

Editorial opinion

Just the beginning

The Middle East accord provides a positive first step toward peace

In a historic move to return to the process of peace initiated by the Oslo accords in 1993 and 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat signed a peace agreement Friday following nine days of grueling negotiations.

The agreement marks a historic attempt to solve the 50-year conflict over Palestinian statehood and curb violence that has threatened the safety of both Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Calling for the transfer of 14 percent of the land in the West Bank currently under the joint control of the two groups to Palestinian rule the deal also includes motions to eliminate the terrorist environment that plagues the Middle East.

Arafat and Netanyahu — leaders previously consumed by plans for retaliation against terrorism — sat together last week amidst news of yet another terrorist act to discuss complex issues rooted in both religious beliefs and history. In a battle that has been brutal and relentless on both sides, the motions of Arafat and Netanyahu to bring peace to the land are to be complimented.

The Daily Collegian Board of Opinion believes that while a monumental first step toward peace in the Middle East, the document and negotiations are only

the beginning. Israeli and Palestinian citizens have heard many times promises set forth by their leaders to absolve the violence between the two groups, and it must be realized that one document alone is by no means an end to the deeply rooted conflict that has troubled the land for decades.

Both President Clinton and the leaders of the Middle East acknowledge the peace agreement's inability to prevent violent attacks from those individuals opposed to the peace process.

We believe that they must also realize that the peace process must continue to work toward a compromise that better satisfies Israeli and Palestinian citizens, or continuing acts of violence are inevitable. The compromises must benefit both groups in order to continue the efforts for peace made by both leaders.

In addition to the support presented previously by King Hussein of Jordan and President Clinton, the United States should play a continuing role as a mediator in the peace process in the Middle East. By continuing to open the lines of communication with future summit meetings and talks and furthering efforts to achieve the coexistence of Israelis and Palestinians, the Middle East may see an end to the violence and civil war that have devastated the land and its citizens.



Letters to the editor

Minority organizations based on experiences

I am writing in response to David Brown's column titled "Organizations, events based on race should be eliminated." Brown claims that organizations and events such as that "help to isolate minority students from everybody else."

He specifically mentions the Multicultural Awareness Career Day. What I don't understand is, if that event is only for minorities, then why did I see "white guys" talking to future employers?

The biggest misconception of organizations and events that promote cultural awareness is that memberships and attendance are only open for minorities. None of the organizations and events Brown mentions are for minorities only and their purposes are certainly not to create "separation of students based on something as benign as skin color."

I became a member of the Asian Pacific American Coalition because I share "common experiences based on our interests and abilities" with the other members. I am sorry if the majority of the people who share these experiences are that of Asian descent, but nowhere does it say that our memberships are for Asians only. As a matter of fact, our biggest event of the year, the Asian Awakenings, is attended by a very diverse group of people.

By the way, "there have been terrible racial injustices in the United States in the past."

However, there are terrible racial injustices in the United States right now, and we are all certainly around here for that. It is our responsibility to combat the injustices and ignorance.

If the organizations and events that are "based on race," as claimed, help our society to fight for equality, shouldn't we support them?

Amelia Antarikso
political re-educator for APAC

Organizations, events celebrate differences

This is the official response of the Black Caucus to David Brown's column concerning minority organizations and events. Every student comes to college with certain needs. These needs come in the form of goals, desires and budding interests. The desired result is that students will come to college and join organizations or groups that will develop these goals and interests.

For students of color, however, the story has been different. As late as the 1970s many universities still weren't integrated. When minority students entered these institutes of higher learning, it was rare that they were welcomed by any of the white staff, faculty or students, let alone in any of those organizations that would have helped them develop their interests, dreams or goals.

After years of systematic denial, minority students began to form their own organizations. One would be hard pressed to find any minority organization that had not been formed as a result of white rejection.

Brown feels he is "... constantly exposed to Multicultural Career Awareness Day, Mr. and Ms. minority pageants, the Black Caucus and other groups and events that help to isolate minority students." Minority students are also constantly exposed. Every time we turn on the TV we are bombarded with white culture, white standards of beauty and white philosophy. From the beginning of our education we find ourselves constantly submerged in classrooms where the only history we learn is white history. At Penn State we constantly face the fact that we may be the only person of color in a classroom full of white students.

Brown says he isn't expecting an invitation to the next Black Caucus Extravaganza any time soon. Well, he is wrong. Please consider this a formal invitation to the next Cultural Extravaganza. While we're at

it, please come to any cultural event here on campus. The Extravaganza is a celebration of blackness. Though you will never be able to fully understand what that means, you could come to appreciate it for what it is.

I would like to elaborate on "minority pageants." Since "white guys" govern America at every level, there is one measuring stick for what is considered beautiful. And that is white beauty and white culture. For this among other reasons various ethnic groups come together to celebrate in the form of pageants. These are not "beauty" pageants in the traditional sense, rather they are opportunities to showcase one's appreciation for ones culture.

Had Brown actually attended any of these events, he may have been moved to do the one thing that "white guys" like him and anyone else dealing with prejudice need to do on a consistent basis. That is to OPEN YOUR MIND.

Lurie Daniel
Black Caucus Political Services Chair
Ms. Black Penn State 1991

Race should not be identified in police log

This letter is in regard to the simple assault report printed in Monday's *The Daily Collegian* police log. We don't think it was fair to print that the victim was assaulted by a black man. We understand that those are simply the facts, but in every other criminal charge printed in the blotter, the racial identity of the suspect is omitted. People of every race commit crimes, so why are journalists always compelled to recognize a black person when they are in the wrong? You should include the racial identity of every criminal suspect or none at all.

Michelle Massie
freshman-journalism
Jenea Maxwell
freshman-biology

Letters to the editor can be sent via e-mail to crd126@psu.edu
Please remember to include name, semester standing, major or title, address and phone number.

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Matthew Shepard could've been your sister, brother, etc.

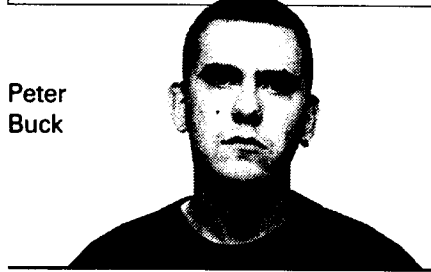
I love my sister. She is absolutely one of the most amazing people I have or ever will have the privilege of knowing. She is a genius of the first rank, a talented musician, has a larger vocabulary than anyone I know and has a beautiful laugh. She lights up the lives of the most of the people that she knows and I am proud to be her sibling.

She is also a lesbian. I remember very clearly when I was a freshman in high school in '91 when she came out. I saw this "What to do if your child is gay" book sitting on the dining room table and thought "What is that?" Catherine had gotten it to prepare our parents for the possible shock of her coming out.

They weren't too shocked. She was terrified to tell them, but being good, loving and upstanding liberal folks, they told her that they loved her and that they would always love her. "Who cares if you're gay? We're glad you told us." Thanks Mom and Dad.

She became one of the most active, vocal and powerful lesbians this campus has or ever will see. She actively wrote

My opinion



Peter Buck

letters to the editor, worked at The AIDS Project and was an officer for the former LGBSA. She proudly spoke out for the rights of millions of LGBT people.

As with all things, there has been the darker side of this rainbow existence. She has been harassed on numerous occasions by sick jerks who have wanted to get their rocks off by harassing a lesbian. She received hate messages regularly. One of her professors harassed her. She has been physically threatened. Why did these things happen? Because she is gay.

With the brutal murder of Matthew

"Every time I think about Matthew, I transpose my sister's body onto that split-rail fence. Her body is bruised, broken and chapped by the cold."

Shepard, I can't help but think that it could have been Catherine. I think about Matthew's friends and relatives and wonder what it must be like for them. Their baby was taken away from them. Their hearts have an enormous hole in them because a couple of hateful morons thought it would be a good idea to beat and rob a gay kid.

How could they have possibly even thought about that? How could that have brought them pleasure? I can't even begin to fathom it.

When I first heard about it, I wanted to hurt them. Really hurt them. As wrong and hateful as that feeling is, it was the first thing that came into my head. I was moved to the desire of real violence, and I wish that I weren't. I wish that every time that I think about young Matthew I didn't want to hurt those men, because I feel

like I am identifying with them somehow, and I don't want that. I pray that those men become beautiful people, and that they may be the last to commit such a crime. But I know that several more have already been committed in our vast nation.

Every time I think about Matthew, I transpose my sister's body onto that split-rail fence. Her body is bruised, broken and chapped by the cold. Her face is unrecognizable. Her last memories are filled with those sick jerks screaming "dyke" and pistol-whipping her.

As if that weren't bad enough, there are people picketing at her funeral because they believe that God not only condemns gays, but that he hates them.

For all of you who believe that people deserve to die for their sins, then you need to check yourself into a sanitarium

or learn the two basic commandments — "Love God with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength" and "Love your neighbor as yourself." The last time I checked, murder was not much of a loving and neighborly action.

I met a guy the other day who always tries to play the devil's advocate. He always tries to figure out a way to justify an action taken by someone, and he tried to figure out a way that this tragedy might be justifiable. The way you might draw a blank when pondering the possible justification of rape or child molestation, he drew a huge blank. There is no justice in hate. There is no reason in hate. There is only irrationality and hate itself.

The moral of this long and cumbersome story is to keep your loved ones close to you. I hope that you all look and see that everyone is someone's daughter, son, brother, sister and/or friend and that we are all neighbors. Love each other.

I love you Catherine.

Peter Buck (pb118@psu.edu) is a junior majoring in music and a Collegian columnist.