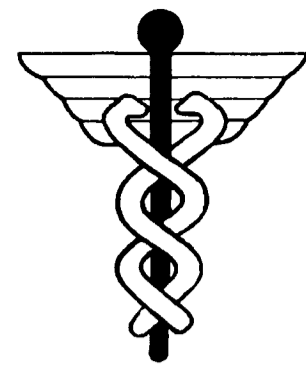




# Healthy living

in college and for life



## Persevering through tragedy and taking all life has to offer

by Sarah Orr  
staff writer

Many of us have heard stories of others beating the odds, overcoming extreme mental or physical barriers to triumph successfully in the end. They are very inspiring stories, but even more so when the person that it happened to is someone that we know. This is the story of one of those people. Her name is Raychel Vendetti, and she overcame daunting odds to beat cancer.

Raychel is a junior Communications and Media Studies major at Penn State-Behrend. Her story began in 1988; she was in second grade playing on the playground when she fell and hurt her knee. For three years she underwent intense physical therapy to help the recurring pains in her knee. She was sent to several hospitals in Erie, Pittsburgh, and Cleveland that diagnosed her injury from everything like arthritis to plain old growing pains.

Still in chronic pain, Raychel went to Shriner's Hospital in Cleveland for another opinion. They diagnosed her with synovial sarcoma, a cancer that infects the fluid in the body. The fluid surrounding her knee contained the cancerous cells. The doctors are not exactly sure what caused the cancer, but it is a rare type. Only one in ten children are afflicted with it.

Raychel faced various treatment options, but following the advice of her doctors, she decided the safest and surest way to prevent the cancer from spreading was to have her leg amputated. And that's what she did; at the end of 5th grade, on April 11, 1991, Raychel's leg was amputated about 5 inches above her knee. The operation was successful. She underwent a year and a half of chemotherapy in Cleveland and has been cancer free for nine years.

Raychel feels that the ordeal has made her a stronger person. She says that she sees things from a different perspective now. She has an extremely positive attitude, an appreciation for friends and family and a respect for life. Raychel has become very close with her family, especially her mother because of the time that they spent in and out of hospitals. Faced with the same obstacle today, Raychel is unsure of how she would handle it. Being a small child at the time that it occurred, she felt that it was just something that she had to endure.

Raychel did not begin her college career at Penn State-Behrend. She started as a freshman at Edinboro University. Being more handicapped accessible than Behrend is, Edinboro was her school of choice. But on-campus living was not as easy as one might imagine. There are situations such as dormitory living and trips to the communal bath-



PHOTO BY JASON SNYDER

Raychel Vendetti is now a junior at Behrend. Concentrating on her studies and making the most out of life are two things that are important to her.

room for a shower that did not prove conducive to Raychel's living needs. She decided to move back home and pursue a degree at Behrend. She is very happy with the strides that Behrend is making with the addition of many new handicap accessible features.

Raychel would someday like to have a career in broadcast journalism, as well as become a motivational speaker for children with can-

cer and cancer survivors. For those suffering a similar ordeal, Raychel offers these words: "Don't think about it. Stay strong and be positive." She commented that if there is a struggle that you must go through, you cannot dwell on the fact that you have cancer. You have to focus on the positive to overcome it. And she is living proof that this motto works.

October is National Vegetarian Awareness Month. Here is a recipe that veggie and meat eaters alike will enjoy!

### Red Pepper Hummus

- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 15 1/2-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1/4 tahini (sesame seed paste) or smooth peanut butter
- 1/4 cup chopped (jarred) roasted red peppers or pimento
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/3 cup fresh copped flat leave parsley

Mince the garlic by dropping it through the feed tube of a food processor or blender while the motor is running. Stop the motor and add the chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, olive oil, salt, cumin, peppers and paprika. Process until smooth. Add the parsley and pulse just until blended. Makes 2 cups.

Nutrients per 1/4 cup: 115 calories, 4 grams protein, 11 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams fiber, 7 grams fat, 0.5 grams saturated fat, 0 milligrams cholesterol, 155 milligrams sodium.

## Don't forget to donate blood!

Where: The Reed Commons  
Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2000  
Time: 11-4p.m.

A student gives blood at the last annual blood drive. It's quick, not terribly painful, and you'll be helping out people that need it!

PHOTO BY JEFF MILLER



### Want to advertise your Healthy business?

The Healthy Living page is a monthly supplement and is read by over 3,700 students. It will run again in November. Send in your ads now! Call 898-6488.

Do you have a human interest story? Or know of one that you would like to share? Email or call us here at the Beacon.

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On The Lighter Side  
**Katie Galley**

## Breathing and flexing to a new mind: is yoga for you?

There are many misconceptions about yoga. It's for those new Age people, you have to be a contortionist to do it, that it's not medically beneficial. All of those assumptions are incorrect.

There are many people that do not consider themselves 'New Age' that participate in yoga. Actors such as David Duchovny and Madonna praise yoga and its benefits. There are even two yoga classes offered here at Behrend.

While flexibility is something that yoga will enhance, it is certainly not something that is crucial to beginners. There are different levels of yoga for all stages of learning. A well known yoga position that almost everyone has done is sitting 'Indian Style', and while that's not its technical name in yoga, the movement behind it is the same.

The practice of yoga can benefit

the body in ways probably not thought of. It does increase flexibility, and it also helps align the body. Muscles are not the only things that will benefit from yoga, it can make the spine healthier too. All of these things together changed my mind about yoga.

Yoga was introduced to me my first semester here at Behrend. After a few weeks of discovering how tight my muscles were and exactly how inflexible I was, yoga became easier. I found out that by doing yoga, I was feeling healthier, I had more energy and that I was a lot less stressed out.

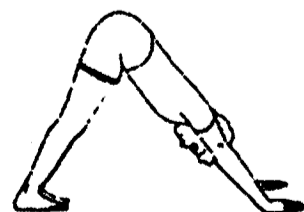
Yoga focuses on not only controlling the movement of the body, but it focuses on the movement of the breath through the body. A simple explanation in layman's terms is that through the controlled and focused movements of the breath and body during the yoga practice, one can focus the mind, body and spirit into one, and live a happier life because of it.

As I mentioned before, there are

different levels of yoga, and there are also several types of yoga. Here are four basic yoga positions and explanations of how to do them.

#### Downward Facing Dog

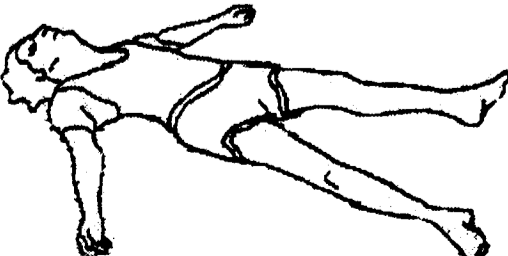
Starting with hands and knees on the floor, position hands directly



hips. Taking several breaths through the nose, on an exhale push the hips backward and up into the air. Start with the knees bent and arms straight. Continuing to breathe through the nose, lengthen through the spine and push heels toward the floor. Stop when the position becomes uncomfortable. Benefits of this position include flexibility of the back and strengthening of the abdomen muscles.

#### Corpse

While this pose looks easy, some people say that it is difficult due



to the fact that you have to totally relax your body to achieve the full effects of it. The best way to start this pose is to lower yourself slowly to the floor, one vertebrae at a time. Once you feel your body completely on the floor, try to find the correct spacing of the legs and arms. This is achieved by bringing the feet together and gradually moving them apart, pausing along the way to see if you can feel tension anywhere in the body, especially the back. Select the position with the least amount of tension. The same is done with the arms, noting the tension in the shoulders and upper back. To position your head correctly, without raising your head, move the chin toward and away from the chest. Slowly roll it from side to side. Find the place with the least tension. Benefits of corpse pose include all the muscles in the body relax, and it

allows energy to flow freely throughout the body. I feel the best time to do this pose is at the end of a yoga workout or when you are stressed, because it lets your mind clear and focus on the tasks at hand.

#### Cobra

Start by laying on your stomach. Place the hands on the floor beside your chest, fingertips at the top of the shoulders. Make sure that feet are on the



floor with toes outstretched. Slowly lengthen the neck on the first inhale. Elongate the spine starting at the base of the skull all the way to the lower back. It may appear that you are using your hands to hold your upper body up, however, that is achieved through the elongation. Keep your elbows tucked in and your shoulders down. Make sure that legs and buttocks are relaxed and heels remain together. Come down in the reverse order, slowly, the chin touching the ground last. Benefits of this pose are that it

makes minor adjustments in the vertebrae. Relieves back fatigue. Strengthens ab muscles. Promotes elasticity of the spine.

#### Mountain

This is a standing pose. Stand with big toes touching, heels one inch apart. Knees are straight, but not locked, and the hips are in line with the ankles. Move the shoulders up, back and then down. Spread the chest and bring shoulders over the hips. Either keep arms at the sides lengthening down or in a prayer position in front of your heart. Benefits include balance and steadiness of the mind.

Remember that yoga is not for everybody. If you have a neck or back condition or are pregnant, check with your doctor first before beginning yoga or any other exercise routine. And 'no pain no gain' does not apply here. If something hurts, then stop, you are moving too fast.

