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ended, the group gathered again for a tour of the monuments and memorials at night. Students posed for pictures on the lap of Albert Einstein, in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's waterfalls, and around the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. The group also showed their respect toward the Korean, Vietnam Veterans, and Iwo Jima Marine Corps War Memorials. Mike Frawley, who attended the trip for the second straight year commented on the night tour saying, "it was interesting to see the monuments at night. You get a whole new perspective."

The group toured the State Department and Capitol Building on Tuesday and relaxed momentarily on the House of Representatives floor (the House was not in session at the time). Kendra Sue Derby of the Ron Brown and Paul Tully Institute for campaign management at the Democratic National Committee headquarters took questions about the training she gives Democratic candidates on campaigning. Behrend student Matt Wiertel commented, "it was interesting to see how one of the most corrupt political organizations internally worked. If you want to learn how to illegally raise campaign contributions, much like Al Gore did in 1996, I recommend going on a DNC tour."

Wednesday was highlighted with a trip to Arlington National Cemetery where the group watched the Changing of the Guard before the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The day also featured a visit to the Newseum and meetings with representatives from the International Monetary Fund and from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a defense-related think tank.

One of the most enjoyable tours of the week took place on Thursday as the group walked through the halls of the Pentagon, learning about the daily operations of the military leaders that hold offices there. Katie Galley, another Behrend student commented on the tour, saying, "the seaman tour guide was very informative and pointed out the display about the Navajo Code Talkers from World War II." Liz Hayes added, "it was cool how they had a hot dog stand in the courtyard of the Pentagon."

Later that day, the students and faculty leaders posed for a picture with U.S. Senator Rick Santorum, who took time to answer some questions from the group.

Friday capped off the week's planned activities with a continental breakfast with U.S. Representative Phil English. English shared his views about the current presidential campaign and fielded questions about local issues, including the rising gas prices throughout the country. The rest of the day was free for students to visit sites that they didn't get to see during the week.

"The students had free time to visit Washington's many museums that we did not have time to see as a group," said Speel.

The group gathered at noon on Saturday to depart back to Erie after a week of nice weather conditions in the nation's capital. The students and faculty members slowly felt the transition from warm and relaxing Washington, D.C. to Erie, being welcomed back with none other than snow and ice.

SPAIN TRIP

by Kristine Harakal
business manager

From the authentic Spanish village of Toledo to the commercialized metropolis of Madrid, the students of the International Studies 497C class saw it all. Nineteen Penn State Behrend students spent their spring break traveling around Spain in order to experience the culture and improve their grasp of the Spanish language.

The journey began on March 3 when the students met at the Erie International Airport. It was non-stop fun from there. Upon arriving in Madrid, some students took it upon themselves to explore the city, while others chose to follow Dr. Juan Fernandez-Jimenez, professor of Spanish, on a guided tour. In the evening, everyone joined Fernandez-Jimenez in the heart of the city to experience Carnival.

A tour of the Prado Museum was the main event on Sunday, where students were able to admire the works of Goya, Picasso, and Dali. After-

wards, students took a walk through Retiro Park. That evening students enjoyed the Spanish discos.

On Monday, the long bus drive to Fernandez-Jimenez' hometown of Jaen began. There was a stop in Toledo where some people bought swords and jewelry. The Toledo Cathedral was toured in the evening.

At the request of the ten-year-old daughter of Dr. Dawn Blasko, the group spent Tuesday touring a castle in Jaen. Blasko, associate professor of psychology, brought her husband and two daughters to Spain with the students.

On Wednesday Fernandez-Jimenez received an award from and key to the city of Baena. The local television stations interviewed him, and there was an article in the local newspaper. He received the award for literary work that he is doing. After all of the paparazzi left, the group continued on their way to Granada to see the famous Mosque.

The beautiful castle of Alhambra was toured on Thursday. There the group explored the Generalife, or gardens, for two hours. Afterwards, it was off to the beach. The beach was enjoyed by most of the group as they stuck their toes in the water in order to say that they were in the Mediterranean Sea.

Friday was the day of leisure. Some students took a tour of the Baths and then the Cathedral in Jaen. Others caught up on some much needed sleep that they had lost from spending all of their nights at discos.

Saturday may have been the most authentic Spanish day of all. The group toured an olive oil factory and then had lunch at Fernandez-Jimenez' home with his family. After eating, Fernandez-Jimenez brought out his Spanish guitar and began playing some Spanish songs. His entire family sang along, and the few students that knew the words also joined in.

Sunday was spent traveling back to Madrid for the last night in Spain. Many students took advantage of the last night and went to a disco. Others rested for the morning that would come too soon.

The group departed from Madrid early Monday morning and arrived in Erie late Monday evening. The trip to Spain was not only a fun way to spend spring break, but was also a way to experience the culture of another country.

ALTERNATIVE
SPRING BREAK IN
JUPITER ISLAND,
FLORIDA

by Liz Hayes
news co-editor

While many students were lazing around over Spring Break, the members of Reality Check were spending their days helping the

environment. Nine students went to the Blowing Rocks Preserve on Jupiter Island, Fla. to participate in volunteer activities.

For the past year volunteers have been working at the nature conservancy, building a new trail that will run through the 73-acre Preserve. The trail is being designed to inform people of nature conservancy in general and about the native wildlife and foliage found on the Island.

The group of Behrend students performed various tasks while at the Preserve. They arrived on the Island every day around 7 a.m., Monday through Friday. Tasks there included designing and building a stone patio, building log fences that lined the trail, trimming trees bordering the trail, and mulching the trail itself.

In addition to working on Blowing Rocks, the group took two different field trips to local environmental sites. One trip was to a wildlife rehabilitation center, where the Sea Turtle Rescue Program is run. At this center, endangered sea turtles that have been wounded are rehabilitated before they are released into the wild. No turtles are kept permanently at the center.

The other trip was to another nature preserve that contained a large marshland. There the group learned about different types of native wild- and plant-life. They even got the chance to see baby alligators.

Before arriving at Blowing Rocks, the group stayed in Orlando on Saturday. Several students used this opportunity to check out the Universal Studios Theme Park.

Upon arriving at their destination Sunday afternoon, the group stayed the remainder of their trip in tents on a state campground. They even cooked their own meals a few times.

The group had some free time during the week. On Thursday night they went to a street party in West Palm Beach, enjoying the live bands and vendors. They also logged several evenings on the private beach co-owned by the Preserve and a few private homes.

The trip incurred few costs for the students. The Student Activities Fee provided some of the funding. Also, the group was able to take funds that had been allotted for the Baltimore trip that was scheduled for Fall Break but was canceled. Faculty and staff also donated funds. Students only had to pay for their meals in Orlando and for their breakfasts and dinners on Jupiter Island.

Janique Caffie, director of educational equity programs and the organization's advisor, also went on the trip. Shawna Pelasky, coordinator of Greek life and student leadership programs, also contributed heavily to the organization of the alternative break trips this school year.

This was the last alternative break trip planned for this semester. However, more trips are being

planned for the 2000-2001 school year. For more information about the trips, interested students should contact Pelasky in the Student Activities Office at x6171.

Read next
week's
Beacon for all
the fun and
sun of this
year's Spring
Break. Send
your stories
to behrcoll5
@
aol.com, by
Tuesday @
5:00 p.m.

Credit card debt a
growing concern
for college students

by Angela Majoris
staff writer

Tables filled with phone cards, gym bags, and am/fm radios may be a sign that Behrend is not immune to the persuasive tactics of credit card marketers. The tables' offerings in exchange for 15 minutes worth of credit card applications often keep a steady flow of students gathered in a scribbling fury.

"I got my Visa card here on campus. I wanted a free calling card - that's why I signed up. I didn't really think that I was going to use the card, but I ended up using it when I decided that I wanted a cell phone," said student Keenan Adams.

Credit card companies have begun to target college students, hoping that the students will become life-long customers of their cards and other financial products. Card issuers have also created plans that allow students to receive payments for having a friend sign up with the company.

"I have had a credit card since I was 16; my dad got it for me in case of emergencies. I got my own credit card when I came up here to school from one of the tables. It's the Penn State Alumni card. I usually use it for groceries, and the basic stuff I need," remarked student Jessi Dearolf.

Some card-owning college students have realized that using and making payments on their cards will help them establish credit. Unfortunately, most of these students are subject to

high interest rates. Though interest may be based on whether or not a student has a job and on any past credit history, most rates tend to be set at 17% or higher.

Some of the companies are receiving criticism for portraying a "plastic money" illusion, instead of the reality of debt.

"They shouldn't be targeting college students because we don't have any money and they know it," said Ryan Anderson, another Behrend student.

Many students are aggravated by the frequent soliciting from card marketers. This soliciting may include the tables seen outside of Bruno's, phone calls, or Internet advertising on college websites. One credit card marketer placed phone cards on his table to attract students, even though phone cards were not one of the gifts that could be received after applying. When asked about it, he openly admitted to this tactic.

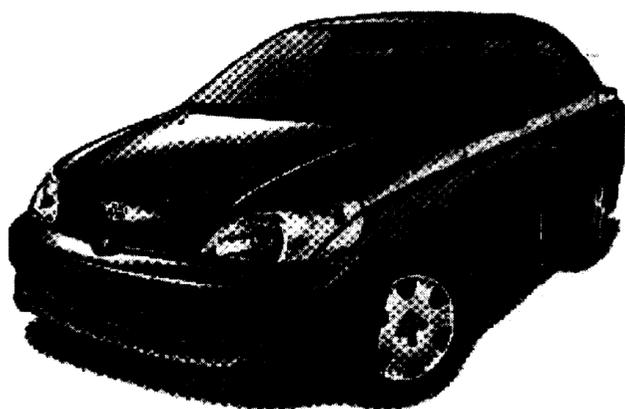
"I hate that we are called about the Penn State card all of the time. The tables don't really bother me; I just ignore them," student Justin Lennon explained.

Student Monitor, a marketing research firm in Ridgewood, NJ, has shown that more than half of students at four-year colleges have credit cards in their own names. Most of these students pay their own bills, and have learned to be responsible with their cards.



PHOTO BY CHARLES TESTRAKE
Students from the Washington D.C. trip take a ride on the Senate Subway from the Hart Senate Office Building to the Capitol.

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