

NEWS

National Geographic holds local photography camp

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Janet Niedenberger/THE BEHREND BEACON

A student uses his new skills to focus his camera.

hood in Ohio to his photos worldwide. "It's an interesting world through here," Abell said, holding his own camera. "It's small and intimate and all your own."

The workshop loaned the students digital Olympus cameras which they used to take pictures and refine their techniques while doing so. They went on trips with the National Geographic crew, going to different places around Erie, including a sailing trip around Presque Isle.

Behrend student Janet Niedenberger was a volunteer teaching assistant for the program. All of the students were split up into four groups. In Niedenberger's group were brothers Muamal and Murtaja Mahdi, ages 18 and 17, from Iraq. There was also Ibrahim Konneh from Liberia, age 18, and Askar Dzhbarov, age 18 from Russia.

"Most of them had never used cameras," Niedenberger recalled. But each student was given a digital camera and free reign to shoot Erie and their families according to their own perspectives.

On Thursday, the first day of the program, the groups split up. Niedenberger's group went to State Street in downtown Erie to photograph. The kids were all entirely engrossed in the project, often going off on their own to shoot.

For Friday, all of the groups went to Buffalo Rd, which is where most of the students live. Being able to shoot their neighborhoods and their homes was a rewarding experience for the teachers as well as the students. Niedenberger recalls spending twenty minutes with her group, trying to capture falling leaves.

At the end of the day, the students were given a writing assignment; a letter to someone that they admire. Niedenberger enjoyed getting a deeper look into the kids' lives, learning about their stories and the struggles that made their artwork even more precious.

On Saturday, the final day of shooting, the Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies donated four sailboats, complete with captains and crews, to the program. Each of the four groups sailed over to the peninsula in their own sailboat.

The kids spent the afternoon shooting at the beach, sometimes taking a break to enjoy the sun and the water themselves. "It was so much fun, watching them play in the water like they'd never done it before. Who knows, maybe the never had," remembers Niedenberger.

On the way back to the mainland, the group experienced an adventure of unprecedented proportions. "The captain said that he hadn't been to the peninsula in over ten years," Niedenberger laughed. "And the crew was obvi-



Janet Niedenberger/THE BEHREND BEACON

Teaching assistants for the camp videotape and watch as Sam Abell gives a presentation at East High.

ously new, because he was always walking them through every thing."

Halfway to home, Niedenberger's boat wrecked into another group's boat. The other boat's mast hit Niedenberger's boat's boom, which swung all the way across the deck. Niedenberger and her students all ducked in time, but the National Geographic crew said that it was the most exciting thing to happen in any of their programs.

Finally, for the last day of the program, the students sat down and picked out three of their favorite photos. Each group contributed twelve photos to a presentation made just for the kids.

Later that day, the students put on a public presentation at the Erie Bayfront Convention Center for family and friends, and anyone else who happened to be interested.

The slideshow contained 150 photos and was about an hour long. Afterwards, each student got their own DVD of their pictures to take home and

keep.

Overall, Niedenberger said that the experience was a very rewarding one. "At first, [the students] were all really shy," said Niedenberger. "Not all of them speak English very well." But by the end of the first day, their enthusiasm was contagious. Niedenberger's group alone shot 2,500 photos in three days. The entire program shot 12,700 pictures in the same amount of time, which had to be cut down to the 150 pictures used in the final slideshow.

"The kids were amazing, the teachers that helped were great, and the National Geographic photographers were so down to earth and grateful for the volunteers' help," said Niedenberger. "It was such a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

"We might not all speak the same language or come from the same neighborhoods, but we're all going to communicate in the same language this week, that of photography," announced Kirsten Elstner, who was recently named the program coordinator for a National Geographic four-day photo camp in Erie, the *Erie Times* reports.

The program was held at Erie's East High School and featured a diverse group of students from all over the world. Teenagers and beginning photographers came from Iraq, Bosnia, Somalia, Russia, Ukraine, Sudan, Mexico, Liberia and Kyrgyzstan. There are many photo camps spanning several states across the nation, however, National Geographic acknowledges this camp as its most diverse.

The photo camp would document the students' learning experiences while bringing in 17 students from nine different countries on four continents.

Celebrated photographer Sam Abell was a keynote speaker at the event. The photographer displayed to his small but rapt audience his life work: his photography dating back from his humble child-

Former Behrend student convicted continued from page 1

As a student, Demerecz was an undergraduate Physics major. Outside of his classes, he was involved in clubs and organizations such as Matchbox Players, Gamers Club, MISC and Physics Club. He served as the vice president of Gamers Club, which is the school's interactive gaming system club.

As a member of MISC, Demerecz was involved in the media support, which was in charge of audio and visual equipment, printing, copying, technical classroom aids and other services.

Local police authorities arrested Demerecz in November of 2006 after his roommate reported that he had seen pornographic-looking images on Demerecz's computer. Police then searched the apart-

ment and seized his eMachines computer on which the files were located.

According to court records, authorities reported that they found approximately 600 images and 21 movies of minors engaging in sexual acts with adults and other minors.

The defense argued that Demerecz's computer belonged to a network, which allowed other users to access his files.

Demerecz faces up to seven years for each of the 21 felonies that he faces. Also, there is a potential for a \$15,000 fine. The misdemeanor offense of the possession of the instrument of crime has a sentence of up to five years with a \$10,000 fine.

Career Fair brings employers continued from page 1

out all opportunities after she graduates. She was applying for an internship at Ebicit Pa Center for E-Business. Brem is going to Behrend for math and statistics so she was looking at every possible bank, including Citizens Bank, Northwest Savings Bank, and HSBC, which is in Buffalo. Brem is heading in the right direction for graduation, where she is sure to have a lot of success. Brem summed up the career fair like this: "I met a lot of nice people here and a few scary ones!"

One company that stood out at this career fair was Citadel Broadcasting. They own four local radio stations in Erie. Tina Achhammer, the promotional director of Citadel Broadcasting says that they are an ever-expanding company, being the third

largest broadcasting company in the local area. They just purchased ABC, which is a great accomplishment for this company. Citadel is home to some of Erie's favorite radio stations-Classy 100, Z102.3, Country 98, and the sports station, ESPN. Within each radio station there are many opportunities for students, including full time work as well as internships.

The opportunities here at Penn State Behrend are limitless. There were over 100 reasons to attend 2007's career fair here at Behrend, including all of the free goodies. A lot of students lives changed yesterday-all for the better. For those that were not able to attend, another Career Fair is scheduled for this coming spring.

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