

MY FAVORITE SPOT ON CAMPUS

STUDENTS IN COMMUNICATIONS 001 GIVE THE SCOOP ON THEIR FAVORITE "HOT SPOTS" AT BEHREND.



Erin's Tree at the Gorge

by Erin Henninger

I was worried that my favorite spot on campus would only be conducive to fair weather, but my tree at the lookout of the Wintergreen Gorge came through and proved to have an even more spectacular vista with the snow.

The best way for students to get a full appreciation of my tree is for them to take a good long walk, or for the more determined, a good long run, through the beautiful trails that run parallel to the Gorge on the western side of campus.

It is virtually impossible to get lost back there because the trails are so well worn. So there are no excuses for avoiding this awesome part of our campus.

The lookout point lies behind the parking lots of Ohio Hall. My tree is on the left, just at the edge of the slope. Like nature's Lazy Boy, the roots and trunk form a perfect recliner. You'll save yourself a trip to counseling and advising if you just come out here and unwind by watching, listening, and breathing in the serenity.

Look at the fall foliage, watch the birds practice for migration, breathe in the cool air, and clear your mind. Oh yeah, and watch your step.

The Dorm Room is a Hidden Gem

by Douglas Smith

Everyone has a place that relaxes them or brings them close to their friends, but often the dorm room is overlooked. Sure it can be rough if a roommate is not cooperative when it comes to compromising. Still, that place for rest, the bed, can make the difference between a good day and a horrible one.

As a new student, I have already taken on the motto of "Who Needs Sleep?" which is illustrated pretty well by the rock group Barenaked Ladies on their last album, *Stunt*. Anytime there is an opportunity to sleep, it should be taken. Somehow I find myself instead trying to work ahead, to watch television, or to be occupied by meaningless web pages. My average bedtime has become 2 a.m. because of some awkward will power to stay awake.

I work as a night assistant, so most would think that after the shift is over, it is straight to bed. Well the TV might be on and an unusual movie like *Casualties of War* may captivate my worn out interest. Also, it can be hard to adjust to a new bed, and a roommate's sleeping habits (no TV, radio, etc) are respected by the considerate.

The work can get to us all too. I have not been here too long, but a few tests required study time until 4 a.m. Of course, there are get-togethers that can occupy our time also, no matter what the objective of the meeting. For whatever reason, sleep seems to be one of the last things college students are looking for. My bed calls me a lot and since I do not get a chance to answer much, it has become my favorite spot here at Behrend. It truly gives a welcome rest. Of course, sleep debt goes away after a few weeks so I guess not getting to bed isn't that bad. No, I didn't mean that.



The Outlook at the Gorge

by Rehab Elzeney

A thin trail crawling through the middle of the woods, leaves and twigs crunching underneath your feet, the wind biting your face, strange sounds echoing in the distance. No, this is not a scene from *The Blair Witch Project*. It is the path that leads to my all-time favorite nature spot at Behrend: the Gorge.

I still recall the exhilarating view the first time I took that final step on the trail. That one step unexpectedly led me to the edge of the cliff, also referred to as "The Outlook." The magnificent drop off, the green blanket of trees below, the long stream that creeps through the valley, the mist that hangs over the tree-tops, the mysterious air of depth, the faded blue horizon and the adrenaline rushing through my mind. Definitely breathtaking!!

This is one spot at Behrend that provides a mixture of mystery, fear, serenity, and adventure. Whether in the middle of the scorching sun of the summer, or in the horrifying winds of winter, the beauty never ceases to captivate one's eye. So, take a book; take a pillow; take a friend; throw a pebble. Whatever you do, I can guarantee the thrill that the Outlook will provide. Being a nature lover, I revel in the beauty of the Gorge, and especially of the Outlook. Just make sure you don't take one too many steps on that trail....



Almy Study Lounge

by Jessi Dearolf

Of all the little nooks on campus, my favorite place to go is the Almy study lounge. The ironic thing about my favorite place is that I am not a residence of the Almy Hall, so I must be escorted to relax in my favorite spot. Whenever Raechel calls me to study with her, Daniel, and "J," I scurry around to find my books and I sprint up to Almy as fast as I can to take advantage of my limited, supervised study session.

What could possibly be so great about a study lounge? Well, this lounge is fully equipped with comfortable office chairs, an oval table for all to gather around, and a dry erase board, which is hidden in the cabinet on the wall. Not only does the dry erase board prove to be useful for math or chemistry problems, it is perfect for intense games of Pictionary during short study breaks.

I must say though, even with the wonderful atmosphere that the Almy study lounge provides, I still do not like to study, but at least here I can sit and savor my surroundings. I recommend the Almy study lounge to anyone who needs a new place to concentrate.



By the Observatory

By Leanne Acklin

Living in the "boonies," I discovered stargazing at a relatively young age. Regardless of the problem, all I had to do was look upward to a boundless sea of stars to realize how small the matter really was. Stargazing has been a saving grace throughout my life so far.

I viewed coming to Behrend as a stepping stone into my future, but more concretely as a smooth transition to University Park within the next year or so. No matter where I go, I will always have the stars to "guide" me, or at least to calm me. That is, unless the lights from campus are glaring in my eyes! Pretty and beneficial as they are, the lights along the walkways of campus hinder a decent view of the sky at night.

However, there is a satisfactory path around this obstacle, and it is to be found behind the Otto Behrend Science Building. There are no lights on the small section of land where the observatory is located, and the glow of the other campus lights is at a minimum. This is a decent place to set up a telescope and explore space, or to just look up at the sparkling beyond and wonder (wander?) aimlessly.

Because I often use the night's sky to set myself back in my place, the land around the observatory is my favorite site on campus.

First Floor of the Library

By Chantel Gray

I am a college student. I am a commuter. When I'm trying to study, it gets a little noisy around the house sometimes! Instead of losing my sanity and tearing the phone out of the wall, I go to the library. The first floor of the library is my favorite spot on campus, because it is where I go to study. I know that if I go there, I will get my work done. I am easily distracted while trying to study, so the library is a good place where I won't have any distractions. I would recommend the library to anyone who, like myself, is easily distracted and cannot find another quiet spot otherwise. At least there, you won't lose your sanity!



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Heavenly Devil's Backbone

By Erin McCarty

I follow the upward rambling path through the forest, making the short but arduous journey to my destination. The thick cover of trees gives way to a grassy clearing. I'm almost there. I carefully make my way along the cliff edge, taking care not to get too close.

And then I see it. It's a narrow cliff-top clearing, a combination of hard grey rock and pale green grass. From this unique vantage point, I can see for miles around. If I'm feeling especially brave, I may bend over and peek down at the creek rushing through the gorge. Looking up into the vast expanse of purplish pink sky, I think I catch a fleeting glimpse of a hawk preparing to begin his nightly prow. They call this spot Devil's Backbone, and a look over the edge easily reveals why. More than one student has lost his footing and succumbed to the icy grip of death below. Still, in spite of the dangers—or maybe in part because of them—I come here and feel invigorated. Abundant life surrounds me, and I fall to my knees in gratitude...as soon as I'm safe back in the woods!

The Creek through the Gorge

by Angela Majoris

The hike down may be a challenge, but it's well worth it. The slow moving water is the only sound that can be heard, which makes this spot a wonderful place to enjoy the peace of nature. The stresses of college life, the constant contact with people, and the many problems that everyone has at one point or another all seem easier to deal with when enjoying this serene spot. The trails down (if they are trails at all) are not always easy, but that makes the journey there so much more invigorating. The gorge is like a swallowed world, with the many demands of life lying far above. The creek can be as useful for celebrating a good day and a love for life as it is for washing away tears that no one else will ever need to see.



Niagara Study Lounge

by Jennifer Primerano

What has a carpet, four desks, a small couch and remains quiet? Yep, you guessed it...the second floor study lounge of Niagara Hall.

A few weeks ago, I had a big psychology test to study for on a Sunday night. My dorm room was invaded by tons of people saying "hi" after returning from weekends at home and eagerly volunteering details which I didn't have any time to hear. I had only been to the library once, and since it was a cold night, I didn't feel the urge to put on my coat and take the long walk down the hill. Also, I was in a bummy mood, modeling my cozy sweatpants and warm socks. I needed a comfortable place to study and memorize the intricate parts of the ear and eye that I would be tested on the next day.

That's when it happened! I asked a friend of mine if there was a study lounge somewhere in the building, and she directed me to the second floor room. The room was empty, so luckily, no one would distract me from my Psychology book. I quickly made myself comfortable on the two-seat couch and threw my brother my bookbag down beside me. Finally, I was ready to begin!

Occasionally, however, the girls in the adjacent room were quite loud, causing me to peek up from my notes every once in a while. I learned to block them out, or sometimes, I actually found myself laughing at some of the comments I overheard. Everyone needs a bit of humor when a stressful time approaches! That was the only drawback I discovered in the second floor study lounge.

I spent a few hours curled up on that couch, and no one else opened the door, except the RA on duty just checking things out as usual. Needless to say, I took the test the next day and got an A! That second floor study lounge in Niagara Hall is now my favorite place on campus!