

CAMPUS NEWS

Behrend to host blood drive Nov. 6

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Each semester, the Community Blood Bank of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western Ohio makes its way to the Behrend campus to encourage the student body to donate blood for others in desperate need.

This year the bank will settle in McGarvey Commons on Thursday, Nov. 6 and will invite students, faculty, and staff to participate in this vital event. Dr. Rod Troester, a professor of Communications at Behrend, requires one of his classes to help promote the event each semester. This year, he has selected his small group theory class to plan some advertising and promoting for the spectacle.

"It offers good experience in publicity and promotion for students," he said. "How you publicize an event is a great way to exploit your creativity." Troester actively participates by donating blood every time the bank is on campus. "It's just kind of a habit that formed a long time ago," he says.

The Hamot Medical Center, Saint Vincent Health Center, Metro Health Center and Millcreek Community Hospital collectively founded what was then known as the Community Blood Bank of Erie County in November of 1965. Since then, it has expanded its area coverage to include Warren, McKean, and Elk County, as well as western New York.

According to their website, "The Community Blood Bank exists as a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to provide a safe, adequate supply of voluntarily-donated blood for patients. We are licensed by the FDA and hold permits in the New York Department of Health and in the Pennsylvania Department of Health. We are accredited by the American Association of Blood Banks and Clinical Laboratory Improvement Acts and are a member of America's Blood Centers."

Mark Woodel, a senior communication major, knows first-hand that these events are more than crucial. Last February, he spent four days in the hospital after an ulcer caused him to lose a significant amount of blood,

requiring doctors to pump five bags of blood into him.

"It definitely saved my life." Woodel was tremendously affected by this life-saving event and is disappointed he can't donate blood because of it. "I'm upset that I didn't do it in high school, but I'm still very grateful of these events. I just wish I could help out more," says Woodel.

Troester's class has been collaborating over the past two weeks, thinking of every possibility in order to push this event into the heads of Behrend students. Each student has been given a specific role in order to publicize the event in any and every way.

Troester feels that this is extremely beneficial to the campus as a whole. "I just think that when people are more informed and reminded, then they're more likely to donate," he says.

Woodel, who had his own life saved by blood donors, knows the value of the selfless act.

"Think about if it was for your family and they needed you," he says. "You would do it."

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Investigation: Gudgeonville bridge

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James turned to us and looked us each in the eye. "Now, I want you all to ask the spirits not to follow you home." Not a one of us blinked. "They shouldn't leave here," he said.

By that point, sitting in the dark a little after midnight next to the haunted Gudgeonville Bridge, we had all given up the idea of sleeping that night. Only a week before Halloween, two reporters and I had decided to investigate the bridge with James, a paranormal investigator. The bridge is known nationally for being one of the most haunted sites in Pennsylvania.

Naturally, I was skeptical. As a journalist, I try to find the truth behind situations. Regardless of the fact that I was there for a story, I felt my own bias creeping in. I tried not to laugh as James explained how he attempts to communicate with the spirits around him.

"It's all about protocol," he says. "Some people don't follow the protocol, and you can't take any recordings they make as serious. If you take care not to whisper, or move, or take pictures on a foggy night, then the stuff you come away with is a lot more legit. You have to go in calmly, because if you get scared, your mind starts playing tricks on you. You hold your breath when you take a photo, take four or five in a row so that it's credible if there's something in all of them."

He opened his equipment case and took several devices out. He gave a temperature sensor to us, explaining that a drop in several degrees could prove the presence of a spirit. I probably rolled my eyes. He handed me a little box that looked like a remote control, explaining that it was an electromagnetic field sensor. Useful in sensing electric fields in the air, paranormal investigators often cite readings from these devices as physical evidence of a paranormal presence. I was handed one of these. The reading sat at zero, and I hardly believed it was on. For the first hour and a half, I stared at the empty meter, wondering why I was believing in this.

We stood there, in the freezing cold, as James told us chilling stories about the Gudgeonville bridge, including the death of a local girl, Darlene, on April 19th, 1964. The original clipping of the

girl's death was part of James's portfolio for the area, and also easily found online, with last names removed. The girl fell 225 feet to her death. The bridge's reputation was based partially upon this death, by those who think that the girl's spirit still lingers there. Other stories include some that James dismissed summarily, such as a headless horseman, a mule which was supposedly killed on the bridge, and other even more ridiculous tales.

James said that there was one way to figure out what was there for sure.

Electronic voice phenomena, or EVPs, are spirits whose voices are captured on audio recorders. A disembodied voice is one which you can hear without recording equipment. James mentioned nonchalantly that he had heard three of the latter.

He warned us all not to whisper or move, then turned on the recording. We stood there in the silence, alone at the haunted bridge, for several moments. Feeling stupid, I waited as he started to play the recording back. What I heard gave me the first hint of doubt in my firm theory that "ghosts" don't exist.

Listening closely to the recording, James pointed out several points where there were hints of a voice in the background. For most of those, we could hardly make it out. In the back of my mind, I dismissed it as background noise, until we came upon what James called a "Class A" recording, which was a clearly heard voice.

It was at a point on the recording when our guide had told us to reach out our hands. Reluctantly, we all put our hands in front of us and stood there. Listening back, right after I remarked loudly to my friend that this was pointless, we heard a chilling voice whisper "...touch your hand."

We couldn't believe it. He played it again and again. We did our best to rationalize it, but we knew none of us were whispering. There were no other people around, and none of us had moved. I found myself finally believing that there could be spirits around us.

Suddenly, the meter in my hand, dormant for hours, went straight to red, its maximum reading. I nearly screamed, "Woah, woah, it's going crazy," with



some more colorful language interjected. Immediately, James turned on the recording again, and we stood, eyes wide, as he asked the empty winter air who was present with us. He asked questions, and swore he heard responses on the recording; some of them were audible, others were not. Either way, we were thoroughly freaked out.

"Go up on the bridge," he said, looking at me. "Go on. Just go up there."

Standing with friends and a paranormal expert was one thing, but walking alone in a pitch black, haunted bridge was another. I walked alone through the bridge to show my friends that I was still impervious to the Halloween thrills. I was terrified, but managed to walk across and back. "There," I said. "Nothing."

The meter went to red and the temperature immediately dropped ten degrees. "They probably like you," James said. I was fine with that.

It started to rain lightly, so we got in James's car and watched a handful of teenagers drive up, approach the bridge, and run away giggling. "Amateurs," I muttered.

After sitting in the car for twenty minutes, we decided it was time to go. James turned to us and looked us each in the eye. "Now, I want you all to ask the spirits not to follow you home." Not a one of us blinked. "They shouldn't leave



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

ABOVE: The woods around the bridge at after dark
DIRECTLY ABOVE: Highlighting where the girl, Darlene, fell from the cliff.

here," he said.

Ten minutes later, after silently begging whatever set off the meters to leave me alone, I was driving home with my two friends, flinching at every sound in the woods, and thoroughly petrified.

We tried to rationalize it. We argued, debated, and kept coming back to the inescapable fact that the sounds that we

heard simply could not be explained away. Every few minutes, we would all just yell to relieve the tension we all still felt from one of the most deeply chilling experiences of our lives. Even weeks later, we try not to speak about it. The memory of the Gudgeonville bridge will always stay with us, and a return trip next Halloween is a certainty.

Students celebrate Behrend's 60th anniversary with Founder's Day

continued from front page.

The Velcro wall had students suit up, run, and high jump on a large sticky surface. The company also brought large cushioned suits for sumo wrestling and a long obstacle challenge course for students to race through.

In addition to the inflatables, over 600 t-shirts and glasses were distributed. The day ended with the band Bon

Journey, a cover band who played songs from both Bon Jovi and Journey. The five members of the group stepped on stage at 8 p.m. and played songs such as "Any Way You Want It" and "Lights" by Journey.

"It seems like every one had a good time and enjoyed it," said Brad Kovalcik, the Executive Director of the campus. "The celebration brings a bit more Behrend pride to the campus."

The celebration was sponsored by both the Lion Entertainment Board and the Lion Ambassadors. Between the two organizations, roughly \$10,000 was spent to commemorate the occasion.

On Oct. 30, 1948, the Glenhill Farm was dedicated as a Penn State facility. Five years later, the campus began to offer two-year associate degrees. The campus has continued to grow over its sixty years into the rapidly developing school that it is today.

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