

Trigon and PCM encourage students to 'Stop the Hate'

by Courtney Straub
staff writer

After attending a concert at a local church in Williamsport, Pa., an 18-year-old black gay male, Gene, was assaulted, not only verbally but physically.

First the assailant showed Gene the letters KKK on his skateboard. Next, he verbally attacked Gene for his race and sexual orientation. As for the physical abuse, the assailant put a few scrapes on Gene's eye and broke his glasses.

Gene pressed charges. He's also fighting for approval of the hate crimes bill in Harrisburg. Gene's assailant has been charged with a list of crimes including simple assault, ethnic intimidation, and harassment by communication, among others.

The attack in Williamsburg led the students at Penn College to hold a Hate Crimes Rally. Gene spoke about his experience.

To make people more aware of hate crimes on the Penn State Erie, Behrend Campus, Trigon and Protestant Campus Ministry will hold a program titled "Hate Does Not Discriminate."

It will be held on Wednesday at 7 p.m. in Reed 117. This program is also being held in honor of "Stop The Hate Day." Everyone is invited to attend.

"The 'Hate Does Not Discriminate' program

should be a big one," said Abbey Atkinson, the president of Trigon.

At the program, many issues will be discussed, including hate crimes and legislation proposed. Trigon will gather signatures and announcing actions dealing with Gene's assault. According to Atkinson, this is all very important to our region because the Aryan nation compound is very close, located about two hours away from Behrend.

Also at the program, Brent Scarpo, a Hollywood film producer, will present his film "Journey to a Hate Free Millenium," and will give a short speech.

"He has a very interesting and endearing presentation that everyone should enjoy," said Atkinson.

When Scarpo is done, the group will march to the Smith Chapel living room in silence by candlelight for a reception will be held for "Stop The Hate Day." Refreshments will be provided while the group reflects.

"I really hope people come out and support this program; it's of global importance," Atkinson said.

Astronomer Tokunaga seeks Earth-like planets

by Tony DiPlacido
staff writer

On Sept. 19, a full house welcomed speaker Alan Tokunaga at the Science Lecture Hall for his presentation, "Halfway to Space." Tokunaga, a renowned astronomer, came to the second of this year's Open House Nights in Astronomy to talk about the largest observatory in the world, in Mauna Kea, Hawaii.

According to Tokunaga, telescopes as we know them are almost a thing of the past. Today's astronomers rely on more advanced technology that looks at the sky.

"It is interesting that an astronomer can now enter the facility after sunset, leave after sunrise, and never have to look at the sky," he said. This is not to say the telescope isn't used at all, but it is hardly the primary source for obtaining information. Still, there is a telescope operator.

"There is a lot to be said for using the telescope, but more importantly," he added jokingly, "it's fun." Tokunaga displayed many eye-catching photos of shooting stars, nebulas, the birth of solar systems, and dying stars.

Though Tokunaga's research has produced many false alarms of earth-like planets, he was confident that eventually we will make contact with intelligent life. He estimated an Earth-like planet may be as close as three light years away.

After the lecture, attendees could gaze through Behrend's own telescopes to search among the

stars. The next lecture in the series, titled "Fr. Georges LeMaitre, The Priest Who Saw the Universe," will be presented by Dr. Roger Knacke in the Science Lecture Hall on Oct. 24 at 7:30 p.m.



PHOTO BY HEATHER MYERS / BEHREND BEACON
Astronomer Alan Tokunaga discusses his research in Mauna Kea, Hawaii, during a recent Astronomy Open House.

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship changes lives

by Katie Hinman
staff writer

Each school year brings new challenges and decisions that must be made. Students in all grades are always looking for ways to be involved in their college and, more importantly, ways to get to know others. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) can change a person's life, as well as accomplish these two elements of college life.

IVCF is a religious organization; however, it is for all people who believe in God. According to members in the group, everyone is trying to get to know God and the mysterious ways in which He works. Sometimes, it's hard to find trustworthy people that will be life-long friends. True friendships and love are found in this group.

As a freshman coming into a new school and a new environment, it can be extremely difficult to make new friends and start all over.

"I went to IVCF with a friend, not knowing what to expect," said freshman Richard Macko. "The people there were so into God. I was amazed because you normally can't find that love for God at a college campus with sin. The people there were so open to everyone and welcoming. I met so many people there, people who are good friends of mine now. It's kind of like a big family."

There is no pressure in coming weekly to events. People just come when they can or when they feel the need.

"IVCF gives students a chance to explore their relationship with God," said freshman Matthew Arch. "It's also a fun way to get to know others with the same beliefs as my own. Everyone is so nice in IVCF. You could be just a weekly participant in the large group, or an active member throughout the week. They don't judge you; they are just always happy to see you. We all pray to the same God, just differently."

There are also many groups and teams of IVCF that a student can get involved in. The large group meeting is where most people learn about IVCF and is held every Thursday night in the Reed Union Building. This is a time for students to enjoy fellowship with one another, sing of God's love and hear testimonies, as well

as sermons.

"I'm in IVCF because God put me here," said senior Sunny Webb, the IVCF president. "I am now a senior in my fourth year. Everything is so fast-paced and I can attest to that! The past three years have been a collection of different classes, friends, organizations, new buildings showing up at Behrend, jobs, family members, etc. Name something in your life that is now constant and I guarantee that it will change by the time you graduate. But for me, IVCF has always been on Thursday evening.

"For a college student to be able to say, 'Every Thursday evening I was here,' it is a HUGE deal," Webb continued. But IVCF has remained constant, and I believe the reason for that is because of who is running this organization - Christ. I have made friendships in IVCF that you cannot get in a classroom or a bar or a dorm room - friends who will clean your toilet when you are too sick to get out of bed. I cannot say enough positive things about the organization and am still befuddled as to why I am in the honorable position of president."

The mission of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at Penn State Behrend is to "Save the lost, strengthen the weak, and send the committed."

"We want people to be educated about how real God is," said junior Cassandra Willey. "God made us and he knows what's best for us. As we strive to become more like Him through prayer, going to church, and reading the His Bible, we become more the way we were meant to be. Some of these opportunities include sharing God's awesome news on this campus, serving in our community in places like the city mission, or even going on mission trips to places like South America or Russia."

IVCF explores religion through Bible studies, prayer groups, campus events, bringing national speakers to the large group meetings. The members also believe spending a lot of time just hanging out can bring new perspectives one's life.

DEAD MUSIC IS NOT REALLY DEAD AFTER ALL

BOB WEIR (FORMER GRATEFUL DEAD VOCALIST AND RHYTHM GUITARIST) AND THE BOYS OF RATDOG BRING THEIR SOUND TO ERIE, PA AT THE WARNER THEATRE ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15 AT 7:30PM. WHEN THE GRATEFUL DEAD DISBANDED IN 1995 FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF JERRY GARCIA, RATDOG BECAME WEIR'S MAJOR FOCUS. THE BAND'S CURRENT LINEUP INCLUDES BOB WEIR, WASSERMAN, JAY LANE, JEFF CHIMENTI, MARK KARAN, AND KENNY BROOKS.

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Outdoor Club and Commuter Council help Make a Wish Foundation

by Jenna Dominick
staff writer

Knowing that your actions can directly help someone in need is one of the most rewarding feelings. Many people experienced as they participated in the Outdoors Festival Sept. 13, from 4 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. to raise money for the Make a Wish Foundation. The Commuter Council and Outdoors Club came together to make this event a great triumph.

The idea for this fundraiser originated at flag football. Two weeks before school had started, members sat down and flag football evolved into the Outdoors Festival, comprised of many different

activities, instead of just one.

Teams of four to six members competed in various events throughout the festival. Each team paid \$10 to enter competition. The teams that participated were Delta Chi, Alpha Phi Omega, and Delta Sigma Pi. The Organization of Latin American Students, the Association of Black Collegians and the Multi-Cultural Council also played a part in the festivities.

There were four events in which the six teams competed. First was the tent set-up, where the teams were timed. They were also judged on things such as creativity and ingenuity. The bridge crossing competition was a team building activity. Each team was given two cinder blocks, set 12 feet

apart, and one eight-foot plank. They were to cross from one block to the other, without touching the ground. The car wash was up next, which was also timed and judged. Finally, a relay race took place in the gorge. The gorge run spanned one-half mile.

"I think it was a very successful event," said Outdoors Club President Keenan Hansen. "I was glad to see all the teams come out and see all the support for Make a Wish."

So far, the Outdoors Festival has pulled in \$250 for the Make a Wish Foundation.

The Commuter Council is committed to relaying information from student commuters to the administration of Penn State. The Commuter Council's president is Meggan Allen, and the

council's vice president is Julie Lafferty.

The Outdoors Club plans outdoor activities for students of all backgrounds. Their focus includes backpacking, rock climbing, hiking, skiing, and snowboarding. In the future, the club plans to invite speakers to come in and talk about such things as no-trace camping techniques.

In light of the success of the Outdoors Festival, plans are in the works for a follow-up fundraiser for next year. Organizers hope support from the student body and the entire Penn State Behrend community for Make a Wish and other foundations will continue to grow.