

Eye on Campus

Delco THON support not without controversy

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are people out there that do not have a heart."

Later, Campoli verified that she and Albarouki were referring to the members of Delco THON who were in State College and spent less than one or two hours with the dancers in Recreation Hall, or never showed up to THON at all.

"Although some of the THON members from Delco didn't show up, we still had a fun time, and a great experience," they said in the same e-mail.

In conjunction with the THON chairs, it was confirmed that the majority of the 20-some Delco students who went to THON were not a part of the THON organization itself.

Some were Lion Ambassadors, SGA, or simply friends of the dancers. This number included the 11 students who joined the THON officials on the chartered van that left Delco last Friday morning.

"That's really a shame," said Dr. Laura Guertin, professor of earth sciences at Delco. "THON is a wonderful organization and I think students could use the support."

Guertin has been the THON faculty adviser for three years and was not surprised to find that students went to State College during THON weekend with little enthusiasm for the weekend's main event.

"But," Guertin said, "I'm not a baby-sitter."

THON's policies provide guide-

lines for those who attend the event to support the participants.

The 2005 THON rules book states that, "anyone suspected of being under the influence of alcohol or any other substance will not be permitted on the floor... in extreme situations, dancer couples and passes could be taken away for future dance marathons."

Also, the book discusses the penalties of infringement of the rules through an investigation of the overall THON committee.

"Monetary fines, which will be deducted from the organization's total and transferred to dance marathon as a whole," or "loss of participation in dance marathon."

"I'm proud of all the dancers...(it's) hard to stay on your feet all 48 hours," said Andrew Farrell (sophomore, business), "but it's even harder to live with cancer all your life."

Farrell was one of the THON club members to make the trip. He also caravanned with the majority of the independent, non-club related Delco students.

The caravan shared four separate rooms at a State College motel.

There, Sean Nichols, a freshman elementary ed major and Lion Ambassador, shared his views on the injustice of the policy.

"It's not fair for the THON dancers, who worked so hard, to do this thing, and for them to have this opportunity taken away from them,"

Nichols said.

But THON weekend did not go without such examples.

George Daniels has been a strong supporter and member of THON since his freshman year.

Though never a dancer himself, Daniels went 44 hours without sleep one THON weekend.

"The dancers can't stop their friends from going drinking," said Daniels, who is also a Delco alum and a student at University Park.

This THON weekend, Daniels reported that he saw, very late on the first night, an unidentified man whom he claimed was under the influence "hop the fence, run up and get onto the stage singing and dancing with the band, and cheering, 'Go Delco!'"

In another incident, a student from the independent caravan on her way toward State College said that she witnessed a sign displayed in a car window that read, "THON 2005 — Show us your (breasts) — It's for the kids."

Back on the dance floor, around 3 a.m. on the second night, the remaining supporters of THON stood steadfast in the stands.

Those in the stands warmly welcomed cameos by Delco alumni, ex-dancers, supporters and ex-THON chairs such as Ed Rich, John Coyle and Haley Schorza.

"It's indescribable...I've only had six hours of sleep!" said Schorza, who didn't hide her enthusiasm.

Though she has graduated, this was Schorza's fifth year at THON.

"I have a lot of love for Thon and I have to support the organization and my best friends," Schorza said, "Just being in the building, we support the dancers."

Next to her were Jackie Varisano (junior, marketing) and her friend Laura Lubrano (junior, business), non-club member supporters who came with the Delco van.

"(There) could have been a lot more, but people don't understand what it is," Varisano said. "Last year I didn't, until the last four hours."

The last four hours of THON showcased the 2005 Four Diamonds Fund children beneficiaries along with all their families on stage. Then, a tribute video was shown in honor of all the children in the Four Diamonds fund who'd died of cancer.

"We had to leave that Sunday morning," said Nichols, who was not a driver in the independent caravan. "when I went online, I was able to watch it."

He was referring to the live camera feed, which was available through www.thon.org, "But there was no sound to it," Nichols said.

Meanwhile, 48 hours later and 292 miles away, delirious and exhausted, the dancers finally allowed themselves to drop to the floor, knowing they are safe among friends.

A look at THON through the lens of Matthew Kelly

