Editor: Lawsuits a growing threat

Collegian Staff Writer

The nation faces a growing problem of libel lawsuits involving newspapers and private citizens amid a climate that offers no immediate solutions, said Gene Roberts, executive editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer.

The increase began a few years ago after actress Carol Burrnett sued The National Enquirer for defamation of character and won, prompting America's public officials and private citizens to seek court action against derogatory remarks appearing in the media, he said.

These court actions have forced many newspaper editors to temper their news coverage, initiate fewer investigative news stories and print fewer letters to the editor that accuse public officials of wrongdoing.

But while many of the larger newspapers can afford to fight the lawsuits, the smaller ones are being forced out of business, unable to contend with the million-dollar courts fees involved in most libel cases.

The problem is forcing newspapers' coverage of news events to be shallow and not as critical as it could be, Roberts said. He said many newspaper editors are adopting a popular attitude: "If there is any question at all, we tend not to print

Roberts spoke to about 100 students and facuty of the Schoool of Communications last night as

Winston, along with Vice President and Vice the media through libel law and ethics, and students gathered at the talk.

part of the school's first Mellet Awards program



Gene Roberts

award to a presentation, held at Kern Building. Honored for their outstanding media critism

Long Island, N.Y. Loren Ghiglione, editor and publisher of the Southbridge News in Southbridge, Mass., and Bristol Press in Bristol, Conn., was presented a special citiation for his contributions to constructive analysis of the media. Winston said at the awards ceremony that the

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winners share the philosophy that "a free press should be a responsible press." In expensive libel cases, Roberts offered no mmediate solutions for smaller newspapers. But he said that when libel suits can be brought only by those who can be sued themselves, the media will come to "an enlightened position."

A 1964 Supreme Court ruling in the case of New York Times vs. Sullivan — which allows public officials to win libel cases involving actual malice or "reckless disregard" for the truth - began as a good intention by the courts but has turned into a "weapon aimed at the heart of criticism,"

By publishing stories on libel cases, Roberts said, the media have made lawsuits an attractive profit-making move by citizens. To some extent, this is to blame for the situation today, he said. Isaacs added that the media's arrogance helps contribute to the increasing number of lawsuits against them. "We're too goddam big for our britches.'' he said.

But Roberts said "the chill goes on" as news-Provost Ken Mortimer and other School of Compaper editors single out letters to the editor that munications faculty, invited the winners of the take on certain public officials and refrain from publishing editorials that could be controversial. "I submit that people of your generation can were Norman E. Isaacs, author of a book titled play a useful role when you move out into a world School of Communications Dean Brian Untended Gates, which expains how to improve of professional communications," Isaacs told

'Sister! Sister!' portrays women of world

By ERIC SCHMIDT

Collegian Staff Writer She is a modern woman talking around the world facing their prob- woman programs, the three biggest telephone. She is society passing "I don't make a deliberate effort to Together Children," a show about the judgment on a 14-year-old girl who send a message," Burrows said, "I black experience; and "African does not understand the modern admessage." vances her husband brings home, and

a feminist explaining what a man can She is also a performer named

Burrows, the veteran of seven Broadway shows, performed last women to it." night at the Paul Robeson Cultural Burrows, a New York City native, promote world peace and to ensure go? Angola." directed by the Office of Minority entering the theater at a very young 116 countries. Programs and the Center for Women age.

"and I've added more and more 1945 by European women.

Penn State Sub Shops

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"I was in a Broadway show with she provides expert advice on the said."

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ter!," is a conglomeration of several got me on my feet, and I liked it." vignettes showing women from Burrows said she has seven one-

> including "Sister! Sister!"; "Walk Burrows is also a permanent rep-

Burrows said she conceived "Sis- resentative to the United Nations care facilities, housing and education ter! Sister!" 10 years ago. "It started representing the Women's Interna- at refugee camps in these nations. at the beginning of the United Nations tional Democratic Federation — a Decade of Women." Burrows said, non-governmental group formed in mainly young people — moving

Center in the first of a series of received her prelaw degree from another conflict like World War II It is because of that movement into programs on the interaction of rac- Yale University - something she does not happen again, Burrows said. Angola that the South African governsm and sexism. The series is co- said her mother wanted — before The organization has 127 affiliates in ment is attempting to destabilize the

The program, called "Sister! Sis-Helen Hayes," Burrows said. "That condition of women worldwide to the

Burrows was also a part of a recent

U.N. fact-finding tour of the African bordering South Africa, including Anhas committed infanticide, as well as just present the truth of women and a traditional African woman who hope that people take away their own legends and myths.

Sent a message, Burrows said, 1 black experience; and African gola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique—sponsored by the U.N. Burrows said she looked at health

The organization is designed to border," she said. "Where do they

Angolan economy and is conducting a As a representative, Burrows said war in its southern province, Burrows

IN THE FREEZER?



Mine was. By the time I had written 190 pages, I was convinced that my house would burn down. I kept my note cards on ice, too.

In May there was a power failure. A half-gallon of Mint Chip ice cream infiltrated my study of industrial

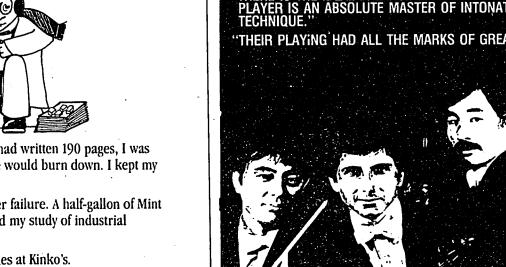
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Student loan defaulters' payments up

WASHINGTON, D.C. (AP) -Federal collections on student loan defaults during the last fiscal year are expected to total \$229 nillion, more than twice the previous year's collections, the Education Department said

ers," Education Secretary William Bennett said in a statement "When loans are paid back, the integrity of the federal loan programs is preserved. In fiscal year 1985, which ended Sept. 30, 1985, federal collections

gram, a two-year pilot program that began last year. Under the program, debtors were warned by mail to pay up or face the loss of their 1985 income

By BILL McCLOSKEY Associated Press Writer WASHINGTON, D.C. — Almost three years after Con- criminal prosecution.

Jack D. Smith, the FCC's general counsel, said nine

4 p.m.-12 a.m.

4 p.m. - 1 a.m.

238-9403

Photos offend 'Zone' lawyer

trial witnesses are in the room.

By LINDA DEUTSCH **Associated Press Writer**

LOS ANGELES - A defense attor- brings witnesses into a room with charges against director John Landney complained yesterday that the pictures on the wall of Vic Morrow is, associate producer George Folsey, Twilight Zone prosecutor has turned and the children in life and death and special effects supervisor Paul Stewher office into "a grotesque chamber also pictures of their body parts." art, production coordinator Dan Alof horrors," displaying pictures of D'Agostino ridiculed Braun's com- lingman and pilot Dorcey Wingo. decapitated victims for witnesses to plaint outside court, saying: A helicopter, flying through special

Attorney Harland Braun asked Su- complaint a day about me. It's back ese village, crashed on top of them in perior Court Judge Roger Boren to to persecute the prosecutor." "This is bad news for default-

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totaled \$94 million. Bennett attributed the increase in fiscal 1986 - which ended three weeks ago - to the Federal Income Tax Refund Offset Pro-

tax refunds.

Steps taken to close dial-a-porn complaints against a single company were selected from about 30 received from parents since the law was passed

tions Commission has taken the first step toward shutting keep youngsters from hearing the messages. down a dial-a-porn service, the FCC chairman said If the government decided to prosecute, Smith said the A series of court decisions blocked enforcement of the company to stop letting children hear the sex talk. law until a way could be found to prevent youngsters from Enforcement of the law has been postponed while the hearing the messages without keeping adults from hear- FCC searched to find a way to keep children from hearing

VISIT HARNER FARM

"I think this is a barbaric thing to Renee Chen, 6, in the helicopter acci-

'They've got to have at least one effects explosives in a mock Vietnam-

do," Braun said. "She admits she dent which led to manslaughter

in 1983 and sent to the Justice Department for possible gress enacted a law to keep children from calling sexually Smith said he sought prosecution of the company, which

> next step would probably be to ask a judge to order the the messages without infringing on free speech guarantees in the Constitution.

order Deputy District Attorney Lea Before attorneys left court for the 1982. Morrow and the Le child were regional blood services, said the Schroeder said statewide hospi drive is meant to help ease the tals have recently requested al Purwin D'Agostino to remove the day, Braun raised his complaint decapitated by the helicopter blades demand for blood in State College types of blood from the Red Cross. pictures from her office wall when about the pictures, which depict the and the Chen girl was crushed-

the early morning hours of July 23,

explicit telephone messages, the Federal Communica- he refused to name, because it was not making an effort to

Intersection of West College & Whitehall Road

The first 200 people through the

and surrounding areas.

campus briefs

The Asylum will be open from 10 Monday. p.m. to 1 a.m. Admission is \$2 and In addition, a variety of free college identification cards are non-alcoholic drinks such as

Band to rock Asylum

Students can listen and dance to door each will receive a free paint

Blood drive today

Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity will "Originally the blood drive was

sponsor a blood drive at noon to meet the demand for B positive

today at the Paul Robeson Cultu- blood that is predominant among

Connie Schroeder, campus coor- this blood drive has gone beyond

dinator for Red Cross Johnstown emphasizing B positive blood."

the music of the band Press Club er's cap in recognition of the Natonight at the Asylum in the HUB tional Collegiate Alcohol

required, said Dave Raymond, mocktails, near beer and non-alco-

minorities," Schroeder said. "Yet,

chairman for the Asylum commit- holic wine as well as carbonated beverages will be served. -- by Megan McKissici



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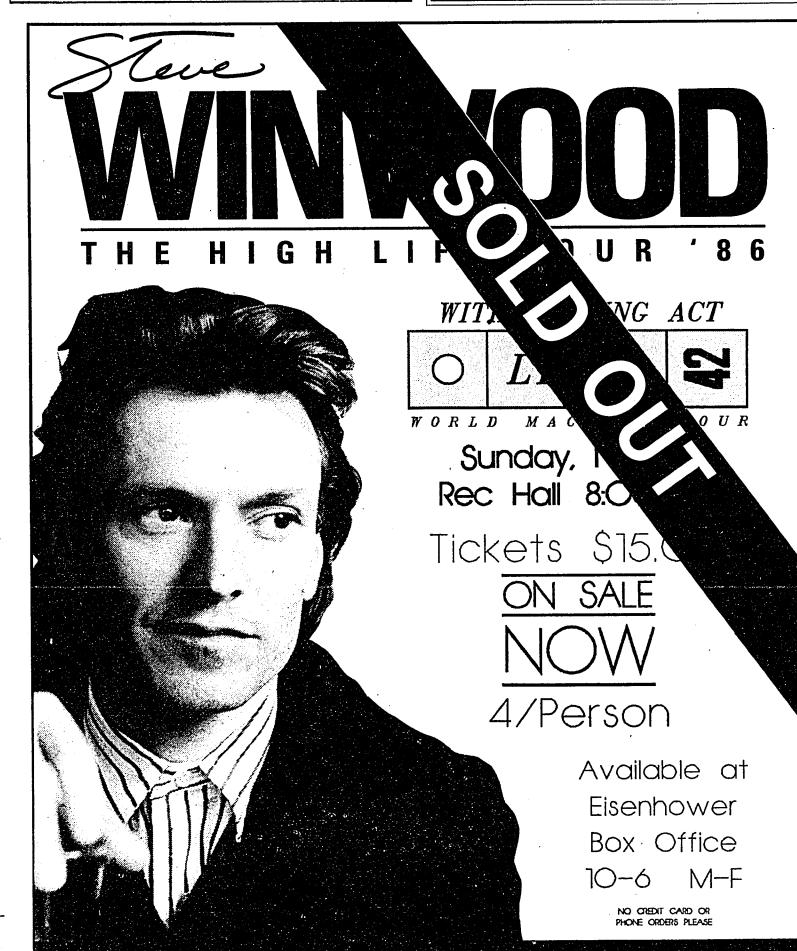
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