

STAFF COLUMN

Equality for women has come far in short time

By Krystle Kopacz

IF I WERE a college student at Penn State in the early '70s, you can bet I'd drag around my own portable soapbox.



MY OPINION

It simply boggles my mind how unequal society used to be - and how much it has changed in the past few decades.

I would've had to fier the campus. I would have had to carry a bullhorn. I would have probably had to get arrested to prove just how serious I was about equality.

Maybe I've just listened to Destiny's Child's Survivor album one too many times, but it never ceases to amaze me how much societal norms toward women have changed since our moth-

ers were raised - since they dealt with the stuffy traditions that have slowly faded from campus life.

The independent women of today have our predecessors to thank.

Fewer than 35 years ago, women were not allowed to live off campus, but men were.

And if a woman wanted to visit a man's residence, she needed written permission if she was under 21.

Crazy. My roommate told me that her mom, who graduated from Penn State in 1974, said women used to attend football games as if they were dated functions - women didn't go unless a man asked them. And they wore dresses.

Thirty years later, that scene seems to be isolated to the black and white photographs in history books.

It would be absurd to consider a loud, drunken, Penn State tailgate football fest as a date nowadays.

My roommate's mom also said when she was on the women's basketball

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team as a freshman, the whole team wore dresses as uniforms. And women and men couldn't share a gym - the White Building was exclusively for women.

While I was astonished by these changes and feeling pretty good about the way things are swinging for us girls, my friend, a feminist to the core, assured me that although things have changed in past years, they still aren't right.

"Men still control every aspect of this country," she asserted, a hint of fury in her voice. She said it is still a patriarchal society. She said salaries are still unequal.

She said things still need to be changed and we shouldn't settle.

Still, I can't help but think about how far we've come, and how the strides taken by the women before us have changed each of our college experiences.

During this month - Women's History Month - it is important to remember and thank the handful of eager women who were the first to enroll in Penn State, and others who, across the pages of history, have spoken up and caused change.

After all, the track record has been set - imagine what change will happen in the next 35 years.

Krystle Kopacz is a sophomore majoring in journalism and English and is the Collegian's campus chief. Her e-mail is kk298@psu.edu.

VOICES

Do you think performance-enhancing drugs in sports is a problem Congress should deal with?

"They have better things to deal with overseas and domestically, rather than focus on sports."



Chong Soh senior-information sciences and technology

"I don't think it's a congressional issue. It's something to be dealt with by commissioners of major-league sports. They have a better idea on how to handle it."

Jonathan Jastremsky junior-civil engineering



"It's drugs, and the government tries to be involved in other drug problems, so steroids should be no different. It's another drug."

Erin Irving freshman-psychology

— Compiled by Rachel Loeb — Photos by Dan Freil

U-WIRE COLUMN

Networking is not a dirty word when searching for a job

By Flash Clark

THE BURDEN of too many years spent as an undergraduate looms forebodingly on the horizon. After two years of searching for gainful employment, I'm left with little more than when I left this town.

So as I look upon the tip jar sitting on the counter of this little coffee shop, guessing what generosity has afforded me tonight, I wonder what it is that I'm missing.

It is not so much experience that I lack, and it's certainly not a well-rounded education. And it certainly wasn't for a lack of searching. Employers from Japan, Iraq and the entire continental United States plus Hawaii have copies of my resume.

The recent rejection letter from a local paper only complicated matters until I suddenly realized what it was that I had been missing all this time.

I was watching my customers, many of whom are artists or activists or professors or even columnists, when it dawned on me: connections. I don't have any connections. I spent most of

my time concentrating on creativity and design theory when I should have dedicated some effort into creating a network of associates and friends with whom to collaborate in the future.

Don't get me wrong, the classroom experience of my discipline taught me precisely what it was intended to. However, the issue of networking was never really addressed. Now, the longer I find myself treading water in unsubstantial employment, the more I realize just how detrimental a factor that can be.

My whole life, I was raised, like many people, under the ideal principal that if one works hard and keeps his nose to the grindstone, then she or he can achieve anything.

While surely this statement has merit, I see it as the professional equivalent to the dating precept that people will like you solely for you are and not for what you look like. The professional world is not much different. Oftentimes, getting a job can hinge on what you look like, how you conduct yourself outwardly, the people you know and, of course, education and experience.

For years I resisted against all temp-

So I finally convinced myself that networking was not cheating, no more than finding a person physically appealing is narrow-minded. It is just business.

tations to believe that it could be true; that employers would consider anything but the facts: The grades, the degrees, the work experience, the work ethic. I believed in an ideal meritocracy, but that is not business. So I finally convinced myself that networking was not cheating, no more than finding a person physically appealing is narrow-minded. It is just business.

It is business, business in the way that retailers charge customers more for the product than it cost to make it. Business in the way that everything is taxed to hell. Profit, spam e-mail, super-sized transfatty fries and telemarketing, heaven help us, are business. And networking, too, is just business. Every friend you have ever had and every classmate you have ever sat next to is a contact. Every professor you didn't wholly irritate and every

instructor who ever handed you an op-scan is a potential associate for later in life.

Of course, sometimes the notion of just asking a friend or associate for a lead or helping hand is not as easy as one would like. It is almost guaranteed that the more an individual needs assistance, the less likely he is to ask for it outright. Such was my case. Such is the nature of pride. However, as time passes and the job market yields less and less, pride wanes and necessity prevails. And so, I understood, on a Friday night, as the clock waxed midnight, watching the people typing and writing and one reading Vonnegut upside down. There is no shame in networking.

Flash Clark writes for The Collegiate Times at Texas Tech.

9 letter word for procrastination

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