

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter in response to two stories that appeared in last week's *Behrend College Collegian*. I'd like to clarify several issues.

Colleen Fromknecht's opinion piece on the student activity fee questioned the integrity of the activity fee allocation process, and that disappoints me. On behalf of the Student Activity Fee Allocation Committee, I had submitted a two-page progress report to the *Collegian* on Tuesday, February 11 in an effort to ensure that the newspaper staff would have good information about the process and rationale, and the status of the committee's deliberations.

I was disappointed that the paper carried no story on the work of the committee. Instead, an opinion was published, the author of which had neither read the progress report nor had done much, if any, fact-finding prior to alleging that the committee members had "cheesy ethics." I do not take issue with the decision to print an opinion, but since the issue of ethics has been raised, I'd like to suggest that there is an ethical problem associated with printing an opinion which criticizes the character of individuals without

making an effort to understand their point of view

Allow me to summarize the allocation process. First, consistent with University-wide guidelines, the activity fee committee is comprised of seven students, two staff, and a faculty member, and is appointed jointly by the SGA President and the Dean of Students. Care was taken to ensure that the committee would be representative of the student community, including commuters and resident students, returning adults, student athletes, student government leaders, students of color, Honors students, and students representing every year of a four-year academic program and all four academic units of the College. Seven of the ten committee members served on the 1996-97 committee.

The committee invited campus-wide input into this year's planning process. A letter outlining the process and guidelines, with a student activity fee suggestion form, was mailed to every Penn State-Behrend student, faculty member, and staff member. A full-page *Collegian* advertisement also invited student input, as well as a poster campaign and an e-mail memo sent to faculty and staff.

More than \$400,000 in suggested uses of the fee revenue were received from all College constituencies. Every suggestion was reviewed, discussed, and where appropriate, researched by committee members. Because of the large number of suggestions and issues that the committee had to consider, its preliminary discussions were not public in an effort to ensure that all committee members had the opportunity and comfort to discuss openly with one another every possible issue and concern without fear of misrepresentation. As noted above, a written progress report, outlining items that the committee had tentatively agreed to recommend for activity fee funding, was submitted to the *Collegian* on February 11, but the newspaper chose not to write a story. The final preliminary report is printed in another full-page, paid advertisement in this issue. Questions and comments are welcomed and may be directed to any committee members.

I'd like to say a final word about the integrity of the committee members, particularly the students. We held four long evening meetings, including a Friday evening meeting. The students made this work a priority by attending meetings, and they did their homework. One student

committee member lives 90 minutes from the campus and is a returning adult who must balance family with University life. On one occasion when she had an early morning class the day after a meeting, she slept on a friend's floor in a residence hall in order not to neglect her responsibility to represent students on the committee. The decisions of the committee were, in the final analysis, student-driven. I commend the students who made this important work a priority.

I'd also like to comment briefly on the article entitled, "WPSE loses activity fee money." The article contains several inaccuracies, beginning with the title. WPSE did receive one-time supplemental activity fee funding last year in order to provide time for a new marketing idea to be tested. That was a difficult and controversial decision, the rationale for which included a vision for a future radio station that would be self-supporting and would offer students an educational opportunity, and the community a programming opportunity.

WPSE's marketing plan has been successful to date and no additional funding was requested this year from the activity fee committee. The station didn't request and lose funding as might

be concluded by some who read this article, but rather, it honored its commitment to students to become self-supporting and not to request additional activity fee funding.

While this year's priority for WPSE has been fund-raising, the future vision of WPSE is to involve many more students in a wider variety of station experiences, including production work, marketing efforts, interviews of corporate leaders, and the more traditional aspects of operating the radio board.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment and clarify.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Reber
Dean of Student Affairs

Should there be a Johnday?

by John Amorose
Collegian Staff

While making my bi-weekly trip home, my mother proposed a very interesting concept. She said that she could better handle her work load if she only had another day in the week. I thought nothing of it, at first, but when some friends of mine brought this same idea up a couple of days later, I started pondering the advantages of having an eight day week. This proposal could solve the world's problems: there would be no war, violence would take a sharp decline, and mankind would enter a golden age of peace and prosperity. All right, maybe not, but it's pretty cool to dream, though.

Think about it. A day after Sunday, but before Monday. Let's call it Johnday (blatant self-promotion!). Being college students, there are several extremely useful reasons for this day. First of all, for those of us who travel home for weekends throughout the semester, those precious few hours on Sunday just aren't enough. In that time, we must do homework which was neglected over the weekend, give our roommate/friends a vivid recap of the events that occurred at home, do

laundry, as well as many other obligations. With the establishment of Johnday, students can relax on Sunday evening, and be more refreshed throughout the week. Also, with Johnday being class free, homework or studying from either the previous week or the week to come can be completed, causing a rise in students' grades, thus opening a broader selection of post-graduation job opportunities.

Aside from the increase in school performance, there's the physical effects. How much relaxing does the average student do on the weekends? Saturdays are usually spent recovering from Friday night, and trying to make plans for Saturday night. Sundays are usually spent recovering from, and sometimes regretting what happened on Saturday night. And just like that, the weekend's gone, and the next week is upon you. But if you had a day in which you could do the things you forgot, or just didn't do over the weekend, plus sleep, and maybe catch up on a little TV, wouldn't you feel great? I know that I would. Stress would be reduced and students' overall self-esteem would increase greatly, causing a more pleasant atmosphere around campus, especially on those dreaded Mondays.

So email the president, write a letter to your congressmen or talk to somebody important. Tell them the world needs Johnday. Penn State-Behrend needs Johnday. We all need Johnday!



"Take my advice. Leave it on the street with the keys in it."

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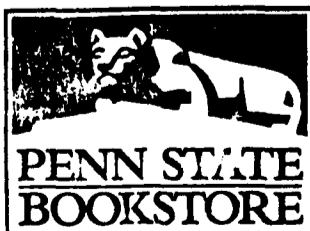
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