

OPINION

THE DAILY
Collegian

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Letters

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

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■ **Postal mail/in person**
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Letters should be about 200 words. Student letters should include class year, major and campus. Letters from alumni should include year of graduation. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Members of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their groups. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters. The Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all letters it receives. Letters chosen also run on The Daily Collegian Online and may be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters become property of Collegian Inc.

EDITORIAL INTERNET POLICY

Like sex, Facebook often bad idea

Putting your personal information on Facebook is kind of like having sex.

It might be fun to do at the time, but it can be a seriously bad idea if you're not prepared.

Facebook recently made headlines when it teamed up with search engines, including Google, Yahoo! and MSN, to allow Facebook's search listings to show up in those engines' search results.

This isn't really a big blow to students' privacy — anyone on Facebook can already search for your profile. And anyone can join Facebook.

But to hear some students talk about the new Facebook search feature, you'd think there was a new sexually transmitted disease going around.

Just like with sex, there's a few sensible steps you can

take to protect yourself.

Before you get busy with your late-night uploading, make sure you check out Facebook's privacy settings. With just a few clicks, you can remove yourself from most search results and allow just your friends to view your profile.

But also like sex, there's a single, 100 percent effective way to avoid having your information spill all over the Internet: Don't put it up in the first place.

Penn State's Information Technology Services (ITS) department has been trying to pound this message into students' heads for some time now. Unfortunately, not all students listen to the instructions on the colorful residence hall posters.

Sure, it's tough to believe those ITS officials (they're

probably just jealous because no one wanted to upload their photos), but they might be onto something this time.

This isn't denying that Facebook is fun. Posting and sharing those scandalous photos can be pretty darn exciting. You don't have to go "abstinence only" — but use some moderation.

It's OK to upload a party of your friends having a good time. But the picture of you upside-down on the stripper pole? Think before you insert that memory card.

Don't go friend-ing everyone you bump into. And don't join a naughty group just because your friends invited you.

Above all, be careful about your first time uploading new information.

Because once it's gone out to the Internet, you can never, ever, get it back.

Gender-neutral bathrooms waste of students' tuition

I'm a little disturbed by the news that gender-neutral bathrooms even exist and much more by their presence at Penn State.

There is absolutely no need for it. Thousands of tuition dollars are being spent making bathrooms that are only used by a small fraction of the student population. That means part of my tuition is being spent on bathrooms built for people who can't stand to use the men's or women's restroom.

My question to them is: "Why can't you just use the men's or women's bathroom?" There is nothing "discriminatory" about having men's and women's bathrooms; it's good etiquette. Moreover, even if you are a transgender student, you are not limited in your ability to use one or the other bathroom; just pick one.

One might ask: "why do handicapped people get their own restroom?"

A handicapped person may not be able to use regular facilities, whereas transgender students have every capability of using the same facilities as everyone else.

David Navickas
sophomore-mechanical engineering

Students shouldn't expect to see CATA bus changes

Mr. McCarthy's complaint about the Centre Area Transit Authority (CATA) being overcrowded is an understandable gripe. I experienced a similar dilemma in 1999 and 2000 when I was an undergraduate student.

A word to the wise to Mr. McCarthy and any other student frustrated with overcrowding at bus stops: Get used to it.

The situation is not going to change. Because the university keeps a tight grip on student parking on campus, riding the bus is always going to be a daunting task, especially at those early class times. Don't expect CATA to buy more buses.

I'm sure overcrowding is stressful on the drivers and dealing with students who rush on the bus. There are regulations on the number allowed on public transportation vehicles. It is a safety issue for students and the driver.

A couple of solutions to curtail the problem: Take an earlier bus. Walk if you are close to campus. Deal with it.

Kyle Greenwood
Class of 2001

Article omits main causes for PSU's lack of diversity

In response to Arianna Davis' "Penn State rising in diversity rankings" Sept. 18, I wonder how many students believe that Penn State is a diverse university. I hope the number is low.

It was interesting that Davis only included a quote about minority self segregation as a possible explanation for the lack of diversity that some students feel. Her article failed to touch upon majority exclusiveness and intolerance. What a sad oversight given this country's history of legalized exclusionary practices carried out by white and heterosexual majorities. On top of that, minority groups, like homosexuals and blacks, have their own histories of fighting for integration.

Perhaps, her omission of this angle was subconscious and thus telling of a larger problem at hand—the inability to look in the mirror and admit that what's seen is ugly. Majorities won't read articles that implicate them in society's shortcomings, and media outlets cater to them. In the end, the status quo is maintained, and real change is lost to illusion.

Dominic C. Jones
senior-health policy and administration and sociology

Jesus and Allah are terms with different meanings

Kevin Lowe makes a good point in his letter "God and Allah are terms which refer to the same deity" Sept. 19, and one worthy of discussion. From a linguistic perspective, God and Allah carry the same denotation.

However, these names carry connotations with divisive theological implications. Christianity, despite similarities among religions, is the only religion that believes Jesus is the face of God.

He is the dividing line. Jesus is the god of grace who endured our worst in order to give us his best. This difference is not a reason to hate one another, but we cannot pretend to be the same. God and Allah may be synonymous, but Jesus and Allah are not.

John Petrilli
senior-mechanical engineering



COLUMNIST

Columnist wants to experience real hunger

By Caitlin O'Malley

DO YOU know what it's like to be hungry?

No, I'm not talking about the kind of hunger you get when you accidentally sleep in, skip breakfast and then sit in the Forum Building, hoping no one can hear your stomach rumbling over that annoying kid's presentation.

Nor am I referring to the kind of hunger that partygoers feel at 2 a.m., when their alcohol-enhanced sense of smell drives them to cut in line at Canyon Pizza with the ferocity of a pack of lions on the hunt.

I'm talking about the type of hunger that keeps you up at night and wakes you up in the morning. I'm talking about the hunger that comes from skipping breakfast because there isn't any food, avoiding lunch in order to save up for dinner and still wondering from where that dinner will come.

I have never been that kind of hungry. But the United States Department of Agriculture estimates that 12.6 million U.S. households have experienced this kind of hungry—known as food insecurity.

In quiet, hidden ways, many people in America are hungry. A few years ago, I worked with a happy-go-lucky, 23-year-old waitress. She worked two jobs and went to beauty school—all quite energetically. Her family was supportive and close. She looked clean, dressed decently and had an average build. Nothing would indicate

that she was poor or hungry — until I found her crouched down behind the dish-washing station secretly picking through food scraps from customer's plates and shoveling them into her mouth instead of throwing them in the garbage. In the extra pocket of her apron, she shoved a heaping handful of half-eaten wings and French fries that were already drenched in ketchup.

No wonder she always insisted she wasn't hungry when she worked 10-hour shifts without ordering a snack. There's so much you cannot know about a person, even after years of working with them, living next to them or sitting beside with them in class.

That's part of the reason I became a journalist. I want to know. I'm interested in people. I'd like to know what it's like to live their lives — the private moments, the small details, the struggles, their secrets, their emotions and their thoughts. Since I can't live 1,000 lives, reading or writing about people is the closest I've ever come to understanding them. But I knew that writing about hunger and feeling hungry was not the same.

So I enlisted the help of some experts at the State College Area Food Bank.

"I do know what it's like to be hungry. If you could imagine when you get slightly hungry, magnify that a thousand fold. Unless you have actually ever been there, you can't really understand. It feels like the world is coming to an end," said Linda Tataliba, the food bank's executive director.

In the 1960s, Tataliba experienced hunger for the first time when her father lost his job one winter. Tataliba and her siblings packed two empty slices of bread as their school lunches and pretended they were eating regular sandwiches.

"The other kids knew," she said. "They made fun."

She also recalled her youngest brother sitting at the kitchen table and crying for food in pain. At times, flour was one of the only foods her family had access to, and her mother would use it to make dough balls. Tataliba and her older sisters visited food banks for the family because their parents were too proud.

So, how much money do I spend on food per week if I wanted to experience "being hungry" for myself?

"Pay your other bills first and then act like you have nothing left," Tataliba said. Nothing? I was confused. How do I live on nothing?

"Most of the people who come into our food bank have no money left for food," she said.

Obviously, I couldn't go to a food bank and take away from the needy in order to write a column, so I needed a spending limit.

The food shelter can feed one person for a week for about \$12.50, so this is the upper limit of my spending range. I'm aiming for \$7 to \$10.

More advice: No bottled water. No alcohol. No treats. You eat pasta plain if you run out of sauce. No exercise other than walking, no tanning, no going out. This is what you do if it is a matter of survival. No buying personal items. (Tataliba recalled having to borrow items such as soap from her neighbors if she needed them.) No hair cuts. Everything you take for granted is gone.

Next Thursday in my column, I will reveal, as best as I can, my experience of being hungry — if only for a week.

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MY OPINION

blog lines

Collegian: Travis' Travels

"After making the 90-or-so-minute trek to Harrisburg, we finally arrived at the Days Inn just after midnight...only to find upon attempting to check in that we'd been booked for the wrong night.

But we lucked out. Before we started panicking about where we'd be sleeping that night, the desk clerk informed us we'd been transferred to another Days Inn.

So we piled back into the car. And this time, we started on another trek, this time to our final resting place, at least for the night..."

Read more of the Collegian: Travis' Travels blog at www.collegian.psu.edu under the "Blogs" heading.