

Opinions

Editorial Opinion

Q&A

Board of Opinion answers all you want to know about edits

Q: What is an editorial?

A: An editorial is a staple of most newspapers, allowing each publication to provide an informed opinion about current events. Editorials (commonly called "edits") appear in this box every day to provoke thought and awareness.

Q: Who decides what issues will be editorialized on each day?

A: At The Daily Collegian, the editor in chief and the opinion editors draft a list of issues to be discussed at a weekly Board of Opinion meeting. The board is comprised of 17 staff members who debate the issues to reach an opinion based on majority agreement. The members are chosen by the opinion editors and the editor in chief to bring together diverse experience and ideology.

Q: How do the edits get into this box?

A: The edit writer — a board member — bases the content on the board's discussion. The edit is not a personal opinion but one of group consensus. However, individual writing style makes each edit original.

After the edit is written, the opinion editors read it with the writer to check style and spelling and to ensure the board's opinion is clearly stated. The editor in chief must give final approval before the edit is published.

Q: Where does the board get its information?

A: The board examines news coverage from local, state and national media, including the Collegian, The Centre Daily Times, The Harrisburg Patriot, The

Philadelphia Inquirer and The New York Times. Edit writers often do additional research and interviews for more complete information.

Q: Are edits considered news?

A: No. Opinion and news are separate entities. The opinion editors do not influence news coverage, nor does the managing editor dictate the content of the opinions page. Although edits are opinion, they do contain factual information to support the argument.

Q: Does the University influence Collegian editorials?

A: No. The Collegian is published independently by students, and the Board of Opinion exercises complete editorial freedom.

Q: Does the Board of Opinion's editorial stance reflect a hidden agenda for the opinions page?

A: No. The opinions page is a marketplace of ideas. Although the board's edits consistently may reflect one ideal, the board strives for fairness and is just one voice in that marketplace. The page allows for diverse and opposing expression through letters to the editor, reader forums and columns.

Q: Can readers respond to an editorial?

A: Yes. Anyone can write a letter to the editor. Letters must be no longer than two typed, double-spaced pages and must include the writer's name. Readers can also call the editor in chief or the opinion editors at 865-1828 to respond to edits.



Reader Opinion

Please recycle

I am writing to you today, full of anger, concerning the apathy of the Penn State student body and the State College community toward Mother Earth and our environment. Although there are many aspects of our environment that are being ruined and destroyed by humans on a daily basis, the primary focus of this letter is recycling.

Both the State College community and Penn State have made much progress in recycling aluminum, glass, mixed paper, newspaper and plastic. Recycling bins are readily accessible in most main buildings and dorms on campus, and the State College recycling crew picks up recyclables at every home once a week.

This is why I feel disgust and anger when I walk down College Avenue or through the HUB and find waste cans literally overflowing with aluminum Pepsi cans, glass kiwi-strawberry Snapple bottles and copies of The Daily Collegian. There is no excuse for this type of laziness. Contrary to popular belief, custodians and maintenance workers do not sort your recyclables out of the trash cans.

Please take a little more effort in caring for our environment. Please carry your Snapple bottle the extra block home or put the newspaper in your bag until you find a recycling bin. We must set aside our immediate convenience for the well-being of our delicate planet and all living creatures that depend upon it.

Kathleen Szybis
sophomore-division of undergraduate studies

A new voice

A liberal, free-thinking, committed citizenry in the Penn State community is not a new phenomenon. What is new, however, is a publication for the thought-provoking and diverse writing characteristic of that group. Not particularly well-represented in existing local media, we are ready to take action and build momentum.

Organizational and production efforts are underway, and will result in the publication of VOICES of Central Pennsylvania: A liberal periodical of news and opinion. Written primarily by and for Central Pennsylvania residents, including members of the Penn State community, this inclusive journal will

strive to create a community that accepts and cares about men and women of diverse ages, classes, races, ethnic and social groups.

We extend to you an invitation to join us, at whatever level you choose, in promoting a fresh and challenging perspective. Experience and energy are welcome in diverse areas from production and writing to typing and distribution. Although some initial funding has been provided by sponsors — Svoboda's Books, 227 W. Beaver Ave., Committee for Penn State (COPS) and Ni-Ta-Nee NOW, the local chapter of the National Organization for Women — more is clearly needed. The malignant, record-setting growth of hate groups in Pennsylvania and increasing right-wing intolerance, as evidenced in Rush Limbaugh's show and another local publication, should be countered.

Don't just sit by. Send your tax-deductible check and/or your skills and interest areas to: VOICES of Central Pennsylvania, P.O. Box 10961, Calder Square, State College Pa. 16805-0961. (Friend: \$10; Bronze Voice: \$25; Silver Voice: \$50; Gold Voice: \$100; Patron: more than \$100).

Alycia A. Chambers
co-coordinator for Ni-Ta-Nee NOW
Arthur Goldschmidt
professor of Middle East history

Write a letter

Do you have an opinion you want to share with your classmates and professors?

Have you noticed something on campus or downtown that you think people should know about?

If awareness and expression are important to you, don't just tell a few friends. Spread the word and help others know what is going on around them. Write to The Daily Collegian.

You can submit letters at the Collegian's business office, 123 S. Burrowes St. Photo identification is required. If you cannot drop your letter off, mail it to the same address. Please include your name and telephone number.

Letters should be no longer than two, double-spaced typed pages. Letters up to three pages may be accepted as reader forums.

The Collegian reserves the right to reject or edit letters for space and accuracy. All letters become the property of Collegian Inc.

Do you have any questions? Please contact opinion editors Rebecca Fishkin or R.J. Hufnagel at 865-1828.

the Collegian

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Editor
Mike Abrams
Business Manager
Walter F. Gorba

complaints should be presented to the business manager. If a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved, some grievances may be filed with the Accuracy and Fair Play Committee of Collegian Inc. Information on filing grievances is available from Gerry Lynn Hamilton, executive secretary, Collegian Inc.

Letters Policy: The Daily Collegian encourages comments on news coverage, editorial policy and University affairs. Letters must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than two pages. Forums must also be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than three pages.

Students' letters should include semester standing, major and campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Names may be withheld on request.

The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject letters if they are libelous or do not conform to standards of good taste. Because of the number of letters received, the Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all the letters it receives. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters received become the property of Collegian Inc.

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor holding final responsibility. Opinions expressed on the editorial pages are not necessarily those of The Daily Collegian, Collegian Inc. or The Pennsylvania State University. Collegian Inc., publishers of The Daily Collegian and related publications, is a separate corporate institution from Penn State.

Complaints: News and editorial complaints should be presented to the editor. Business and advertising

Inside the real world: Hold on to your hat and speak up

Welcome to the real world. You're in for the ride of your life. Please keep your hands and feet inside the cars. Do not stand up.

This real world moves fast. People have thoughts and ideas, and they are quick to share them with you. Sometimes you will agree; sometimes you won't. This real world has friendships, battlegrounds and infrequent cease-fires.

This real world moves too fast — that might just be the problem. The people, places and things that scape the land in this real world move at a feverish pace.

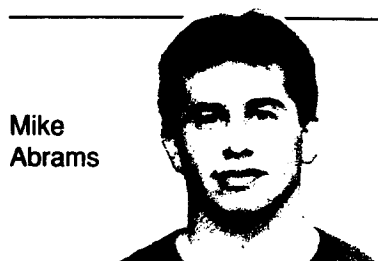
There are leaders who direct policy. There are athletes who play the games. There are activists who lobby and cajole. There are fundamentalists, fanatics, lunatics and everyday "Janes" and "Joes." None of them march to the beat of the same drum.

Then there are the media — more specifically in this real world, The Daily Collegian. We are the chasers. Our job is to seek out the different paths all the Janes and Joes are taking, then make some sense of it in each morning's paper.

It is not an easy job to anticipate and track so many people going so

From the Editor

Mike Abrams



many directions so fast. That is how we end up in the middle of controversy.

Controversy itself isn't trouble. However, the way we in the media sometimes deal with controversy is. The only way to solve problems and settle disputes is through careful dialogue and understanding from all sides.

The Collegian has had its share of controversy. Veteran readers don't need me to remind them of plenty of controversial columnists and editorials from the recent and not-so-recent past. New readers, you too, inevitably will hear a hearty supply of "Collegian stories."

I'm not writing today to dispel

myths. I'm not writing to make excuses for the things we have printed and will print. I am writing to offer a little insight into how controversy seems to erupt around some of the material we publish.

The Column: About a year and a half ago Chino Wilson wrote one of the most controversial columns to hit this campus. It is impossible to characterize Wilson's entire piece in just a paragraph or two, and that is where the trouble started.

Wilson wrote a volatile column that touched on sensitive racial issues and promoted violence as a means of defense, which many people in our real world had a hard time swallowing. After the column appeared, two protesters picketed in front of our offices. A reporter for a national wire service filed a story that exaggerated the situation, and various local and national media outlets reprinted excerpts and summaries of the column.

People on the streets in our real world and the real world talked and argued about the column, often relying on second-hand information and incomplete descriptions about the original column. The Collegian took a lot of heat for it.

"Our reporters and editors strive to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. We are watchdogs — aggressive and hungry. That is our job."

In response, the Collegian's Board of Opinion published the First Amendment in the editorial box on this very page. Many readers never questioned the Collegian's constitutional protection, but focused on "why?" the editors at the time did what they did.

Perhaps if the editors had taken the time to explain in an open forum on the Opinions page some of their reasons for printing the column, some of the confusion and excitement could have been prevented. Of course, I look back on the situation with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight.

That ability to look back on past mistakes has been one of my most valuable tools as I wade through the uncharted territory as editor.

Roller Coaster Ride: There are a lot of things I have witnessed in my three years on the Collegian staff. We have covered some stories well,

and we have made some grave mistakes.

Sometimes a reporter or editor spells a name wrong or misquotes a source. Sometimes a story is missing an important element. A lot of times a story turns out just fine.

As we climb the hills and scream and laugh as we drop on our roller coaster ride, we will experience the joys of success and the sicknesses of failure.

You may sit in a classroom reading a story this semester, and something in the words might frustrate you. The paper you read might infuriate you — just as our successes might blow right by you.

I sit with a team of more than 120 people in a classroom — the Collegian. We are working on stories, taking photographs and creating graphics all for the sake of learning. You are an important part

of that process. You must be an active watchdog toward the material we publish.

Our reporters and editors strive to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. We are watchdogs — aggressive and hungry. That is our job. We certainly pursue honesty, truth and fairness. However, pursuit can fall short.

What I urge each of you to do is recognize what we are trying to do. We offer what we believe to be a complete representation of the news and views in our real world and the one "out there." If you ever have questions about the material we publish, call me at the office.

In the end, what is important is that you, the readers, must afflict us. You must hold us accountable. We will continue to print the news and views every day. We will try to learn from our mistakes and use our 20/20 hindsight.

I ask you to come to us when you have a problem.

Hold on. It will be a wild ride.

Mike Abrams is a senior majoring in journalism and the Collegian's editor in chief.