

C.C. reader

Volume 15, No. 3

"All the news that fits we print"

15 October 1981

New Faces In Old Places

Patterson Is A-Head Of His Class

By William J. Neil

When General George Edward Pickett and his division charged up the hill in the face of heavy fire on July 3, 1863, he had no idea that his defeat there would go down in history as the notorious "Pickett's Charge," and that ultimately it was to be the turning point of the Civil War, ending the Battle of Gettysburg and causing Confederate General Robert E. Lee to retreat the next day. Nor did the General have any idea that today—over a century later—people would still be flocking to the Gettysburg area, erecting sophisticated motels and fast-food establishments to "commemorate" the bloodiest battle ever fought in the Western hemisphere.

Although that may sound strange at first, it is indeed true, according to Dr. John S. Patterson, who has recently been named the new head of the Division of Humanities at Capitol Campus. Dr. Patterson is also working on a book dealing with Gettysburg and its influence on American life from the mid-nineteenth century to the present.

Dr. Patterson did his undergraduate work at Oberlin College in Ohio, where he majored in political science. He then went on to Indiana University, where he earned his master's degree in folklore, and from there he moved to Brown University, where he obtained his Ph. D. in American Civilization in 1969. And although this is Dr. Patterson's first job in an administrative position, he is no stranger to Capitol Campus; he has been here teaching American Studies since 1968.

Dr. Patterson says that during his tenure as the Division head, he intends to help make this (humanities) as strong a program as it can be by working closely with the faculty and students. "Encouraging the students and faculty to develop the humanities program fully is really what this job is about," Dr. Patterson notes. "I certainly intend to make myself as accessible as possible to both faculty members and students. I am eager to learn what they think and to gather new ideas to make our program more effective."

Part of Dr. Patterson's hectic job includes working to schedule the courses that are offered each term. "It's a relatively open process, but some courses must be offered because they are required and they are of vital importance in our various options," explains Dr. Patterson. "Moreover, we have a responsibility to offer the courses that are listed in the catalog. I like to work as closely as possible with the faculty, and if a teacher has a special area of interest, he or she obviously will be chosen to teach that course," Dr. Patterson adds.

Also, Dr. Patterson would like to keep varying the courses offered. For example, this term a course is being offered called "Sports In America," and in the past Dr. Patterson himself has taught a course dealing with American humor. Other courses dealing with special topics in the humanities are being

offered in the winter term, also. "These types of courses are taught with an emphasis on how they reflect American society," Dr. Patterson explains.

Well, what about the required courses? You know, the ones students love to hate—specifically the three Western Tradition courses that humanities students are forced to take. Dr. Patterson, for one, agrees that Western Tradition courses should be required, saying, "It is generally true that the Western Tradition has been instrumental in shaping our ideas about the world. It is still important, and the courses provide a real core for our program."

Dr. Patterson argues that a humanities training is indeed helpful in today's society. "A strong case can be made for a humanities education in today's society. The humanities test our ideas, explore our cultural heritage, and help us appreciate the great art, literature and music of our past," Dr. Patterson says. "Moreover, we also hear a lot concerning the problems employers have communicating with their workers. The humanities help develop those skills," he added. "The humanities certainly have a vital role to play in today's world."

Although the Western Tradition courses are in no danger of being axed, they may have to be restructured or reshaped when Penn State converts to a semester plan in 1983. However, Dr. Patterson notes that there seems to be general agreement among the Division faculty that such courses are needed.

One research project to which Dr. Patterson has devoted a great deal of time is the writing of his forthcoming book, which will look at Gettysburg as a symbolic landscape. "In it I discuss what Gettysburg has meant to America since the battle, what people have written, drawn, sculpted, and said since the very battle, and how the battle was seen by the rest of the world," explains Dr. Patterson. The contents of the book will range from poetry to real estate, from fast-food establishments to gigantic paintings.

Fast-food establishments? "Yes," smiles Dr. Patterson. "Right down the road from the field where Pickett's Charge took place are a number of fast-food franchises: Hardee's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, Elby's, Howard Johnson's and several others. Photographs taken as recently as 1940 show that none of these things were there."

Where did they come from? When? Why? "A lot of it has to do with vacation time, or America's so-called 'new leisure.' I was astonished to discover how sophisticated the motels and highways are," Dr. Patterson said concerning Gettysburg's now tremendous tourist industry.

"Gettysburg shows us a lot about ourselves—our attitudes towards violence and war, and how we travel and spend our leisure time," Dr. Patterson explains, "and my book looks at the continuity and change in the landscape and in our attitudes toward the battle and its significance."

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Breslin Relates To New Position

By Kathy Kern

Is there more to Capitol Campus than what meets the eye?

If so, it may be because of the efforts of the Campus Relations Office and its new director, Michael Breslin.

Breslin, who before assuming his position here was Coordinator of College of Medicine, Public Relations/Publications Editor at the Hershey Medical Center, is readying his office to accomplish a thought-out set of both short-and long-range goals.

Such plans include more involved news releases, more in-depth coverage of campus events, increased electronic media involvement (talk show formats, etc.), and the development of a "press contacts" book for Capitol. The publication will contain names of faculty members and where they can be reached if the local press would ask for a source of commentary on a particular subject.

But what really is the role of the Campus Relations Office?

According to Breslin, there is the traditional role of such an institution, to "promote Capitol Campus in the eyes of the community... constituents... and alumni." However, the new director adds, there is also an advisory role for

the office to play, a kind of watchdog to check on how things on the outside affect the campus. "We watch what is happening closely," commented Breslin.

He also added that he sees the office as fulfilling both the traditional and advisory roles, and said that the administration here is committed to good public relations.

Breslin, who is also editor of the office's newspaper, *Currents*, was second-in-command in his office at the Hershey Medical Center. He felt upon gaining his position here that he has taken a step up, as he is now first-in-command.

As for what attracted him to Capitol, Breslin—who lives in nearby Palmyra—said he likes the geographical area and saw the job here as giving him the chance to continue taking advantage of it.

But that was not the only thing that brought him to Capitol.

"I wanted to get into a more traditional academic environment," Breslin noted, adding that the school is varied and the job here is "an entirely different kind of public relations," than at Hershey.

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Bob Sharkey, leader of the famed Capitol Campus Yellow Band, calls all good students to come to the aid of their team. For more about the Band, see page 7.

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