

Eye on Campus

Religion positively altered his life

Robert Hyer's
new peace leaves
wild times behind

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Robert Hyers, an English major, left his partying days behind when he moved to Pennsylvania.

Three years ago, Hyers received his associate's degree in liberal arts from Ocean County College in New Jersey. He spent five years getting a two-year degree after dropping classes and attending a few at a time.

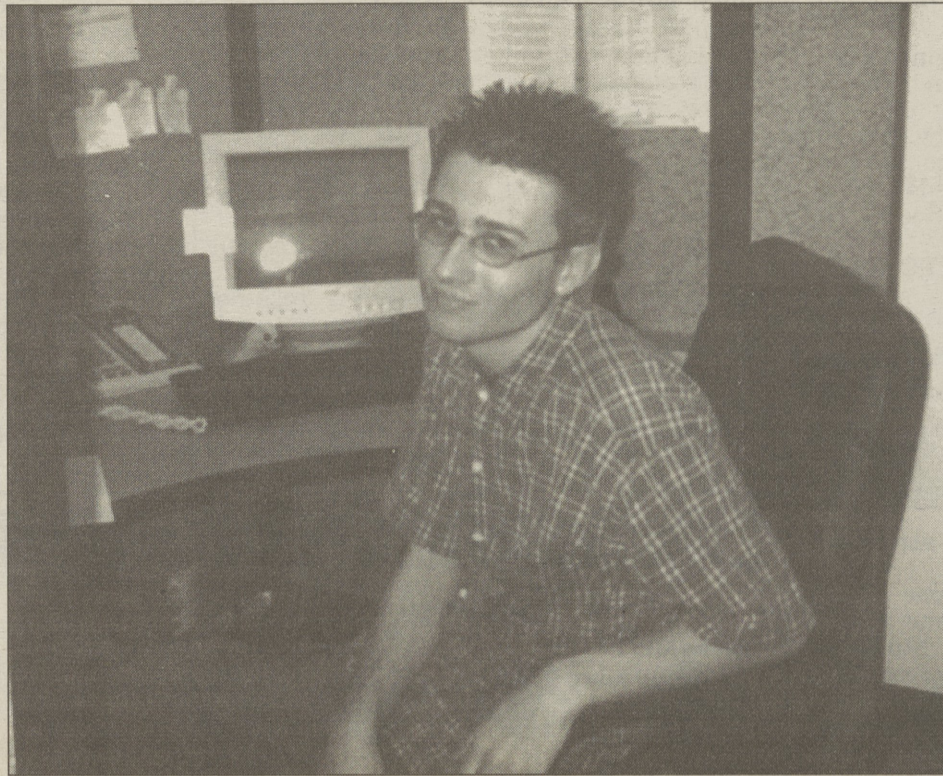
Hyers says he tried ecstasy at age 19 and crystal meth at 22. He began to party about four days a week with friends. Places like "Lime Light," "Tunnel" and all night raves became his second home.

Drugs, he says, became one of the biggest interferences in his life.

"I made no time to go to class or finish homework," he said.

At that point, he also worked full-time at Staples, which left no real amount of time to succeed in school.

Shortly after he got his degree, he met Michael, decided to move to Philadelphia with him and get his bachelor's degree in English. Michael, a college graduate, is completely supportive of Hyers' decision to finish college. Since he stopped



Lion's Eye photo

With the help of Buddhism, Robert Hyers says he found a way to leave a life of drugs behind and focus on the future.

doing drugs and his parents moved out of New Jersey, he moved away also.

"There was nothing left in New Jersey to keep me there," he said.

Hyers came to Penn State Delco in August of 2003 and he is graduating this May.

"I don't know what I want to do full-time upon graduation, but I do

plan on publishing my first novel as soon as the opportunity comes along."

When Hyers was 18, he explored gay fiction and never really found anything likable.

"Ever since I was real young, I knew I wanted to be a novelist," he said.

He is now inspired to "write gay

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fiction that is more interesting than some of the gay fiction that is offered today."

Around the same time he found Michael, Hyers also found Buddhism.

"I've been studying Buddhism for five years," he said, "and there is a principle that states if something is temporary, you shouldn't put your trust into it, because it will end. That's the No. 1 reason why I quit doing drugs. I am also more studious without the drugs, because there is a lot more time in the day to get things accomplished."

"Buddhism gave me a new outlook on life; I can see the good in people and everything."

He meditates once a day for a half-hour. Buddhism has disciplined him to stay focused on the positive things in his life. He hasn't touched a drug in three years, and he rarely drinks.

"When I do drink," he said, "I only have a couple of drinks."

"Without Buddhism and Michael, I would probably be doing the same thing I was doing before, and I would probably not go very far in my life."

Since he started going to Penn State, he became focused on graduating and finishing his novel. Fortunately, he is supported through his schooling by professors, friends and his boyfriend.

"Michael is very supportive, and he emphasizes the importance of earning my degree. I feel that I will succeed after I graduate."

Penn State Day: It wasn't to be mist

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The rain didn't stop the crowds from pouring in to the Delco campus' annual Penn State Day Saturday.

Alumni, prospective students, parents and current students came out to enjoy the festivities, food and fun that the campus provided.

"Not enough people are eating cotton candy, even though the weather is bad the turnout is good," said Samantha Reese, a junior IST major, as she proudly took a bite of the IST's homemade cotton candy.

Among the many activities were rock climbing, potato-sack racing, decorating cupcakes, scavenger hunts, poetry contests and pie-eating contests, all of which were backed up by swinging live music.

"I think it is a great opportunity to come

and reunite with all my friends," said returning alum Ryan Frampton. "I see a lot more people out than in previous years. The weather hasn't deterred the people."

Not only is Penn State Day intended for current students and graduates, it is also a great opportunity for prospective students and their parents to learn about the degrees and activities that this campus offers.

After taking a bite of her free hot dog and pretzel, Lauren Lauff, a senior at Archbishop Prendergast High School, offered her thoughts.

"I liked it," she said. "I like the community and the intimate size and setting of the campus."

Lauff is seriously considering joining the Penn State population.

"It's a definite possibility...I think I'd major in business or accounting," she said.

Maybe Lauff will also join the *Lion's Eye* staff.

"My favorite part of the day was being interviewed for the paper," she said.



Photo by Anya Takos

The cotton candy table at PSU Day was run by the IST club's Ranveer Basra and Samantha Reese.