

THE BEHREND BEACON

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Campus concludes culture commemoration



Jennifer Haight/THE BEHREND BEACON

Culture Week has brought many different kinds of performers to the Behrend community, ranging from painter, Richard Hight to dancing drum group, Waongo, to the returning slam poetry duo, Yellow Rage.

By Matthew Ryan Burneisen

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Culture week, which kicked off Monday, has brought musicians, poets, painters and activists to campus from different parts of the country and the world to expose students to new things.

On Wednesday, in the WinterGarden of the Reed Union Building, Penn State hosted Waongo. Part of the Rhythms of Life Series, Waongo is a Central African dance and drum group featuring instruments, songs and dances from the people native to Central Africa. The performance lasted for about an hour and attracted a diverse crowd. Students who had seen posters or read announcements about the event came, but people were also drawn out of Bruno's to the lively performance. Kevin Jackson of Lawrence Hall said, "I forgot about it, and I was walking back from class and it (the music) brought me in."

Children from a local elementary school were found in the crowd and were very active in participating in the show. Andy Herrera, the Director of Educational Equity and Diversity Programs, said "[The group set] a very harmonious mood and did a good job incorporating

the crowd into the performance."

Still to come, there is a diversity luncheon in the McGarvey Commons, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. today. Free food will be provided to students along with pamphlets, buttons and a slide show to embrace diversity and promote equality. On Saturday, Yellow Rage will perform in the McGarvey Commons from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. This duo of Asian American poets should be unique. Herrera said that it should be an "amazing performance of spoken word" and described it as "rap with poetry." He also said that they "express themselves very strongly about their experiences of being Asian American and what that is."

Culture Rush, similar to Club Rush, was held on Monday in the McGarvey Commons and had a "fairly good turn out" according to Herrera. He also stated "about 100 people came in..." and that the main purpose of Culture Rush was "[To try] to get the organizations on campus that are multi cultural in nature, to not only make themselves available to students, but also invite to student body to check them out."

Tables were set up with balloons, finger food was served, and music from around the world was enjoyed throughout the event.

Magdalen Hsu-Li, a painter, songwriter, singer and cultural activist, spoke and performed on Tuesday in the McGarvey Commons. She is an Asian American woman who spoke out about her personal experiences of being discriminated against. Her message dealt with more than just racial prejudice but also prejudice based on her sexual orientation.

Visual Impact performed on Thursday Night and consisted of an artist who paints to music. His theme was diversity, and he filled an 8-foot canvas in the time it took for one song to play. Also on Thursday, and throughout the previous two days, the Diversity Committee had a table set up outside of Bruno's where they promoted Culture Week and their organization with giveaways and fundraising efforts.

All of these events were put together by students, faculty, and their organizations. Herrera stated, "[The] majority of the events have been coordinated by the SGA [Student Government Association] diversity committee and specifically Seraina Naef." Other groups that participated in the creation of Culture Week are the Asian Student Organization, Matchbox Players, Women Today, and Trigon.

Inside

Penalized parking

By Miranda Krause

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A lack of parking spaces at Behrend and the abundance of parking tickets are causing some anger as well as frustration among students. Some students believe the plethora of parking tickets is caused by stolen parking permits. Dan LaFuria, a commuter student, left his window open in the spring time and someone stole his parking permit. While parked in the student parking lot, he received a ticket for \$50. After explaining his story, his parking ticket was lowered to \$7. "I was very upset," LaFuria said, "I had the permit and I still had to pay for the ticket. I actually had to buy a new permit."

Eric Kephart, a freshman and commuter student, claims his permit was stolen too. He had parked in the student parking lot and received a \$50 ticket as well. "It was disappointing because I had to go to Erie Hall, it was a waste of time."

Last year, from 2004-2005, the total number of parking tickets written was 3,484. This academic year, 2005 - 2006, the number of tickets written so far is 426. A parking pass is the only way to avoid getting a ticket. A semester parking pass for a full time commuter student is \$130 whereas a semester parking pass for a residential student is \$135. Also, a part time student pays \$65 for a semester parking pass. However, if you purchase a fall and spring pass together, rather than separately, you receive \$30 off the total price.

The price of tickets ranges from \$7-\$50, depending on the offense. After nine tickets are written for the same vehicle, the car is then suspended and must be kept off campus for a week. If the same car receives any more tickets after this, each offense will have the car suspended for another week. Even if you are a resident, you must remove your car from the campus.

Colleen White has not had nine parking tickets but has had three. One parking ticket she received was for parking in the 15 minute parking spaces behind Niagara. The ticket was for \$15 but was lowered a few dollars because she had paid it within three days. White doesn't like the arrangement of parking spaces because "it's hard living on campus and not being close to a parking lot." White says, "It just depends on which building you live in, for me if I can't find anything thing in the 'banana' lot. I have to go to the Junker lot and the walk up hill...well I hate it and even more so in the snow and rain."

However, a new parking lot is being constructed behind the REDC, the new engineering and business building, located near the Junker Center. It is said to provide 160 parking spaces. This may help with the lack of parking spaces and would provide parking that is a lot closer to the dorms. Unfortunately, the parking lot will not be constructed until this summer, and John Ream, director of operations doesn't "anticipate it being open until November - December of 2006."

Cartoons cause controversy

By Jerry Pohl

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The publishing of satirical cartoons of Muhammad has the Muslim community upset. Riots around the world have escalated and are becoming increasingly violent. Behrend's Political Science faculty was asked for their thoughts on the issue.

Dr. Robert Speel said of the riots, "I think to a lot of people in the Middle East, it represents western attitudes...the riots are about a lot more than the cartoons. They're about the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the conflict in Israel."

Dr. John Gamble said "There should be some latitude and license in editorial cartoons....There isn't much free press in the Muslim world...a lot of the protests were aimed at the Danish government not understanding that in Denmark, the government doesn't control the newspaper."

Jonathan Brockopp, Associate Professor of History & Religious Studies at University Park said, "Every one of these demonstrations is taking place for local reasons....The original context is becoming increasingly irrelevant as this controversy takes on a life of its own."

Several of Behrend's Muslim students were asked for their comments. Adam Othman, English 03, does not consider himself particularly religious. He was shown the original cartoons and said, "As a Muslim I say you have to get over it....In South Park, Jesus is portrayed satirically...anyone can be made fun of."

Zeynep Ezgi Muderrisoglu, DUS 02, said, "In today's world you'd expect people to be more tolerant of other religions and cultures and be respectful."

Meysa Al-Mosawi, DUS 01, said, "Of course we don't like it, but we can't do anything to it....It's freedom, they [the cartoonists] can do anything they want, but it's not nice."

Sabina Medilovic, History/Political Science05, found the cartoons "extremely religiously offensive" and said, "I thought that the Danish newspaper printing them was offensive...Cartoonists have a right to draw, the fault lies with the editors...I understand why the Muslim community was offended but don't think their response was appropriate."

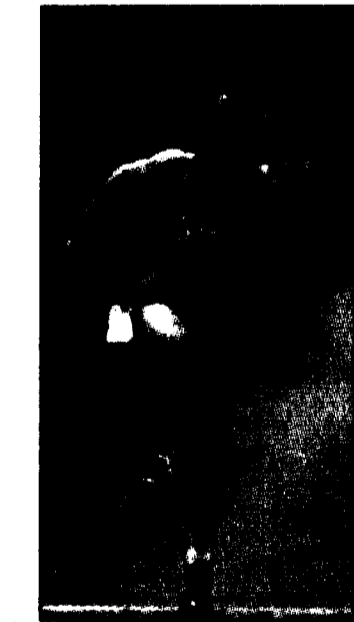
Behrend's Philosophy professor, Dr. Joshua Shaw, has studied and written papers on humor and offense. He said, "Jokes can be immoral simply in virtue of joking about taboo topics." Of this controversy specifically, he said, "Both sides are, I think, using these cartoons to excuse a lot of irresponsible, thoughtless behavior."

These opinions demonstrate that an issue that started long ago and far away is affecting Behrend's campus today.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

One of many cartoons that have sparked controversy in the Middle East.



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