

# FEATURES

## Profiles

first nine months at State College learning English. In April of 1989, he began his studies here at Penn State Harrisburg.

Though Battal was accepted by four other institutions including Syracuse and Georgetown universities, Battal said he chose Penn State for two reasons: a letter of encouragement from his present advisor, Christopher McKenna, and the excellence of the PSH administration program.

### The Saudi Arabian student said the invasion has been "like a bad nightmare."

While most of his time is devoted to studying, Battal said he always finds time to watch political discussions on television. "I enjoy watching TV because I can learn from it. There are different sides to issues that I might not see anywhere else but on TV."

Two of Battal's favorite programs are "Larry King Live" and "Crossfire." Battal also enjoys playing ping pong and soccer and going to movies. Though the food in America is very different from that in Saudi Arabia, Battal enjoys seafood and likes to eat at Red Lobster and Chi-Chi's. Battal enjoys the yearly cycle of seasons although summer is his favorite season.

But for a student who spent his first nine months at State College, Middletown has little to offer in comparison.

"Middletown is like my hometown of Durma, very small," Battal said.

The likeness sometimes makes Battal long for home and he calls his family of seven more often now that he lives in Middletown. According to Battal, the family unit is very close-knit in Saudi Arabia. Battal is anxious to visit home over Christmas break this year. It will be his first trip home in 17 months.

Battal says after getting his degree he will return home to teach and gain experience, but may return to the United States to seek a doctorate degree. Before leaving the U.S., Battal said he would like to visit Niagara Falls in Canada and the Caribbean.

## Darlene Rey-- Non-traditional

*Christopher Burns  
Capital Times Contributor*

Every weekday it's the same routine. Darlene Rey dresses for work in a business suit. Then she prepares breakfast for herself and her son, makes a sack lunch for work and drives from Hershey to the campus of Penn State

### "At age 45, starting a new career is difficult. Being a woman makes it even harder."

Harrisburg. She has a secretarial job in the Institute of State and Regional Affairs but it isn't what she plans to do for the rest of her life. But for now the job supplies an income for bills and allows her to take six credit hours towards a Humanities degree.

Rey is a non-traditional student, a single parent and a person with a firm focus on a professional career in advertising. Her struggle to make something of herself has been, and continues to be, an uphill battle against time.

"At age 45, starting a new career is difficult," Rey said. "Being a woman makes it even harder."

But she isn't completely unprepared. She's earned an associates degree in art and photography from Harrisburg Area Community College which may help her test out some course work and accelerate her education program. She describes herself as having a "backpack full of skills" but the one tool that keeps her from a goal of being her own boss is a bachelor's degree.

"Work as a graphics artist is gratifying but the salary levels aren't," Rey said. "I really want to use my skills in Public Relations or Advertising.

Without a four-year degree I don't have a chance."

Working 40 hours a week, Rey can only take night classes, but because Penn State Harrisburg tailors its programs for returning students, there's a large number of older students in the classes. She believes that younger students gain valuable insight from the older students' work experience and practical knowledge. This tends to make classroom discussions more meaningful, making returning students an asset to the school.

For Rey, graduation seems a long way off, but she keeps reminding herself why she's in school. "Building a better career for myself has become an obsession," she says. "I never lose track of what I'm doing all this for."

For Rey, and those like her, education has become a means to an end--an end to meaningless jobs.

### Commencement Ceremonies for Fall 1990 Seniors:



Ceremonies will be held on Saturday, January 5, 1991 at 10:00 a.m. in Founders Hall in Hershey.

Simon Bronner will deliver the commencement address.

## Holiday cheer mauled by raging crowds

*Paula Styer  
Capital Times Staff*

Once a year I pull out my old battered Reeboks and drag myself to that place known as The Mall for that annual delve into my savings account and sanity known affectionately to millions as Christmas Shopping.

This year, I decided to get a head start and avert the throngs of ruthless headhunters who will start a fight if you even so much as look at the item they want to buy. Early in October, I drove half an hour from my house in Reading to the huge mall at King of Prussia in the suburbs of Philadelphia.

The suburbs of Philly were at the mall as well as the entire city. That killed my idea of trying to get an early start on shopping. I did, however, get there fairly early to get a good parking space.

So did everyone else.

After fighting with a Ford F150 truck for a semi-good space sort-of close to the entrance of Sear's, I let him have the space (his vehicle was several times larger than my small Mercury Lynx), and decided I'd rather live and enjoy the Christmas cheer than die right on the spot by the menacing fists of the large muscular man at the wheel.

So I parked by Macy's. After walking what seemed like endless miles to reach the entrance to the store, I was

almost run over by two demonic station wagons pulling into one space at the same time.

Crash. Rip. Tear. Since there were a million and one onlookers to the accident, I decided to lessen the crowd by one. This one observer would not be missed and I went into the world of Macy's.

Naturally Macy's. As I looked around at the gorgeous display of leather, suede, and other expensive coats, shoes, and accessories, I felt awkwardly out of place in a blue jeans jacket, sweats, and my Reeboks.

I quickly exited the store and entered the mall. At least this year I made it safely without a saleswoman at the cosmetics department, standing, feet apart, blocking the aisle, commanding me to try some new aroma by some celebrity for the low holiday price of \$99.99.

My first destination was Lionel Kiddie City to buy a gag gift: a Matchbox truck for my eighteen-year-old brother. I'm a pretty fast walker, so I figured it wouldn't take me more than three minutes to get a quarter of a way across the mall. Wrong. For every zillion people in Macy's, three trillion more walked leisurely through the mall. I couldn't get through. Neither could the anxious lady who shoved me into the man in front of me who fell into the man in front of him...

Well, I finally made it to Kiddie City, only to find a crowd blocking the entrance to the store. Wanting to go in, yet curious about what the crowd hung around for, I asked a Kiddie City employee what happened.

"Two women wanted the last Super Mario Brothers on the shelf," he said. "The lady in blue had it first, then the other one grabbed it right out of her hands."

"Did a fight break out?" I asked.

He nodded and said, "Yep. I see it as a sign that the Christmas season is coming. People are just so ruthless about it all."

Thanks to the ingenuity of a tiny tot, I managed to avert the still-eager-to-see-a-fight crowd by crawling on hands and knees under and through the legs of many surprised shoppers. Well, maybe it didn't happen exactly like that, but I did follow a little girl into the store.

Once in I quickly found my item and hoped to get out even quicker. But it never happens that way. Only three cashier lines were open and backed up as far as the rear of the store. Luckily, just as I got there, another cashier opened a register and yelled, nasally, "Can I help someone?"

Of course you can. I ran for dear life, from fear of being trampled. I came in second--behind a rather bewildered-looking man with two carts full of toys, probably for one of the screaming kids

joining in the choruses of "Deck the Halls."

Three hours later the cashier finished ringing up his items and asked The Question. "Cash, check, or charge." I, along with every person behind me, held my breath and waited for his answer.

"Charge," he said sheepishly, turning around and giving us a weak smile.

The cashier, who, I might add, performed her duties as fast as a speeding turtle, put the plastic card through that little machine that says either "OK" or "Rip up your card before you go into debt," and filled out the charge slip.

Fifteen minutes later the card was approved and the man went on his merry way to some fate that I am sure involves a very spoiled child.

The crowd cheered.

Within seconds my purchase was made. Hours ago my stomach let me know of its empty state, so I trekked to the opposite side of the mall to the food court, at the greasy creation of some cook, and hiked my way back to the other side of the mall, through Macy's, and back again to the parking lot where, many miles away, sat the welcome sight of my little blue car.

Ah, this is the sort of ordeal I put myself through every autumn. I got off easy this year; I received no bodily bruises.