

SO WHAT IS **Froth** ANYWAY?

With a dozen or more years off for bad behavior, **Froth** was more than a sometimes funny, sex-oriented, audacious, sophomoric college humor magazine that regularly ignited Penn Staters from 1909 to 1984. **Froth** was a happening that became an institution. Unlike its stalwart companion, *The Daily Collegian*, **Froth** was tolerated but not unduly encouraged. **Froth** had to make people want to buy it and in the process became the bane of the prudish and champion of causes. It could also be very funny in the process.

Each fall a new group of student editors directed eager neophytes through literary minefields of mirth and satire. Success brought national honors. Prewar **Froth** was sold in Wanamaker's and in chic bookstores in Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh. One sublime poem even made *Bartlett's Quotations*. **Froth's** potential for impact on the campus was always a real one. Whether it followed the curve or preceded it may be matters for discussion, but at least twice in that seventy-five year span, **Froth's** efforts were linked to significant changes at Penn State. The first was in 1935, two years after prohibition's repeal. That collegiate essential, beer, was flowing again, but "blue meanies" forced a referendum. Students were aghast, but voteless. Sensing a cause célèbre, **Frothy** became the voice of the opposition and the most feared, most dreaded referendum was defeated by seven votes!

Of more lasting importance, after World War II, **Froth** supported student appeals for campus improvements. Along with the gags and the gibes, a 1947 guest editorial by Fred Waring, Penn State's preeminent troubadour, implored the College (then) to build a "suitable new auditorium." Plans were laid for Eisenhower Auditorium! In 1948 **Froth** asked graduating seniors, "... not to forget campus needs when they had achieved money, power, prestige... on the outside... when they would be the ones who could help build a student union, swimming pool, student co-op and increase teaching pay." History proved they did remember. All these goals came to pass and more!

Froth's most important function was to be an unfettered outlet for students' feelings about their university and how they were being educated. In the process many staffers had their first experiences with free enterprise, entrepreneurial requirements, editorial integrity, and how to laugh at one's problems. Many graduated into communications careers where they continued to write, draw, or design for the amusement and betterment of all.

*Some may not even remember.
Some may not have totally forgot.
But most will never have known
The works of this once foolish lot.*

A r t W a r d A N D A r t S t o b e r