

CLUB NEWS

SGA UPDATE

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The Oct. 5 meeting continued discussion on a proposed amendment to the SGA's constitution and raising awareness of serious issues.

For the third time, Matthew Mahoney, Senator, Humanities, read his proposal to change the right of the SGA vice president to make budget exceptions. Mahoney repeated that SGA needs to establish a check and balance system. He added that as the amendment stands, it gives "huge power" to the vice president. Mahoney said that while he knows the current vice president would not abuse this power, future vice presidents might.

The SGA discussed several events, many of which are meant to bring serious issues to students' attention.

The Black Student Union plans to host an open forum on Oct. 23 from 12-2pm to discuss the recent school shootings in Colorado, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania.

President O'Malley discussed an idea for an open forum about a recent incident that happened at Penn State UP. She explained that a man wore a shirt around the UP campus that said something along the lines of "No homos go to heaven." She said students may have a lot to say in regards to preventing such occurrences. It was suggested that the SGA hold the forum on Oct. 11, which was *National Coming Out Day* for the GLBT community.

Another SGA activity announced at the meeting was a date auction to raise money for THON.

During the Oct. 12 meeting, SGA spoke about Mahoney's proposed amendment, access to the school's computer labs after hours, and how to plan more weekend events to provide students entertainment.

According to O'Malley, Mahoney must start his amendment proposal over again because she discovered a rule where it is required to post hard copies of an amendment proposal in certain places in the school so the proposal is open to the entire student body before the SGA can make a decision. She explained that although the senate could not come to a decision that day, they could still discuss them.

About the amendment dealing with vice president exceptions, Vice President Augie Bravo explained that certain groups, such as the Doctoral Student Association, have a difficult time attending SGA meetings because its members often work full-time jobs and attend classes immediately after work. He said that the amendment, if approved, would be unfair to those groups.

"The check and balance is in place so if the vice president says no, a club can then come to the senate," said Bravo. "If we allow just one governing body to make that decision, and the club can't come before the senate because of schedule conflicts, then we've left them with nothing."

Because this was the fourth week the proposal was debated, O'Malley suggested that Mahoney make a revision of his proposal so the senate can make a final decision.

O'Malley said, "I'm going to suggest you make a revision so we can do more than discuss this."

Senators Mahoney and Holly Weichman then explained that they had been working with both Dr. Pat Johnson, Director of Humanities, and Bob Brinkley, director of I.I.T., to get after hours access passes for students, which would allow students access to computer labs on campus any time.

The senate agreed that the support of the SGA was important in speeding up the process and giving a voice to the idea at UP.

Also in this meeting, Craig Dewalt discussed sending gifts to soldiers overseas during the holiday season. He explained that while the soldiers wouldn't mind receiving letters from SGA members, they said would like something more personal than letters, such as Frisbees and footballs.

ASME goes medieval with weapon of siege

By **MARUJA ROSARIO**
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"There's no rain delay in war." So said Andrew 'Dickie' Scott, president of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), as he and the rest of his crew got soaked to the skin on Tuesday, Oct. 17.

He spoke this as they all prepared to, for the first time in front of a crowd, launch a pumpkin with their trebuchet.

But before we can learn what happens to Scott and his motley crew, a bit of background information is required. Let us begin with the obvious question. What is a trebuchet?

A trebuchet, by American Heritage Dictionary's definition is, "a medieval engine of war with a sling for hurling missiles," and by Scott's definition, "a medieval weapon of siege." A trebuchet uses a "weight/counter weight system to hurl projectiles as far as half a mile at an enemy, used against barricades, walls, and forts," said Scott.

Scott conceived the idea for building one when he saw the annual pumpkin chucking competition in southern DE on television. He thought that the project would be a great one for ASME to get involved with, so he wanted the club to construct a grand trebuchet and compete in Delaware.

When he realized that, with time constraints, it would be almost impossible to accomplish this, he changed it to a competition held on campus during Penn State Harrisburg's Fall Fest, open to all students. When even this one seemed far-fetched, Scott cut it down strictly to ASME, "just to say we did it."

The enthusiastic club embraced the project. With wood donated by 84 Lumber (they had a contact with Dan Bock, senior, Mechanical Engineering, who got them that lumber), the club gathered for its first build day on an early Friday morning.

"We were really tired, running on stick figure sketches (provided

by Bock and Pat Ebner, who oddly enough, built a trebuchet before)," said Scott.

Within four hours, the crew of around six people finished with the framework. "It would have been faster, but we don't know how to work with wood," Scott said with a smile.

The project continued over a few days. Somewhere in that time frame, ASME got permission to use an old lamppost outside the MET lab as the mighty arm of their weapon.

Scott was excited about this find; the metal pole is lighter and longer than a wood beam would have been. "It

[the wood beam] would have needed a greater amount of counterweights for the same distance," he said.

"[Plus], the structural engineers can keep their wood."

The original build was completed on Wednesday, Oct. 11, when the club started testing their trebuchet for proper angles and weights with pumpkins. The pumpkins were all but donated by Lowe's, charging the club \$1 a pumpkin. Their first launch threw the pumpkin 60 to 70 yards without modification, though it was only "casually tested."

After their first successful test launch, as mechanical engineers

do, "we went through a sequence of loading more and more weight (the weight was actually club members) until it ultimately failed," Scott said.

That failure had a successful launch, but on the backswing the brackets snapped, releasing the arm that crashed through a 4x4 on the leg on its way down.

ASME salvaged the trebuchet by learning from their mistakes, replacing the leg and reinforcing weak points. "It is stronger and safer than it was before."

On Monday, Oct. 16, ASME took the trebuchet out to its launching field, the CUB Hill, in between the

library, Capital Union Building, and the bookstore. They left the critical parts unassembled so that no one would feel compelled to hurt it or themselves. On Tuesday morning, amid a torrential downpour, the club assembled the weapon (and set up a spectator tent), at 11:30 a.m.

And so now, we are up to when Scott releases the pin for the first time in front of a crowd.

A small but dedicated crowd gathered under the tent to see this first pumpkin fire. After the efforts of three people pulled the arm down and pinned it in place, Scott pulled out an air horn, hollered "LAUNCH ONE," and released the pin.

The image of this massive metal arm swinging up and, at the peak of its swing, release a pumpkin into the air was breathtaking. The entire crowd was simply stunned with awe before erupting into cheers and applause.

No one in view of the trebuchet could pass by without watching. Among all their spectators, Scott was most pleased by the police cruiser and Physical Plant (with the van and all three GATORS), stopping during their day to watch.

After a few more launches on both the large trebuchet and the smaller, all metal trebuchet built by Brian Roper, ASME charged spectators \$2 to pull the pin themselves. "We made \$10," Scott said.

Though Scott was disappointed by the weather, he felt it was important to show that, when the club sets itself up to do something, "we'll come through."

ASME plans another demonstration on Tuesday, October 24 at 12:30 p.m. Though pumpkins will be provided, spectators are more than welcome to supply their own pumpkin, "watermelon, [or] cantaloupe."

Scott's harebrained idea turned itself into a reality with the help of his club, and he is well aware of that. "Thanks to ASME for all their time and effort to this project."

Scott also added, "Not only are we the crazy engineers who built a medieval weapon of siege, we are the crazy engineers who built a medieval weapon of siege in the rain."



Andrew 'Dickie' Scott, ASME president, prepares to release the pin that will launch the massive metal arm of the trebuchet, releasing the unexpected pumpkin from the sling for its wild, airborne ride and final, ultimate demise.

Fall Fest trudges through bad weather

By **CHRISTINE CHURCHWELL**
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If you haven't noticed leaves falling, though sadly lacking in the vast amounts needed to scrape together to form a sufficient pile for leaping, there is a news update. Fall is definitely in the building.

How do I know? Besides the coating of leaves that is determined to swallow my car each day and the nose chilling bite of Old Man Winter each morning, Fall Fest of course!

On Tuesday, Oct. 17, Penn State Harrisburg's Student Government Association and the student body banded together to revel in the glory of the season with free food, loud tunes and various amusements.

Due to the fickle nature of women, Mother Nature decided to send shivery temperatures and rain in an attempt to thwart SGA's valiant attempt to celebrate Fall's return to campus, and so the activities were sent inside. Fall Fest may have been forced indoors but it hardly impacted the spirit of the Harvest.

Although a few choice activities were abandoned, much to the dismay of many, with the change of venue the main lobby of Olmsted was transformed into an amphitheater of rock music, played by local band, Holis.

The music ranged from much loved cover songs to original works by the band. The turnout that amassed was surprisingly chill and groovy.

If you had walked through the lobby at that time you could find many individuals sitting on hay bails or any sturdy surface to relax

and decompress for a few. Afterwards many students, like Amanda Baldwin, junior, psychology, are welcoming the idea of live music during break.

"It was a good change of pace from the hectic demands of college." Will lyrics reverberate off the walls more often in Biscotti's future? We will wait with baited breath.

Speaking of college, as a student myself, I find it undoubtedly safe to say that free school events are the best school events and Fall Fest was wonderfully free.

If you happened to check out the Gallery Lounge you would've found a Fall Fest paradise complete with free food, T-shirts and Harvest inspired games.

The delectable munchies provided by Commonwealth Catering and served by earnest SGA members, featured an assortment of Fall inspiring foods like chili, potato soup, corn bread, and, best of all, "Mmm...really good Apple Pie," according to Teddy Tesfayone, sophomore.

Other offerings included t-shirts designed by Youthana Yuos marking the event and candy apples, which always brings to my mind Snow White's fated slumber.

To get into the competitive spirit the SGA offered amusing games such as "Guess How Many Candy Corns Are In The Jar", where I'm convinced that there is a secret compartment under the lid, hiding



Decorations adorn the Gallery lounge as Fall Fest happened inside the Olmsted building. The torrential downpour stopped the festivities from being outside, but that did not stop the activities from occurring inside. Among them were getting hand-dipped caramel apples, which some students waited in line for 45 minutes, pumpkin decorating contest with voting, and Holis, which played in the lobby.

just a few more candy corns to throw any estimate off.

Above all other forms of entertainment, the Pumpkin Carving contest displayed the true artistic talent of various clubs on campus.

Among my favorite: the Anime Club's pumpkin that sprouted legs and decided to outfit himself in a

trench coat and hat; the Photography Club whose pumpkin bared a strong resemblance to Mr. Potato Head; and the American Society of Engineers who presented their smashed pumpkin on a platter. To all the club members, you are winners in my book!

While warm and toasty inside the lobby of Olmsted, some of you

with a tougher constitution braved the elements and happened out by the back parking lot. Where you were sure to witness the delightfully destructive activity of launching pumpkins from trebuchets.

All of it done just to see how far a pumpkin can fly before reaching an untimely and messy demise.

After the first failed attempt it began to rain pumpkins in earnest.

Many of the students who huddled under the small, but, nonetheless, much needed shelter of a tent, gleefully shouted encouragement.

"Let her rip," said Matthew Mahoney, junior, Communications, before ASME

president Andrew Scott tugged the rope.

At 2 p.m. when things were done and students ran off to class, it was apparent that Penn State Harrisburg welcomed in the harvest season with a bang as Fall Fest 2006 was a hit.