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Positions selected for 2003-2004 SGA



PHOTO BY ROB WYNNE / BEHREND BEACON
Scott Soltis prepares for his new role as SGA president.

by **Erinn Hansen**
Calendar Page Editor

The winners have been selected for the 2003-2004 Student Government Association (SGA). Elections took place on Tuesday and Wednesday and students had the opportunity to vote online for whom they wanted to lead Behrend next year.

"The elections are a crucial part of the student government and the student body," said Jen Crawford, SGA Elections Chair. "The more students vote, the more the student body has a voice, which is very important."

One President, one Vice-President, one Secretary, and 11 Senator positions were chosen. The selected candidates include: President, Scott Soltis; Vice-President, Jenn Sutter; and Secretary, Jessica Burnett. The 11 Senators include: Alexander Henderson; Erin Strayer; Gillian Young; Nathan Snyder; Kristin Zyupancic; Matthew Withum; Nichole Lemke; Jair Carrasquero; Sara Grant; John Zwigart, and Jason Horton.

The campaign started Feb. 17, which began a series of steps in the election process. Senator and Secretary candidates had to pick up an application, along with a petition, get 50 different signatures from the student body, and turn it back in to the RUB Desk. Candidates for President and Vice-President had to do the same thing, only they needed 100 signatures. All of the candidates were then contacted, and had to pick up a campaign packet.

On March 17, the campaign began, and the candidates could start putting up posters and getting help from their friends as well as the elections committee. However, no more than 150 campaign posters were allowed.

Then on March 25, students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to meet all of the candidates in the Reed Wintergarden, followed by a question and answer session for the President and Vice-President the next day.

"We were looking for people who are willing to communicate back and forth between SGA and the students," said Sutter. "We were also looking for people who are going to work hard, do what they are supposed to do, and put in the hours and the time that it takes."

SGA is the governing body of the student population, strives to voice student opinions on all issues that contribute to the betterment of the social and intellectual life at Penn State Behrend. Students can become involved in SGA by running for the Council through elections, and weekly meetings are open to everyone. Regular open forums are also held to hear student concerns and act upon them.

Each position has certain responsibilities. The President and Vice

SGA
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Activists march towards empowerment



PHOTOS BY KEVIN FALLON / BEHREND BEACON

Demonstrators, including many Behrend students, speak out against violence and sexual assault at the annual "Take Back the Night."

Annual 'Take Back the Night' draws student crowd at Perry Square

by **Angela Szesciorka**
staff writer

Despite the bitter chill, chants resonated through downtown Erie as students, volunteers and activists rallied against domestic violence and sexual assault at the Take Back the Night march Tuesday at Perry Square.

Organized by Behrend support group Women Today and Gannon University's Center for Social Concerns, marchers wearing Take Back the Night t-shirts began at Sixth and State streets, circled around Fifth Street back to Perry Square, and concluded the march at Gannon by singing the Tracy Chapman song "Behind the Wall."

In between chants of "2-4-6-8, no more date rape," and "sexist, rapist, anti-gay—don't you take our night away," stops were made so speakers could tell the crowd of roughly 50 marchers the statistics of abuse and the need for change.

"We are outraged by the fact that one in three women will be raped in their lifetime—78 in one hour," said Crime Victim Center representative Jen Redenis.

Speakers included Redenis, the Gannon Interfraternity Council president Joshua Hayes, the Behrend Panhellenic president Diane Smigielski, and Behrend Counseling and Advising Office representative Allison Parr-Plasha.

At Gannon, marchers shared their experiences and opinions at a speak-out followed by free food and music. Information tables offered free brochures detailing the effects and statistics of sexual abuse and domestic violence.

"We're here so victims know where they can turn," said Smigielski. "These violators cannot make us victims if we know how to handle the situation."

This is the fourth year that Behrend has hosted and sponsored the Take Back the Night march. The Take Back the Night began in England in 1977 as a women's protest against violence encountered on the streets after dark. The next year, activists in San Francisco held a rally focused on sexual assault, which encouraged the spread of awareness all over the world.

Behrend sponsors included the Interfraternity Council, the Multi-Cultural Council, the Office of Student Affairs, the Panhellenic Council, Student Activity Fee and Student Government Association. Gannon sponsors were Metz & Associates and the Center for Social Concerns.

Other sponsors included Cinemark-Millcreek 6, Crime Victim Center, the Department of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Erie Athletics, Erie Insurance Exchange, Hamot Health Connection, the National Organization of Women, SafeNet, Sarah Reed Children's Center and St. Vincent's.

The Crime Victim Center provides free education programs to the community. Any person interested in learning more about what the center has to offer as well as victims in need of help may go to 125 W. 18th Street or call the 24-hour hotline at 455-9414. A web page for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, the main organization is www.pcar.org.

Women Today seeks new members. Interested students may contact the president of Women Today, Carrie Rodgers, at cr1143@psu.edu. Women Today is dedicated to education, growth and awareness concerning the issues of women. The organization co-sponsors the Women's Film Series and encourages voter registration and attends marches in Harrisburg, Washington, D.C., and other locations.

Campus Q & A

This week: **Brandi Hovis**

A series spotlighting newsworthy members of the Behrend community



PHOTO BY ROB WYNNE / BEHREND BEACON

Two-year SGA president Brandi Hovis will graduate in May with a degree in Management and Marketing.

by **Jen Henderson**
assistant news editor

Have you ever wanted to know how extremely busy a person could be? Brandi Hovis could definitely tell you a thing or two! She has somehow juggled SGA president duties and a college schedule for the past two years. The average per-

son would be driven to insanity, but not her. She seems to perform both jobs with ease.

Hovis grew up in Cochranton where she attended high school at Cochranton High School. She is part of a large family, with five brothers and two sisters. Hovis has been SGA president for the past two years and a member of the Senate for three and a half years. She will graduate this year from

Behrend with a degree in Management and Marketing.

Through the SGA she has been active with THON, which is becoming more and more popular each year. Hovis also acts as vice president of the Irish American Society which she helped start and participates in Leadership Unlimited. She has seen Behrend put many new ideas and plans into action and has played a large part in many of these. Hovis will leave big shoes to fill when she leaves office after this semester.

Q: What is your best memory of going to school here at Behrend?

A: I haven't left yet. I still have some time for more! As of now, I'd have to say all the people I have met and worked with—they're all great!

Q: What are your plans after graduation?

A: I am attending graduate school at Indiana University of Pennsylvania for the Student Affairs in Higher Education (SAHE) program.

Q: What is your favorite movie?

A: "Dead Poet's Society."

Q: What do you like to do in your free time, when you have any?

A: What's that? Just kidding. Well, when I do have some extra time I like to, believe it or not, go to bookstores or little cafes. It's relaxing. When I get the chance I go

home to visit my family.

Q: Do you have any advice for the next SGA president?

A: Listen to people, take lots of notes, ask lots of questions. Constructive criticism is a good thing. Think outside of the box. And I like how Steven Covey states it, "The challenge is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves."

Q: What was your favorite part of the major benefits of being SGA president?

A: I really like working with people who are motivated and inspired to make a difference. A major benefit of being SGA President is the perspective that you obtain about Behrend—it's a wonderful school and I wish more people could see it that way.

Q: What is your favorite book?

A: I have quite a few favorites but "1984" by George Orwell and "A Separate Peace" by John Knowles rank at the top.

Q: How would you improve Behrend?

A: I would love to get more students involved!

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NEWSROOM: 898-6488
FAX: 898-6019

Contact Us

E-MAIL:
behrroll5@aol.com

Offices are located
downstairs in the
Reed Union Building