

# Paternoville wraps up season with final campout

By Greg Cohen  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

With the football season coming to a close, a relatively small group of only 30 tents and 237 people arrived to camp out for the final week of Paternoville. But the diehards weren't about to let that define this season.

Over the course of the season, 1,715 different people camped at Paternoville.

"If it didn't break the record for numbers in 2005 for total campers, then it definitely came close," Paternoville Coordination Committee (PCC) Vice President John Tece said.

Eight campouts after the season's first game against Akron, members of the PCC and the students who have weathered the conditions at Beaver Stadium's Gate A say they will look back with fond memories.

"Coming into the year, we definitely had some different expectations than what we got," Tece said. "We didn't expect the huge rush of numbers, especially during the first couple of weeks ... Obviously that's a good thing, because it shows how many people want to sleep out here for three nights a week and sit near the field on Saturday."

Tece said the PCC expected no more than 15 to 20 tents for the season's first game against Akron but ended up with 35. And because so many students showed up, Paternoville grew into a community.

The number of campers for the season really stood out, Evan Rothey (junior-finance) said. Rothey said he was impressed by the involvement of the student body compared to the last few seasons.

"People seemed more open to getting to know each other," he said. "It's nice to get to talk to everybody, and there is more of a real community feel."

While Rothey looks forward to re-joining the Gate A neighborhood next season, some Paternoville veterans are manning their tents for the last time. Mat Kovalich (senior-secondary education), a four-year Paternoville camper, said his fellow resi-



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dents — who have become his friends — will be what he misses most.

"This is the eighth campout of the year, and I've bonded with everyone here," Kovalich said. "I see them every week, and I'm really going to miss talking to them and relaxing and just having fun here. If I can get out of work next year and find a group that wants to take me in for a weekend, I will be up here in a heartbeat."

Kovalich also completed a lifelong dream of his this year: meeting Joe Paterno.

"I can die a happy man," he said. "That tops the list, without a question."

PCC President Alex Cohen highlighted a few other moments from the season he will always remember.

"No. 1 was the slip 'n slide," Cohen said. "It was just unbelievable, a Paternoville first. No. 2 had to be all of Homecoming Week and building the float. It culminated in us winning the best float for independent organizations. The final one was probably the Thursday night before Iowa. Even though we lost the game, everyone was just so pumped up, and we had a lot of juice."

Early in the season, Cohen said he and the rest of his group determined they had spent 18 of 30 days at Paternoville, spending more time at Gate A than in their own apartments. That dedication has helped him lead the way during a once-in-a-lifetime season, he said. When asked if he could say one thing to the 1,715 students who came out and "made this season spectacular," Cohen paused to frame his words properly.

"I'd say, 'Thank you, it was a great season,'" he said.

"Thank you for your passion and cooperation. I hope I did what I could to make your experience at Paternoville great."



Collegian file photo

This colorful array of tents is set up outside Beaver Stadium in anticipation of the Ohio State game. The last Paternoville campout of the 2009 season takes place this week.

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