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Monitor Newsletter August 08, 1994

Bowling Green State University

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MONITOR

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BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

AUG. 8, 1994

The ADA is leveling the playing field for all students

All over campus, work is going on continually to bring the University into compliance with the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act, which went into effect last July.

According to Rob Cunningham, associate director of affirmative action/disability resources, 10 percent of incoming freshmen will have some type of disability, either physical, mental or learning. The task of opening access to everyone is a large one, he said.

"We're making very good progress. I'm pleased with the cooperation of the University community in taking an active interest in making programs and services accessible," said Cunningham.

He said the purpose of the act is to "level the playing field and allow the same level of participation for individuals with disabilities as for those without.

We need to minimize as much as possible the impact of the disability on a person's experience."

To this end, he has been working since long before the ADA took effect with other University staff to find out where problems lie and how to solve them.

Since 1990 the office has been conducting surveys and last year, Jim McArthur, assistant University architect, and a group of students, both disabled and not, traveled around campus in wheelchairs to see what obstacles exist. "Just to get a grasp of the difficulties, a little crack or depression can make a big difference to a

person in a wheelchair," said McArthur. "We had been hearing about a crack that was causing a problem and when I tried to get across it, it almost threw me right out of the chair."

McArthur's office has been very active in the past few years insuring that all new construction on campus is accessible and that renovations continue in existing buildings to improve access. Olscamp Hall, scheduled to open this fall, will have state-of-the-art physical access features such as automatic door-opening devices, lowered phones and drinking fountains.

According to a report prepared by the disability resources office, Founders Hall is completely accessible and offers in-room visual alerting systems upon request. Many other residence halls are being or have recently been upgraded for ease of access.

But ADA covers much more than physical barriers. Access to programs must also be maintained for all individuals, which means allowing everyone to participate "in as independent a way as possible," Cunningham said.

For the hearing impaired, his office offers assisted listening devices which operate on an FM wavelength and cut down on extraneous noise. These devices are also available in some movie theaters, he added.

The University continues to purchase computer hardware and software to help with "a range of disabling conditions," said Cunningham. For those with visual or fine-motor problems, there are devices that enlarge the

screen or contain a speech synthesizer or steady a hand, for instance. "These are not prescription devices," stressed Cunningham, "but generic items that permit general access to the computers." The ADA does not say the University is required to supply these computer devices in every computer lab, but simply to make sure they are available and accessible to those who need them.

The crux of the ADA, he said, is to provide "reasonable accommodation" for those who request it. This means that if a visually impaired person calls the registrar, for example, and informs the office that he or she will be on campus in a couple of days to go over course descriptions, an effort must be made to accommodate that person. This may be done in various ways, either by supplying large-print catalogs, making an audiocassette, or if these are not available, having someone there to verbally give the needed information.

In the area of programmatic access, there are few specific requirements. The mandate is to make a good-faith effort to assist as much as possible. However, in the physical access side of ADA, there is a great deal spelled out about the removal of architectural barriers. There are specifications for everything from height and type of door handles to how many handicapped-designated parking spaces must be provided, to how many fully accessible hotel rooms there

Continued on back

Orphan chemical program noted for its innovation

The University's orphan chemical recycling program is garnering some national attention. It recently received the National Safety Council's Award of Distinction in the council's Unique and Innovative Program Competition. The University's entry was displayed at the International Conference on Campus Safety held at West Virginia University June 19-24.

Dave Heinlen, environmental health and safety, said the program is gaining recognition among other institutions and has the potential to be implemented across the country.

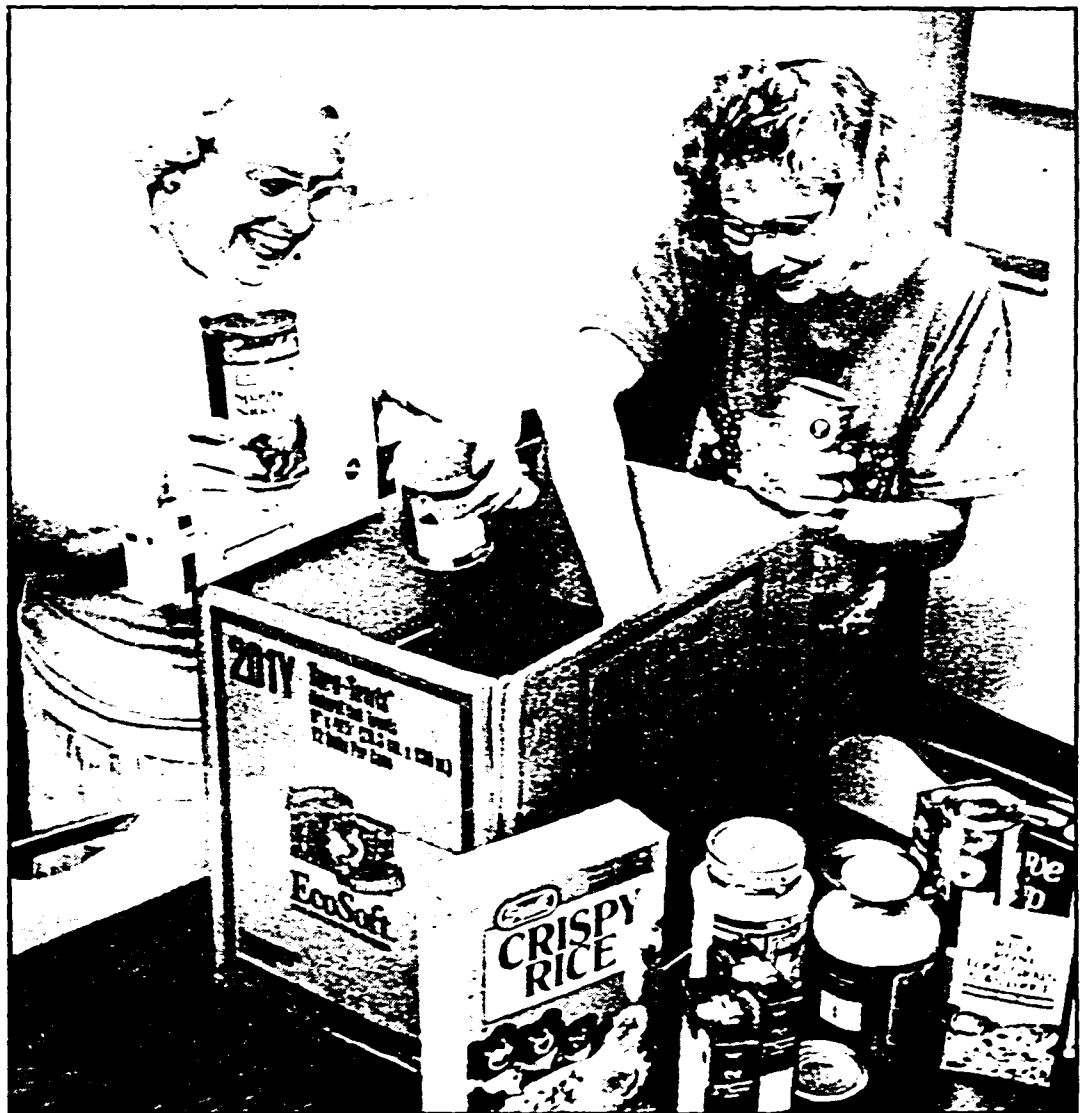
An orphan chemical is any chemical substance that has been used in experiments or research and is no longer needed by that researcher but is still in good, usable condition. Most often these chemicals are disposed of because people don't know what to do with them.

Heinlen said he originally devised the University's orphan chemical recycling program in 1991 as an in-house method of reusing chemical materials. He developed an inventory of used chemicals from areas such as the biology and chemistry departments and let other offices know what materials were available. In the first year, approximately 700 pounds of solids and 50 gallons of liquid chemicals were transferred for use in other departments.

"After seeing how well that worked, we thought we could do even better," Heinlen said.

The program was expanded to outside the University to include science departments in junior high schools, high schools and area colleges. The schools are invited to compile lists of their used chemicals and submit them to Heinlen. He then puts together a complete list of available chemicals and where they are located.

Continued on back



Lois Howe (left) and Cathy Kutz, both of the physical plant, box some of the food items collected at their building for the Administrative Staff Council and Classified Staff Council second annual summer food pantry drive. Employees across campus were asked to bring a nonperishable food item to work on July 27. More than 1,000 jars, cans and packets of food went to the Bowling Green Food Pantry located on Pike St. Becky Cheney, a volunteer at the pantry, said the collection was greatly appreciated as their stock has been particularly low this summer.

Sociologist receives grant to study mentally ill offenders after prison

Dr. Joseph E. Jacoby, sociology, has received a \$49,124 grant from the Ohio Department of Mental Health to conduct research on how mentally ill offenders make the transition from prison to community life. The pilot study, thought to be the first of its kind, is expected to take about two years to complete.

Estimates are that between 10 and 15 percent of the nation's prison population suffers from serious chronic mental illness.

"Prison life is very stressful. Some (offenders), who might be described as fragile when they enter prison, develop mental disorders while in prison," Jacoby noted.

Right now relatively little is known for certain about what happens to the mentally ill once they are released on probation or "maxed out" after serving their prison terms, according to Jacoby. It is speculated, the sociologist said, that after release these individuals are likely to commit new offenses, be victims of crime themselves, and continue to be cycled through the prison and mental health systems.

"We do know that they are troubled,

troubling and a drain on resources," Jacoby said.

The sociologist plans to document the experiences of 30 mentally ill offenders to determine what kinds of assistance make a difference in their lives after their release from a penitentiary, whether it be help from family members, friends or government agencies.

The subjects, who will be asked to take part in the project shortly before their release, will be interviewed weekly during their first two months outside prison, then monthly thereafter for a year. Those hired to conduct the interviews will have had prior experience with the mental health system as clients.

"We think the interviewers will have gained some insights as a result of their experiences and will also serve as research consultants," Jacoby explained, noting that the research methodology being used is itself being developed on a trial basis.

The information gained through the study could help to identify ways to stop the cycle of imprisonment, release, relapse and rehospitalization or reimprisonment. The findings also potentially could help policy makers develop programs to assist the mentally ill more effectively and economically.

While acknowledging that the scope of the pilot project may limit its potential contribution to public policy, Jacoby said he hopes the study will provide a model for research on a much larger scale.

A member of Bowling Green's faculty since 1981, Jacoby frequently writes on topics related to criminal justice and the mentally ill. Among his previous research projects was a national survey of public opinion on punishment for criminal offenses funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

CHEMICALS

From the front

The lists are sent to all participating institutions which refer to it when they need a particular chemical.

Currently two junior high schools, eight high schools, Penta County Joint Vocational School, Owens Community College and the Medical College of Ohio are participating. Since April 1993, 1,320 pounds of solids and 260 gallons of liquid chemical materials have been transferred for a cost savings of approximately \$55,000 to \$73,000.

"The nice thing about this program is its dual cost savings," Heinlen said. "It saves us in not having to dispose of the materials as waste, particularly hazardous waste, and there's the savings when we can obtain the chemicals through a transfer rather than a purchase."

The list also has recently been put on GOPHER "so anyone can get in there and see what's free," Heinlen said.

The program's continued success has Heinlen thinking about expanding it further to the six counties surrounding Wood County. He also has been asked to give presentations on the program at institutes in Alaska and California.

Lots close for repairs

The following campus parking lots are closed until Aug. 14 for repairs:

Lot A — east of University and Hanna Hall

Lot G — south of the Business Administration Building

Lot C — north of Moore Musical Arts

Lot 16 — north of Moore Musical Arts

Lot H — north of the Life Science Building

Lot 7 — north of Offenauer

Lot 8 — north of Offenauer

Also keep in mind that those attending the final pre-registration event on Friday will be parking in Lot E (east of the smokestack) and in Lot 4 (west of the smokestack).

FACULTY/STAFF POSITIONS

The following faculty position is available:

Management: Associate/full professor (tenured or probationary, full-time). Contact James McFillen (2-2946). Deadline: Sept. 1.

The following administrative positions are available:

Development Office: Director of planned giving. Contact personnel services (2-2227). Deadline: Aug. 19.

Academic Enhancement: Assistant director, Student Support Services. Contact personnel services (2-8426). Deadline: Aug. 26.

Biological Sciences: Laboratory aide (part-time, grant-funded for one year). Contact personnel services (2-2227). Deadline: Aug. 19.

Career Planning and Placement Services: Microcomputer coordinator. Contact personnel services (2-8426). Deadline: Aug. 26.

College of Health and Human Services: Geriatric education coordinator (part-time grant-funded for one year). Contact personnel services (2-8426). Deadline: Aug. 19.

Enrollment Services/Firelands: Coordinator of financial aid. Contact Office of the Dean, Firelands College-BGSU, 901 Rye Beach Road, Huron, OH 44839. Deadline: Sept. 1.

Intercollegiate Athletics: Restricted earnings hockey coach. Contact personnel services (2-8426). Deadline: Aug. 19.

Office of Personal and Professional Development/Firelands: Business and industry liaison (part-time). Contact Office of the Dean, Firelands College-BGSU, 901 Rye Beach Road, Huron, OH 44839. Applications accepted until position is filled.

University Architect's Office: Assistant architect. Contact personnel services (2-8426). Deadline: Aug. 26.

ADA

From the front

must be in the University Union, based on estimations of user population.

McArthur pointed out that there are advantages for everyone to these ways of doing things. "We can all benefit from doors that are easy to open and ramps that are easier to walk up than stairs," he noted.

"One of the biggest new things about the ADA is that not only students but visitors must be accommodated," said Cunningham. And employees are included as well. Currently the University has about 10 full-time students and four to five faculty and staff who get around in wheelchairs or scooters and many others who are temporarily disabled. Cunningham commented, "Any day any one of us could become disabled, either permanently or temporarily, and we would certainly like to still be able to get into our offices."

This highlights another goal of the act, which is to heighten people's awareness about the issue. This also means everyone is responsible for being sensitive to the needs of those with disabilities and making improvements, not only the office of disability resources. "Every department, every area must take steps to improve access. It would be impossible for us in this office to do this all alone," said Cunningham.

Also, said McArthur, the best efforts can be and often are thwarted by people's insensitivity to the difficulties experienced by others. For instance, he said delivery trucks frequently park in the way of the ramp meant to speed the way of people in wheelchairs around the administration Building. A minor convenience for the delivery people can be a major, time-consuming inconvenience for those who must then travel around the building the other way to reach their destination, particularly in bad weather. More awareness is needed to stop this type of thing from happening, he said.

Cunningham and McArthur have developed a presentation of "diversity modules" complete with visual aids aimed at informing and raising the consciousness of the University community about the ADA and its ramifications. They have spoken to a number of classes and committees.

Opening access now means dealing with a wide range of mental disabilities as well, said Cunningham. More and more learning disabilities are being diagnosed, and in these cases his office can offer some guidance. Cunningham may receive a report from a social service agency describing a student's problem. He will then pass along the information to the respective faculty along with strategies for enhancing the student's ability to comprehend the work. If the student has a reading disability and would benefit from extra time to take tests, Cunningham's office can arrange for a proctor to stay the additional time.

Another new development is the increase in students who have suffered traumatic brain injury, said Cunningham. "These people need vast amounts of mentoring and support," he said.

Cunningham has also arranged class schedules for individuals who are HIV-positive whose medicine causes severe fatigue. Whenever possible, he sets up their classes for the afternoons.

Some situations are very challenging, but "the ADA doesn't say we must be successful in every case, only that we make a sincere and well-informed effort," he said. — *Bonnie Blankinship*

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

New vacancies

Posting expiration date for employees to apply: Noon, Friday, Aug. 12.

8-5-12 **Account Clerk 3**
Pay Grade 7
School of Art

8-5-12 **Typist 2**
Pay Grade 4
Mass Communication
Twelve-month, part-time