

Economist discusses drugs

By Jourdan Cole
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

There is one thing that would make Walter Block not want to legalize drugs — taxes — because taxes are used to take away freedom, he said.

Austrian economist and libertarian theorist Block spoke on Tuesday night to about 50 people in the Thomas building on the libertarian philosophy and the legalization of drugs. The event was hosted by the College Libertarians, and Block started off the night by explaining that “libertarianism is the view that you can do anything you want, except you can’t initiate violence against people and their property.”

College Libertarians President

Nicole Ritschel said the lecture was just what she was looking for to explain her reasons for supporting legalization.

“It was important to give a legitimacy to our argument, because people who are looking at our argument from the outside, see it as an excuse to get high,” Ritschel (junior-political science) said.

Block explained the basis for legalizing drugs from a philosophical and economic perspective. Citing hang gliding, coal mining and french fries, Block said all pose certain risks to humanity but they are all still legal.

“If you own yourself, you ought to be able to put crap in your own body,” Block said. “Just because it’s harmful, forcing adults to act

responsibly is totalitarian.”

From an economic standpoint, he said the amount of people using drugs and the demand for drugs would not differ much from current usage if they were legalized. He said every time the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) succeeds, they seed their own failure by causing the drug trade to come back stronger.

After explaining his reasons drugs should be legalized, Block took on arguments against legalizing drugs. Block said those who argue that addictive drugs promote crime were nonsensical because regulation of drugs would actually lead to less crime.

While some were unsure of their standpoints on the legaliza-



Chris Donada/Collegian

Walter Block gives an enthusiastic speech about personal freedoms to a group of students in the Thomas building on Tuesday night.

tion of drugs, Frank Chang said he saw good points in Block’s lecture such as a legitimate use of liberties and a person’s body.

“There’s always a hint of skepti-

cism, I guess it’s not harmful to discuss it in public.” Chang (freshman-political science) said.

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Lawyer speaks through OutLaw

By Marilyn Perez
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

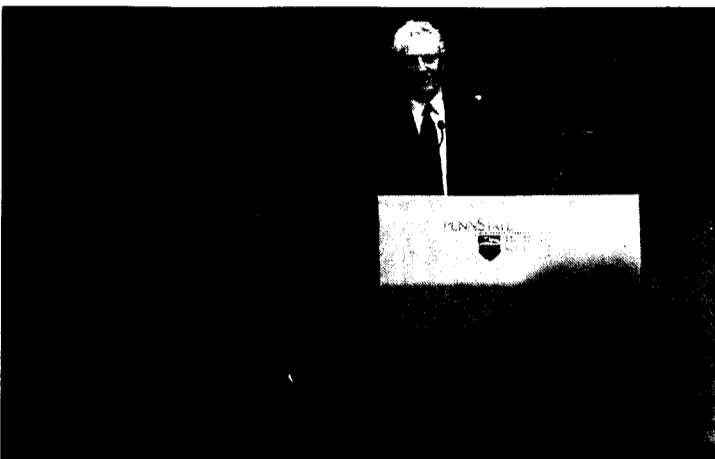
Civil rights lawyer and co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center Morris Dees spoke Tuesday night about the importance of justice in the world and his experience as a lawyer who is known for taking on controversial cases.

“There can be no peace in the world unless there’s fairness and justice,” Dees said.

Dees, brought by the Dickinson School of Law’s LGBTQA organization OutLaw, spoke to approximately 200 people on “Equal Justice for All” in the Greg Sutliff Auditorium of the Lewis Katz Building. He is most known for his controversial civil rights cases in the South.

He said being a lawyer promises a lot of riches like a good, consistent salary to care for a family. But, he said there are more important rewards that come from a career in law.

“The riches you will gain from



Peter Tesonero/Collegian

Civil rights icon Morris Dees talks to students about his experiences as a lawyer in the Greg Sutliff Auditorium on Tuesday night.

being a lawyer, the real things you’ll remember are the people whose lives that you affected,” Dees said.

He spoke of one case in particular that he said he found most touching. He said the case involved Michael Donald, a young black man who was lynched by two Ku Klux Klan members.

He represented Donald’s mother in the case, and said one of the Klan members was sentenced to death. As the man was leaving the courtroom, he asked Mrs. Donald for forgiveness, he added.

Dees said there wasn’t a dry eye in the room when Mrs. Donald responded, “Son, I’ve already forgiven you.”

The Donald case was one of the most notable stories Dees told during his lecture, said Denise

Conner (graduate-chemistry.)

“From a legal standpoint, it was groundbreaking,” Conner said. “I think it was good work. The words of the mother who lost her son were really, ‘Wow.’”

Dees said that Martin Luther King Jr. had fears and doubts about a democracy with liberty and justice for all, but he had dreams, too.

Elementary school teacher Claudia Wilson, a Miles Township resident, has used the idea of taking dreams and making them a reality into action in her classes.

“I had my kids pick something they had a dream about,” Wilson said. “I really challenged them to accomplish what their dream was.”

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Cultural Festival sees successful beginning

By Chris Zook
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

It started strong with eight straight hours of movies, and the World Cultural Festival still plans to do a whole lot more.

The Paul Robeson Cultural Center celebrated the beginning of the World Cultural Festival on Tuesday. The festival began fairly well, staff member Arlana Henry (junior-crime law and justice) said.

“It’s off to a pretty great start,” she said.

Though it is her first year helping out with the festival, Henry anticipates more people will start attending as word gets out among students, she added.

Jessica Harris (graduate-education) agrees, estimating anywhere from 300 to 450 students attended throughout the day. Though it is part of her requirements as a graduate student to help out with the festival, she has a very positive outlook about the event, especially for student involvement, she said.

“That’s one of the great things about the festival,” she said. “Everybody is involved.”

Mohamed Magdy Taha, facilities manager for the Cultural Center, has worked with the festival for years. He views the festi-

val as a matter of high importance for Penn State and the community, he said.

“We’re so isolated here,” he said. “This is a very effective way to expose the community to other cultures.”

The festival can offer participants and attendees more than they can learn in classes, Taha added.

“Diversity is more than just reading books,” he said.

The film series went from noon until 8 p.m., featuring the movies “Born Into Brothels” and “The Agronomist” in the East Halls Cultural Lounge and “Zulu Love Letters” and “Rabbit Proof Fence” in Paul Robeson Cultural Center’s Heritage Hall. Each film dealt with the hardships faced by those living in countries outside the United States, including Haiti and South Africa.

Future events include a culture and politics discussion on Wednesday from 1 to 3 p.m. and a global bazaar on Thursday from noon to 5 p.m. The festival will close with a hip-hop showcase on Friday that will feature break dancing, rap battles, and a DJ Hero contest from 6:30 to 9:20 p.m. All the events will occur in Heritage Hall.

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