



Megan Kanagy/Collegian

Congressman Glenn Thompson, R-Pa., talks to students about Israel and other political issues at the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center on Saturday.

Thompson talks Israel, politics

By Megan Rogers
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Visiting with a small group of students Saturday afternoon, U.S. Congressman Glenn Thompson said he counts Israel as an important ally and supports its status as a Jewish nation.

Penn State Hillel President Michal Berns (junior-media law and policy) organized the event, inviting Thompson, R-Pa., so students could hear their legislator's opinion on the issue. The event was attended by members of College Republicans, College Democrats, Hillel, University Park Undergraduate Association, Students for Justice in Palestine and several other groups and students.

Thompson began the roundtable discussion by recounting the weeklong trip he took to Israel this past August. Thompson called the trip — where he met with government and military leaders, as well as everyday citizens — an enlightening experience. Visits to a children's playground with a bomb shelter, border settlements and a home that helped children who had lived through war all made an impression, he said.

Thompson joined 60 other freshmen congressmen on his trip.

"We came away very committed to supporting Israel," he said.

After hearing about Thompson's trip to Israel, the

audience asked the congressman questions about the Middle East and other topics, including nuclear weapons, changes in the missile defense system and whether Israel should be allowed to continue as a Jewish state.

"My commitment is that we support [Israel's formation] as a Jewish nation," he said.

Students had varying reactions to Thompson's stances on issues.

"I thought Congressman Thompson gave good, balanced answers," said Samuel Settle (sophomore-political science and history), the executive director of the Penn State College Republicans and a volunteer for Thompson's campaign in 2008.

But members of Students for Justice in Palestine said they were disappointed with the congressman's presentation.

"I was annoyed he doesn't support international law," the group's president David McLaughlin (senior-electrical engineering) said of Thompson's stance on border settlements.

Thompson also shared some thoughts on "Climategate," tuition increases and the locally proposed tuition tax, which he called a "terrible idea."

"This certainly is what democracy is about, being able to listen to other people's opinion whether or not you agree with them, but they all have the freedom to express them," Berns wrote in an e-mail.

NOW awards local women

By Evan Trowbridge
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

State College Borough Council President and Mayor-elect Elizabeth Goreham was one of three women honored by the Pennsylvania National Organization for Women (NOW) Saturday at the Nittany Lion Inn during the organization's biannual state convention.

In its first convention held in Centre County in more than 25 years, Pennsylvania NOW presented three Molly Yard Woman of Courage Awards to Goreham, State College Police Department Detective Deirdri Fishel and Peggy Lorah, director of Penn State's Center of Women Students.

Goreham received the award in recognition of her work with the State College Human Relations Commission and for supporting State College's employment anti-discrimination ordinance, which was passed in December 2007.

"I'm really quite humbled by it," Goreham said of the award. She emphasized the role that Pennsylvania NOW President Joanne Tosti-Vasey had in helping her with her work for the borough.

When presenting Goreham

with the award, Tosti-Vasey said the anti-discrimination ordinance Goreham supported was one of the "most comprehensive in the state, if not the country."

After receiving the award and giving Tosti-Vasey a thankful hug, Goreham briefly spoke on how her attendance at the convention has helped her gain insight on some of the issues facing State College and Centre County.

"I learned a lot about my community and our needs, but also the amount of dedicated efforts that are being put forth here," Goreham said. Specifically, the future mayor mentioned learning about how Centre County is one of the worst areas in the state for finding affordable housing for low-income people.

Fishel was recognized for her work in reducing domestic violence in Centre County as the case manager of the Center County Victim Centered Intensive Care Management Unit.

"I can't tell you what this means to be recognized individually for what I always think is a team effort," Fishel said. "If you guys keep pushing us forward, we'll keep doing it."

Lorah, a member of the Centre County Task Force on Sexual and Relationship Violence and Penn State's Coalition to Address

Relationship and Sexual Violence, was recognized for the award based on her work in the Penn State community.

Tosti-Vasey touted Lorah's resilience in facing Penn State's administration concerning women's rights issues. In 2006, Lorah even helped lead a call for the resignation of Joe Paterno, citing some of the coach's past comments as derogatory to women.

The namesake of the awards, Molly Yard, was a former president of NOW from 1987 to 1991 and a Pittsburgh resident.

Other events at the convention included unison phone calls to Pennsylvania senators Arlen Specter and Bob Casey to advocate single-payer health care and a videoconference with congressman and Senate hopeful Joe Sestak (D-Pa.).

During the convention, elections were held to determine positions for the next two years in Pennsylvania NOW.

Centre County residents to receive elected positions for the organization include Tosti-Vasey, of Bellefonte, who will continue as president, and Shani Robin, of State College, who will be an at-large member.

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Runners endure cold for charity

By Megan Rogers
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Despite the cold and ice from Saturday's snowfall, the 26th annual Nittany Valley Half-Marathon had more runners this year than ever before.

About 500 runners came out for the race, which was sponsored by the Nittany Valley Running Club.

Profits from the race are donated to the Centre Volunteers in Medicine, a local non-profit group providing no-cost health care to uninsured people in central Pennsylvania.

A final count of the donations was not available as of press time.

"Fundraisers like this are what keep us going," CVIM board of directors member Tom Cali said.

Jacob Loverich, of State College, finished first with a time

of 1:17:43. Molly Ritter, of Arendtsville, Pa., was the first female finisher at 1:28:17.

Ice was a problem for some runners, race director Dave Egger said. Runner Jackie Rohrbeck said she saw several people fall because of the ice.

"In spite of the snow, a lot of people came," Egger said. The majority of runners were from State College, but many also came from New Jersey, Delaware, Ohio and Maryland.

The race began at 10 a.m. in the Snider Agricultural Arena parking lot and ended in the Centre County Visitor's Bureau parking lot, making it a 13.1-mile trip.

The course was run mainly on university service and rural roads, with runners looping around the service roads twice and running past the University Park Airport before heading back

toward the stadium on Porter Road.

"It was challenging, but challenging in the right spot — the end," said Tom Fanning, who ran the race with six other members of the Indiana Road Runners Club. The hills are all in the last three miles of the race, with a 160-foot rise in the last mile and a half.

Nicole Irizarry (sophomore-veterinary and biomedical sciences) said the end was miserable and that she was thrilled to see the finish line.

"Temperature-wise, it was colder than ideal, but that's what you get for running in State College in December," she said.

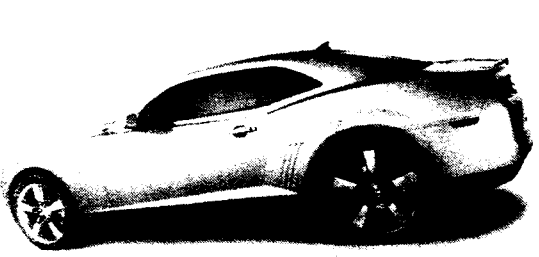
Runners said the wind and ice were problematic but that the landscape was gorgeous.

"It was beautiful with all the snow — the scenery was great," Rohrbeck said.

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