



# THE BEHREND BEACON

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students from Behrend pose in front of a house they helped restore in Mississippi.

## Students travel to Mississippi on Alternative Spring Break

By Angelica Stoltzfus  
staff writer  
ans5154@psu.edu

During spring break 28 students and seven faculty members from Penn State Behrend traveled to Gulfport, Miss. for the Alternative Spring Break trip to help rebuild the area from Hurricane Katrina.

For 2007's trip, Behrend sent a group of seven students and two faculty members into the aftermath of Katrina, but this year attendance skyrocketed. Kelly Shrout, an intern-Associate Director of Student Affairs and Craig Berger, Resident Life Coordinator, were very excited when they returned in 2007 to start setting up promotions for the spring of 2008.

Freshman Marc Powers said that the "experience was really life changing. The attitudes of the Katrina victims were so positive and selfless; it really put things in perspective for me." Powers also said that he was encouraged by Berger that if "he had the opportunity and the financial ability to go, there was really no reason not to."

Berger readily took on the challenge of organizing the trip last year without any previous knowledge of the Penn State University Park's involvement. He acknowledged that "neither I nor any of the other members even knew of the other Penn State students" but he certainly was not surprised at their willingness to serve those less fortunate.

Hurricane Katrina was the deadliest storm in the history of the United States with deaths surpassing 1,800 people. The storm produced devastating damages throughout

the coastlines of Louisiana, Miss. and Alabama. Carrie Barr, a student that is going on her second alternative spring break said, "I assumed things would be the same as last year. I, however, was very wrong." Barr retold a tragic story of a homeless man running after them as soon as they entered the area. She assumed most of the victims from Katrina had been taken care of and the renovations almost completed. Barr was astonished when she found out the organizations they worked under will be continuing to dedicate their lives to the reestablishments of Katrina for approximately another five more years.

Freshman AJ Cadman explained a typical work day, "Every morning we wake up in coccugated plastic box at 6:45 a.m. We ate a breakfast prepared by volunteers and then travel to the beach where our work spot was for that particular day. We worked each day for about eight hours with a nice lunch break. After our work was completed, we go back to our residential location and have a meal again provided by volunteers. We then took our showers in some what larger curred gated plastic boxes then headed back to our 'bed' before 10 p.m. each night."

Berger explained that the students were very willing to join the cause and "acted positively." The jobs assigned to the volunteers were random but Berger admitted, "We do what they need done." The lodging for the Behrend students is nothing exceptionally wonderful, but there are "hot showers on demand" said Powers. Berger described the beds themselves as "interesting"; but the students and volunteers accept

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## Democratic representative hopefuls visit Behrend

By Marcus Yeagley  
staff writer  
mjs5012@psu.edu

While the race for the Democratic Presidential Nomination is lighting up Pennsylvania with political activity, the competition to decide Phil English's opponent for his House of Representatives seat remains in the background for Democrats. Some candidates in fact are traveling to local college campuses such as Penn State Behrend to garner support.

An Erie resident and business owner, Kathy Dahlkemper, is one of them and came to talk to the College Democrats about her bid for the Democratic nomination to face Representative Phil English on Tuesday. One of her competitors, Mike Waltner, visited the student run political club last week.

Dahlkemper is one of four Democrat contenders looking to be nominated in the upcoming Pennsylvania primary to try to dethrone the current long running Republican Representative Phil English, who has held the seat since 1994.

Arriving late and out of breath, Dahlkemper suffered from a miscommunication as one of her advisors inadvertently told her the meeting was one hour later than it was actually held. Regardless, she came ready, willing and prepared to make her

appeal to the students in attendance about why she feels she is the best candidate prepared for the job.

"When I look at some of the big issues we have to deal with in this country, that is where I think that my breadth and depth of experience will really help me," said Dahlkemper, who graduated from Edinboro University with a dietetics degree and currently runs a landscaping company.

She also discussed her thoughts about education: "I think we need to be looking at increasing the federal grant program," she stated after criticizing the lack of funding for No Child Left Behind. "We will never regret in this country investing in education. I believe that education is the backbone of our country, the backbone of a strong economy, and if our students are not prepared to compete locally and globally, our country will continue to have many many problems."

When asked what made her policy unique from the other Democratic candidates, she responded by stating that "what I think makes me different is that I believe I have a much greater breadth and depth of experience in many different areas. I've got the healthcare experience. I've got the business experience. I'm the only one who has actually raised children and deal with the college issues and high-

er education."

The previous week, one of Dahlkemper's competitors, Waltner, also talked to the College Democrats.

Waltner, a former Director of Operations at the Interfaith Center and another Erieite who has not held public office, stated that he believes his unique background and dedication to service makes him the right candidate. Raised by only his mother and a former member of a seminary, Waltner believes he can bring the district and Congress together.

"I think we need a person in Northwest Pennsylvania who understands the values and concerns people have here," stated Waltner, who has the largest grassroots operation in the district.

Additionally, Waltner said "I believe I have the most bold plan on healthcare" after being asked what issues are most important to him. In addition, he stressed his focus on education, wishing to reduce interest on student loans.

Three other candidates are in the field wishing to take English's seat in the House of Representatives. Democrat Kyle Foust, an Erie city councillor, Democrat Tom Myers, a part owner of the Erie law firm of Nichols & Myers, P.C., and Independent Steven Porter, who ran and lost to English in 2006, all also wish to challenge for the spot.

## Abracadabra!



Keegan McGregor/THE BEHREND BEACON

A student sits on stage with a magician at a program aimed to raise cultural awareness in McGarvey Commons.

## Mercyhurst's student-run newspaper, *The Merciad*, required to cut political ads

By Lenny Smith  
news editor  
lrs5046@psu.edu

Mercyhurst College's student-run newspaper, *The Merciad*, has stopped running political ads after Bishop Donald Trautman of the Erie Diocese sent a letter to the college regarding the church's political neutrality.

Bishop Trautman was prompted to write a letter to the college after the newspaper ran an ad from Sen. Barack Obama's campaign asking college students to register to vote for the upcoming Pennsylvania primary on April 22. The Diocese is afraid that political affiliation will affect the nonprofit status of the church.

Sheila Coon, the college's director of marketing, said that the college does not currently have a policy regarding the use of political ads. The college is organizing a committee because there is no policy in place.

The editorial board of *The Merciad* are at odds with the college president and Bishop Trautman.

According to *Merciad* editor-in-chief, Joshua Wilwohl, the newspaper "understands that the bishop has a certain responsibility, but we don't understand how it applies to our newspaper."

## Penn State officials to test PSUTXT system

By Lenny Smith  
news editor  
lrs5046@psu.edu

Penn State will test its emergency text messaging system, PSUTXT, on Monday, March 31 in an effort to make certain the system can handle a real emergency. The messages, which will clearly be marked as a test, will be sent at 1:30 p.m. to validated subscribers at all 26 campuses.

"Testing of the system also raises awareness of the system, increases the confidence of responders and provides insight into the weaknesses and strengths of a plan," said Annemarie Mountz, assistant director of Public Information, Penn State University Park. "Testing will help to proactively identify and resolve any issues."

Mountz said that they want to assure that the e2Campus server, which hosts the PSUTXT system can handle such a large demand. "e2Campus is aware of the test," Mountz said.

Many students think that they have subscribed to the service but have not validated their service. "They are not set up to receive PSUTXT messages although they may think they are," Mountz said. "This test also will help to make those people aware that their PSUTXT accounts are not active and they need to complete their subscription validations."

Students who think they are registered for the service but do not receive a test message on March 31 should go to <http://newswires.psu.edu/> and then click on the "PSUTXT Login" button to update their subscription status.

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