

Lab explosion closes building

By Casey McDermott
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

A chemical spill in an unattended room sparked a small explosion inside the Materials Research Lab (MRL) Monday morning, prompting a two-hour evacuation of the building.

Inside the second-floor laboratory of Craig Grimes, two liquids came in contact with one another and sparked the reaction at about 11:30 a.m., Penn State spokeswoman Jill Shockey said. One bot-

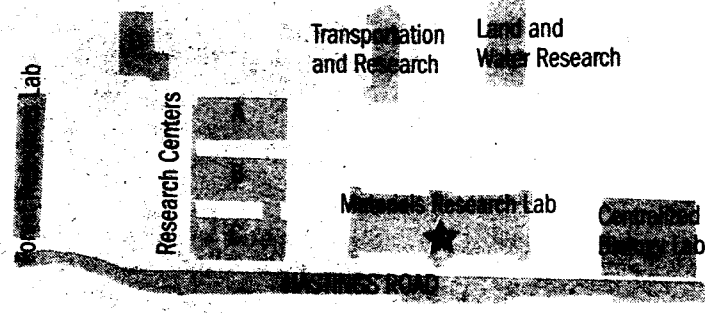
tle contained a mixture of nitric and sulfuric acid, and the other was a mixture of ethylene glycol and ammonium chloride, Shockey said.

No injuries were reported and the spill's damage was minimal, only amounting to some broken glass and spilled liquids, Shockey said. But as a precaution, the building was evacuated and the adjacent Hastings Road was temporarily closed off, she said.

While sitting in his office just around the corner from the lab

Small chemical explosion

The Materials Research Lab was evacuated and Hastings Road was closed between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Monday.



Source: campusmaps.psu.edu

Sandra Fung/Collegian

room, Lucas Witmer said he was within earshot of the small explosion.

"It sounded like someone dropped a large bucket of water from four to five feet up in the air,"

Witmer (graduate-energy and mineral engineering) said. "It was like a loud 'thud' and then a 'swoosh.'"

Within a matter of seconds, See **EXPLOSION**, Page 2.

Pres. set to meet club

Eco-Action to fight coal

By Paul McMullen
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Three weeks ago, Eco-Action marched across campus to promote sustainability. Today, the group continues that march into Penn State President Graham Spanier's office to fine-tune the university's plan to become carbon-neutral.



Spanier

Members of Eco-Action, the oldest environmental group on campus, will meet with Spanier and other high-ranking administrators today at 2:30 p.m. During the meeting, they will request that the university shut down its coal plant and commit to a plan which will transition to using 100 percent renewable energy on campus, said Chris Tutolo (sophomore-journalism), Eco-Action public relations officer.

"President Spanier has a choice — he can make Penn State a nationwide leader in renewable energy use or he can continue to use old, dirty energy," he said. "Either decision will affect the student body and the environment for decades to come."

Spanier granted the meeting after Eco-Action marched from the West Campus Steam Plant to Old Main to deliver a petition that urged the university to become more sustainable.

The petition was signed by a number of student groups, State College Mayor Elizabeth Goreham, university officials and internationally renowned environmentalist Bill McKibben.

Eco-Action members believe a major step the university can take toward becoming more sustainable is to close the on-campus coal plant.

The plant, which has been an energy source for 270 buildings for almost 80 years, would cost roughly \$200 million to entirely convert to clean energy, Penn State spokeswoman Lisa Powers said.

"We recognize that there is a lot of common ground on this issue and decisions on major investments such as an upgrade of the West Campus Steam Plant are complex," she said. "The See **ECO-ACTION**, Page 2.

Dem. talks issues

By Katrina Wehr
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Dan Onorato pitched his ideas for keeping higher education affordable at the Penn State Grassroots Network Education Forum Monday afternoon.

In collaboration with the Commonwealth Campus Student Government, Graduate Student Association and with the support of the University Park Undergraduate Association, the Grassroots Network hosted a discussion about issues of higher education.

"We were looking for open conversation and dialogue about higher education issues in a higher education setting," said Alan Janesch, director of the Grassroots Network.

Republican gubernatorial candidate Tom Corbett was also invited to participate in the event, but was unable to attend, Janesch said.

The program began with CCSG member DJ Ryan talking to the audience about Penn State's status as Pennsylvania's only land grant university and the benefits of such a status.

"Penn State's land grant mission is alive and well, both here and across the Commonwealth Campuses," Ryan (senior-communication arts and sciences) said.

Ryan also talked about shrinking state appropriations and the federal stimulus package Penn State receives, which ends this year.

Onorato, Class of 1983, then gave the audience a quick overview of his plans for keeping higher education affordable and accessible for Pennsylvania's students before taking questions from the audience.

His ideas included revamping the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency to make sure every dollar going into the agency is going back into grants to help students, Onorato said.

See **ONORATO**, Page 2.

A KNIGHT'S TALE



Venkatesh Krishnan/Collegian

David Frister (junior-mechanical and nuclear engineering) and Brad Winters battle in full knight costume on the HUB-Robeson Center lawn on a balmy Monday afternoon. They are members of the Society for Creative Anachronism.

SJP listed as 'anti-Israel'

By Alyssa Bender
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Anti-Defamation League ranked Students for Justice in Palestine the ninth most influential anti-Israel organization in the U.S. — but leaders from Penn State's chapter of SJP disagree with the ranking.

"It's wrong," said Heather Qader, president of Penn State's chapter of SJP.

"We're here to put aware-

ness out. There's no hate."

The ADL, an organization that fights anti-Semitism worldwide, describes this list as "groups [that] demonize Israel through various public campaigns."

The ADL's list was compiled using a variety of factors, including organizing anti-Israel rallies quickly, utilizing social networking sites effectively to broaden membership and bringing in speakers on anti-Israel subject matter, said Adina Holzman, an

analyst in ADL's Center on Extremism.

"We thought SJP was a very important group to include because of its significant presence in colleges around the country," she said.

Qader (senior-international politics) said SJP primarily works to educate the public to promote human rights through speakers, demonstrations, and protests — sometimes using a See **STUDENTS**, Page 2.

Conklin shaped by Centre Region roots

By Katrina Wehr
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

If someone asked Scott Conklin in high school what he wanted on his tombstone, his answer would be far from what it is now.

As a student at Philipsburg Osceola Senior High School, Scott Conklin never imagined he would become involved in politics.

"When I was in high school, politics was the farthest thing from my mind," Conklin said.

He came from a lower middle class family, he said. His mother worked as a night custodian for the school, and cleaned at the area hospital during the day.

Conklin's father ran a bread route before getting into carpentry, and Conklin followed in his father's footsteps after graduation. He attended Clearfield County Career and Technology Center for carpentry, and later went back to become a licensed air conditioning technician.

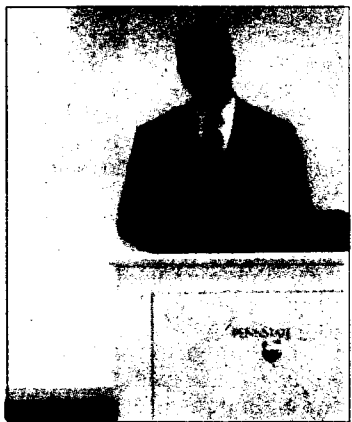
He was working in the construction business when he heard a program on the radio with people talking about what they wanted on their tombstones, what they wanted to be remembered for after their lives were over.

"Before I knew it, I started running for office," Conklin said. "I See **CONKLIN**, Page 2.



Peter Tesonero/Collegian

Scott Conklin answers questions during a press conference in March.



Tyler Sizemore/Collegian

Gubernatorial candidate Dan Onorato speaks about higher education Monday afternoon.

Lt. Michael P. Murphy/Veterans Plaza | "Old Willow" Tree and Class of 2011 Trustee Scholarship | Penn State Alma Mater Display

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