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Scam artists target students

By Annie Sevin
staff writer

Chief of Police and Safety, James Amann, is asking Behrend students to beware of phone and e-mail scam artists. Students are receiving fake phone calls and/or e-mails every semester regarding scholarships or grant money.

The scam artists ask for financial information from the students so that they can rip them off. These people make their case sound legitimate, they can even go as far as making fake websites, but students are advised to not give out any information to such people.

"I just wanted to make students aware that these types of things are going on and that if you do receive a phone call or an e-mail or something along those lines, don't provide any financial information at all. Just delete it or tell the person on the phone that you're not interested," said Amann.

He says these sorts of scams happen at colleges everywhere and that students need to be aware of it.

"I received a call from the police down

at Gannon; they say that the students down there had also been receiving calls," Amann said. "This is going around all the colleges. It's a big thing." Amann said, "usually they're offering...grant money or scholarship money and they want banking information or checking accounts or savings accounts."

He also advises students to "never provide any of that stuff over the internet." If students do hear from any scam artists, they may report them if they wish, but Amann says it won't do much in the way of catching the solicitors.

"These calls are extremely difficult to trace and the stuff on the Internet could be from a foreign country for all we know... so the best thing to do is prevention," said Amann.

The biggest problem with identifying these phone calls or e-mails as fakes, is the fact that they look legitimate. Some of the solicitors go to extreme lengths to make students believe that they are real.

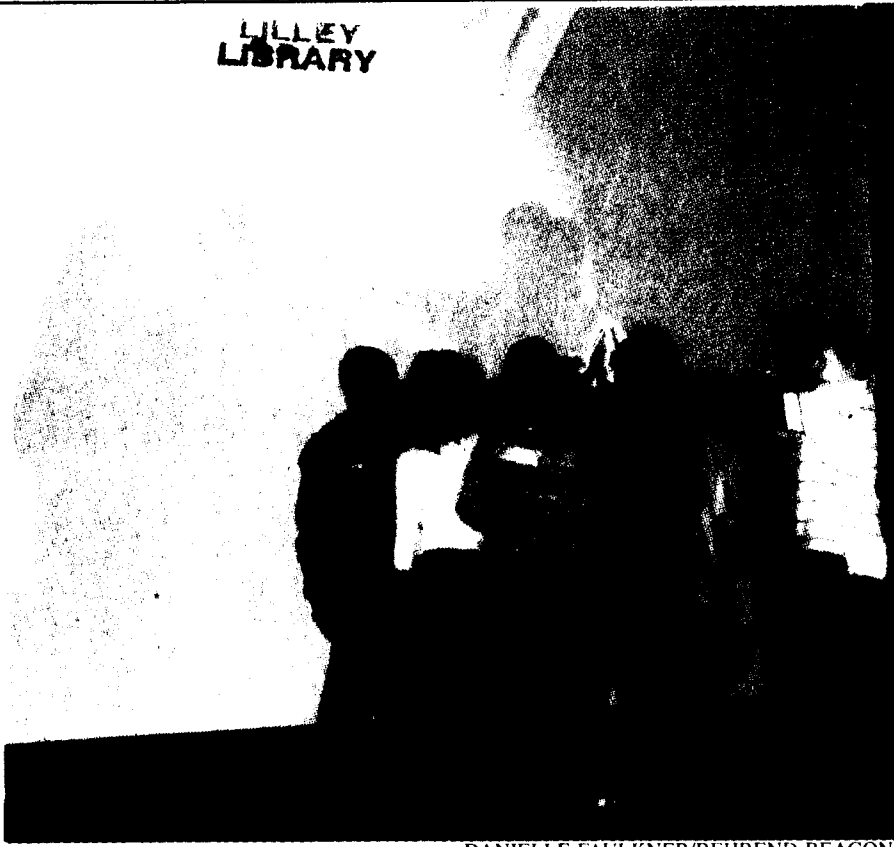
Amann warns that, "if something comes out of the blue...it's not a legitimate offer...legit companies or organizations are going to go through channels;

they're not just going to come out of the blue promising money."

Some of the scam artists will say they are from banks or lending institutions and then they can prompt a student for his or her financial information to transfer funds. Some of them even make websites that look professional in order to convince students that they really do have money coming their way. "A lot of these sites from banks and whatnot...look just like legitimate ones, so even if it looks to be legitimate it may not be," says Amann.

"Websites that identify themselves as banks or whatever and they're asking for you to confirm your financial information with them...it's bank that you may or may not have ever heard of...they're just fishing for financial information that they can use to rip you off," said Amann.

Again, Amann mentions prevention is the best way not to fall victim. A good form of prevention is to think logically: If a student has not applied for a scholarship or grant, chances are they are not receiving one and they don't need to provide any financial information to anyone.



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The MLK day festivities ended with a candlelight ceremony in the McGarvey Commons. Jenna Gregory, Adriane Smith, Lindsey Giuliana, Eric Hilla, Jed Smith, Scott Soltis, Amy McCullough, Chrissey Lambert, Pam Sumah, Hayolom Tadesse, George Morgan, Tabitha Chase and Kara Humphris huddled on stage and pressed their candles together in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.

Protestors rally in downtown Erie

By Bradley Stewart
news editor

While republicans were celebrating George W. Bush's inauguration into his second term as president yesterday, Erie democrats were protesting the inauguration and the war in Iraq.

In West Perry Square, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., a collection of more than 20 students, senior citizens and middle-aged Americans braved the cold to gather and send a message of peace. Protestors held signs that read "Stop the War" and "We the People Say No to the Bush Agenda."

From the gazebo platform in West Perry Square individuals rotated reading the names of soldiers killed in the Iraq war.

The mood of the event was a general negative feeling towards the war, not specifically a protest towards Bush and his inauguration.

"It's always important to support action against the war," said Ben Haire, PLTSC 04, president of the Young Democrats at Behrend. Haire and several other Behrend

democrats were present to rally and share in the peaceful message.

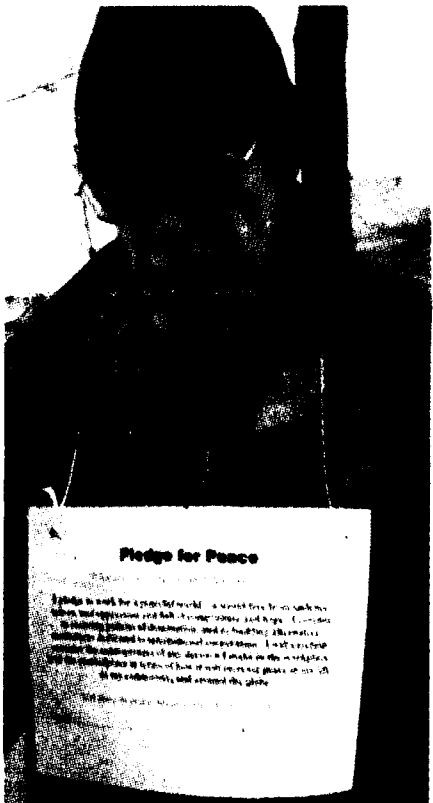
Another student organization in attendance was the Voice for Peace from Gannon University. The organization's slogan: peace and justice for all.

"No to war, no to empire, no more blood for oil," said Matthew Ochalek, a junior liberal arts major from Gannon.

Ochalek, along with two fellow members, stood in the cold with their anti-war flags draped across their shoulders in support and an attempt to keep warm.

"It's a disagreement with his [Bush's] policies," said Sarah Sunseri, a senior math and secondary education student, another member of Voice for Peace.

Al Richardson, an Erie resident and organizer, was circulating the crowd and distributing "pledge for peace" cards. Richardson is part of the 9/11 peace initiative of Erie, and he was there "to make a statement that invading and occupying Iraq is causing great pain and suffering to troops and families and soldiers that have been disabled and Iraqi women and children."



DANIELLE FAULKNER/BEHREND BEACON
Al Richardson, Erie resident, passes along his pledge for peace.



DANIELLE FAULKNER/BEHREND BEACON
Matt Ochalek shows off his flag and listens to soldier fatalities.

Steelers fans speak out

By Andy McNeil
opinion editor

With the NFL season coming to an end, it is evident that one team in particular has grabbed the attention of the students at Behrend. Since a large majority of the student populace is from the Pittsburgh region, the black and gold are an obvious favorite.

Steelers fans, known for their tenacious nature and diehard commitment, have become a sort of unduplicatable phenom. Take for instance this ferocious quote by fan Mike Orr, MIS 08: "We're gonna treat the Patriots like kids treat bumblebees. We'll rip off their wings and burn them with a magnifying glass...then we'll go inside for a popsicle."

Such brash statements and boastful ways have given the terrible towel-clad fans an indisputable untidiness in the question for humbling other teams and league domination. Alan Dolhi, HIST 08,

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Gray shares synthetic vision with students, staff

By Lacy Buzard
copy editor

Dr. Robert Gray, assistant professor of engineering, developed synthetic vision systems after witnessing four airplane crashes over the course of three years due to bad weather conditions.

Gray was living in Shemya, a small island near the former Soviet Union, when he first acknowledged the need to augment traditional navigational aids, such as GPS and radar.

He and 24 other people (only two women) had dorm rooms in an Air Force hangar so they could be near the aircraft they were assigned to support. There were no other people on the island and necessities, like food, were carried in by plane.

Shemya was notorious for its high winds and fog that made it difficult for pilots to see. Pilots were forced to use instrument flight rules, which resulted in a controlled flight into the terrain.

Gray was able to focus more on SVS upon his return to the United States, motivated by the deaths of so many people due to low visibility in the air.

Advancements in technology were instrumental in the development of his system. Computer memory, like the hard drives in PCs, grew larger and the price grew smaller. Micro-controllers became faster, but most importantly, CD-ROMs allowed for larger optical storage space.

The SVS basically paints a picture of the surrounding landscape using a static database that must be updated for new construction, like new cell phone tow-



DANIELLE FAULKNER/BEHREND BEACON

Dr. Robert Gray gave a seminar on synthetic vision systems Thursday in Reed 114. The systems provide navigational directions similar to GPS and radar.

ers. Programmers take a visual fingerprint of an airport's surrounding and save it to the SVS.

A high-definition television depicting the real landscape was placed directly beside the SVS monitor during testing.

The displays were remarkably similar, according to Gray.

"This display is much better and the resolution is fabulous," said a pilot during the video of the system test, comparing SVS to then-current navigational

aids. "It's not error-proof," Gray said, but there is continuing research.

Eventually, Gray sees this technology being used in every mode of transportation, even in the commercial arena.

Students at Behrend have been inspired by Gray's success. "I really enjoyed him as a teacher," said Brian Lee, EET 08. "He gave us real life examples in his life for the type [of] material we were covering and how it was important."

"I didn't realize he was in this deep," said Isaac Aunkst, EET 06. "I'm impressed."

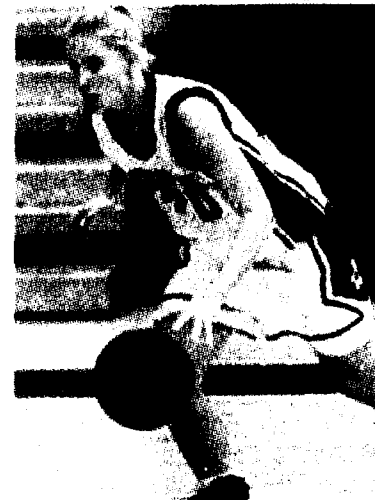
Departments of transportation in Michigan and Minnesota have already adopted SVS for snow maintenance vehicles. SVS can display where the center and sidelines are supposed to be on the road.

Gray offered to sell the technology to PennDOT, but with no success. According to Gray, PennDOT is very reluctant to adopt new technologies even though the technology has been used in similar circumstances in other parts of the country.

Gray earned his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Ohio University and a MSEE from the United States Air Force Institute of Technology. He is currently the director of the Center for Navigation, Communication and Information Systems for the Transportation Institute at University Park.

The School of Engineering and Engineering Technologies' next speaker will be Dr. Joseph McClellan on Feb. 17 at noon.

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