

NEWS

National and world news in brief

By Patrick Webster

RIAA starts crackdown program

NEW YORK: The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has increased its efforts to reduce the effects of peer-to-peer music sharing on U.S. college campuses and is suing hundreds of individual students for possible license infringements.

The new effort comes after several reports were released asserting that well over half of all college students in the United States either swap music with their friends personally or use widely-available file sharing software such as KaZaa and Limewire to do so. The end result that hundreds of thousands of students are listening to music they didn't pay for is not acceptable to the media giant, whose album and singles sales have dropped over 23 percent in the last five years.

"We need to address this demographic," RIAA President Cary Sherman said. "Remember that the habits that they form in college will stay with them for a lifetime."

The RIAA responded by sending letters to over 400 students warning them of imminent lawsuit and instructions on how to settle the lawsuits out of court. Students who opt to settle out court would pay a hefty fine and sign an official document agreeing not to send or accept unlicensed music ever again. The association also sent similar letters to 13 colleges and universities in an effort to pressure educational institutions to take a more proactive measures against such practices.

However, many students and opponents of the restrictive measures disagree with their implementation, including those who feel that file sharing between friends helps to broaden an audience for music, not harm it.

"I know students are active users," said Arizona State University student Sean Foley. "But the record companies should be letting people use these services rather than ban them."

Web tracking companies report that over one billion music files may be swapped every month.

Source: CNN.com, Yahoo! News

Taliban resurgence in progress

KABUL, Afghanistan: A top military commander for the strengthening Taliban forces in Afghanistan has claimed that a large army has been assembled and continues to grow as they prepare for a spring offensive.

In a rare interview granted to Channel 4 News in the United Kingdom, Taliban military operations director Mullah Dadullah claimed that hundreds of suicide bombers were prepared to kick off the offensive and that coordination communications with Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden were regular and productive.

"The Americans have sown a seed. They will reap the crop for quite a long time. We will get our revenge on them, whether in Afghanistan or outside," Dadullah said in the interview. "The suicide martyrs, those willing to blow themselves up, are countless."

International relations experts claim that indications in the war-torn country seem to support the assertion that large events are on the horizon. U.S. presence in the country is down to its lowest point yet, with only 16,000 troops in country with a similar number of NATO troops in support. Meanwhile, the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are being funded by record-level drug exports that have increased exponentially since the first U.S. invasion. Dadullah said that the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are going to coordinate their efforts to maximize effectiveness.

"We exchange messages with each other to share plans. We actually meet very rarely, just for important consultations. It's hard for anyone to meet bin Laden himself now, but we know he's still alive," Dadullah said. "His comrades stand shoulder to shoulder with us. We also go to the battlefield together."

Taliban and Al-Qaeda attacks in Afghanistan increased over 400% from 2005 to 2006, and the country now averages over four bombing attacks a day.

Behrend students plan to travel during spring break continued from page 1

Amsterdam, Netherlands, which he said he chose because, "It is the ideal location for friends and family to reunite and have a fun time." During his stay, Audeh arranged to visit night clubs, check out some tourist spots, and spend most days in the coffee shops just relaxing.

Sophomore Sheri Kroskie is flying to Myrtle Beach for her getaway. "I'm super pumped to get away from Behrend. Basically anything is better than Behrend's unbelievably freezing weather," said Kroskie. It seems that the one thing that students are looking to escape is the cold temperatures and unpredictable weather. Eric Diluzio said, "I can't wait. One week without bitter walks through iceberg Behrend to get to and from class." Diluzio won't have to worry about his mittens and scarf because he plans to fly to Florida with his friends and enjoy a handful of sunny days wisely. "I am prepared to make every day worth it. It wouldn't surprise me to see twice as much snow here when I get back," said Diluzio.

Danielle Brown, a Junior and Communications and Media Studies major here at Behrend, is going all out for her spring break trip as she is going to be splashing at Montego Bay, Jamaica. Brown said booking an all-inclusive resort and choosing Jamaica was easy as her one wish was to go somewhere warm. With Danielle's boyfriend as her vacation buddy, she said she has no worries. "While I'm there, I just plan to relax on the beach and go to a few nightclubs," said Brown.

However, spring break can be

a dangerous time for some students. Vacationers need to use common sense and know what they are getting into. University staff members said they are concerned some students are not fully aware of the risks that come with the freedom of spring break.

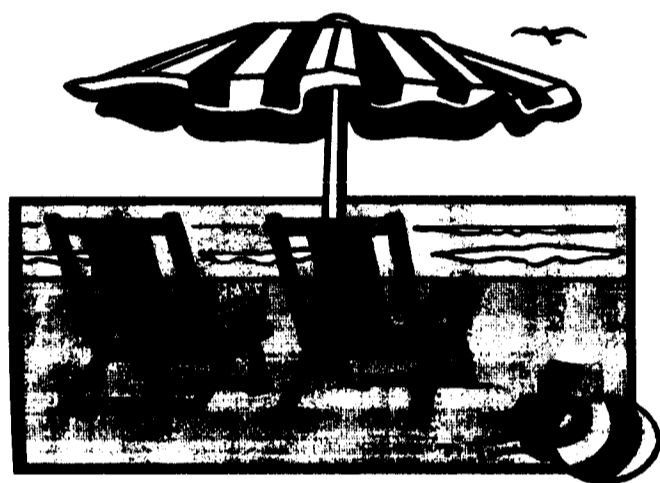
More money is spent on alcoholic drinks, raising the total cost of trips significantly. High-risk drinking during spring break can also lead to negative consequences. As a student's blood alcohol level increases to over .12, 90% of them underestimate their level of intoxication. This is one of the biggest concerns associated with spring break parties. At that level of impairment, students tend to make bad decisions and do things that they normally would not do. Try to avoid shots and drinking games, as both can lead to over drinking. Besides, wouldn't you like to remember what happened over your spring break?

If you do choose to drink it is always good to know how to avoid hangovers. Everyone knows the symptoms of a hangover: headaches, vomiting, nausea, cotton mouth, and fatigue. Most people do not know that a hangover is a mild form of alcohol withdrawal. Some tips to steer clear of them are to not drink so much or drink too much too quickly on an empty stomach. Sip, don't gulp drinks, as pacing yourself as you drink throughout the night will help to avoid a hangover as well. Men should have one drink per hour and women one per every 1.5 hours to avoid drinking too much. Students need to remem-

ber alcohol dehydrates the body. When sun and salt are added to the skin on top of the alcoholic beverage, it is just setting up the body for dehydration. Be sure to drink plenty of other non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks in-between to replace lost body fluid.

Spring break parties can also lead to unintended promiscuity. Students risk contracting sexually transmitted infections for the thrill of a one-night stand. Any small amount of alcohol can act as a "social lubricant." It is recommended to avoid the combination of alcohol and sexual acts. Freshman, Leah Shoemaker, plans to be cautious during her vacation. "Partying at school is one thing; I know and trust everyone around me. I will definitely make myself more aware of my surroundings during break." Her exciting retreat includes visiting some friends at other college campuses and shopping at Philadelphia's King of Prussia Mall.

Having trouble trying to figure out what to pack? Frequent travelers have a knack for knowing what to pack. It's not a case of "everything goes," but rather start at your head and work down to your toes. Don't forget the extras either such as a camera and sunglasses. However you choose to spend your time off, be sure you make the most of it. Spring break memories carry with you throughout your whole college experience, so have fun, relax, and be safe.



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OVER SPRING BREAK BY
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Quotes on Civility

"Like the body that is made up of different limbs and organs, all moral creatures must depend on each other to exist."

-Hindu proverb

Janet Neff Sample Center
for Manners & Civility



Erie opens first casino continued from page 1

Any kind of drinks are served amidst the nonstop noise and clouds of cigarette smoke until 2:00 a.m. Telling what time it actually is could prove difficult however. The facility does not have any clocks or windows, therefore not giving the gamblers a chance to have a glimpse of what time it is without looking at their watches.

Presque Isle also plans to add entertainment to its amenities. As with Mountaineer Race Track & Gaming Resort in Chester, WV, Presque Isle would like to bring concerts outdoors during the summer. Presque Isle hopes to bring local and regional bands to play indoors at the casino soon. In the future, they hope to offer snow mobile races as entertainment as well.

Presque Isle may want to attract as many people to their casino as possible, but they aren't turning a blind eye to those with a gambling problem. On Presque Isle's website, they feature an advertisement for gambling hotline, 1-800-GAMBLER.

The gambler or a friend of a gambler can call the hotline to get help.

Test days were held at Presque Isle on Sat. and Mon. where gamblers had the opportunity to play and keep their winnings. However, during the two test days, the house donated all of its winnings, a sum that is totaling over \$115,000, to the United Way of Erie County.

Winners were not hard to come by on Wednesday. A number of jackpots were handed out; including one for \$328 that Saxonburg resident Tina Shideler won after just 15 minutes in the casino. The days big win came around 3:00 p.m. when a gambler hit the jackpot for \$10,000. Although the casino had many payouts during the day, Presque Isle Downs & Casino managed to pull in \$8.9 million on its opening day.