



THE BEHREND BEACON

Friday, September 21, 2007

A Penn State Behrend Student Publication

Vol. LIV No. IV

Read this year's SGA candidate platforms on page 3.



Who was victorious Kanye or 50 Cent? Find out on page 6.

Behrend hockey hits the ice this weekend. Details on page 9.



Miss the VMA's? It's all recapped on page 5.

Behrend students shocked by death of Mercyhurst teen's baby



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Old main on the campus of Mercyhurst College, where Teri Rhodes attended, is a gathering point for students on campus. Police allowed Rhodes, 18, to return home while they thoroughly investigate the death of her baby. Officials say first-degree murder charges will not be pursued.

By Scott R. Muska
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A new development came about on Sept. 18 regarding the case against Teri Rhodes, an 18-year-old former Mercyhurst College student who allegedly murdered her daughter 10 minutes after giving birth to her in her on-campus apartment.

The announcement was made by Erie County First Assistant District Attorney, Robert Sambroak, Jr. during Rhodes' bond hearing. He revealed that the D. A. office will not push for first-degree murder for the teen when the case goes to trial.

"We do agree that this young lady is not a flight risk," said Sambroak during the hearing. This statement allowed the County Judge presiding over the case to release Rhodes on a \$25,000 bond, since she is considered neither a flight risk or a first-degree murder defendant. She was allowed to return home to Commerce, MI with her parents.

District Attorney Brad Foulk said at the bond hearing that his office did not believe it had enough evidence to prove first degree murder at the bond hearing, but that every case continues, investigative-wise, up until the time that the case goes to trial.

"[Rhodes] is charged with a general charge of criminal homicide, concealing the death of a child, endangering the welfare of a child, recklessly endangering another person, and abuse of a corpse," said Sambroak. After saying that the DA's office would not seek a first-degree question, he

said, "I have a good-faith basis to argue third degree, or, you know, manslaughter. So we are sticking with the general charge of homicide. We are not going to amend it at this point, at least until we have a preliminary hearing."

Penn State Behrend students reacted to the District Attorney's announcement with shock. Chris Oehme felt that the DA's office was being too lenient by not pushing for first-degree murder. "I think it is a tragedy. Things

like these are horrific, and she definitely should have gotten first degree murder," he said.

"This is terrible," said Kim Hayes. "Something should be done so she gets convicted."

Other students were not as concerned with the legal implications of the case as they were shocked that such a devastating story happened so close to home. "I think it is unbelievable that a tragedy like this happened so close to Behrend," Mindy Geibel said.

Not only is the story affecting Behrend students and the Erie locals, but is also garnering nationwide attention. It has caused the NCAA to review its guidelines on pregnancy with a possibility for change because of their concern that athletes may feel pressured to have abortions for athletic reasons. It has come to light that many colleges do not have guidelines for pregnant athletes or policies to protect them and give them the care that would be necessary.

It is speculated that many athletes may abort their babies in fear that they would lose their scholarships.

This may have been a deciding factor in Rhodes' actions, since she allegedly denied her pregnancy twice; once to her coach and once to a doctor during her pre-season physical.

"I think it is a tragedy. Things like these are horrific, and she definitely should have gotten first degree murder."

**-Chris Oehme
Freshman**

ROTC Club offers adventures for Behrend students

By Carly Smith
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Everybody has some activity or hobby that they love to do when they get bored. It is just part of human nature to want to do something fun or exciting instead of just sitting around doing nothing. Some may get online and chat it up until three in the morning while others curl up in a comfortable chair with nothing to look forward to but the adventure that a good book is about to take them on. Whatever a person's interest may be, here at Penn State Behrend there is a club for just about everything and everyone.

Some clubs have just started their activities and are still looking for new members to sign up. The ROTC club is a group that is worth looking into if you would like to have a fun time doing awesome activities and get involved with a different group of people.

The club has many different and exciting activities planned for its members this year. An adventurous white water rafting event is on the schedule, as well as an invigorating game of paintball. Fundraisers will be involved in the list of activities for the club. The money will directly benefit the ROTC Club. There is word of a Push-Up-a-Thon, which will give people the chance to sponsor participants for every push-up they complete, a donation will be made towards the group. Also, on the parents' weekend that is coming up, the group is looking to put together a pie-throwing activity. A person can pay one dollar and throw a pie in the participant's face. All of these activities are possibilities for fun and excitement.

The ROTC Club is not to be confused with the ROTC program that the campus offers. The Army ROTC is an elective course here at Behrend. It is not a major by itself, it is only a course designed to make a person's leadership and management skills better. The ROTC is a course that is beneficial to any area of study and it also looks good on a job application.

The ROTC Club and the Army ROTC class are both exceptional activities for any student to be involved in. The class is going to train and educate you. It will provide useful skills for your future. The ROTC Club is a group made to have fun. With all of their activities the club members are bound to have a good time.

The club is not for members of the ROTC course only; any student who wishes to participate in the activities is allowed to join the group. To support the fact that the club is not just for students that are taking the class, the club is trying to change its name to the "Pathfinders Club." They are still looking for new members to jump in. Libby Pascuzzi, a freshman here at Behrend, and also a new member of the ROTC Club is looking forward to the activities that they have planned. "It is going to be a good time for all," she says.

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Plastics Training Academy strengthens School of Engineering

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The plastics industry is practically exploding with new work, new people, and new money. Penn State Behrend is moving ahead in this giant opportunity, while putting its new Research and Economic Development Center to good use, with the Plastics Training Academy: a continuing education program in the field of engineering.

The Academy is made up of short courses in plastics technology. These courses cover topics from experiment design, to processing and design, to project management. The focus, is injection molding, and 40-45% of the courses cover this subject. Injection molding is when molten plastic is injected into heat-tempered aluminum or steel molds. After the plastic hardens, a part, ranging from bottle caps to a car panel, can be extracted from the mold. The Plastics Training Academy is concentrating on injection molding because this is what most of the local plastics industry is involved in. "There are more injection molders than there is anything else. That's where the demand is," explains Dr. Brad Johnson, who currently chairs the injection molding division of the Society of Plastics Engineers.

Since the Plastics Training Academy is a continuing education program, most of the courses are held in the summer, although there are some in the fall and maybe more during the week of spring break. Companies send employees of every age and level of experience, from new hires to people who have been with an organization for decades. Engineers come to keep up with the rapidly changing technology or broaden their horizons beyond their specific field. Designers will attend to better understand the production process, and processors will attend to better understand design. The summer and early fall scheduling makes it easy for companies to send whole teams over at once. The program even gets many repeat customers who like to participate often so they can easily keep up to date.

Behrend's exceptional processing facilities are what draw in employees from all over the country and the world. The School of Engineering is one of four accredited engineering programs in the country, and the processing facilities are the best nationwide. This is due to years of influence by the region's heavy concentration in plastics. Behrend specializes in hands-on workshops available to everyone. "This facility was built with industry in mind," says Johnson.

This Academy means only good things for Behrend. For one, the whole program is entirely self-sufficient.

Each participant pays for each class, with prices ranging from \$600 for one day to nearly \$3,000 for ten days. The cost is usually out-of-pocket for companies or individuals. However, there is a lot of outside grant money available for the program, and many people take advantage of that.

Not only is it financially strong, the Academy can prove useful for students looking for a job after graduation. Sometimes students help faculty with the workshops, and this introduces them to employers from all over the country. Many students can find work based on the connections they make with this program.

On a larger scale, the Plastics Training Academy makes the Behrend Engineering School well known nationwide. When organizations are looking for a good place to send their employees for continuing education, Behrend is one of the top names on the list. This draws attention to facilities and graduating students entering the workforce. Johnson sees this as only a good thing. "For the undergraduate program, it gives it a lot of exposure," he says. "We get companies from all over the country, all over the world."