

# OPINION

## A minute with Mauti



By **LISA MAUTI**  
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Political Banter. It's annoying, but come every election I still see middle age men turn themselves into kindergartners like magic, pointing their little fingers every which way to make themselves seem like the better person. It's almost like the "Who's bigger" competition men secretly engage in. (Yeah, don't act like you think women don't know. We do and, it's okay. Just know that we laugh inside.)

But seeing all of these messages, whether true or not, still seems to invoke citizens into heated discussions surrounding politics. I tend to be a hippy when it comes to politics. I don't really like them, but societies need them, so I deal with them. On paper I'm a Democrat, as most of my family is. So, you guessed it; I don't appreciate the decisions Bush has been making.

I can be very outward about my feelings towards this administration, but last Sunday I got myself into a bit of a pickle when I started talking politics with a bunch of Republicans. Now this wasn't just any group of Republicans. They were the parents of a certain someone in my life. After a few heated debates about the war in Iraq, abortion and Bush, I declared, "This is why I don't talk politics with friends or family!"

This issue has come up quite frequently in the past year as I have started to grow into adulthood. My identity has started to shape, and I'm not afraid to stand up for what I believe in. But I had never before realized just how defensive people get about politics until I started openly throwing around what I thought. Now I don't mean I go around trying to start fights with people. But when I talk politics it's more of a light, conversational occurrence, or a disagreement in class. It's a free country and not everyone has to agree, but I have discovered that there are some people where it is life or death with them. It's scary in a way.

Even scarier is the fact of how old school people are when dealing with women in politics. It's a jump back to the 1950's. Just bringing up the fact that a woman might run for President in an upcoming election, instantly turns a switch and people refer to women in the most derogatory forms. For instance, if a man likes to work hard and get things done, he's ambitious. But if a woman acts in the same manner, she is aggressive. And for heavens sake, we can't have an aggressive, emotional woman in charge of our country. The Oval Office would have to stock up on Kleenex for days when she is so emotional that every call makes her cry.--Yeah right. That's a bunch of BULL!

Anyways, when it comes to relationships, there is a certain dance you have to do to keep things civilized. My brother just married a Bush-loving Republican who doesn't see anything but the good in Bush. I can thoroughly argue with the fact that people who don't see the bad in things are just making things worse, but I love my new sister-in-law and would like to keep it that way so we stick to talking about other things. So I guess if I have learned anything in the past few months, unless you want to lose some of your good friends for reasons that should never enter into a friendship, don't let political banter enter in the room. It's just badly produced propaganda that star middle age men acting like youngsters who like to point fingers to save their reputation.

## CULTURALLY INEPT A BI-MONTHLY PONTIFICATION

By **OSCAR BEISERT**  
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In a letter to her mother dated 1856, the struggling American genre artist, Lilly Martin Spencer, wrote, "Things are going all ways, but up!" After loosing one's job to no conceivable fault of his or her own, fighting a torrent of governmental fines and fees, and, continuously, working to surmount the financial struggles that burden the poor slob who finds his or herself collecting the—lower than usual—wages of unemployment, it is difficult for one not to empathize with Spencer's lament.

On the contrary, the one great thing about hitting rock bottom is the prospective acquisition and strengthening of important human qualities—endurance and durability. Holding tightly to these traits, I recently decided not to allow a PHEAA faux pas or even an elongated spell of bad luck to debase my tenacity. So, in an effort to surmount the path of life, I decamped my cloud of negativity, and employed myself as a laborer of academia.

Still moving in all ways, my new endeavors compelled a pioneering upward motion—or, at least, an uptown movement. Now, when I

say uptown, I'm withdrawing from this—the Harrisburg—region and relocating the subject to the tiny island of Manhattan. This "upper" led me to the New York Metro American Studies Association (NYMASA) Conference at 115<sup>th</sup> and Broadway where I found "the" Columbia University.

Never having attended an Ivy League university, I was slightly intimidated by the level of discourse that might ensue at this conference. The day's events were titled, *Crash Landings: Friction and Flow in the American City*, and the discourse proved to be not only intriguing, but—on the whole—at my level. Thoroughly enlightened and intrigued by the first two sessions, it was quite a change of pace to embark upon session three's pseudo intellectual level of discourse. (Now, please remember, this is merely my opinion!)

This session involved two speakers and a respondent. Speaker one, a graduate student at Columbia, presented his paper titled, *Mark Twain in New York City: The Country Boy Made Good*. While I am not greatly knowledgeable on the subject of Twain or his writings, the presenter alluded to a number of racial and theoretical statements made by Twain.

Some of these allusions included

Twain's use of the "N" word as a term of racial identification and a theory regarding country child rearing as the best and truest form of such a task. Another of his references derived from the topic of country child rearing it entailed the belief that great men come from poor and/or humble beginnings. The delineation of these facts involved a self righteous jeering and criticism as though Twain were present and standing at the opposite podium. In fact, the entire presentation, including the question/answer portion, denoted a great interest in derision more so than analysis.

While I am fully competent of the social necessity of historical and cultural analysis of deceased individuals and their works that have effected American society, I am not persuaded that the lampooning of people long dead has any real academic or social value. Obviously, we analyze and acknowledge historical events to understand the present and create a tool by which unnecessary or detrimental actions are not repeated.

I am mindful of this sort of discussion as a genre of contemporary academics. However, I am unclear as to its scholarly value. Twain opined that great men come from poor and/or humble beginnings, but we know

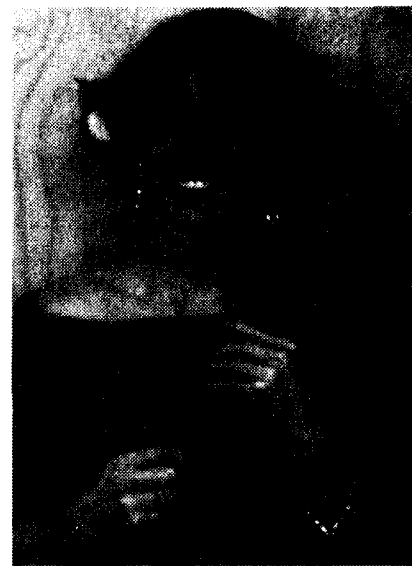
from history that (wo)men such as Abraham Lincoln and Harriet Tubman were just as contributive as others such as Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt.

Modernly, society opines that you MUST have a college degree to perform the widest range of lucrative American jobs. However, is it possible that intense training and vocational education might provide the same level of preparation—or even more so—than four years of a liberal arts education?

It is relatively simple to criticize someone of another era—someone reared with completely different values, ideas, and understandings of social issues. However, it is less simple to revisit their level and fathom the reasoning behind choices that were made once upon a time. This more difficult approach does not validate these antiquated practices and/or ideas, but instead, it allows one to truly understand the subject and/or situation. Thus, one is enriched with the viable knowledge needed to accurately and positively utilize such information.

Maybe such criticism has great validity, but the real value is in the effort to move forward. Is it possible that despite all of the negative things that occur in life, we can still move in all ways including up?

## President's Corner



By **ARIEL O'MALLEY**  
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**LEADER.** What does the word "leader" mean to you? Do you think of a person with a lot integrity, strength, or ambition? Or maybe someone who is outgoing, congenial, or approachable. Whatever group of traits you use to define a leader, that is your unique point of view.

In my opinion, a leader is someone who is approachable, and open minded, yet possesses a set of their own opinions, determined, ambitious, and willing to go that extra mile to get everyone to work together and accomplish their goals.

However the definition of a leader does not simply stop there. A leader is also defined by how they react to things.

They are defined by how they react to confrontations, last minute changes, flaws in the plan, and issues within their organization.

No one wants to be led by someone who cannot do damage control or someone who flies off the handle when things do not go exactly as planned.

But as Abraham Lincoln once said "nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

A person may be your best friend, yet when put into a position of power or lack of power they can become your enemy.

As one can see, it becomes quite difficult to find a person with the right set of qualities as well as the ability to have power to lead those around him.

Which explains why there are also various levels of leaders. For instance there is the *average* leader. The average leader does their job as outlined, goes about their daily duties, and generally gets along with everyone. They do well enough but nothing really stands out about them.

Then there is the *great* leader. The great leader does their job as outlined and beyond. They go that extra mile simply for the sake of doing it, not for the gratitude or praise.

They are respected simply for who they are and what they do. Respect is never commanded or demanded, rather; respect is naturally given. But most importantly when they leave, they leave behind a group of individuals who want to strive to be just like them.

Even the person with the best mixture of leadership qualities can fail with a lack of cooperation within their organization.

If a leader cannot inspire those within his organization, he is simply a man among men.

One must be able to rally those who depend on him to reach a common goal in order to succeed. A leader also needs the faith of those within his organization to do what is best for them as a whole in order for the organization to excel.

Without this faith there is a constant questioning of motives and a lack of growth.

In the end, it is not the person who defines leadership, but rather the things that they do that define the leader they are. So I will ask you again, what does the word "leader" mean to you?

## Don't be afraid to ask Zack

By **ZACK PICCOLO**

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**Hey Everybody! Hope everyone is having a great semester! For those**

"Ask Zack" is the Capital Times' first advice column. I decided to start this mainly because I know there are students out there who are being faced with difficult situations and struggling with all types of problems. Something that really concerns me and motivated me to create this column is the fact that so many people out there are going through problems and they feel like they are all alone. I feel that I have been blessed with a gift to see deeper and I want to use that gift to help those around me.

Now, as I am sure you know, there are tons of problems and issues that exist out there. So I rallied three professionals in the psychology community to help me in my mission. The first person I would like to introduce is Dr. Steve Backels. He is a Licensed Psychologist in the state of Pennsylvania and is currently

employed here at PSH as the Director of Counseling Services, and has been in that position since 1991.

The second person is Anthea Stebbins. She works full time at Interworks in Harrisburg as a counselor and teacher and is an adjunct instructor of Human Development and Family Studies here at PSH.

The third person is Linda Meashey. She is a licensed psychologist and works full time here at PSH as a counselor in counseling services and has been here since 1988. These professionals will act as advisors to me and help me make sure my information is accurate.

You are free to write about anything that pertains to your life as a student which could be honestly anything you're going through at all. Please try to keep all questions 400 words or less.

This is my second semester at Penn State Harrisburg, and I transferred from Harrisburg Area Community College. I am currently a sophomore in the Psychology Department majoring in Applied Behavioral Sciences.

To contact me, please type (preferred) or write a letter, and send it through the mail. I chose that as the standard way to protect your identity, but you are more than welcome to send letters directly to my e-mail as well, which may be easier and more convenient for you. You can choose a code name to be addressed by, and if for some reason it is inappropriate, I will simply use "PSH Student". Letters through e-mail can be sent to zjp5006@psu.edu. Please use the following address for mailing letters: Penn State Harrisburg Capital Times Advice Column 777 West Harrisburg Pike Middletown, PA 17057

Now I go to my last and most important topic, confidentiality. Here it is down to the brass tacks. ABSOLUTELY NOBODY else will see these letters but me. My staff will never see them, only listen

to them. Once I receive the letter, I will go through them and select the one to be published. If you want a response, even if you're not published, and you write a letter, please include your PSU e-mail. I will do my best to get to as many as I can. I will not get to all of them, so please don't be upset if you don't get a response.

But, please be advised that Pennsylvania State Law requires my staff and I to report any serious crimes that are made known. Also, if we feel that your life or someone else's is in any danger, we need to act and beg you to provide contact information so we can get you help from the counseling center.

The counseling center is in Olmsted Building W-117 and their phone number is 717-948-6025. Only in extreme emergencies like those will my staff read the letters and take appropriate action.

I hope you take advantage of this column and start sending letters. I look forward to getting to know you all and I hope we can learn something from each other and make a difference here on campus.

## Osman's window into the world

By **OSMAN ABDALLA**  
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All types of current governments don't suit all types of current nations. That is for simple reasons.

First, the people who are governed (not the people in the government) of any nation are not the ultimate and the only recipient of the nation's resources.

Second, while the social structure of any country is changing, ideologies are not. Ideology-based decisions therefore interrupt the dynamic of the social structure and lead to more and more conflicts.

Third, politicians in all nations based on current measures severely lack transparency. And finally, priorities of any nation are well confused by the government.

The government in any country should be an instrument in the people's hand to use in their pursuit of happiness. For many reasons, government officials tend to

suppress this role for government.

Instead they abuse the power were given to them to serve the public. They take advantage of their seats to advance personal, partisan, or ethnic agendas. If this power will remain permanent to them it wouldn't have come to them first place!

We need government officials who believe in altruism as a way of life. Do we have those?

The social structure of any country is not very static, as government officials perceive it. Based on many factors, the social structure changes in a very observable way. Therefore, the same way of decision-making is never feasible.

Therefore, partisan ideologies severely cripple the social progress and bring more conflicts.

Select any country and examine if the current government takes priorities in the order they should be taken. For the example, take the current administration in the United

States. The Bush administration is the only administration in the world that did not sign the Kyoto protocol that tackles global warming. Global Warming is a threat to the existence of human herd, how can there be more important issue than our existence.

President Bush vetoed a bill that congress passed to fund embryonic stem cell research, this research is expected to eliminate Alzheimer and many other genetic diseases.

Lack of transparency is institutionalized in all governments' structure, regardless. Why should there be classified information? The government thinks that people don't have a right to know what the government is doing. Why? Why do politicians lie?

These governance issues stem from one primary reason, that is the separation of decision from analysis. The separation of decision from analysis stands as a fundamental factor that will undermine human progress.

It has been clear by many cognitive scholars' articles that decision making depend entire on the person's cognitive style or knowledge.

Without the analysis that uncovers truth behind all the facts and the relationships between them, how can a person make a decision? Especially in the public sector where all officials are equipped with whatever they can spend taxpayers' dollars on.

All these resources are granted for them for making better decisions. Yet everyone in the country is not enjoying a better health care, education opportunity... etc.

And why politicians don't consider Global Warming as an issue that threatens our existence, simply because gut feeling doesn't match the scientific findings, and as well as they don't feel scientific findings as true as their gut feelings. That is an other form of the separation of decision from analysis.