

Question of the Week

by Jen Henderson, associate editor

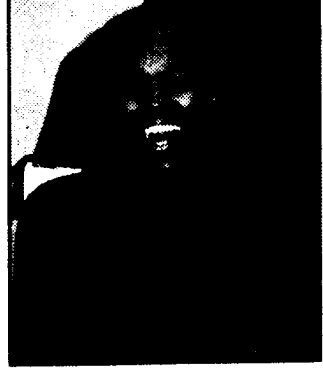
What was your favorite Christmas gift?



"My best Christmas gift this year was a fleece robe. My house is so cold!"
Brenda Perry
Communications, 02



"My 'vette!"
Mike Alabran
PLET, 05



"My front teeth!"
Kim Moses
MIS, Gettin' Out



"Sleep, I hibernated for about a week."
Francis Hayes
Biology, 02



"I got a CD player for my car from my father-too bad my car rarely runs properly."
DeAdra Walker
Psychology, 02

FROM FRONT PAGE

LEE

A Spike Lee Joint: career highlights



when they chose a profession they did not love." He emphasized the notion that effort is just as necessary to achieving a career goal as passion or talent.

"People are tricked into thinking someone's gonna discover them," said Lee, complaining about such shows as "American Idol" and "Star Search." "They think they don't have to do any hard work." He assigned some of the blame for this widespread ambivalence to current American culture. When he was growing up, he said, he and his friends looked up to African-American men who possessed one or more of three qualities: athletic ability, a way with women, and intelligence.

"Today, if you try to raise your level of consciousness, you're ridiculed," Lee said. Blacks who are well-spoken are accused by members of their own community of trying to sound white. "What has happened for us to equate ignorance with being black and intelligence with being white?"

"Values are dispensed through the

home, but most importantly through the media," Lee said. "The reason the USA is the most powerful country in the world is because of culture. You control the media, you can influence how people think. You influence how people think and you don't need bombs."

He said that Americans need to be more careful about what they watch, avoiding the drivel that is so prevalent. He especially criticized the current trend of reality television and such hits as "Joe Millionaire," as well as situation comedies.

Lee's own contribution to American culture has been significant with such films as "Malcolm X," "Do the Right Thing," and "Jungle Fever" and, for the younger set, the PBS show "Ghostwriter."

"I try to make thought-provoking films with some humor in them," said Lee, noting that historically films have been about the degradation of minority groups. Even films by African-American directors usually fall into timeworn categories set by the Hollywood

gatekeepers, those who decide which films get made and which don't. He praised "Antwone Fisher" and "Drum Line" as exceptions while criticizing "Barbershop" for the derogatory jokes made about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, especially because these remarks were made by the man who was supposedly the wisest character in the film.

"I don't know how we could laugh at that," he said. "These are the things we have to think about."

Many of Lee's films tackle controversial issues, and he is not afraid to speak his mind. But his fiery reputation was largely absent from the calm manner in which he addressed questions from the audience. The one question that seemed to ignite his ire was a rather belligerent demand as to why he is taking part in advertising for the Navy, whom the student accused of sending minorities to fight for imperialist nations.

"It's amazing how African-Americans

are held to different standards," Lee said. He noted that historically African-Americans have been eager to defend this country. Now that the Navy is making an effort to reverse its reputation for being racist, Lee wants to help bring the message across. He is also involved in two pet projects that involve major African-American athletic figures.

Lee infused the evening with humor and advice for the audience members, particularly students.

"Find out what it is that you love," he stressed repeatedly, and think about the signals that the media is sending. Both were messages everyone could take to heart as they dispersed to face the frosty night.

Lee was the first of this semester's guests in the Penn State Behrend Speaker Series. The next guests, Peter Hillary and Jamling Norgay, are sons of the men who conquered Mount Everest. They will speak on March 20 at 7:30 p.m.

THON rapidly approaches

by Jen Henderson
assistant news editor

Fundraising for THON is in full swing this semester as the day of the event rapidly approaches. Efforts thus far have brought in almost \$4000. SGA members are hoping that the number will go up even more by Feb. 21.

"We appreciate and thank all of the student organizations that have supported this wonderful philanthropy that helps the kids," said SGA President Brandi Hovis.

Dancers who will represent Penn State Behrend in this year's THON are Michelle Rizzo and Jennifer Sutter. The event will take place at University Park on Feb. 21 to 23. This weekend the two will be attending a retreat at UP associated with THON.

The retreat is an effort for all of the dancers from the various other commonwealth Penn State campuses to meet each other. They will all get a chance to know one another and do many activities to prepare for the THON weekend.

Since THON is a 48-hour dance marathon, it can be tiring. Anyone who would like to send dancer mail to our two representatives is appreciated.

The dancer mail can include cards, letters, signs, toys, etc. The dancer mail is delivered to the dancers at a certain time during the forty eight hours to give them a smile and a morale boost.

If interested in giving dancer mail, drop it off in the SGA office to Brandi Hovis. Fundraising efforts are still underway for this incredible event and student, faculty, and staff support is needed.

Ad targets SUV drivers as supporters of terrorism

by Lauren Packer
staff writer

If you drive an SUV or a gas-guzzling car, then you support terrorism, claims ads aired in major cities, including the motor city Detroit.

The Detroit Project, founded by Americans for Fuel Efficient Cars, focuses its ad campaign solely on SUVs because of their poor gas mileage and the overwhelming number of Americans who drive them. Currently, more than 20 million Americans drive SUVs and that number is quickly rising.

The main idea of the campaign is not to attack SUV owners, states Detroit Project founder Arianna Huffington.

Huffington told CBS "the campaign is not designed to demonize SUV owners. We want to encourage customers to connect the dots and make socially responsible consumer choices."

In its ads, the Detroit Project depicts sequentially how an American driving an SUV supports terrorism. This is a transcript of one of the Detroit Project's ads, which began airing Jan. 12: "This is George. This is the gas that George

bought for his SUV. This is the oil company executive who sold the gas that George bought for his SUV. These are the countries where the executives bought the oil that made the gas that George bought for his SUV. And these are the terrorists who get money from those countries every time George fills up his SUV."

In 2001, the U.S. imported 588 million barrels worth of oil from Saudi Arabia and imported 289 million barrels of oil from possible war-opponent Iraq.

Edwin Masteller, professor emeritus of Biology at Behrend, not only shares the same viewpoint of The Detroit Project but also practices what he believes. Dr. Masteller rides his bicycle to work, only using his vehicle when the weather is inconvenient. The odometer on his 1997 Ford Ranger reads around 40,000 miles, proof that he practices what he preaches.

Masteller also believes that it is unfortunate that Americans are involved in numerous international problems but are not willing to decrease the use of petroleum.

"We drive these gas-guzzling vehicles

then try to save countries with oil that we deem feasible," said Masteller. "They have to stop and think that somebody is going to lose their life in these fights with those countries." By using less petroleum, there are obvious benefits: cleaner environment, less need to buy foreign oil, and of course, less need to go to war to protect foreign oil investments.

Why not do something as simple as make our cars and SUVs more fuel-efficient? Like others who want more fuel-efficient cars, Masteller thinks that the new legislation that is trying to be passed is ridiculous. The fuel efficiency standard for SUVs, along with vans and light trucks, is 20.7 mpg. Under the new legislation, standards would be forced to rise to 22.2 mpg by 2007. Cars would not have a change in miles per gallon and would remain at 27.5 mpg.

"I wonder how much the petroleum industries have a hold on American government," states Masteller.

In 2000, more than \$35 million was spent by automakers to lobby in Washington.

What do SUV drivers on the Behrend

campus have to say about their so-called "support" of terrorism?

Sixth semester student Amanda Brown does not agree with the accusations of the Detroit Project. Brown, whose family owns a Ford F250 Truck and a Ford Expedition, says that America is in love with SUVs and their power and status symbol. For Brown, it is not a question of power or status symbol rather it is a necessity.

"They [the SUVs] are more spacious, and my mom enjoys hers for when we travel. My dad uses his truck for hauling things back and forth when needed for his job," said Brown.

"Also, in our case it is easier to drive in the winter weather with an SUV where we live."

Masteller understands Brown's needs and states, "People need to consider if they need that size of vehicle all the time when it comes time to purchase an SUV."

And with fuel currently around \$1.50, Brown realizes that the Expedition her family drives does consume a lot of gas, but she does not believe that she and her family support terrorism.

"I think that fuel is too high right now

and my mom does limit her driving because the Expedition uses up a lot of gas. I do not believe that we are supporting terrorism just because we drive an SUV. SUVs are not the only vehicles that require gasoline to run, so why is all the blame placed on that specific car? If people feel it is such a big issue then why don't we use our own resources," said Brown.

While the use of our own resources certainly seems like a good idea in theory, in reality it is having a hard time catching on. Drilling for oil off the coasts of California, Florida are not allowed and drilling for oil in Alaska is also banned.

Masteller suggests taking simpler, smaller steps that will reduce the number of drivers and cut down on the use of petroleum.

"Why not try to use public transportation, if you get it to be more convenient? Honda and Toyota have come out with hybrid cars. Somehow, you just have to make the effort."