



The Lion's Eye

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It's 'For The Kids'

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By 7 p.m. on a bustling Friday evening, nearly a thousand people rose to their feet. They were cheering and shouting, shaking the walls of the Recreation Hall in State College.

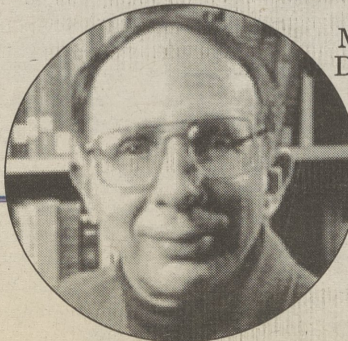
THON 2005, had finally arrived.

Short for Interfraternity / Panhellenic Dance Marathon, THON pits students' mental and physical endurance against time and nature through a 48-hour, no-sitting, no-sleeping, on-your-feet nonstop-action marathon of dance.

"All my wonderful friends will keep me awake," said Stacie Mann (junior, business administration), who is the Delco SGA financial adviser, as well as one of the four THON dancers representing Delco.

The three other Delco THON dancers included Ashley Carruthers (sophomore, psychology), Justin Spencer (junior, corporate communications) and Kyle Potter (senior, HDFS). Spencer, a Delco soccer player and co-president of the Delco Lion Ambassadors, had high energy the first night and remained that way throughout the weekend.

"I always keep some kind of ball by my side. Balls keep me occupied," said Spencer of his strategy for staying awake for 48 hours. "I have a tennis ball right now."



More than 20 Delco students were joined by a large number of Delco alumni at



THON is the largest student-run philanthropy in the world. All proceeds go to the Four Diamonds Fund. This year, Penn State raised a total of \$4,122,483.65.

Photo by Matthew Kelly

University Park last weekend for the purpose of encouraging the dancers through their grueling trial, and to participate in the largest student-run philanthropy in the world.

THON also is one of the most productive clubs at Delco, annually providing \$1,500 or more toward the Four Diamonds Fund, which benefits pediatric cancer research at the Hershey Medical Center.

"I hope we raise a lot of money," said Carruthers, around 2:30 a.m. on the first night. Dancers are not allowed to know the time during the duration of the weekend.

Carruthers, whose older sister was a Four Diamonds beneficiary, shared that her strategy for surviving the 48 hours was dependent on the supporters, family and friends.

Since October of this year, on-campus fund-raising activities such as the THON Halloween

Dance, the Music Versus Cancer concert and the THON silent auction produced most of the proceeds that helped increase this year's total THON earnings to \$4.1 million from last year's \$3.5 million.

Other sources of revenue came from students "canning" for donations at busy intersections and public places, and selling THON-related items.

This year's wildly popular blue bracelet, a complement to the rubber-wristband fad, had the words, "FOR THE KIDS," imprinted on them.

According to the official 2005 Thon Program, the same words are the trademark and ultimate purpose of THON.

"I've been sick all week," said Potter, "but it's all for the kids."

Potter has been involved with THON at Delco since her freshman year and became a dancer for the second time this year. She offered advice for future dancers.

"Don't stand in one spot," she said. "Turn around. Because then you'll start feeling all the pain you're in."

Away from the dance floor and far behind the scenes, members of Delco THON have been suffering for much longer than 48 hours.

"Throughout the four of five months of raising money, we did not have the support that we should have had," wrote Darlene Campoli (sophomore, secondary ed) and Adham Albarouki (sophomore, elementary ed) in an e-mail, "and also how people can not give a weekend of their lives to help kids dying from cancer. It shows that there

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