

CULTURALLY INEPT

A BI-MONTHLY PONTIFICATION



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While I do know that there are a number of individuals that greatly enjoy their jobs, I would say that on a general basis most people trudge through the day awaiting that "end of the day" bell to ring so that they are temporarily free from the ball of chain that provides their means of livelihood.

I would venture to say that the majority of these Americans have a half to one hour commute prior to and following their eight hour work day. If, at the least, there is a thirty minute commute equating to one full hour per day, there is at least a one hour period of time getting ready for the long day of work and travel. And let's not forget the half to one hour lunch break that we—working Americans—are required, by law, to take. So, all and all, on the low end of the spectrum most Americans spend about ten and a half to eleven, maybe twelve, hours per day trying to earn enough money to make ends meet. Furthermore, it is prescribed that we get from seven and a half to eight hours of sleep in preparation for the next day. Considering seven and a half hours of sleep and ten

and a half hours of work related activity, Americans have about six hours of time to themselves per day. This doesn't include the obligations we have to school, children, and relationships.

You might be wondering, what am I driving at?

Well, my question is, is this the life we've chosen or do we even have a choice?

In regards to work, I would generally say that the best life is to be self-employed – well, as long as such employment is lucrative! However, in most cases, it is fair to say that not everyone can have the luxury of a job they love. So, my prescription would be to find ways to cut that 10 and half to twelve hour days to the least amount of time possible.

For example, there are over three hundred thousand people who

work in the city of Harrisburg and according to local population records there are around fifty-three thousand people living in the city proper. If you were to poll the number of vacant or blighted houses in the Allison Hill neighborhood, you would be astonished. What is even more astonishing is the fact that most of these homes are three floors of hard wood floors, high ceilings, and intriguing interiors that are built ultimately superior to our modern homes. Now, I know what you're saying—what about all the riff raff, deterioration, and crime that plague communities such as these?

This is where the phenomena of gentrification comes forth. Let's say that out of the fifty-three thousand residents of Harrisburg there is, on average, one home

per resident. And let's say that Allison Hill makes up a third of that number. Is it possible that there are 17,000 sensible people who work in the city proper who would like to eliminate blight, their commute, and maybe even their yard work? If the answer is yes, then what do we need to do to make this happen? If the answer is no, then could it be time to reevaluate what we—as Americans—think is important? Is it possible that we'd rather live a life wherein eighteen out of twenty-four hours of our week is spent working or in preparation for such?

This leads me to a greater question. Once we're home, after ten and a half to twelve hours of work, are we really in the mood to live and experience our life, or is it just easier to blob out in

front of the tube? Well, I'm sure that in most cases the answer to this question would be yes; however, for some, it is possible that while they'd like the answer to be yes, they have many other responsibilities. So when parent to child relationships go sour and marriages deteriorate due to constant bickering, are we really considering all of the factors that might contribute to these issues?

Do we really think about the ramifications that living in the suburbs, separating ourselves from the ones we love, and having that piece of green space around our house really have on our lives? Is it possible to consider that the farmer lived in the country because he worked there? And if these considerations have any relevance, then *is it time to consider moving back to the city?*

A gripe about WPSH heard without static

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I currently have quite the gripe with PSH. Last year, when I transferred to this campus I made a conscious decision to be more a part of the campus activities. While browsing over material provided at an open house I was given a pamphlet with a list of all the clubs available on campus.

Two clubs quickly caught my attention. The first being The Capital Times newspaper, obviously I signed up for that because you are reading this, and this, and this...

By the way, while I'm on the subject, I'd like to take a second to encourage more people to come

to the Cap Times office and join the staff. I've earned some great experience and met some great people since I began writing, but I digress.

The next club to catch my eye was WPSH Radio. I read the following quote, be sure to take note that it is a quote:

"WPSH Student Radio" - Offers practical experience in the field of radio and broadcasting."

Now, I would like to ask PSH what they consider practical experience. If they define it as building a beautiful radio studio, then abandoning it and leaving the students to find a way to fund it and set it up, being constantly denied any attention, leaving them pulling their hair out, or just not caring anymore, then they nailed it.

Last fall, during the club fair, I signed up for the radio station being told that it was down, but would be up shortly. At the first meeting that was held, there were at least 20 students in attendance. Now when we have meetings there are at most two or three people in attendance, and this includes myself.

Why have so many people who initially signed up, stopped coming? The answer is easy. It should not be the student body's job to fund something like this. The students wanted to participate in the radio station, not build it. The students want to have radio shows.

The saddest part of remembering that first big meeting is the fact that it was so diverse. We had a great chance of providing sports shows, hip-hop shows, talk radio, rock/punk shows and even an interest in jazz radio. Among that I bet we could even broadcast home field sports games over the radio, I bet we could even get the psychology faculty to host a call in sort of show for students to anonymously discuss issues and receive advice.

While driving in my car, I was listening to Harrisburg's local NPR station, 89.5, at the end of an interview with Andrew W.K.; I heard the stab of the line informing

me that the radio station was funded in part by Penn State Harrisburg. I don't think I need to elaborate on this; the irony is too 'in your face.'

So why don't we have the needed money? SGA says we don't show

there is enough interest in the radio station. That is a huge joke to me, if you take a University and throw a radio station at them, there will be interest. There are currently 46 members enrolled in our club on

Angel, but no one comes to the meetings!

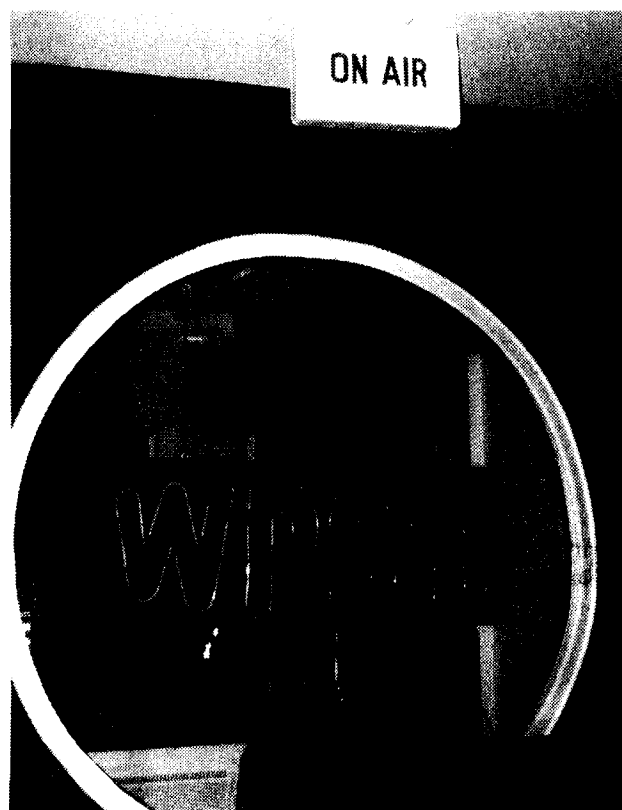
Granted we have been given money in the past, but once we receive the funds, we do not know what to do with it. We are not radio engineers or sound engineers, so the money gets taken away at the end of the semester, leaving us back at square one. This same exact situation happens every semester, if we even get any money. Also, the problem is the amount of money the club

needs to start up is way beyond what SGA or SAF wants to spend in a single semester on a single club.

While rooting through boxes in the radio studio, I came across t-shirts made in 2002 that complain that the students voice is not being heard. I'm sure that we can all do that math. That's four years that the University has given us the cold shoulder! That, above all, should be proof that students should not be responsible for building this radio station. It needs setup professionally, then select students need to be trained how to use the equipment, they in turn then can teach the next few, and so on. This is not a difficult concept in my opinion.

To sum it up, I hope with the SGA elections underway, that maybe we will have a radio station ready for us to enjoy and gain real "practical experience." Or maybe we should just spend even more money in bringing more jaded, insecure actresses from Laguna Beach for an hour.

I am urging anyone who reads this article and has any interest in reviving the radio station on campus to please let SGA know, or let me know and perhaps we can do something about this.



WPSH, a student voice on campus, has been off the air for four years and counting. The radio station's office is pictured above.

Karma: it'll get you every time



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So most likely you have heard the word Karma tossed around from time to time. Karma loosely defined is when you get what you deserve. Do good things, get good Karma, for now or for later. Do bad things and it will eventually catch up with you.

Up until lately, I have always believed that yes, Karma will catch up with you, but I was always focused on the later portion of it. For instance, help an old lady cross the street now, and find a \$20 bill on the street a few years from now.

But a few weekends ago at work, I hurt myself after joking with a co-worker... joke was on her (all in fun and games of course). After I hurt myself, she said, "Instant Karma. See I don't joke around. Mess with me and the Karma is instant."

Huh, this baffled me. I had never heard of instant Karma before. So it got me thinking, and I started asking other people if they had heard of this 'instant karma' and before I knew it, instances of instant Karma started popping up everywhere. Like that time I was eight and whacked a goose in the nose with a carrot. Next thing I knew, I saw the goose flying angrily towards me, and had then latched itself onto MY nose!

Instant Karma. Two summers ago, my cousin was in the south driving on her way to tip a few cows, when they ran into a cow standing in the middle of the road. Car totaled. I used to just think

it was a coincidence, but now I say instant Karma. I mean come on, who hits a cow on the way to go cow tipping? I can just hear the cows laughing.

There are dozens of other instances I can think of, but never thought about until now.

So what does this mean? Is there like some super power watching over all of us like devil's advocate, just waiting for us to mess up so we can get smacked.

And how does this instant Karma play into our love lives? For some cheaters, heh-hum, it can mean getting the girl pregnant that they cheated on someone with. That is like *eternal* instant Karma. I can see the Gods just watching down chuckling, going, "Oh that's not a nice thing to do, Poof be Pregnant."

And not to taunt the Gods, but is every little thing we do tallied and put into some equation to determine whether the Karma should be instant or later? I know, I know. I am taking this just a bit to the extreme, but I just can't help it. Sooner or later you're gonna get what you deserve. For some it's instant and some it's not.

But I LOVE good instant Karma. Like say you let someone into your lane during a traffic jam when no one else will. Then a few minutes down the road you hit all green lights and it's smooth sailing from there.

OR that old lady that you were helping cross the street earlier, when you got to the other side her gorgeous grandson that just happens to be a doctor is waiting there for her.

Ahh yes, meeting that cute fish in the sea is always a great serendipitous event to follow bad Karma.

So not to make your mind wonder, but the next time you run into some good luck, or some bad luck that came along just a little too fast, maybe you just got hit with a case of instant Karma.

Turn out the lights and go to bed

By JAMES BLAND
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I did a quick count and found that I had nine remote controls in my home. I'm not sure how this compares with the average household. Each one has a purpose – ceiling fans, stereo, DVD player, TV, even video game controls. These conveniences - along with microwave popcorn, ice makers, and cordless phones – opened up countless hours once dedicated to mundane tasks. With all of the time freed-up due to these conveniences my kids should have no excuse for forgetting to turn off the lights when they leave a room!

The path from my daughter's room to the sun room includes nine light switches connected to 21 light bulbs. I can understand the need to turn on a light to guide her way in the dark, but for some reason she does not believe the sun provides enough light to guide her way in the middle of the day. Whether it is day or night a quick survey of our home will show there are at least three rooms illuminated without a person to be found in each.

My son is known for his uncanny ability to leave water running in the sink when he finishes his business. The good news is he remembers to close the door.

As a concerned parent, I began to think that perhaps these habits were an indication of an abnormality with my beloved children. As I asked neighbors if they had similar experiences I was provided a

plethora of stories that proved to me my children were either normal or the entire neighborhood is in trouble.

Some spoke of refrigerator doors being left open while the child ate lunch in the kitchen. Another described the obsession with running water in the bathroom the entire time he is in there – whether he is using the sink or not. Countless parents spoke of kids returning empty containers to the fridge.

Conversations expanded from leaving lights on and water running, to an obsession kids seem to have with waste. Unfortunately, they are not obsessed with reducing waste to save the planets resources, but in wasting everything including food, drink, electricity, paper, and especially time. The only thing that kids don't seem to waste is toothpaste. They seem to conserve it as best as they can.

Most parents I spoke with described the longest hours of the day being the ones dedicated to getting the kids out of bed in the morning and then into bed at night.

The delay tactics employed by children show their creativity, cunningness, and persistence. The basic nighttime tactics are asking for a snack or drink and expand to "I forgot I have a science project due tomorrow!"

The delay tactics don't stop when the child's head hits the pillow. Their minds are hard at work to think of excuses to get out of bed and start the process over again. My daughter's favorite is forgetting

to put something into her backpack for the next day. My son wants to find a toy to sleep with. And once you think they are settled, they reappear with my favorite line of all "I can't sleep." Of course only ten minutes have passed.

When morning arrives a new challenge begins. Removing the child from the bed is twice as hard as getting him there in the first place. The constant refrain from each bedroom is "I'm up. I'm up." It is almost like an old folk song. My version goes like this:

Daddy can't be late for work today.
I'm up. I'm up.
Mommy can't be late for work today.
I'm up. I'm up.
You're going to be late for school today.
I'm up. I'm up.
You're going to miss the bus today.
I'm up. I'm up.
Hurry up and get dressed today.
I'm up. I'm up.
You're still not out of bed today.
I'm up. I'm up.
You haven't eaten your breakfast today.
I'm up. I'm up.
Your hair and teeth must be brushed today.
I'm up. I'm up.
This is the last time I'm calling you today.
I'm up. I'm up.
Go back to bed I forgot its Saturday.
Too late, I'm up.

As I shared my writing with my wife she reminded me that I'm worse than the kids. I'll admit that I'm not a morning person. In fact, I don't set my alarm but awake to the announcement of the time which is graciously shared every three minutes.

The clock by the side of my bed is precisely calibrated to display the time I would arrive at work if I left immediately. This tool allows me to announce to everyone exactly how late we are running. It also saves me from calculating complex equations so early in the morning.

Although I complain about the morning rituals of getting the kids out of bed, it is an improvement over a few years ago. For over a year, beginning when my son was two, he would awake – full of energy – and find his way to my room to ask for his morning chocolate milk. He would patiently stand at the side of my bed hoping his quiet presence would awake me. In time, he would realize that silence, accompanied with gentle tapping on the bed, was not enough to wake me. It was at that moment that my son would smack me on the forehead and utter the phrase "Chocolate milk please!" Each day the ritual would repeat. Each day, I would shoot up out of bed as if struck by lightning.

I don't have a solution for the rituals associated with kids and bed. All I know is I look forward to the weekends but I always find it ironic that everyone is up and dressed without incident on Saturdays.