

Opinion

Letter from the editors

Somehow, some way, have a happy holiday

Hello campus community.

It's that time of year again, when the world celebrates its diversity through cultural holidays that reflect our basic human instinct: shopping.

It's that time of year when crazy shoppers get up before the crack of dawn to head to the malls that have been open even earlier than that. When, if you're not quick enough, you just might miss snagging the hottest toys of the season or that wild sale in which everything is 75 percent off. When, if you haven't even thought about holiday shopping yet, good luck checking things off of your list.

But the holidays also bring out a different aspect of human instinct: caring. It's the time of year when everyone is a little bit nicer than how they would normally be. When, maybe they anticipate standing in longer lines at major retailers and show a little bit more patience. When everyone gives to Toys for Tots, Boy Scouts and whatever other charity exists specifically for this time of year. Hopefully they're giving out of the generosity from their hearts, and not for a last-minute tax writeoff.

Why is it that people are generally nicer only this time of year? Why is it that everyone shows just a little bit more compassion? Shouldn't these good feelings exist all year long? Shouldn't you be giving all year long?

It's difficult when you're in college to accept that life can be unfair at times. The holiday season is a time for joy and family, right? Wrong. Someone has to feed those hungry shoppers and unfortunately for us, we're the zookeepers. If you're a poor, college student the holidays mean more debt, more lines, more work hours and less sleep. And we won't even mention the word finals.

We have to make ends meet to get through college, to pay car insurance, etc., which means we have to sacrifice something. Unfortunately, it is our own time. Christmas Eve, the last chance for the ultimate procrastinators, is horrendous amid pulling double shifts. When is it time for family? When is it time for us?

Even Christmas Day is likely to be spoiled by giant retailers. Wal-Mart and Kmart were open on Thanksgiving, another family-less holiday spent preparing for Black Friday, the most anticipated shopping day of the year. Will they be open on Christmas Day also? Sometimes it's difficult to differentiate why we really celebrate at all.

Good luck trying to keep your head above the water. If you do manage to steal away those precious few private moments between working and studying, enjoy them to the fullest extent. And, don't lose sight of what the holidays are really about: retail.

Happy Holidays!

Sarah and Jennifer

MISSION STATEMENT

We are the newspaper of the Penn State Delaware County campus, serving the students, administration, faculty and staff of, and visitors to, our campus. We vow to entertain and inform all of our audiences, and we will strive to make each edition better, so that we remain a vital part of the Penn State Delco experience. We also strive to be professional, and to follow the highest standards of good journalism.

PENNSTATE



The Lion's Eye

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People Poll

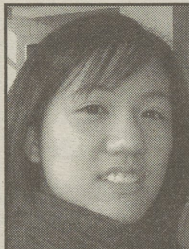
Staff writer Anya Takos asked:

Do you think military recruiters should be allowed on campus?



No, because they are pushy and I don't agree with the war.

Folake Ojo
Nursing major



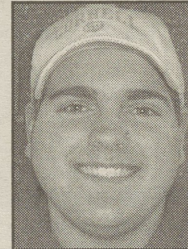
Yes, because there might be people who are interested in joining.

Helen Mach
DUS



I think it should be voluntary for students, so recruiters should keep off campus.

Shana Goldson
Business Adm.



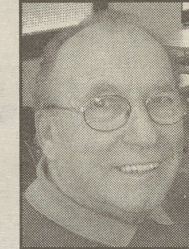
Yes, only because it is easier for them to get people to join.

Anthony Thompson
Kinesiology



Yes, because recruiters coming to campus would make it easier to get information.

Bob Gult
American Studies



I don't think that we should have recruiters on campus. Some people aren't meant to be in the service, but recruiters convince them to sign up.

Bob Farrell
English

Buyers beware: Retailers aren't fair

We're making our lists and checking them twice, because Santa is coming to town.

It's impossible to miss the holiday cheer. Cashiers are passing back receipts as quickly as you can hand them the cash. Smiles are exchanged, maybe even a Christmas greeting, and you're off to make that next purchase.

Now freeze. It's time to fast-forward and prepare you for the unexpected. Is that gift perfect for its new match? Will your dad like that sweater? Will mom like the perfume? Did you ever buy something for someone unsure if he would like it, but feeling confident that he could return it? Try again.

Retailers have become vengeful. They want you to spend money in their stores, but when it comes to returning, they aren't as pleasant. In fact, they are down right mean.

The quick and easy return procedure is now like trying to convince Scrooge you deserve a raise. And all recipients must be ready for the battle.

Retailers have hired companies to help prevent frequent exchangers from making their returns. Unfortunately, it's possible for anyone to earn the title "frequent shopper."

Stores now use licenses to input your driver's number into their computer. That number is saved, in order to tally up the number of returns for every individual. Once you meet their return policy limit, you are no longer allowed to make the exchange. Even with the handy-dandy receipt that proved that you made a purchase.

That's flat-out wrong. It isn't the customer service way. And I don't think they see that in the long run, profits will be lost. How many shoppers are going to want to return to their stores, if they know it's impossible to make a return?

Receipts don't help. The proof of purchase isn't what you need in order to get past their new systems. They don't care if you made a purchase and decided you didn't like it at home. All that matters to them is money, and meeting profit goals.

Of course, they won't be making any goals treating their customers with such disrespect. Who wants to shop at a store where they aren't guaranteed satisfaction? And what happens when the product doesn't work? Do they at least allow exchanges? Not always.

There are ways around computers. You could have a relative or friend make the exchange for you. But why should you feel forced to surrender, when stores are here to serve you?

Has customer satisfaction disappeared from this planet? Wasn't it once mandatory for employees to say the customer is always right? If we brought that sweater home and decided it didn't fit exactly how we wanted, isn't it our right to say that we weren't satisfied with our purchase?

Perhaps the reason stores have this new outlook on exchange policies is because some individuals who buy items, wear them, and then return them afterward. Isn't it always a few who ruin it for everyone?

But stores need to remember that not every shopper wears and returns items. Retailers should develop a new strategy to weave out the bad from the good. Because it shouldn't matter if you returned one item one week, and exchanged one more the following. Maybe you're a frequent shopper who decided that you would rather have that sweater instead of this one.

Unfortunately, retailers do have the right to prevent customers from making returns or exchanges. And Christmas shoppers must be aware of this. When making a purchase ask the cashier what their return policy is. And even if they have a sensible return policy, ask if they require ID. Because you never know how many times your gift recipient has made returns during the holidays.

And if you find yourself in a quandary, ask a friend to make the exchange for you. It's the only way around the system.

Unfortunately. And unfairly.



By SARAH GALLATIG

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