

Dateline

House members embrace Medicare overhaul

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Sports

Swoosh on ice

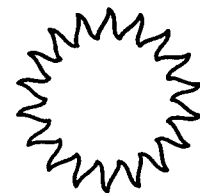
The Icers have a new look thanks to a new sponsor

— Page 12

Weather

What kind of winter lies ahead? Today, sunny and mild, high 76. Tonight, patchy fog, otherwise clear, low 48. Tomorrow, sunny with a bit of haze, but still gorgeous, high 79.

— by Paul Markowski



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Simpson backs out of 'Dateline NBC' interview

By MICHAEL FLEEMAN
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — O.J. Simpson backed out of his live interview with NBC just hours before air time last night, complaining that the network was out to "retry me." He had agreed, he insisted, only to "a conversation, not a confrontation."

Days earlier, NBC said the former football star had consented to a no-holds-barred format for his first extensive interview since he was acquitted last week.

Tens of millions of viewers had been expected to tune in to the hourlong, commercial-free "Dateline NBC" interview with Simpson that would have been conducted by NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw and

Katie Couric. Simpson suggested there were indeed conditions to the interview.

"It was agreed that this would be a conversation, not a confrontation. Because of pending litigation, there would be some questions that I could not obviously address at this time," he said in a statement read by his lawyer Johnnie Cochran Jr.

"It has become clear that NBC has, perhaps in an attempt to appease diverse public viewpoints, concluded that this would be a time and an opportunity to retry me."

Anything Simpson said on television could have been used against him in the wrongful-death lawsuits brought by the families of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Simpson never took the stand

at his yearlong murder trial but may have to do so if the lawsuits reach trial.

In another development yesterday, Simpson lawyer Robert Baker contended in court papers that Simpson shouldn't have to pay damages in the suit brought by Goldman's relatives because Simpson was acquitted of his murder. The documents didn't mention the separate suit brought by Nicole Brown Simpson's family.

Legal analysts have said that Simpson could still have to pay damages in a wrongful death suit even though he was acquitted. The civil action has a less stringent burden of proof than the criminal case.

The cancellation was seen as a setback for Simpson, eager to

counter widespread public outrage over his acquittal.

"Now, it's a public relations disaster," said legal analyst Stan Goldman said, "as if he needed any more public relations disasters."

NBC's announcement Monday that it would broadcast the interview had prompted a storm of protest from groups and individuals inside and outside the network who criticized NBC for giving a forum to Simpson.

NBC had been inundated with thousands of calls, mostly negative, spokeswoman Lynn Gardner said.

Brokaw announced Simpson's pullout in a special live afternoon broadcast.

"NBC News had a clear understanding as of yesterday morning with Simpson and his lawyers that

there would be no conditions attached to this interview," Brokaw said.

"But Mr. Simpson's lawyers overnight prevailed upon him not to participate, they said, because of the civil suit that he faces."

In an interview on CBS radio station WBBM in Chicago, Brokaw was asked if he and Couric would have been barred from asking about the murders.

"It came down to that," Brokaw said with a laugh. "They did say, 'Well, are you going to get into timelines?' And we said, 'That's how we're going to begin.'"

Gloria Allred, the lawyer for Nicole Brown Simpson's family, quoted her sister Tanya Brown as saying after Simpson canceled: "It makes my day."



AP Photo

O.J. Simpson canceled his interview on NBC



Collegian Photo/Laura Chiles

Coffee house crooner

Bob Szybist, singer and guitarist of an acoustic duo "Bob & Gavin" performs at the Coffee House. The free entertainment was sponsored

by the Student Union Board, which presents shows on Wednesday evenings in the HUB main lounge.

Hundreds gather for 'coming out'

By JENNIFER REITZ
Collegian Staff Writer

A big crowd, a big sign and a big line-up of speakers reinforced the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Student Alliance as they rallied for National Coming Out Day at noon yesterday.

"Today is the day we nationally recognize the need to create visibility for members of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community," said Ephraim Lopez, addressing a crowd of more than 500 on the steps of Schwab Auditorium.

Hordes of spectators gathered around the steps of Schwab Auditorium to listen to Lopez, LGBSA political co-director, the mayor of State College Borough and the Undergraduate Student Government president pledge their support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community.

Mayor Bill Welch compared the crowd to the student section at Beaver Stadium.

"At the stadium on Saturday, we chant 'We are Penn State!' But more importantly, we are who we are," Welch said, urging community members to be true to themselves.

Association of Residence Hall Students President Maggie Kutzler and USG President Kara Annechini also spoke at the rally. Kutzler opened up about the pain some family members and friends have incurred while dealing with their sexuality and told lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered students that ARHS representatives are sensitive to their concerns.

As USG president, Annechini made a landmark appearance at the rally along with USG Diversity Outreach Director Saulo Santiago, as she represented some, but not all, of her colleagues. But she said USG is trying to gain more understanding of alternative lifestyles.

"I'm learning and many other people are learning, too," she said.

USG's show of support for National Coming Out Day was not the only first for the rally. The list of sponsor's was longer than it has ever been and includes, among others, Latino Caucus and the Puerto Rican Student Association.

"(Because of) Latino Caucus, it probably reaches out to a larger audience," said Michael Branchly (senior-English) as he surveyed the packed Mall.

Please see RALLY, Page 9.

Some say crime prevention should be focus of legislation

By MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN
Collegian Staff Writer

Pennsylvania's legislative fight against crime has left some wondering whether the battle strategies are effective or if they have been a ploy to make the generals designing them look good.

More than eight months after Gov. Tom Ridge remained true to his campaign promise and opened Pennsylvania's special session on crime, some are not convinced that

the governor and the legislature have addressed the right issues.

Kim Turner, press secretary for state Rep. Dwight Evans, D-Philadelphia, said the measures passed during the special session have addressed crime from the wrong end.

"We need to do more on prevention. We need to shift priorities. Drafting legislation and locking people away is not the answer," Turner said.

Ending school violence and pro-

moting community-based education about the negative effects of crime are the issues that deserve the attention and funding, Turner said.

While Turner said Evans believes hardened criminals should serve their sentences, she said at the current incarceration rate, Pennsylvania will house 33,000 prisoners by the year 2000. She said it will require the construction of five more state prisons.

"The question you have to ask is,

'do people feel any safer?' Probably not," she said.

However crime itself is a large issue and can be broken down into at least two parts, said Gov. Ridge's Deputy Press Secretary Jerry Feaser.

Ridge has split the problem, Feaser said, by first addressing the public's concern about violent crime before outlining specific crime prevention programs.

Feaser said Ridge has always made it clear that his first priority

was getting violent offenders off of the streets.

"The first step all along was to address the problem of crime and to move forward on the issues of public safety first," he said.

Still, Feaser said Ridge has not neglected prevention in his crime proposals. A proposal for tougher truancy laws, development of a safe schools program and establishment of the Governor's Community Partnership for Safe Children all encourage crime education

and prevention for the commonwealth's youth.

Concerns about crime prevention are not just on the minds of government officials.

Andrew Kreider (senior-political science) said the problem of adequately addressing crime prevention is both a state and national problem.

"I think our overall approach to the correction system in the U.S. has failed," the former president of

Please see CRIME, Page 9.

USG department working toward safety for women

By BETH YOUNG
Collegian Staff Writer

The Undergraduate Student Government Women's Affairs Department is working to make women students' lives a little safer in State College.

The Women's Affairs Department is designed to celebrate women and to work toward making the University a safer, more accessible place for women students, said Michelle Thaxton, director of the department.

"My vision of the Women's Affairs Department's purpose is to promote the positive facets of women to the University," Thaxton said.

This semester, the department's main project is establishing a Sexual Assault Bill of Rights. The bill will outline the various services available to women in cases of sexual assault, Thaxton said.

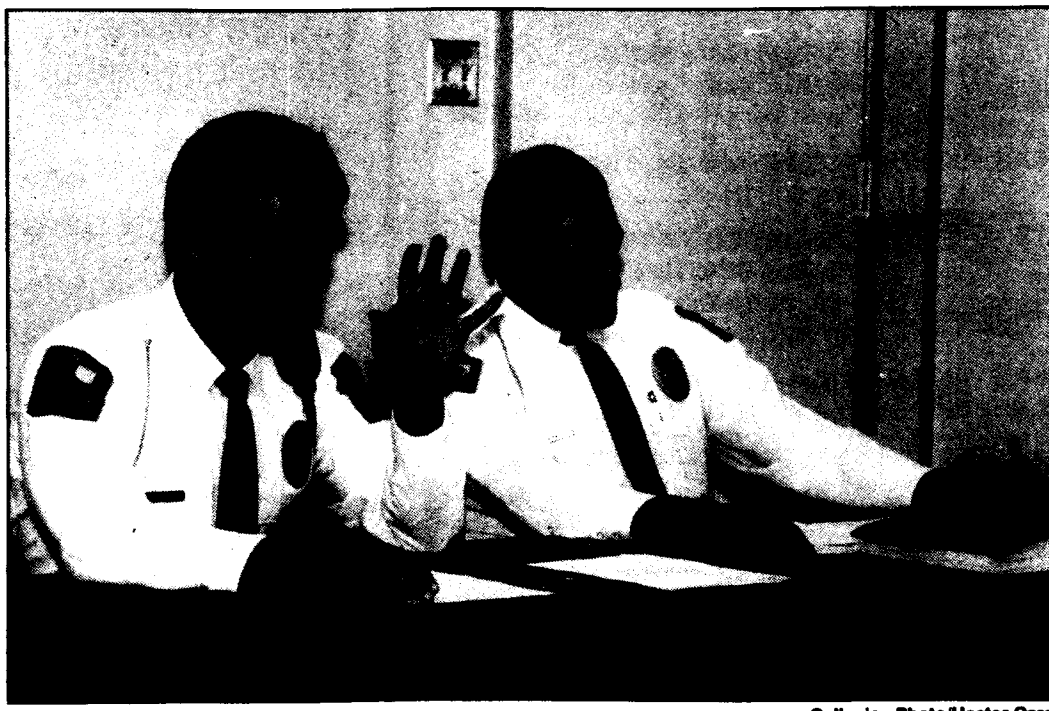
"We want to create awareness through this bill," Thaxton said. "Through awareness you create a more educated student body — through awareness you, in essence, create a safer environment."

Many services exist for women that most students do not know about, said Women's Affairs Department member Nikki Maurer.

Jessica Juge (junior-French business) said although she believes hot lines and support groups for sexual assault victims exist, she did not know anything about them when she first came to the University.

Rachel Barbera (senior-architectural engineering) also said she thought a publication like the Sexual Assault Bill of Rights would be important and valuable for new students such as freshmen and sophomores.

Please see WOMEN, Page 9.



Collegian Photo/Hector Caro

University Police Services Officer Frank Bell, left, and University police Supervisor Delmar Woodring join in an open forum with the Undergraduate Student Government last night. The topic was "Police Services: Friend or Foe?"

Police, students join in discussion

By MEGAN DONLEY
Collegian Staff Writer

Rape, bicycle theft and alcohol abuse were among issues addressed last night at an informal discussion titled "Police Services: Friend or Foe?" The Undergraduate Student Government sponsored event brought students and members of University Police Services together.

Although only a handful of students took advantage of the opportunity to express concerns to campus police officers, Administrative Contact Committee Chairman and Town Senator Joshua Pechter said the discussion was a success.

"It's unfortunate that more students didn't take advantage of the opportunity," he said. "But that won't dismay the ACC or the senate from continuously providing programs that students desperately need to take advantage of."

Pechter said the purpose of the discussion was to get students into a better position with University police.

University Police Supervisor Delmar

Please see POLICE, Page 9.