

Rally

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But not all of the audience was there to support LGBSA in their endeavors. Gary Cattell, otherwise known as the Willard Preacher, led a large group of students in chants of "Sodomy is perversion."

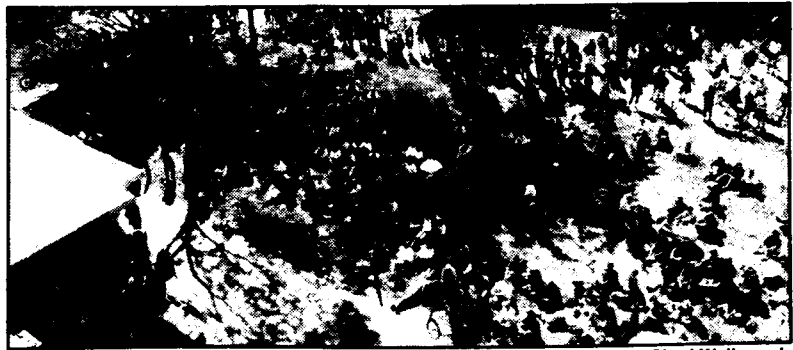
Joe Tomko, director of campus affairs for Penn State Young Americans for Freedom, was one of those students.

"I don't feel threatened by (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people)," he said. "They're a joke."

But for Catherine Buck (junior-women's studies) being a lesbian in the world today is anything but a joke. Buck raised her quavering voice against Cattell as she broke down in remembrance of a friend who committed suicide, unable to cope with a homophobic society.

"She's dead," she cried. "Don't you get it?"

Sally Maud Robertson, director of the Centre County AIDS Project, also brought a solemn note to the event as she warned the audience against becoming too confident in the progress of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered movement. A fight still lies ahead, she said.



Collegian Photo/Chad Weihrach

Students gather at the National Coming Out Day rally in front of Schwab Auditorium. Over 500 students gathered yesterday for the rally.

"The religious right wants us to remain in the closet," she said.

Robertson was accompanied by three students from State College Area High School who spoke about their hope for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered youth.

"Sometimes when we look into the future things seem scary for us," one of the girls said.

Buck's and Robertson's emotional pleas for sensitivity contrasted sharply with the general atmosphere of the rally. Most participants spoke of hope, of pride and of progress. Sue Rankin, women's softball coach and LGBSA advisor, listed a slew of accomplishments

made since she began her career at the University.

If ten years ago, someone suggested to Rankin that she would be speaking at a National Coming Out Day rally on campus she said she would have laughed at them.

"I would have said, 'Yeah. And the Yanks have a chance of winning the World Series,'" she joked.

The Yanks are out of the race already, but yesterday a division one coach stood at a podium on campus at a major university and said she is proud to be a lesbian.

"My athletes and students should be my primary focus," Rankin said. "Not maintaining the door to my closet."

Women

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The Sexual Assault Bill of Rights is an attempt to help new and unformed women students, Maurer said.

"A lot of women don't know where to go," Maurer said. "We're trying to open up more opportunities for women."

The Women's Affairs Department is also examining the idea of consolidating the on-campus and off-campus services offered to women, Thaxton said. The department is trying to coordinate a consolidation effort that would streamline all the services offered to women in State College, including the Center for Women Students, the Women's Resource Center and Wellspring, she said.

The department also hopes to help the various services coordinate activities and programs and to eliminate the repetition of services, Thaxton continued, saying the coordination effort is still in the research and planning stages.

But Patty Johnstone, assistant director of the Center for Women Students, said while the Sexual Assault Bill of Rights is a good idea, the idea of streamlining services may not be in the best interest of women students.

Although some of the services offered by the different organizations may overlap, the programming is complimentary, Johnstone

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

— Michelle Thaxton

director of the USG Women's Affairs department

said, using the Center for Women Students and the Women's Resource Center as an example.

"Neither of us is a very large organization and we need each other," she said. "The more people doing the work, the better it is for the student."

The organizations also serve different purposes, with the Women's Resource Center taking a community-wide role and the Center for Women Students focusing on University students, Johnstone said.

Some women students may also feel more comfortable using off-campus services for personal reasons and those students must be kept in mind when considering a streamlining effort, she added.

In addition to the Sexual Assault Bill of Rights, the department is working on other projects such as a crisis line. The department is currently researching the idea of a crisis line women would be able to call if they had questions about where they should go for help and what procedures they should fol-

low in cases of sexual assault, Thaxton said.

Thaxton and other members of the department are also concentrating on smaller, but important issues many women might not think about, such as eliminating flip light switches in the women's bathrooms on campus, Thaxton said.

Thaxton also hopes to co-sponsor women speakers in Spring Semester. Women's Affairs is currently co-sponsoring Women's Awareness Week from Nov. 6 - 10 along with the Panhellenic Council.

Johnstone said she is pleased with the role the Women's Affairs Department has taken in addressing safety issues. Each year the Center for Women Students have relay messages concerning general safety to a large group of new and unformed students any help in doing this is welcome, she said.

"I think it's important that they are highlighting safety issues," Johnstone said. "It helps us do our job better."

Police

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Woodring said one of the biggest problems is that students take their personal safety for granted. He said there is a "Happy Valley Syndrome" at the University, which keeps students from thinking anything bad can happen to them.

USG Senate President Bill Rothwell brought up the concern with bicycle theft.

University police Officer Frank Bell said bicycle theft is steadily increasing.

"The best way to prevent it is to lock your bike to an established bike rack," he said. "Also register the bike. If it's stolen and later recovered we can get it back to you."

Bell added, however, that the recovery rate is low, probably 2 percent. He said they do not know where the stolen bikes are going, but it may be to large cities where they are sold.

"Where (registration) helps is that everything is computerized," Woodring said. "If someone tries to register the same frame number, a red flag goes up and we know that bike was stolen." He added it would be helpful if the University police received more calls about suspicious activity.

The relationship between police and students was among the issues discussed. Pechter asked officers how they think students view police.

"I'm going on 23 years of experience. It's definitely improved," Woodring said. "People are seeing that we're more community oriented. I think we've got a different caliber of students than we've had in years. They're great."

But relations are sometimes strained.

Bell spoke about being verbally abused by students.

"I've always tried to be a nice, decent person," he said. "When someone calls me a pig, gestapo, or nazi it goes through this uniform and goes to me. We're paid to take that, so we do."

Former South Halls/Atherton Senator and current member of the activity fee committee Pat Scanlan asked how necessary the officers think it is to carry firearms at University Park and if they think it is also necessary at other Commonwealth Campuses.

"I feel that at University Park we're professionals," Woodring said. "Any officer that carries firearms, I have no questions about their credibility." He said he thinks some of the Commonwealth Campuses should give firearms to their police officers and some shouldn't.

Town Senator Mark Sosnowsky asked the officers if domestic violence is a prevalent crime on campus.

"It is definitely under-reported," Woodring said. "That's probably because people don't know that it is a crime. We are trying to reach out

to people and educate them."

Bell said when a victim comes to the University police, their desires are the priority.

"If a victim comes in and wants to make a report but doesn't want an investigation, the investigation stops there," he said. "It's the victim's desires that we see to on every level."

Bell said the police would like sexual assault victims to prosecute, but they encourage victims to just talk to them about it if they do not want to go through the whole process.

Sosnowsky also asked if hate crimes are increasing on campus.

Woodring said they receive very few reports on hate crimes and Bell asked the senators if they think it is a big problem.

"Harassment is on the rise," Pechter said. "People think because they're here, things don't apply to them anymore."

Pechter later said that it is the little crimes that make life for students uncomfortable, such as scalping tickets.

"(Scalping) isn't the biggest crime that we have out there," Bell said. "Basically officers are getting what we can."

After the program, Pechter said it was a wonderful evening for the senators and students who attended.

"We learned a lot," he said. "I got more out of this than I thought I would."

Crime

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College Democrats said. "The lack of prevention tends to be a problem with politicians in general."

But Eileen Grimm, president of College Republicans said she agrees with Ridge's current efforts.

"I agree with a crackdown on crime in general," she said.

Criticism directed toward Ridge is unjust, Grimm said. "I don't think it's just for self interest."

Others directly affected by the crime session's legislation agree with such criticisms.

Jim Jones, administrator for the Central Counties Youth Center, said that while the majority of the laws emanating from the special session may ease the public's concern, they will do little to deter crime, especially among juveniles.

"Kids are impulsive. They'll do some dumb things sometimes and don't think about the consequences," he said.

Jones, who is responsible for the five-county cooperative youth facility, said too much emphasis was placed on locking offenders up rather than offering them help in order to prevent future crimes.

"My philosophy is that locking a kid up without giving him any kind of treatment or any kind of counseling won't help in the long run," he said.

The reason for at least the initial emphasis on punishment rather than prevention is directly related to the public's demands, said Michael Young, director of the Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg.

Young said criticisms surrounding the crime session are somewhat unfair. The governor and the legislature, he said, have responded to the public's concern about crime. However, he said the impact of the legislation on criminal offenses is small.

"It's fair to say that what they did to reduce crime was pretty minimal," he said.

While he understands the commonwealth's reaction to crime, Young said prevention goes beyond the public's desire to lock criminals up.

"You can't stop by getting bad guys off of the street. There'll be more bad guys replacing them," he said. "That's a Band-Aid approach, but when you're bleeding you need a Band-Aid."

Hurricane hits Mexican coast

By ANITA SNOW
Associated Press Writer

TULUM, Mexico — Uprooting trees, toppling streetlights and leveling a concrete stadium, Hurricane Roxanne swept through a southern Mexican provincial capital yesterday during a daylong march across the Yucatan.

Roxanne's 75-mph winds tore through Campeche, a state capital of 175,000 people. There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries in the city or anywhere else in the hurricane's path.

Three thousand residents sought shelter from the storm, and television footage showed people wading through waist-high water.

The storm headed southwest late yesterday, sending shrimpers and oil workers fleeing to shore before it hit the city of Campeche, on the western Gulf coast of the peninsula, flinging tin roofs into the air.

The oil-rich lowlands of Mexico's southern Gulf Coast are still recovering from floods caused last week by Hurricane Opal, which killed at least 11 people in Mexico before veering north to hit the Florida Panhandle.

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