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Erie Man Killed In Gorge

Tragedy at Devil's Backbone

A 22 year-old Erie man was killed Sunday night when he fell from Devil's Backbone in the Wintergreen Gorge near campus.

John H. Morton of East 25th Street was kicking rocks over the edge of the sheer cliff when he apparently lost his footing, falling approximately 200 feet to his death.

Morton had been hiking with a companion at the time of the incident, which occurred at approximately 5 pm.

Behrend police officer Chip Sanders and Collegian photographer Jeff Majcher were two of the first people on the scene.

Both concur that a family who was picnicking along the top of the Gorge ignored repeated pleas for help. "They just didn't take us seriously," said Sanders.

Sanders reports that Morton's friend apparently ran to the bottom of the shale cliff and checked on Morton's condition before running to Behrend's

apartment complex to report the incident.

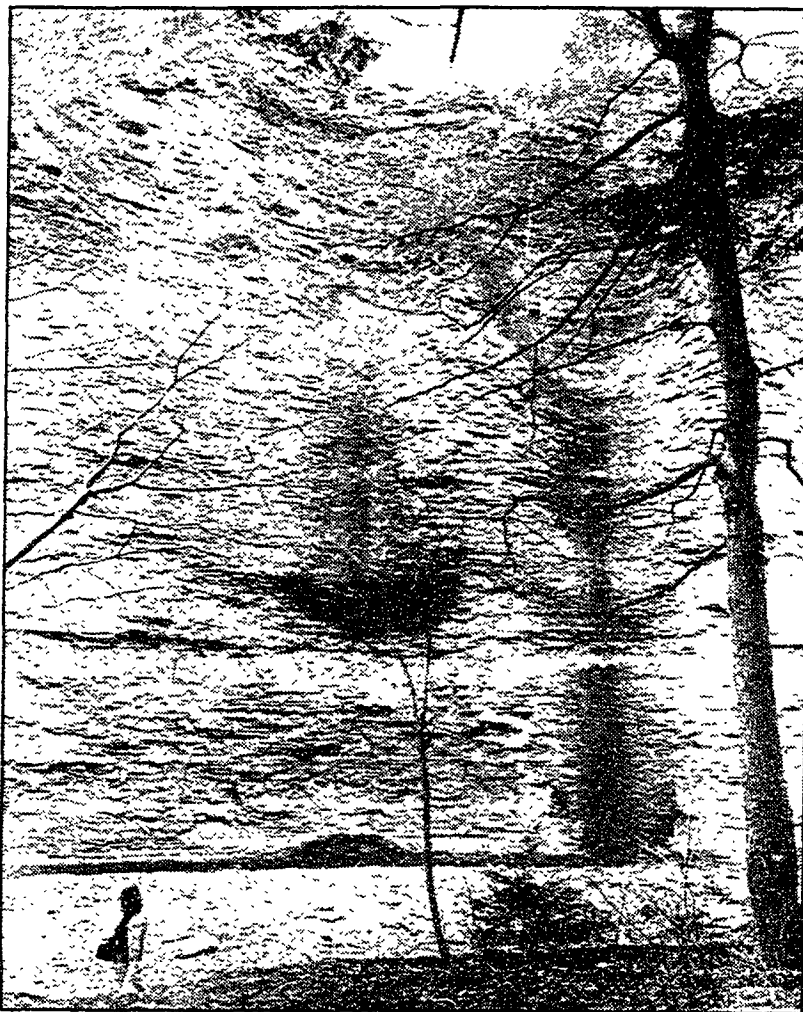
While Morton's companion reports he spoke with him after the fall, Erie County Deputy Coroner Richard Skonieczka believes that a fall of such magnitude would have killed Morton instantly.

He estimated that approximately 33 minutes elapsed between the incident and the phone call notifying Police and Safety. He adds, however, that a quicker response probably wouldn't have made any difference.

Devil's Backbone is the steepest, most dangerous part of the Wintergreen Gorge and has been the subject of considerable concern for a number of years.

Sanders, who notes Morton was walking on or near campus property, said there is no suspicion of alcohol being involved in the incident, but notes that Gorge patrols have been increased this spring.

photo by Jeff Majcher



Police Investigate Incidents

by Laura A. Weaver
Collegian Staff Writer

Two traffic accidents near Behrend were reported on April 23. In the first, a vehicle was found laying upside down on Jordan Road. It is not known how the car was flipped, but apparently no one was injured.

Later that day, a car leaving Behrend collided with a car traveling on Station Road. No injuries were reported. Vehicles parked along Station Road during a softball game reportedly blocked one driver's view. The Pennsylvania State Police are investigating.

Schlesinger Predicts Liberalism

by Maria Plaza
Collegian News Editor

Historian and Pulitzer prize winning writer Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. predicted a turn towards liberalism in the 1990's and questioned the practicality of Bush's "Thousand Points of Light" before about 300 people in Erie Hall on Thursday, April 20.

Schlesinger's lecture, "The Shape of American Politics to Come," was the final feature of Behrend's 1988-89 Speaker Series.

Public vs. Private

Schlesinger described a 30-year cycle between concern for public interests and private interests. Concern for the public good and active government, he said, peaked under Theodore Roosevelt's administration during the century's first decade, Franklin Roosevelt's in the '30s and '40s, and John Kennedy's in the '60s. The focus was on private interests and a small government role during the presidencies of William McKinley at the turn of the century, Harding and Coolidge in the '20s, Eisenhower during the '50s, and Reagan in the '80s.

"Thirty years is about the span of a generation . . . the cycle during youth shapes one's views," Schlesinger said,

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Enrollment Reaches Record Levels

by Cindy Craig
Collegian Staff Writer

"We are at the limit," said college registrar Robert Schenker of Behrend's growing enrollment. A record 2,707 students enrolled for this semester, a 5.4 percent increase over last spring's enrollment of 2,568.

Optimal enrollment at Behrend is 2,500 students. Ideally, the administration would like to reduce enrollment to 2500 while retaining an equal number of juniors and seniors versus freshmen and sophomores. Since underclassmen presently outnumber the upperclassmen, the number of entering freshmen is being cut back. To achieve this, the admission requirements for first year students are increasing and will continue to increase. "Right now, a student sitting in a high school senior class . . . may need the ability to predict a 3.0 grade point average to be admitted to Behrend," Schenker said. The admissions office is also being very selective about which provisional students are admitted.

While overall enrollment has increased, admissions has been successful at improving the ratio of upperclassmen to

underclassmen. There are 186 more fifth to eleventh semester students for spring of '89 than for spring of '88 while the number of first to fourth semester students has decreased by 64.

While short term plans are to cut back by about 200 students, the long range goal is to increase the size of the student body. This will only be attempted after appropriate physical facilities are constructed. Behrend currently needs more resident space, parking, faculty offices, and classrooms. New offices and a new gym are in the works and there are tentative plans to increase residence space and parking area. Projected completion dates are not available at this time, but it's estimated that the construction is several years away.

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The liberal Mr. Schlesinger listens to the rebuttal of an offended audience member. Schlesinger, former assistant to John F. Kennedy, discussed the nation's trend toward liberalism last Thursday in Erie Hall. (photo by M. Zawistoski)