

Website of the Week

by Christy Piccola
staff writer

If you can imagine a room full of people helping you decide on everything from "laptop computers to movies to political candidates," then you have an idea of what DEJA.COM is all about. The site offers ratings, discussions, and reviews on topics that fall under headings like Arts & Entertainment, Computing and Technology, Money, Sports, and Travel. Within each of these groups, there are at least four or five subgroups that help you narrow your search.

Once you decide on a product or service, DEJA.COM offers three different evaluation methods - first there are ratings. According to the site, this consumer-driven ratings system currently covers more than 12,000 products, services and topics in more than 500 categories. Users can contribute their experience with a particular product or service, and you can check with Deja Ratings to help decide whether or not you want to purchase it. The ratings are easy to understand, mostly

because the opinions and ratings come from normal, everyday consumers like yourself, and DEJA.COM's setup makes them easy to reference.

The second evaluation option is Deja Discussions. They are not really chat rooms, but more like message boards that let users post questions and responses to those questions in an easy to read format. You can find discussions on everything from student activism to what you would consider the best single game performance by a pitcher.

DEJA.COM also offers daily reviews of products like MP3 players, SUV's and sports equipment. The product reviewers are from all over the world, and offer diverse opinions on each product. Comments on the MP3 player ranged from "annoying audio flaws" to "I've had mine for about a year now...and I love it." These reviews can be helpful when you are considering whether or not to purchase a certain product, and DEJA.COM also offers links to such popular on-line merchants as AMAZON.COM and eBAY.COM. If you are still unsure after visiting the site, you can register for Deja Tracker

which will send you email alerts about new posts in your particular area of interest. I found the site easy to navigate, and very user friendly, even offering User Tours guided by Rover the dog, which will eliminate any uncertainties you might have about the site and how it works.

The large amount of information is a double-edged sword, however. With so many different reviews, it can be hard to decide which to believe and what decision to make. Also, every page of the site is full of advertisements and links from top to bottom, and the selections can sometimes be mind-boggling. There are times when the ads and the information on the site are in conflict, which is a definite downside.

Aside from these problems, the site does exactly what it promises to: it empowers you to make educated decisions about everything you buy, and it offers practical wisdom so that you can, in their words, "discuss...decide...purchase." (That is, if you have any money left after college).



The Beacon's New Advice Column

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STUDENT CLUB OF THE WEEK

Multi-Cultural Council

by Elizabeth Hayes
associate editor

Readers may remember the article two weeks ago in this column about the Student Government Association. This week's feature organization is quite similar to SGA.

The Multi-Cultural Council is the organization that helps to coordinate other diversity-focused organizations on campus. The seven organizations that MCC represents are the Association of Black Collegians (ABC), the Asian Student Organization (ASO), the Organization for Latin American Students (OLAS), the National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE), Returning Adult Student Organization (RASO), Trigon, and Women Today. Also, MCC is trying to organize an International Student Organization to support international students on campus and to promote cultural diversity.

The Multi-Cultural Council is also an independent organization all on its own. It has its own budget and its own agenda. It has its own executive board and its own activities. According to club president Shamira Williams, MCC serves two major purposes, "To act as a liaison between SGA and diversity focused organizations, and to promote, encourage, teach and preserve diversity among the College and Erie's community."

While both MCC and all the individual organizations have their own budgets, MCC can also provide additional moneys if the organizations should encounter a situation where they are in need of funding. The diversity-focused organizations go to MCC for additional funds before going to SGA or the Student Activities fund. MCC is funded through SGA and fund-raising-just like other student organizations.

MCC also sponsors some activities in conjunction with the other organizations. Some major events MCC sponsors include the Ice Cream Social and Fall Dance during Orientation week, the Harambee Dinner last Wednesday, a Cultural Week in November, Holiday Carnival in December, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January, and the Spring Carnival around Easter.

The individual organizations also sponsor their own events. Some to look forward to this year include a Black History Contest from ABC, a Fashion Show from NSBE, the Friday Fiesta from OLAS, the Women Film Series from Women Today, and Sex Cabaret from Trigon. Events currently in the works are a Casino Night from NSBE for October 1st, Spanish Heritage Month from OLAS, and a Diversity Series from MCC.

MCC has public meetings every other Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. in the

MCC suite. This suite is located in the rear of the first floor of the Reed Building, across from the mailbox wall. The next meeting will be on October 6, 1999. Once again, all meetings are open to the public.

In addition to the Multi-Cultural Council, all of the other seven diversity-focused organizations share office space in the MCC suite. There are four offices in addition to a group meeting space. Trigon and RASO; ABC and OLAS; and ASO and NSBE share offices and phone lines. Each organization has its own staffed office hours, which are posted inside of the MCC suite. If students are interested in joining the club, the suite is full of people almost all day during the week. Or, the Multi-Cultural Council can be reached by phone at extension 6098.

When asked what she would most like others to know about the Multi-Cultural Council, Williams said, "The MCC is a wonderful place to come and expand your mind about different cultures. It appears that many students are discouraged from coming in because they feel they do not belong because they do not fall into one of the ethnic or racial groups which fall under MCC. However, college is supposed to be a learning experience--come and learn about others' cultures and teach someone else about your culture."

B.R.U.N.O.S. is back for weekend

by Kellie Chase
staff writer

With Fall Festival / Parents and Families Weekend upon us, there are numerous activities taking place on campus. One activity that should not be missed is the Behrend Studio Theatre's encore production of B.R.U.N.O.S., which is Behrend's first original musical. The play was first performed last April, but due to limited seating, all were not able to be accommodated. If you missed your chance last spring, this is your opportunity to find out what you were missing.

Through B.R.U.N.O.S., the Matchbox Players take a comical look at

college life at Behrend during Freshmen Orientation. The setting of the play takes place in the basement of the Otto Behrend Science Building and is fueled by the imaginations of the students with sightings of the ghost of Otto Behrend.

In the spirit of the weekend, the majority of the original cast will be returning to star in the roles they played last spring. Since that performance, a lot of the actors have either graduated from Behrend and now live throughout the country, or they have transferred to University Park to complete their education. Regardless of where they are in their lives now, they have all taken time out to return to Behrend and be a part of the very special performances this weekend.

The script is written by two former Penn State Behrend students, Joe Getway and Dallas Skeens. Getway graduated from Behrend last May as an English/Creative writing major. Skeens is now at University Park, majoring in philosophy and Russian. Members of the cast include Ryan Cannon, Erin Costello, Leo Hanley, Bethany Cummings, Jessica Dows and Dr. John Champagne as the ghost of Otto Behrend.

Show times for B.R.U.N.O.S. will be at 6:00 and 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 25th and at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 26th. Admission to the play is free, but reservations are required and may be obtained by calling 898-6016.

HOROSCOPES

Aries (March 21-April 19). Do not go to something that you really don't want to attend, no matter what your significant other might say.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Live dangerously, eat at Dobbins!!!!

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Call your parents and let them know that you're still alive!

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Words to live by - more studying, less partying!

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Try new things this weekend, they could lead to something very special.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Go swing dancing and make new friends!

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A big test may cause you problems this week, put in some extra study time.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Sunlight is your friend, try leaving your TV for awhile and enjoy it while it lasts!

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Respect other people's viewpoints this week; you might learn something.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Three feet of garbage on your floor does not make your room look "lived in." Clean it up!

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb 18). Make time for yourself this week, you need to unwind and relax more!

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Watch your money this week, unexpected expenses are always around the corner.



by Bongo the three legged monkey

WHEN MILK GOES BAD.

