

STUDENT LIFE

Campus Activities

Say 'CIAO' to new club on campus

by **Lori DeFabio**
student life editor

Interested in Italian culture? Want to meet to some new friends? Join the newly formed Collegiate Italian American Organization.

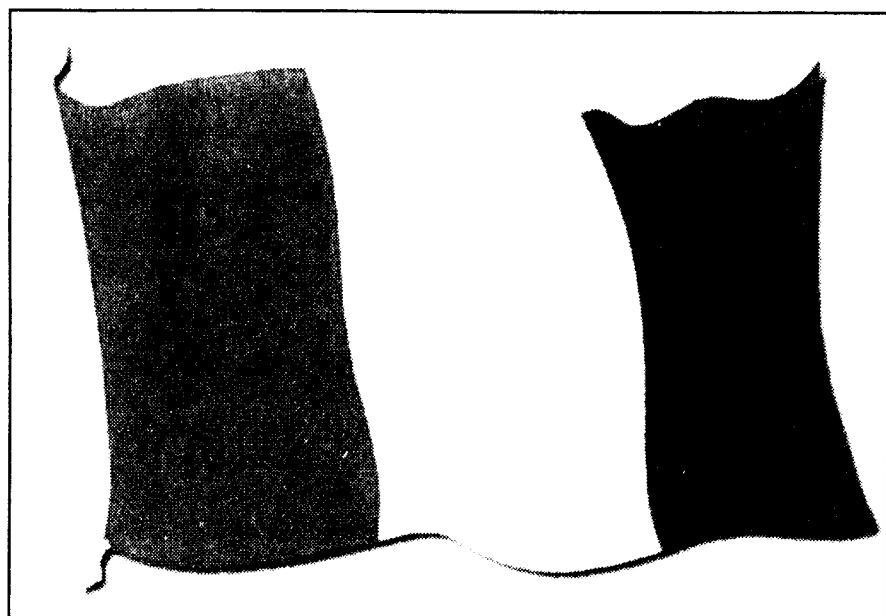
The idea to form a club promoting Italian culture came from Nick LoGalbo 06 FNC. He approached Jenna Boazzo with the idea and the two began recruiting members and developing the club constitution under direction of the club's faculty advisor, Dr. Mark Bestoso.

"There are a lot of Italian-Americans on campus that were not being represented by MCC and Italian culture is not just for Italians; it's for the world," said LoGalbo.

The Collegiate Italian American Organization (CIAO) began recruiting members last semester but is currently not an approved Behrend club because SGA has yet to vote. SGA should be voting on CIAO's proposal within the next few weeks.

Unlike most clubs on campus, CIAO will not be collecting dues from its members. "No dues will be collected because this club is more than cultural diversity; we're mainly interested in doing community service," said LoGalbo.

CIAO will begin its community service projects Monday by volunteering at St. Paul's Soup Kitchen and a Bocce tournament for charity is being planned. CIAO members have also been discussing co-sponsoring activities with other Behrend clubs, including Matchbox Players and ScreenVisions. Activities such as a picnic with bocce and flag foot-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The newly formed Collegiate Italian American Organization will be meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. CIAO is planning many community projects and ways to promote Italian culture.

ball games, spaghetti dinners and poker tournaments are also being discussed.

CIAO currently has about 16 active members, including President Nick LoGalbo, Vice President Jenna Boazzo 06 MANGT, Treasurer Dom Caimano 08 ND and Secretary Lauren Breskovich MANGT 06. Officers were elected last semester and elections for next year's CIAO officers will take place later this spring.

Boazzo chose to accept nomination of vice president because, like many other Italian-Americans on campus, she thought that CIAO would be a good way to promote Italian culture.

"Heritage is a big part of my life: I'm 100 percent Italian. When we started, we were small and I thought it was a good idea to promote Italian heritage on this campus," said Boazzo.

The club is open to everyone regardless of whether the person is of Italian heritage.

"Even though I'm not Italian, I decided to join CIAO because many of my friends are Italian and I wanted to learn more about their heritage," said Jess Gogal 08, BECON.

CIAO will hold its next meeting on Jan. 19 at 7:00 with location to be announced. For more information, contact Nick LoGalbo at nxl904@psu.edu or x2082.

Behrend Students get 'Reality Check'

by **Crystal Chisholm**
staff writer

Reality Check is a service organization on campus that pledges its time to helping people whose lifestyles are drastically different from many of our own. During the course of every school year Reality Check offers students the opportunity to travel to various cities in the United States during either Spring or Winter break as volunteers, and this year, the club traveled to New York City.

On Jan. 2, Penn State provided a bus for official members of the club, as well as other students in the Behrend community, to travel to New York City for a six day, five night experience unlike any other. Though the group stayed in a hostel in Manhattan, the real work began in a totally different area of New York City. During their week long stay, the club worked with another outreach organization on Staten Island called Project Hospitality. Project Hospitality is a non-profit organization that serves as a soup kitchen, food pantry and shelter for abused women.

Stephanie Kencht, a sixth semester Biology major, and member of Reality Check said that it was an experience she will never forget. "What made the trip so valuable for me was the interaction with people, and with the volunteers. Working with Reality Check gives you the chance to meet people from all over the world, and in turn helps you to become more aware of the world - more than just what's in front of you."

Oftentimes, people have the mindset that serving others is a hassle, and are usually made to feel guilty or called lazy because they choose not to participate. However, the members of Reality Check view their

service projects in a totally different light. They realize that because they share their time with others, their perception of the world changes because of the encounters they have with people they wouldn't normally associate with. One of the biggest misconceptions about people who come to soup kitchens or clothing drives is that they are either lazy and don't want to get a job, or have had an addiction they couldn't overcome, causing them to turn to outreach organizations such as Project Hospitality. Most times, Kencht says, "The people that come to the shelters are people with good lives that have been interrupted by an unfortunate event."

Usually when students here the phrase "service project," they immediately think of the community service requirement they needed to fulfill in high school in order to graduate, but Reality Check is about more than just spending an hour at a soup kitchen. What makes Reality Check so special is that it gives students the opportunity to experience reality not through their own understanding, but as it is for those without a voice; people who have been easily forgotten and overlooked by society.

"Community Service projects such as this help people to realize their role not just in a small community like Penn State, but their role in the world as well," said Kencht. Ultimately, by volunteering their time, students gain new found knowledge about themselves and have a better appreciation for those they aid in their communities.

If you would like to attend the service project Reality Check in planning for their upcoming spring break trip to Baltimore and Jacksonville, FL, you can contact De'Adra Walker, president of the organization.

Next week will begin Jerry Pohl's weekly article, "Project Words," analyzing and defining the word respect.

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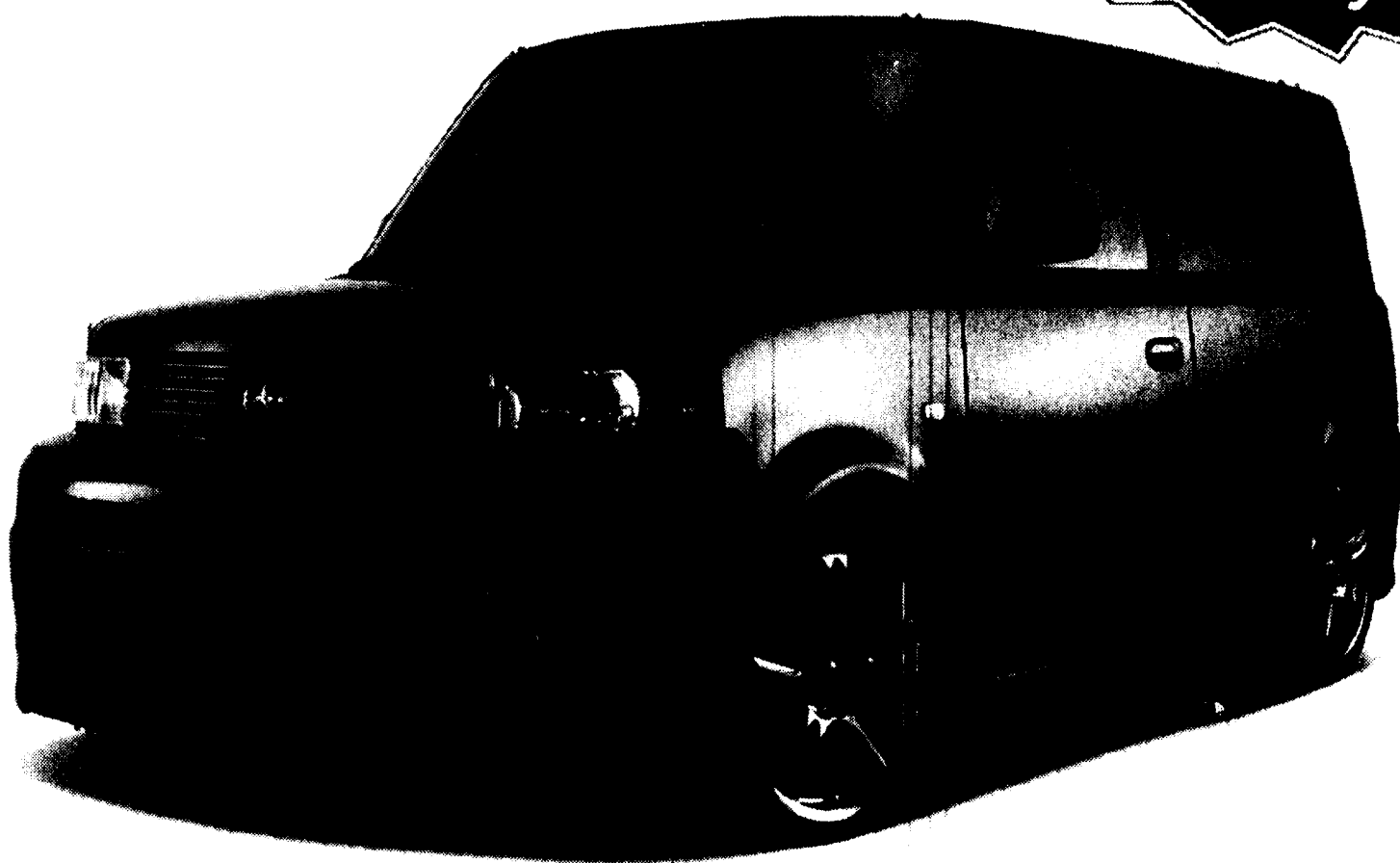
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