

Student Spotlight

ET major, "Psycho," restores automobiles in spare time

By Derrick Stokes

His Friends call him "Psycho." If you ever ventured into his passenger seat, you would probably think he got the nickname from his driving. Seatbelts are a necessity, helmets are optional. Just stay out of the crosswalks when a blue blur masquerading as a 1988 Z-24 approaches. He can't drive 55.

Friends tagged Francis Pagnotta "Psycho" after the Bill Murray vehicle Stripes featured a psychotic Francis.

Pagnotta, 21, can be described as "normal" although this mechanical engineering technology major spends most of his weekends on campus. You have to be crazy to do that.

At 5 feet, 11 inches and 165 pounds, Pagnotta is built like an inverted pyramid -- a well-developed upper body, and skinny legs. A simple nudge could probably push him off balance.

Pagnotta doesn't look like the typical engineering technology major -- burned out and beer-bellied.

His brown hair always looks neat and his shirts always match his pressed pants. Dapper Fran dresses like a humanities major.

"Hey, Fran, where's the flannel shirt and faded, wrinkled Levis?"

He probably wears them back home in Latrobe, Pa. when he's working on his car. It's not a hot rod; it's a classic '29 Ford.

Pagnotta became interested in antique cars through his father, Francis Pagnotta Sr. You can say it's in his blood.

"Dad had restored one when I was little, so I grew up around it," he said.

While helping his father cover a frame in his backyard, his father asked him if he wanted to build something with it. Looking at the naked frame, Dr. "Fran"-kenstein had no idea what body to

give it.

Browsing through an antique car magazine, he found a picture of a truck owned by Philadelphian Peter Noyes. Pagnotta wrote Noyes asking for "tips and hints." Noyes responded by sending polaroids.

"Looking at the photos gave me an idea of how to go about it," Pagnotta said.

A year and-a-half later, Dr. "Fran"-kenstein had reincarnated a vermilion red '29 Ford.

According to Pagnotta, it's relatively easy to restore old cars. Many companies make reproduction parts, he said.

Pagnotta was now ready to show off his new, old car. The best place to show off his finished product was a car show.

"It's someplace to get reactions, to get feedback," Pagnotta said.

At age 19, in the summer of 1986, Pagnotta entered his first local show. He placed second.

It took little coaxing to get Pagnotta to enter the Antique Automotive Club of America national fall meet later that year. He placed third.

Last week, the AACA nationals were held in Hershey. Pagnotta added to his growing trophy collection by placing second. Maybe next time's the charm.

Pagnotta said patience is the key to his stick-to-it-iveness. His neighbor, Jeff Spencer, echoed those sentiments.

"You have to have an appreciation for it," said Spencer.

Another neighbor was more cynical. "It's for people who like to live in the past," cracked Mike Yost.

Pagnotta said that the estimated cost of restoring his truck was "about \$8000." He said that if thoughts ever entered his mind he thinks that \$18,000 to \$20,000 would be a "pretty reasonable price."

If only I had a frame.

Jog/walk-a-thon raises \$400 for athletic department

by John Yagecic

On Saturday, Oct. 29, members of the Penn State Harrisburg Athletic Association and campus athletes donned their running shoes and hit the gravel in the association's jog/walk-a-thon.

The jog-a-thon, held at the Middletown High School track, raised approximately \$400 which will help support the athletic department.

Athletic Director Duane Crider was pleased with the turnout and the amount of money raised.

"We had about twice as many runners as we did last year," said Crider.

"We had good support from the campus too. About 95 percent of the funds raised came from student sponsors," Crider said.

Runners in the jog-a-thon solicited sponsors before the event to give them a certain amount of money per lap or a flat pledge regardless of the number of laps.

"That was the toughest part," said participant Jim Snock, "I didn't mind running, but it's a little embarrassing to go around and ask for money afterward."

The effort was worthwhile, however. Funds raised will help pay for the sports banquet held in the spring to which coaches and athletes are invited free of

charge.

The money also helps procure necessary equipment and supplies. According to Crider, the ice machine purchased with last semester's earnings has proved invaluable in treating sports-related injuries.

Aside from the satisfaction of having helped out the Athletic Association, runners who earned over \$20 received a jog-a-thon T-shirt. The top money earner, who will be named when all the totals are final, will also receive a Penn State hooded sweatshirt.

The jog-a-thon was made a success through the dedication and cooperation of all parties involved.

"I'm really pleased with this year's group on the athletic board," stated Crider, "we've got a lot more student participation."

Board member Terry Majzlik was able to persuade area merchants to donate gifts and prizes to the runners. The Colonial Inn, The Sunburst Lounge, Middtown Pizza, Roberto's Pizza, The Movie Merchant, J&J Pizza, The Old Stone Inn, and PSH's own Lion's Den contributed to the cause by providing runners with incentives such as gift certificates and free meals.

Applications are still being accepted for editorial positions for the spring semester. Any *Capital Times* member or student who has taken HCOMM 310 is eligible to run for the position of editor.

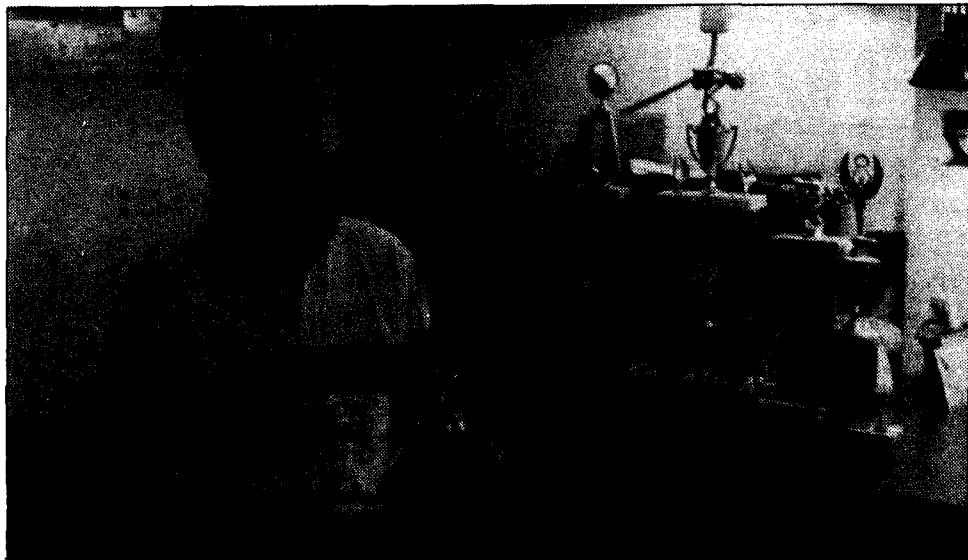


Photo by Karen Peiffer

Francis "Psycho" Pagnotta displays auto trophies in his room.

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