



The Lion's Eye

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A day in my wheels...

PSU students learn life lessons about living with a disability

Analysis by SHAWN PETTIT
Staff writer

When I was nine years old, I was involved in an accident that put two serious fractures in my left pelvic bone. I choose not to discuss the circumstances of the accident, but, for three months, I was temporarily disabled. Because of my experience, I thought I knew what having a disability was like. I was wrong.

The "Day In My Wheels" program was the first event of Disability Awareness Week. The purpose of the program is to give able-bodied people the chance to see what situations a person with disabilities is put in every day. I participated in the wheelchair program along with a few others. We all received a wheelchair and were given instructions on what we had to do.

The first thing we did was take the Main Building elevator up to the second floor and find our way to the bathroom, where we had to enter a stall in the wheelchair.

We then proceeded to the third floor to do the same thing. After completing this, we had to go down to the first floor, go outside, and go to the Commons building. That meant going up the large hill. When we finished trudging up to the Commons, we then received a free drink, and then left the Commons to go back to the student lounge in the Main

Building.

Afterwards, Dory Shea, a part-time sophomore and organizer of the event, asked each of us what we thought about the venture. The most common response was "interesting" and "fun." The hill and getting through doors seemed to be the hardest part of the program.

Shea is a member of the SGA and uses a wheelchair every day. She was born with Spina Bifida, a spinal birth defect, and has used a wheelchair since she was ten years old. She started this program to raise the issue of the school not giving enough money or consideration to the disability program.

There are other programs during Disability Awareness Week, including a Disability Basketball game. The program will continue next semester with similar events.

I personally had a very memorable experience with this program. I know I don't have a real sense of what real life situations people with disabilities go through, but I do take seemingly common things, such as walking, a bit more seriously now.

"There are still people who don't consider the feelings of people with disabilities," Shea says. "People have to realize that the person is more important than the disability."

I think all able-bodied people have to take that into consideration.



Students enjoy a game of wheelchair basketball during disability week at Delco

Get your hand off my butt

By ADAM WOJCIECHOWICZ
Assistant editor

"Suppose that your boyfriend or girlfriend comes up to you and says that something a person said to them in class has simply made them uncomfortable," asks Dr. Nancy Wyatt, Associate Professor of Speech Communication.

"And they would rather not go back to the class, rather than put up with something sexually offensive," Wyatt continues, just as calmly and confidently as she began, and knowing the coming conclusion is not going to be a simple one.

The question that follows is, do these circumstances constitute sexual harassment? There was no physical contact, no assault of any kind, only the exchange of words.

For just these types of questions, Wyatt has organized a sexual harassment program for September 19, at 12:30 (common hour) in room 206 of the main building.

The answer though, in one word, is simply 'yes.' This may seem obvious to some, but for a great many it's all too unclear what action are dangerous versus those that are just mean, or what actions are punishable versus those that are not.

Most important is the question of how one should proceed if he or she is a victim of sexual harassment.

"Sometimes people just don't know where the line is, and sometimes the victims don't know either. You need to be aware that other people will stand behind you when someone steps over that line."

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Penn State Delco discovers the power of one

"Tuesday's with Morrie" takes it's place among Delco's 'must read' list

By ADAM WOJCIECHOWICZ
Assistant editor

"We're involved in trillions of little acts just to keep going. So we don't get into the habit of standing back and looking at our lives and saying, 'is this all? Is this all I want? Is something missing?'" -Morrie Schwartz

If you've ever been a busy student, author Mitch Albom has something personally in common with you.

Over the past decade, his life as a renowned professional journalist resulted in an all-too-common modern way of life, one built upon a foundation of scheduling, efficiency, deadlines, and constant work.

The typical student is definitely acquainted with this work ethic, if not quite as intimately as Albom, and they'll get a chance to read about a turning point in his once turbulent life thanks to a campus readership program now getting underway.

Albom, the Emmy Award-winning broadcaster and sports columnist, authored in 1997 a small, modest book entitled "Tuesdays with Morrie." It tells the true story of his reconnecting with a favorite old college professor now on the brink of death, and the final teaching of "life's greatest lesson."

The ongoing discussion series here at Delco seeks to foster a more unified, defined campus community through the shared reading of one book, namely "Tuesdays with Morrie."

At its core, the book tells the story of Albom's personal escape from a dreadfully busy working existence, barely keeping him alive in his mind, through conversations with Morrie Schwartz, former sociology professor at Brandeis University.

"Albom personifies in his book the commotion of a younger, newer generation of today. And compared to Morrie, Mitch's late college professor, we're all very young," said Norma Notzold, a key proponent of the readership program active this fall.

The committee, made up of students as well as faculty, put a good deal of thought into determining a suitable book for the purpose-relevant in all people's lives, yet convenient enough for students to pursue outside of class.

The month of September is intended for building a reader base, with informal discussion groups open to all those interested, meeting each Tuesday in the main building lounge at 4pm, with refreshments on hand. In October, the larger luncheons and panel discussion will take place, open to all those interested as well.

"September is important because it is the month in which most people will be actually reading the book. It is the prelude for October, which will culminate the program with a number of panel discussions and luncheons," said Notzold. "It's certainly a nice way to start the semester, as we're all getting to know one another."

Delco's website, at www.de.psu.edu, currently has a link to the program's website, at <http://www.de.psu.edu/book/fa01/>, where information can be found on the current program, including schedules of events and speakers.

The website also offers a "reader's guide" to "Tuesdays With Morrie," containing a wealth of links to further reading on several important aspects of the book, as well as many discussion questions for your own enjoyment/group use.

The book can be acquired a number of ways. The Vairo Library has several copies available to be checked out on a daily basis, and the campus bookstore has new and used copies available as well. Additionally, local library or major retailer is likely to carry "Tuesday's with Morrie."

Amazon.com is also an option, offering 40% off the cover price, or used versions for even less.

"It's a book that once you start, you can't put it down," said Jacqueline Hudson, a staff member in the Learning Center. "These are topics that all of us think about, at any age...and there is certainly value for any young person."

And it's never too late to be young, and live.