

## Empty pockets, heavy books

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sell textbooks and other items such as music and movies; Bigwords.com: A site promising to "protect the universe from high textbook prices;" Ecampus.com: Offers new and used books and an opportunity to sell online.

Despite the money saved by purchasing textbooks online, there are other factors to consider when purchasing on the Web. Namely, shipping costs will increase the total cost of buying books online. In addition, a wait-

ing period of approximately seven to 14 days is part of the online buying experience, unless you want to shell out extra money for expedited shipping.

Other ways to save on textbooks include scanning campus bulletin boards for used books for sale or buying books from students who have already completed a course.

Those students who buy directly from the bookstore are actually contributing back to Penn State, said Hockenberry. "...a substantial portion of every dollar spent is kept within the

University to fund various programs, activities, improvements and scholarships. Penn State bookstores fund PSU scholarship programs at nearly one million dollars annually. The online retailers you may wish to purchase from have no commitment to you, your school or ensuring that you are provided with the necessary materials for a successful semester, while we at the bookstore are committed to all of these things," said Hockenberry.

For more information on the PSH bookstore, contact (717) 948-6286.



Photo by Kathryn Herr/Capital Times

Utilizing book buyback is one way for students to save money on textbooks.

### WARNING: This is a Sharon Furfaro original cartoon.

You will be subject to various visual rantings and ravings about all that is ironic, disturbing, sarcastic, cruel, humorous, or unfair in this world, according to me. Hey, you've been warned. Look for more cartoons, only in future issues of The Capital Times.



## PSH grad builds the future through engineering

By Elizabeth Wingate  
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Stephen Fleming is not a typical twenty-something. Yes, he spends quality time at the gym, and yes, he lives with a bunch of guys who are no strangers to having a good time. Occasionally, he even sleeps until noon. But Fleming, 26, a graduate of Penn State Harrisburg, has a drive and vision that few people his age possess, and according to him, Harrisburg is the perfect place to make it happen.

Engineering runs in Fleming's family, and he knew early on that he wanted to make a career out of it, with a twist. After stints throughout high school and summer breaks at a local engineering firm, as well as occasionally working with his father at Hempt Bros., Fleming transferred from the University of Hartford to PSH, where he majored in Structural Design and Engineering Construction Technology. "That program helped me more than civil engineering," said Fleming. "It taught me estimating and scheduling, with more of a focus on skills that would assist me in land develop-

ment, which is my primary interest." Additionally, Fleming pursued a Real Estate Sales License, which has allowed him to create a development company with his uncles; the group recently purchased a 12-unit apartment complex and plans to acquire more investment properties.

Engineers in Fleming's field design stormwater facilities, sanitary sewer systems, roadways, oversee construction projects, design and implement commercial and residential development projects, and oversee the permitting of projects by working with local and state government agencies. Fleming loves the challenge that each piece of land

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-Stephen Fleming

presents. "Each site has its own special features," said Fleming, "and preserving those features by incorporating them into the development ensures the space is enjoyed by those utilizing it. You see the real value of land, and the process is a great mix of creative design and technical engineering." "One day, a site is a field. A year later, there's a building there with people working in it, and you feel as though you've contributed to something positive, a good ending," he said.

Fleming's first job after graduation was with Hartman and Associates, where he was an assistant project manager and design engineer. Fleming interned for the firm throughout college, and therefore had four years' experience and a solid relationship with his employer upon graduating. Fleming credits working at a small firm with providing him a greater degree of responsibility. "I don't feel I would have had the same opportunities at a large firm," he said, adding, "Harrisburg is a great market for someone in my field. It has a steady development record, and the potential for development growth is huge. Bigger markets seem to fluctuate much more."

One of Fleming's mentors at

## Harrisburg has mass transit mess

By Marc Levy  
A P Writer

HARRISBURG, Pa. - As the public transit agencies serving Pittsburgh and Philadelphia threaten service cuts and fare increases, the scramble has begun in Harrisburg to determine who will pay.

The ideas are beginning to pile up and it seems clear that, whether it is the motorists, commuters or home buyers and sellers, someone will pay more.

There also is plenty of finger-pointing over how the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority and the Port Authority of Allegheny County became mired in a combined \$92 million deficit this year.

Gov. Ed Rendell has blamed the federal government, in part, for changing rules in 1991 to allow transit agencies to use federal dollars for capital costs like fixing trains and buses, but not for operating costs like salaries and benefits.

That same year, lawmakers raised property taxes on utilities to provide new money for mass transit but that evaporated a few years later, when power plants were exempted from the tax as part of deregulation.

Also, in six of the past nine years, state lawmakers did not increase public transit funding to keep up with inflation.

"We've virtually done every-

thing we could do to cope with those declining state revenue sources, but it has finally caught up," said Paul Skoutelas, the Allegheny County port authority's chief executive officer.

Some Republicans, whose party controls the Legislature, maintain that the state already spends enough on public transportation.

Sam Smith, the House Republican leader from Jefferson County, last week questioned why the state is "on the hook" to erase public transit deficits. Cities like Pittsburgh and Philadelphia may have to contribute more, he said.

Pennsylvania was among the top four states in the nation in 2002 in spending on public transportation operating budgets at about \$554 million, according to Federal Highway Administration figures, but county and municipal contributions to public transit in Pennsylvania were 16th among states in 2002.

Nationwide, public transit agencies seem to be having similar financial troubles, and in many cases observers say sluggish tax revenues are to blame.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority of New York City board voted last month to raise fares on unlimited-ride subway and bus MetroCards, marking the second time in two years that prices for public transportation have been increased.

In Boston, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority has been shedding chronically absent employees as it tries to reduce a \$16 million deficit. New Jersey Transit has raised the possibility of increasing fares to close its deficit. And in San Jose, where sales taxes bottomed out when the Silicon Valley dot-com bubble burst, the Valley Transit Authority is facing a \$100 million deficit.

Experts say that the transit authorities that tend to be the most stable are the ones financed by a broad range of revenues.

Fare increases and service cuts might solve the deficit but they drive away customers, said William W. Millar, the president of the American Public Transportation Association in Washington, D.C.

Rendell and state lawmakers have about six weeks to produce more money to stave off the fare increases and service cuts being planned by SEPTA and the port authority.

Erik Arneson, the chief of staff to the Senate's majority leader, David J. Brightbill of Lebanon County, raised the possibility that lawmakers could come up with temporary funding until they can craft a longer term package that would include funding for highways.

"Nobody wants to see dramatic service cuts or dramatic fare hikes," he said.

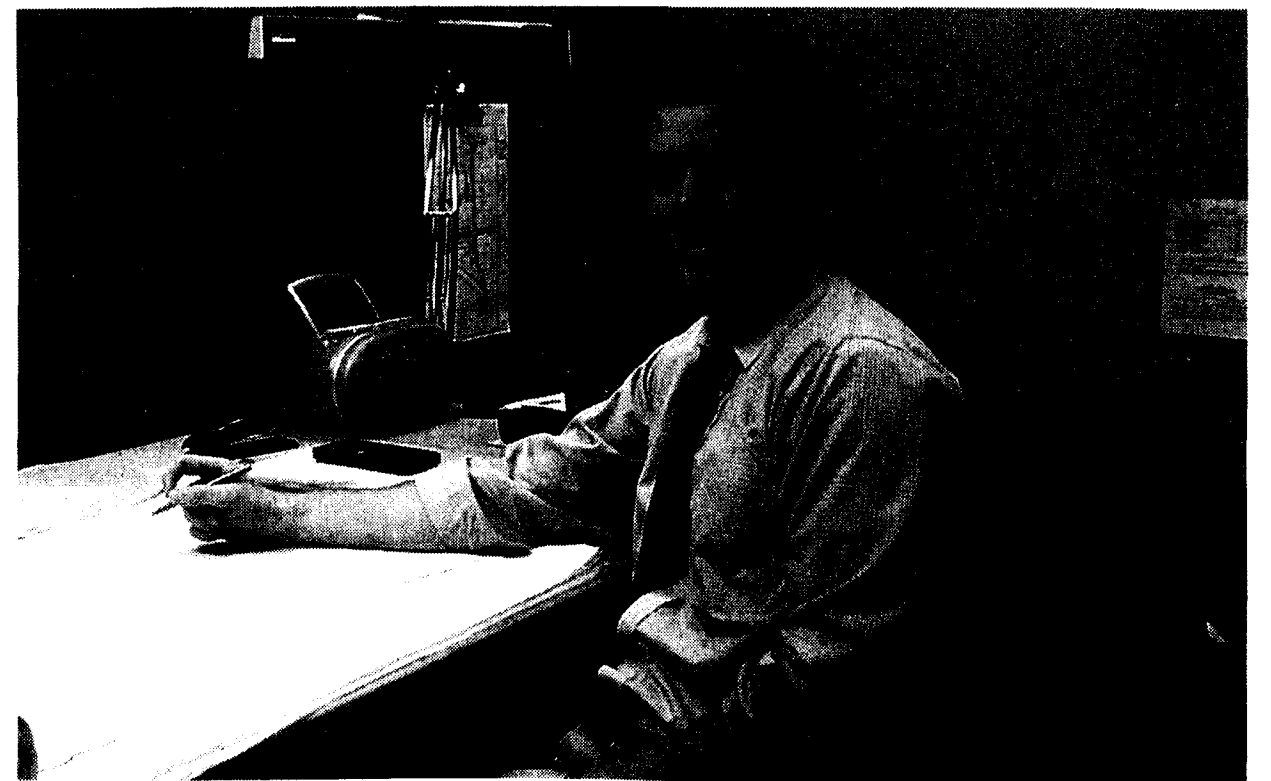


Photo by Elizabeth Wingate/Capital Times

Stephen Fleming is a graduate of PSH's engineering program.

Hartman, Ron Secary, moved to Herbert, Rowland, and Grubic, Inc., and Fleming followed him shortly after, undertaking more high-profile projects for corporate giants such as Wal-Mart, Sheetz, several area banks, and large-scale commercial and residential developers. The fit has been a good one for Fleming, who added homeowner to his resume

when he purchased a home in Camp Hill in 2002; his real estate license allowed him to represent himself in the transaction.

Fleming's advice to those interested in engineering is simple: take the initiative. "Seek out a job in your field as soon as possible," he said. "You might make less money initially, but it will pay off in the long run. Look for an

internship- you can do that in your first year of school- the experience will prove invaluable."

"I never only wanted to go to work and come home every day," said Fleming. "I wanted to make a difference in the world around me, to create something tangible, and that's what I do." All in all, a very solid foundation.