

It's time to shrine: PSH senior class gift announced

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The 2005 senior class has decided to donate a gift of a Nittany Lion Shrine to Penn State Harrisburg. The class hopes to build an outdoor shrine as a place of reflection, pride and beauty to be enjoyed by students and alumni for years to come.

Students, faculty and staff can donate as little as one dollar to contribute to the shrine, though a suggested donation is \$15 - 50. Students that donate will instantly become members of the Golden Lion Society.

Marissa Hoover, development office, said that the Lion is a universal symbol of pride at all Penn State campuses. "It would be nice to be able to commune at or take pictures at a Lion that

is not in front of a bathroom," Hoover said, in reference to the statue in the Olmsted lobby.

"A small contribution can add so much to this campus," Hoover said, "I think it's definitely worth donating - those who help can come back to campus, look at the shrine and say 'I was a part of that.'"

Students are encouraged to submit creative designs for the shrine, to be voted on by the building committee. Design forms are available in the Student Government office, and the deadline for submissions is April 8. The winner will receive a Nittany Lion Shrine desk statue and their design formally presented to the Physical Plant committee for consideration.

Rodney Horton, SGA president and senior class gift chair, said "Many freshmen I've talked to

want to transfer to University Park - that seems to be a common trend. I'd like to see that trend put to rest." Horton wants to see university pride here. "I know we are a quieter community, compared to main campus, but we have more and more activities for students here - we should all be proud of our campus."

Horton believes that this gift will not only be an indication of campus pride, but of student friendships and experiences as well. "This shrine can ensure that memories created here will last a lifetime."

For more information about the Nittany Lion Shrine, design proposals, or donations contact Marissa Hoover at (717)948-6317, or e-mail at mr159@psu.edu.



Photo courtesy of sn.psu.edu

The PSH Nittany Lion Shrine may look similar to the shrine at the Worthington-Scranton campus, pictured above. The design remains in the hands of student creativity and the Physical Plant committee.

Sleepless in State College

By Maruja Rosario
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On Feb. 18 at 7 p.m., I participated in a countdown that would forever change my life. After screaming the number one, I rose from the place where I sat and began a marathon unlike any other—a marathon with no losers and the winners were not the people who participated. I got the rare opportunity to participate in THON in the highly coveted role as dancer. This was my journey.

2 weeks prior to THON: After a quick scavenging of money, I raised enough money for Penn State Harrisburg to participate in THON. Dancing, contrary to popular belief, is not free. With that accomplished, I started the difficult process of "training."

Training for any sport is difficult, or so I'm told, for the only athletics I participate in involve a PS2 controller. Now I was faced with having to get my body in shape in two short weeks for the most grueling event of my life. The THON regime stripped me of the two things I love most in this world; caffeine and sugar, in essence, Mountain Dew. Regardless, I pushed on; holding my large Gatorade bottle I stole from Austin (now filled with water).

1 week prior to THON: Depression about not having caffeine was starting to affect me greatly. Even though I don't drink caffeine for the pick-me-up effects, I enjoy having my cup of coffee during class, soda with lunch, and a cup of tea right before bed. About to crack under the pressure, my younger brother reminded me of a beautiful thing called decaf and Kate Herr reminded me that ginger ale was caffeine-free. Caught with the ginger-ale. I had to give that up too.

I was also advised to get plenty of sleep during this week, since sleep is cumulative. To be honest, I failed miserably. In fact, the night before THON, I only went to bed at 2 a.m.

The morning before THON: I needed plenty of underwear, tons of socks, tennis balls, baby powder, and other random items that just don't belong together in the same shopping basket. Once purchased, I proceeded to go to campus, learn a little Japanese, type up my SGA report, and ride with Kate up to University Park.

Kate and her brother dropped me off at the Rec. Hall, my home for the next 48 hours. I met up with Victor who took me to where Molly Harmes, the mysterious second dancer that I never met, was sitting.

Pre-Game: Molly and I were ushered into a large gym where the first thing the THON organizers did was place yellow hospital bracelets on our wrists. Then we went to our seats that had our official dancer t-shirts draped over the back. Exciting

as that was; the real prize was on the chair: a Nike book bag, the kind with the air in the back of it to maximize comfort, full of free stuff. As we rooted through our new loot, Mike Cocco, chief organizer of THON, faced the 704 dancers and pumped them up with a pep talk. After that, it was time to go. We started to file towards the out-of-doors where we were greeted with one of my favorite parts of the whole THON experience.

For one second, imagine being the star player of your favorite team and being greeted by hundreds of screaming fans lined in two lines, and as you walk between them they shout nothing but words of encouragement, and that this affection goes on for about 5 minutes. That was the human THON Tunnel, and it psyched me up in ways that cannot be explained. I just knew I was not going to let anyone down.

Finally, with the Black Eyed Peas, we got it started.

First night/day of THON: At



From left, Janice, Molly, Rob and Maruja take a moment to pose for a quick photo. The moralers' sole purpose is to inspire the THON dancers to keep on going, no matter how hard it gets.

first, though the dancers were motivated with *Dodgeball* and *Napoleon Dynamite* clips, the energy in the room was rather dead. Everyone just stood up. First time dancers looked around, not sure what to do. Molly and I were these people. Our bewilderment did not last long as we quickly were put to work by our morale captives. THON creates a line dance every year, which is performed by the dancers, that captures PSU and U.S. current events as well as the spirit of THON. That took only an hour of time. The line dance would be performed once every single hour of THON from that moment onward.

To be honest, not much else happened those first few hours. I did finally find Kate, who had been searching for me the entire time, and also found Steve O'Holla and Nichole Dellinger in their little corner of the THON observing area. All of them also helped me make it through that first difficult night, and for that I am thankful.

Second day/night of THON:

spread the entire way through my thighs before it was over.

Finding Kate for the last time that day, she came to attend the pep rally with me. This was another one of my favorite moments. All the major athletes from most of the big name PSU sports (and even some not so big) came out and supported the dancers. They then proceeded to perform dance routines to entertain us. One has not lived until they see football players reduced to dancers. I do not remember who won the competition, I just remember having a good time. Kate went home, and Molly and I were pretty much alone to fend off sleep as night two entered the 2 a.m. period.

Final night/day/night of THON: Molly retired to the locker room with Janice where dancers were allowed to put their knees on large balls to give their poor feet a break. I, on the other hand, could not handle the quiet of the locker room, so I stayed on the floor with Rob. He and I colored pictures of Care Bears to pass the time. At first, I almost smacked

my head on the table as I almost passed out from the therapeutic effect of coloring. After that tragic moment, I stayed awake, at least for a while. Rob and I also met Mr. McFeeley, known as the postman on Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood that always said "Speedy Delivery!" But that was not going to be enough. That lovely night where I went to bed at 2 a.m. started to catch up with me, and it was coming up fast. Rob had left me, and I was left to fend for myself. So I did the only thing that a person whose been up for almost 36 hours can do: hallucinate. I envisioned a wall where the entrance to the girls' locker room should have been, do not even remember what I did when I finally found the locker room but I must have gone in it, because when I exited, I didn't know

the sole possessor of the final 4-hour pass. When she arrived, the emotional portion of THON began. Video footage of the THON kids that passed away since last year showed and dancers showed no shame in dropping tears. After the video, THON families told their stories to the crowd. I will never forget one woman who said she looked out and saw that we were all fatigued and exhausted and realized we were doing it for no other reason than her child and the other families' children. I was moved, and knew that I could do this.



Photos by Kathryn Herr/Capital Times

Maruja Rosario, with trusty cowgirl hat, dances to help kids with cancer.

The final hour of THON approached and I spent it full of energy. I line danced, danced, I told Kate I could dance for another 48 hours. She only gently told me that I was exhausted and that I was soon done. As the minutes towards the end of THON counted down, as I performed the last line dance of THON 2005, I knew that I had the chance to be a part of something bigger than me, something special. I made a difference in a child's life. I helped fight the beast that is cancer. And I made it.

We were allowed to sit down for the first time in 48 hours, but we didn't sit long. As the grand total of all the fundraising was made known, \$4.1 million (give or take a few hundred dollars), we all were on our feet again, cheering, screaming, and jumping around. Looking around the room, I wouldn't even believe that any of us were tired. We were so excited to have raised that huge sum; the first time \$4 million was reached in THON history.

All that remains to tell is Kate waking me up during the car ride home through the snow so that she could stay awake, and finally crashing into the most wonderfully soft bed I have ever felt. I slept into 3 p.m., did some homework, and went back to bed. The following day I was congratulated for my efforts, and it took me a week before I stopped suffering from narcolepsy. But in the end, it was worth it. It was all "For the Kids."

THON wrap-up

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THON was a huge success this year, as it is every year, raising over \$4 million dollars with all proceeds going to the Four Diamonds Fund to help children with cancer.

Blessed with the opportunity to speak with a friend of mine, Sean MacLaughlin provided enormous insight to the preparation of THON. MacLaughlin is a senior at Penn State University Park and took part in THON's yearlong preparation. MacLaughlin's role in THON was a Hospitality Captain, which put him in charge of 17 committee members. "Before THON, I was responsible for contacting local restaurants to get donations of food for other captains and the overalls, as we spend the entire 48 hours in Rec. Hall with the dancers," he said. MacLaughlin said, "Throughout the weekend my fellow captains, committee members, and I were responsible to feed 700 dancers, 200 captains, and 450 Four Diamonds Families."

MacLaughlin enjoys in participating in THON, and explained the event for people who may not be aware of the largest student-run philanthropy in the world. "THON is a 48-hour no sleep/no sit philanthropy event with over 700 student dancers, put on by Penn State students that benefits the Four Diamonds Fund. The Four Diamonds Fund supports pediatric cancer patients and their families from the Hershey Medical Center," he said. "The money raised from THON goes toward families' medical bills, the salaries of doctors, cancer researchers, nurses, social workers, and others who work with the families, and other things that a family could use throughout the process of battling cancer."

THON is an excellent way to bring together a community to raise money for a good cause. MacLaughlin said, "THON, more than any other event, brings the Penn State community together to help with a cause that deserves every moment that is put into it. THON is more than just one weekend, it is an entire year of hard work by many people," he said.

When asked what one goal for THON was, MacLaughlin had the perfect answer. He said, "Our ultimate goal for THON is that someday we will need to find a new organization to fund, as through our donations and support, we helped a researcher discover a cure for pediatric cancer."