

# Behrend students spread Christmas spirit



photo courtesy of Lion Ambassadors



photo by Michael Morano

In an effort to reach out to local community children, six Behrend student organizations (Micultural Council, Inter Fraternity Council, Association of Black Collegians, Returning Adult Student Organization, and the History Club) sponsored their third annual Christmas caring workshop. The event was held last weekend in Bruno's and featured a mini-arcade, arts and crafts, free food, and a visit from St. Nick. Despite the weather conditions, turnout was good, and the event was largely a success.

The organizations plan on holding this event for years to come, and hope participation and involvement will increase each year. The involvement of so many diverse organizations together distinguishes this event from many others on campus, and sets a great example of how together students can make a difference in the holiday season.

## Student involvement in WPSE

by Andrea DiPlacido  
staff writer

WPSE, the 1,000-watt, commercially licensed radio station of Penn State-Behrend, was given \$40,000 worth of student activity money last year. The money was reallocated from the Student Activity Fee Committee to underwrite the participation of students. Ten students operated the station last year and also ran the board which is currently automated. Out of those ten, five were enrolled in the Communications 003 class, a one

words, funding from industry as well as retail." So far, this has proved successful.

The radio station received their first year of a new format to ensure future success. As of now, the station is fulfilling its goals this year to become self-sufficient. Funding money helped the station to take off, so that in the future, selling advertisements would cover expenses.

Students do not run or manage the station. Instead, it is professionally run and the goal is to make it a profit-making business. The business network format was chosen to provide a good learning opportunity by way of firsthand experience.

However, SGA President Michael Zampetti comments "I do believe the format should change. Even if it stays AM radio, there should be student programming." Since the station is AM, it does not offer music and is instead oriented toward listeners who tune in to get business information.

Many other students agree, saying they would like to see the college radio more oriented towards students. Its business news format is meant to appeal to local business people.

Community listeners value the service the station provides, and the format of the station supports Behrend's strength in business, argue some Behrend administrators. However, some complain that the station is not beneficial to the student body at large. Marketing, Communications and Business majors are people who can take advantage of current opportunities at the station.

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SGA President

credit radio practicum, while the others were either completing an internship or volunteering.

The students that are involved this year are doing work study, attending the class, or volunteering time to help out. Though they may be doing it for different reasons, the students involved are learning the business and communications aspects of WPSE.

"When I came into the management position," comments General Manager Ron Slomski, "I felt the partnership business program would enable us to develop non-traditional radio funds. In other

## Astronomy open house: the Christmas star

by Andrea Zaffino  
editor in chief

Last Thursday on December 4th, Dr. Richard Knacke, Director of the School of Science, hosted the Astronomy Open House "The Christmas Star." Knacke first spoke about the current alignment of Mercury, Mars, Venus and Jupiter. He explained that this is an unusual event and nothing like this will happen again for about a century.

It was too cloudy to bring the presentation outdoors for a look at the actual alignment from a telescope. However, Dr. Knacke gave an account for the event using slides. He showed how linear alignment can only happen if the orbits are in the same plane. Beginning roughly around 4 1/2 billion years ago, a huge cloud of gases shrunk together to form the sun.

Knacke explained, "The fact that [the planets] are all in a plane shows the cloud was not a sphere but flat, like a pancake." The current alignment is a trace of what happened 4 1/2 billion years ago.

After discussing the planetary alignment, Knacke addressed the subject for which the open house was titled, "The Star of Bethlehem." He gave a historical account for what

might have actually happened on the first Christmas and some past and current theories for what the wise men may have actually seen in the star of Bethlehem.

Knacke explained that the accurate day or month of Jesus' birth is unknown and December 25th was set centuries later. He told the audience that what may have happened is that the wise men were astronomers or astrologers from Babylon who traveled to Bethlehem around the fifth or sixth century BC.

Some theories for what they may have seen included a comet, which is unlikely because more people than the wise men would have noticed it. Another theory was a supernova — Dr. Knacke said of this idea, "I think not, it seems very unlikely."

Then he gave his explanation that what they saw was most likely a grouping of Jupiter, Saturn and Mars, which happens about once every 800 years, during the time of Pisces and what the three men saw was dubbed as the star of Bethlehem. Knacke said, "This is the most probable explanation but I can't say for sure. At the core, those events will always be a mystery."

## Police And Safety REPORT:

12/02/97 Received complaint of pornography being shown on campus.

12/02/97 Complainant was concerned that there may be a problem at the safe sex cabaret and requested an officer stay in the area (see above)

12/03/97 Complaint of possible vandalism to decorated tree outside Bruno's between Reed and Perry.

12/04/97 Complaint of theft from the RUB desk involving a student employee.

12/04/97 Complainant reported glass kicked out of the candy machine in the laundry room below apartment three hundred.

12/05/97 Complainant reported EMTA bus was stuck against the light pole in Reed lot.

12/06/97 Complainant reported a problem with the phone in Almy Hall. Found he was trying to call a number starting with '9.'

12/06/97 RA needed assistance locking the front door to Tiffany Hall due to someone shoving paper in it.

12/06/97 Student drove into the back of a university vehicle.

This is the last issue of the Collegian published this semester

the next issue will be published on January 15, 1998

We want to hear from you!

send a letter to the editor  
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be sure to include your full name, phone number, semester standing and major