



# The Behrend Beacon

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## Faculty shines during 'Behrend Reads'

by Rebecca Weindorf  
managing editor

On Thursday evening at Bruno's Cafe, the Smith Creative Writing Reading Series continued with Behrend Reads, an annual event that invites Behrend professors to share their own works.

With a less-impressive crowd than the last reading by Sean Thomas Dougherty, six professors shared their finished or in progress writings.

Dr. Diana Hume George, on her way out from the Behrend community, shared what she defined as a "spiritual manifesto" to open the evening. The essay, titled "Scarlet Letter," explored her role as the first non-Christian in her family as the daughter/ granddaughter / niece of Protestant believers and ministers.

The essay acted as a defense for George's beliefs as an atheist. In using sparse comparisons to Hawthorne's novel "The Scarlet Letter," George explained her journey through organized religions until realizing, at the age of 50, that she had no belief in any organized religion. Her essay ended with "Forgive me, my fathers, for I know exactly what I do."

Dr. Chet Wolford also took the reading as an opportunity to share his attempts in satire, which he defined as "a very difficult genre to write in." The reaction from the crowd indicated that he was making progress in his attempts.

There were chuckles in the crowd when Wolford introduced the narrator in his story, Art Dunkel, a 28-year-old graduate student who has been hired as a history professor at a small Pennsylvania college - an open position that no other experienced professor would touch.

"Professor" Dunkel ended up meeting the president of the college in a small diner, a woman with "a handful of chewed fingernails," and his living arrangements are in the lower level of the local YMCA.

Both Dr. Archie Loss and George Looney told the crowd that their readings were a result of an unexpected turn in their writing. Dr. Loss began a second section and then wrote two other projects before he could work on it again.

The excerpt from the section, titled

**FACULTY**  
continued on page 3

# Tomorrow's superstars

## Behrend students compete in Erie Idol contest



PHOTOS BY KEVIN FALLON / BEHREND BEACON

Behrend students Andrea Rodriguez, Troy Shafer, and Erinn Hansen sing their hearts out at the Millcreek Mall Friday. Rodriguez, Shafer, and Tom Widdowson advanced to the next round of "Erie Idol," a local singing competition modeled after the popular show "American Idol."

by Kevin Fallon  
editor-in-chief

Behrend student Andrea Rodriguez thinks she has what it takes to be the next big thing.

Well, at least in Erie.

On Monday, Rodriguez, as well as several other Penn State Erie students, took to the stage for the Erie Idol contest at the Millcreek Mall.

The glorified karaoke contest is based on the popular television show "American Idol." The contest gives local amateur singers a chance to showcase their talents, or lack thereof, before a panel of judges, all with the hopes of being named the Erie Idol.

"I like the show 'American Idol,'"

said Rodriguez. "I hear some of the people on TV and they're not very good. So, I think I have a chance."

Like the television show, the contest features some good, and let's face it, some not so good acts. But you won't find any Simon-esque insults in this contest.

"We want to be nice," said Shani Bills from Fox 66, the event's organizer. "They have to have guts to get up there."

More than 200 people showed up to enter the contest, but only 49 were selected to sing for the 10 semi-finalist spots.

"We are looking for someone with a good voice, good style, and someone who is not afraid to give it their all," said Bills. "We want to have a party up here."

The bright lights, big stage, and lure of Eric stardom was the perfect combination for some contestants.

"I love singing karaoke," said Erinn Hansen, a Behrend student who sang on Monday. "I just wanted to try something new."

Those with the courage had to face an audience of an estimated 700 people. And like the TV show, the audience has a say in who wins. For many of the contestants it was their first time singing in front of a large audience.

Behrend student and karaoke buff Troy Shafer took part in the contest.

"Karaoke is a whole different setting because it's in a bar," said Shafer. "It's different on the main stage."

Three Behrend students advanced to

the next round. Rodriguez, who sang "At Last" by Etta James; Shafer, who did his rendition of Garth Brooks' "Friends in Low Places;" and Tom Widdowson who sang B.B. King all became one step closer to becoming the Erie Idol.

Those who did not make it will have another chance. Open casting calls will take place every Friday night through April 11 at various locations.

But most of the contestants insist it's a love of music that motivates them.

"I'm just going to go up there and do my best," said Hansen. "The most important thing is to have fun."

# SGA seeks candidates for elections

by Jen Henderson  
assistant news editor

Interested in making some decisions about issues on the Behrend campus? Want to give your input and really see it put into action? Then sign up for the Student Government Association. SGA is looking for candidates to fill the spaces of 11 senators, secretary, treasurer, Vice President and President.

There is no experience required to become a senator or secretary; however, you must get a petition from the RUB desk and collect 50 signatures by March 5. Petitions are available now.

Running for Vice President and President is a combined ticket. In order to attain either one of these positions, you must have at least one year of experience with the SGA and collect 200 signatures on the petition. The treasurer position is a bit different from the others. It is not filled by voting, rather by applying. Anyone interested in this position must send in a cover letter, resume, and student schedule by March 5.

An SGA open house will be held on Feb. 26. It is open to anyone who would like to learn more about what the SGA is all about. A few committees that SGA has on special projects now include the governmental affairs and the student life committees. Governmental affairs is

currently meeting with representatives and talking to them about Behrend and all that it has to offer as a college. This whole process is very important due to the fact that it needs as much funding as possible.

The student life committee works towards helping students in basically every aspect of campus life. Right now, it is trying to get a food cart in the Kochel building along with helping students with troubles such as the Lion Cash machines and housing concerns.

The SGA is also in charge of allocating funds to the student organizations on campus. The association is given \$35,000 a semester to give to the various clubs. The SGA is also looking into reorganizing itself, and if this occurs there will be many changes over the next year.

The process of the upcoming election is spread out over the next month. After all petitions are returned to the RUB desk, election chair Jennifer Crawford and SGA President Brandi Hovis will review them for their accuracy. They will then contact the candidates to give them a better idea of the positions they are going for. An outline will be given to help in this process.

As they do every year, the candidate's photos will appear in the Beacon along with their statements proclaiming why

they would make great contributions to the SGA. A Meet the Candidates event is scheduled for March 25 in the Reed Wintergarden. Everyone is invited to attend and ask questions of the candidates. There is also to be a President/Vice President debate that will take place on March 26 in Reed 114. This event will also take place of the SGA meeting scheduled for that day.

The actual voting will occur on April 8 and 9.

"It is important to vote for the students that will best represent your voice at Behrend," said Hovis.

"The SGA Election is a very important part of this school," election chair Jennifer Crawford said. "SGA is the governing body of all clubs and organizations, and the students have a say in who will be sitting on SGA. Even if students do not run for any of the positions it is crucial that they vote since this is their governing body."

There are moves being made to hold the elections online this year. Nearly 560 students voted in last year's election that took place outside of Bruno's. This figure was considerably larger than the 316 from the 2000-2001 running year. This year is hoped to be even better.

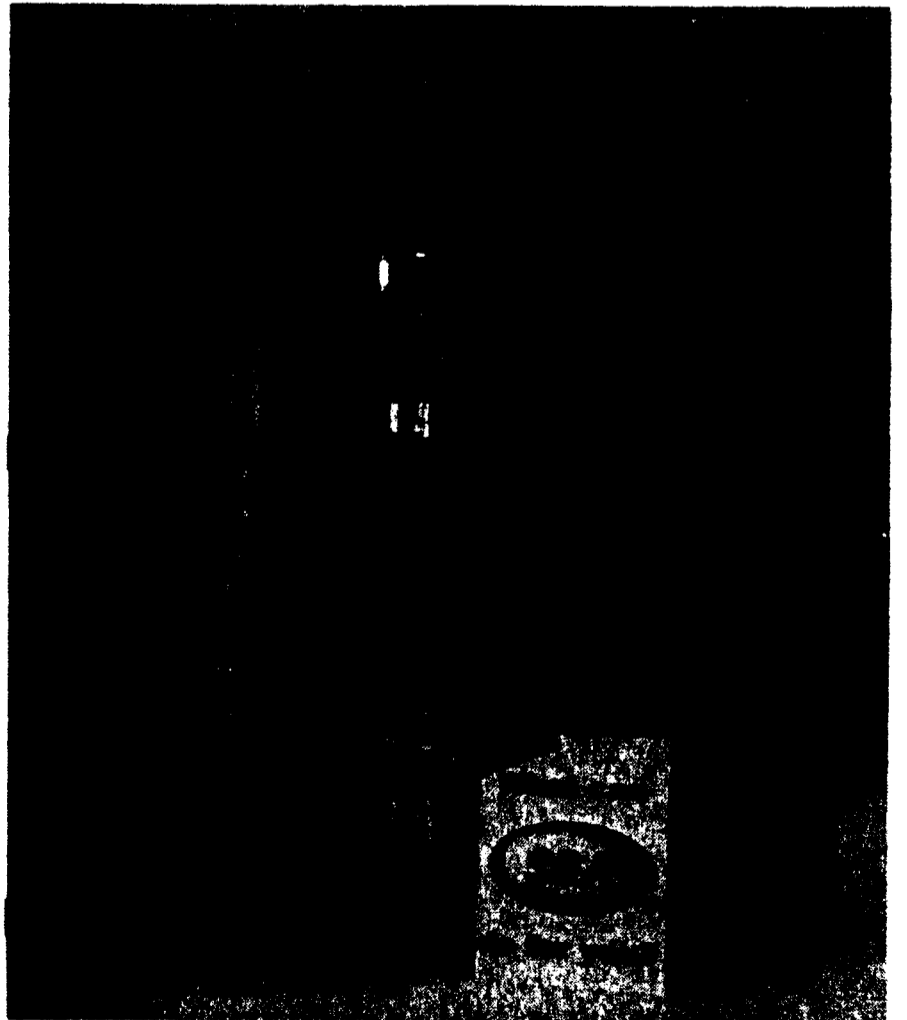


PHOTO BY JEN HENDERSON / BEHREND BEACON

The door to the SGA Office stands as a reminder of all that the organization does on campus.

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