

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

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EDITORIAL

Choosing not to vote sets course for future

Congratulations, Penn State.

Last week, a hearty 12 percent of the undergraduate student population chose to exercise its democratic rights by voting in the Undergraduate Student Government elections.

In one of the most impressive displays of wide-spread public apathy since 1983, students barely defeated a ridiculous referendum to ban on-campus smoking and, in a landslide, elected Matt Roan and Kelly O'Brien to the offices of USG president and vice president for the 2000-2001 academic year.

With only 3,905 undergraduate students bothering to stop by one of 13 polling stations to vote, a landslide victory certainly doesn't amount to much of an endorsement.

When students don't care enough to vote in strong numbers, or even non-embarrassing numbers, then it becomes obvious just how unimportant government is to most students.

If this overwhelming apathy is any indication of future voting trends in this country, then the future of politics, and American life in general, seems to be a very dim one indeed.

But today, students have the chance to redeem themselves for last Wednesday's disappointing turnout by casting a vote in the primary elections for president, U.S. Senate and House offices, state representatives, state attorney general, state auditor general and state treasurer.

Though Pennsylvanians didn't have the real opportunity to narrow down the field of presidential candidates, the commonwealth's voters do have an important voice in the future of Pennsylvania politics by choosing candidates who might run for more visible offices later.

The people who are elected now will make important decisions in the future, whether that means in their current terms or the decisions they make in a different office later in their careers.

Even if voters don't care about the issues raised in the primary races now, in the future, those issues might become very relevant and important.

Besides, if you don't vote, you can't complain about politics or new laws or the state of the state.

And there are few things more satisfying than complaining about politics because there is always a lot of good material to use for complaints.

Legislators don't have to explore the issues important to students when students don't vote. Typically, elected officials are only going to remember the concerns of the people who elected them.

If students — who historically come out to vote in low numbers — don't make their needs known by voting for candidates whose platforms they support, then they can't expect lawmakers to make decisions that will reflect students' needs.

Voting is more than a citizen's right; it is a citizen's duty, too. Casting a ballot is the true manifestation of democracy in action.

Without active participation, there isn't really a democracy in action because public opinion is silent.

If citizens do not vote, they give up their voice — the cornerstone of American government.

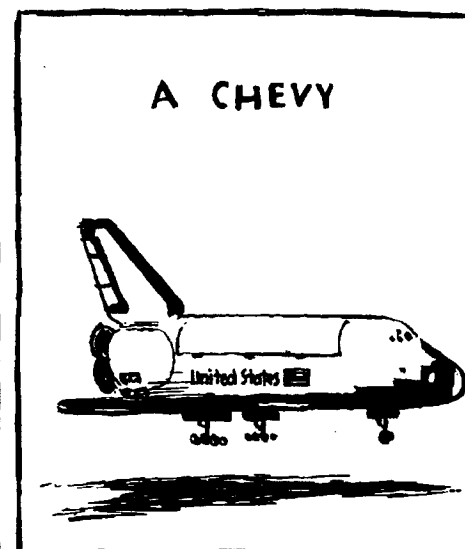
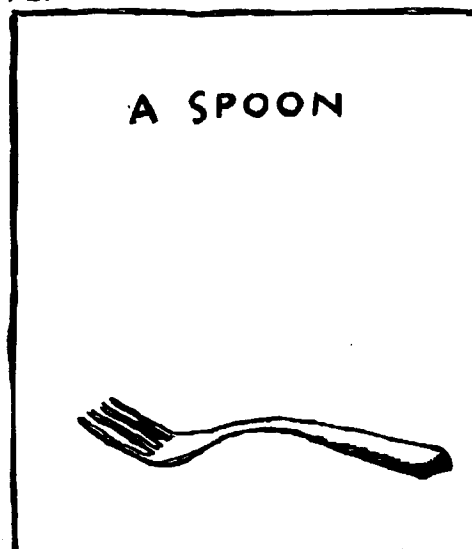
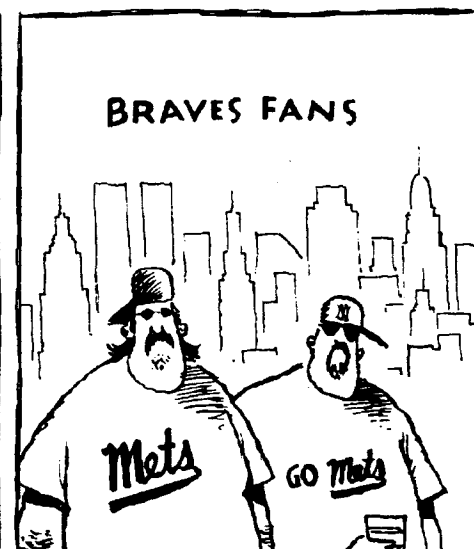
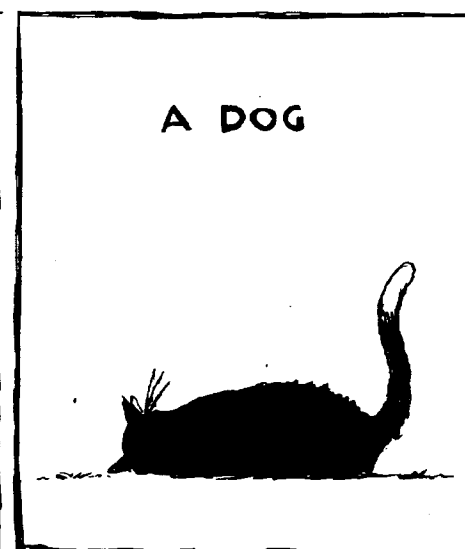
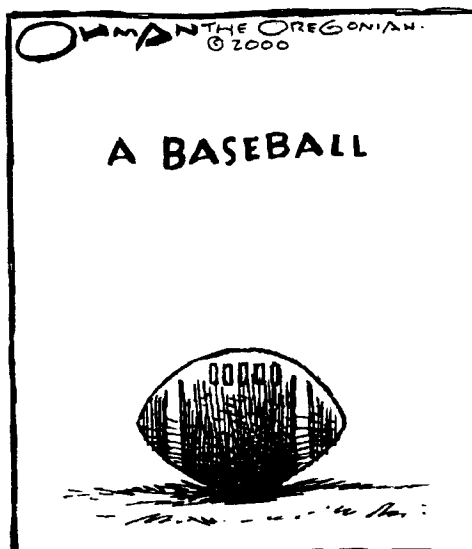
As Penn State students, we are the future of Pennsylvania politics. And today is the perfect chance to make up for an embarrassing showing in the USG elections.

Try a little harder to make yourself heard — and make the candidates listen.

Who we are

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. Editorials are written by The Daily Collegian Board of Opinion.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Drinking not integral part of college students' lives

In his column titled "Drinking part of Penn State life," Hal Cohen discusses the positive impact of binge drinking.

Although such a column might have its place as a satire, Cohen seems serious, and his reasons seem misguided, selfish and irresponsible.

First of all, Cohen implies that five drinks in three hours are actually two drinks, when considering the male body's rate of metabolizing alcohol.

This logic is misleading because those two drinks left in the bloodstream are not being metabolized at all by the body; a person is feeling their full effect on top of the three others.

And even if he were correct, he fails to recognize that for some people, two drinks is more than enough to impair judgment.

Cohen also uses a "practice makes perfect" mentality with drinking. Later, he says that most cases of alcohol-related fatalities came from people not being experienced drinkers and consuming too much too soon. But by his earlier reasoning, that is how one learns to drink responsibly. Unfortunately, the strive for "perfection" can have fatal consequences.

With problems like this, it is no wonder Penn State is trying to curb binge drinking. Contrary to Cohen's beliefs, life without drinking alcohol does not result in a life without fun.

He seems to believe that the alternative to drinking is other illegal activities, such as the "growth of the State College drug market." There is no reason whatsoever to believe that more strict alcohol regulations would result in an increase in other unlawful acts.

Finally, Cohen takes a selfish view of drinking alcohol. He discusses alcohol consumption only in terms of the person drinking.

The fact is that one who drinks has a serious impact on the people around him: the friend at whom he screams, the class partner who fails a presentation because he was too hung over to come to class, or — in a worst-case scenario — the person he kills after getting behind the wheel of a vehicle.

I see nothing wrong with college students who decide to drink, as long as they do so responsibly.

Getting "stupid, crazy drunk" is not responsible, whether it is as a learning experience or a weekly occurrence. When one

Write a letter

We want to hear your comments on our coverage, editorial decisions and the Penn State community in general.

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University Park, Pa. 16801-3882

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James Building
123 S. Burrows St.

Letters must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than 400 words. 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.

Members and officers of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their organization. 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 letters it receives. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters received become the property of Collegian Inc.

decides to drink, his responsibility is not just to himself, it's also to all the others with whom he comes in contact.

Kamal About-Hosn
junior-computer science

Teachings speak against homosexual orientation

In reference to Joseph Hlubik's letter in yesterday's edition, the Church doesn't recognize what Hlubik said at all. He's not quoting the official Latin version of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which says nothing about "homosexuals not choosing their condition."

The teaching of the Roman Catholic Church on homosexuality as given in the official Latin version of the catechism is found in

paragraphs 2,357 to 2,359. The Catholic teaching on this issue is now in accord with Cardinal Ratzinger's pastoral, speaking for the Teaching Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church, which was released in 1986.

The definitive position of the teaching Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church on homosexuality is presented in a "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual persons" given at Rome on Oct. 1, 1986, by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The major excerpts from that letter follow.

"Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil; and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder.

"Therefore special concern and pastoral attention should be directed toward those who have this condition, lest they be led to believe that the living out of this orientation in homosexual activity is a morally acceptable option. It is not."

There is not one shred of evidence that homosexuality is genetic. Even if there were, does that make homosexual lifestyles or inclinations to it right? If serial killers had a genetic predisposition to their activity, would that make serial killing right?

Homosexuality can be a part of God's plan only if those heterosexuals who are homosexually inclined pick up the cross and live chaste lives.

Nowhere did Hlubik make the distinction that accepting homosexuals does not mean accepting their lifestyles which are condemned by the Church.

Dr. Joseph Nicolosi of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, in an article from *Our Sunday Visitor*, says that word "orientation" has serious theological implications. "If you believe that some people are essentially homosexual, you turn Christian anthropology on its head. Christianity holds that we are all heterosexuals in our God-given nature, though some heterosexuals have a problem with same-sex attractions. If you believe that homosexuality is part of a person's nature, given by God, then homosexual acts become a fulfillment of a person's God-given nature, and that's never been the Christian teaching."

Nicolosi's assessment is in exact accord with the teaching of the Catholic Church on homosexuality unlike that of Joseph Hlubik.

Gary L. Morella
research assistant

Spending semester abroad creates housing difficulties

By Dan Ten Kate

In high school, I had the opportunity to visit the beautiful countries of England and Scotland, and ever since, I have desired to study abroad in the United Kingdom. In fact, one of the reasons I chose to attend Penn State was because it has an extensive study abroad program. So, I recently filled out an application to study abroad at Leeds, England, for Spring Semester 2001.

Everything has gone very smoothly with the application process as all the advisers and others that I've talked to have all been very supportive and cordial in helping me apply to the program.

The only problem that I have run into is finding reasonable housing for just Fall Semester.

When I considered applying for study abroad, I chose Spring Semester for many different reasons. At the time, I didn't think it would be too difficult to find housing for just the fall — after all, since Penn State offered these programs for just the Spring Semester, surely they would be willing to accommodate those students who needed

housing in State College for just Fall Semester. Right?

Well ... no. I have run into a brick wall when it comes to finding housing for just Fall Semester.

The ideal place to live for a study abroad student would be in the dorms, because the dorm contract automatically cancels when students leave for overseas. The other option available is to sign a 12-month lease at one of the numerous apartment complexes and hope to find someone to sublet it for the spring or find a sublet for just Fall Semester, which I am finding to be next to impossible.

I am in an especially horrible situation, as I moved off campus at the end of last year. I could not fill out an application for the dorms until March 20, well after the date on-campus students can apply, and even then the dorms were filled in a matter of hours.

But I went into the housing office anyway on March 20 to fill out an application for the dorms, praying that somewhere a space in supplemental housing would be waiting for me.

Instead, I was immediately put on the enormous waiting list for supplemental housing, with basically a slim to none chance of living in the dorms next semester.

I was running out of places to turn, so I made the mistake of telling the housing office person my predicament.

What they told me, more or less, was that

"Is Penn State here to provide a quality education and the logistics involved with it, or to make money by selling out to every corporate sponsor and deny housing to students who need it ... ?"

since I moved off campus, my application would be considered less of a priority because the housing office gives preference to those students who decided to stay on campus each year. Also, since I was "using" the university for housing for only one semester, I had another strike against me compared to those who wanted to stay the full year.

I stood there stunned at that response, wondering if those points made any sense at all. The first point about considering off-campus students after on-campus students for housing is totally ridiculous.

The dorms here house roughly 12,000 students and the housing office reserves 40 percent of the dorm space for incoming freshman. Consider the fact that roughly 40,000 students attend this campus, and it is blatantly obvious that there is no possible way

to house every Penn State student on campus.

The university relies on students such as myself and a majority of others to voluntarily live off campus.

If we did not voluntarily look for housing off campus, the university would have to force us to do so, as it did to many students who were unable to renew their dorm contracts because the spaces were filled in a matter of hours.

So to give priority to students who have lived in the dorms their entire collegiate career does not make sense. If everyone wanted to live on campus the entire time they were in college, then the university would be forced to deny thousands of applicants.

The fair way to give out housing would be to look at the needs of the students and base selection on that. The university needs students to move off campus, and some students need to live on campus, even if for just a semester.

Which brings me to the second point made by this housing office person. It is hard not to be skeptical about the motives of the university when I, a mere college student looking to enhance my education by studying abroad (a practice which the university has said it encourages), is accused of "using" the university for housing.

This terminology raises an inevitable question: What are the priorities of the uni-

versity? Is Penn State here to provide a quality education and the logistics involved with it, or to deny housing to students who need it because they are "using" the university for housing?

How can the university honestly encourage a practice such as study abroad and then deny the housing for a semester that many students need to be able to participate in it?

Apparently, what the university would like me to do is sign a 12-month lease at an apartment complex somewhere and pay around \$2,000 for the six months I will not be living here.

They need the sixth person in the temporary housing room to be staying both semesters, not just one, to ensure they maximize their profit.

Therefore, I am left to shameless begging. I really don't have any other options. The university has shut me out of the dorms and I don't have an extra \$2,000 to spend on a room I won't be living in.

So please, anyone out there, I am begging you to let me live with you Fall Semester. Otherwise, at least wave to me when you pass my cardboard box on Beaver Avenue next fall.

If nothing changes, that is looking like a very real possibility.

Dan Ten Kate (kd111@psu.edu) is a sophomore majoring in English and a Collegian columnist.