

Campus News

Challenging American Morals: A Constitution Day Celebration

By Labanya Mookerjee - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - lzm5110@psu.edu

On September 16, 2011, Dr. Laura Guertin hosted the annual Constitution Day Celebration in the courtyard of the Vairo building to, as she put it, "continue the legacy of the signers." The discussion was centered on whether or not social media should be monitored.

Social media, explained Dr. Guertin, played a key part in triggering flash mobs in Philadelphia, organizing the 2011 England riots, and even banning cell phone usage aboard San Francisco trains, under the threat of the possibility of a danger attack. So, Dr. Guertin asked, should social media be controlled? The answers varied from the audience.

"It's not right for a group to restrict social media on a group of people on the premise that they might do something."

Sarah DeMartino, a sophomore, stated that "It's not right for a group to restrict social media on a group of people on the premise that they might do something. I think before you suspend somebody's rights, you have to have solid proof -- you are not guilty until proven guilty. Take the subway incident, where cell phone service was suspended. Not everyone was a rioter, and all

of these people suddenly couldn't call for help if a riot did start."

Another student, Aimee Ralph, said that "Social media is a great tool for keeping connections with friends and family, but if people are going to schedule riots, it should be controlled."

Dr. Shupp added to the conversation: "There's a certain responsibility that comes with these tools... People have a right, but people should also realize the responsibility that they have."

Marguy Gray explained that since emergencies are unpredictable, "people need that freedom to use their phone until there is an absolute threat."

Dr. Guertin went on to explain the positive contributions of social media. For instance, it was Ann Curry's tweet that helped expedite aid to Haiti.

"It keeps us connected in a good way when we can't get through other sources," said Dr. Guertin.

Moreover, for a lot of educators, social media provides a means of keeping in touch with the professional community across the nation and the globe. Since Dr. Guertin is the only geologist in the area, applications such as Twitter help her to keep connected with others in her field.

Dr. Guertin later raised the idea of using Twitter and Facebook in the classroom. A course in University Park, she explained, is already using

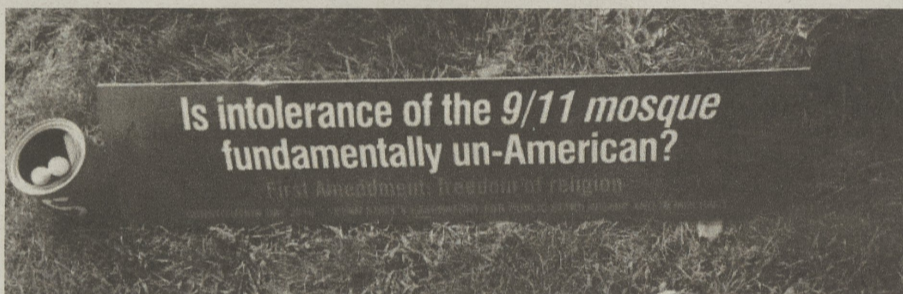
Twitter as a way for students to ask questions during class. However, a serious challenge in employing such a method would be in keeping the applications from becoming a distraction.

Aside from the enriching discussion that September afternoon, our campus was also scattered with black boards, accompanied by stacks of multi-colored chalk. Each board contained responses to questions that dealt with matters such as gun control and the "9/11 Mosque."

Thus, the success of this celebration not only encouraged members of the Penn State Brandywine community to think critically about important issues in the world, but also raised awareness of the rights granted to citizens under the American Constitution.



Social media and the First Amendment were the focus of this year's Constitution Day celebration. Constitution Day is celebrated every September to bring attention to various rights celebrated by the US Constitution. (photo courtesy google.com)



Signs like this one marked the pathways at Penn State Brandywine on September 16 as the campus celebrated Constitution Day. (photo by Labanya Mookerjee)

Matt Glowacki Gets The Conversations Rolling on Life Spent In A Wheelchair

By Mason Kieran - Lion's Eye Staff Writer - kdm5066@psu.edu



Matt Glowacki, above, recently visited the Penn State Brandywine campus and presented his "Doing Happiness" campaign. Glowacki's motivational presentations focus on "able-ism," "look-ism," and racism, with the hope that his audiences understand the impact and harm that can be caused when we labeling others. Glowacki's aim is that people walk away from their time with him knowing that we all are very similar despite what we might look like on the outside. (photo courtesy Matt Glowacki)

If you think you have it tough, you haven't met or heard Matt Glowacki speak. Glowacki, who has been a guest speaker throughout the country for 13 years, is a successful businessman, a former Team USA athlete, a mentor, a mechanic and a motivational speaker. The only difference between him and most of us is that he was born without any legs.

Born and raised in Wisconsin, Matt Glowacki has spent his 38 years of life being the "out-cast", but if you were to ask him if there was something wrong with him, he would say "I'm not handicapped, I'm not physically challenged or crippled, I just have an inconvenience. People have inconveniences every day, such as if your car won't start, mine just happens to be all the time (being in a wheelchair)."

Glowacki made his way to Penn State Brandywine September 13th, and spoke to students about some of his life experiences through his "inconvenience" and some of the projects he has been working on and plans to work on in the future.

Through his experiences over the years, Matt has now accumulated three different jobs, all in which he has a strong love and dedication towards. The

first is his lectures in which he visits schools, from elementary to universities to get the word out on the diversity. He travels 250 days a year, whether driving in his own specialized car or traveling by plane, he makes sure his message gets out.

Throughout his lectures Glowacki incorporates a fun and comedic way of nearly poking fun of himself being in a wheelchair. "For example, people always ask me why I have a wheelchair so I tell them to keep my butt clean," he says jokingly. As he says this, he hops off of his wheelchair and starts walking on his hands around the room.

His other jobs include being a DJ in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin as well as designing specialized wheelchairs for athletics. Matt has always had a love for music and sports so he thought of the best way to get involved in both of them. When he was a teenager he used to see girls surrounding the DJ, so he figured he could do that, while also getting paid. A year later he saved up for the equipment he began playing music at dances.

Glowacki created a program called "Doing Happiness." Doing Happiness is a program but also a way of life. Matt believes that doing something nice for someone each day which results in another person being happy is what key within the program. He says blowing bubbles around people is the best way because everyone likes bubbles and when they see bubbles it triggers a part of the brain that makes you smile and brings you back to the best times in your life.

People who meet Matt continue to say that he is an inspiration and that they do not know how why he is always so happy for being the way he is. His response is always that he loves what he does and will continue to do it. More information about Matt and his can be found at www.mattglowacki.com/.

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