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White House ratchets up rhetoric, signals war with Iraq imminent

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By Warren P. Strobel, Diego Ibarguen and Martin Merzer
Knight Ridder Newspapers



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

President Bush presents his plan of action during the State of the Union Address.

War with Iraq appeared all but inevitable Wednesday as the Bush administration launched the "final phase" of consultations with hesitant allies and political foes, and United Nations members planned the equivalent of a war council.

With U.S. troops streaming toward the Persian Gulf, President Bush said:

"History has called the United States into action, and we will not let history down."

A U.S.-led war on Iraq could start as early as the beginning of March, several senior administration officials said, and the White House flashed war signals on many public fronts.

"It certainly feels around here as if the preposition has changed from 'if' to 'when,'" one State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said about the widespread feeling that Bush has chosen war. "It certainly feels like there's a green light."

Speaking one day after his State of the Union address, Bush ratcheted up his rhetoric about the

threat posed by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

"He is a danger not only to countries in the region, but, as I explained last night, because of al-Qaida connections, because of his history, he's a

danger to the American people, and we've got to deal with him," the president said during a speech in Grand Rapids, Mich. "We've got to deal with him before it is too late."

Other top U.S. officials said that before acting

alone or with a few allies, they would wait weeks - but not months - for the United Nations to put teeth into its threat of "serious consequences" for Saddam if he fails to disarm peacefully.

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld made his strongest effort yet to justify pre-emptive military action on moral grounds, even while conceding that Americans traditionally have believed that "unless attacked, one does not attack." "The question, though, is, in the 21st century - with biological weapons, for example, that could kill hundreds of thousands of people - what does one do?" he asked. "Does one wait until they're attacked?"

Rumsfeld argued that, even with its best spy technology, the United States may never gain "perfect knowledge" of what Saddam may be up to.

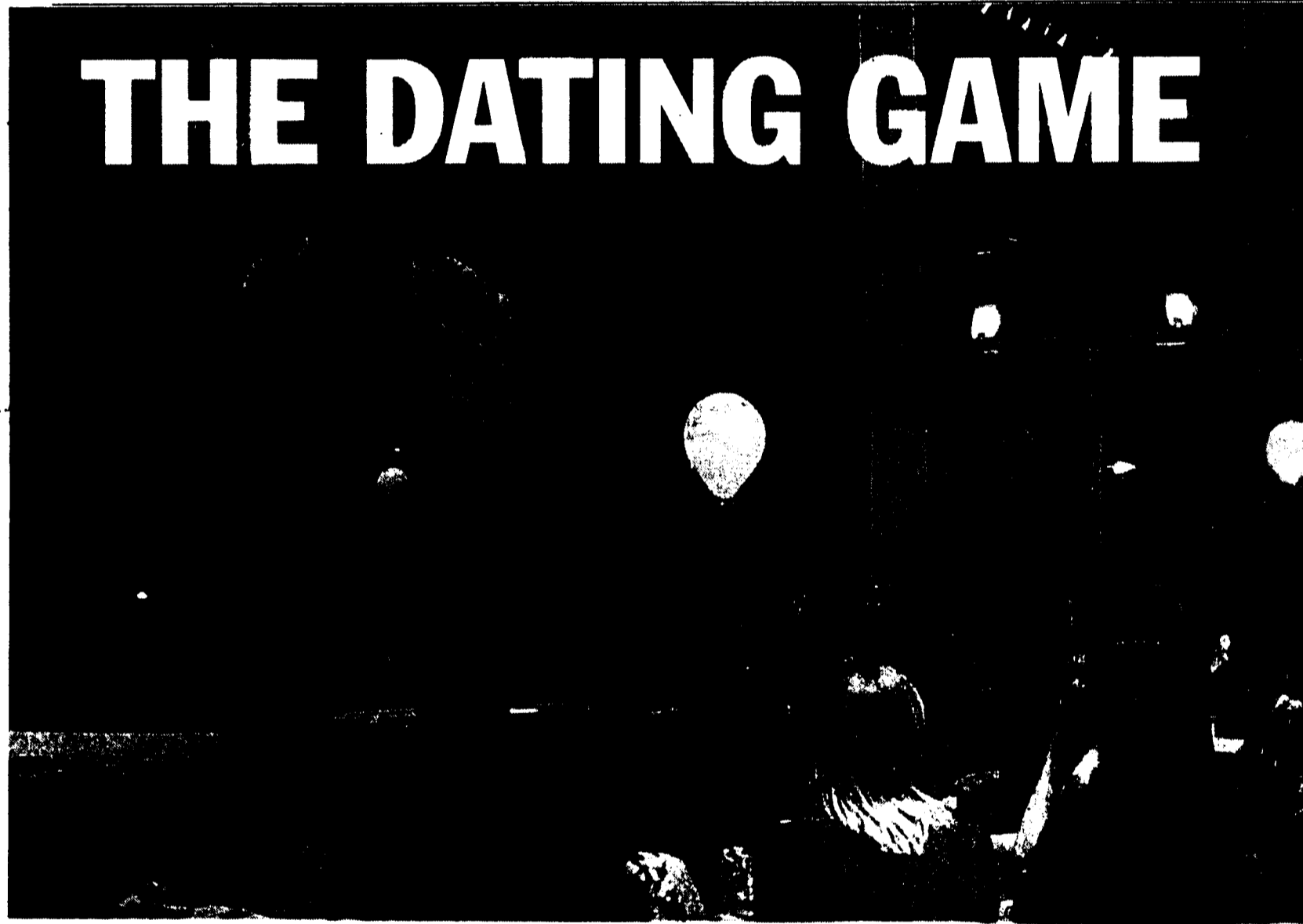
"The only way you get personal knowledge is to wait until Japan attacks Pearl Harbor," he said. "That's when you get perfect knowledge." By then it's too late, so a pre-emptive strike is justified, he suggested.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Colin Powell again

BUSH

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THE DATING GAME



Excitement runs high at the ASA Date Auction Tuesday night. The sisters raised \$716 for the Special Olympics and S. June Smith Center.



ASA'S auction benefits charities

by Erika Jarvis
staff writer

Once again the Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority sisters managed to get a few people dates, and to raise money for the Special Olympics and S. June Smith Center, all while having fun.

On Tuesday, the sorority held its seventh annual Date Auction in McGarvey Commons. ASA's biggest philanthropic event of the year took in \$716, which will be split among the two.

The auction started off with a bang with local radio station Star 104 supplying the music and the

emcee, who got the crowd excited over the "hotties" to be auctioned off.

It was a good night for the Theta Phi Alpha sisters when their "sweetheart" Ryan Maddick was sold for \$100, the highest bid of the night, to an Alpha Sigma Alpha alumnus. Also, the ASA sisters couldn't have raised all that money alone had it not been for Ann Murosky bringing in \$95 being sold to her own "brothers" in the Tau Kappa Epsilon Frat.

The brothers kept raising the price on their "Sweetheart" until they finally scrounged enough money to become the second highest bidders of the

night.

Prizes awarded throughout the night included dinner to local restaurants, movie tickets and a grand prize of a ride around Erie in an Escalade Limo.

The sisters of Alpha Sigma Alpha thank everyone who came out to help them raise money and for making the night fun and memorable.

If you're upset you missed this year's date auction, no worries. The sisters will be back next year with new prizes and new dates, and who knows?

Behrend battles cabin fever



PHOTO BY KEVIN FALLON / BEHREND BEACON
A despondent-looking Behrend student gazes out of the ice-glazed window of the Reed building.

by Katie Zellars
staff writer

Behrend students have probably asked themselves lately why they came to Erie after last week's record low temperatures and immense snowfall. Sophomore Jason Karns summed up students' general attitude towards the weather when he simply stated, "It sucks."

Last week a high-pressure system in Canada pushed arctic air down, creating some record lows. Last Thursday the wind chill dropped down to minus 15 degrees. It only takes 15 minutes for frostbite to begin setting in at that temperature. On Monday night the city dropped down to zero degrees, the coldest it has been in Erie in the last four years.

Also according to the WJET Channel 24 website, as of Wednesday, Erie's had a seasonal snowfall total of a whopping 97.8 inches.

These cold and dreary days can leave students begging for a ray of sunshine. Many cases of cabin fever develop across campus. Cabin fever, or scientifically known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), can cause sleep problems, depression, joint problems and behavioral problems. There are ways to fight off or cure SAD or cabin fever.

WJET meteorologist and Behrend professor Tom Atkins recommends trying to stay active

SNOW

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