

The Capital Times



Volume XL, No. 2

Wednesday, September 8, 1999

Spanier Urges More Faculty Involvement

By Ken Lopez
Capital Times Staff Writer

Penn State president Graham Spanier called on all faculty members to "get more involved in the lives of their students," in his yearly State of the University address which was given at the University Park campus on August 27.

Spanier, in his 16th year as university president, said faculty need to accommodate students inside and outside the classroom. He said more than 100 new faculty positions have been created over the last three years to attract professors who will have immediate ties to the university.

"Faculty need to make students feel more connected to the university, more a part of Penn State," Spanier said in his address, which was broadcast in the Olmsted auditorium via satellite from State College.

Spanier cited several examples collected from across the university system of faculty members who lacked concern for Penn State or its students, recounting one instance where the academic dean at Penn State-Berks pleaded with Spanier to keep a particular faculty member. After talking by phone with that faculty member, Spanier decided that individual was not aptly qualified to teach at the university.

"There exists a whole new awareness about what faculty members university-wide and at Penn State Harrisburg need to do in order to increase those ties," Steve Hevner, PSH public information director, said. Hevner added that even though he doesn't immediately per

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Brad Moist went on tour with Christian rock band Devoted Molded. Page 6.

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Photo by Cathie McCormick Musser

The cast of PSH professor Eton Churchill's new play, "Son of Liberty." Left to right: Mike Severeid, Peter Hewett, Mary Smetak, Ray Manlove, Anne L. Alsedek, Theron Holmes, and Cary Burkett. Churchill is in front.

Latest Churchill Play Takes Shape

By Cathie McCormick Musser
Capital Times Staff Writer

Like all creative endeavors, playwriting is an evolutionary process. On September 2, about 60 people joined PSH Humanities Professor, Eton Churchill, in the birthing of his newest offspring, "Son of Liberty."

The audience perched on folding chairs in the Mt. Gretna Hall of Philosophy while ceiling fans spun soundlessly. Lining the rear of a

small platform at the front of the room were six tall, wooden stools. During the staged reading, actors advanced and retreated from these perches and followed along in their scripts; each in turn read their lines.

The stools and two strategically placed chairs were the only props. The sound of late-summer insects

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LIVE ON VARTAN PLAZA



Photo by Matthew McKeown

Local band Tony Perry 3 performed on September 1. From left to right: Tony Perry, John Staz and Glen Smith.

Visting Professor Addresses Women's Issues in China

By Paula Marinak
Capital Times Staff Writer

On August 31, Congmei Chen, an associate professor of linguistics from Mian Yang Teacher's College in China, met with a small group of students and faculty in the Gallery Lounge to discuss some of the greatest concerns facing women in her native China.

Chen is now completing a year-long trip to the states. She came here to study African-American vernacular English with Bernard Bell, a professor at University Park. Though her background is in linguistics, Chen hoped her presentation would enhance understanding between the two cultures.

"Most American people don't have the opportunity to go to China and see with their own eyes, but they are very interested," she said. "I'm a woman, so I feel very interested in issues affecting women. I want to speak out my opinion."

Her speech's title, "Half of Sky in China" refers to an expression from the time of Chairman Mao Tse Tung. It means that women and men each hold half the sky; therefore, they share equal rights and

responsibilities.

However, Chen told the gathering of 25 to 30 students and faculty that three major concerns face women in her homeland. Employment and the struggle for independence in the work force remain a major issue.

The professor explained that women typically devote their married lives to care of the home and family. This cultural expectation makes it difficult to begin or maintain a career.

"Married women can work and earn money, but few can continue to develop their abilities," Chen said. "In their minds, they don't have much bigger goals."

A main reason women have trouble advancing in the work force is the expectation that they will be absent for long periods to raise children.

A 1997 law stated that up to half of the workers at major companies would be laid off unless they could demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to perform their jobs adequately. This regulation compounds problems for women, resulting in family difficulties such as divorce.

Chen cited educational opportunity as the other main concern facing Chinese women. Chen said that before 1949, the illiteracy rate among women had reached 90 percent.

Education reforms over the last five decades, have, however, reduced that figure to 30 percent. Furthermore, laws now mandate nine years of schooling for girls aged seven to 15.

Only in some rural areas does the belief persist that females, as the inferior sex, do not require education. Even so, the government has created several programs to improve education among the poor.

One of the best examples is Project Hope, which began in October 1989. It has financed 500 primary schools. It has also provided scholarships to high school students.

Another pro-education program is

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