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Behrend's Weekly
Newspaper

The Collegian

Thursday, November 14, 1991

Vol. XL No. 11

Campus crime: New bill may change the way crime is reported

by Vicky Snyder
The Collegian

For years colleges across the country have had to follow federal confidentiality laws in order to protect the privacy of staff and students.

Those same laws, however, enable colleges and universities to obscure how much crime occurs on their campus by "giving" some of those statistics to local police agencies. Based on those statistics, allow campus and universities to make their own policy.

The new bill gives the Pennsylvania State Police force colleges and universities to be more open with their crime records, making students across the commonwealth know if their college community is more like Miami or Mayberry.

Currently the Buckley Amendment, a federal law which requires student records to remain confidential, is in effect for the entire country. However, Pennsylvania has proposed Senate Bill No. 1378 which would allow daily logs of crimes reported to become public information.

In order to circumvent the federal Buckley amendment, the U.S. Senate passed an amendment to

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-Larry Silvas,
Police and Safety Manager

its crime bill called the With Amendment. This amendment would allow universities to comply with state open records laws while still conforming to the Buckley amendment.

Pennsylvania law requires colleges and universities to contribute their daily crime reports to the Pennsylvania State Police Crime Report. This publication is available through the local news and is helpful in comparing crime between different universities.

However, Larry Silvas, Manager of Police and Safety, wants more accurate information.

"The community is not only of the college, but those who are surrounding it," he said.

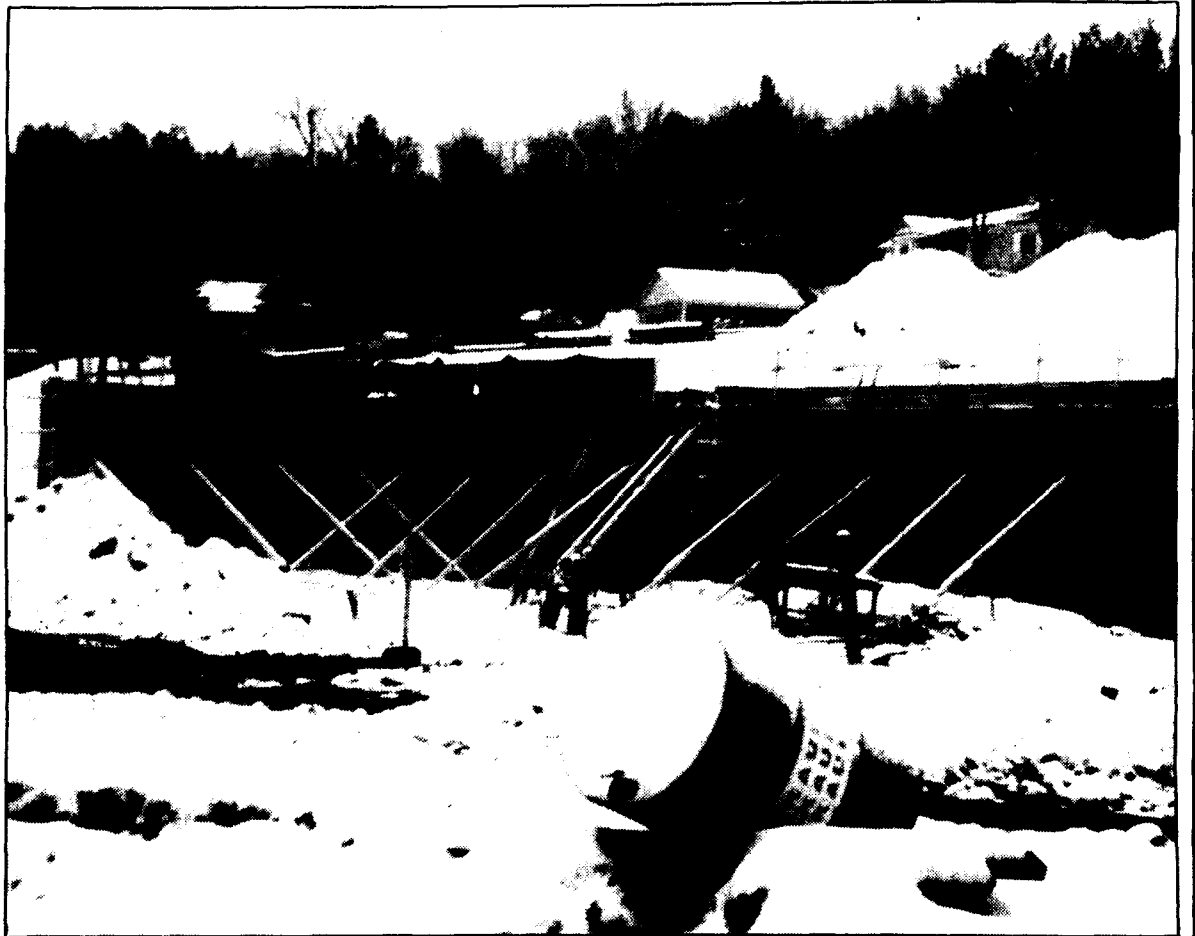
"This is certainly a strong way to go in the reporting of crime on college campuses."

"There is a need for good information to be available for parents and students," he said.

On the accuracy of the Uniform Crime Report, Silvas said, "It's as accurate as anything you can find; the majority (90 percent) of colleges have conscientious

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First snow



Under wraps: Parts of the new library complex are covered up so construction can continue as winter comes around the corner.

Investigation discovers asbestos in library ceiling

by Loretta Russ
The Collegian

A program to investigate the presence of asbestos fibers in campus buildings has turned up the cancer-causing fiber in a material used in the ceiling of the library.

Administrators, though, said the material in the ceiling poses no threat to students or staff using the library.

John Ream, director of operations at Behrend, said "The library was just tested last year and samples are taken periodically to make sure the situation has not changed."

So far, examiners do not see a threat from the ceiling material and are continually monitoring the library for any change in air quality.

A change in the air quality could be an indicator that there is a higher level of asbestos in the air than government regulations

allow.

Ream said the only time problems could arise are when the surface of the library ceiling is disturbed. In that case there is a possibility that asbestos fibers could be released into the air.

"The only danger to anyone using the library would be in a situation where someone would knock down (ceiling) chunks from the ceiling."

John Ream,
Director of Operations

"The only danger to anyone using the library would be in a

situation where someone would knock (ceiling) chunks down from the ceiling," he said.

To avoid that problem, the library's new lighting system was installed on the floor, "which eliminates the problem of someone damaging the ceiling when changing light bulbs," said Ream.

When the library is moved to the new building Ream said Penn State will look into a project to address the process of removing the asbestos from the ceiling.

In related news, Ream said the new library's foundation is almost complete and basement walls are going up. Also, workers are preparing to run the permanent electricity to the building.