

The Behrend College Beacon

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

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Live From Guyana

AYODELE JONES

Remember the less fortunate on the holidays

'Tis the season to be jolly....." It's Christmas time again, and the time has come for anyone and everyone to take part in the holidays. The holidays can have different meanings for people. For some, it's a time to spend moments of love and laughter with our loved ones, it's a time to attend religious services and also share with one another in the bounty of food and gifts. While for others, it is another holiday to spend in need of the basic things in life; food, shelter and family.

As we begin to continue our quests for the perfect gifts, we sometimes overlook the less fortunate. Many people are without homes, without

jobs and even without families and instead of being worried about which color gift wrap they should buy, many are wondering where their next meal is coming from.

As citizens of the world let us not forget about the needy, let our feelings of thanksgiving continue throughout the remainder of the year, and more importantly let us reciprocate our good fortune to the needy. We can all contribute a small token of love and generosity to needy charities.

On Christmas morning while many of us are awakening to the various smells of the kitchen and an array of gifts under the tree, there

are some who awaken without hope or cheer but rather with despair. Let us not forget these people during the holidays, donate your time, energy and even monetary or material gifts to organizations dedicated to improving the lives of the less fortunate.

The worldwide fellowship that Christmas produces causes us to fall under a spell, of kindness and goodwill toward all. It is this euphoric feeling which defines the meaning of Christmas. It is not the sugar plums dancing in our heads nor is it the tree filled with candy canes and a bundle of gifts, but rather it the feeling of giving, giving not only to

our families and friends but also to our neighbors in need. When the holidays are gone and the gifts are opened, let us not forget, the spirit of giving and goodwill toward men, it is a principle that needs to be practiced throughout the year. Let us remember the angel song; "Glory to god in the highest. Goodwill toward men and peace on earth." Happy Holidays!

Jones is managing editor of the Beacon. Her column appeared every three weeks.

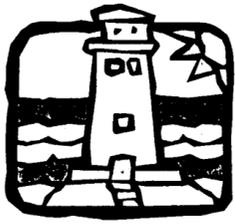
A view from the lighthouse

SGA book exchange beneficial to students

At the beginning of next semester, Student Government Association (SGA) will attempt to run a book exchange program for students. The process will work like this: a student will bring in a book and decide how much he or she wants to sell it for. If the book is sold, the student will get the full amount of money.

SGA is doing a good thing by finally providing the bookstore with some competition. Most other colleges have at least one off campus bookstore to provide the school run store with some competition. However, Behrend students are not this lucky. We literally have no choice when it comes to buying books. Occasionally, Gannon or another nearby school will have a specific book at the more reasonable price, but this is not usually an option.

Getting students to participate in



this exchange might be somewhat of a problem since it is not taking place until next semester. Students probably want the money for their books now and might not be willing to take the chance of waiting until next semester to sell their books.

Despite the possible problems, it is necessary to at least get the exchange started. SGA can look at the results of this semester's exchange and improve future attempts.

The Ordinary College Student

MARK GREENBANK

End of semester brings extra stress

With the end of another semester fast approaching, the usual pressures and complaints are starting to pop up once again all over campus. It seems that every semester the last week of classes is the most chaotic and hectic week of the term.

Everyone is scrambling around to complete papers, presentations and projects that have been put off all semester. The computer labs are no longer vacant at 8:00 a.m., and students begin to wander the campus at all hours in a state of insomnia scurrying around like rats to complete their work. One issue that constantly rears its ugly head is the

issue of selling books back to the bookstore. Why is it that so many people complain about the whole buy-back process without investigating how the prices are set and what factors determine the buy-back prices. These same people then complain semester after semester. You get in line to hear everybody cry about how they paid \$80.00 for their book and are only getting \$20.00 back. If you don't like it, then get the hell outta' line and don't sell your books back at all, or try buying all your books somewhere else. Supposedly a couple other book return programs

are in the works for this year. Maybe these people can try their luck with the new programs.

Also there is the issue of 24 hour quiet hours. I fully understand why the program is in place, and I agree with the policy since it is a good idea. Why, though, do we only get a generous fifteen minutes of "loud time" for each day? Thanks, but the fifteen minutes don't really cut it. Many students feel, as do I, that having an hour or two in the middle of the day, or an hour in the evening, would be beneficial for everyone. This would give students ample time to relax and still time to study

and/or sleep the rest of the day.

Overall, the ordinary college student has many problems to face at the end of the year. Many of these difficulties are brought on by the individuals, but some need not exist. The school does have many good policies in place for finals week, but maybe there is an easier way to the relieve some of the stresses on students for the last week of classes.

Greenbank is associate editor of the Beacon. His column appeared every three weeks.

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"The only person I'm hurting is myself."

Pinochet should be tried under international law

The strong case for extradition

By George Black
Special to the Los Angeles Times

In the suspenseful hours before the British House of Lords delivered its historic judgment on the immunity of Chile's Gen. Augusto Pinochet, I found myself driving slowly past the Navy Mechanics School in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In a city of beautiful buildings, it is one of the most handsome and imposing. With its clipped hedges, whitewashed walls and ornamental trees, it is an image of martial elegance akin to Annapolis or West Point. It is no one's idea of what a torture chamber would look like. But that is what it was.

Truly terrible things happened here. The ESMA, as it is known, was the main detention and torture center used by the Argentine military during the years of terror known as "el proceso," from 1976-83. Pregnant women were among those who came here after being snatched from their homes in the dead of night by armed men in unmarked Ford Falcon cars. At the ESMA, the women gave birth to their babies. Afterward, the mothers were incinerated or thrown alive out of helicopters into the Atlantic Ocean. The infants were given to childless military families, to receive what the generals liked to call a "Christian upbringing."

Argentina is now caught up in a remarkable debate over the fate of the ESMA: Demolish it and destroy all that it symbolizes, or preserve it as a monument to evil?

More remarkable still, on the day before the Lords announced their verdict on Pinochet, the man who commanded the ESMA, retired Adm. Emilio Massera, was arrested on criminal charges of abducting a child - the infant son of Cecilia Vinas and Hugo Reynaldo Penino, a young couple who vanished into the dark-

ness of the ESMA in September 1977. The abduction of minors was not included in the general amnesty that was granted to Argentina's former military leaders in 1990. Nor was DNA testing an established science at that point. But it was DNA evidence that recently produced the positive identification of Vinas' son, who is now 21.

The most satisfying aspect of the Massera case is that he will be brought to justice in his own country, not on foreign soil. Admittedly, dark forces still inhabit the shadows in Argentina. Human rights advocates are still snatched off the street and beaten up - the latest just two weeks ago. Judges are still suborned and threatened. But Massera's trial, as well as that of his fellow junta member, Gen. Jorge Videla, seems likely to go forward in Argentine courts. Like the debate over the future of the ESMA, these trials are an essential step toward healing Argentina's wounds and strengthening its democratic institutions.

But what of Chile's wounds, and what of Pinochet? After the House of Lords' ruling, the Chilean government maneuvered furiously to secure the return of the senator for life to Santiago. Foreign Minister Jose Miguel Insulza tried to persuade British Home Secretary Jack Straw and the Spanish authorities that Pinochet should be brought to justice at home, not abroad, and that a domestic trial was indeed a realistic option.

The possibility that Pinochet will stand trial in Chile is one of two questions that now weigh heavily on Straw's mind as he contemplates his final decision on extradition. The second is the nature of Britain's obligations under international law. Pinochet is charged with torture, committed on such a widespread and systematic basis that it constitutes a

crime against humanity - a crime under both domestic and international law and a crime of universal jurisdiction. States therefore have not only an interest in seeing the crime investigated and punished - they have a legal obligation to ensure that this happens. That obligation became binding on Britain in 1988, when it ratified the U.N. Convention Against Torture. This treaty is not yet as widely known as it should be, but it has an enormous potential role to play in the future enforcement of international human rights law.

International enforcement should come into play only when national

legal systems are unable, or unwilling, to take action themselves to punish crimes against humanity. This is a core principle of the new International Criminal Court, which Britain has supported vigorously. So again the question comes back to Straw. Is Chile willing and able to prosecute? The answer, categorically, must be no.

Even as Insulza was delivering his seductive message in London and Madrid, the leadership of his own party was writing to European leaders to tell them that the idea of Pinochet being brought to trial in Chile was sheer fantasy. The ob-

stacles are simply too great. First, there is the blanket amnesty that Pinochet's military granted itself in 1978; second, the presumptive immunity that he enjoys as senator for life; and third, the failure of the Chilean government to create a judicial system that could promise a trial before an independent civilian court.

If Pinochet is returned to Chile under these conditions, Britain will be in breach of its duty under international law. Straw's decision should therefore be a straightforward one. He should approve Pinochet's extradition. The general's victims would celebrate that decision, rightly, as a

huge step forward for international law - even though their joy might be tinged with the chagrin of knowing that Argentina, whose military rulers were every bit as barbaric as Pinochet, has actually moved further along the road to becoming a functioning democratic society.

Black is research and editorial director of the New York City-based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.