

Opinion

Porno Access:

Delco's Freedom Debate

Freedom. Self-expression. Personal rights. These are American ideals. Yet, what happens when, in expressing and exercising rights, one person offends another, infringing upon that other person's freedom?

Although certain people might want to express themselves by running nude through the streets of Philadelphia, most citizens do not want to be exposed to someone else's random nudity, and so society has ruled that naked strolls are not protected under the first amendment. Although we like to think of ourselves as completely free, in reality, we are all constrained by societal rules - laws. Complete freedom would be nothing more than anarchy - a society of rape, murder, robbery, perpetual war, and lots of car accidents.

The issue of personal freedom has come under debate with the recent resurgence of pornography on the computer screens in campus labs. Regardless of personal feelings on pornography, which students describe as everything from "exciting" and "cool" to "graphic, tasteless garbage," most agree that to preserve freedom of expression, pornography cannot be prohibited. The dilemma is whether, as extensions of the classroom, the computer labs should be kept free from distracting or inappropriate behavior that detracts from an educational environment. A side issue is whether printing out reams of pornographic pictures wastes paper (and printer toner) that is intended for academic use. PSU Delco's image must also be considered since campus visitors may be offended by pornographic "wallpaper" unofficially installed on lab computers.

While we are all "free," a gracious person would relinquish certain personal freedoms in order to prevent needlessly offending fellow classmates and faculty. One suggested solution to this dilemma, installing software that blocks objectionable sites, would take away students' freedoms. Sara Whildin, Delco's head librarian argued that, as the fifth edition of the *Intellectual Freedom Manual* states, for freedom to exist, society must provide "unrestricted access to information and ideas regardless of the communication medium used, the content of the work, and the viewpoints of both the author and receiver of information."

All information must be accessible, (although when, where, and how that information can be accessed is another matter), or nothing is safe from restriction. Though pornography offends person A, certain religions might

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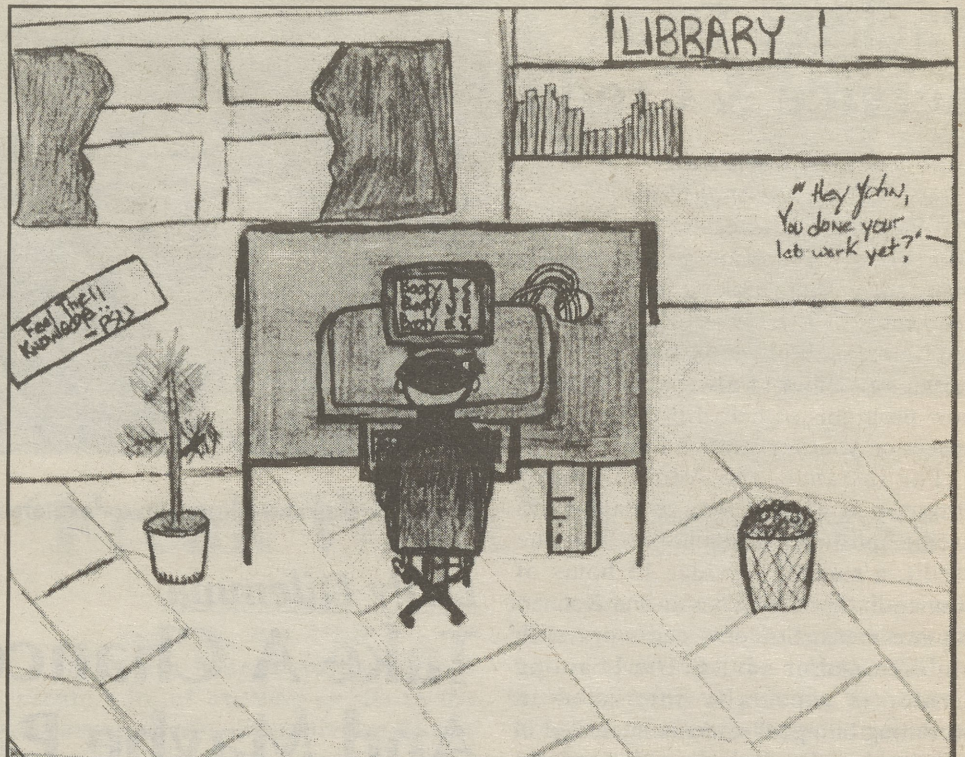
offend person B. Although person A might succeed in prohibiting pornography, person B will use the same arguments to censor religious symbols like a crucifix.

Furthermore, blocks on websites are indiscriminate, so by blocking "sex" sites and "porno" web pages, legitimate sites on "human sexuality" that students might need for research, as well as music groups like Sex Pistols, and albums like Extreme's *Pornograffiti*, and Red Hot Chili Pepper's *Blood, Sugar, Sex, Magic* would be inaccessible as well.

Last semester one student was printing out pictures of bestiality. Other students, retrieving their papers at the printer, were forced to wade through pages of animals and humans having sex. Nearly everyone agrees that bestiality and child pornography are extremely offensive. Still, some students don't "want to live in a world without pornography," while others find it ethically, morally and aesthetically offensive, and still others don't like it but aren't bothered by others looking at it. Some even consider female pornography as sexual harassment against women, and feel that it degrades and objectifies their sex.

If one student insists on viewing pornography in the lab, he or she takes away the rights of other students to have an academic lab free from distraction and potentially offensive material. Yet, if accessing pornography in computer labs is outlawed, then the freedom to access information is restricted. Which position is right?

A realistic university policy might require students to either view questionable material in the privacy of their own homes or immediately stop viewing material if it is offending someone else sharing the same lab. While Delco has "no specific policy about what a person can look at on the computer, there is specific policy about how it affects others," said Gordon Crompton, coordinator of student computer labs. So, rather than debate the merits of pornography, it is time for the University to set a standard and enforce the guidelines.



Behind Cobwebs And Weeds Springhouse Has Potential

By Alyece Wolff
Lion's Eye Staff Writer

Before refrigerators, people used small stone structures called springhouses to store their food. These structures were apart from the house, like outhouses. It can be said that these were the most vital part of the farm. Farmers, both men and women, worked close by them. The term derives from the small spring inside the structure, which served to cool down everything inside.

On the campus grounds of Penn State Delco, there actually is a springhouse. This particular one was used by the Pratt family for their dairy farm, which predated the campus. It was "The working heart of the Pratt farm," as described by Dr. Phyllis Cole, Professor of American Studies.

This rich relic of our past sits alone in the woods, off to the side of Main Building - barren, laden with cobwebs and weeds. Rather than being left to sit and rot there for eternity, this stone structure could be used quite nicely in the expansion of our campus around the Classroom Building area.

There are no current plans concerning the springhouse, nor have there ever been, but by creating some, the campus would be wholly and historically enriched.

Joan Jensen, a prominent national women's historian from New Mexico, used to study the land of Delaware

County (particularly the farm women), and according to Dr. Cole, would be willing to dedicate our particular springhouse if needed.

There are many possibilities, among them: the creation of a picnic area for students surrounding the springhouse perhaps with a fountain; or simply a little monument to the land's history, featuring a plaque explaining it to current and future generations.

Everyone agrees that clearing the weeds and brush surrounding it would be the first step in any type of restoration. What happens from there is up to the campus.

"I'm open to ideas," says Dr. Cole. "I wouldn't want to see it totally transformed into something else, but maybe we could restore the roof. I do think there are a lot of possibilities. Maybe even paving a path from the Classroom Building to where the springhouse lies." Of course, any kind of work like this needs funding. "We'd need to find a historical organization who is interested by this and would give us some financial support," says campus CEO Ed Tomezsko.

He says that if word got out, for example in a local newspaper such as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* or *Delaware County Times*, "You never know who might be fascinated by this idea. Maybe

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