

ELECTION 2008

McCain rally aims to increase community involvement in Republican campaign

LYNN SWANN, TOM RIDGE, PHIL ENGLISH AND JERRY COFFEE SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF MCCAIN-PALIN TICKET

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By 9:10 a.m., many Erie officials were present, including Ridge, English and Erie County Coroner Lyell Cook.

"All the elected Republican officials were asked to appear," said Cook. "But I am a McCain supporter at any rate, so I would have been here regardless."

Veterans were prominent at the event, as McCain's service in the Navy during the Vietnam, and time spent as a P.O.W. have gained the senator much support from former servicemen.

"When we're talking about the leader of the free world, we have to look at character and personal things," said John Nelson, a veteran of the Vietnam war. "From my way of thinking, Mr. Obama just doesn't cut it."

At 9:15 a.m., Congressman Phil English started his speech. He began with the usual salutations and gratitude toward the organizers of the rally.

His formalities were short-lived, as his focus quickly shifted to the election.

"The speech I was going to make when I agreed to make this appearance is now probably moot," said English. "A lot of things have happened in the last couple of weeks."

The first topic the congressman touched on was Sen. Barack Obama's (D- Ill.) experience

compared to McCain's

"This election is going to be about change, but it is also going to be about electing the kind of people who can achieve change and who have a proven track record of achieving change."

Toward the end of his speech, English began to tout himself as well as McCain.

"In the House of Representatives, I've been an advocate for reform; I've been an advocate for health care reform; I've been an advocate for economic reform; I've been an advocate for trade law reform; and I've been an advocate for building the economy of the future right here in Northwestern Pennsylvania," said English.

The rally's next speaker was former Pennsylvania Governor and first Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge.

"It's nice to be back home," Ridge said. "I never thought I'd be opening for Lynn Swann."

Before speaking on behalf of McCain, Ridge spoke in favor of English.

"Phil English is a very widely respected member of the Congress of the United States, respected for his independence of thought, his intellect and his willingness to reach across the aisle and try to solve problems," said Ridge. "People used to run for



DANIEL SMITH / The Behrend Beacon

Above: Tom Ridge, former Pennsylvania Governor and former Steelers' Super Bowl M.V.P. Lynn Swann
Right: Captain Gerald Coffee and Pennsylvania Congressman Phil English

public office in order to solve problems. You'd run to win, then you win to govern. Lately, we've been missing the second half of the equation. People run to win, then run to win again. We don't have too many problem solvers anymore. Phil English and John McCain are problem solvers."

Ridge then spoke about the economy, specifically the current financial crisis.

"As McCain stated, the challenge in terms of foreign relations and in terms of connecting America's economy to the global economy is the toughest challenge we've had, perhaps ever," said Ridge. "If you're going to pick an airline and the weather is bad, would you want someone who just got their license to fly, or someone who's been around 20 or 30 years?"

Ridge claimed Obama would increase taxes, due to his new program proposals.

"I don't believe that in his brief career in the senate of Illinois and his even briefer career in the senate of the United States, that Senator Obama has ever met a tax increase he couldn't support," said Ridge. "When people are struggling [financially], it's not the time to take more money out of their pocket."

Ridge concluded his speech with more Obama criticisms.

"I don't think the White House is a good place for on the job training"

"Pennsylvanians aren't bitter, were proud."

Following Ridge was Lynn Swann, former Pittsburgh Steeler.

"They tell you you should never start with an apology. I'm

gonna break that rule," said Swann. "I want to apologize because [Ridge] shouldn't be the warmup for anyone in Pennsylvania."

In the early parts of his speech, Swann focused on the local Pennsylvania government and related it to Obama's plan for the nation.

"Here in Pennsylvania since we've had a Democratic Governor for the last six years, we started out with a budget of twenty billion, six million dollars and it's risen to twenty eight billion, four million dollars said Swann. "When you take a program like we've experienced here in Pennsylvania and stretch it out over the United States, that's what Barack Obama is."

Swann's speech largely mirrored Ridge's and lambasted Obama for his lack of experience and youth.

When the former Steeler finished speaking, retired Navy Captain Gerald Coffee spoke. Coffee is one of the longest held P.O.W.'s of the Vietnam war.

Coffee arrived at the event on the "Straight Talk Express," one of a fleet of four buses travelling across the country in support of McCain.

The majority of Coffee's speech focused on McCain's time spent in a P.O.W. camp.

"I was in Hanoi for a year and a half before John got there and when I first heard his name, it sounded like this," Coffee then tapped "McCain" in morse code on the microphone.

"I met John McCain face to face in about 1970."

After Coffee spoke of their history, he spoke of McCain's presi-



dential campaign.

"Never in my wildest dreams could I imagine that I'd be standing here on these steps before you this morning, talking about my friend John McCain."

"John said, 'When I went to Vietnam I was my own man. When I came home, I was my country's.'"

In a one-on-one interview with The Behrend Beacon, Ridge stated the importance of college students in this election.

"College students are the generation most affected by this election," said Ridge. "The price of college is an incredible bur-

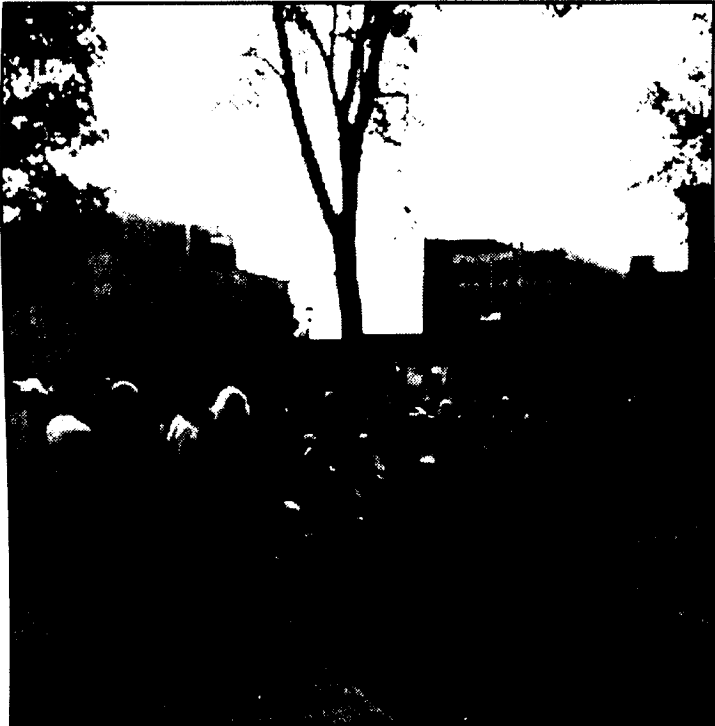
den, and McCain will live up to his promise of easing that burden."

Ridge then touched on how the economic downturn will affect college students.

"Finding jobs after college is a bigger crisis for young people than health care," he said. "McCain is the man who would be best for the nation."

Phil English had similar sentiments when he spoke one on one with The Behrend Beacon.

Education funding remains a priority," he said. "McCain has the ability to build coalitions and build a vibrant economy."



MATTHEW SCHWABENBAUER / The Behrend Beacon

John McCain supporters congregated in Perry Square Wednesday.

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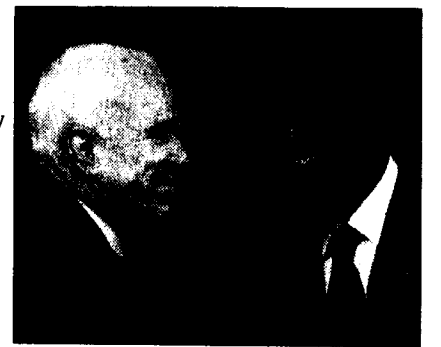
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WHAT'S INSIDE

Students meet in Brunos to watch Presidential Debate

Brunos Café was flooded with students Tuesday night for the 2nd Presidential Debate of this year's election. The debate, hosted by former NBC Nightly News anchor Tom Brockaw, aired promptly at 9 p.m. as students from a diversified range of majors packed the café, leaving little to no seating. **PAGE 3**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Penn State to change football ticket system

According to The Daily Collegian Online, Greg Myford, assistant athletic director at Penn State University, stated that they will be progressively shifting toward a web-based ticket management program which will permit students to buy their football tickets online. **PAGE 4**

Women's Tennis team moves to 14-2

Behrend's Women's Tennis team continued its incredible season this week with three decisive victories at home. Penn State Altoona, Waynesburg, and Pitt-Bradford all fell to the Lady Lions. **PAGE 8**

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