

## Editorial opinion

### Poor discretion

*Banning all nonacademic clubs increases animosity toward gays*

Last week, the Salt Lake City Board of Education banned all nonacademic clubs in its schools, a move they believed would ensure the community's safety from the formation of a gay student club.

Roughly 70 percent of the constituents in the area are Mormons, whose church condemns homosexuality. Opposed to letting gay students have their own club, community leaders opted to curtail the freedom of all students.

School board members argued that they were in a bind. They had to choose between two methods of defense. Permit all extracurricular clubs — allowing gay students to run amok — or eliminate them all.

In a 4-3 vote, the school board members decided to go with the latter. As a result, no student in the school district would be able to participate in his or her special interest, hobby, activity, ideology and so forth, within the confines of their educational system — unless that activity is school-related.

And federal law provides that they had every right to go the route they did, according to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that the board cited in their decision. But while they legitimately

used the proper channels of United States law, their judgment is questionable.

Banning all nonacademic student groups is regressive. It does not simply silence the gay community in an attempt to conform to community standards. It stirs animosity among students, which many will direct toward the gay students whom they will regard as the cause of their suffering.

This move will not improve community relations or enhance the social environment. Rather, it deprives all students of their freedom of expression — a right that is just as inalienable as the board's right to disband organizations. Most high school clubs are productive, stimulating supplements to the regular curriculum, and nobody has the right to take away what they judge to be too unwholesome.

The board showed poor discretion by eliminating each and every aspect of its students' extracurricular lives based on the fact that they disapprove of a small fraction of them.

*If you would like to comment on this issue, please write to: Salt Lake Tribune; Attn. Reader's Forum; 143 S. Main St.; Salt Lake City, UT 84111.*



## Letters to the editor

### Mutual understanding

Since when are we in a contest to see who has the "best" culture? What is so threatening about learning that there is more than one way to live a life or view the world? Multiculturalism is not a political platform, it is a fact. We live in a Multicultural society, even out here in Central Pennsylvania. The University believes that students should spend a few weeks studying other ways of living to help prepare themselves to live in a multicultural world. Such requirements have long been considered an important element of the broad education that is a tradition in the United States. Actually, here at Penn State, this requirement pre-dates the term "multicultural" when I studied here as an undergraduate in the late seventies, these six credits were known as the "other cultures" requirement — "others" being understood as "non-Western."

Is anyone asking you to convert to any of these cultures? Is anyone trying to convince you that these "other" cultures are superior to your own? They ought not to be. However, it may be pointed out in the courses that mainstream America has made — and continues to make — some mistakes. You may learn that other cultures have found solutions to problems that plague mainstream America. You may even learn that ranking cultures serves no constructive purpose.

For all your emphasis on the individual, don't forget that you and 220 million other individuals make up a nation that never has been and never will be homogeneous. The survival and prosperity of this nation depends on the willingness of individuals to maintain a sense of mutual understanding of different perspectives. We don't necessarily have to agree with those other perspectives, but we need to be informed in order to be able to respect each other as individuals and work together.

Lynn Palermo  
graduate-French

### You asked for it

You asked for it Miss Blynn! You dangled the bait out with that "Friends" bashing article and didn't realize you opened a can of whoop-ass in the process. Unlike

that jumble of words you tried to pass off as an opinions column, this response serves to call you more than just a "moron."

First of all, my confused freshman writer, if I may quote the great George Carlin here for a moment: "There are two knobs on the television. One of them turns it on and off. And the other one changes the station."

Imagine that, you can actually change the station! Its part of freedom of choice and it was one of the principles this country was founded on."

Now, I'll admit I watch "Friends" on Thursday nights. And, I'm not ashamed to do so. But I don't understand why those of you that don't (or did and stopped) are downing everyone else who does? I'm sorry if reruns of NOVA or Body Piercing Digest don't hold my attention. After a tough week of hitting the books and sleeping in class, I need a good laugh (and not just from re-reading your column). And as far as "Only the strong" resisting the appeal of "Friends," I have a few questions on strength for Miss Blynn the Historian:

First of all, you quote Bob Marley (a great man and one hell of a musician), now let me return the favor. The Great Marley also said "Stand up for your rights." So I am.

Second (sticking with the music quotes) Tom Petty said "You don't know how it feels to be me." Who gave you the right to play FCC and exert dictatorial power over student viewing? It takes a stronger person to suggest alternatives than to simply point the finger and complain. I realize that by that logic I, too, am guilty, but screw it. I won't cry myself to sleep tonight over it. Are you strong enough to say that?

Third, "Friends" is not the only show were women all want to be on it and the men drool and dream of performing illicit sexual acts on the female cast members. This has been a phenomenon that dates back to when you were in diapers just a few short years ago. The recent return of "The Dukes of Hazzard" jogged my memory on how I used to crawl into the family car through the window and wish I could take Daisy for a little spin in the General Lee. And I ask you what's wrong with that?? The purpose of television is to entertain and inform its audience. Did you

forget to check if it was a COMEDY show or were you too strong to open the TV Guide?

I don't mean to come off as harsh, but you asked for it and I felt it was my responsibility to put you back in your place. Just as when you speak in real life, one must think before writing. Your fellow opinions writers discuss important issues like USG and student apathy. You choose to bash those figures "flickering" on the pretty screen. I, for one, am disappointed.

If I may quote the immortal Timothy Pryor: "Friends. How many of us have them. Not you!"

I look forward to your next article. Have a nice day.

Matthew Ostot  
junior-journalism

### Racist policies

We all know the University claims to be opposed to racism. Yet Penn State presently runs an "Affirmative Action" program which institutionalizes racism, by explicitly establishing a policy of race- and ethnicity-based admissions and hiring practices. For example, I personally receive "special treatment" by virtue of being an "Hispanic." This "special treatment" consists of (1) lower standards for admission and (2) eligibility for special scholarships. It is quite clear these are racist policies!

President Spanier: Does Penn State run these "Affirmative Action" programs merely to comply with federal and state laws in order thereby to become eligible for government education subsidies?

Or does Penn State have some hidden agenda for such obvious acts of hypocrisy? Rafael Garcia  
graduate-physics

What is your impression of the Republican primaries?

Send us a letter via E-mail to jta108@psu.edu or bring it to the Collegian office, 123 S. Burrowes St. Be sure to include your semester standing, major and phone number

## the Collegian

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# Beware Bubba's scapegoat campaign for 'fence-sitters'

In January 1993, William Jefferson Clinton arrived in Washington to the melodies of Fleetwood Mac, claiming the first 43 "mandate" in U.S. history. "Don't...stop...thinking about tomorrow..."

Clinton was to be the next John F. Kennedy. He would bring an end to a Republican era and to their alleged oppression of the American people. His campaign was brilliant, manipulating a vague economic picture, aggravating class envy to new levels of resentment and yet promising a renewed "camelot."

Moderate and disaffected voters had elected Bill Clinton. Most Republicans didn't believe the "Clintonese" and to us, remembering the ultimate futility of the Bush campaign and recalling the Clinton inauguration are still profoundly painful. Mickey Mouse '96 remains more attractive than Clinton '96.

But to moderates, election decisions are less clear-cut, perhaps simply because "fence-sitting" defines a more objective viewpoint than that of the die-hard Republican or lifelong Democrat. On one hand, the next John F. Kennedy is now a sad hybrid of

## My opinion



Bill Lalor

Teddy Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson; he has elevated the political flip-flop to an art form, and his trial balloons leave us all wondering if he has any values beyond those of his domineering, pseudo-Republican wife. Camelot has become a poor Mel Brooks slapstick.

But then he's so darn energetic and charismatic. And he really hasn't screwed up in a while. And Republicans are hard to predict. And Dole is so old. And Clinton can "feel the pain" because he's on MTV, just like we wanted. And...

Watch out. Bubba's 1996 campaign is once again aimed at you, the "fence-sitters." They know what you're thinking. Their strate-

gy? Create a bleak picture of Americana, blame the Republicans, and tell us how they'll fix the "problems," both real and contrived.

It worked for Team Bubba in 1992, and it might just work again. They're baaack.

Step one is already in progress. The America that you see hides the symptoms of its "problems." The state of the nation is as such despite the liberal President(s), not because of him (them). In 1992, some faced economic hardship, a pre-supposed inadequate health-care system, and widespread inner-city violence. And the Clinton campaign convinced you that these were suddenly "epidemics" and "crises."

Again in 1996, you'll see afflicted children and hear sound bytes of truly sad stories of unemployed fathers or of the apparently faltering American dream. They will be sad and touching to all of us.

But are these anecdotes a legitimate basis for effective national policy? They certainly make us feel bad. Clinton wants you to succumb to your emotion and to sign on to a rehash of Jimmy Carter's "national malaise."

His government is his solution. If you're convinced, you'll look for a scapegoat.

Republicans abandon those children, Team Bubba will say. The Contract With America will soon replace "the 80's" as the overused liberal icon for Republican "greed." Three years ago, Bill Clinton convinced us that Republicans were to blame and assured us all that twelve years of a conservative executive branch was at fault. Now, he'll blame the Republican legislature.

"Don't...stop...thinking about tomorrow..."

Finally, Team Bubba will try to convince you that the "party of the people" will solve all these real and contrived problems.

Clintonese suggests that life in America is a continuous episode of the A-Team. Remember? The faceless and nameless extras on the set (the American public) helplessly watched the righteous SWAT (Democrats) slug it out with the evil, fiendish thugs (Republicans). The SWAT's leader (Bill Clinton) is aloof and without direction, and yet is charismatic enough to disguise his own incompetence. And now that elections are here there are

more players on both sides like that special A-Team episode when Mr. T brought along his body-building pals. Oh, and yes, the SWAT and their fearless leader are themselves convicts. The similarities are striking.

Republicans surely are not perfect. Dole lacks charisma and for that matter a recognized platform. Buchanan is construed as a bit extreme. Alexander is terribly reminiscent of another southern-state president.

The issues will become jumbled in political rhetoric. But don't let the Clintonese create that familiar, overused facade of good-intentioned liberal humanitarianism. Fundamental issues persevere. Is it better to give a poor man a handout of one fish or a bucket of fish? Or is it better to teach that man to fish for himself? Do we measure policy "success" by the number who sign on to welfare or by how many we help to begin productive working lives? Should the standard of living afforded by public assistance be greater than that of the working poor? Is government the solution to our problems? Or are we?

This is not the A-Team. We solve problems by ourselves in this coun-

try. That's what is called "freedom."

And whether Bill Clinton admits it, character is an issue. For four years, the daily spectacle has included:

Gennifer Flowers, Paula Jones, and a forgotten hotel room visit. Whitewater. Travelgate. Whitewater. Webster Hubbel and his pals. Whitewater. President Hillary Clinton. Whitewater. Her secret health-care meetings. Whitewater. His draft-dodging at Oxford. Whitewater. "I didn't inhale". Whitewater. The curious Vince Foster "suicide." Whitewater. Lost and found files. Whitewater, Whitewater, Whitewater.

"Yesterday's gone. Yesterday's gone."

But his lack of character perseveres. If we want a spectacle, we can watch Fleetwood Mac or a three-ring circus. Bill Clinton's failed presidency shouldn't be a part of the act.

The choice is yours.

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