

Eyes turn to victims

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Saturday, a ceremony and procession were held in memory of Melanie Spalla. Jenelle Lockard, friend of Spalla, lit the candle that stands on the HUB



Photo by Michelle Gruendl

GIFTS OF MEMORY: This tree is near the spot where Nicholas Mensah was wounded.

lawn that burns as a constant reminder of the pain that all involved have endured. The procession started at Schwab Auditorium down Pollock Road to the HUB lawn where Spalla drew her last breath. The procession stopped at the spot of Spalla's death, as solemn and tear stained faces stopped to pay their respects.

There were also candles lit for Nicholas Mensah, who was shot in the abdomen. Mensah was transferred from Centre

**"We need to have an ending so we can somehow try to move on."
-Randyn Hoffman**



Photo by Michelle Gruendl

A VIEW ACROSS THE HUB LAWN: Looking across the lawn, the spot where Melanie Spalla was fatally shot (pictured below with the wreath) is almost in the center of the photo.

Community Hospital to Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia. He is listed in stable condition, however, his physical condition has not changed.

The longing for closure was summed up by senior journalism student, Randyn Hoffman, who said, "We need to have an ending so we can somehow try to move on."

Information courtesy The Digital Collegian located at <http://www.collegian.psu.edu> and University Relations at <http://www.ur.psu.edu>.

Personal Feature with Michelle Gruendl:

A visit to the HUB lawn

by Michelle Gruendl with Jennifer V. Colvin

I feel very sheltered at college; so sheltered that I'm scared to death to graduate and head out into the real world with real things and real problems.

But my personal sense of shelter was shattered last week. For most at University Park, the

security blanket was snatched away Tuesday morning after the blunt reality of the shooting set in.

But for me, my security blanket fell away a few days later on Saturday while visiting UP and viewing the HUB lawn.

Though many may not think this visit emotional, it was very much for me.

In the absence of the caution tape removed on the day before, the entire campus was somber.

The day of Melanie Spalla's funeral Saturday was real eye opener for me.

THE HUB LAWN

On Saturday, I traveled to UP to visit my best friend. While there, we spent a few hours walking around campus and eventually ended up at the HUB lawn.

All around me were people; people studying, playing and enjoying the sun.

I don't know why, but I was surprised.

I could not believe how four days before, police crowded the lawn their cruisers and yellow police tape, and now there are people back on the lawn.

It's good to move on, but I was surprised that things were going back to normal so quickly.

As I walked across the lawn, people were setting up volleyball nets and studying everywhere... except near the flowers.

The flowers were not planted, but left by people in memory of Spalla and in honor of Nicholas Mensah, victims of last Tuesday's shooting.

You can't forget; it's not something you can forget - not if you're on that lawn... seeing the flowers and candles, seeing the ambulance and police car tracks in the lawn.

Although there were a lot of people on that lawn, the area seemed to have an invisible fence around it.

No one crosses the fence because I think they are afraid to remember. It may be their way of trying to move on... dealing with the pain or emotion.

The one's that do cross the



Photo by Michelle Gruendl

MY STOMACH DROPPED: "Standing in the tire tracks (below) you feel your stomach flop and it goes directly through your heart." - M. Gruendl

The flowers above are at the fence where Melanie Spalla died.



fence are remembering; that may be their way of dealing with it.

When visiting a battlefield of days gone by, you feel remorse, but feel safe; it's a detached feeling because it happened in the past.

But the people who were involved that day on the lawn were all my age struggling with the same things I am; it is easier

to connect with someone who was killed yesterday than a victim of a violent act 100 years ago.

Like everyone else, I question over and over again why - but we may never know.

What I do know is that this was an unfortunate event which has touched all of us in some way. I will never forget my walk on the HUB lawn that day...

Letter to the Editor: High school friend expresses grief after shooting

Everyone on campus was shocked after hearing about last Tuesday's shooting at University Park, and I am sure that it has been the subject of a lot of conversations lately. But, I don't think that very many people were as shocked as I was when I found out the name of the assailant.

Jillian Robbins was a high school friend of mine, and at first I was not sure if it was her because she always spelled her name with a "g", so we used to call her Jill with a "G." But, that was only something she did, her legal name was Jillian, spelled with a "J."

I really have mixed feelings about the whole situation. My sympathy goes out to the family and friends of the victims, but I have equal sympathy for Jill, most likely because I knew her.

We were not what you would call best friends, but we were together a lot in school. We had some classes together and we both had a love of horses. Actually that is what we talked about most, was horses. Jill was an excellent artist, she drew very well. I still have several horse pictures that she drew for me. Jill was strange, but she was not psychotic when I knew her.

It has been reported that she has a history of mental problems, but she was not like that when I knew

her. These problems must have started and escalated over the past two years. She was a very nice girl in high school, when I knew her.

I definitely do not want her to get the death penalty, she needs help and she was "normal" at one time, so I am sure she can get back to that way.

I guess most of all I feel badly that I did not keep in touch with her. I think a lot of her feelings and psychotic tendencies stem from the fact that she did not feel accepted by society. From the way it sounds she did not have many friends.

If I would have kept in touch with her, maybe she would've known that she had a friend and maybe it could've changed things, but maybe it wouldn't have, I don't know.

I do know that this incident has left an impact on a lot of people and I know there are mixed feelings about what her punishment should be.

This situation has really hit my high school and friends hard. On that note, I have one thing to say to Behrend students about this, next time you leave a school, whether you are transferring or graduating, think of Jill with a "G" and try not to lose contact with your friends, because you may one day be in the same situation I am.

- Jennie Kuhne