

Letter from the Editor

I have been working on this first issue since May when Jim Vomero, last year's SGA President, approached me about establishing a campus newspaper. I have had to learn as I go, having no training in the newspaper industry. The experience I have gained from working on this project is invaluable.

There are several people to whom I owe thanks for helping me with this endeavor. Dan Mroz and Staci Willhide from IT have gone out of their way to provide equipment and support. Matt Hass and Josh Klenzing from SGA have been supporters from the beginning. A special thanks to the library staff for giving us space to work. Certainly, this newspaper would not have been possible if it were not for the advice and encouragement given to me by Dr. Boon and Dr. Dendle.

Funding for the printing of this issue was provided by SGA, for which we are very grateful.

To the staff: It was your hard work and effort that made this newspaper happen. *The Fourth Wall* is fortunate to have such dedicated writers and looks forward to attracting more contributors from the student community.

Danielle Ramsay
Editor-in-Chief

Mission Statement

The Fourth Wall was established to provide a responsible forum for dialogue within the student community and for the free expression of considered ideas; to build community; to promote student involvement in activities and issues that have an impact on students' lives; and to disseminate information about campus activities, organizations and events. This is our chance, as students, to say what we really think.

Announcements:

Currently seeking
contributors

The Fourth Wall is seeking writers for all sections, including sports and arts & entertainment. We also need general writers on assignment and general article writers. There are openings for regular columns, such as a political column, humor column, advice column, and cartoons. All students are welcome regardless of major. Writers are not required to submit articles on a regular basis.

To make this paper successful, we need you to participate by writing in your opinions, concerns, and comments. Interested parties should send emails to fourthwall@psu.edu.

There will be a meeting for Adult Learners on Tuesday October 12 from 2:30-3:30 in the Wiestling Student Center.

This Month...
**Cumberland Valley
Women's Conference**

"Healthy Women:
Mind-Body-Spirit"
Saturday October 30
Workshops such as Mak-
ing Memory Quilts, and
Basic Feng Shui.

Also free blood pressure
screenings, bone density
scans and many door
prizes.

"Be part of a movement
of realization of potential
of women."

Contact Alice Royer at
749-6234 or
axr24@psu.edu
for more information

*Students wishing to place advertise-
ments can submit them to
fourthwall@psu.edu for consider-
ation. This is a free service for stu-
dents.*

"The Fourth Wall" for the Fourth Estate

Prof. Kevin Boon

"The Fourth Wall" is a theatrical term referring to the imaginary wall between actors on a stage and an audience. The term refers to part of a proscenium theatre, one of three main theatre designs.

Most stages have historically been designed as arenas, thrust stages, or prosceniums. All three types refer to the relationship between a stage where performances occur and an audience. Arena theatres are comprised of stage surrounded on all sides by the audience. Theatre in the round is performed in an arena theatre. Thrust stage theatres use one wall as a backdrop to the performance and surround the stage on three sides with the audience.

A proscenium theatre positions an audience on only one side of the stage, leaving three walls to frame the performance. Nearly all modern theatres are designed this way, but the first permanent proscenium theatre was not built until 1618 when the Teatro Farnese was in the Palazzo della Pilotta.

The term "The Fourth Wall," which came into vogue just after the American Civil War, refers to more than the missing fourth wall that allows the audience to view the performance. The term implies a relationship between the drama and the audience, one that is unbroken by direct acknowledgement of the audience's presence. Prior to the American Civil War, it was common for actors to deliver speeches directly to the audience. In modern theatre this is referred to as "breaking the fourth wall."

Since the growth of motion pictures in the twentieth century, "The Fourth Wall" has come to signify an imaginary separation between audience and performance, or between those who observe and those who are observed. Performers act as if the fourth wall is not there, as if their actions cannot be seen, while an audience peers through the fourth wall at the action. This relationship marks the term's relevance as a name for a newspaper.

The strength of a news source in a free democracy is its unrestricted access to the actions of ruling bodies and its power to comment on those actions without fear of reprisal. A public press (sometimes referred to as the "fourth estate") is both a platform for the free exchange of ideas and a "fourth wall" into the machinations of governing bodies. A free and public press has the power to observe actions and discussions that might otherwise take place in closed rooms. The press in a free society operates as a fourth wall through which that society's citizens view the actions of its government. The fourth estate is a fourth wall for the people.

In naming the Mont Alto newspaper "The Fourth Wall," the editors are putting the newspaper forth as a window into the Mont Alto campus society, a means by which students can view the inner workings of their campus and university and, conversely, a means by which the university can learn what is on the minds of its students.

The Fourth Wall

The Fourth Wall is the monthly student newspaper for the Mont Alto campus of The Pennsylvania State University. Letters to the Editor, comments, and queries may be addressed to Danielle Ramsay, Editor-in-Chief (dar262@psu.edu). Mail can be sent to The Fourth Wall, Campus Life Office, 1 Campus Dr., Pennsylvania State University Mont Alto, Mont Alto PA 17237.

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