

Medical woes

Centre Community Hospital may curtail some free services

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Catching on

Redshirt frosh shines against Bearcats

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Weather

Can-dew attitude. Today, mostly cloudy and humid, with showers and a stray thunderstorm, high 81. Becoming partly cloudy tonight, low 60. Tomorrow, partly sunny and refreshing, high 77.

— Greg DeVoire

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High noon for Thomas

By JAMES ROWLEY
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Clarence Thomas will speak for himself today after a summer of vigorous political campaigning by supporters and opponents of his nomination to the Supreme Court. "There's a fight on," President Bush declared on the eve of Thomas' confirmation hearing.

"I am confident we're going to win it," Bush said as Thomas and his questioners made final preparations for Senate Judiciary Committee consideration of the nomination.

After two months of avoiding public stands while others attacked and defended him, Thomas will be asked to detail his views on contentious subjects as he makes his case for confirmation to take Thurgood Marshall's place on the high court.

Like Marshall, Thomas is black, but he has staked out conservative positions in sharp contrast to Marshall's staunch liberalism. So there will be tough questions from liberal Democrats concerned about how Thomas, 43, would vote on such issues as abortion, privacy and civil rights.

Yet, Bush suggested that Thomas should not be pinned down on how he might vote on specific issues.

Bush said that when he nominated Thomas, "the administration applied no litmus test on specific issues that might come before the Supreme Court. We did not question Judge Thomas on possible decisions or cases that could come before the court."

"Similarly, I have confidence that the Judiciary Committee will want to preserve the independence of the court as it explores the record of Judge Thomas," the president said in a written statement.

Even after all the efforts to influence opinion for or against Thomas, 65 percent of respondents in a new poll said they had no opinion about whether he should be confirmed. This was close to the 73 percent who had no opinion about Robert Bork just before the confirmation hearings that led to the rejection of his nomination in 1987.

Results of that CBS-New York Times poll, published in today's editions of the newspaper, showed black people with an opinion splitting 23 percent in favor of Thomas and 15 percent against, and white people with an

opinion dividing 26 percent for Thomas and 10 percent against.

Overall, the poll of 1,519 adults by telephone from Sept. 3 through Sept. 5 had a likely margin of error of three percentage points either way. An additional sampling of 218 black people for a total of 324 was necessary to reach usable conclusions; for black people, the margin of uncertainty was given as five points.

Supporters of Thomas have highlighted his rise from a poor black family in segregated Georgia to important positions in Washington, where he chaired the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and became a federal appellate judge.

But the opposition coalition of civil rights and labor organizations has focused on Thomas' opposition to affirmative action programs and on writings concerning "natural law" that suggest he would vote to overturn women's right to abortion.

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Students respond

By MIKE ABRAMS
Collegian Staff Writer

As Clarence Thomas faces the start of Senate confirmation hearings today, student groups are offering diverging opinions about the controversial U.S. Supreme Court nominee.

"A judge is supposed to be fair," said Kristen Eisenbraun, co-director of Penn State Pro-Choice. "I just don't think he is fair."

Thomas, nominated by President Bush this summer, has been regarded as a minority opposed to minority rights — especially the reproductive rights of women. Accusations of "minority planting" have highlighted news coverage as the hearings approach.

Opinions vary as to whether Thomas would be a positive addition to the nation's highest court.

"He would make a good justice," said Kristen Bernath, Penn State Students for Life president. "I think

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A humanitarian habitat

Volunteer groups build houses to aid those in need



Collegian Photo/Michael Kubel

Jack Harding of State College helps build the Habitat for Humanity house at Sandy Ridge. A member of the Aid Association for Lutherans, Harding has been part of the program from the start.

By KRISTI McCLENDON
Collegian Staff Writer

Down a gravel road near Sandy Ridge, the sun peeks through the skeleton of a 1,232 square foot house. Workers busily move around hammering boards together and mounting shingles on the roof.

The house sits vacant — but not for too long.

Thanks to the efforts of local and out-of-state volunteers, a woman and her two grandchildren may be able to move in by December.

Founded in 1976 by Millard Fuller, Habitat for Humanity International is the project's inspiration. Operating under the basic premise that everyone deserves adequate housing, the organization sells homes for no profit or interest to families that might not be able to afford them otherwise.

Habitat boasts about 560 affiliates in the United States and 100 projects in 30 countries, said Arlene Hicks, coordinator of the local affiliate, Tri-County Habitat.

Applications based on financial need and background are reviewed and, if approved, vying families are put on a waiting list, said Ted Koch, a board member and chairman of Tri-County's construction committee.

Once chosen, families have obligations or what Habitat calls "sweat equity."

"They're required to put in 500 hours," Koch said. "It doesn't have to be with their house. It can be with any of the houses that we work on."

Hicks said, "It is a partnership; it's not a charity."

Currently, Tri-County along with a Habitat for Humanity touring group, Collegians Helping Aid Rescue Missions, and Aid Association for Lutherans are working on the Sandy Ridge home, and another home in Morrisdale.

Wearing a T-shirt reading "Building Hope... Building Homes," Jack Harding, an AAL member and State College resident, scanned the work in progress.

"I've been a part of this from the beginning," Harding said.

A little over a month ago, volunteers began digging the basement and leveling stone, said

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USG members consider plan to reform as umbrella group

By SCOTT DODD
Collegian Staff Writer

If some Undergraduate Student Government members have their way, student government at Penn State could be radically altered.

All of USG may need to be restructured into a "student association" that would act as an "umbrella group" for other student organizations, said USG President Mark Stewart. In this plan, all student groups would fall under one centralized student administration.

"It only serves the purpose of the (University) administration for us to be fragmented in the way we are," Stewart said.

USG Senate President Joe Atkinson agreed, saying, "A student association would form a more unified and powerful voice for students."

The association would represent all students, with current student organizations functioning as departments, Atkinson said. The departments would work independently, and the student association president could not tell the departments what to do, he said.

This structure could help avoid problems like those that recently occurred between USG and Womyn's Concerns, Atkinson said. A former USG department, Womyn's Concerns officially split from USG Friday after disputes between leaders of the two organizations about how Womyn's Concerns should operate.

But Craig Waldo, political co-director of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Student Alliance, pointed to the problems with Womyn's Concerns as an example of what happens when one group tries to control another.

LGBSA would never want to be part of a student association, Waldo predicted, adding that his group and many others need their independence.

"My group would never want to be told what to do by anyone else," Waldo said. "The whole

"A decision has to be made as to what we are trying to achieve and how best to do it."

— E.J. Shaffer
USAB president

idea of an umbrella group is ridiculous... It's another case of those in power trying to keep their power."

Atkinson admitted that some organizations might not agree to a student association, since they would lose their autonomy.

"The biggest barrier to restructuring will be those organizations that have a definite sphere of influence," Atkinson said, noting that they may not want to give up the influence they have now as a part of the University Student Advisory Board.

Stacey Ishman, chairwoman of the Student Organization Budget Committee, agreed that all of USG needs to change to make a difference. With SOBC as part of a unified student government, student organizations could have greater control over their budgets because the money would be distributed from a central point, she said. SOBC now works independently with each student organization's budget.

Other USAB members tried to work within the current structure, citing the need to get rid of seats filled by underrepresented groups and other student groups that don't represent the student body as a whole.

Tom D'Alfonso, president of the Graduate Student Association, said one group that may no longer be essential to the board is LGBSA.

LGBSA's membership on USAB was important a few years ago because of certain pressing issues, like the addition of "sexual orientation"

to the University's non-discrimination policy and several acts of intolerance, D'Alfonso said.

The Latino Caucus tried last semester to join USAB but was denied a seat. The group plans to submit a petition Thursday night to gain a seat this semester.

Waldo disagreed with the idea that USAB should not include more underrepresented groups.

"I see more voices making it more effective," Waldo said. "All student opinions need to be heard."

Membership on USAB is not an appropriate way for all student groups to seek representation, D'Alfonso said. Leaders of student groups should come to USAB and relate their problems and concerns but not necessarily have a seat on the board, he said. More members do not necessarily make USAB more effective, he added.

USAB should be limited to student organizations, such as USG, GSA and the Council of Commonwealth Student Governments, that are able to represent the concerns of all students, not just select populations, he said.

Atkinson agreed that USAB may currently include too many student groups to be effective.

But underrepresented groups definitely need a forum, Ishman said.

"Without USAB there isn't a place for them to go," she said.

Ishman suggested that the leaders of underrepresented groups like LGBSA and Black Caucus could be given Senate seats in a new government, giving them a direct part in legislative decisions.

Ideas about restructuring USAB led to the formation of a committee of USAB members in August. Committee members are trying to decide if they can better serve the student body by restructuring the board itself.

"A decision has to be made as to what we are trying to achieve and how best to do it," said E.J. Shaffer, USAB president.

Borough parking critics buoyed by new voices

Students could affect rollback program

By ANTHONY J. DeGOL
Collegian Staff Writer

Fizzled efforts to reverse the rollback parking program may get a boost if the Undergraduate Student Government decides to rally for the plan's demise.

Mike Gillespie, chairman of the USG Governmental Relations Committee, said the committee is reviewing the rollback program and may join forces with the plan's opponents.

The rollback parking program — which began Aug. 1 and is aimed at reducing the bumper-to-bumper traffic in downtown neighborhoods — has drawn criticism from many students and residents who do not want to pay to park on the streets.

The plan includes charging commuters \$30 a month to park in a designated commuter zone on weekdays. Residents who live in the commuter zone must pay \$7.50 a year to park in the area.

The State College Borough Council last week rejected a petition calling for reconsideration of the plan, ruling that opponents did not have the 77 signatures required for them to readdress the issue.

But if recommendations from last night's borough council work session are any indication, the plan is not likely to be reversed.

"Rollback should be continued," said Borough Manager Peter Mar-

shall, reading from a staff review of the plan.

Marshall said the staff concluded that rollback has been effective in reducing commuter traffic in the downtown neighborhoods, and, besides a few amendments, should remain intact.

But Lester Penino, a representative of Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 458 E. College Ave., and spokesman for the petitioners, continued his drive to abolish the program.

"I worked hard on this petition and you fluffed it off," he told the council. Penino said free parking is a right every resident should have and charged the council with not being receptive to the situation.

Although the council told Penino future petitions must include 77 new signatures, rather than just adding to the existing signatures, he presented Marshall with only 22 new signatures.

Since Marshall said the latest petition will probably carry little weight, Gillespie said if USG decides to oppose the program, the committee could recruit enough registered students in the borough to sign a new petition, which would force the council to reconsider the issue.

"I would like to see more students active," said Gillespie (junior-political science).

Penino said new people are crucial to make a difference on this issue.