularly "efficient" means of spreading HIV, could Decker be both assuming incorrectly that gay sex equals unprotected anal sex, and denying that some heterosexual engage in anal sex, too?

AIDS educators like Decker must stop burying their heads in the sand: both homosexuals and heterosexuals engage in a variety of sexual practices, some of which carry greater risk than others for transmitting HIV. Luckily, Decker's ignorance is set-off by the wisdom, candor and grace of our own Patty McMahon, who has worked diligently to convey to the Behrend community the truth about HIV disease, including the ways its spread might be prevented.

Sincerely,
John Champagne
Assistant Professor of English

