

CLUB NEWS

SGA Update

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No clear reason was given as to why Student Government President Marques Stewart has resigned from office. Saying that his time in office has been a "great opportunity to grow as a person and as a leader," Stewart was praised by his peers as being a driving force behind not only raising the diversity of the SGA, but also the diversity awareness of the entire campus.

Among the many accomplishments that Stewart has made while in office, his parting legacy is one of intrigue. Insisting that people will continue to remember him if they speculate as to why he left, Stewart gave no reason for his departure. While this may be true of some students, speculation without facts is the stuff of opinion pages, not factual columns.

SGA Vice President Sahar Safaee now takes the reins of a SGA that has been hard at work over the past few weeks to improve their image, and not through baseless statements, but through actions.

The SGA showed dedication for our region in being the only commonwealth campus within our caucus to attend the November Commonwealth Campus Student Government (CCSG) meeting, a gathering of all Penn State SGAs.

Topics from CCSG that affect our campus included a "Paws Here" campaign that would offer discounts at local businesses for students with their Penn State ID. This idea has been brought up in the past and has been a recurring issue for nearly two years now, still with no resolution.

Diversity remains a focused topic for the SGA. Diversity Affairs committee chairperson Phebe West made the point clear at the Nov. 15 meeting and the Nov. 29 Town Hall meeting that diversity within PSH is not up to par. She cited facts from CCSG showing that retention rates among minority students are low. Fewer minorities return after their freshman and sophomore years. CCSG discussed the option of introducing a minority scholarship to help combat this problem.

West also brought forth the idea of introducing a lecture series that would highlight the diversity of minority cultures living in America and the diverse aspects brought forth by various European cultures as well. West hopes to work with MAEP and John Howie of the Multi-Cultural Recruitment Team to provide diversity education in the interim until the lecture series comes to fruition.

THON also became the topic of discussion when it was revealed by sources at CCSG that the THON committee was supposed to be operated by the SGA and not as a separate entity like it is here. No immediate effects have been noticed with the release of this information due in part to the SGA "handling it professionally" as they promised at the Nov. 15 meeting.

This became a cause of concern because PSH was being penalized within the THON system for not having THON committee members attend CCSG meetings. The punishment is that PSH cannot sponsor a family for two years. Thus far PSH has not been given this punishment and the SGA and THON has pledged to never let it get that far.

The SGA fielded many questions during the Nov. 29 Town Hall meeting, among them advertising for clubs. Suggestions brought forth included weekly event e-mails, a Facebook group and table tents, for the tables in Stacks. SGA adviser Donna Howard pointed out that an event calendar already exists online at the PSH homepage.

There are many other topics on the SGA plate and students are always welcome to voice their opinions and concerns either at meetings or directly within their office.

Show off your diamonds at PSH

By **ADAM PORTER**
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The holidays are a time for family. We try to slow down our busy lives, if only for a day or two, and spend time with those we love.

Family comes in many forms. For Sean Laird, family is Mom, Dad, two older brothers and so much more.

The Lairds met their "extended family" when Sean was only 2 1/2 years old. Teresa and Bob Laird, Sean's parents, noticed when their son was out playing with other kids in the neighborhood, he would tire much more quickly than the others. Sean also had an unusual limp that caused him to drag his leg behind him. Mrs. Laird took her son to their family doctor to get tested for, perhaps, arthritis. There also appeared to be small red spots on Sean's leg.

Luckily, the doctor ordered a CAT scan, which could provide more detail than other tests. Thursday night, right around dinnertime, Mrs. Laird took a phone call.

"The doctor said, 'You need to come in right away.' I told him I wanted to get dinner started, could it wait until tomorrow?" she recalled.

The doctor insisted on seeing Sean right away. Once directed to the emergency room, 2 1/2 year old Sean

the blood. It causes your marrow to produce so many cells, called blasts, that haven't fully formed into lymphocytes that the red blood cells and platelets you need get pushed aside.

"Then Greg came to talk to us."

Diamonds) Fund paid for, because I just couldn't believe it," chuckled Mrs. Laird. "Taking Sean to the clinic was almost like a party once we got to know all the other families there. It was such a good time, especially considering what we were there for,"

he doesn't remember much. When asked if he is now able to understand what he went through, he replied, "I think so. We were talking about leukemia at school the other day and I put my hand up and said, 'Oh yeah, I had that.' All the kids in class couldn't believe it."

Other memories include "Mr. Tubey," a hand-made stuffed bear that had a small piece attached to its chest resembling the tube on Sean's Metaport used to administer the chemotherapy.

"He also loved a smile," noted his mother.

Sean was quite a night owl, staying up for the late talk shows simply because the comedians would always have such a big smile.

Sean is now in 8th grade at Palmyra Middle School and doing great! To this day, he still keeps in touch with his newfound family from the clinic. He's even attended THON since its last year in the White Building. At his school's career day, he expressed interest in law enforcement, EMT training and also photography. What college is he considering attending? "Penn State!" he declared.



The Four Diamonds Fund Conquering Childhood Cancer

Photo courtesy of google.com

was poked and prodded for a blood sample to test.

"Get someone else who knows how to do it or stop," Mrs. Laird insisted.

Within an hour, the results came back. Mr. and Mrs. Laird sat with Dr. Barbara Miller, Division chief of the Pediatric hematology/oncology team at Penn State Children's Hospital.

"It's cancer," the doctor told them. Two words so clearly etched in the memory of these dedicated parents.

Acute lymphoblastic leukemia, "ALL" for short, is a cancer of

Greg Baiocchi, MSW, LSWS, is one of two full-time social workers at the hospital. He explained that the Four Diamonds would be able to pay for anything the family's insurance didn't cover.

Mr. Laird had personal appreciation of how expensive hospital bills can be. As a small child he received burns over much of his body, and his mother had to go back to work just to keep up with the medical costs.

"I didn't want to seem dumb, but I had to ask Greg again what the (Four

she continued.

She later learned that the Fund had even replaced a family's furnace that had broken just to keep the child healthy.

"They do whatever it takes to keep the family's focus on making sure their child gets better," reiterated Mr. Laird. "We were very lucky. Everything just fell into place."

"He was like a celebrity at the hospital. They treated him so well," recalled Mrs. Laird.

Given his age at the time, Sean said

Toys for Tots, bring a smile to a child

By **JENIFER BAUGHMAN**
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Come be a part of bringing a smile to a young child this Christmas. Toys for Tots is a nationwide organization that delivers toys to less fortunate children.

You can help the children by donating a new toy to one of the local sites in Harrisburg. Donation sites can be found at the Toys for Tots homepage, www.harrisburgtostots.com.

Toys will be accepted from Nov. 2 to Dec. 15.

The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve has conducted the annual Toys for Tots for 59 years. Social organization, churches and community programs deliver the gifts to boys and girls up to 15 years old.

Their goal is to provide local children with a happy, enjoyable and fruitful Christmas.

First Sgt. Paul Finn, the coordinator of Toys for Tots in the Harrisburg area stated that

2006 was the most successful year ever. Nationwide they delivered 19.2 million toys to 7.6 million kids. In Harrisburg 78 thousand toys were delivered to 16 thousand kids.

If interested in helping with Toys for Tots in your local community you can participate in any of the following: donate a new unwrapped toy, organize an event, help sort toys, have your own toy collection, host a collection event or donate cash.

Visit your local website for additional information.

How did Toys for Tots begin? In 1947 a lady handcrafted a Raggedy Ann doll at Christmas and asked her Marine husband to deliver the doll to an organization that would give it to a needy child.

He found that no such organization existed and decided to start one. It was so successful that the Marine Corps adopted Toys for Tots in 1948.

Toys for Tots is now part of the official mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.



Bring a toy and a smile to a child

Make Penn State proud and help a child by donating either a new or gently used toy to one of the donations boxes located around campus.

Bin Locations:

CUB Lobby

Library Lobby

Bookstore Lobby

Olmsted: Town Square and Main Lobby

Dates: November 2 to December 8

Make the holiday a little bit brighter for a child! :-)

For over 365 years, the Army National Guard has been proven in war, proud in peace. And now we are prepared for the 21st century. Once you've earned the title "American Soldier," you'll be part of something greater than yourself, you'll be part of a team.

The black beret symbolizes a lighter, faster and stronger land force prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

YOU CAN be part of this team, and wear the black beret with **pride**.

Duty | Honor | Country

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