

## The Behrend College Collegian

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

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## EDITORIAL

### Reed Commons renovations beneficial in the long run

For all those students who make use of the Reed Commons for studying purposes or for anyone who has gone to a function held there such as the Behrend Speaker Series, the news of the closing of the facility on April 1st affects you.

However, aside from the inconvenience of the temporary loss of an area to study, this is primarily a good thing for the Commons in the long run. The Commons is being closed so it can undergo much needed improvements.

A new sound system will be included to accommodate the acoustics of that room. Anyone who has seen a speaker in that room knows how terrible the sound can be. The new sound system will hopefully solve this problem. The lighting will be changed and the room as a whole will be given a much more welcoming appearance

both for study purposes and large group functions.

From the beginning of April to the end of the semester the Catholic campus ministry will be holding its services in the Reed Lecture Hall. But beginning next year, the improvements to the Commons will also offer a more welcoming environment for that sort of thing.

Overall, the long term improvements made to the Commons will definitely outweigh the temporary unavailability of the facility at the end of this semester. Currently, the Commons has a very impersonal, almost hospital-like presence to it, and if the changes go according to plan, it will be much more widely used and appreciated in the future.

### Your privacy for sale

Los Angeles Times Editorial

The indiscriminate gathering and sale of personal information, including Social Security numbers, have made many Americans unwittingly vulnerable to "identity theft" and other fraud in this age of computerized databases.

Privacy concerns had triggered a Federal Trade Commission study, but the results proved to be disappointing. Creeping intrusion into our private affairs should be high on Washington's vigilance list. Consumers are being told by the FTC that they will be protected under new privacy principles. But the standards are being set by the companies that gather and sell our personal data for profit, and compliance is voluntary.

The FTC has decided to let the Individual Reference Services Group, which represents the data industry, have a try at self-regulation, a dubious decision. In contrast, the Federal Communications Commission prohibits telephone companies from using data on customers' calling habits to market new services unless the customers approve such use. Information that can be used to identify and locate a person or verify identity has always been publicly available in government records, real estate records, telephone directories and other documents. Businesses known as "look up" services or locators collect personal data and now, with computer technology, can easily compile it for sale to private clients.

The new technology has made it possible to combine information from multiple sources more quickly and sell it cheaply. Increasing access to data from non-public sources like credit reporting agencies has raised the blinds on privacy. The "non-public" information the services provide can include Social Security numbers, dates of birth and mothers' maiden

names, authenticating data that can be used for fraudulent purposes. Federal, state and local government agencies use the services in law enforcement - to track down debtors, for instance, or in the prosecution of financial crimes.

The private sector subscribes to the data bases to verify information and investigate potential fraud. Ordinary citizens -- and would-be "identity thieves" -- can get some of the same information by using the Internet. One online service is reported to have offered its subscribers a person's Social Security number, birth date and telephone number for \$1.50. Imagine what a crook could do with that.

Across the country, the privacy standards, which take effect next year, tend to favor data service companies over individuals. For example, the companies say they support restrictions on the sale of authenticating information like Social Security numbers from non-public sources but allow distribution of this same information to so-called qualified buyers.

It's unclear precisely which customers fall into this category, but clearly fees must be a factor. The FTC correctly pointed to some shortcomings in the industry's approach, which would essentially provide no controls on the uses of public records and publicly available information. Meanwhile, data service companies are not required to maintain audit trails of records accessed by information users.

These audit trails would be particularly important in tracing seemingly legitimate entities that obtain personal data for illegal uses. Despite these concerns the FTC insists that the industry plan is "more comprehensive and far-reaching than any other voluntary, industry-wide program in the information sector." That assertion may be still another reason to worry.

## That Strange House on Station Road

ANNE RAJOTTE

### Does Police and Safety go too far?

Often, there can be a very fine line between the privacy of citizens and the protection of the police. There are disputes between the two about how far the police should go to protect citizens.

Recently, Heather Smaltz, 04 DUS, was questioned about street signs in her room. She stated that she saw Police and Safety officers looking in the windows of Niagara, where she lives. According to Smaltz, they saw the sign hanging in her room and went inside to question her about it. Her sign had a UPC symbol on it, indicating that she had bought the sign and not stolen it. After questioning her, the officers left without her sign. Smaltz also stated that she saw other signs in the back of the officers' vehicle that had apparently been confiscated from other students' rooms.

Bill Donahue, Director of Police

Services, emphatically denied that officers were looking in windows for street signs. He said that they usually find signs when in the room for an unrelated incident or the residence life staff finds them in room inspections. Donahue also noted that there are very few reasons that a student should have a sign in his or her room.

Smaltz was uncomfortable about the fact that she felt that officers were looking in dorm windows to find street signs. She stated that she felt that it was an invasion of privacy.

Often the police report will show individuals being stopped for "suspicious behavior." Donahue stated that there are no strict guidelines concerning stopping people deemed "suspicious." He went on to say that people aren't always stopped for investigative purposes; sometimes people seem lost or in need of assistance. In addition,

officers who work at night become accustomed to the normal happenings at night and would notice anything out of the ordinary. It is the experience that the officers have that governs their actions.

It seems that Police and Safety attempt to use their best judgement when it comes to investigating incidents on campus. This is shown clearly in the low crime rate on this campus. However, P&S must be very careful not to cross the line to invading students' privacy. The incident with the street sign has two conflicting sides of the story. Nevertheless, the student involved felt that the officers were over the line and too invasive handling her situation. There seems to be no clarification as to how the officers found out about the sign in her room. Smaltz was under the impression that the officers were look-

ing in her room through the windows, which would certainly make any student uncomfortable.

Most likely, the officers followed the correct procedure in this incident. However, the animosity that some students feel towards Police and Safety about parking and other issues could lead to real problems between officers and students. If Police and Safety is perceived as looking for things to get students on, then student resentment is going to grow. Obviously, some students already feel this way. It is Police and Safety's responsibility to maintain the fine balance between protection and invasion of privacy.

*That Strange House on Station Road appears every three weeks in The Collegian*

## Iraq accord is no sure win for U.S.

By Mark Kagan=Special to Newsday

The United Nations secretary general says Iraq has agreed to allow free and unfettered UN inspections of all sites in Iraq without any time limits. And President Clinton has said he is prepared to give the accord a chance.

The reluctant American acceptance is sure to stimulate both the advocates for the use of diplomacy only and the advocates for the use of force to claim victory. We can also be sure, to paraphrase an old Neil Diamond song, that "we've been this way before and we're sure to be this way again."

Iraq has already agreed numerous times since 1991 to free and unfettered access to all sites in Iraq by the inspection teams of the UN Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM). The reason there have been so many agreements is that Iraq has simultaneously engaged in a systematic, massive and blatant program of deception, deceit, denial, diversion and evasion against UNSCOM. This program has three aims: Preventing or delaying the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, and the infrastructure for building them; sabotaging or negating UNSCOM's inspection and verification procedures; and wearing down the international consensus and will to enforce Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions and to maintain sanctions absent that compliance.

The program's centerpiece has been the construction, at a cost of billions of dollars, of more than 60 "presidential sites" (not just the eight that the Iraqis have offered) around the country. At these sites, as well as in dozens of other "sensitive" military and security installations, which have been barred to UNSCOM inspections in blatant violation of UN resolutions, Iraq has created a "parallel universe" where it could continue or resume its forbidden weapons programs. If Iraq succeeds in keeping these sites uninspected unmoled, UNSCOM and its monitoring devices will be rendered largely useless and actually become part of the Iraqi deception and evasion program.

While Iraq's program has been systematic and long-term, the same cannot be said for U.S. policy to Iraq. By dealing with Iraq only when Saddam Hussein causes a crisis, the Clinton administration has allowed the Persian Gulf war coalition to fall apart, and left doubts and skepticism both domestically and especially abroad about the seriousness of Hussein's transgressions and the threat he poses. The United States has also succeeded in turning the current crisis into a question of prestige. Bomb Iraq and Hussein gains face for standing up to Washington; Iraq gains international sympathy as well as support due to civilian casualties.

In addition, Hussein's weapons of mass destruction are only "diminished." Don't bomb Iraq, and the United States loses face and credibility (and Hussein keeps his weapons). Meanwhile, the United States has given Hussein months to disperse and

hide both his unconventional and conventional weapons and forces, while filling up potential bombing targets with civilians. In short, the Clinton administration has maneuvered itself into a potential lose-lose situation

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with Iraq whether it bombs or not. This has been the price of the U.S.

failure to pay attention to Iraq and to make sure that the rest of the world paid attention during the past seven years. It is hoped the administration has learned that U.S. policy toward Iraq can no longer be just crisis-driven.

It must be made very clear that violation by Iraq of the UN-arranged accord will bring swift punishment. And even if bombing attacks go forward, U.S. policy henceforth should be based on the following long-term, clear, understandable and well-publicized points: Hussein will no longer be allowed to drag out the process of destroying his weapons of mass destruction, delaying the day that Iraq is in compliance with UN resolutions and the UN sanctions can be lifted. Denial of access to UN inspectors to any site in Iraq or harassing them in their work will result in denial of access to Iraqis.

The site (or a presidential palace) will be destroyed. Reports on Iraqi evasion and deception activities will no longer remain within just a small

circle of officials and policy wonks, but will be regularly given the widest distribution and publicity. A worldwide educational campaign to explain that these actions are being taken to relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people, because the sooner Iraq complies with the UN resolutions, the sooner the sanctions can be lifted.

The sites in Iraq that have been barred to UN inspections cover hundreds of square miles and include hundreds of buildings (and whatever may have been buried underground). There are thousands of Iraqis whose only job is to protect forbidden weapons from the 200-odd UNSCOM inspectors. The United States must stay in Hussein's face to make sure he gets no more chances. After seven years, it is time for the tail to stop wagging the dog.

*Consultant Kagan has been a military analyst at Janes Information Group and an intelligence analyst at the U.S. Department of Defense.*

