

New Housing Burys Campus Ballfield

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New student housing being built at PSH will be located on a field near the Olmsted building that was previously used as a baseball field. But not any ordinary baseball field. PSH's newest dorms will soon conceal the interesting history that lies behind that baseball field -- a history of community effort and pride.

All that remains of the baseball field now is the backstop, so it is easy to forget that, over the years, the field served as "home field" for children's summer leagues, high school teams, men's over-thirty leagues and PSH's own intercollegiate baseball team.

Until 1977, PSH's intercollegiate baseball team was forced to use fields off campus for home games. This caused problems when outside fields were not available. Bud Smitley, assistant director for athletics and director of PSH intercollegiate sports in 1977, recognizing the importance to the baseball team of having its own field, Smitley approached the university with a proposal to build a new field.

University officials estimated the project would cost \$100,000 and denied the request. Smitley, who believed the university's estimate was too high, was not discouraged by the refusal. Despite the fact that he had never built a baseball field, Smitley approached university officials to let him purchase and organize the building of the field himself. Smitley had a plan.

Smitley knew building the new field would have to be a community effort to be successful. He first approached John Harmon, a former PSH engineering professor, for help. Harmon happily lent his services and, applying his engineering skills, designed the field so that a 3 p.m. sun would not be in a batter's eyes.

Once Harmon decided how the field should be positioned, it was time to build it. Armed with an athletic handbook he bought for a dollar, Smitley went about turning a rocky field into one of the best baseball fields in the area.

All summer long, Smitley and Freddie Clark, a high school student, worked on the field. (Clark is now a member of the Harrisburg School District's Empowerment Team). Smitley rented a sod cutter, and he and Clark peeled back the land to create the baseball diamond. They replaced the sod with two hundred tons of diamond-text and then mixed diamond-text and clay together to form the pitcher's mound. Next, Smitley recruited a local company to install a backstop.

PSH's Maintenance and Operations Department helped by putting up the outfield fence, using old fencing that once surrounded the campus. The department also paid to have concrete slabs laid for the dugouts.

When the baseball team came back to campus in September, they pitched in to help. About thirty-five students tackled the chore of picking up the many rocks scattered all over the outfield. In November, members of the Harrisburg Rugby Team, who often used PSH's other field, built the dugouts. They took only to be compensated with free beer. Smitley laughs when he remembers that the second dugout was no quite as nice as the first one. The Trauhaut Corporation bought and installed roofs and benches for the dugouts.

With the help of students, faculty, staff and community members, PSH's baseball field was finished by March 1978 -- in time for baseball season. It had taken less than a year to complete and cost far less than the university's \$100,000 estimate.

Smitley says he is definitely excited about the new dormitories, but at the same time, he is a little sad the baseball field will no longer be there. Smitley smiles when he remembers how the campus and community came together to build the field, all the hard work that went into the project, and the many years of enjoyment it brought to its baseball players. After all, it truly was a field of dreams.

Campus Reacts To Presidential Election

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turned 18 in October, the paperwork needed for him to register for this year's vote did not arrive in time, so McDonough felt her vote carried double value.

McDonough's observation that "we live in a society where computers are taken for granted and here we are poking holes in ballots" is balanced by voters' recent introduction to the complex diversity of "dimpled," "hinged," and "pregnant chads," and the intricacies of "butterfly ballots."

Although Bresler believes the machinery of voting needs to be changed, he feels that "rushing to high-tech solutions like optical scanners is not necessarily the answer." Bresler advocates the low-tech solution offered in the levered voting machines first introduced in 1892 and still in production.

Lisa Nagele, a dual secondary education/social studies and public policy major, would like to see "things more proportionate with the popular vote" and declares "there's something wrong in this country when the candidate who receives a majority of popular votes is not elected president."

The example of past close or controversial elections prompts Peterson to "guarantee" that this election will provoke discussion in the near future about eliminating the electoral college but that "nothing will happen." Bresler concurs, adding that while "some states may make some changes in the way they choose their electors," he doesn't foresee wholesale modifications to a system that most states consider fundamentally essential. In addition to the extreme difficulty of amending the Constitution, Bresler submits that "surprisingly enough, this election didn't raise the clamor [needed to amend the Constitution] — and if this election didn't incite a 'wild fire' call for change, which one would?"

Whether this latest exercise of democracy in action solidifies national confidence in the political system — as well as each citizen's role in it — or fosters a cynical indifference toward the process remains a question.

Nagele had first-hand experience in this exceptional civics lesson as she taught American government to high school seniors as the campaign and election unfolded. Nagele recalls that as the election approached, she stressed the importance of voting to her students and was impressed by their interest and enthusiasm in analyzing the unusual election developments and the procedures undertaken to resolve them. However, as her student teaching assignment came to an end and the next president still had not

been named, Nagele says her students' attitudes deteriorated to complacency and disillusionment, regardless of her efforts to impart the significance and uniqueness of the ensuing scenarios.

Disillusionment with the situation was certainly not limited to Nagele's students. In particular, repeated missteps by the Florida and U.S. Supreme Courts elicited unfavorable evaluations at PSH.

While Nagele and Qiong Liu approved of the U.S. Supreme Court's intervention in deciding the election, Nagele expressed disappointment with the Supreme Court's action. Nagele was encouraged by the U.S. Supreme Court's Dec. 4 directive returning the Florida Supreme Court's decision on recount deadlines for clarification. Nagele saw the Supreme Court's action as a demonstration that "the court was trying to use federalism in the way it should be used." However, when the matter again appeared before the Supreme Court justices, Nagele felt "the judges should've reached a consensus decision" and "come back with a way of counting the votes so that everyone would feel their vote was counted and that it mattered." A united decision, Nagele believes, would have re-affirmed the impartial nature of this highly-respected judicial institution for the American public.

Peterson states that while it was "within the purview of the U.S. Supreme Court to get involved in a matter such as this," he nevertheless believes the court "should have declined to hear the case, at least until it had run its course through the Florida Supreme Court." "The high court's intervention," Peterson says, "created a dynamic that was not terribly constructive." Bresler speculates the U.S. Supreme Court "thought it was riding to the rescue," and "tried to bring finality to the chaos caused by the Florida Supreme Court." Bresler indicts Florida's Supreme Court for "making a hash of things," and explains that "by not mandating a standard list as a basis for counting ballots and requiring [the recount] to be done too quickly by untrained counters," the state court wrote "a prescription for disaster."

Bresler, however, is ambivalent about the efficacy of the U.S. Supreme Court's remedy. While the court's ruling overturned the Florida Supreme Court's recount, it "left questions about what the Supreme Court could've done [to resolve the election]," and cast an "unnecessary cloud over the outcome of the vote." Still, Bresler points out that "with all the mistakes the courts made, they were listened to, demonstrating the power of the rule of law in this country."

Time is a great teacher,
but unfortunately
it kills all its pupils.

Hector Louis Berlioz