

The Behrend College Collegian

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

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Postal Information: The Collegian is published weekly by the students of Penn State Erie, The Behrend College; First Floor, The J. Elmer Reed Union Building, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563. The Collegian can be reached by calling (814) 898-6488 or (814) 898-6019 (FAX). ISSN 1071-9288.

Letter Policy: The Collegian encourages letters to the editor. Letters should include the address, phone number, semester standing and major of the writer. Writers can mail their letters to behrcoll2@aol.com. Letters must be received no later than 5pm Tuesday for inclusion in that week's issue.

EDITORIAL

Spring Break trips valuable to students

During Spring Break, two groups of students supplemented their regular classes with a trip to Spain or Washington DC.

The students who went with Dr. Juan Fernandez to Spain had all taken some Spanish classes previously. During the trip they were able to use their knowledge of the language in a different way than they normally would have in a classroom. Most of the students were speaking and understanding Spanish much better than they did before the trip. Just one week in Spain made the students accustomed to the sound of the language. At the beginning of the week, many students had a difficult time understanding anything said to them in Spanish. It seemed that most were much better at reading and writing Spanish than actually speaking it. By the end of the week, many had carried whole conversations in Spanish and could communicate effectively with Spanish-speaking people.

An experience like this is invaluable to students who would like to be able to use Spanish in the future, especially in their careers. Classroom learning provides a good base of grammar and writing and reading skills, but it seemed that the most effective way to speak Spanish is to be put into a situation where that is the only way to communicate. All of the students had some base knowledge of vocabulary and gram-

mar and with the added experience of spending a week in Spain, they were able to intensively practice the language they learned.

The other group of students went to Washington DC with Dr. Robert Speel and Dr. Zachary Irwin. Students were able to see how government works and policies are implemented. They went to the Senate gallery while it was in session. After learning about the Senate and policy making in political science classes, the students were able to see the Senators in action. The students also had the chance to meet with US Senator Senator Rick Santorum and US Representative Phil English of Pennsylvania. They were able to ask questions and discuss issues and policies with the Congressmen.

This also was a great experience for students interested in politics. The opportunity to meet with politicians gave students a new perspective on politics and the way that policy and laws are made.

In the past, students have gone to Germany and England. Future trips are planned for Ireland, France and Mexico.

These trips are a unique opportunity for students to gain an understanding not found in a regular classroom. Both groups were able to put their knowledge to use in ways that will greatly benefit them.

A Day in the Life

Communication problems with Police and Safety

BRIAN ASHBAUGH

A disturbing trend is forming among the relationship between the Police and Safety services and the students who live on campus regarding the control of questionable activity. From accusations of "suspicious" behavior to confiscations of supposedly stolen street signs, paranoia appears to be rising in the service. In the minds of students, having nothing better to do has led to these kinds of "suspicious" allegations on Police and Safety's part.

As a protective measure, special phones have been installed to request an escort from the far reaches of the sparse parking areas to the dorms and apartments. But what if there is no parking available in the prescribed lots and officers are confronted for an escort? The answer is simple, an escort should be granted; it is a right given to all students living on campus, right? Or is the policy regarding escorts unclear to residents? A female student, who has been left unnamed upon request, was denied this privilege on the way back to her apartment at about 1:00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 3. The details of this incident clearly indicate the animosity between the two parties.

The student arrived on campus hoping to return to her apartment after being out with friends, eating dinner and play cards. During the course of the night she admittedly had one beer with dinner and two wine coolers thereafter over a period of about six hours. As she drove around and as there was not any parking near the apartments to be found, she went down to the Police and Safety lot to park and receive an escort back up Jordan Road. As she arrived in front of the building, the officer on duty was out front talking to a Wesleyville officer. She requested for an escort and was granted the ride by the officer.

As with many students who cannot find parking at Behrend, she was bitter. So she proceeded to express her disapproval with the parking situation with the hopes that it would reach the proper authorities. She was given a number to call about the problem. Evidently this confrontation did not sit well with the officer, so he accused her of using Police and Safety as a taxi service and retracted his offer of a ride to the apartments. Instead, he decided that the two would walk up the hill and he turned off the lights in the building and prepared for the trip.

The officer, upon smelling the alcohol on the student, alleged she was drunk and requested she take a breath test to determine if she was indeed intoxicated. The breath test discovered that alcohol was in her system. To further insure her driving safety, a pen test was administered. The pen test is one in which the officer holds a pen in front of the eyes of the accused and moves it back and forth horizontally. The accused is then to follow the pen with their eyes and intoxication is determined by the quickness of the eye movement. She was determined to be borderline drunk by the officer, but not enough to receive a DUI. He advised her not to attempt to drive back up to the apartments.

Following the incident, the officer took her drivers license number and issued the student a referral for his disapproval of her conduct regarding the circumstances. Eventually, she was walked up the hill by a friend who had arrived in the Police and Safety lot soon after.

This episode clearly illustrates the many misunderstandings between students and Police and Safety. According to Bill Donahue, Manager of Police and Safety, the policy

regarding escorts is that "(Police and Safety) provides escorts when students are in fear for their safety. We don't have the resources to provide a ride to everyone for their convenience." Maybe these types of interactions could be avoided if there was better communication on both parts. It has to be considered that many of the officers protecting this campus are also students, so they should know how the residents feel about matters.

It appears as though the officer administered the field sobriety tests as a reprimand, not as a safety concern. If he was concerned he could have asked for identification and inquired about how much she had been drinking. Obviously, if she was too drunk to drive and under age, she probably would not have confronted an officer. It also appears as though the student felt that the officer had an obligation to provide an escort even though she did not fear for her safety, as the guidelines state. So who is at fault in this situation? Or it should be, WHAT is at fault in this situation? The only true answer is communication.

A Day in the Life appears every three weeks in The Collegian

Don't forget the already addicted smokers

By C. Everett Koop=Special to The Washington Post

To date, most of the tobacco control efforts of this administration have focused on preventing young people from taking up smoking. Everyone can agree that teenagers and younger children should not smoke. Even the tobacco industry can safely join in that refrain, and frequently does, with characteristic and clamorous hypocrisy as it turns its marketing machines loose on the young. But at exactly what age does the plight of American smokers lose its poignancy?

One-third of teenagers who experiment casually with cigarettes will become regular smokers, with one-half of these trying to quit, but failing, by age 18. The vast majority of current smokers were hooked in their teens or earlier. During the '80s, the tobacco industry mounted a public relations campaign maintaining that smoking was "an adult decision." It was a model of reverse psychology, tempting teens at the same time it offered false assurance to their elders. The vast majority of smokers are captive to their addiction, so that most who "decide" to quit cannot _ not without help or years of

repeated tries.

If we pretend that adult smoking is a consumer choice like any other, we fall prey to the trap laid by Big Tobacco. Addiction makes the very notion of choice moot. Who would freely choose sickness and suffering, lost productivity or 50 percent chance of premature death? Yet cigarette smokers of all ages continue to die prematurely at the rate of more than 400,000 per year. If not one single young person started smoking from this day forward, these losses would still continue unabated for 30 years. Imagine 1,000 jumbo jets emblazoned with Marlboro and Winston and Camel insignia crashing each year for the next three decades. Should we accept such dramatic losses as par for the course?

We must not focus our efforts so narrowly on preventing tobacco use by youth that we send smokers the message that we have abandoned them -- that their addiction is their own fault and that we don't care about them. This is exactly what the tobacco industry wants them to hear. Forget quitting, hedge the health bets instead. Responding to founded fears, tobacco companies unleashed so-called "low-tar" brands in an effort to hold on to their smokers and reduce the concerns of the uninitiated. But in their attempt to avoid becoming yet another statistic, smokers have only changed the form of their resultant lung cancers from the squamous cell cancers of the upper lung to the adenocarcinomas of the lower lung as they inhaled more deeply to extract the nicotine their bodies craved from such cigarettes. There is an alternative. We can combine tobacco prevention initiatives with efforts to ensure that those who

are hooked can obtain effective treatments.

The facts are that quitting smoking at any age reduces the risk of premature death; current treatments can substantially increase the odds of quitting. It therefore seems logical that each decision to smoke should present an equal opportunity not to smoke and an equal opportunity to get help. The Food and Drug Administration's actions in 1996 to restrict tobacco marketing to minors and to approve over-the-counter marketing of nicotine gum and patches for adults were pioneering steps in the right direction. So are several pieces of congressional legislation currently under discussion that include provisions for tobacco addiction treatments.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done if our nation is to make tobacco dependence treatment as acceptable and as readily available as tobacco itself. We must evaluate and approve potentially life-saving treatments for tobacco dependence at the level of priority we assign to treatments for diseases such as AIDS and cancer. Signaling such a course could help empower the private sector to meet these challenges in a way that will contribute to the health of our nation in the short and long run.

Currently, the tobacco industry is lobbying Congress for its own solution to the needs of smokers. Under the guise of a newfound concern for the health of their consumers, these companies want incentives to market products that they claim will reduce the dangers of smoking. We do not want to stifle development of such products. Indeed, we should require reduced toxicity of tobacco products, as we now understand that

they are unnecessarily dangerous and addictive. But such a course should not enable tobacco companies to undermine our efforts to reduce overall tobacco use by allowing them to advertise their products with claims such as "low tar" or "reduced delivery."

Legitimate concern for the health of tobacco users should balance efforts to reduce the toxicity of tobacco products with the means to expedite the development of new treatments for those who are addicted. Under its existing authorities, including its designation of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products as combination drug and device products, the FDA has many regulatory tools at its disposal to accomplish its goal of reducing the risk of death and disease in tobacco-addicted Americans. Congressional legislation that weakens the FDA's authority over tobacco reduces its ability to serve the public health.

I strongly encourage any forthcoming congressional legislation or executive actions to strengthen, if not leave alone, the FDA's authority over tobacco, and to support the FDA's ability to evaluate new treatments and treatment approaches in a manner that is consistent with the devastation wrought by unremitting tobacco use. Moreover, in our battle with Big Tobacco, we should not hide behind our children. Instead, as we take every action to save our children from the ravages of tobacco, we should demonstrate that our commitment to those who are already addicted and to those who will yet become addicted, will never expire.

Koop was surgeon general from 1981 to 1989

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

SGA President discouraged at lack of student involvement

Dear Editors,

I initially sat down to write a letter apologizing for my poor choice of words in the Collegian just before Spring Break, but my intent has changed. For those who may have forgotten or did not read the article, I was quoted as saying the SGA Open Forum "sucked." As I thought about that evening and my crude response to Andrea Zuffino's question, I realized that I was not sorry after all. Yes, I could have chosen a more appropriate word to describe my opinion, but the lack of student concern truly aggravated me.

As president of the SGA I continually hear student complaints about the Activity Fee and Bookstore prices and the food at Bruno's. We, the SGA, provide the students with an avenue to bring about change. The first Wednesday of every month we host an open forum in which you, the student, has the opportunity to come and air out your complaints. At the March forum, no students showed up so we decided to take the show to the students. And when we arrived at Bruno's a majority of the students there rose from their seats and like mindless sheep walked out of Bruno's.

This mass display of apathy and mindlessness is distressing. Colle-

ge students, and Americans as a whole, do not appear to be bothered by their lack of involvement. We (I apologize to those that do not fit within the collective "we") rather sit back and watch hours of television. Like mindless fools we watch television, the average American watches four hours a day, and like mindless fools we walk to class and sit there as professors feed us information. Never do we stop and process this information that we are given. Never do we question a professor as to why 2 + 2 = 4. We accept information without trying to understand the reason for that fact or that opinion.

After class we walk back home and sit in front of the television again. This time, however, we have mail to read. So we open the letter from Penn State that contains our semester bill. We read that bill and it states that all students will be charged \$25 for an Activity Fee. We complain about that bill and resolve that tomorrow "I am going to do something about this." Tomorrow comes and the same routine occurs. Watch t.v., go to class and absorb information like a sponge absorbs water, then back home. Except today while watching t.v. we see that the US is on the brink of war with Iraq. As a person eligible for the draft we im-

agine Bill Clinton (for those that are truly in a hole, he is our president) to seek diplomatic measures that will avert the war. Today, like yesterday, we resolve "to do something." We will write letters to our Congressional representatives showing opposition to the war. And like yesterday, we do nothing.

What happens when tomorrow, when you read that mail, you find out that you have been drafted or that Penn State has increased your Activity Fee \$5 a semester, totaling \$40 in your college career of additional fees? What do you do then? Like all good Americans you complain that the system "sucks." I, like the collective "we," find myself in the situation of just complaining. Progress and change does not come about from idle resolutions. To add credence to ones words one must push harder, demand more for themselves. The response at the SGA Forum did "suck" but next month SGA will be back out there trying to learn what makes you mad.

Change comes through your actions, not through little complaints that are expressed to Bart Simpson.

Carpe Diem!
Respectfully,
Michael Zampetti
SGA President

