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The Behrend Beacon

Brown bear breaks into Appalachian State building

by Diane Suchetka
Knight Ridder Newspapers

It wasn't your average breaking-and-entering call, the one that came into the Appalachian State University police department minutes before midnight Monday.

The dispatcher listened as students described the scene outside their apartment window. The suspect, they said, was knocking in a door at the Holmes Convocation Center on busy U.S. 321 in Boone.

A one-word description was all police needed:

Bear.

When officers arrived, they saw a brown bear had pushed the glass out of a ground-level door and was making its way down a hallway.

For some reason, it made a U-turn and headed back out, according to ASU Police Chief Gunther Doerr.

Spooked, perhaps by officers' flashlights, the bear fled across campus and ran head-first into an office building, Thomas Hall, where it bloodied its nose on a window. Then it took off into nearby woods, according to the chief.

Officers searched for about an hour, wanting to make sure the bear was OK. Despite its size, estimated at 150 to 200 pounds, they never found the bear.

No one else was injured in the incident, police said.

"There actually was a student working inside the convocation center, but I don't think he was in the same hallway as the bear," the chief said.

He estimated damages at \$150 to \$200.

"I'm trying to think of why he would've chosen that building to go into, but it's beyond me."

The convocation center, used for sporting and other events, has concession stands on the second floor, but no other food to speak of, Doerr said.

"It's just basically a kind of bizarre incident," he said.

"We're going to be on the lookout for him."

Hampton University, student paper reach accord after confiscation

The Virginian-Pilot

Hampton University's acting president and the editors of the student newspaper reached a resolution Oct. 24 after all copies of the latest issue were confiscated earlier this week.

The acting president, JoAnn Haysbert, had complained that the students had ignored her request to put on the front page her letter about recently corrected health violations in the cafeteria. It appeared on Page 3.

In the agreement, the students said they would reprint copies of the paper Oct. 24, with Haysbert's letter on the front page, said Chris Campbell, director of the journalism school. In return, Haysbert appointed a panel to draft guidelines for the operation of the newspaper, he said, and she agreed to abide by its recommendations.

The panel will be led by visiting professor Earl Caldwell, a former columnist for The New York Daily News, and will include student journalists, Campbell and the newspaper's three advisers, Campbell said.

"I think it's a good resolution to a difficult situation," he said. "This gives us a great opportunity to design a model for how newspapers at private universities should function."

Language boom sweeps colleges

by Robert Becker
Chicago Tribune

In an increasingly global economy, and as terrorism and war bring world events home, American students have returned to the study of foreign languages in record numbers.

According to a study released Thursday by the Modern Language Association, 1.4 million American college students are enrolled in foreign language study – the most since the group conducted its first survey in 1958.

Since 1998 – the last time the survey was published – the number of students enrolled in foreign language courses has jumped 17.9 percent. The percentage of college students taking such courses has risen to 8.7 percent, the highest it's been since 1972.

Students say the study of languages is more than just an exercise in verb tenses and vocabulary.

Rather, it's a unique window into another culture.

"Through German I'm getting a better understanding of Germany and the reunification process they're still undergoing and just a lot of the things they've gone through over the last 50 years – the Cold War and all that," said Aaron Miller, a freshman at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Study of some languages has risen sharply. Since 1998, enrollment in Arabic has increased 92.5 percent – to 10,596 students from 5,505 – and Biblical Hebrew was up 59 percent, to 14,469 students from 9,099.

"I think no doubt it's the interest in global issues," said Rosemary Feal, executive director of the association. "The world is smaller, and people are much more aware of the need to expand their learning beyond the border of the U.S."

Even with the jump, foreign language study in America's colleges and universities lags far behind schools in Europe, where language study often begins as early as age 5, and high school graduates are proficient in two languages.

"The good news is we seemed to have bottomed out on our sustained three-decade decline in language acquisition," said David Ward, the British-born president of the American Council on Education and the former chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "So it's two cheers, not three."

The study notes that although Spanish, French and German still dominate the academic landscape, colleges have broadened their offerings, teaching 148 of the less commonly taught languages in 2002, compared with 137 in 1998. These languages include Ojibwe, Swahili, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

"It's great in terms of educating students in a global way," said Larry Schehr, a professor of French and executive associate dean for the humanities at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "It's a great way to develop and foster global awareness."

Education experts said American schools witnessed dramatic increases in language enrollment during the 1960s amid the Cold War.

At that time, national security concerns – the need to translate foreign technical journals and analyze intelligence data – prompted students to study Russian and other Eastern European languages.

Though the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks undoubtedly inspired part of the current increase, experts said Americans also understand the need for a deeper cultural understanding.

"It is learning the language, but it is also becoming culturally literate," said Dagmar Lorenz, a professor in the department of Germanic studies at UIC. "Because just knowing the words and sentences really is not that helpful if you don't know the larger context."

UIC's German department has seen undergraduate enrollment rise to 422 students in 2003, from 309 students in 2001.

Elizabeth Loentz, an assistant professor at UIC, said students interested in the European Union and the global economy are majoring in German with a minor in business.

The growth in the number of students studying Arabic at schools like Northwestern University has prompted administrators to add additional classes to accommodate them.

At Northwestern, enrollment increased to around 60 students this year, up from 17 students in 2000. Lynn Whitcomb, a lecturer in the program of African and Asian languages at Northwestern, said a more diverse group of students is studying Arabic.

"It seems there are all sorts of people who want to learn," Whitcomb said.

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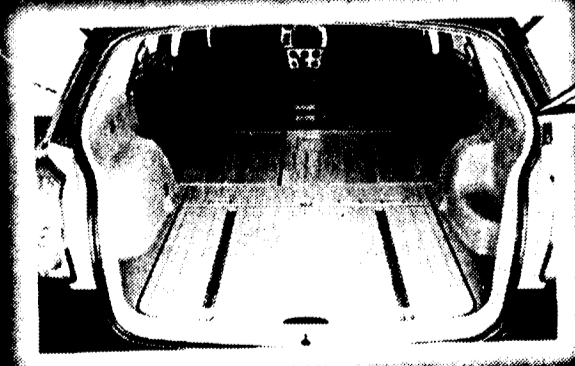
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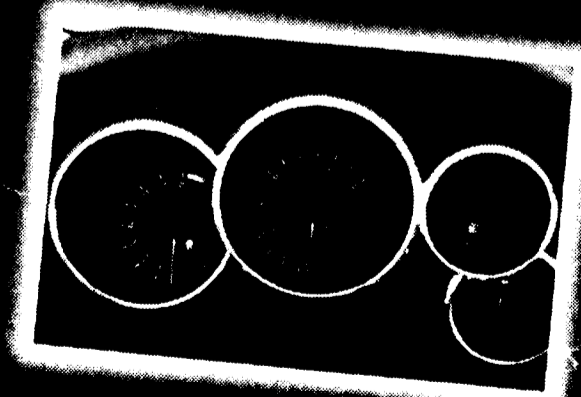
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