

# Dr. Eric Corty delivers "Lessons in Psychology"

by Anne Rajotte  
managing editor

Dr. Eric Corty, recipient of last year's Council of Fellows Excellence in Teaching Award, spoke in the Reed Lecture Hall yesterday as part of the Provost's Speaker Series. His talk, entitled "Lectures in Psychology," explored the difficulties psychologists have dealing with flawed data and test results.

Dr. Corty received his doctorate from the University of Indiana at Bloomington. He had two post doctorate degrees from the University of Pennsylvania and Case Western Reserve. He has worked with heroin addicts in Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore and worked in a gender identity program at Case Western Reserve.

Dr. Corty's lecture began with a discussion of the shootings in Jonesboro, Arkansas, from a

psychologist's view. He showed a Letter to the Editor from *The New York Times* that said that a school psychologist should have been able to tell that Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson were disturbed enough to commit this crime. Dr. Corty stated that he thought that this overestimated psychology.

He used a hypothetical test to show how flawed data can produce destructive results. He explained that a test that would correctly identify 99% of children that would be future murderers and also correctly identify 99% of children that would not murder in the future sounds like a fairly accurate test. However, if 1 child per 1,000 is a future murderer, then 91% of children predicted to be future murderers would incorrectly be predicted. The children wrongly predicted murderers would have to face ostracization from schoolmates and counseling for this problem that was wrongly identified.

Dr. Corty stated that although he felt that tests were one of the best predictors of something like violent tendencies, "all tests contain errors," and, "there is no measurement we have that is perfectly precise."

Dr. Corty also discussed a phenomenon he called, "the field of dreams effect," or if you ask, they will answer. In other words, people like the children in Jonesboro may be able to give a reason for their crimes, but it may not necessarily be the correct one. People can give credible answers and not even realize they are lying, or may give an answer that they think people want to hear.

Research nihilism is a concept that asks, if "all data are flawed and we can know nothing with any certainty; why bother?" Dr. Corty admitted that he used to be something of a research nihilist himself. A psychologist named D.C. Funder offered two reasons that

changed his mind.

First, Funder stated, "There are only two kinds of data. The first kind is Terrible Data: data that are ambiguous, potentially misleading, incomplete, and imprecise. The second kind is No Data. Unfortunately, there is no third kind, anywhere in the world." Second, Funder stated, "Something beats nothing, two times out of three."

Dr. Corty reiterated Funder's point by saying that even though data may be flawed, some information is better than no information. He expanded on his point by saying that many great things have been accomplished with flawed data.

Audience members asked Dr. Corty about the application of his ideas in situations at Behrend, including the Student Response to Teacher Effectiveness (SRTE) forms that students fill out at the end of the semester.

# Rohypnol can put students in danger

by Melissa Roberts  
staff writer

Picture this scene: It is the first weekend of the new semester, a female college student wants to go out and have a good time, dance and has no intention in drinking anything other than soda. She just wants to relax a little, socialize and hang out with friends. She meets a tall, handsome, dark stranger. They begin talking and find they have a lot in common, they are in the same Sociology class, and she sits two seats ahead of her. He offers her a drink and she politely refuses, motioning to her soda that was sitting on the table. They dance and have fun laughing and talking.

Meanwhile, the tall stranger leaves the woman's side, promising to return soon. He walks near the table where her drink is sitting, drops his wallet on the floor and in one swift move bends over picks up the wallet and drops a small tablet in the woman's drink. He

returns to her side and he suggests they go back and finish their drinks and maybe go for a walk somewhere. The woman sees no problem in this, finishes her drink and begins feeling drunk and uncoordinated. She later passes out and doesn't awaken for 6 hours. The night of fun and socializing had quickly turned into a foggy night of horror that she will never remember and at the same time never forget.

Like this woman, countless people are sexually assaulted in similar manner. Many of these assaults on college campuses are the result of drugs added to mixed drinks and other beverages. The two drugs that are the result of many of these attacks are Rohypnol, also known as Ruffies, Roches, Rope, and the Forget Bill, to name a few, and GHB, also known as Liquid Ecstasy, Easy Lay, and Gamma 10. These drugs are the cause of countless sexual assaults each year.

Rohypnol is illegal and is a fast-acting sedative that may be noticeable within twenty to thirty minutes. Rohypnol causes drowsiness, confusion, impaired motor skills, dizziness, and reduced levels of consciousness. Rohypnol added to alcohol or other drugs lowers blood pressure, causes difficulty in breathing, comas and even death.

GHB has never become FDA approved in the United States because it has many harmful effects. GHB is a strong drug that acts as a depressant to the nervous system. The effects of this drug can occur as quickly as 15 minutes, and causes vomiting, confusion, seizures, drowsiness or in extreme cause can result in a coma.

More recently, the use of drugs have begun to aid in sexual assaults and the only way to slow the increase is to make people aware of the risks and signs of the drug, so if they themselves or a friend are a victim, they know the

appropriate manner in which to find help.

The first step towards slowing the increase is prevention. If you don't put yourself at risk, then you won't have to worry about dealing with the consequences. The most important rules at parties or in the presence of someone who you do not know or trust are: never drink beverages that you don't open yourself; never drink a punch of any kind; don't drink from a container that is being passed around; and never leave your drink unattended. Also, throw away any drinks that have been left unattended and never drink anything with an unusual taste or appearance. Patty Pasky McMahon, coordinator of the Behrend Health and Wellness Center, emphasizes, "Never drink from a community punch bowl and never accept a drink, whether it is alcoholic, pop, water, anything, unless you see exactly where it comes from."

When going out with friends appoint a "sober" person who watches out for the rest of the group. Make periodic checks on all the parties in your group and if any of them seem overly intoxicated or pass out and cannot be awakened easily you need to take them to safety and if necessary, call 911 for emergency assistance. If you see anyone hanging around the punch bowl at a party try talking to the person and discard the entire bowl of punch. If you hear of a place where you think people have been given these drugs let as many people as you can be aware of the potentially dangerous situation.

There are many signs that you have been drugged by Rohypnol or GHB. If you drink a questionable beverage, then look for the following symptoms: feeling a lot more intoxicated than you actually are, feeling hung over, or feeling "fuzzy." If you remember taking a drink, but don't remember anything that happened from the time you took the drink to the time you woke up, or if you feel as though you have had sex but do not remember anything before, during or after, then you may have been drugged and sexually assaulted.

In the case that you have been drugged you must first go to a safe place and get help immediately. Call the police and go to the hospital and get medical assistance. Tell the hospital you think you have been drugged and would like a drug test. Do not shower or urinate. Do not throw away any articles of clothing you were wearing during the incident. You may also want to call the rape crisis center for information about support groups or the possibility of talking to a personal counselor.

One-third of all males and females have been involved in a violent dating situation, and 20% of these result in reports of forced sexual intercourse or rape. Anyone can become a victim, and the problem won't stop until people identify the problem and take actions in stopping it.

McMahon also "urges people to change their ways of socializing so we can stop giving advantages to people who would use these drugs."

If you have any further questions about Rohypnol, GHB, sexual assault, or rape, Ms. McMahon would be more than happy to set up a confidential appointment and discuss your concerns with her.

## Police And Safety REPORT:

04/08/98 Complainant reported finding beer cans in room 22 of the library.

04/08/98 Report of a fire alarm in Elliot Hall. Could not give a specific apartment where it was. Housing said they accidentally tripped a sprinkler and there was no fire.

04/08/98 Bowling club wrote on the sidewalk behind Reed. Checked it out and found no obscene language or intolerant discussion. All the writing was in chalk.

04/10/98 Observed two white males near the Housing golf cart. Both ran when asked to stop. One was later apprehended and charged with a violation.

04/12/98 Complainant reported that an alarm was going off in apartment 307A. Upon arrival no one was home. Entered apartment and found the alarm to be the alarm clock going off. Secured scene.

## Question of the Week

Do you think marijuana should be legalized? Why or why not?

"No, because it is the Devil's weed."

-Todd Pounds, 02, Accounting

"Yes because it's not as harmful as people think it is."

-Nick McClearn, 02, DUS

"Yes, I think it's less harmful than alcohol."

-Robert Lingo, 02, History

"No, too many problems."

-Brian Dacansky, 02, Electrical Engineering

"Probably not."



-Seth Kimmy, 02, Chemical Engineering

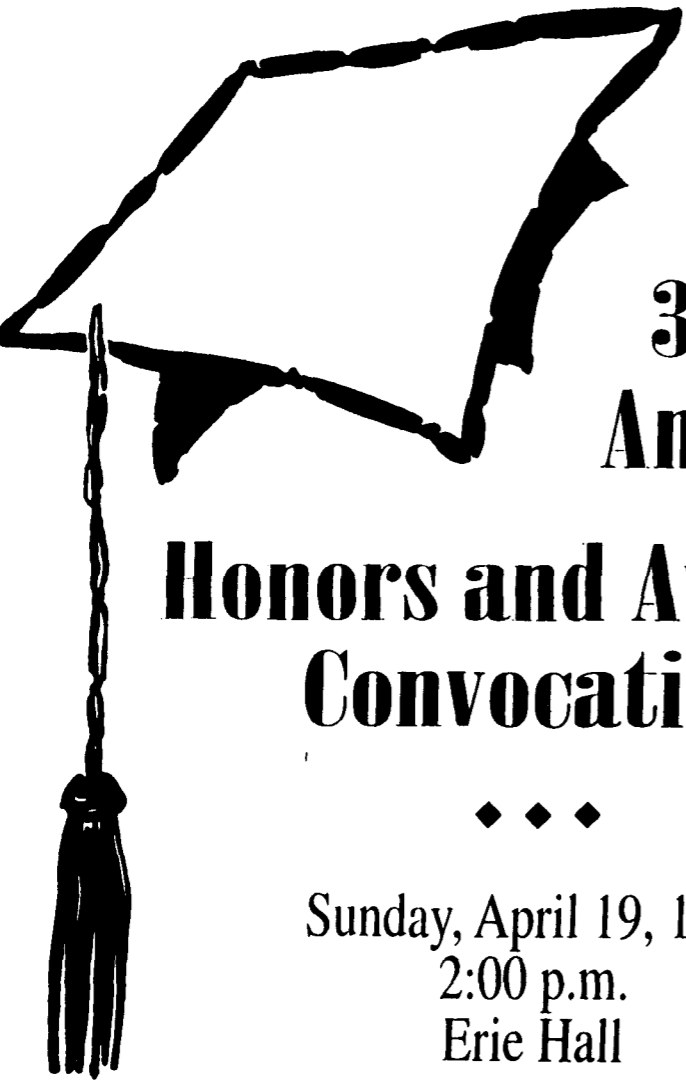
"Yes, it can be used as medicine."

-Jon Hjemvick, 04, MIS

"Yes because it can be taxed and we would be out of debt."

-Ronald Meyers, 04, MIS


**PENNSTATE**  

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37th Annual

Honors and Awards Convocation

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