

## Vermont approves gay marriage law

By Ross Sneyd  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MONTPELIER, Vt. — Lawmakers gave final approval yesterday to legislation making Vermont the first state to grant gay couples nearly all of the rights and benefits of marriage.

The state House voted 79-68 for the "civil unions" bill, which was approved by the Senate last week. Democratic Gov. Howard Dean said he will sign it, possibly as soon as tomorrow. "I think the powerful message is that in Vermont, we tend to value people for who they are, not what they are," Dean said.

Three homosexual couples and their lawyers, who sued in 1997 when they were denied marriage licenses, watched in the crowded House chamber as the final roll was called.

Stacy Jolles and Nina Beck stood cradling their 5-month-old son, Seth. Peter Harrigan stood embracing Stan Baker, who held a small necklace from

which his parents' wedding rings dangled. And Holly Puterbaugh held hands with Lois Farnham, who wiped tears from her eyes.

"This isn't marriage, but it's a huge and powerful bundle of rights that we've finally gotten," Baker said.

The bill came about after the Vermont Supreme Court unanimously ruled in December that gay couples were being unconstitutionally denied the rights and benefits of marriage.

The court gave the Legislature time to decide whether to let gays marry or to create some kind of domestic partnership. It opted for a parallel system for homosexuals, creating what they called civil unions. After the bill takes effect July 1, couples will be able to go to their town clerks for licenses. Then they will have their unions certified by a justice of the peace, judge or member of the clergy.

Breakups will be handled in Family Court, just as divorces are, although they will be called dissolu-

tions. The more than 300 benefits that the state confers on married couples now will flow to same-sex couples, including the ability to make medical decisions on behalf of partners, inherit from each other without hefty taxes, and protection from having to testify against one another.

But there are responsibilities as well. For example, same-sex partners will have to assume each other's debt and pay child support.

Civil unions will not entitle couples to benefits bestowed by the federal government in areas such as Social Security and immigration. And most states will probably not recognize civil unions.

Still, no state has ever gone so far in recognizing gay relationships.

"I think this definitely places Vermont in the forefront in this country, places Vermont on par with Nordic and European countries and Canada," said Beth Robinson, a lawyer who argued the gay couples' case before the Vermont Supreme Court.



Beth Robinson, left, attorney, hugs Stan Baker, one of the complainants, yesterday after the Vermont Senate's approval of the bill.

## Student reports of Nike tour released

By Tim Swift  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Nike released yesterday the findings of college students, including one from Penn State, who toured the company's clothing factories in Asia, North America and Latin America this spring.

The program allowed 16 students to tour factories with representatives from Pricewaterhouse Coopers, an independent monitoring organization hired by Nike to inspect its factories. The students looked for violations in Nike's code of conduct and local labor laws.

Martin Austermuhle (junior-international politics) toured factories in Mexico while remaining students separately monitored factories in other countries, including China, the Dominican Republic and Canada.

Posted on Nike's Web site ([www.nikebiz.com](http://www.nikebiz.com)), the students' report was mostly positive. The students said most of the factories met health and safety standards, employed few underage workers and posted Nike's code of conduct for all employees to know their rights.

"What we have learned by having college students go on these tours is that the more we can open this up — demystify it — the better we can make people understand the complexity of this work," said Dusty Kidd, director of labor practices at Nike.

However, the student monitors complained the announced visits allowed factories to prepare and possibly hide violations. Also, the students who toured Latin America said many of the employees could not read and may not have been aware of their rights under the code of conduct.

"You wouldn't go in and see slave drivers," Austermuhle said in an earlier interview. "The problems were subtler."

Common problems cited in the report were forced overtime and inadequate fire safety measures. In an extreme case, Shubha Chakravaty, a graduate student at Stanford University who toured factories in Bangladesh and Indonesia, said at a factory in Bangladesh, six out of 25 workers interviewed said the management physically abused them.

While interviews with workers inside factories were convenient, workers may not have felt comfortable speaking candidly about labor practices because plant managers knew or could find out which workers were interviewed, student monitors said.

See NIKI, Page 12.



Van Wagner (graduate-agriculture education) sings on Old Main yesterday as part of the "Grassroots on the Lawn, Rally for Solidarity."

## STAR protesters leave Old Main

By Heather Cook  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Though the tents on Old Main Lawn came down yesterday afternoon, Penn State has not seen the last of Students for Accountability and Reform's spray-painted signs, speakers promised about 80 spectators at its rally yesterday afternoon.

The rally, formerly titled "Grassroots on the Lawn, Rally for Solidarity," was STAR's celebration of activism that, said Devon Swisher (senior-labor and industrial relations) as she introduced the speakers, "did not die with Vietnam."

The end of the campout comes on the 20th day of STAR's protest of Penn State's refusal to join the Worker Rights Consortium. The number of students in support of STAR grew from an original eight campers to 35 yesterday before they took down their tents.

Protesters decided to leave yesterday because they met their three major goals, said Justin Leto, co-founder of STAR.

The goals, he said, were that the administration decide to allow student substitutes for the committee created to review the WRC, that members of STAR be allowed to present at the committee and that a deadline for a decision had been set for Dec. 30.

Leto added, however, that just because STAR is leaving the lawn doesn't mean its mission has been accomplished. "Penn State is not for sale, and we will see to it that this university puts students ahead of corporate greed," he said in his speech.

After some musicians played to the audi-

ence, speakers took the mic and Julian Catchen, co-founder of STAR, listed the problems the university still has to solve.

He mentioned future plans to name a Penn State building for a bank, the university's refusal to release a textbook list and the high cost of renting space in the HUB-Robeson Center.

Catchen also talked about the mortgage Penn State has taken out on student activity fees to help pay for HUB construction, as well as a policy that doesn't allow faculty to bring items into classrooms that conflict with corporations like Pepsi.

"The university has to stop seeing students as consumers, faculty as streams of revenue and facilities as buildings for rent," he said. Other speakers addressed how important it was for students to become educated about global politics.

One speaker, Matthieu Dalle, who represented the Graduate and Fixed Term Employees Organization, encouraged spectators to get involved with helping the graduates get benefits and be allowed to unionize in the university. "We provide a service to the university, and we want to be recognized for that," he said.

John Stith, representative candidate for the Green Party, also addressed the audience to talk about the state of democracy in Pennsylvania and at Penn State.

When he asked how many students thought Penn State operated as a democracy, no hands went up.

"The question you should be asking is, 'How are you going to help make the campus more



Amir Joshua (senior-science, technology and society, and philosophy) and Reggie Brooks, former College of Education director of minority student relations, talk yesterday at Old Main.

democratic?" he told the audience. Students who have been living on Old Main for the last three weeks said moving back indoors would be sad for them in some ways.

"I'll miss the people," said Dan Uncles (senior-American studies) after the speeches. "We were forced to be out here, but we all learned a lot from each other."

## Inside

### Growing up

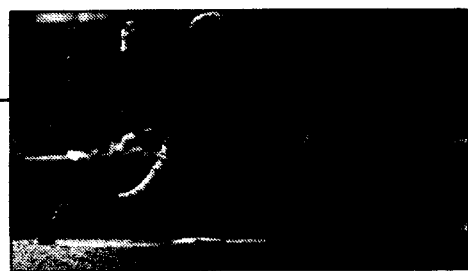
Penn State pitcher Dan Goebeler has grown up in his four years at Happy Valley and now has the Nittany Lion baseball team approaching the top of the Big Ten standings and in search of a conference crown. | SPORTS, Page 13

### Rest in peace

Another pizzeria in downtown State College was forced to close its doors this week. Competition for students' business moved Peace A Pizza to shut down after a rocky two years of business at its East College Avenue location. LOCAL, Page 4

### Abortion debate

In the Supreme Court's most important decision since 1992, six of the nine justices voiced concern yesterday about a Nebraska law, similar to those in 29 other states, banning a surgical procedure opponents call a "partial birth abortion." | NATIONAL, Page 5



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## Workshop, worship celebrate goddesses

By Allissa Wisnouse  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Twelve women sat in a darkened circle Monday night, chanting about their womanly strength, power and sexuality in a goddess-worship ritual influenced by Pagan and Wiccan beliefs.

The women attended a program in Eisenhower Chapel sponsored by Silver Circle and Womyn's Concerns about goddess-based spirituality.

"I think all women can benefit from seeing themselves as somehow like the divine," said Aase Wiborg (graduate-Spanish), a practitioner of feminist spirituality. "I'm not promoting that everybody become practitioners of feminist spirituality. I think spirituality is what's right for you and ultimately about what helps you to find inner peace to live a productive and ethical life."

Wiborg said one of the reasons for doing a workshop and worship ceremony for the goddess on campus is to let people who are interested know about the divine as female.

"We live in a society where not everybody even knows it's possible to see the divine as woman. I didn't know that until I was 19 years old, and when I did, it was like an epiphany," she said.

When other religions see women as passive, it becomes difficult to have a relationship with the divine as feminine, Wiborg said.

"I don't see them (other belief systems) as inherently oppressive," she said. "What I think is that human institutions have used their own interpretation of the word of god — whatever god is — to abuse people, not just women, but indigenous people, poor people, even the general population. I don't think there's anything wrong with seeing god as genderless or god as male, but I do think it's wrong to use those beliefs to make part of the population feel bad about themselves."

The workshop and ritual were influenced by Paganism in which the earth's fertility cycle is central to spiritual beliefs, Wiborg said. The Wiccan-based ritual focused on

empowering the female self through goddess worship.

Wiccans generally worship two deities, one male and one female, but the goddess took center stage Monday night.

During the workshop segment, the women were given words associated with women, such as "virginity," "pregnancy" and "femininity." First, they brainstormed about how society views these words, and the findings were primarily negative and passive. These words were then redefined with positive images: "menstruation" changed from unclean and disgusting to life giving and natural.

During the ritual segment, the women hailed the four quarters (North, East, South and West) and invoked them to join the ritual. In darkness, with closed or lowered eyes, they used deep breathing to allow inner energy to ground into the earth and expand into a collective bubble enclosing the room.

"It's more of an intuitive spirituality," said Michelle Yates (sophomore-women's student). See GODDESSES, Page 12.