

Letters to the Editor

In defense of honorable journalism

By **JEREMY N. KIEHL**
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The Capital Times and its staff owe an apology to all the students who read the article labeled "SGA Update" in the December 9th edition of the campus newspaper. After reading this article's complete departure from honorable journalism, I would be remiss to let such a display of biased, sensationalized journalism go unanswered when it lacked basic research, knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and objectiveness. While I do not have the time or patience to respond to every one of the numerous irresponsible errors and opinions reported as truth, I will address several of the more blatant ones.

From the onset, the article was clearly and unfairly biased in its report of the interaction between the Student Government Association and the Graduate Student Association. For the Capital Times to state that SGA members lacked "concern" and only answered the GSA's questions in order to defend themselves against mounting accusations is absurd. As one of several SGA members who were late for class in order to remain after the meeting to talk with the GSA representatives, answer questions, and respond to concerns, I challenge the Capital Times assertion. Additionally, the repeated pitiful references to the SGA's unwillingness to "spare a little money" or give a "fair amount of money" to the GSA were biased and simply untrue. Although I do not have time to delve into the details regarding the funding process the SGA goes through in allocating funds, it would greatly behoove the Capital Times to do a little research into the money the GSA actually receives from the University.

In addition to being biased, the entire article was written in an absurd sensationalized fashion. The continued references to the meeting as being "heated", a "circus", a "commotion", and a "debacle" made me wonder if I had attended the same SGA meeting. While certainly more lively than many SGA meetings, this one resembled little of the picture the Capital Times article painted. Furthermore, the insinuation that mysterious and ominous whispered conferences were going on between the Student Court and SGA President Michael Edwards as he furtively "crept" around the room is absolutely laughable. The duty of the Student Court at such meetings is to provide oversight and to give discretionary advice as outlined in the SGA Constitution. The conversations between Michael Edwards and the Student Court were directly related to procedural issues and nothing more. I sincerely apologize to anyone who envisioned a grand conspiracy after reading the article.

Although I recognize that there are places in the Capital Times for the pontification of baseless opinions and topics worthy of tabloid publication, the SGA Update is not one of them. It should do exactly what its title proclaims - update the student body regarding the work of their Student Government. The latest SGA Update article did not come remotely close to fulfilling this duty. While I welcome healthy, constructive criticism, I will not hesitate to lash out at the un-researched, biased, and sensationalist style of reporting that the Capital Times has resorted to. The editors of this paper are doing a great disservice not only to their once good reputation, but also to the campus at large. I look forward to the Capital Times return to the honorable journalism the Penn State Harrisburg Student Body deserves.

Please see Editor's Comments on page 2 regarding above.

By **RACHEL MAHAN**
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Reading the numerous articles and rantings in the Dec. 9th issue of the Cap Times, I thought maybe you should hear from someone in the Senate, you know, someone who was there and isn't just basing their rantings off of rumors and disenchantment.

Firstly, let's start with Parliamentary Procedure. Who at PSH knows and understands Parliamentary Procedure? By some of the statements in the Capital Times, it is obvious that many do not. I know Mike Edwards put Parliamentary Procedure booklets in the Cap Times boxes, but if you didn't receive one ask him I'm sure he'll make one available to you.

An issue that arose in the Dec. 1st meeting was the GSA and their funding. What the SGA Update didn't mention was that, according to Monica Minter, the GSA receives about \$45,000 in funding and keeps it all and that the SGA received \$33,520 to split among all the clubs, from Lion Ambassadors to Tamhelm, on campus. In addition to that, take note that the age of the average graduate student on campus is 32. Compare that to the average age of your SGA senators - 20. Would you like someone who is 12 years your junior to plan an activity for you? On top of all that, we did some research. There is no record of the GSA requesting money from the Student Activity Fund. To be that forthright with her statements regarding funding, Ms. Minter should have double checked her information.

The GSA's position on campus is to "represent and support the interests of current and future graduate students by supporting scholarly activities and providing leadership, service and social opportunities." With \$45,000 I would think that you could provide those opportunities, because with the \$33,520 the SGA provides opportunities like that which are open to all students, regardless of undergraduate/graduate status. We provide these opportunities by funding clubs on campus who in turn plan and execute activities. We also plan and execute those types of activities - for everyone.

A Public Comments time was early on during the meeting. The member of the GSA that tried to speak at the end of the meeting was trying to speak during Open Forum. Open Forum is a time for the Senators to bring New Business to the table for the next meeting and to generally discuss items on the agenda. What it also didn't mention was that due to the GSA's earlier tirade the meeting was running into a class time and we had to leave the room so we didn't delay and disrupt a class, in addition to the fact that many members of the SGA had classes at 2pm as well. A few members of the SGA also met with the GSA after the meeting - was that mentioned in any article? No.

And while it's appropriate for students to examine and dissect the SGA and it's operations, don't you think that you would need to attend at least one meeting in order to do so? Not if you're writing for the Capital Times. Having been to all except one meeting this semester I can tell you that Oscar Beisert has not been to one single meeting. Not one! Oscar should become involved in the GSA, since he cannot come to SGA meetings, as he is a graduate student and the GSA meets in the evening. In each and every article Oscar has written this semester for the Cap Times he complains about the SGA and it's members - don't just talk, do something! And I would like to take to task his "obvious lack of SGA presence" statement. This past week alone we have done Stuff-A-Plush and Finals Food. Did he take advantage of any SGA activities this year? I couldn't tell you. What I could tell you is that our activities this semester have been overwhelming successes. We ran out of food for Fall Fest - after raising our budget by 500\$ for the activity - we also had Color Me Mime, a "design your own ceramic" which was an activity that began after night classes ended, in addition to many other activities. We also have much more being planned for the Spring Semester, like Winterfest and a Spring Formal.

Also, there was a Screening Ad-Hoc committee which was set up this semester to fill vacancies of the SGA. This committee was meant to take interested students and interview them, making sure that they could truly be involved with and help the Student Government Association. It hasn't been a particularly helpful committee, but it was meant to take the brunt of the work regarding the vacancies of the SGA off the President's shoulders, leaving him available for other matters.

If anyone feels the need to rant you are more than welcome to come to an SGA meeting and speak during Public Comments, we are more than willing to hear you out and figure out a possible solution with you. You can contact me at any time and I'll personally try and help you out and way I can.

CULTURALLY INEPT

A BI-MONTHLY PONTIFICATION

By **OSCAR BEISERT**
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On my way out the door for winter break, my new Editor asked me to go out and find something "interesting" to write about during my holiday. "Oh my gosh," I thought—with one of my normal bouts of paranoia—does that mean my usual topics are getting boring, should I take her comment as a subtle hint to get it together or throw in the towel, was her simple request just that of an over dramatic new Editor, or was I over analyzing her elongated and newspaper related "Happy Holidays?"

For a while I chewed on this piece of newspaper jerky, and then I realized, how could I make conclusions about my new Editor; I don't even know her.

And then it clicked; maybe I should pay more attention to how I evaluate my relationships.

Strangely enough, I had always considered one of my main interests to be the formulation and analysis of relationships—especially, or at least I thought, my own. Now, as you may have assumed, I am using relationships in the most general sense of the term—according to dictionary.com, a relationship being the condition or fact of being related; connection or association.

So I decided that during my holiday, I would pay close attention to my "relations, connections, and associations" with others.

Only three short days after my long-term relationship—the lengthy thirty seconds—with my new Editor, I found myself on a plane in route to Houston, Texas.

During the flight, I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with a contemporary of mine

who was finishing her degree at Syracuse University.

We passed the time discussing a myriad of topics ranging from inter-city public education to the gentrification of blighted communities. Our conversation lasted almost two and half-hours and, boy 'o boy, was it interesting; not to mention, a relief since it allowed the time to pass rather quickly.

However, by the end of the flight, neither of us made any attempt to prolong our relationship and seemingly content departing with no means of contact.

An hour in my drive from the Houston airport to Austin, Texas, I remember pondering my mid-air relations, wondering as to why we didn't exchange instant messenger or email identities. During my drive, I also reflected upon a part of our conversation that led to some rather disturbing thoughts.

We had both inquired about the sibling status of one another. My acquaintance having none, she was especially inquisitive about my brother. Answering her questions, I had informed her that my brother and I were fairly close; however, the more I thought about my answer, the more disturbed I became. Were my brother and I really close? Of course not! In fact, I don't know that we had ever had a conversation of that length or if he would even be capable of such.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I knew more about my next door neighbor—of five months, whom I had grown to dislike, than I did about my only sibling.

Here I was fretting about maintaining relations with a perfect stranger, but for some reason I had yet to be bothered about the fact that my only natural sibling was a stranger to me.

During the Austin segment of my trip I had plans to see a friend whom I had been in close contact with since my move. We had managed to maintain strong relations since both of us had moved to different regions of the country. However, during the weekend, back in Austin, we only managed to associate for one awkward hour.

Oddly enough, we had been unable to reestablish a healthy connection in person, but were somehow able to spend months talking on the phone with supposed longings to see one another. Would I be able to carry on the charade of our friendship for another semester or would I be forced to pull the plug?

While I didn't answer the question during my trip, I sometimes wonder why we would make so much effort to connect on the phone, but so little in person.

While I was able to spend a good deal of quality time of others, my trip to Austin definitely complicated the looming concerns regarding my relationships. Nearing the end of my trip home, I was online at a coffee shop when an efriend of mine messaged me to inquire about my Christmas. Since I would be flying back into Philadelphia, I entertained the idea of meeting after four or five months of talking.

However, the individual was strong opposed to the idea, claiming that the last personal meeting, stemming from an online friendship, led to the demise of the online friendship and, obviously, the personal relationship.

Thanking this person kindly for the faith in humanity, I accepted, with little choice, the "no" which had so ardently been rendered. Until recently, I had simply accepted the "no" whole-heartedly; however, this column has led to me wondering about the healthiness of this type of

friendship. Was it positive for me to maintain relations with someone unwilling to meet me in the flesh? Or was it good to have a non-objective listener to speak with on a constant basis?

My last example, probably, the most seemingly disturbing, involves a person with whom I have been involved with on several occasions and on a romantic and intimate level. Supposedly, with similar interests—not only involving things of interest, but more so in having a relationship—I recently saw this person at a bar in Philly where I met this person's significant other of over eight months.

Glazed over, I felt completely distraught. Not at the loss of this prospect per say, but more so because I felt as though I had completely misjudged all of my relationships over the last six months.

Could it be that I had been so nonchalantly introduced to this person's significant other when such an introduction would bring so many false pretenses to light?

From my brother, to my friend from home, to a lying adulteress, was it possible that I had suffered from misjudgment on all counts? Were the failures of these relationships inevitable or had I, personally, just missed the boat?

These intrigues leave me with a few questions for everyone to ponder. Is there a common culture to all of these relationships or do each of them have a culture of their own that we, as individuals, widely share? And, no matter what, would it be more constructive to conceive the old folklore "its not the amount of time, its what happens during that time?" With this in mind we must wonder, how do we maintain, recollect, and judge our relationships?

Student Activity Survey

The Student Government Association (SGA) at Penn State Harrisburg wants your feedback.

In order to improve student events and activities, the SGA is asking that you take the time to complete this short survey. Tell us what types of activities you would like to see take place on campus; also let us know how we can better communicate with the student body. Without your feedback, we cannot improve student communication or campus programming.

The Student Government encourages all students to take advantage of all the opportunities that the college has to offer. Thank you for taking the time to help the student body have a full and exciting college experience.

Please return surveys to the Student Activities Office in room E131 Olmsted at your earliest convenience.

Student Activity Survey

Name	
Email Address	
Major	
Do you read the PSH Weekly email?	
If not, why not?	
If yes, is it useful?	
How could we better communicate with you?	
Are you a member of a campus organization?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Do you take part in campus events?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Do you read the events monitors?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Monitors exist?
College	<input type="radio"/> Freshman <input type="radio"/> Sophomore <input type="radio"/> Junior <input type="radio"/> Senior <input type="radio"/> Graduate Student

In the space provided, please let us know what activities you would like to see on campus.