

OPINION

Obituary for chivalry on the horizon

By Aaron J. Amendola
staff writer

It's pretty much common sense that we should treat others as we wish to be treated. When it comes to girls however, the treatment should be given with 110 percent.

I'm not kissing up to our female buddies, though; that's just the way I was brought up. I was taught to always open the door for ladies, be as polite as possible and give compliments whenever I could. After having a conversation with one of my friends, I was shocked to hear that she thought chivalry was dead. Of course, I brushed it off and went on with my life.

It wasn't until I sat down a few days later with another friend when she went off on a tirade on how men aren't respectful; repulsed with the fact she had insensitive "pigs" living in her dorms constantly cracking sex jokes at her. Ok, now two complaints within the same week are just coincidence.

Skip forward another couple of days. I was sitting outside Bruno's anxiously waiting for some of my friends to accompany me to dinner. I sat at one of the tiny tables and pulled out a book to pass the time. While I tried to enjoy the musings of David Sedaris' latest novel, my attention was constantly shifted to the set of double doors next to the café. I watched for about ten minutes, idly observing different groups come in and out, yet I did not see one boy hold the door open for a girl.

I've come to grips with it by now. Chivalry is dying fast.

Why though? Where did it suffer a blow? I'm sure there are still a few good guys out there carrying books and doing good deeds for ladies, but those guys are few and far between.

I blame the media. Take a gander into a Maxim or GQ and rifle through the loads of advertisements. I'm willing to bet that every other ad has something that disrespects women or objectifies them. All the de-sensitizing conditioning guys are getting from these magazines is really putting a damper on the opinion of men everywhere. The media constantly recognize women as objects and, while that does happen to men as well, males seem to act on this notion much more than needed.

I know a group of guys that are always talking about their "next girl." Who is this "next girl?" From what they tell me, it's whoever is going to be at The Metro or Peccadillo's this week. The morning after their night of clubbing they will tell me and the rest of the guys in my class of their triumphs. These are kids that ace every test and all have good heads on their shoulders; they just lack in giving respect to women. Chivalry should be taught in a classroom, maybe then they'd study up on that, too.

These types of guys are constantly making it harder for the "nice guys" of the world to get ahead. Why do women put up with men that persist to use them and abuse them? Simple: The media glorifies this type of behavior. It is depicted

in everything from advertisements to movies. People have been de-sensitized to it, so they allow it. I'm just scared that if this problem continues, then everyone will think this is acceptable behavior. Pretty soon nice guys won't finish last, they'll never start the race to begin with.

Hear that? It's the sound of all the nice guys of America dying a slow, cruel death.

There isn't much anyone can do about it. Companies are going to continue to use advertisements like the ones found in GQ and Maxim magazines. Sex sells and images of women being used as objects are appealing to men, there's nothing we can do to help that fact. If guys are like me and are against having women beginning to see us as "pigs," and being driven by nothing by sex, then I know of something that may just help in the fight.

Chivalry. In the end, it all comes down to what our mamas and papas taught us. It's not that hard either fellas. Being polite to girls isn't hard, it just requires the slightest of efforts. Next time you see a girl behind you, get to the door first and open it for them. If they're having trouble with something, just help them. What if the girl behind you in your political science class drops her pen? Pick it up for her dammit! In the fight for chivalry, we can make a difference. Will you join in my crusade? Who will be strong and work with me? It's time for the nice guys of the world to take a stand.



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Singing the Kit-Kat jingle

By Kristen Comstock
editorial columnist

It's the most wonderful time of the year! The holidays are coming and we all know what that means winter break! This time it will actually be a break unlike our recently ended Thanksgiving Break.

It is unclear why Penn State has given it this title. The name "Thanksgiving Break" implies two things. First, the United States holiday of Thanksgiving takes place during this time period, which by all reports it did. Second, that the Penn State students receive a break. The second insinuation is the one of most concern.

Maybe the real question is a break from what? Giving Penn State some credit, we did receive a break from cafeteria food, a break from college drama, a break from gang showers and flip-flops, a break from roommates, a break from professors, a break from classes and a break from walking up that stupid hill three times per day.

However, we did not receive the most important things we need during break, which are relaxation, sleep and a break from homework, reading, studying and research.

The last day of classes before Thanksgiving Break students, of every semester, could be seen lugging bags of laundry and backpacks stuffed with books and binders out to their cars. Is this a fair or just way to spend this so-called "break?"

Let's breakdown the days of the Thanksgiving holiday and analyze the behaviors of the students during each day. (Can you tell I have been spending most of my time analyzing data for my research project?)

The first day of break is spent unpacking, talking with family, and perhaps doing a little laundry. The second day is

Thanksgiving. So obviously that day is spent eating, socializing, reminiscing and sleeping off the tryptophan. Next is Black Friday, which students either spend that day shopping or boycotting the horrible consumerism of the country.

That leaves Saturday and Sunday, which seem like just any other normal weekend that we have while we are at school. There still exist distractions that prevent homework from getting completed and chapters from getting read.

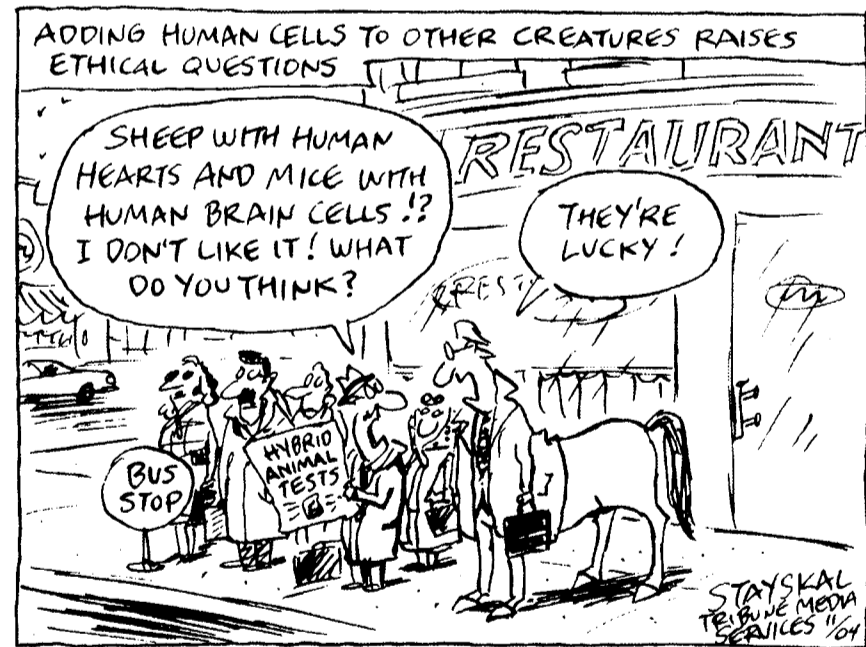
All students overcome these challenges every weekend by the invaluable and essential "Sunday Workday." Everyone knows that Sunday afternoon is the time to stop procrastinating and accomplish things. This is evidenced by the array of away messages all with a similar theme, "getting my work done, which I put off all weekend."

The Sunday after break is not a workday. It is spent driving back to campus, lugging the books and binders back to the rooms, and unpacking the now clean laundry.

Also, all the new holiday decorations that were bought discounted on Black Friday, need to be strung and taped up and holiday carols need to be downloaded for the occasion.

Finally, when everything is in its place, it is time to read the rest of the chapters, type up those papers, and do that homework. Break is officially over, without really ever starting.

There is a light in the distance, however. There are only two weeks until Winter Break and, this time, the only books that have to be lugged home are the ones the bookstore did not buy back.



Carolers to be shot on sight

By Amy Pogson
editorial columnist

I don't really like Christmas music. I know I shouldn't say this, especially since people tend to associate Christmas music with cheerful, heartwarming activities: Christmas carolers trudging through the snow to share the beauty of music with their neighbors, friends and family gathered around a fireplace sipping hot chocolate, roasting chestnuts (or acorns depending on how well you adhere to the standards of cooking nuts) and Christmas trees decorated with old family heirloom ornaments. I certainly don't want to be seen as someone who is anti-Christmas.

I don't hate hot chocolate or my family. I might even like family heirloom ornaments. Yet, I can't help the way that I feel. Christmas music has its place, a very rigid sphere of influence that it should not venture beyond, but lately it seems that Christmas music desires to be everywhere, played at all times, by all people: a very alarming trend.

I had my first brush with Christmas music in mid-November. I was pumping gas at my favorite Country Fair (the one in Edinboro where the gas is cheap, the people are friendly and everyone knows your name) when I heard a familiar tune come on the speakers. Now anyone who has ever listened to real gas station music, the kind that doubles as elevator music and restaurant music, knows that gas station music is never familiar. It is an

obscure instrumental mix known only to the people who wrote the songs, performed the songs and who are stuck working in the gas stations with the songs. Since the tune was familiar, I stopped and listened. Sure enough, it was genuine Christmas music, the kind that you hear in December, before Christmas.

The realization that the gas station, my beloved Country Fair, was playing Christmas music in November did something to me. I can't explain it. It was a very surreal sensation, as if I was living in a parallel universe, a universe where Christmas exists without Christmas.

It was a cold November night, there were no cozy fireplaces, no cups of hot chocolate and good will towards men seemed to be a temporarily forgotten concept in the day to day task of pumping gas, yet the music played on, reminiscent of Christmas past and hopeful of Christmas yet to be.

It struck me afterwards, when I was thinking about the music at the gas station, that Christmas music is only worthwhile in the brief period of time before Christmas, not before, not after, and certainly not in the summer when some ambitious stores celebrate Christmas in July. Christmas music is a lot like the United States' elections. If it is drawn out for too long and people are forced to listen to songs like "The Little Drummer Boy" and "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" months in advance, then people will become bored and stop paying at-

ention. The songs will lose their significance. The value that Christmas music has a unique ability to evoke cheerful thoughts of family, friends, and that Christmas magic that we all remember feeling as children, will be lost.

And maybe the problem of Christmas songs goes hand in hand with other aspects of Christmas. If people decorate their homes too early, then the decorations become boring. If people begin their Christmas shopping too early, it becomes more like a task, a chore to get done, than the spontaneous search for fun gifts that people will like, conducted a week before Christmas.

If they are real, Christmas trees should be purchased a week before Christmas, so as not to become dry and flammable during the holidays. If they are fake, Christmas trees should be left in the basement or attic until the appropriate time, one to two weeks before Christmas.

And if Christmas music comes on the radio at inopportune times, change the station. Write letters of complaint. Spread the message to your friends that Christmas music at the wrong time will not be tolerated. Tell the world that you want your Christmas music to be meaningful and you want it played at Christmas. Never settle for less and have a merry Christmas, when you are ready, of course. Amy's editorial appears every third week.

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