

NEWS

National and world news in brief

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Six Sept 11 conspirators face death penalty

MIAMI – On Monday, Feb 11, the Pentagon announced that it would seek the death penalty against six men, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, one of the alleged masterminds behind the Sept 11 attacks. The six men would be charged with conspiracy, murder in violation of the law of war, attacking civilians and civilian objects, intentionally causing serious bodily injury, destruction of property in violation of the law of war, terrorism, and providing material support for terrorism, the first charges to be brought against any of the 800 detainees at the Guantanamo Bay U.S. military Prison in Cuba. Mohammed is also facing the additional charge of hijacking a vessel.

This is also the first move in a change of strategy by the Office of Military

Sources: LA Times, BBC News

Commissions. For the past six years, the commissions has been focusing on building cases against 12 detainees accused of lesser crimes. The commissions' new strategy is to go after the inmates with the worst offenses.

Last year, the chief officer of the Office of Military Commissions resigned in protest to "political interference." As the Bush Administration has been receiving more and more criticism for its policy at Guantanamo Bay, it has been applying more pressure to the office of commissions to convict Mohammed, and other high-profile detainees. Now, with Mohammed being convicted, it is expected that the current policy at Guantanamo Bay will carry over into the next presidential administration.

U.S. military to shoot down broken spy satellite

WASHINGTON - The Pentagon announced on Thursday that the President has approved the U.S. military to shoot down a broken spy satellite. The Pentagon claims that if the satellite is not shot down, it will land on Earth within weeks.

The government is concerned that if the satellite crash lands on Earth, it will release a hazardous material that is dangerous for humans. The material in question is the fuel that powers the satellite; hydrazine. According to General James Cartwright, Hydrazine affects humans in a way similar to ammonia or chlorine, a burning in the lungs and possibly death.

Deputy National Security Adviser James Jeffries said this case is different than other space objects falling to the earth because of, "the likelihood that the satellite upon descent to the Earth's surface could release much of its 1,000lb plus (454 kg) of its hydrazine fuel as a toxic gas."

Although it is not very probable that the satellite would land near a populated area, Jeffries claims there is enough risk for the president to be concerned about human life. If the satellite were to crash, the area at risk of exposure to Hydrazine would be the size of two soccer fields.

To destroy the satellite, the Navy plans to launch a specially modified missile from an Aegis destroyer. Gen. Cartwright said only one missile is planned to be shot, but there will be three spares in case the first attempt fails.

The National Reconnaissance Office "bird" was launched in Dec 2006, but shortly after entering space its power failed and communications with the satellite are impossible. Gen. Cartwright denied that the satellite was being destroyed to cover up confidential information.

No new eateries coming to Behrend

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establishments within walking distance around Behrend would be impressive; not to mention being of some assistance to the growing population, and to some of the students who do not have the luxury of a car. "The growth of the campus is a plus, but isn't enough to develop retail or food establishments solely for the purposes of the campus." He also added that there was some talk of a coffee shop to be built by the Shannon Exit on Bayfront. However, that was three years ago.

The Behrend population itself seems to be increasing more and more each year, so the needs for such establishments are considered crucial. In response to Rich Hall, Courtney Gibaud, sophomore at Behrend, had this to say: "I think it's unfair as far as population concerns. We have more of a population than the Harborcreek com-

munity, and if they want the population and interest in Behrend to grow, they have to develop the areas around it to accommodate the students."

Some students also believe that it is to our advantage to build the new coffee shop, and sandwich restaurant, because it adds to more of a variety of food establishments on campus. "I feel that the decision is wrong because not everyone on campus has a car, and since I really don't appreciate cafeteria food, it would be easier to have another variety within walking distance," stated junior Sasha Singh.

Students say if there were to be a new establishment built on or within walking distance of Behrend for the sole purpose of the campus, it would be extremely beneficial. When will it happen? That's a question still waiting to be answered.

Online Wiki not as great for Behrend

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As with any Wiki, there are going to be people abusing the resource. On the front page of the wiki, there was the inevitable yet insurmountably obnoxious "We Are" topic, with the body of the post containing "Penn State." In addition to useless or empty posts, there were many duplicate entries of people trying to gain an unfair advantage over other posters.

One shortcoming of the Wiki is mandatory registration. In order to make posts, you must be a registered user, which is understandable, but to use some crucial features such as the search bar, you must be registered. In order for a service such as this to catch on to the majority of Penn State students (which is clearly the goal of the Wiki's creators) features must be able to be accessed quickly

and easily. For someone just searching for information on an event, having to take the time to create an account and then log in to your e-mail to activate the account is a hassle, and quite unnecessary.

It remains to be seen if the PSU Wiki will catch on with Behrend students as it has with University Park students. Currently, all of the postings on the front page of the Wiki are associated with UP. With such a sheer number of main campus students compared to the relatively small amount of students attending Behrend, there is little room on the Wiki for our campus. A Behrend-specific Wiki is possible, if there is enough of a demand for it. Collegewikis has an e-mail dedicated to suggestions for Wikis for other universities. If interested, send an e-mail to suggestions@collegewikis.com and ask for a Behrend Wiki.

Want to write news for *The Behrend Beacon*?Contact Lenny Smith at lrs5046@psu.edu or Matthew Schwabenbauer at mjs5387@psu.edu

Budget released for student clubs

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student population. Budget approval is governed by a committee consisting of three SGA members and six campus representatives selected by the budget committee head. Each request is considered in the order they are received.

The twelve remaining groups received amounts ranging from \$1,000 to no funds whatsoever.

Erin Kennedy, the vice president of SGA and budget committee head, stated in a short interview the three criteria the organization utilizes to distribute the very limited financial pie. First, the clarity of the request is assessed; SGA will not allocate funds for a request they do not understand or see the need for. Second, the request must help fulfill the official mission statement of the club. Lastly, financial quotes (proofs of cost) are mandatory.

When emailing each club president for comments about their budgets for this article, only two responses were elicited, one by Jason Baptiste, president of Trigon and a member of the SGA and budget committee, and by Caitlin Lovey, president of the Panhellenic Council.

"I feel that our club gets the funding it asks for and needs," said Baptiste. "Clubs get funding based on the presentation of the proposal to us. If we as a committee feel that this program is unclear, not organized, or lacks creativity or does not make sense then we will not fund it."

Baptiste also stressed the importance of speed when it comes to budget requests. "[T]he people who tend to wait to the last minute and turn things in usually do not get the money because we have already given it away to another club on campus."

Lovey backed up Baptiste's positive statements. "I believe most or all organizations, including mine, have good relations with SGA," stated Lovey. "SGA takes into consideration all organizations requests, and doesn't discriminate against any club or organization."

In order to receive funding from SGA, events must be open to the public. Food requests exceeding \$75 dollars must be for events based around food (dinners, luncheons, etc) in order to receive more than the \$75 amount.

Comedian Ronnie Jordan amuses Bruno's

By Walaa Ahmad
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Comedian Ronnie Jordan had Penn State Behrend students roaring with laughter during his recent appearance at Bruno's Café on Friday, Feb 8.

Jordan got his start as a comedian by performing at open mic nights in Atlanta. "It's not easy to make people laugh," Jordan said. "You have to have the right settings. In college, I used to make jokes with my roommates."

"If there are moments the audience doesn't laugh about a certain joke, I quickly roll it to something more funny," said Jordan.

Jordan admits he used to be a class clown. He used to get in trouble for talking in class, but always did his school work. Jordan wasn't expecting to become a comedian, but he knew that he wanted to work for himself.

Behrend students like sophomore Rose Skiba enjoyed Jordan's performance. "He was hilarious," she said. "He was easy to relate to. He knew what was amusing to college students and delivered. I liked that he could poke fun at himself. His honesty

made him seem more confident. I also liked that a lot of his material was targeted toward the audience, there wasn't a dull moment. He was 'real' in an amusing manner."

Senior Dewey Black said Jordan's humor was great for a college audience. "He was very funny," said Black. "Despite the poor turn out, Jordan did a good job incorporating jokes about college life. He was good about using self-deprecating humor. He was also good about making the audience feel involved by asking questions and shows of hands."

Samira Hassan, a freshman elementary education major at Behrend said "I think Ronnie Jordan is one of the funniest comedians. He made the audience laugh and by talking about different subjects, he entertained the audience."

Jordan gave a fantastic performance. He even used background music over some of his jokes. Jordan kept the audience involved by asking them questions. Keep an eye out for more upcoming events in our area such as; August Rush in Reed 117 and Bowl For The Kids at Eastland Lanes.

At least five dead, 17 others wounded in Northern Illinois University Shooting

Alleged gunman commits suicide

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At least 22 people were shot at Northern Illinois University on Thursday, six fatally as of press time. The gunman opened fire from behind the stage's curtains.

Four were pronounced dead at the scene, including the gunman who turned the gun on himself. Seventeen of the victims were rushed to Kishwaukee Community Hospital, six of which were in critical condition and flown to other hospitals. One fatality was confirmed by the hospital, with two victims being admitted, and three discharged. According to a hospital spokesperson, most of the injuries are head and chest shotgun wounds.

As of press time, authorities have not released the shooter's name or motive.

The shooter was a spring 2007 NIU graduate student, but not currently enrolled at the school.

"He just kicked the door open, just started shooting," said Kevin McEnery, a student present during the shooting. "All I really heard was just people screaming, yelling 'get out.' ... Close to 30 shots were fired."

The class in session during the shooting contains

162 registered students. The lecture hall had four exits, two in the front and two in the rear.

Shortly after the shooting, the campus was ordered into "a lockdown situation" according to police chief Donald Grady. Eventually, an all-campus alert was sent through e-mail, the university website, the campus crisis hotline, voicemail, news media and alarm systems. According to Grady, the message was "There's a gunman on campus, stay where you are, make yourself as safe as possible."

By 4 p.m., police had checked the area and came to the conclusion the gunman was alone, and dead.

According to authorities, the shooter had three weapons. He started with a shotgun then switched to a Glock handgun and a small-caliber handgun.

NIU events and classes have been canceled until further notice, and the Illinois governor has declared a state of emergency. Counseling areas have been constructed around the NIU campus, and hotlines have been established.

In December, police found threats on the NIU campus. Written on a bathroom wall were racial slurs and references to the Virginia Tech shooting. Authorities stated they have no evidence linking the threats to the shooting.

Note: All information and statistics were accurate at press time Thursday night. As with all developing stories, information is subject to change.

Quotes on Civility

"Secrets should be Secret, told only to the Secreter and the Secretee."

-Virginia Clark Clarkson,
The Alphabet of Civility

Janet Neff Sample Center
for Manners & Civility