

Awards lose meaning when based on information forms

The Organizations Advisory Board gives out awards to clubs at Penn State Harrisburg each year. Did you know that? With awards in such categories as "Most Outstanding Club Award," "Campus Community Award," and "Community Outreach Award," it sound as if these "awards" are being given by you, the student body. But they're not.

Nominees are voted on by members of the Organizations Advisory Board, individuals whose knowledge of a club's activities is limited to a form they call a "club resume." The club resume was to be filled out by the club presidents, listing what sort of activities they had held or sponsored during the semester. In effect, the clubs are "campaigning" for nominations and votes for these "awards" by simply filling out a form.

I thought awards were supposed to be some sort of prestigious event, that they represented a large group of people's beliefs and support of an individual or an organization. But here at Penn State Harrisburg it is determined by how you look on paper to a select group, not how you look to the community of Penn State Harrisburg.

I think it's wrong. This year's winner of the Most Outstanding Club Award is the PSPEC. Now I'm sure it's a great club and that its members work very hard doing what they do, so I don't mean to sound disrespectful when I ask, "What the hell is it?" Seriously. I have never heard of them and I've been involved with the student newspaper for the last two years.

Now I admit that I failed to turn in my club resume, but I thought my "club" was pretty self-explanatory...I run a newspaper. We print so many issues a year and that's it. No dance benefits, no blood drives or bake sales, just five or more issues of student reporting on campus events. An attempt to keep the campus community informed about local and world events and how they effect our lives.

I did not believe for a minute that by not completing the form I would disqualify my organization from winning one of these wonderous awards. I assumed awards would not be given based on a piece of paper. For some odd reason, I imagined a totally different scene.

I was ignorant enough to think the student body would be the ones deciding who got what award. But that's not the case. In fact, I'd wager that very few of you were even aware awards were given to clubs, much less cared about it. But 154 of you cared enough to vote in the Student Government Association's election. And I'd also wager that the same 154 would have cared enough to vote on club awards if the opportunity were placed in front of you at the same moment.

I know 154 is hardly an overwhelming number when you consider



how many students attend this campus, but having 154 speak for 3,500 students is better than having the opinions of 12 people represent those of 3,500. Don't you agree? Things have to change.

Why not include year-end club awards on the same ballot as senior senators and student government officials? You vote for those who represent you, why not vote to reward those who serve you.

It's not right that awards with words such as "campus community" in their title be handed out by mere "representatives" of the community. It's your campus, it's your community, if you think an individual or a group deserves an award for serving you, YOU should be able to cast your vote for them. YOU should be heard from. You've been silent far too long.

Karen M. Putt
Editor-in-chief

A fair adeiu, so long, farewell, adios, goodbye...and Amen

Well, it's been a long time coming, but my last issue as editor of the *Capital Times* is finally here. I've been preparing my farewell message since December, when I logically should have "passed the buck" to someone else, but didn't. Whether it was stupidity or the collective coercion of Dr. Parisi and my fellow staff members, I stayed on to head the paper a second semester.

My only regret is that I was unable to give as much time to the paper this semester as I did last semester. I didn't have time to fight with the Student Government Association's Finance Committee for money to buy a much needed new computer. I tried to play it their way; the red-tape/paper chase route, and submitted a written proposal requesting funds, but here it is April and I've had no action taken on my proposal, much less a new computer.

Because of my internship, I couldn't spend as much time doing things I should have, like attending staff meetings. Some of my reporters may not even know who I am, much less that I was their editor. I have Elin Marcel, Fathead #2, to thank for keeping the ship afloat, and giving me the time I needed to get my professional life going outside of school. You may have thought I never appreciated all you did Elin, but none of your efforts went unnoticed. And I'll never forget all of the things you did to help me.

I owe my staff a great deal of thanks as well, for being patient enough to hang in there and sometimes teach themselves by trial and error. To the "ever faithful" bunch of Mike, Lee, Lee, Jason, Terry, Ann, Sharon, Stacey, Larry, Trinh, Harry, Angie, and Rodney--I owe you guys more gratitude than I could ever express. Granted you've all missed a deadline a time or two (or three), but you're still the ones who fill these pages each month. It wouldn't have been possible without you. And to Trev--you are truly a godsend. You came out of nowhere and worked with me under the most impossible conditions, thanks.

I'd also like to thank three professors who have greatly influenced my life in one way or another. I could never thank them enough for what they've given

me, but I'll try.

Dr. Michael Jarrett, my English 15 teacher from Penn State York, was the first one to write "This is good stuff" on one of my compositions. I still have it and I pull it out to read when I need to. Looking back, it was a really horrible essay, but I think you saw what it could be--what I could be, if I so chose. Thanks Dr. J. for the many words of encouragement, and for telling me I was funny when I didn't think I was. I'll never forget you.

Dr. Peter Parisi who taught me everything I'd care to know (and even stuff I didn't) about the inverted pyramid news story and what it means to be a good writer. You've made me what I am today, for better or worse. I'll never forget the things you've taught me or the kindness you've shown me on several occasions when I needed it.

And Professor Jerry Trently, who challenged me to "get in there" and overcome my fear of mechanical equipment long enough to learn how to use a video camera. You've shown me an entirely new way of looking at the world, and I could never repay you for that. You'll always have a special place in my memories.

To you, the readers, thanks for being along for the ride. I hope I've given you something to think about in my editorials or at least been someone to argue with. I hope you realize what a valuable asset the student newspaper is, and support it in the future. After all, we are here for you.

I'm looking forward to graduating, and while there will be a period of withdrawal when I long for this underfunded, understaffed newspaper, I'm glad to be going. Though I'm confident I will return to pursue my master's degree, I'm anxious to start my life outside of this institution. In the words of Linda Ellerbee, "And so it goes..." Goodbye.

Karen M. Putt
Editor-in-Chief