

Eye On Community

Delco Community Update

Dec. 14: Student Activity Fee Meeting at 11:30 a.m., LCR, Commons Building.

Dec. 15: SGA Winter Holiday Party at 11:30am. *Free food, holiday music, and tree decorating!

Dec. 18-21 *Finals and Book Buyback Week*

Dec. 18: Stress Free Zone, 10-a.m.-2 p.m. in Lion's Den Cafe
Chair massages, energy foods, coffee and juice bar, soothing music, and stress pens

The Lion's Eye

Editorial Board and staff writer positions open for Spring 2006. If interested, please contact Editor-in-chief Dr. Andrew Walter (drwalter@psu) or Managing Editor John Miller (jmm833@psu). Weekly meetings begin on Tuesday Jan. 16, 2007 at common hour in the club room, 202 Commons.

Broken Pieces of Glass, Ceramics at Home on South Street

By **ASHLEY SALADA**
 Staff Writer
 ans5075@psu.edu

Fine china, old bottles, and painted tiles. These are mostly things you'd find in your grandmother's attic unless you're visiting the Magic Garden Mosaic on South Street in Philadelphia.

In a city that's expensive to live in, going through an art-like nirvana only costs two dollars, the suggested donation they ask before you enter.

The pathways twist and turn, some are narrow and some are broad, and the stairs bear a cautious step. But, when you pass Victorian china and bicycle wheels, Buddha statues and gargoyles, you get a sense of calmness you may not get anywhere else.

Isiah Zager, 67, is the mastermind behind the Magic Garden. Zager was born in Philadelphia in 1939 and spent his next 21 years in Brooklyn, NY. He earned his B.F.A. from the Pratt Institute in 1961.

On a vacant lot, Zager began to build walls and push pieces of broken tiles into concrete. But Gaston Safar, the owner of the lot, wouldn't have it. Zager has been

asked to pay a hefty \$300,000 for the lot.

According to Mike DelVecchia from philadelphiawriters.com, Zager has taken out a loan from a bank for the said amount. Zager also sells original pieces of art work at his adjacent studio and takes donations for the Magic Garden.

In 2004, a petition was placed outside of the gate to the garden where 14,000 signatures were collected. Also outside of the gate is a collection bin where you can slip in a prized offering. You can also attend one of the monthly workshops where Isaiah Zager himself, for two days, will teach you the ins and outs of mural making including tile breaking and mirror cutting.

On a street littered with everything from tattoo parlors and occult stores to organic grocery stores and a Johnny Rocket's, this work of divine art is a perfect fit.

Visit the Magic Gardens of South Street at 1024-1026 South Street, Philadelphia, PA. Hours of operation are Saturdays and Sundays, noon to four. To also learn more about Zager, his art and the workshops at <http://www.phillymagicgardens.org>.

ACME President Judy Spires Dishes Out Advice to Students

By **SHARON ACHILLES**
 Staff writer
 saa192@psu.edu

In cramped cubicles and dead end jobs everywhere, some men and women dread going to work. A woman from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, Judy Spires, who got her first job at 16 with ACME, isn't one of those people.

Today, a sophisticated and confident Spires rose above gender inequalities and has proved the American dream is still alive today.

She became the first woman President of ACME markets in February of this year and knew early on she was going places with the supermarket giant. On Nov. 28, at Penn State Delaware County, Spires shared with students and faculty her passion for retail. Through college and beyond, she

pressed on with her obsession of working with people. Her persistence and her enthusiasm for ACME, a company she's been a part of for 35 years, have served her well.

With the help of her father, Spires started as a bagger and checker to begin earning money for college. She later graduated in Special Education from LaSalle University.

"I always knew I was going to college. Back in the dark ages I only had two options that existed for women, either a teacher or a nurse," Spires said.

Effortlessly, she crashed through the glass ceiling that hung above her and so many other women at the time. Although for Spires, she hardly knew it was there and dreamed big even as a child. At one time, she wanted to become a Broadway star, and later in college would change her mind more than once. Her goal was to work for the United Nations and teach French.

However, over the years, Spires mastered as many departments at Acme as possible. What she was going to become when she grew up formed into something attainable.

"I really liked being there. There were so many things I loved about retail. It grew into a passion," she said.

Spires, sharply dressed, commanded attention as she approached her audience in the Classroom Building's auditorium. Immediately, she asked them if they knew what they wanted to be.

After discussing where she came from and how she climbed the ladder at ACME, Spires transitioned into what made the supermarket business click for her. She described the immediate gratification she felt in a retail environment. The reachable goals made her aggressive and helped her foresee larger ambitions for herself. Not long before graduation, did she decide to overcome her greatest challenge.

"In my heart, I knew I wanted to be a store manager for Acme," said Spires.

"I still felt a glimmer of hope about how I could get into this business."

Next, Spires confided in her father.

She told him she didn't want to be a teacher, however, becoming ACME manager was her new dream.

Her father replied, "Judy, you can be anything you want to be."

With persistence and her father's support she accomplished her goal. She then continued to take on challenge after challenge over the years. Often by consistent nagging and hard work she jumped from one position to another.

"At one point, I thought if I could get to District Manager, life would be the cat's meow," Spires said.

With more than three decades of experience with ACME she gained life lessons that she shared with the room full of business majors and professors.

"Always say yes to every opportunity that comes to you," she said.

By stepping on to unfamiliar territory she found and applied new skills that helped her flex her creativity in new ways. Spires then assured her audience that each of them doesn't need to know all the particulars of a job coming to them. In some of the new roles she took on, she encountered more than enough "on the job training."

Not only did the challenges that Spires overcame exist in the places where she worked but also in the changing environment and trends within the stores she was hired to oversee. Supermarkets are a very competitive business and have a very low profit margin.

Four other companies present a threat to ACME's continued success according to Spires. She called them the 4W's and includes: Walmart, Wegman's, Whole Foods, and Wawa.

Each of them for different reasons has made gaining profit more complicated. At one time ACME once depended on 7.5 visits a week which is now down to 1.8 visits," said Spires.

"We're behind in the times. People want semi-prepared meals. They are very busy, but still want to eat well," she said.

Wegman's, a rival company, has fair and reasonable food that's convenient. On the other hand, Whole Foods pushes a healthy diet and lifestyle. They sell hip organic products some shoppers want.

Whether it was a new position, changing demographic or non-stop competition, Spires' taste for retail and ACME Corporation has yet to change. Spires said since the very beginning she's felt connected and engaged in this business.

"Look for something that ignites passion. You will know when you're in a place you're supposed to be," Spires said.



Photo by Linda Johnson, Philly Inquirer