

'Rascals' to return for fourth concert

By Alexandra Fletcher
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Scheduled to perform its fourth show in State College in the past decade, Rascal Flatts' appeal spans farther than just its sound.

Chrissy Miller, lead singer for local country-rock group Fat Girl Slim, said the group's popularity might stem from the image it puts forth.

"They seem like a bunch of down-to-earth, honest, wholesome guys, and they respect their audience," Miller said. "I think they really bring a lot to the table."

Rascal Flatts will perform on Jan. 22 at the Bryce Jordan Center with an opening performance from former Hootie and the Blowfish frontman Darius Rucker. Bernie Punt, director of sales and marketing for the BJC, said the band loves to perform here and is just another example of the kind of big-name country acts that have recently performed at the BJC.

"In the last two years, we've had just about everybody on the CMA Awards," Punt said.

Similar to country artist Carrie Underwood, Rascal Flatts' success can be attributed to the team of people working with the group. Miller said — their staff reads the market to select great songs for the band to take on.

As a result, Rascal Flatts is producing country songs that almost go toward the pop genre, Miller said. That's similar to artists like Faith Hill, who started off as a solid country singer and dipped into the pop music scene, or Jewel who delved into country after starting as a soft rock artist.

"They are more of a rocking country group than a standard country act — they provide such a wide variety of music," Miller said. "They do get a lot of airplay. Every time you turn on Froggy [98.1 WFGY] ... you hear them."

Because State College is set in central Pennsylvania, it's appeal-



Meagan Kanagy/Collegian

Country band Rascal Flatts performs at the Bryce Jordan Center in 2008. The group will visit for the fourth time in a decade in January.

ing to artists traveling to major cities and looking to cover a wide range of people, Miller said.

"They have come a long, long way and I think they are going to do quite well again," she said.

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Tree to light up closer to holiday

By Brittany Stoner
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Holiday tidings will be coming to State College a few days closer to winter break this year, with the 15th annual tree-lighting ceremony at the Allen Street Gates set for next week.

Although the tree-lighting ceremony is usually held the Thursday before Thanksgiving, the State College Downtown Improvement District (DID) has decided to hold it on Nov. 23 in order to move it a little closer to Christmas, staff said.

However, this also means that most Penn State students will be home for Thanksgiving break and will miss the holiday event. That's a shame, said Borough Council President Elizabeth Goreham, as students are such a big part of the town.

"We think about the tree-lighting as being especially for children, but it's not — it's for everyone," Goreham said.

The DID expects 400 to 500 people to attend the event, and it doesn't expect the lack of college students to make much of a difference.

"The event is more targeted to people who live in the area, particularly families with children," marketing intern Jamie Baser (senior-public relations) said.

Interim Mayor Felicia Lewis will begin the ceremony by welcoming the crowd. Her welcome

will be followed by a reading of "Twas The Night Before Christmas" by Mrs. Claus. Free refreshments will be provided, and there will also be showcases by Singing Onstage Studios' performing group, the Broadway Showkids, and Christmas carolers Dan and Galla.

Those who bring a canned good or toy to donate to the food bank or Toys for Tots can have their names entered in a raffle to help Santa light the tree later in the evening. Goreham said she will attend the ceremony this year and hopes to make the event a personal tradition.

"One of the reasons I haven't attended in the past is because I'm one of those people who is surprised every year about the holiday season," Goreham said. "It just seems to happen so fast — Christmas is in December, not in November."

Carnie Smith (junior-nutrition) said the ceremony would have been a fun event to attend with her roommates.

"We do fun things together. We like to decorate and be all festive," Smith said. "The people who do know about it will definitely miss out."

Despite poor economic conditions and recent budget cuts, Goreham is optimistic that the festivities will continue in years to come.

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Media group begins PSU chapter

By Lauren Ingenu
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

After interning for Seventeen magazine and the Food Network, Jessica Wisel learned that networking is key in the field of communications.

Now president of Penn State's new chapter of American Women in Radio & Television (AWRT) — a national non-profit organization — she and other students are utilizing the club to make connections in the media world.

Wisel (senior-public relations) said she heard about AWRT from an ad sales assistant at the Food Network. Since a chapter of the organization had not yet been established at Penn State, Wisel decided to create one in August.

Founded in 1951 and featuring prominent members such as Diane Sawyer, Barbara Walters and Rachael Ray, AWRT's mission is to "promote diversity and strengthen the influence of women in the vast media commu-

nity," according to its Web site.

And that's a mission Wisel said she takes to heart.

"Its main purpose is networking and getting information about the media. If you join, it's getting your foot in the door because that's the main way to get a job in this industry," Wisel said. "It's great to put on your resume."

With about 30 students currently in the Penn State chapter, Wisel said her main goal for the organization this year is to recruit more members. One incentive students now have to join the group is a \$10,000 student media scholarship competition being sponsored by AWRT and the Loreen Arbus Foundation.

The scholarship is open to any man or woman who joins AWRT.

According to AWRT's Web site, the competition involves creating a written statement for a public service announcement that must incorporate the theme of "Opening Doors & Minds: Celebrating 20 Years of the

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)."

The PSA should address issues such as the culture of society before the ADA was signed and how the views of Americans have changed toward people with disabilities. The \$10,000 awarded to the winner will be used to produce and create the PSA video.

The winner will also be publicly honored at the 31st College Television Awards gala in Los Angeles, said Wisel, who plans to compete.

The PSA will also be shown at the July 2010 National Summit on Disability Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., according to the AWRT Web site.

Bob Martin, the College of Communications assistant dean for internships and career placement, is the faculty adviser for the club.

He said he is looking forward to seeing the group grow, adding that the scholarship is a great opportunity for students.



Collegian file photo

Santa Claus talks to a girl on Allen Street during the 2007 tree-lighting ceremony. The community event will include Santa again this year.

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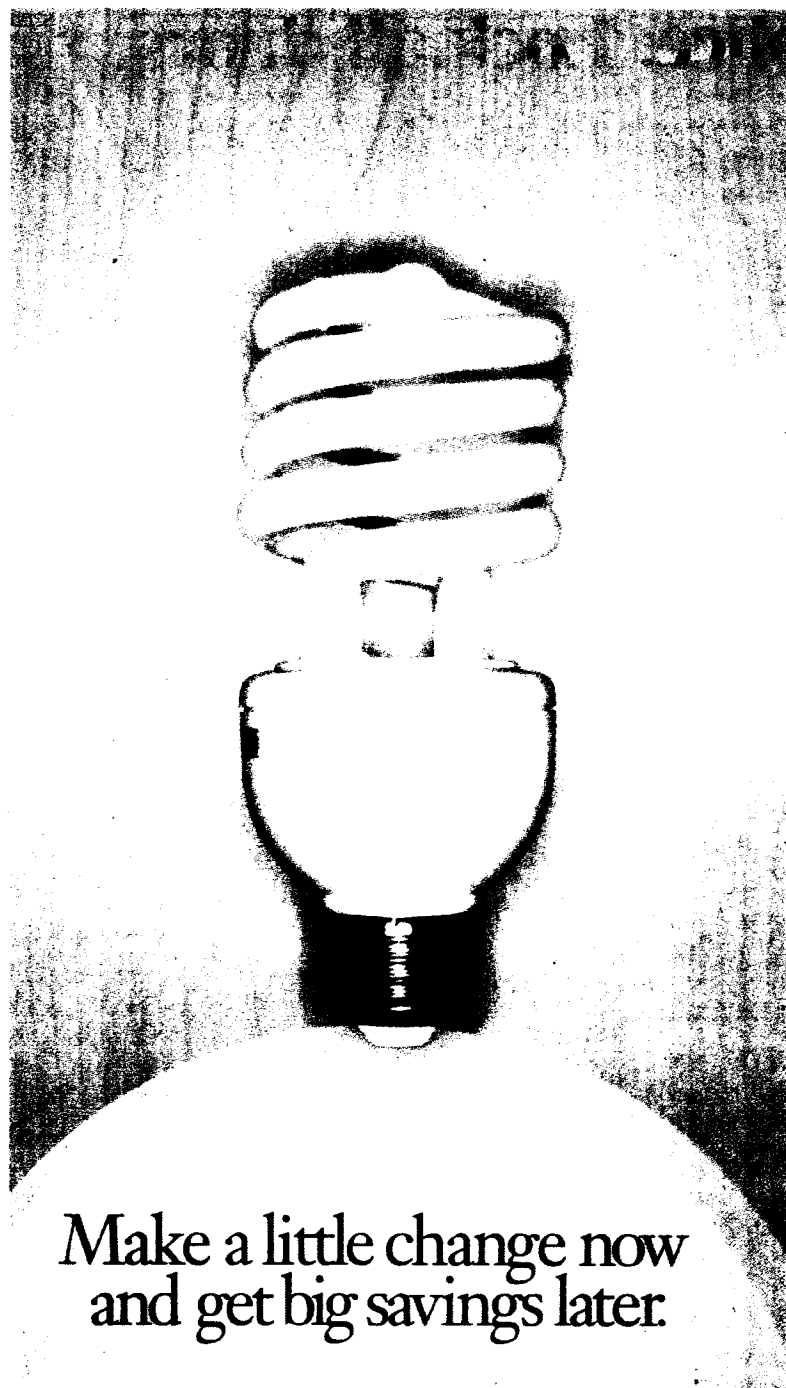
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