

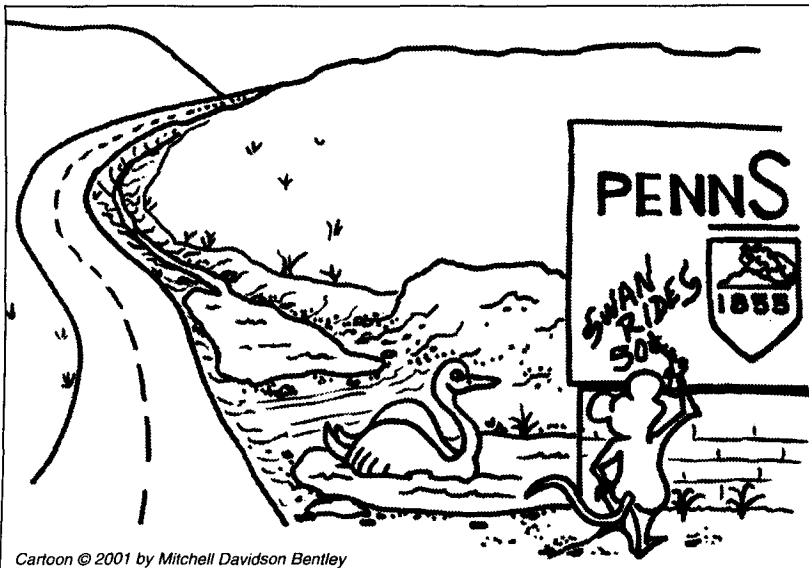
SAVE THE PONDS

BY "ILLIUM" THOMAS—THE PHANTOM CAMPUS OBSERVER

I was my usual innocent, mindless self, tooling my way to school when, turning off 230 and driving up towards Olmsted, I noticed something stunning. I had—how shall I put it—an aesthetic experience. Not one of the highest order, mind you—I'm not convinced that such sublimity is possible at Penn State Hbg. No goose bumps raised their little heads on the back of my arm. And my joy at what I observed was tinged also with a certain anticipation of disappointment. As I contemplated my own mixed reaction to what I saw, I was reminded of Plato's remark that, here on this less than ideal orb, the

beautiful is always mixed with the sordid. On the right as I drove I observed with delight that our beloved administration has blessed us with not one, but two campus ponds. That makes one more pond than you'll find at E-town College,

down the road. What did we do, I wondered, to deserve two ponds? When, I hoped with delicious anticipation, would the swans be arriving? The lily pads? The



Cartoon © 2001 by Mitchell Davidson Bentley

row boats for gentle, amorous, rides? Of course there were certain negatives in my vision that would be better left unsaid, for who would wish to break the hold of such a beatific scene?

But, dear reader, honest reporting has

its own virtues and so I must disabuse you of any delusions of grandeur that you might harbor regarding the noble sight I describe. I ran to one of our glorious administrators, inquiring of the earth-shattering, campus-transforming significance of the ponds. (S)he informed me that these were two temporary and inadvertent drainage ditches on either side of a small road-diverting project. Imagine how crestfallen I was. My idealism, my very spirit, was shattered. How sad. But, as I have said already, I had girded myself for disappointment, out of habit.

Nevertheless, in the spirit of noble disillusionment, let me appeal to our blessed administration: please save the ponds. We don't need to tell the rest of the world they're just muddy drainage ditches, and besides, downscale ponds are what this campus deserves anyway, right?



American Studies Grad Raises the Bar

Jennifer Kasunick
For The Capital Times

You may have seen her: she rushes into the humanities office with her hair swirling around her (a bit reminiscent of Botticelli's *Venus*) after hiking over from the Swatara building where she assiduously works on an archival project known as the McCormick Family Papers.

She greets you as you enter the Olmsted building, encouraging you to attend the American studies/humanities club film series and to donate a buck for a chance to win an oversized poster of their latest film offering. She served as the club's former president, organizing trips and other functions to support the students.

This is Emily Murphy — American studies graduate student extraordinaire.

The humanities department is pleased to announce that Murphy is this year's recipient of the Outstanding Graduate Student Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Graduate Schools. Murphy was the only graduate student nominee from within the Penn State University system.

The last time a PSU graduate student won this award was in 1998. Murphy has also received the Sue Samuelson Award in American studies, presented to a student who displays excellence and accomplishment in academics.

Dr. Simon Bronner, distinguished professor of American studies, as well as folklore and American studies graduate coordinator, has high praise for Murphy's achievements. "Emily Murphy makes things happen as her mind clicks and her ideas flow. You're bound to be swept up by her energy; you have to be impressed with her dedication; you have to be inspired by her intellectual mission."

Murphy arrived at Penn State after publishing a history of St. John's College and working at the Maryland State Archives. She frequents national conventions and has presented her research at a Mid-Atlantic American Studies Association Meeting. Of course, she is a stellar student, holding one of the two University Fellowships from the graduate school. She justly deserves her well-earned accolades.

EDITORIAL: SGA ELECTIONS

Editor urges officers' involvement on committees

By Cathie McCormick
Capital Times Editor In Chief

The dust has settled after an exciting — for PSH anyway — Student Government Association election. Most years, the process meets with more than a few yawns as busy students gracefully step aside to let someone else take the reins.

I, for one, hope some of you have paid attention - and are now fully awake. Under the usual electoral atmosphere in our little corner of the world, rules have been casually overlooked. During the "no . . . after you" campaigns, those pesky little things called constitutions and election rules are hardly an issue. If somebody wants the job . . . they've got it.

This time, however, the PSH student body was treated to no less than four candidates for the student presidency, and it got ugly. Those election rules rose from the ashes quickly and our election screening committee and student court got a crash course in human nature -- theirs and lots of other peoples.

I learned a long time ago that the reason there are rules is for the few times

they're needed. Just like birth control pills though, they're no good unless they're used in advance.

I counted the "no more than fifty words" running platforms myself . . . shame on whoever approved them in the first place. We were off on the wrong foot right there. Why should candidates who were permitted to violate the first election rule they encountered pay attention to the rest? If there was aggressive campaigning

"This world is as real as it gets — and the press will be watching."

happening around the polls - why wasn't it stopped? Why does it take a written recount request to enforce the regular ballot counting procedure?

Because *The Capital Times* is responsible for keeping the campus informed, we got a crash course in what the Student Government does and why the students should be paying attention.

Representatives from the SGA, usually officers, are expected to serve on a number of PSH committees including the

faculty senate and the alumni association. They are also invited to be active in a multitude of ways on campus and throughout the PSU system. The administration, faculty and staff of PSH and PSU expect them to be the student voice. If they are inactive, the student voice is silent — and decisions are made without student input.

This means the SGA officers must be extremely committed to representing their constituents and will find themselves EXTREMELY busy doing it — if they want to do it well. It's up to the students on campus to insist that they do.

Congratulations to the newly elected officers and senators! Please drop what you're doing and run to the student activities office and get a copy of the Student Government Association constitution. You each raised your right hand and swore to uphold it. While you're at it, grab a copy of Robert's Rules of Order, cancel your cable subscription and lighten your work load. You're in for a hell of a ride — and if by this time next year, you're not exhausted — shame on you.

This world is as real as it gets — and the press will be watching.