

editorial opinion

Playing it straight

For some coaches and student athletes at Penn State, the first weeks of this semester have been ones of anxiety and waiting.

Are they worried about a big game or match coming up against a tough team? Are they thinking about a tournament that could put them in the running for a national championship? Things should be so simple. The source of their anxiety lies with the University's waffling over the fate of grants-in-aid for 10 teams.

Using various criteria, including participation in these sports on the high school level in Pennsylvania, the University Intercollegiate Athletic Strategic Planning Committee recommended in November that athletic scholarships for three athletic programs — men's volleyball and men's and women's lacrosse squads — should be frozen and these teams should not continue recruiting.

The committee also recommended that men's and women's fencing should not receive scholarships in the future, even though these sports have not received scholarships since 1981.

Softball, men's and women's golf and men's and women's tennis programs will also receive grants for the first time since 1981, under the committee's recommendations.

However, these recommendations have yet to be approved.

In fact, no further information on the status of the recommendations was provided until last week when University Vice President for Financial Operations Steve Garban said, "We kind of discussed the matter and we agreed that we should implement the new priorities or at least give the coaches notice that we are thinking about it."

The committee's recommendations were sent to Athletic Director James I. Tarman, who then sent them to Garban for approval.

The recommendations will ultimately be acted upon by University President Bryce Jordan. Garban sent them back to Tarman who will resubmit them to the committee with comments from the coaches.

The only indication on a final decision came from Garban, who merely said he hopes it will be in the next month. However, some of the committee members said they were unaware of a timetable for a decision.

Meanwhile, the coaches of these sports are left wondering whether or not they should start recruiting. Some of the teams were told that they should start looking for prospective recruits while others were told to stop their recruiting efforts.

Since the recommendations to alter the scholarship system became public last November, no official decisions on them have been made.

Two months later, the lack of resolutions to these proposed changes have left the future of these sports up in the air.

As a result, potential recruits for the three teams who are interested in coming to the University for the 1986-87 academic year are wondering if they will be offered scholarships.

These individuals and the teams need to know what kind of money they will or will not have in the future so they can get on with preparing their teams for competition.

Deciding which teams receive scholarships and which teams lose them is a difficult one and not everyone can be pleased.

However, once a decision has been reached, the administration must not allow itself to get caught in the shuffle of papers and red tape — paper and tape that currently keeps some University sports programs from moving.

It is time for the administration to ease the minds of at least some coaches and athletes on campus.



reader opinion

Class act

Often on college campuses many positive aspects of your University are overlooked or, worse yet, taken for granted. On behalf of the University of Oklahoma Marching Band, I would like to express to the entire Penn State community how well the Penn State Blue Band represented your University and state at the Orange Bowl.

In my seven Orange Bowl trips at Oklahoma, we have met very extreme fans and marching bands. Needless to say all memories are not all positive. We found the Penn State Marching Band staff and membership to be extremely professional. Our students totally enjoyed their relationships with members of the band and only wish we had the opportunity to mix more during our stay in Miami.

Penn State University has numerous things to be proud of and the Blue Band is certainly one of them. The band's performance and representation of your University was exemplary — you are a "CLASS ACT" and we salute you!

Gene Thrallkill, director
Pride of Oklahoma Marching Band

For life

Coverage of the abortion issue is difficult by its very nature — it is quite difficult to remain impartial on such a controversial issue. However, after reading *The Daily Collegian's* coverage of the issue, it isn't difficult to deduce where some of the reporters stand.

For example, in the Wednesday issue of the *Collegian*, Megan O'Matz wrote an article on the "debate still raging after 13 years." In her article, O'Matz devoted four paragraphs to the pro-life groups and 12 paragraphs to the pro-choice group. In short, O'Matz gave the pro-choice people three times the amount of space to vent their views as the pro-life members.

Obviously, evaluating an article's merit solely on empirical data is foolish but this three-to-one ratio can hardly be deemed "objective."

The next day O'Matz covered the March on Washington, D.C., she was more impartial but still disappointing.

As a member of a pro-life group on campus, I attended the

march and was amazed at the diversity of people that protested: Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Moslems, feminists, the young, the elderly and people from across the country were there. Despite the extremely eclectic group, Ms. O'Matz manages to quote a Catholic nun, four men and a group of high school girls who "just wanted to get out of school." So much for diversity.

Coverage of the local protest was equally distorted. Nancy Funk writes "45 men and 16 women protested a pro-choice celebration banquet on campus." In the couple of years I've been reading the paper I never saw an exact count — by SEX — of any protest group.

Perhaps I am being hyper-sensitive, but it seems like Ms. Funk is covertly displaying female chauvinism. One gets the impression from her statistics that the group was primarily old-world men trying to oppress women. I don't understand Funk's data because women outnumber men in our pro-life group.

There was another article that dealt with pro-life clinics that was so asinine I won't even bother to comment on.

However, I would like to congratulate Valerie Bailey on her column; in her column, Bailey raises an excellent point — many people want freedom of choice yet they refuse to deal with the "choice" in moral fashion. I'd like to further point out that the medical community has made (and is making) quite a lot of blood-money from the over 20 million abortions that have resulted from the Supreme Court decision.

I guess what bothers me the most about the media at large is how they stereotype the pro-life group. Penn State Students for Life are not reactionary abortion-clinic bombers. We are a non-religious group (I am agnostic) who believe that life is sacred before and after birth. We believe that the retarded and the physically impaired have to live as much right to live as those that society deems "normal." Throughout this year we have supported the hungry (via the CROP Walk), runaway teens (throughout Covenant House), and retarded children as well as the unborn. If anyone is interested in what we are doing, we are meeting this Wednesday, Jan. 29, in 319 Bouck Building at 9:30 p.m.

Mark Kirby, secretary-Penn State Students for Life

opinions



reader opinion

Not surprised

My hat is off to the 200 or so students and townspeople who had enough courage and mindfulness to voice their opinion on Saturday concerning apartheid in South Africa. It does not surprise me one bit that the Board of Trustees still voted to maintain the University's holdings.

Here we are, living in a society where equal rights and brotherhood are preached from city hall to the pulpit, and yet organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the John Birch Society still operate openly and carry on their business, practically free from reprisals.

I wonder how many people realized that Monday was a national holiday? It was just good old Martin Luther King Day. You remember Martin Luther King Jr., don't you? He's that black guy who... oh, never mind, he never did anything for this University anyway so why should we observe a holiday in his name, right? No, it doesn't surprise me one bit.

My trousers are down to the 2,000 or so students and townspeople who had a high level of brain death to show their support on Saturday to the Penn State football team. You ruined State football team. Now there's a cause we should all support.

What better way to rid the world of oppression? Well, for some people, maybe that's their twisted way of showing support for equal rights. There are Blacks on the football team, right? No, it doesn't surprise me one bit.

Joseph A. Cipollina, graduate-chemistry
Jan. 21

Immaturity

To the immature, foolish mob at the bus stop in Parking Lot 80 on Saturday night (Jan. 23):

We three girls in the front of the line would like to voice our complaints concerning your stupid behavior at the bus stop. In all your impatience, did you ever think that someone could have been pushed beneath the wheels of the bus and killed, or that someone could have been suffocated or just plain trampled from your pushing and shoving?

You acted like grade school children, and for what? To go to a party? Is a party so important to your social lives that you'd kill to get there? One of the three of us in the front was a weekend visitor from Shippensburg University, and she was thoroughly appalled at the behavior that all of you displayed — not a favorable impression of Penn State.

Another one of us (the author of this letter) was the brunt of obscene remarks, degrading comments and physical abuse. We wanted to let you know that we found your conduct rash, stupid and unbecoming to the students of the Penn State. You ruined our weekend very effectively.

Kira Billik, junior-English
Donna Lenzo, sophomore-math
Heidi Mehrotra, Shippensburg
Jan. 23

Who are you?

Who does David M. Silverman think he is — Nipsey Russell?
Henry C. Patschke, senior-film
Jan. 23

the Collegian

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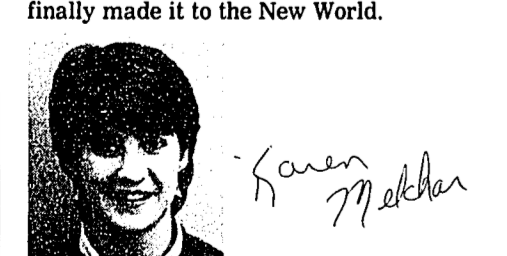
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Plymouth Rock:

Realizing the importance of history without the facts being processed, memorized or recited

Let's talk about a rock — Plymouth Rock. The one you learned about in the fourth grade when you spent the three weeks before Thanksgiving learning about Pilgrims. In fourth grade, they told you that Plymouth Rock was the boulder that the Pilgrims first stepped out on when they finally made it to the New World.



As far as rocks go, it's a pretty famous rock — what with being a historical landmark and all. But let's face facts here, a granite boulder is a granite boulder even if this one does have the year 1620 chiseled on the side. It's just not that impressive, especially if you're looking for something meaningful in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The people in Plymouth try very hard to keep up the rock's reputation. The whole town is very rock conscious — piles of t-shirts, bumper stickers, little rock key-chains and pencil sharpeners are stocked in every store and restaurant.

They're very sensitive about what you think of the rock, and the first question out of every waitress's mouth is "so, have you seen the rock yet?"

They keep the rock in an especially constructed pit right on the bay. It's sheltered from the elements by an ornate, pseudo-Greek classical building, complete with granite pillars making it look a lot like a temple. There's a railing around the pit to keep the fawning tourists from touching it.

The whole set-up is very nice with a lot of landscaping and strategically placed park benches and gift shops. At any given time during the right seasons of the year, the whole area is crawling with tourists trying to get close enough to the rock to get their picture taken.

But there's just one problem. The rock looks fake. I mean it looks like you'd expect a granite

boulder to look, but it also looks like something your mother would surround with other rocks and shrubs and call a rock garden. From looking at it, you can picture your dog lifting a leg over it — not exactly the stuff of which national landmarks are made.

The people in Plymouth must realize this. The National Park people are always on guard, ready to answer the inevitable smart aleck who asks "how do you know that the Pilgrims stepped on it?" "Was anyone really paying attention to the rocks when they got off the Mayflower?"

They give "rock talks," a dull little lecture delivered in a monotone voice by some person who probably has several advanced degrees in anthropology and history. They have an annual Rock Day with a parade, and they decorate the rock with a garland of flowers.

The whole fiasco is a little pathetic and you can sense the struggle for credibility and dignity. It strikes a lot of people who see the rock that the only interesting thing about the fact that it has been dropped twice, and both

times by the same people who make such a big deal over it. The irony is hard to resist. Here's a town so proud of their rock that they wanted to move it to a better location. Somebody goofed and the old rock got dropped practically right in the middle of Main Street.

Then some years later, they were moving it to another place and they dropped it again. This time it broke in half and had to be cemented back together. Truthfully, the rock is looking pretty shabby.

But the rock lives on, and thousands of people file by every year to look at it. They drag their kids (who are much more interested in the hot dog stand, the gift shop and the pigeons) over and make them look at the rock. This is it, they're saying, this is a part of history that I can grasp and understand.

The kids are a lot more realistic. Stand by the rock long enough and you'll hear the adults rhapsodizing about the Founding Fathers, the Colonists and Freedom. Listen to the kids and you hear that the rock is broken, dirty, or just plain boring.

Karen Melchar is a senior majoring in English and is a columnist for *The Daily Collegian*. Her column appears every other Wednesday.

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