

Question of the Week

by Jen Henderson, associate editor

What did you do when the school shut down last Monday?



"I went to lunch with friends and watched a movie with cold beverages."

Julie Lafferty
Political Science, 07



"I stayed around campus and studied."

Cristen Stephansky
Biology, 07



"I went to Barnes & Noble and took notes for a paper that was due the next day, because the library was closed."

Alex Styborski
Film/Video, 03



"I went home."

Amanda Suites
Biology, 07



"I went home to relax after a long weekend in Toronto (big up Organization of African Students)."

Kenned Lorya
Communication, 03

Adams, Parenti urge caring

by Erinn Hansen
calendar page editor

Hunter "Patch" Adams, clown, social activist, and medical doctor, continued the Speaker Series at Penn State Behrend on Nov. 26 in the Reed McGarvey Commons. His assistant Dr. Susan Parenti, philosophy professor, composer, and performer, accompanied him.

"We are here to inspire people to think they can do what they want to do, and accomplish their dreams," said Parenti. "When people are able to do what they want to do, it makes them feel bigger and better."

Adams, born in Virginia, was an Army Brat and grew up in Japan. He was once a mental patient, attended the Medical College of Virginia, and is a professional clown, for which he wears a rubber nose and funny hats. Adams became an advocate for reform, and mental health, as well as medicine. He and his colleagues started the Gesundheit Institute in Virginia, in 1972, which operated for 12 years. During those 12 years, the institute saw more than 15,000 patients, charged nothing, and did not have malpractice insurance.

However, in 1984, the employees working at the institute were burning out, and the money situation was becoming a problem. They had no time for fundraising. As a result, Adams felt it was necessary to close the Gesundheit Institute, and start raising money to build a bigger and better hospital located in the same area.

After the institute closed, Adams became a professional clown, and both he and Parenti began traveling around the world, helping people while trying to raise funds for their new hospital.

They have been to places such as Afghanistan, China, Thailand, Australia, Mexico, and many more, including the Kabul Pediatric Hospital, located in Africa. At this hospital, children needed food medicine. As a result, Adams started collecting food and medicine in the United States, and eventually shipped from three to ten tons of food and medicine over to this hospital.

"We will be going to Rome, Italy, next," said Adams. "We will be leaving within a couple weeks."

Along with traveling the world, Adams became a social activist. He began speaking out about the joy and quality of lives through caring, how to reduce stress through humor, as well as his experiences and medical practices.

"The goal of speaking out is to inspire people about caring and using humor as a stress lowering mechanism," said Adams.

Adams believes that America's current health care system is elitist and in slavery to money and technology. He also believes that humor, joy, compassion, and simple listening have their own healing power, and builds friendship and trust with his patients before moving on to any sort of treatment that is not involved with trauma.

He spoke out about how important it is to care for people, as well as using humor to reduce stress and make people feel better.

"Humor is a political strategy," said Adams. "It is also an amazing tool in helping people."

Adams also spoke about his own experiences with a brief history of his life, with regards to the movie "Patch Adams."

"Patch Adams," a movie with Robin Williams in the title role, tells the story of Adam's early years at medical school and some of the obstacles that he overcame. However, Adams said this movie only covered the political side of his life, and left out a great portion of what actually happened. The movie left out the marks against racism, and also lost the spirit of the '60s.

Adams cleared up some of the events that the movie either left out or showed in a different point of view. He spoke about his experiences with people around the world, and showed a video of the places he went and the people that he worked with.

When Adams finished, he turned the microphone over to his assistant Parenti, who spoke about the importance of caring, as well as her experiences. She spoke about how people think that caring is not part of their career, and about how people go into nursing homes.

"The people in the nursing homes are in there so they will not be a burden to their family," said Parenti. "I would love to wake up in a world where people would say, 'My mother has Alzheimer's and I can finally take care of her.'"

She spoke about her experience with a patient who had emphysema, and how she loved taking care of her, as well as about how people live in a society where freedom is more important than care.

"Young people are not connected and do not understand," said Parenti. "They spend more time at the malls than caring."

The Speaker Series concluded with a special thanks to the people who came, and a question and answer session, which followed the presentation.

Adams and Parenti made the Speaker Series a huge success, as the audience's attendance and reaction showed.

"It was very informative," said Laura Doerr, freshman at Behrend.

"This was a unique experience for Behrend," added Chris Rizzo, director of Student Activities. "This Speaker Series was unlike any other one that we have had."

Adams and Parenti agree that the presentation was successful.

"Penn State Behrend is a wonderful school, and Erie is a nice community," said Parenti. "The turnout was terrific, the audience was very attentive and helpful."

The next Speaker Series features Spike Lee on Jan. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the Reed McGarvey Commons.

Driving in a Winter Wonderland

by Erin Scott
staff writer

"Oh, the weather outside is frightful," and commuters are just beginning to face the frosty fallings. Flakes began to fall on Nov. 22 and haven't stopped since. Many students are leaving an hour early to come to campus, before their classes start. They are also staying on campus all day until their classes are over because the stress and hassle of coming and going just isn't worth it.

"The snow makes it impossible to use Cooper Road, so it takes longer to get to school," said Dan Rosa, a commuter to campus. "When the roads are bad, it doubles the time it takes to get to school."

Cooper Road is a good alternative to using I-90, yet when it's out of commission, many students are left stranded either at home or on campus. Many commuters deal with the inconveniences by hanging out at Bruno's or the library between classes to catch up on some reading or to enjoy a moment to themselves.

The snow doesn't seem to be stopping anytime soon, so here are a few common sense tips to help keep you safe and on time.

1. Leave earlier. The more time you have at your leisure; the less chance there is that you will be careless in a hurry.

2. Watch the weather report. Find out what's going to happen before it happens!

3. Feel comfortable driving your car. The better you know your vehicle and how it handles in the snow, the more confident you will be on the road.

4. Drive at a pace you are comfortable with. Just because everyone else is going 40 doesn't mean you have to. Set your own speed and let them pass you if they must.

5. Drive defensively. Everyone thinks they are good drivers, and they think they are even better in the snow. Be aware of who is on the road with you.

Although many professors, students, and faculty complain the snow is a problem, some students think it's no big deal.

"The only traffic in Erie is on campus, so that's what takes the extra time," said Ben Askin. "The snow doesn't really bother me."

Whether you like the snow or not, it's here to stay for quite awhile. So remember to take the extra time to prepare for any circumstance.



PHOTO BY KEVIN FALLON / BEHREND BEACON

It's time to dig out those shovels as snow blankets the campus - and the roads - again.

Reality Check sponsors ESO dance

by Erin McCarty
news editor

The holidays are a time of coming together, and opportunities abound for college students to converge and celebrate the season in a variety of ways. At Behrend, for instance, Christmas carol sing-alongs, meditative gatherings, winter concerts, and department parties are only a few events in which members of the student body, faculty and staff can participate. But what about people who do not belong to such a community and do not have the means to seek out activities?

The organization ESO (Expanding Sociability Opportunities) was formed last year in order to give college-aged Erie residents with developmental disabilities the opportunity to interact with one another and with local college students in a social setting.

ESO was conceived by Joyce McDonnell of the Gertrude Barber Center and includes

representatives from Gannon, Mercyhurst, Edinboro and Behrend. Students from Reality Check, Behrend's service organization, serve as representatives from this campus.

ESO holds six dances a year, and Reality Check will host the last dance of this year tonight in Erie Hall from 7 to 9 p.m. The dance will feature festive décor and snacks. Developmentally disabled 18- to 30-year-olds are encouraged to attend at a ticket cost of \$3.

Any college students who want to come may do so free of charge. Not only does this program give these 18- to 30-year-olds a time to be together and have a good time, it also offers college students with little exposure to this segment of the population a chance to increase their understanding.

Gannon will host the next dance in February. Anyone interested in participating in the planning of ESO events should contact McMillen at ktm120@psu.edu.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dr. Patch Adams and his assistant, Dr. Susan Parenti, spoke at Behrend as part of the Speaker Series.