

CAMPUS NEWS

Behrend students celebrate Greek Week

by **Connor Sattely**
managing editor
cjs5060@psu.edu

Painted bodies, human bowling, and chariot races all became the norm around Behrend this week as members of the fraternity and sorority community celebrated "Greek Week."

With one event planned every night, ending with Friday night's annual chariot race, the Behrend Greek Week is an honored tradition in which fraternities and sororities meet to compete and have fun.

Monday featured a pie eating contest; on Tuesday, fraternities and sororities competed in human bowling; Wednesday featured the annual Greek Sing; a relay race was held on Thursday on the steps between Reed and Perry Hall; on Friday, Greek Week will wrap up with a chariot race.

The event is designed to not only show the public the fun that being in a Greek organization can be, but also to provide participants of the program an opportunity to simply enjoy each others' company.

Sonia Rosales, a member of Alpha Sigma Tau sorority, says that one of the best parts is supporting other people in the fraternity and sorority community.

"It's very competitive, but there's also some great sportsmanship," says Rosales, a sophomore at Behrend. "It's a lot of fun, and it brings all the Greeks together."

Alanna Stecura, president of Alpha Sigma Tau, explained the importance of having people to relate to.

"It's a family away from family," she says. "If you don't get to see your family a lot, then you can rely on your friends to support you."

The events required well-coordinated organizations, and all of the programs' participants spoke highly of Liz Warheit and Andrew Varis, who were part of the organization of Greek Week.

Varis, the vice president of special events for the inter-fraternity council, said that the process started with a few people sitting down and thinking about what was truly important for students.

"What mattered is that we have programs that are both fun for its participants and interesting for people that stop to watch," he said. "We have some programs that we have had for years, like the chariot race, and some new ones like the human bowling."

Varis says that while the events are a great chance for fraternities and sororities to recruit, it's even better for them to get to know each other and compete as friends.

Residents of Erie and Edinboro struggle with student neighbors

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equal balance between students and neighbors."

The city of Erie is looking into a new system that would affect all of the colleges and universities in the area, including Behrend. Called "student housing overlay zones," it would allow an exception to the law limiting three unrelated people to one

"We want to find an equal balance between students and neighbors."

- James Thompson
Water and Housing Authority
of the Erie City Council

rental. In the areas directly surrounding the colleges and universities in Erie, as many as five or six students would be able to rent together in one house. However, this would mean that in the rest of the city, no student rentals would be allowed.

This process has already been instated in areas by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Thompson says that Erie will be carefully studying how the new system works in Indiana, Pa., because so many of the conditions are similar to those in Erie. The zoning laws are the same, originally limiting three unrelated people to one rental. Indiana was also experiencing similar problems with taxes and neighbor-to-student relations. Indiana operates under the same national and state laws as Erie.

The city of Erie will also be paying close attention to the challenges against the separately governed borough of Edinboro. Some residents are fighting a new ordinance that was passed over

the summer.

Ordinance 563 serves mainly to decrease the density of student houses in neighborhoods in Edinboro. The law says that any two student houses must be a distance equivalent to twenty single-family homes away from each other. It also says that no neighborhood lot can contain more than one student house, or that any duplex can contain no more than one student rental unit.

Many residents and students were confused as to what constitutes a student house. Ordinance 563 defines a student house as one rental unit occupied by people unrelated by marriage, blood, or adoption, and who are attending or about to attend a college or university. The same ordinance also defines a family; any number of individuals living together in one residence, not including more than three people not related by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Manager T. Jemetz of Edinboro says that the neighborhoods are "being overrun by students." 70 percent of residences in Edinboro are rental units, and students rent out 90 percent of those houses. In an interview, Jemetz said that the problem with student houses are not the students themselves, but with a tax system. Rental units pay fewer taxes than residence units, and the increasing number of rental units to adding more and more pressure to homeowners in the area.

However, the minutes from an Edinboro Council Meeting on July 14, 2008 show friction between students and other residents. Many residents complained that college students were

noisy, left litter in neighboring yards, and parked on other people's driveways and front lawns. One resident asked why a new ordinance was necessary, when local law enforcement could target specific situations. Jemetz explained that the ordinance would serve to decrease the noise in a neighborhood and cut back the student population, as well as level the tax burden for residents. "We just want to stop proliferation," the minutes record Jemetz saying.

Professor Speel of Penn State Erie, the Behrend College, says that any ordinance singling out college students from other residents is unconstitutional. "It's

"It's discriminatory, but they still do it"

- Robert Speel
Associate Professor of
Political Science

discriminatory, but they still do it," says Speel. He says that many communities in the country have taken similar measures to keep college students and immigrants out of their neighborhoods.

However, it would be very difficult for students to challenge these policies, since they are so outnumbered in the community. Many students are either registered to vote outside of Erie or are not registered at all. Even the students who are registered in Erie and vote actively vote only in the presidential election. "Students need to vote in the local elections," says Speel. "[They] are too outnumbered in the communities."

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"It seemed the world was divided into good and bad people. The good ones slept better... while the bad ones seemed to enjoy the waking hours much more."

- Woody Allen

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