

## CAMPUS NEWS

## Cadet for a week

*A journalist chronicles his experience in R.O.T.C. for a week, documenting the extremities of what is an everyday life for some*

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As I crawled under the electric tape representing barbed wire, clutching a rifle to my chest, trying to keep my chest flat against the ground, I realized how crazy of a week it had been. I had been following the Reserve Officer Training Corps, or ROTC, as part of a "cadet-for-a-week" experience.

At that point, I was already pretty exhausted. Physical training on Monday, though I was told it was an easy day, had worn me out. Wednesday, we competed against Gannon and Mercyhurst in a type of army obstacle course. That night, we practiced marching for the Veteran's Day Parade on Saturday. Though it was by far an easy week as far as their standards go, I found myself exhausted after only thinking about it.

It started with physical training, which began on Monday at 6 a.m. and ended an hour later. Some of the drills were familiar to me from my experiences playing basketball and Tae Kwon Do; others were brand new and did a much better job of wearing me down. My first surprise as we exercised, though, was not about the physical component — it was about the people who surrounded me.

These people were not superhumans. They were not robots.

The people in the ROTC class were people I knew. They were the girl who sat in the back of your economics class. They were the two people who played frisbee on the Reed lawn. They were the guy who you sat next to at Dobbins. These were normal people. They joked around, messed with each other, even an hour before the sun came up.

After an hour of working out at several stations, we split up into two teams for a high-speed game of flag football. A small group went to breakfast at Dobbins afterwards, marking about the third time that I had eaten breakfast any earlier than noon this year. When finished, I discovered that, though I'm not a morning person, the early-day workout gave me an unbelievable amount of energy throughout the rest of the day. I wrote for three hours straight, got some homework done, and read the paper. People complained to me about being tired around noon and I just laughed.

Wednesday morning, Behrend faced off against Gannon and Mercyhurst in a squad competition. It was quickly explained to me that I would take part in this event. It consisted of sprinting about a hundred yards with a heavy medicine ball, flat and army crawling, carrying heavy water containers, army crawling under "barbed wire" with rifles, and carrying a "wounded" soldier



KEEGAN MCGREGOR/TheBehrendBeacon

Cadets being debriefed for a squad mission.

on a litter. Before the event, a uniformed student turned to me and, I suppose, tried to warn me. "This will probably burn you out a little bit," he said, slightly grinning.

Though I realized that I had, by far, one of the worst performances on the course, it still felt like I was part of a team. Those who finished before others turned back to shout words of encouragement. For me, they mainly

yelled "keep your head down," but we made it through the course as a team.

Behrend won the event, marking a long tradition of taking victory in the squad competition. It occurred to me that these students, not generally regarded as a sports team, were representing Penn State as much as any other group of students. They cheered for Penn State as much as students did at basketball game. They ran as hard as track athletes, dodged through courses as fast as soccer players, all while in full military uniforms.

At the end of the event, they all stood in rank while being instructed for the rest of the week. I could hardly stand, but tried my best to look unaffected. At 6:30 a.m., in the freezing November morning air, we were dismissed and I collapsed on a Junker Center couch where I slept for two hours. Eventually, I scraped myself off of the couch long enough to make it back to my room and grab some breakfast.

That night, I took part in "colorguard" practice. In high school, colorguard meant a few girls who walked ahead of the marching band twirling flags. Here, it meant two things: the colors, both military and American flags,

and the guard, or rifles, which marched to either side of the flags. I fell into step, learning marching techniques on the go as we drilled in Erie Hall for about an hour. Though I had about died from the squad competition, it felt good to see some of the student soldiers that I had competed with earlier. The marching component was fun as well — it was all practice for Saturday. I was told,

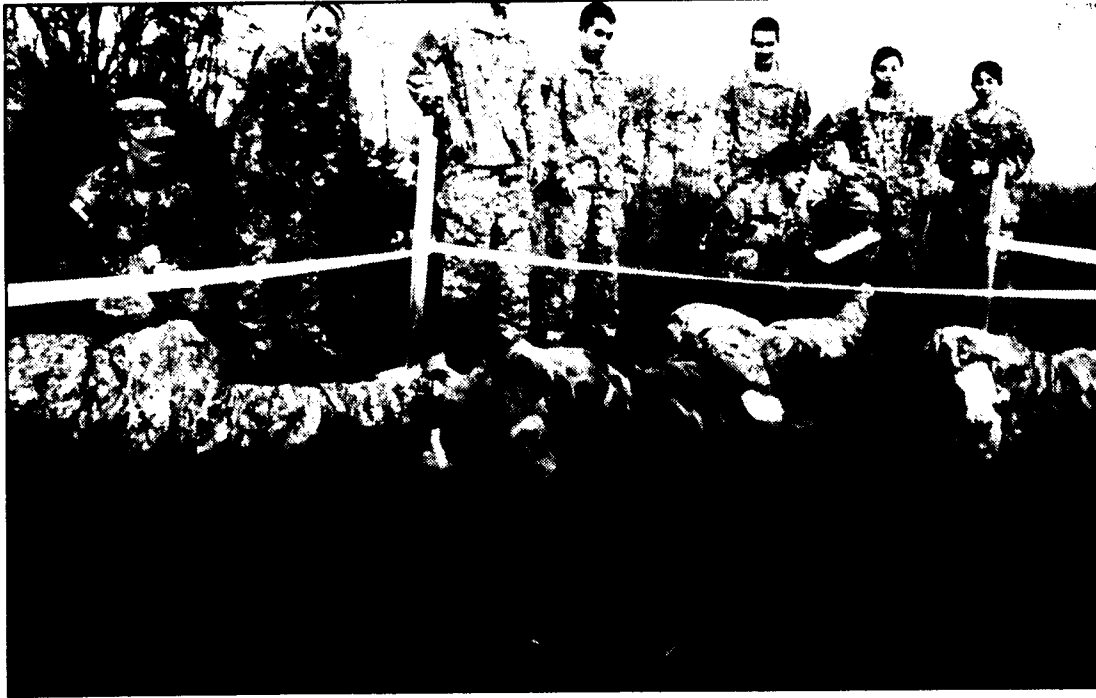
"The Erie Veteran's Day Parade featured the Erie Battalion, which included not only Behrend, but squads from Gannon and Mercyhurst, all marching in a long column. Dressed in ACU's, or Army Combat Uniforms, they marched in columns for miles, chanting army chants. The major sergeant shouted out calls, and the students responded in earnest. Spectators saluted as the students walked past and veterans adorned with combat medals applauded the students as they walked by. I followed the group as a photographer, and got to watch first hand the pride the Erie community had in the students.

At the end of the route, the students went to the nearby Veterans Affairs hospital, where they spoke to the residents, veterans of all of the American wars over the past century. "Many of the veter-

ans just don't have anyone to talk to," the students were told earlier in the week. "They just want to tell their stories. That might be you, someday, and it's easy to do." Almost all of the students stayed to speak to the veterans, something which they looked forward to as a civic opportunity.

For me, it was the end of the week. Beat up, sore, and exhausted from my week as a cadet, I was asked what I thought of the experience. I knew my answer right away. "It burned me a little bit," I told them, and most of them laughed in response.

In truth, it was a fun and valuable experience, not only as a journalist but as a student. My view of the school and of the world around me changed when surrounded by students whose commitments to their country matched their commitments to their school. The people who you saw walking between classes yesterday were the people who faced nearby schools in pride for their own. The people in front of you at the line represented some of Penn State's finest, but also represented the future of the nation — those who wanted to answer the call of a country in need.



KEEGAN MCGREGOR/TheBehrendBeacon

ROTC cadets crawling under tape representing barbed wire.

## Court date approaches for student facing eight charges

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Some students on campus are sympathetic towards Citriniti and hope his case won't affect his future.

"I think everything that happened was real unfortunate," said Kevin Dunn, a sophomore Kinesiology major. "I feel bad for him and hope that everything clears up from him in the future. Hopefully this won't affect him much."

Other students are unsettled by the matter and worry that similar events will take place.

"I feel like safety should be a top priority on every college campus, including this one," said a student who wished to remain anonymous. "To know that someone who has been charged with a felony is still here, on campus, is very intimidating. It's allowing the opportu-

nity for the same harm to occur to someone else."

Student Affairs declined to comment on the case, stating they reserve the right to take disciplinary action against students on a case-by-case basis.

"We're always concerned with our students' behavior," said Ken Miller, Director of Student Affairs. "Whether it's on campus or off, it's our responsibility to ensure we provide a safe environment for our students." Miller stated that taking

action against students who are either criminally charged or convicted depends on the situation's "substantial adverse effect."

According to Miller, a committee reviews the case and decides to take action accordingly. As of press time, Citriniti has not been barred from campus.

## Homecoming to host many activities

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Wednesday has many activities including a Penn State Trivia game which takes place at noon in the lobby of the Reed Union Building. Later on in the evening there will be a tailgate before the game, starting at 5 p.m. The women's basketball game starts at 6 p.m., followed by the men's at 8 p.m., with an audience "white out."

Thursday is Heritage Day with the highlight being the Trigon Drag Show.

"It was a really big hit last year," said Wagner. "We want to bring it back."

There will be four drag queens brought up from Pittsburgh for what can be described as an interactive fashion show. Many students are already hearing about the many events going on this week.

"Oh my gosh, I'm totally going to the drag show," said freshman and political science major, Amber Heeter. Students are already getting excited for the activities.

To finish up the fun filled week will be the faculty versus court basketball game, featuring the homecoming court and staff, including Ken Miller, Director of Student Affairs. After the game will be what seems to be the highlight of the week for first semester political science major, Amber Weber.

"Lets go dance," says Weber. "Forget guys, lets get some shoes and just dance the whole night."

The dance will take place at the Junker Center from 9 p.m. until 12 a.m. Tickets will be available

at the RUB desk in upcoming weeks. The cost is \$1 a couple and \$.50 for an individual.

All of the activities are free to students and will take place starting next Monday with the scavenger hunt, and ending next Friday with the Homecoming dance.

For more information on homecoming, visit the Facebook group "Behrend Homecoming 2008."

## Housing problem not going away

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Since before the task force was formed, students had the impression that they only had to worry about code enforcement during the usual weekly business hours. However, now that officers are working overtime during nights and weekends, fewer students are getting away with being disruptive. According to Franklin, this measure has been effective in curbing drinking and limiting disturbances.

Franklin believes that rather than new legislation, "the issue to address is student behavior." He stated that rather than the majority of the student population; it is only a few that are being a nuisance in their neighborhoods. He cites a current case in which two or three students are being fined several hundred dollars for code violation as an example of an appropriate solution to the increasing problems.

When asked about the potential student overlay housing zones, in

which student rentals would be concentrated around the colleges and universities in the city, Franklin said that he didn't know how that would help.

"I picture having the same problem," Franklin said. The only difference would be who the "complainers" are. Instead of resolving the issue completely, this method would shift the impact to the residents living on the perimeters of the student housing zones.

Housing and water authority

for the Erie City Council, James Thompson, says that the city is still looking into overlay housing zones as an option.

"Geographically, we're looking at what areas would be affected," said Thompson. The city's Planning Commission is juggling this new project along with the proposed tires-to-energy plant. "A lot is certainly going on," Thompson said. According to the Councilman, the city can expect some news on the subject by the end of the month.