

Panel Discussion Focuses on State of Business



Distinguished panel guests from left George Gekas, Thomas Menaker, Howard Graves, John Vartan

By Jan Travers

The Capital College community recently got a chance to hear how the military, unions and government impact on business.

The panel discussion, held October 26, was the last program in the week-long activities honoring John Vartan, 1987 Alumni Fellow. The optimistic discussion was led by

Vartan, acting as moderator, Major General Howard Graves, commandant-U.S. Army War college, J. Thomas Menaker, attorney at law, and George W. Gekas, U.S. House of Representatives.

Presenting the military viewpoint, Graves said since World War II there has been a changing order in the military, political, and economic power in the nations of the world. "These changes have increased the capacity of

the smaller nations to exert military and economic presence," said Graves. With this recognition an interdependence of resources has occurred. For example, Graves said, "Who would say in 1987 we would see a Middle East country hit one of our ships with a pilot flying a French *Mirage Bomber*." We are seeing an age where assembling and manufacturing of American goods can be done in other nations.

The key lesson learned in the military, according to Graves, is that to exist in this kind of world it is important to understand what the other "order" is like and to understand them.

"The military has learned this and I believe the business community can, too. We must learn the value of our competitors, their practices, needs and languages so we can understand them," said Graves.

Failure to keep pace with foreign nations can be blamed in part on

labor unions, according to Menaker. "Countries with more enlightened labor policies, like Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, despite their own economic problems, have pushed America out of competitiveness," said Menaker.

He continued that unions failed to grow with competitive needs of this country and in turn this has created a service oriented country.

Within 20 years Menaker

predicts workers in American industry will be facing a revitalized work ethic and America will again be competitive. "American industry is on the verge of a new partnership with organized labor and with non-organized employees," said Menaker.

However, an area of concern to business at this time is the large number of labor laws being born. "Laws impose on business an enormous compliance burden. What used to require one person in a company now requires a staff," said Menaker. The compliance is expensive and adds to the cost of products in the marketplace, said Menaker.

Gekas, defending the role of government in business, explained that to have political freedom within America there must be economic freedom. "There is a love and marriage between them. One can't exist without the other," said Gekas.

According to Gekas, the government has entered to save or create economic freedom and not to impede it.

"The role of the government has become more diverse in its involvement, nevertheless it still has the job of nurturing economic freedom to allow the spirit of entrepreneurship of free American citizens to join in whatever enterprise the future will bring," Gekas said.

PSPEC


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Conrail building was really a structure built around an existing building which in turn was built on a core structure. This delayed construction while the delicate task of disassembling the structures took place. A graveyard was uncovered in which approximately 600 bodies were relocated. As the students travelled from site to site the guide introduced them to the site managers who were well versed in the major complications associated with the construction. They were eager to share their expertise and answer the students' questions.

The following day, PSPEC visited the construction site of a 7.5 kilowatt dam in the Allegheny River. They climbed into the figure-eight coffer dam designed to retain water while construction was underway. The lowest level of construction taking place which the students were permitted to climb

down to was approximately thirty to forty feet below the water level. The manager explained in detail the equipment present on the site and its operation from a crane-like rig able to reach the entire space.

On Tuesday evening, a dinner was hosted by C.A.W.P., where PSPEC presented a plaque to the president of their organization, Buck Jones. Roy Trent, club president made the presentation to show PSPEC's appreciation to their sponsor. Opportunities abounded, even at dinner where six to seven students were seated with a contractor. There was a short, motivating speech given Wednesday on succeeding in the profession by learning to incorporate the qualities of pride, perseverance, attention to detail and teamwork. During this time, Art Prado spoke of C.A.W.P.'s acceptance of and admiration for PSPEC through their past and present interactions.



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THE PLEDGE

I, _____ do solemnly swear to give up smoking for the Great American Smokeout, Nov. 19. I promise not to smoke for 24 hours (and maybe longer).

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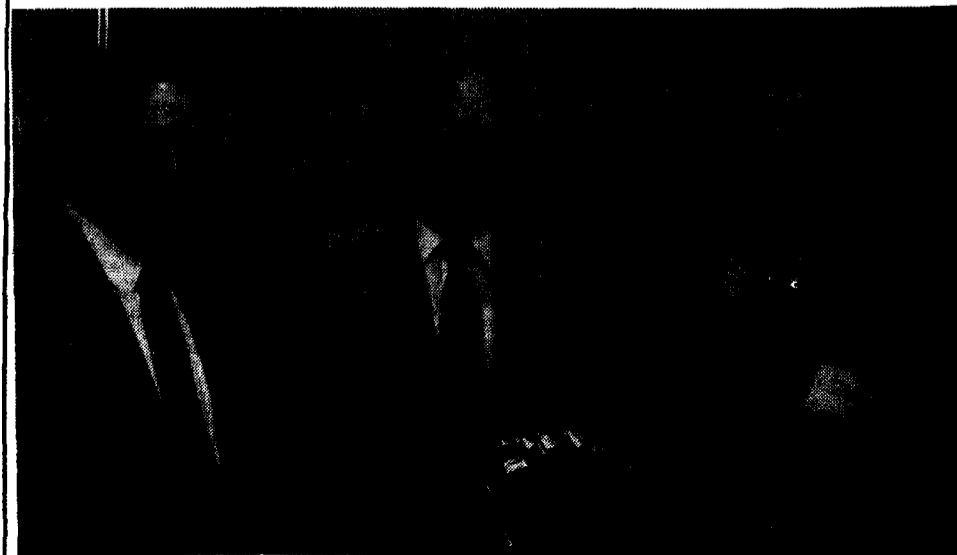
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Joseph Cecere looks on as Roy Trent (right) presents plaque from PSPEC to Buck Jones, C.A.W.P.