

Family, friends honor owner

By Casey McDermott
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Some afternoons, Charles Petnick's routine was simple.

He'd stroll into his clothing store — a slice of pizza and a Coke in hand — find a comfortable seat on the leopard-print couch in the back of the boutique and listen as customers browsing through racks of sweaters and dresses told stories about the clothing they'd bought there.

Petnick, the co-founder and longtime owner of Mr. Charles, 228 E. College Ave., died Thursday morning at age 98 — but his amicable nature and seven-decade legacy on the State College fashion scene still live on in the eyes of those who were close to him.

"He loved to live," Charlene Rosen, the current owner of Mr. Charles, said of her father. "And through all of the different things



Collegian file photo

Shoppers look at items inside Mr. Charles, 228 E. College Ave.

that evolved over the last century, he evolved, too."

But along the way, Rosen said, Mr. Charles evolved, too.

Petnick and his wife, Mary Louise, first brought Mr. Charles to State College in 1940, Rosen said.

The couple, newlyweds at the time, came from Altoona, Pa., to open a men's clothing store on Allen Street, Rosen said.

In a matter of years, though, World War II began — the Petnicks were left with few potential men's apparel customers, Rosen said — so the store changed directions and began catering to women's fashion instead. The boutique's owners, selection and storefront have changed a few times since then, Rosen said, but her parents' mission remained simple: it was all about providing one-of-a-kind pieces and a shopping experience that meant something to its customers.

"It's really full of tradition,"

Rosen said. "Everyone who comes back to the store has a memory from it — whether it was one year ago or 40 years ago."

Rosen said she's heard countless stories through the years of women who still hold onto the graduation outfits, prom dresses or other heirloom pieces that they bought from Mr. Charles, which celebrates its 71st anniversary this year. Veronica Burk, Mr. Charles' manager, as manager, Burk said Mr. Charles and the Petnicks have become like family to her. Today, a framed picture of Petnick, smiling and surrounded by Mr. Charles employees at a company party last winter, sits on the front counter of the store.

To both Burk and Rosen, that positive spirit is what made "Mr. Charles" — the man and the boutique — a State College institution.

"I think his name will live on forever," Burk said.

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Media helps student adjust to U.S. culture

Series Note: This is the third in a five-part series profiling international students.

By Danae Blasso
and Cassandra Wiggins
FOR THE COLLEGIAN



Fahad Taimur has chosen to expand his education in the United States, but his true roots lie over 7,000 miles away from Happy Valley.

In July of 2008, Taimur (junior-chemical engineering) trekked to the U.S. as an incoming freshman at Penn State's Lehigh Valley campus, where he was an officer of the Honors Club. Taimur was raised in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, which is near the nation's capital, Islamabad.

Taimur said most of his family resides in Lehigh Valley, but some loved ones still live in Pakistan.

Urdu, the language of Pakistan, is not the only language he is fluent in, Taimur said.

"I used to watch some American shows and movies in Pakistan from a young age, so I learned [English] from that," he said. "The language was kind of a barrier because at first making friends and stuff is hard."

Taimur said sometimes he has difficulty with reading English, but in regard to his major, he has not experienced much trouble.

He said he did not experience complete culture shock when he moved to the U.S., since the Internet and the news showed him what to expect.

The national dress of Pakistan is "salwar kameez," a long dress, but this is not the only difference between the U.S. and Pakistan, he said.

"For food, we usually eat like curry or rice or something like that, but I pretty much enjoy food from any country," he said. "Usually I eat fast food, most the time it's some Italian food like

pizza or macaroni — mac and cheese."

Though he has been exposed to different ideas and cultures, Taimur said he is still deeply involved with his Muslim religion.

"Over here, life is slightly different as being a Muslim is concerned, because you are not surrounded by as many Muslims as you would be [in Pakistan]," he said. "But I do like interacting with people from different cultures and different religions."

Taimur said people generally accept his religion, but there have been instances where people were "racist, judgmental or maybe just ignorant."

Being in America gives him more opportunities to explore different languages, cultures, and ideas, Taimur said.

"Something which may be shocking to you before coming here, might become acceptable to you after," he said.

Taimur lives with three roommates — one Pakistani student and two Syrian students.

Majd Daher (junior-chemical engineering), one of Taimur's Syrian roommates, said he met Taimur at the Lehigh Valley campus and the two became friends.

"Fahad is very open and friendly with everyone," Daher said. "He just loves to interact with people and learn everything — he's just ambitious about life."

Taimur said he hopes to work for a pharmaceutical company in a major city, plans on becoming a U.S. citizen and wants to live here for the next 20 to 30 years.

After traveling the world and retiring, he said he intends to return to Pakistan.

He's not unhappy being away from home, though.

"Getting good grades every semester, learning more stuff just makes me happy," Taimur said. "Most of my family is here, so meeting them also makes me happy."

IFC warns of suspicious man

By Casey McDermott
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Leaders from both the Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council sent e-mails Thursday warning members to be on the lookout for a man who arrived in State College on Wednesday after having sent "inappropriate and creepy" messages to a female student on Facebook.

IFC President Max Wendkos sent an e-mail to all fraternity chapter presidents Thursday warning them to be on the lookout for a suspicious man who has

been harassing a sorority member at Penn State, and PHC members confirmed that a similar message was sent to Penn State sororities.

According to the e-mail from Wendkos (senior-marketing and psychology), which was forwarded to all IFC fraternity members, the man arrived in State College Wednesday after harassing the student online and telling her that now is the time for them to be together. When he arrived, Wendkos said the man was greeted at the bus stop by police who "cautioned him to stay away from the girl that he had been harass-

ing," to which he responded that he would respect their wishes.

Penn State Police said they are investigating the man involved but would not confirm whether criminal charges had been filed against him or if he had been arrested as of press time.

In a separate interview, Wendkos said that to his knowledge, the man was previously involved in an incident at the University of Maryland where he posed as a fraternity brother from a separate college and trespassed onto several properties.

To e-mail reporter: cmm5773@psu.edu

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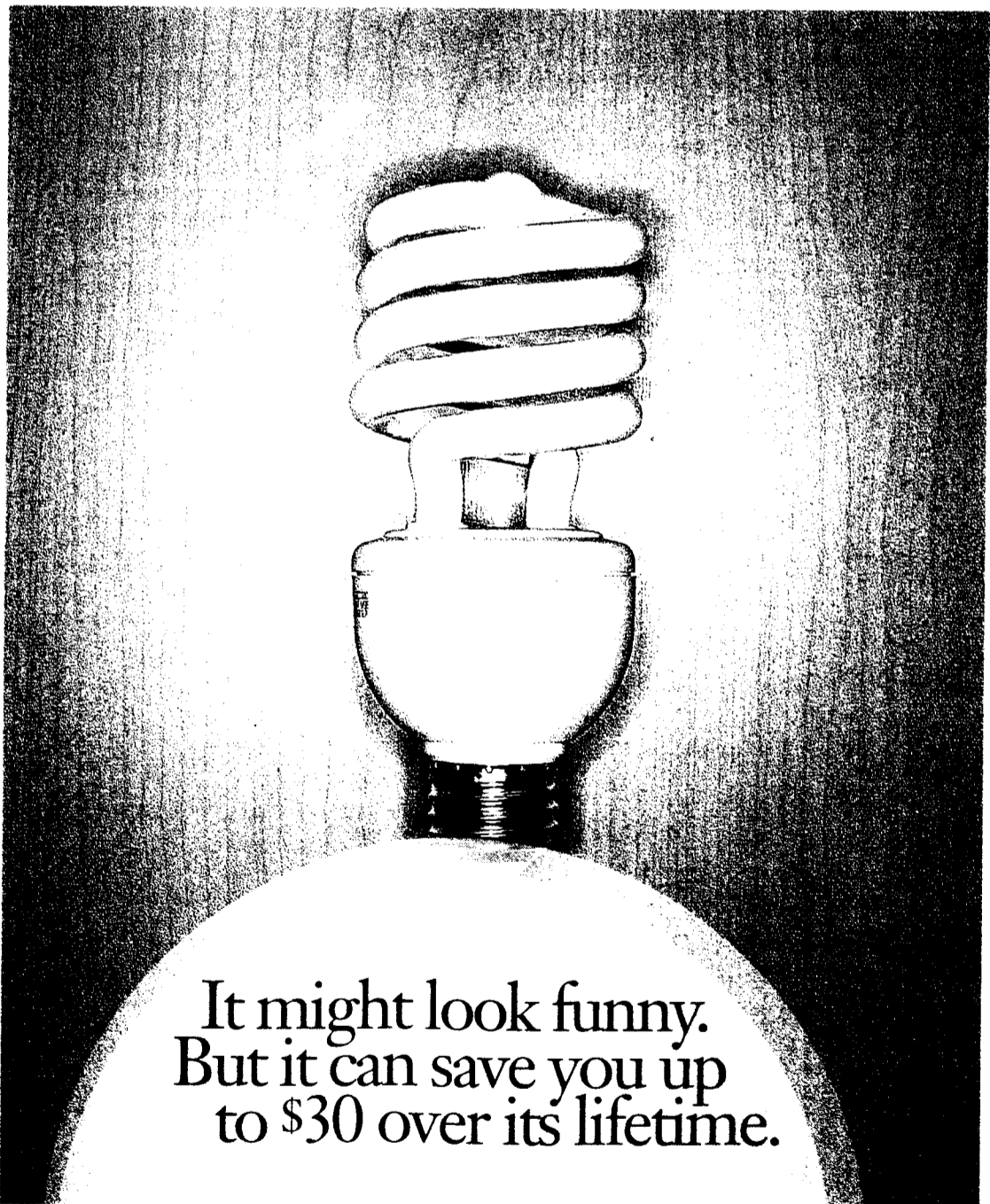
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Questions may be directed to the State College Department of Ordinance Enforcement & Public Health at 814-234-7191 or healthdept@statecollegepa.us



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