

Trigon displays a tragedy

by Brian Mitchell
staff writer

Wednesday night, Trigon showed the Laramie Project in Reed 117. The Laramie Project was a display of Matthew Shepard's death, 200 interviews of what people thought about, and the cases of the two murderers.

"Hate is horrible, and nobody should be excluded for who they are," said Brad Frank, 05 MATH. "I think they got what they deserve."

Matthew Shepard was an openly gay man who attended the University of Wyoming in Laramie, majoring in Art History. One night, he decided to go to a bar to celebrate getting the highest grade in his class on a midterm examination. While he was sitting at the bar enjoying his beer, two guys, Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinley, approached him and offered him a ride home. Knowing that he was gay, they drove him to a place in the middle of nowhere, beat him and tied him to a fence crucifixion style. A couple days later, a biker discovered him. At first, he was mistaken for a

scarecrow because he was tied up. The biker called the police. Shepard was taken to the emergency room and remained in critical condition for a couple days. On Oct. 12, 1998, at 12:53 p.m., Shepard died.

"Go home and give your kids a hug and don't go through a day without telling them you love them," said Judy Shepard, mother of Matthew Shepard.

After Matthew Shepard's death, news reporters started interviewing many residents in Laramie. Many said the two killers made the town look bad because not many hate crimes were ever committed there. Others said Matthew Shepard got what he deserved. In fact, one minister, Pastor Jim Talus, who travels the country, was protesting that Matthew Shepard should "burn in hell." This infuriated some of the viewers.

"One thing that strikes me about this movie was Pastor Jim Talus holding a sign saying 'Matthew Shepard in hell,'" said Dave Laided, 05 Broadcast Journalism, Edinboro University. "It is shocking that Talus, who is a man of God, should produce so much hate."

Five months after Matthew Shepard's

death, the two killers went to trial in State v. Henderson and State v. McLimsley. Shepard's father said he hopes "every morning they wake up in their cells and think about what they did to an innocent human being."

In the end, the two received life-imprisonment on the charges of kidnapping and murdering. Henderson's grandmother was extremely upset when he pleaded guilty; she tried to persuade the trial judge to let her grandson out of prison. Citizens to this day are still mad because no laws have been passed against hate crimes, though the two murderers were locked up for life.

"This film had a huge impact on me," said Britney Heater, DUS 01. "I don't think they should be put to death, but should spend their lives in prison thinking about what they had done."

"I think it was interesting how heterosexual people handled the tragedy," said Laided. "There were people who were strong believers of their values yet went against their religion to show sympathy for Matthew Shepard."

Athletics department presents Fan Jam

In an attempt to boost school spirit on campus, the Athletics department is planning Fan Jam for this evening. Festivities begin at 7 p.m. in the Junker Center, and include a 20 minute men's basketball scrimmage, a 20 minute women's basketball scrimmage and performances from both the dance and cheerleading teams.

Also being planned for the evening is a raffle for Behrend Basketball sweatshirts and t-shirts, as well as a shoot-to-win contest with food coupons from various local restaurants for the winners.

"Fan Jam is a great opportunity for the college community to meet the cheerleaders, dance team, and both basketball teams," said Brian Streeter, Athletic Director.



Members of the Lady Lions Dance Team practice Thursday night for their performance at Fan Jam

PHOTO BY JUSTIN CURRY/BEHREND BEACON

Astronomy holds open house

by Justin Panstka
staff writer

For the past week or two, the sun has been the hot topic of the campus. With the recent solar flares, the sun has taken center stage. Behrend's astronomy department joined in the fun with its latest open house "Solis Investigating the Sun."

On Thursday at 7:30pm, Dr. James LoPresto, a professor at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, reported on the stunning new observations, which showed the sun with increasing sharpness and detail. Attendees were given new and exciting images of the sun in ways never seen before.

This open house was held in Science 101, and it was free to both students and the general public. The lecture was suitable for a non-technical audience, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. It was the second of three astronomy open houses that will take place this semester.

The sun, as LoPresto explained, has been studied for several centuries by

scientists. This flare was caused by solar magnetic fields interacting with each other.

Dr. LoPresto described such observations with the European Space Agency spacecraft, SOHO (Solar Heliospheric Observatory). He said that SOLIS (Synoptic Optical Long-term Investigations of the Sun), a new solar complex on Kin Peak Mountain in Arizona, would join SOHO in the next few months.

Solis, the primary focus of the lecture, is a suite of telescopes that will provide forefront, research-quality, full disk observations of the sun to the scientific community on a continuous basis for several decades.

A point of interest among the attendees was LoPresto's discussion of solar inactivity. From 1645 to 1715, there was a period of solar inactivity which resulted in colder summers. This led to killer frosts, widespread famine, and other climatic problems. Though these inactive periods are difficult to pinpoint precisely, LoPresto says that we are about due for another one of these periods. This is due to

the sun's magnetic field, including what causes the solar cycle and how solar energy is stored and released. According to LoPresto, the key to understanding these phenomena is to monitor the sun's behavior, and to zero in on small regions in the atmosphere.

LoPresto spent a bit of time discussing the current solar activity. The solar flare that recently reached Earth, which is actually a misnomer since what actually reached us is called a coronal mass ejection, caused the most intense aurora seen in Erie for de-

plans for solar activity, the Advanced Technology Solar Observatory, a \$1.5 billion project, is currently located in Chile.

Behrend's open house was open for public viewing after the lecture.

The next astronomy open house will take place on Dec. 4 from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. in 101 Science. The speaker will be about the sun's magnetic field, Dr. Roger Knack, a professor of physics and astronomy at Behrend, will be the speaker.

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Smith Chapel comes to life with 'organ' donation

by Lauren Packer
editor in chief

A thunderous applause greeted concert organist Dr. Larry Smith as he approached the new Opus 100 organ in the Smith Chapel. A standing ovation is what Smith exited to as the Smith Chapel Organ Dedication Recital came to a close on Saturday.

"It's wonderful for me to be a very small part of this," said Smith, a professor of music and Chair of the Organ Department at Indiana University. "I simply get to play pieces that bring to life the wonderful colors of this magnificent instrument."

"I didn't know what to expect," said Larry Smith, whose family is responsible for donating the funds for the Smith Chapel, Carillon and organ. "Dr. Smith is quite talented, that's for sure."

Keeping his feet just as busy as his hands, Dr. Smith astonished the crowd from the opening chord to the final pedal run.

"Dr. Smith's technical ability on the instrument is incomparable," said professor of history A. Daniel Frankforter. "He planned a very sophisticated program consisting of pieces that are seldom performed, primarily because few musicians have the ability to play them."

"We were extremely privileged to be able to hear an organist of this caliber give the inaugural organ recital on our new organ," said Kathryn Wolfe, professor of French.

With his impressive musicianship, Dr. Smith may have stolen the show from other distinguished guests in attendance.

An almost capacity crowd gathered in the Chapel to honor four other Smiths.

Smith and his wife, Kathryn, donated the funds for the Chapel and continued their generosity with the addition of the Carillon and the organ.

"Gifts from generous donors make it possible for Penn State Behrend's students to have a fuller and more meaningful college experience," said Ed Blaguszewski, Director of University Relations. "The Smith family's gifts of a chapel, carillon

and organ created the opportunity for more student involvement in campus ministry and the Center for Service Leadership."

The Floyd and Juanita Smith Carillon is named after Larry Smith's late parents. The organ was dedicated on Saturday to honor the Smiths' two children, Kevin and Colleen.

"We are forever indebted to the Smiths for their amazing generosity," said Kevin Moore, Associate Director of Development and Alumni Relations. "The Smith Organ has greatly enhanced the cultural offerings that the college can provide and has raised the cultural bar another notch for everyone in our region."

One of only three organs of comparable size and quality in the Erie area, the new organ carries the name Opus 100 because it is the 100th organ built by Martin Ott. The German born Ott comes from a distinguished family of organ builders and built Behrend's organ specifically to the acoustics of the Smith Chapel.

"The chapel has fine acoustics," said Ott. "It is small but it's very elegant. It's a landmark for the university. Dr. Smith is a wonderful technician and really brought out the colors of the organ."

Dr. Wolfe shares Ott's sentiment about the value of the organ and chapel to the community.

"To have acquired a place for quiet meditation and a magnificent space in which to develop an eventual chamber music series is certainly a significant achievement," said Wolfe. "The organ stands at the very heart of the new space. The bells of the Carillon make it feel like a campus whose traditions go back further than the mere 55 years Behrend has been in existence."

"The college and the Erie community have not yet begun to appreciate the unique resources of the Smith Chapel," said Dr. Frankforter. "The chapel's new organ is a major work of art that was created especially for us. There is none in the world like it. An undergraduate college with limited offerings in the arts, such as our own, virtually never has a resource such as this at its disposal."