

GOP students look past Watergate

By JOHN MITCHELL
Collegian Staff Writer

The resignation of former President Nixon and his subsequent pardon have caused some embarrassment among Republican Party members, but College Republicans at Penn State are putting the events of the past year behind as they look to future activities.

The current campaign for GOP gubernatorial candidate Drew Lewis is being conducted on a bipartisan basis with support being drawn from both Republicans and Democrats, according to Ed Lerch (7th-accounting), coordinator of the campaign.

"We want to support our candidate because he is a good man rather than because he is a member of the Republican Party," Lerch said.

Party affiliation is being emphasized less in this campaign so that the stigma attached to Watergate does not camouflage the candidate as a man, Lerch said.

"People aren't voting party

tickets nearly as much any more," he said. As a result of Watergate strict party affiliation is not as prevalent now as it has been. People are examining the issues before deciding to support a candidate, he added.

After examining the issues closely, former president of the College Republicans Clyde Sheehan (9th-accounting), is leaving the Republican party, but he said the "reason I'm switching has nothing to do with Watergate."

"One of the reasons I got into the Republican Party is because I didn't think it out

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—Ed Lerch (7th-accounting)

said that the pardon should have come with a few more stipulations on the part of President Ford. "Then we might have heard a more definite reaction from Nixon as to his guilt, and also make the pardon more justifiable to the public," she said.

Lerch said that "there is a thin line between political ethics and dishonesty. Nixon clearly passed the line into dishonesty."

Lerch added that "nothing Nixon did went for personal gain. Nixon's ends usually were all right, but his ways of going about them were questionable."

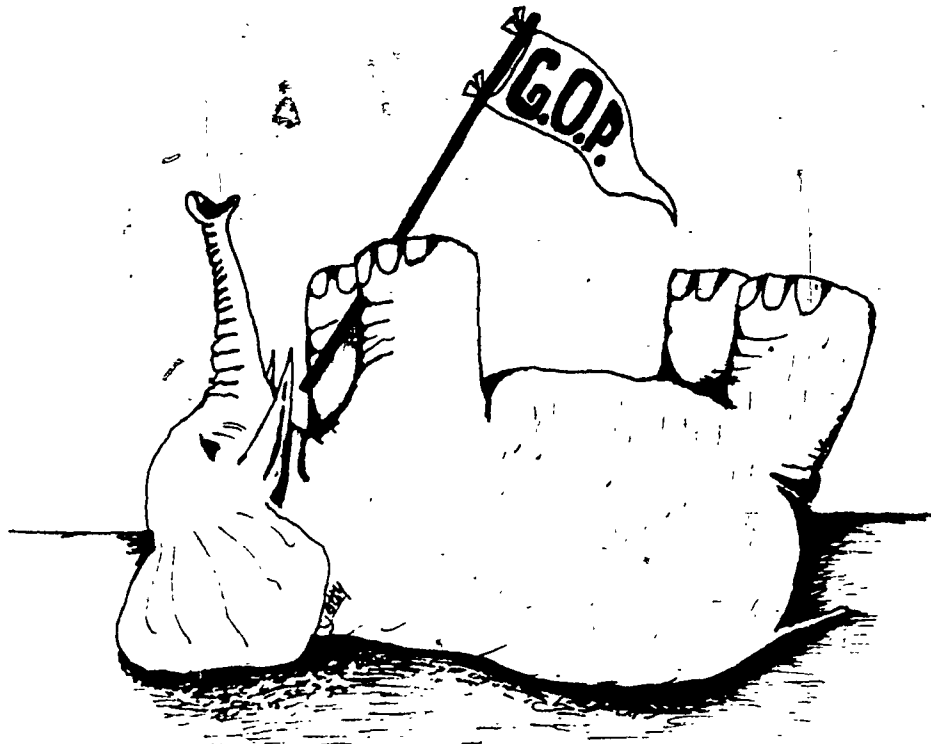
Nixon's resignation and Ford's inauguration "was a breath of relief," Morton said.

As an organization, College Republicans support all Republican office holders, according to member Dave Bufington (1st-secondary education). But individuals in the organization "are not so much party hacks" as might have been the case in the past, he said.

Bill Morton (11th-general arts and sciences) said he thinks Ford's pardon of Nixon was premature. He said that "people wanted to see what truth really was in the case, but the pardon will make that knowledge much harder to get."

According to Lerch, Nixon's acceptance of the pardon was not an admission of guilt, but Lerch pointed out that "if Nixon was innocent, he wouldn't have needed a pardon."

Margaret Hostetler (11th-community development)



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