

# Meet me at the LRC

## Students 'star-struck' at Astronomy Open House

by Erin McCarty  
staff writer

All students could use a little bit of help now and then. Whether it's tutoring in an especially difficult subject, reading and offering suggestions for a paper or providing information about Behrend's Study Abroad programs, the staff of the Learning Resource Center (LRC) is eager to assist students in any way they can. And the cost? Absolutely nothing.

Although the Learning Resource Center, located on the uppermost floor of the Behrend library in the Academic building, is not new to Behrend, some of its programs are. Just last year advising for study abroad was made available through the LRC; prior to that it had to be done through the Provost's office. An extra emphasis has been placed on international studies of late.

"It is becoming more and more beneficial for students to study abroad," said Ruth Pfeuger, Coordinator of the Learning Resource Center. "Businesses look very highly upon international experience when interviewing new employees."

In keeping with this theme, lan-



PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER

QUIET STUDY TIME: A peaceful moment at the LRC.

guage tutors for French, Spanish and German have been added to the LRC this year. Tutors in other subjects have been added as well, to the point that all four academic schools at Behrend are amply represented. Students seeking help with writing can drop into the LRC at the appointed times, and students who could use a few pointers in math can go to the Math Lab in the Behrend Science Building (when

it is open).

"Most of the math classes are on that side of campus," explained Pfeuger, "and there are always math teachers around. This makes it very convenient for the students."

Students who need tutoring in other areas must make an appointment by phone (898-6014) or through the website [www.pseric.psu.edu/learnrc](http://www.pseric.psu.edu/learnrc). The website will soon include lists of

scholarships and fellowships that students might be interested in. Also in the works is a directory of the tutors available, which would include each tutor's name, semester standing and major. All but one of the tutors are students. A 3.0 GPA and two recommendations are required to become a tutor, and many of the LRC tutors have also won University awards.

Some of these tutors are also serving as Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders. This program is designed to help students in historically difficult courses by providing them with the voice of experience. SI leaders have already taken the course in question and take it along with the current class. They then conduct study sessions three times a week. Studies have shown that students who faithfully participate in these study sessions are likely to raise their grade by one full letter. Supplemental Instruction is currently being offered for Chem 12, Physics 211, Econ 2 and Math 140.

"Our long-term goal for the Learning Resource Center is to service students at all levels for all of their needs," said Pfeuger. "We are very open to student suggestions; we're here for them."

by Nicole C. Greene  
staff writer

On Thursday, September 23, Behrend held the first Open House Astronomy Night for the 1999-2000 school year. The guest speaker for the evening was Dr. James Kastings, professor of Geoscience at University Park. His topic was "Searching For Life on Extrasolar Planets."

The lecture, which was held in the Otto Behrend Science Building, brought a large crowd. The lecture hall was filled to capacity and had several people sitting in the vestibule of the building, watching the presentation from a television screen.

Dr. Kastings spoke about the many attempts to find life on planets outside of our solar system. Thus far, 18 planets have been discovered; yet, none of them remotely compare to Earth.

Questions have constantly arisen as to whether or not there are chances of finding planets similar to Earth.

Included in the presentation were several slides, one of which gave information on the size of the 18 planets that have been discovered. It is noted that most of these planets are larger than Jupiter. Another slide provided the reasons why Mars is a non-habitable planet.

There were two prominent reasons: the first being that Mars has an extremely cold temperature of -55 C. Because there is no internal heat: the

planet has no way of recycling carbon dioxide—a necessary component of existing life. A second reason is that it has a high energy UV radiation. There was, however, a geologic history showing evidence of a flowing liquid that is believed to be water.

Of the 18 planets that have been discovered by astronomers, none look a bit like ours. What have been discovered thus far are mostly giant planets that are orbiting small distances. Dr. Kastings explained that, "We can't see anything like Earth yet, but we hope to do so in the very near future."

Chances of finding an earth-like planet in another solar system are pretty good. According to the professor, NASA thinks they can look for earth sized planets 30-40 light years away. Visions of these could develop by the year 2012.

Dr. Kastings brought a lot of interesting information to the students and faculty of Behrend. After the lecture, he responded to questions raised by the audience and invited all those who were interested to observe the night sky through the telescopes in the observatory. Both students interested in astronomy, as well as those in astronomy courses, enjoyed the presentation and information provided by Dr. Kastings.

Be sure to attend the next Open House in Astronomy Night on October 25, where the topic will be, "The Nature of Space."

# Sigma Tau Gamma to celebrate 10 year anniversary

by Angela Majoris  
staff writer

Starting today, the Sigma Tau Gamma fraternity will be spending the weekend celebrating their 10th year anniversary. Over 100 alumni members have planned to return for the weekend's festivities. Many arrived Wednesday and Thursday evening.

Current members and alumni began their celebration at 10:30 a.m. by meeting at Gospel Hill Golfers Club for a golf tournament. Also planned for the day is an 11:00 a.m. tour of

the campus and a Euchre tournament that will take place at the chapter house.

Saturday's events include breakfast at Jimmy Z's, mountain biking, an Alumni Association meeting, and Chucky Cheese's for the children of the alumni. The main event of the weekend is the Tenth Anniversary Dinner and Dance celebration. The formal will be held at a hotel in downtown Erie and will begin at 6:30 p.m. Sunday afternoon current members and alumni will gather for a "goodbye" lunch at the Delta Upsilon chapter house.

"We've been planning it for a year; we've seriously been planning it for about four months," said alumni president and founding father Richard Britt who did a lot of the planning for the celebration. Britt pledged in 1989, graduated with a degree in Business Economics in 1991, and is currently employed as a mortgage banker. "It was only difficult planning because we all have to work, my wife did a lot of the work."

Other members of the anniversary organizing committee were alumni Scott Warotka and Ryan Gilbert, and current member Brian Lindner.

"The planning actually went rather smoothly," said Lindner. In reference to Sigma Tau Gamma's history, Lindner explained, "We were colonized April 9th 1989, and chartered April 8th 1990. This year we paid off the house, we finally own it."

Many of the very first Sigma Tau Gamma members are planning to return or already have returned for the weekend. "This first person initiated, Chris Dean, will be back. It's neat for these guys to meet the people that they've been hearing of," said Britt. "It should be a good time."

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Franken continued from front page

This provoked Franken to lapse into the character that he was most famous for on *Saturday Night Live*, the 12 step un-licensed therapist Stuart Smalley. The audience roared with laughter as the student and Franken performed their take on this extremely popular character, which ended with Franken hugging the student, just as his character did on the show.

After the lecture, Franken was available for a book signing in the Erie Hall lobby. The bookstore had a stand set up for people to purchase Franken's books on the spot and have

them signed.

Franken's appearance at Behrend got the Speaker Series off to a good start. His lecture was very well received by the Behrend audience, as could be gauged by the amount of laughter and applause emanating from Erie Hall.



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Kris Motta, Assistant Director of Student Activities, has Al Franken sign one of his books.

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