

Behrend plays host to conferences

Campus takes turn at hosting state wide psychology conference

by John Federowicz
staff writer

The Reed Commons certainly appeared to be "shrinking" on Saturday, April 21, as the spacious room became thronged with psychology majors eagerly displaying posters and presentations representing months of meticulous research.

Students from western Pennsylvania were given a chance to display their hard-begotten work to the public last Saturday when the 29th Annual Western Pennsylvania Undergraduate Psychology Conference rolled into town. Since 1972, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Psychological Association has been lending the means for undergraduate psychology students in the area to show their research to colleagues and to inquisitive outsiders in an attempt to share ideas and encouragement.

By order of rotation, Behrend became the venue of this year's event: Dr. Dawn Blasko, head of Behrend's psychology department, and Drs. Eric Corty, Victoria Kazmerski, Charisse Nixon, and Carl Kallgren made up the conference committee that was at the heart of the organizational proceedings for the convention.

For the convention, there were two options for showing off undergraduate work. Students could opt either to display their research on paper-

board poster and engage in discussion with roving inquisitors in the Reed Commons, or, as an al-

ternative, they could present their findings in an oral recitation to a faculty member and a closed room of thirty people.

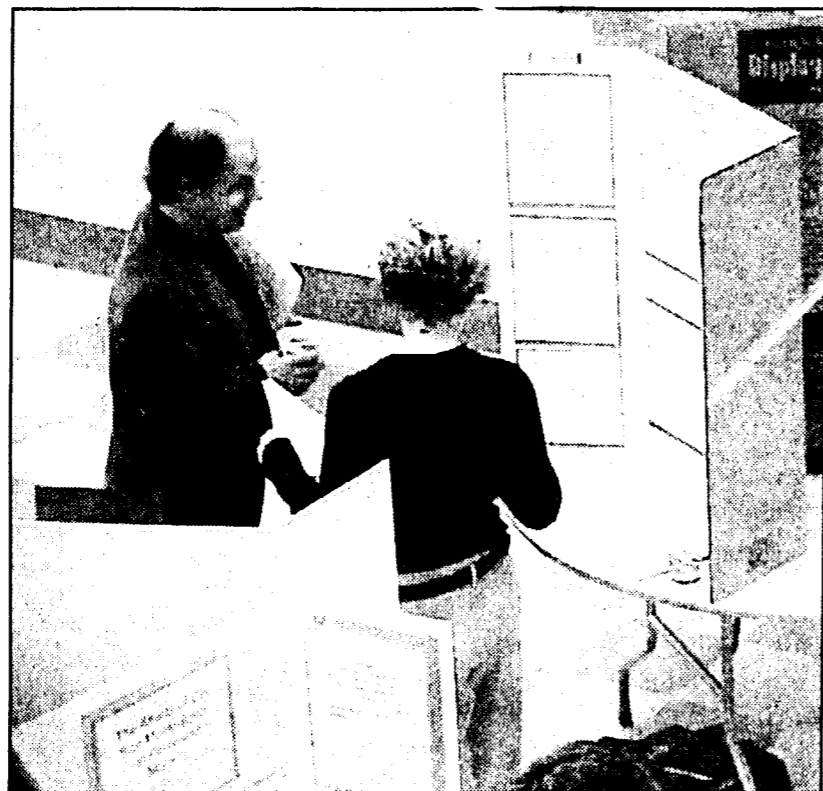


PHOTO BY NEIL MAKADIA

Students and professors observe poster presentations in the Wintergarden during the 29th Annual Western Pennsylvania Undergraduate Psychology Conference.

The topics entered into the convention ran the gamut of the physiological and sociological such as "The Relationships Between Shyness and Headache Suf-

Meeting Their Goals?" which was a timely project for this campus in that the work delved into the efficacy of certain campus curriculum.

Amy Brown, a student at Behrend and one of the compilers of research on the First-Year Seminars project interjected that

"the conference offers us a chance to show off work that might even prove to be a valid study to affect change in Behrend curriculum."

The conference had approximately 275 attendees and was a valuable tool for Behrend psychology majors who were required to attend.

The keynote speech of the day came from James S. Nairne, PhD, and professor of psychological sciences at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Nairne, who received his undergraduate training at the University of California at Berkeley and his PhD in psychology from Yale University, capped off the day with a discussion of the misconceptions surrounding our everyday notions of how memory functions.

Taking a contrarian, counterintuitive stance on how cognitive imprinting works, Nairne discussed how memory is not necessarily the storage of recollective "copies" but a reconstruction of sensory data that is, at times, prone to error. Dr. Nairne's zeal and quest for truth in his psychological research neatly epitomized the spirit of the day for all the convention participants at the 29th Annual Western Pennsylvania Undergraduate Psychology Conference — it was a quest for psychological truth that was, distinctly, the theme for the day at Behrend.

Disaster Preparedness Conference set this weekend

by Jake Boring
staff writer

Why will there be fire-trucks and ambulances at Penn State Behrend at the end of this spring semester? It's for the seventh annual Disaster Preparedness Conference scheduled for Saturday and Sunday at Penn State Behrend's Reed Union Building.

The Disaster Preparedness Conference is designed to educate those who have responsibilities relating to catastrophic emergencies. This includes fire fighters, EMS (Emergency Medical Service) workers, law enforcement workers, nurses, and also school board members. The conference is designed to teach procedures used in different catastrophic emergencies.

Richard Robie, chairman of the conference and the Fire Chief of Erie International Airport, said, "We hope that those who attend the conference will come away with an understanding of how to plan for this type of (catastrophic) emergency and respond effectively when necessary."

The speakers for the Disaster Pre-

paredness Conference come from across the country and represent many different fields. The speakers include Bruce Pringer from the Fire and Rescue Training Institute of the University of Missouri at Columbia; Glenn Miller of the Winner EMS Educational Institute; Terry Massie, D.M.D., Richard Boland from the University of Pittsburgh; Mark Ormsby from the Office of Naval Intelligence; Raymond DeMichael from Pittsburgh's Public Safety Department; and John Rinard who is an EMS instructor from Blinn College in Texas.

If interested in attending the conference, students should contact Cliff Moon at (814) 833-0187 in order to register or receive an information packet. Registration for the conference costs \$35, which includes a Saturday lunch, a Sunday brunch, and all printed materials for the conference. In addition to receiving a certificate, participants may gain continuing education credits as well.



PHOTO BY NEIL MAKADIA

The Undergraduate Research Conference was held in the Academic Building last Saturday. Undergrads from all four of Behrend's academic schools presented their research projects.

Campus honors outstanding students; says farewell to Dean Lilley

by Jenny Zhang
staff writer

The 40th annual Honors and Awards Convocation was held on Sunday in Erie Hall. Awards were distributed to worthy students, faculty, and staff. The ceremony also served as a farewell to Dean Lilley, as many students won't have the opportunity to see him after the semester ends.

The award recipients, faculty, staff, family and friends filled Erie Hall by 2 p.m. Dean Lilley made the welcome remarks, followed by the presentation of awards. The awards were categorized: Student Life Awards, Athletic Awards, Academic Awards, Special Service Awards, and Faculty and Staff Awards.

Student Life awards are designed to recognize students for their outstanding services in the college community to better the student life, including Intramural athletes of the year. Ken Miller, director of Student Affairs, Chris Rizzo, director of Student Activities, and Rob Wittman, Intramurals coordinator, presented these awards to recipients respectively. Among the Student Life Awards winners, Brandi Hovis won two of the seventeen awards: Most Outstanding Student Organization Officer and Student Government Association President's Award.

Athletic Director Brian Streeter presented Athletic awards to the athletes to recognize their outstanding athletic achievement and scholarship. Following were the Academic Awards that recognized students' academic excellence in writing; students in the Behrend Honors Program; and students that earned a perfect 4.0 cumulative grade point average in each class.

James Rusinko, a first year non-traditional student, won the President's Freshman Award for his 4.0 cumulative grade point average and Outstanding First-Year Student Award for his demonstration of outstanding promise of character, scholarship, leadership, and citizenship through

achievements in his or his first year of study. "I am very surprised that I actually won both awards. I hope I can set an example for the freshman class," said Rusinko.

Among all the winners in Special Service Awards, Jennifer Miles was the winner of Thomas H. Turnbull Award, recognizing her service to the student body as the Student Government Association president.

There were also two unique people who won the John W. Oswald Award, which recognizes graduating seniors throughout the entire University who have provided outstanding leadership in at least one of several areas of activity at the University. The two students were Marcus Kalivoda and Celene Yanosko. The unique aspect of their receiving this award is that they are engaged to be married.

"We are very honored and privileged to receive the award. We are also surprised that we both received the same award, and that is what makes it ever better and sweeter," said Yanosko.

Last but not the least, are the Faculty and Staff Awards that were presented by Dr. Bob Light, associate provost and associate dean; Dr. Jack Burke, senior associate provost and senior associate dean; and Dr. John Lilley. These particular awards reward faculty and staff for their outstanding dedication and service to the

college community.

Roger Owens and Mr. Robert Chamber both were the winners of the Benjamin A. Lane Outstanding Service Award. Owens has been in the college Maintenance Department for 35 years and has to be reminded to take a vacation. He will retire after this year. "It is a thrill to me to receive this award after being here for 35 years. It makes me feel very rewarding and honored," Owens said.

At the end of the ceremony there was a heartfelt moment for Dr. Lilley who is leaving Behrend after 21 years

of leadership to pursue his new position as the President of University of Nevada, Reno. There was a standing ovation when Dr. Burke made the announcement of Dr. Lilley's leaving after his years of leadership.

"In the last 21 years, John brought a lot of changes to the college. It is truly a college now, compared with before when we had less than half of the students that we have now," said Burke. "I am very delighted to see all the student's accomplishments being rewarded."



PHOTOS BY BECKY WEINDORF

ABOVE: Out with the old, in with the new. Current SGA President Jen Miles presents an award to President-elect Brandi Hovis.

LEFT: Jen Miles presents the Most Outstanding Student Organization President award to Jason Snyder, editor-in-chief of the *Behrend Beacon*.



Carl Sagan honored in year-end Open House Night

by Mike Francis
staff writer

As the semester draws to a close, the Behrend Open House Nights in astronomy are preparing for the summer sessions.

The final Open House Night of the season on April 19 paid special tribute to great astronomer Carl Sagan, who dedicated his life to observing the universe. A half-hour presentation was put together in honor of his passing. *The Shores of the Cosmic Ocean*, a short film narrated by Sagan, explained time, the earth's origins, and its place in the universe.

Sagan compared the evolution of the universe to a calendar. The first seconds of January 1 are when the universe was born. Each month is the equivalent of 1.5 billion years of evolution and each day is about 40 million years. Using this calendar, the whole human existence would be in the last few minutes of December 31.

In the lecture that followed, Dr. Darren Williams discussed the topic, "Target Earth." Target Earth is the event of an object striking the Earth and causing catastrophic and extinction level events. Williams, an assistant professor of physics, gave some examples of the types of things that could cause such an event, such as comets or asteroids. He pointed out that the size of the object was very important and relevant to the destruction and devastation it might cause on impact.

A well-known case of such an impact occurred around 65 million years ago, an impact that is theorized to have killed the dinosaurs. In this case, the size of the asteroid was about six miles in diameter. "A tiny speck that you couldn't see on a globe can cause such an incident," said Williams, describing the massive power created by one of these objects.

Other threats to Earth are comets, mostly made of ice and rock. Comets are easier to see, however, because of their long brilliant tails that form from the ice melting and

exploding off the surface. The most common of these comets is Haley's, roughly the size of Erie, which rushes by our planet every 86 years.

The lecture continued with evidence of "hits" that have occurred on other planets and the Earth. In 1994, the Hubble telescope took pictures of an asteroid breaking into 21 pieces and plummeting into Jupiter's atmosphere. Here on Earth, the crater that supposedly killed the dinosaurs is located in the Yucatan peninsula and is 150 kilometers in diameter. This crater goes a long way toward proving that the Earth is not immune to the attacks of the solar system, Williams said.

Williams went on to describe the possible effects to the Earth's climate after such an impact. It could cause an earthquake that would be hundreds of times greater than 10 on the Richter scale. Worldwide fires could be created from burning debris falling from the sky. The planet's surface could be covered with dust and remain dark for two years, killing all plant and animal life within months.

The energy released from one of these impacts is immense. Williams made reference to TNT and the Hiroshima detonation. The Hiroshima explosion was equal to 15,000 tons of TNT. The energy released in the explosion killing the dinosaurs was probably equal to one billion megatons of TNT.

"I don't want anyone walking out of here worrying about being hit tomorrow," Williams stated. The chances of an object that size hitting the Earth are very remote. It is estimated that it happens once every 100 million years. So we are safe — for now.

After the lecture, the clouds parted and the stars and planets far out in the depths of space were revealed. From the Mehalsky Observatory, observers viewed Jupiter, the largest planet, and three of her moons, thanks to the telescope's seven-inch eye.