

Babes In Arms is a hit at opening night in the A.R.C

by Jermaine Hardy
features co-editor

This past Wednesday Behrend's Spring Musical "Babes In Arms" opened in the new Athletic and Recreation Center. Presented by the Penn State Behrend Studio Theatre and the Music Department, the play focuses on the mayhem that takes place amongst a group of college age would be actors at a summer theatre in New England. The students get tired of the demanding conditions under their producer Seymour Fleming played by Dan Schiesser, and decide to produce their own play, which they call "The Review."

Kicking off with the comical narration of "The Press Agent," played by Michael Kupniewski, the play takes us back stage at the summer theatre, where we are introduced character by character to the theatre's cast as they tell the audience about their acting aspirations. This smooth opening then leads into the first musical number and theme song, "Babes In Arms." On first note of the melodic harmony displayed by the actors and orchestra, the audience is grabbed.

Setting a high-energy mood for the play, the theme song is soon interrupted by the theatre's owner, Fleming, (Dan Schiesser) who gives the actors the usual orders not to have fun while working for him. Reacting to the pressures put upon them by Fleming, the cast exposes to the audience their plans to produce their own play. Although it is no secret to Fleming, we soon find that their plans don't receive much support from him. The production of their play, as the actors advocate, will be a means of not only enjoying some creative freedom but also of helping Bunny Brown (Rebecca Wolford), assistant to Fleming to reclaim ownership of the summer theatre, since her father lost it as he owed debt to Fleming.

It becomes extra difficult for the actors' plans to be carried out, as the cast has to take their time and devote work to the production of Fleming's latest project, "The Deep North," which brings in big time playwright and director, Lee Calhoun played by Stephen Merritt. As the southern, "Yankee Hating," arrogant playwright and director, Merritt brings much life to the character. He does a good job of counterparting



Cast of "Babes In Arms" displays finale at opening night in the A.R.C

Fleming's character, as both are the comedic villains in the play.

While under the guidance of both a tyrannical producer and director, it becomes nearly impossible for the summer theatre's cast to work on both projects simultaneously. When show dates for the production of "The Deep North" conflict with the scheduled dates for "The Review," the actors become frustrated. As they

look to present their show on a special date in order to impress another big time producer, Steven Edwards (Michael Stephenson), who is set to visit the theatre for one day to view "The Deep North," the gang faces the troublesome task of either convincing the unsympathetic Fleming to let their show go on, or find another way to go about doing it on their own.

With much comedy being spurred

from the mayhem at the summer theatre, the play wouldn't be complete without the various romantic subplots. Stories of love are contributed to the play with the main characters Valentine White (Thad Esak), "The Review's" playwright and director, and Susie Ward (Mary Beaumont.) The love struggle proceeds as Susie attempts to win the love of Valentine but is belittled by him as he confesses to her that she is too young. The battle for Val's love becomes even more intense when Val becomes infatuated with famous actress Jenifer Owen, who comes on the scene as "The Deep North's" star. Other love games take place amongst characters Gus Field (Leo Hanley) and Terry Thompson (Andrea Rodriguez) who are the bad boy and bad girl of the play. The intertwined working of plot and subplot was gracefully performed by all the actors and actresses. The overall story line written by George Oppenheimer is an intricate and interesting one given much justice by the cast who performed it.

On the musical note the performance was just as impressive. With remarkable renditions of tunes

like "My Funny Valentine," "I Wish I Were In Love Again," "Where or When" and more, the audience's ears are sure to be pleased. The orchestra made up of Behrend students and directed by Dr. Daniel Barnard and Dr. Gary Viebranz provided a musical score that was totally on point.

All that goes into good theatre production was present including superb lighting by technicians Amber Foster, Sam Roodman and Brittany Hess, sound by Adam Gaines and set construction by Theatre 189 (Troubled Youth With Power Tools). The production staff as a whole did a great job of replicating a real theatrical atmosphere in the Athletic and Recreation Center. The audience is sure to forget that they are sitting in a basketball court. The overall show is one I strongly recommend for all to go see. The remaining performance schedule for *Babes in Arms* in the Athletic and Recreation Center consists of the following dates and times: March 23, & 24 at 8:00 and March 25 at 2:30 pm. Tickets are on sale the R.U.B Desk.

Chico's Traveler's Inn: a nice place with a great taste



Outside of Chico's Traveler's Inn located on Main street in Fairview

PHOTO BY NEIL MAKADIA

by Karl Benacci
features co-editor

Not long ago, I had the opportunity to have dinner at Chico's Traveler's Inn, which is located on Main Street, in Fairview. A few of my friends and I decided to get a quick bite to eat before seeing a movie, so we chose Chico's, for my friend said that they served their food in a quick fashion.

When I entered the restaurant, I

noticed that there were three basic sections, which were the bar and two restaurant sections (smoking and non-smoking). My party and I chose to sit in the non-smoking section, which had a nice atmosphere to it, however, we could hear the people in the bar yelling and making strange noises.

After viewing the menu, I decided to order a basket of chicken fingers and french fries, which was served in no time at all. Overall, the meal was pretty decent. The chicken fingers

were good and the french fries (which came in a huge quantity) were also tasty. However, the best part was that my party and I only spent around a half an hour in the restaurant. Upon paying the check (the cost of my meal was approximately six dollars), my party and I left for our movie. Although it may not be the most refined restaurant, Chico's Traveler's Inn is a nice place to go for a tasty meal. I give Chico's Traveler's Inn *** stars.

Behrend's Foreign Film Festival features the Oscar Winning 'All About My Mother'

by Mark Benko
staff writer

On Tuesday, March 27, Penn State Erie, the Behrend College will present the film *All About My Mother*, a searing unforgettable slice of life directed by Pedro Almodovar and starring Antonia San Juan and Cecilia Roth. The film will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Reed Union Building Lecture Hall.

This will be the first film shown in the Women's 2000-2001 Foreign Film Series, and what a way to start. Winner of the 1999 Best Foreign Film Academy Award this one-of-a-kind roller coaster ride of emotion, tragedy, and most of all, irony, is filled with remarkably controversial characters.

Set in present day Spain, Almodovar takes us through an exploration of heartbroken maternal anguish and triumph that truly will



PHOTO BY TERESA ISASI

Antonia San Juan as Agrado and Cecilia Roth as Manuela.

be remembered and talked about for some time to come. Hats off to the Office of Student affairs for sponsoring it.

This film is for adults. It contains brilliantly acted frank portrayals of

about every kind of sexuality one can think of, without any vulgarity. This is untinted straight on realism that is not always pretty, but is unrelentingly honest.

Lennys Redondo 'falls in love' with her campus away from home

by Kristin Grudowski
staff writer

Imagine living in another country for eighteen years, and then moving about twelve hours away from everything and everyone who you had ever known. That is exactly what Lennys Redondo did when she moved from Puerto Rico to Erie, Pennsylvania, three years ago.

Redondo moved to Erie after visiting Behrend and falling in love with the campus and the people that occupied it as well. She enrolled as a Mechanical Engineering student, and was accepted at University Park last year. She decided to stay here at Behrend because of the friendships she had made and because of her appreciation for the faculty-student relationships.

Another aspect of Redondo's decision to attend Behrend was her mother's approval of the campus and the idea of her daughter leaving the island to pursue a further education. Families in Puerto Rico are structured in a much more intimate manner when compared to the modern American family. Redondo also noted the differences in U.S. and Puerto Rico's cultures. "The people here are more liberal and U.S. culture is more relaxed," Redondo said, continuing, "at home, our culture is based on respect and is much more conservative."

Food preferences in Puerto Rico and the U.S. also differ. While the U.S. is home to hot dogs and hamburgers, Puerto Ricans prefer "biftec con arroz y habichuela con amarillos," that is, Redondo's favorite food from home. In case you are interested in the English equivalent, it is beefsteak,



PHOTO BY NEIL MAKADIA

with onions, rice and beans. Redondo also noted the differences in the legal drinking ages of the countries. "I miss being of age, because the age at home is 18 and here it is 21."

Another major differences between Redondo's home and the U.S. is the weather. In Puerto Rico it is around 85 degrees in December, while we huddle closer together to conserve body heat to protect ourselves from temperatures below freezing. It was not until Redondo came to Behrend that she came in contact with such conditions. Her freshman year also marks her first experience with snow. "It was amazing, and I was so excited. My friends and I had a snowball fight, and then we used garbage bags to go sledding down a hill on campus," Redondo stated.

It is easy to see that the Puerto Rico native has effortlessly adapted to not only the changes in culture and weather, but also to Behrend itself.

Redondo is a member of ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers), the Behrend tennis team and a sister of Theta Phi Alpha.

Redondo's future plans include graduating from Behrend in the spring of 2003, and attending graduate school to become more familiar with Aerospace Engineering. Although she hopes to work for NASA someday, there won't be any trips to the moon planned just yet because Redondo is more interested in designing the spacecrafts.

Similar to how some have difficulties adjusting to a new school, adjusting to another country and culture can also be difficult. Redondo has proven to be successful in both transitions. "If I had to do it again, I would," she commented on moving to Erie. "Attending school in the U.S. is a very different experience. I am on my own, and I matured quickly because of the distance between my family and I."

LAST CHANCE TO CRUISE FOR CASH

Have you gone on a road trip lately?

If so, this is your last chance to write about it and send your entry to behrcoll5@aol.com no later than Tuesday, April 17, to be considered for winning \$250.

Cruisin 4 CASH

Win \$250

Contest Rules

Any Behrend student can submit a 300-500 word story about a road trip they have taken since the end of the spring 2000 semester. The trip must be more than 150 miles from the original location. A photo must accompany entry with sufficient proof that the trip was made. Insufficient proof will lessen chances to win contest. If more than one student took part in the road trip, only the student submitting the story is eligible, unless all members send name in with entry. If more than one student name appears on entry, prize will be divided amongst the students who entered. Send in entries as soon as possible to ensure publication in the Beacon. Only entries appearing in the Beacon will be voted on. Beacon members are ineligible and will vote on the winner.