

Babes In Arms to open in the ARC

by Jermaine Hardy
features co-editor

"They have been practicing everywhere—even a gym if you can imagine that" is a line stated by a character who is a press agent in Behrend's Spring Musical Comedy *Babes In Arms*, a play about a group of college "would-be" actors and actresses at a summer theatre in New England. It is a line, which is ironic because it literally reflects the dilemma faced by the actual actors and actresses who make up the cast of *Babes In Arms*. "It is a story about a group of college kids who want to do a show so bad that they will do it anywhere," said the play's director Tony Elliot, describing the irony between the actual story line of the play and the situation he, the actors, and crew faced in producing the play. Also commenting on how close to home the play hit, Jeanine Noce, a freshman at Behrend, who plays an apprentice for the "Surf and Sound Playhouse" stated that, "I think that the students will love it

because it is a play about college students and the challenges they face doing something they really want to do."

The play itself focuses on the fun, frustrations, and romances that take place with a group of passionate, aspiring performers as their tyrannical producer works them so hard that they never have a chance to display their own talents. The mayhem ensues when they decide to produce their own show on their own time.

In preparation for the play's opening night on March 21, the cast has made the best out of rehearsing in the Studio Theatre, which has been a construction site for the past couple of weeks, as set builders drill, paint and construct the set, which will be moved to the play's actual holding place, the Athletic and Recreation Center. It was only starting this past Wednesday that the cast of *Babes In Arms* actually got to take on their last couple of rehearsals in the ARC where the musical will take place.

In order for the play to take place from March 21 to March 25, Elliot and crew have been making much preparation to make the playgoing experience a special one for audiences. With the production, they have faced the difficult challenge of turning the ARC's gym into a theatre. The event as a whole is one that will celebrate Behrend theatre and the opening of the Athletic and Recreation Center as a new edition to the Behrend campus.

Babes In Arms, originally presented in New York in 1936, is a musical comedy with lyrics by Lorenz Hart and music by Richard Rodgers. The performance schedule for *Babes in Arms* in the Athletic and Recreation Center consists of the following dates and times: March 21, 22, 23, & 24 at 8:00 and March 25 at 2:30 pm. Tickets are on sale at the R.U.B. Desk.



Members of the cast of *Babes In Arms* ready to put on a special performance at Behrend's new Athletic and Recreation Center.

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The Irish Rovers roll a concert to Mercyhurst College

by Erin McCarty
assistant news editor

While most of Erie celebrated Mardi Gras on February 27, Mercyhurst College housed a crowd of Irish enthusiasts who wouldn't wait for St. Patrick's Day to break out wearin' — and, more importantly, the singin' — o' the green. The Sisters of Mercy in Erie, PA, brought the Irish Rovers to the D'Angelo Auditorium, "the most intimate hall in Erie." Tickets were twenty dollars, twenty-five for Gold Circle seating.

The Irish Rovers, a band which has been performing for 38 years, now consists of George and Joe Millar, Wilcil McDowell, Wallace Hood, John Reynolds, Sean O'Driscoll, and Kevin McKeown. Each member

brings something special to the band. George, whose fiery red hair fits his Irish mischievousness, is the leader who lends his songwriting talents to the group as well as his voice and guitar-playing skills. Joe, cousin to George, is primarily known for his deep, rich voice, which is so suited to Irish ballads, but he also plays the accordion and bass, and is a whiz with the harmonica, and has a knack for making a pair of spoons "sing". The robust John Reynolds is the resident joker, always ready to add a healthy dose of Irish humor to a song or story. His vocals, bass, tin whistle, and guitar are welcome additions to the songs.

Wilcil, the only original Rover besides George and Joe, displays astounding mastery of the accordion.

In addition to his vocal talent, Wallace is adept at playing an impressive array of stringed instruments and employs the tin whistle with stirring beauty.

Kevin McKeown strives to always find the perfect percussion for each song, even if it means making use of something that isn't exactly what you would consider a musical instrument. Sean is not able to join the Rovers for many shows, but he was able to make it to Erie, and he added a third accordion, three different stringed instruments, and a fine voice to the group.

The Irish Rovers are known for concerts, which seem more like a party, and the concert in Erie was no exception. All right, so the audience members didn't pass around a bottle

of whiskey as George suggested, but they clapped heartily to most of the songs and sang along to several. The show began with "The Irish Rover," a rollicking song about a shipwrecked vessel. Most of the songs, which the Rovers pulled from their repertoire, were similar in nature to this one, loud and rowdy with lots of opportunity for crowd participation. Newer — and slower — songs included "Erin's Green Isle," a lovely song written by George and sung by Joe, "Down by the Lagan Side," the beautiful title track of their latest album, and "In the Bushes of Jerusalem," an unconventional ode to the famous "rebel of Jerusalem" who lived 2000 years ago.

Among the old favorites were "Good Luck to the Barley mow," a

recitation of all of the Irish measurements for containers of beer, "Black Velvet Band," the tale of a poor young fellow sent to Australia for a crime he didn't commit, and "Little Brigid Flynn," the song of a bachelor pining after a lovely young lass.

The Irish Rovers entertained for a good two hours, interspersing their music with amusing anecdotes, mostly provided by John, who was occasionally chided by George for going a little too far with his humor. He had an arsenal of mother-in-law jokes and drew the crowd's dubious sympathy when he recalled his childhood of living in a two-bedroom house with his grandparents and twelve siblings and attending a school run by "the sisters of little or no mercy". He also told some pretty

good jokes illustrating the differences between Scots, Brits, and Irishmen.

The encore brought the evening to an energetic close with "What Wid Ye Do With a Drunken Sailor," a raucous sea shanty that required the audience to take on the roles of the shantymen and the drunken crew. But the show's highlights were the band's trademark, "The Unicorn," Shel Silverstein's account of Noah's flood and why there are no unicorns today, and "Wasn't that a Party," a rowdy rock and roll number written by Tom Paxton after witnessing a traditionally wild Irish Rovers party. Tomorrow Erie citizens will celebrate Saint Patrick's Day with parades, parties, and perhaps a wee pint or two. The members of that Irish Rovers concert got a two-week headstart.

Animal cruelty arouses concern in Erie and nation

by Mark Benko
staff writer

"If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog," once quipped Harry Truman. If he were alive today, he may want to qualify that statement considering the recent attention given to the misuse of man's best friend, and the deadly consequences that may result.

The focus of the nation has turned to dogs lately, since the tragic and brutal mauling of 33-year-old Diane Whipple, a San Francisco lacrosse coach, was reported in newspapers, magazines, and national and local television news broadcasts.

Apparently Whipple was attacked by two canines weighing a total of 235 pounds as she attempted to enter her apartment. The attack was so gruesome that the attending police officers needed trauma counseling. It was reported that the only article of clothing left on the body was one sock.

The dogs, a mix of English mastiff and Canary Island cattle dog, (the latter so fierce that it has been outlawed in Spain since the 1930s) were trained as attack dogs by the adopted son of the owners, two San Francisco attorneys. The son, an acknowledged Aryan supremacist, is now serving a life sentence in California's maximum security Pelican Bay prison for unrelated crimes. He reportedly ran an attack dog ring from behind bars.

According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the dog's previous owners stated that they had killed chickens, sheep, and a family cat. *Time* magazine reported many neighbors lived in fear of the dogs. Although the owners deny any culpability, local district attorney Terrence Hallinan has stated publicly that an argument could be made for a second

degree murder charge. Charges are pending.

Locally, Merle Wolfgang and Jennifer McCarthy, both of the Erie Humane Society, commenting on the tragedy, noted that there are many dogs in the Erie area that were raised to be mean. "People have no business raising dogs to be like that. It is another form of animal cruelty. Last year there was an organized dog fighting establishment shut down on Erie's lower east side. There are rumors that some of this activity is still going on, and it is an area of concern."

But the attention given to canine misuse was not limited to San Francisco, for it reared its ugly head right here in Erie's own back yard last month.

"Shocked and disgusted" was all Jennifer McCarthy could say to sum up local reaction to the forced removal of 50 dogs and 13 cats from the Kinamin Animal Shelter, located just southeast of Waterford Borough.

"People who are cruel to dogs are just plain stupid — and they deserve to have the same treatment they dish out put on them," volunteered Judy Jez, describing herself as a concerned citizen who had stopped by the shelter on Monday to possibly adopt one of the dogs.

The Kinamin Shelter was closed down two weeks ago when its owner, Mildred Cochran, pleaded no contest to an animal cruelty charge, and was given a \$100 fine. "The conviction of the charge will open the way for her license to be revoked," stated Chief Investigating Officer Merle Wolfgang.

"Conditions in the kennel were terrible," continued Wolfgang. "The animals were living in dung filled cages with no heat. Some had open sores that were untreated. Water dishes were frozen. There was an

overwhelming odor of ammonia, and every single dog had worms."

"There were animals with hair that had become matted with urine and feces, and some of the dogs are still too underweight to be shown," added McCarthy, while noting that one of the dogs had died a few days earlier. There was speculation that some of the dogs had lived practically all of their lives in cages. The shelter had been operational since 1991, assisted by a \$50,000 government grant.

"There is a lot of ignorance and cruelty around. The hardest part of my job is rescuing animals from a bad situation, and then not being able to find them a home. But as far as the dogs being euthanized is concerned, there is no special time limit for that. As long as we have room, and the dogs remain healthy and in good temperament, they will be cared for." On a positive note, McCarthy added that 6 of the dogs had been placed in good homes. She attributed the good public response to all three of Erie's television stations carrying the story, as well as the area's newspapers.

Currently 35% of American households have dogs. According to animal behaviorists, the majority of dogs who display aggressive tendencies have not been spayed or neutered. Larger breeds possess the capability of crushing 2000 pounds per square inch, which is enough to break the femur bone in a full-grown cow. Once a dog has tasted human blood, it is more likely to repeat the offense.

According to ABC news, many cities are making it illegal to own and train attack dogs. Vicious dog laws are being enacted all over the country, such as Baltimore, where dog attacks are equated with similar liabilities as a firearm.

According to Merle Wolfgang of the Erie Humane Society, since the Behrend campus is located next to Wintergreen Gorge, for the past 50 years it has been one of the leading dog run sites in the city, thus it might be wise to review what to do in threatening situations.

1. Shield yourself — hold your backpack or anything you have in front of you.
2. Do not run or scream.
3. Stay calm and stand perfectly still.
4. Speak firmly, but don't yell.
5. Command the animal by saying: No, Sit, Stay, Down or Go Home!
6. Don't stare at the animal. Look over its head.
7. Back away slowly.
8. Do not turn your back on the animal.
9. Never try to stop an animal fight.
10. Leave injured, sick, or dead animals alone, and get help.
11. Leave all wild animals alone, especially when seen during the day.

People can stop by the Humane Society on weekdays from 1:00pm-4:00pm. It is located just across from the Erie Zoo at 418 West 38th Street. Information about adoption can also be obtained at the web site (www.goerie.com/humanesociety).