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## Rockin' the Vote rocks the boat

### Communication class deals with project censorship

by B.J. Shields  
staff writer

A student-produced public service video was recently yanked from viewing in Bruno's Café.

The video in question was put together as a project for Dr. Ursula Davis' COMMU 405 class. As part of an overall program called Rockin' the Vote, a group from Davis's class made the video to show prior to their planned event, in hopes of promoting it to the student body.

After arranging to have the video promotion for Rockin' the Vote aired for two days in Bruno's Café, the group members looked forward to the success of their class project.

"We really just wanted to promote the event, to get people registered to vote," said Carrie Rodgers, COMMU 09.

On Monday, Rodgers approached the Office of Student Activities about scheduling the voter registration program to take place in Bruno's that Wednesday. The office approved her request, and that afternoon, the promotional video her class had prepared began showing in a continuous loop on the screen in the café.

Later that evening, Rodgers stopped by Bruno's to make further arrangements with Housing and Food Services for the set-up of the public service event. At that time, she noticed the video was not playing.

"The manager of Bruno's told us they had to stop playing the video because someone from Residence Life staff had complained," said Rodgers.

The complaint about the video took issue with a scene in which two DJs were filmed at a local tavern after one of their shows. The DJs had offered to play at the class's event free of charge, so the producers wished to include them in the promotional video.

At one point in the clip of the DJs, the liquor bottle lined shelves of the tavern

appeared in the background.

"It was a two-minute section of the video, and no one was seen drinking in it," said Brooke Nix, COMMU 07, who also worked with the class on the project.

"They (the representative of Residence Life) said we were promoting the bar."

The students said they felt they were going to get in trouble with the school and said the manager of Bruno's was also fearful of disciplinary action.

Because the video was part of an assigned project for which the class would be graded, the group approached the Office of Student Activities, offering to edit the questionable scene from the video.

"We didn't really get a straight answer, though, so it was not shown at all after that," said Rodgers.

It is unclear where school policy comes into play in the incident, however. Rodgers and Nix point out that Bruno's routinely airs football games that contain advertising and promotion of beer products. The school also supports the Beacon newspaper, which last week printed a page specifically promoting

area drinking establishments and has in the past reviewed restaurants along with their respective alcoholic beverage specialties.

According to Chris Rizzo, director of Student Activities and the Reed Union Building, the video was removed from viewing by Housing and Food Services (HFS), which is an independent organization.

"Housing and Food Services has the ability to manage operations of their facility," said Rizzo in an electronic communication. "The use of Bruno's for programming/event purposes has been a privilege extended by HFS in support of student life on campus."

Following the removal of the video from Bruno's, and the lack of a response from the Office of Student Activities, the class discussed at its regular meeting how the tape's removal can be viewed as censorship.

"The most frustrating thing about this whole situation is that it was an assigned class project," said Nix. "We all worked very hard putting it all together, and we weren't promoting alcohol in any way. We were promoting voter registration."

In addition to discussing the issues of censorship surrounding this chain of events in their own class, the video was also presented to one of Davis' other classes.

Consensus seemed to be that there was nothing wrong with the video and that the brief scene of the DJs was not in any way promoting alcohol consumption to the viewers. The incident raised questions in both classes as to the validity of the initial complaint against the video and whether the students who created it were being unnecessarily censored.

With the most of the student population being 18 and older, the college would be wrong to think that students can not make mature decisions.

"We're adults," said Rodgers. "And besides, it's not like college students don't already drink."



Students are seen here exercising their right to vote during the 2002 SGA Election. The Rockin' the Vote project was designed to increase voter registration on campus, thus enabling students to exercise their rights of voting in state and federal elections.

## Hunger and homelessness week begins Monday

### Organization plans for 24 hours of homelessness

by Eileen Jensen  
staff writer

Each year, one week before Thanksgiving, the National Coalition for the Homeless sponsors National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Throughout the week, schools and communities participate in a nationwide effort to bring awareness to the country about the problems of hunger and homelessness.

Behrend will be one of many schools throughout our nation advocating and educating the school community on the importance of not forgetting about those less fortunate.

An end to homelessness is not impossible, and throughout Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, many activities will be available for students to participate in to learn more about how they can help.

On Monday, the Behrend Soup Bowl Dinner will take place. Mr. Jonathan Hall, instructor of physics, will be talking about his experiences in the Peace Corps. A free lunch is included, and students must sign up at the Reed Information Desk. This program is sponsored by Reality Check and the Student Activity Fee.

The following day, in the Smith Chapel Living Room, students can experience a meal from a

first, second, or third-world country. The Feast or Famine Banquet is a chance to expand knowledge as to what others are experiencing because Americans often take for granted what is given to them. Sign ups are located at the Reed Information Desk. The Center for Service and the Student Activity Fee is the sponsor of this program.

The Cardboard City Program will begin at 4 p.m. on Wednesday. It will last until 4 p.m. on Thursday. This program's purpose is to raise awareness of hunger and homelessness issues through experiencing it first hand. Each organization throughout campus has the opportunity to build their "cardboard city" which

will shelter its members for 24 hours.

Organizations must sign up at the Reed Information Desk so that Police and Safety will know where their "cities" will be located throughout campus. The students in the shelters will beg for money from fellow students. The money that is raised will support shelters and soup kitchens in Erie. A homeless shelter will be set up in the Smith Chapel for the evening.

The final program for Hunger and Homelessness Week is the Community Service Fair on Friday. This will take place in McGarvey Commons from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. This provides students the opportunity to find out about local organizations that need volunteers. There will be

a DVD raffle at this event.

Some people may say that one person can not make a difference, but students can advocate and volunteer, and truly make a difference in the lives of those who need help.

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, 40 percent of people living in poverty are children. The two main factors that account for poverty increasing is eroding employment opportunities and the declining availability of public assistance towards those in need of help.

If you have any questions about the programs and events planned for Hunger and Homelessness week, ask at the Reed Information Desk or contact Kelly Shroud, Coordinator of Service and Student Activities, at kaw148@psu.edu or x6609.

The following organizations help to end hunger and homelessness. Any organization involved in the Cardboard City Program will be benefiting one of the following charities: the Booker T. Washington Center-Emergency Food Fund, the City Mission, the Emmaus Soup Kitchen, the Refuge Emergency Homeless Shelter, the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity, SAFENET, the St. Martin Center, the Second Harvest Food Bank, Alternative Spring Break, or your own non-profit organization that helps to end hunger and homelessness in the community.



A cardboard city, like the one pictured here, will soon start springing up around campus.

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