

# Alternative Spring Break club puts partying on back-burner

CONNOR SATTELY  
editor-in-chief

40 students, faculty, and staff from Penn State Behrend hopped on a plane during Spring Break to head to the gulf coast.

Unlike many other south-seekers, though, they went for a different reason than partying.

The trip was this year's Alternative Spring Break, which sent a total of 67 students, faculty, and staff - including 18 from Penn State DuBois, and nine from York. Those who were willing to give up their Spring Break for service saw first-hand how much work still needed to be done in areas deeply affected by Hurricane Katrina.

"It was eye-opening," said Behrend freshman Sarah Cevallos, a biology major. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime experience. You see not only the destruction that went through the city, but a lot of the rebuilding and recovery efforts as well."

Cevallos and the rest of the group had the opportunity to be a part of those efforts, each in

their own small way.

"Our group had a project that was only about three weeks old," said Cevallos. "Our homeowner was a woman who had gotten a divorce a few months before Katrina, and then her house was destroyed during the storm."

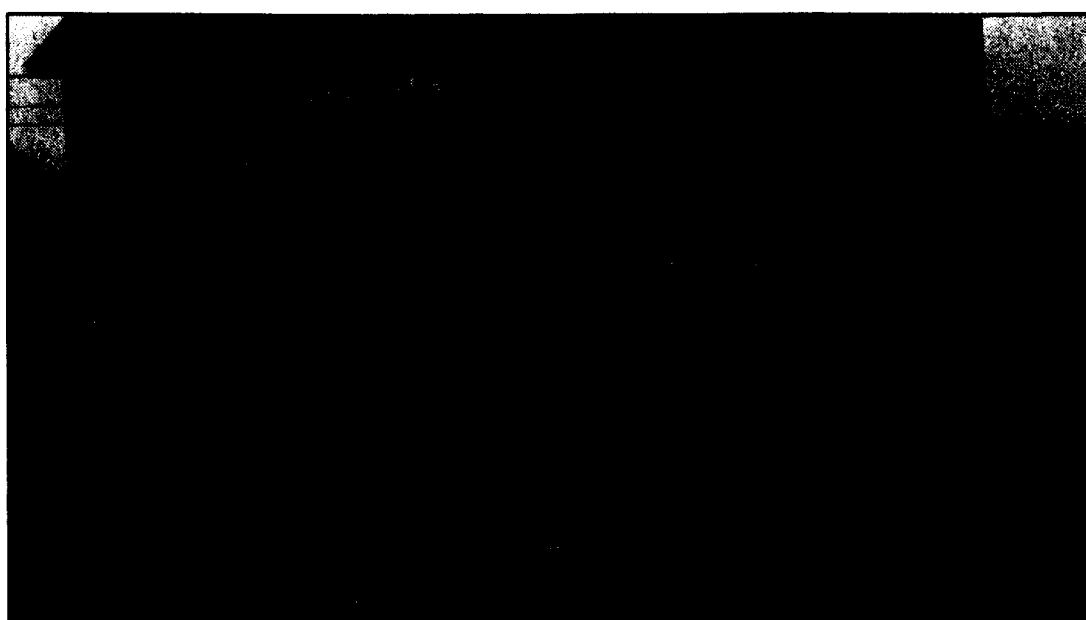
That homeowner, Cevallos said, was moved to Philadelphia for about two years, then returned home only to be a victim of contractor fraud, a common occurrence in the post-Katrina Gulf Coast. The homeowner has been living in her FEMA trailer for two years.

Students on the trip spent roughly six to eight hours a day at their work sites. Cevallos said that her job mainly consisted of sanding walls and installing joint compounds.

After their day of work, many students on the trip had the opportunity to head into New Orleans to experience the city's culture for themselves.

That's what Behrend senior Molly Eberly will take with her as one of her favorite parts of the trip.

"The culture in the French Quarter was amazing," said



Connor Sattely / The Behrend Beacon

Alternative Spring Break member Erika Glover scans the house that she is about to help rebuild.

Eberly, a mechanical engineering major. "Seeing Café du Monde was fun, and the food down there was incredible."

For Cevallos, other sights in the city caught her eye as well.

"We drove through areas where there used to be houses, but they are all gone," she said. "There are projects there that tore down the remnants and

have started new houses, but a lot of them don't have anyone living in them."

In that way, the trip provided students a chance to learn the details on why the city was affected so much by the storm.

"I never knew much about the floods, or the levees breaking," said Cevallos. "Our advisor [Financial Aid employee]

Giselle [Hudson] was from New Orleans, so she got to tell us childhood stories, teach us about the city, and also show us what happened to the levees during Katrina."

All of those aspects together made for a whirlwind of experiences that left Cevallos exhausted after a 13-hour trip back to Erie.



## Meals in Erie Hall

JEFF KRAMER  
copy editor

After the recent fire, Dobbins has started serving students a similar menu to what they used to serve in a new location at Erie Hall. In order to prepare the food, Behrend mobile kitchen, the price of which couldn't be disclosed.

In order to compensate for the inconvenience, the university deposited \$50 of meal points into each student's meal plan account.

Randy Geering, Director of Housing And Food Services, said that the fire did not reach far beyond the Gazebo. It entered the dining area and melted the TV in the corner, but it didn't proceed. All of the plastic casings that house the fluorescent lights melted as well.

The university may be making improvements to Dobbins while cleaning the water damage to the kitchen areas.

"That's what's being discussed now," said Geering.

Dobbins relocation to Erie Hall will displace several kinesiology courses to the Junker Center.

## ASB We Are Penn State chant breaks out

CONNOR SATTELY  
editor-in-chief

A chance encounter over Spring Break allowed 40 Behrend students, faculty, and staff to realize how invested Penn State truly is in community service.

"There were about forty of us standing outside of Café du Monde, getting ready to go in," recalls Matt Haubach, a senior economics major from Penn State Behrend. "The next thing we heard was from inside the cafe, a big group of people yelling 'WE ARE!' So, of course, we replied in kind."

After heading inside, the Behrend group discovered that a 16-person strong group of University Park students, also in New Orleans for Alternative Spring Break, was sitting down enjoying coffee and dough-

nuts in the popular café.

"It was just a random event," Haubach said, "but it led to one of the coolest Penn State experiences I've had. It made me proud to be a Penn State student, to realize how strong the Penn State body is."

Brad Stamm, a senior meteorology major from Penn State University Park, said that the meeting wasn't too much of a surprise.

"For people that don't go to Penn State, these encounters might be kind of strange," said Stamm, who was on his first Alternative Spring Break trip.

"To Penn State students, it's really the norm. When we got down here, we just ran into another service group from Penn State staying at the same hotel at us, and then we saw the Behrend group at the café. Penn State students are everywhere doing serv-

ice."

Stamm's trip was very similar to the Behrend group's, though his individual group didn't perform quite the work he was expecting.

"Rather than doing construction, we actually planted Cyprus trees all week," he said. "At first, we were kind of surprised, because we planned to build houses."

Cyprus trees, Stamm explained, were torn up by the hundreds of thousands during Hurricane Katrina, and provide a strong barrier of resistance against hurricane force winds. Replanting those trees, he says, will help protect from future storms.

"The first day, you could plant a tree anywhere," he said. "By the time we left, it was hard to find an open space."

## Fire ruled accidental

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thought we could, so that gives him more time to complete the reconstruction," Geering said.

"The main dining area and serving area should be ready by August 2010, but we still may choose options to rebuild the Gazebo that will take a longer time to be completed. If we decide to make the rebuilding process for the Gazebo area longer we provide an alternate dining area in addition to the main dining area of Dobbins."

"Our insurance company, Factory Mutual, is in the process of evaluating what the value is of everything that has been lost and damaged."

"We are not in a position to even ask contractors how much it will cost to replace all of our losses."

According to Geering, there will be no raises in tuition as a result of the renovations because Housing and Food Services are a separate entity from the University.

## Lawrence Hall evacuated after gas main leak

CONNOR SATTELY  
editor-in-chief

A construction worker hit a gas main at the Dobbins construction project Thursday, prompting Behrend officials to evacuate Lawrence Hall.

The gas leak, described by Housing and Food Services Director Randy Geering as "substantial," leaked gas for roughly 20 minutes before it was turned off.

"There was a heavy smell

into the surrounding areas," he said. "The gas was not harmful unless in the case of prolonged exposure."

Geering said that Behrend Police and Safety was called, and made the decision to pull the fire alarm in Lawrence Hall as a safety precaution, largely due to a strong westerly wind. After fifteen or twenty minutes, the students were let back into their rooms.

Police and Safety had notified Residence Life prior to

evacuating the building, but it still served as a surprise for many students in the building.

It provided a hint of frustration for freshman Sam Cramer.

"We can't live somewhere that always has something wrong and gets evacuated," he said.

Freshman James Boorman-Padgett, also a resident of Lawrence Hall, wasn't too surprised.

"I started to smell gas in the room, so I wasn't too very sur-

prised when the fire alarm went off," he said.

Geering says that the worker was part of Perry Construction, the group working on the Dobbins renovation project. The accident will not cause any significant delay or damage to the renovation.

"It feels kind of major, because of the safety precautions, but it's not that big of a deal," said Geering. "This has happened a few times in the past on construction projects."

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Elections held April 14-15th



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Contact Molly Thomas at mbt5012@psu.edu with any questions!