

Security too costly, powerless

If a solution costs a lot of money and doesn't really solve anything, can you call it a solution?

More to the point — why pay for security monitors at a cost of \$16 per hour if they can do little more than check names off a list?

That's what the Interfraternity Council (IFC) is doing.

This semester, a new social policy has been implemented, and one element of the policy stipulates that fraternities will hire security personnel to guard doors and social monitors to ensure the IFC's rules for parties are being followed.

According to IFC president Max Wendkos, some fraternities were unhappy with the new policy. They have good reason.

The effort seems like little more than a publicity-inspired move.

Security personnel won't check IDs, so liability from any underage drinking would still rest with the fraternity where the violation took place. The average security guard isn't trained to break up fights. He or she would have to call police, meaning the damage from a fight could start and finish before someone with authority steps in.

If the IFC is going to

pay for professional security, why not go all the way and make it effective?

That way, the money spent will do more than cosmetic work.

Or, if the cost for effective security is too much, why not police parties effectively with in-house solutions?

At most fraternities, members already guard the entrances and exits and presumably take care of any violations of fraternity rules.

Right now, the IFC is looking for a middle-ground solution, but in this case, that solution offers too little and costs too much.

Food choices a subsidized U.S. sickness

By Braden Katz

WHEN our parents were in college, the sight of an obese person was a rarity. Today, those who are excessively overweight are no longer considered a minority.



MY OPINION

The National Institute of Health found that 64.5 percent of Americans are overweight and nearly a third of the population is clinically obese.

Although these numbers are already staggering, the country is only getting fatter. By 2015, 75 percent of Americans are expected to be overweight and 41 percent obese according to the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

With numbers like these, the argument that individual irresponsibility or lack of self-control is the sole cause of the obesity epidemic would be irrational. Although there is certainly some individual fault, America's eating problem can be seen in the center aisles of the everyday grocery store and the absurdly low prices of fast food items.

This connection is no coincidence. As author Michael Pollan frankly put in an interview with Christian Science Monitor, "We are subsidizing obesity."

U.S. crop subsidies were initially used to ensure the financial survival of farmers and thwart off famine during the great depression. Now, though, crop subsidies serve a different purpose.

Today, the most highly subsidized crop is corn. Corn subsidies jumped from around \$2.5 in 2004 to more than \$9 billion dollars in the past two years.

As a result, junk food products containing subsidized-corn ingredients are extremely cheap. This skews the food market for consumers to purchase unhealthy foods.

Anyone gulping a Coke, biting into a KFC drumstick, munching on a Twinkie or partaking in all three is ingesting some form of processed corn.

Among the most lethal — and popular — of the corn concoctions is high-fructose corn syrup. This serves as a fatty sweetener found in soft drinks, yogurts, cookies, salad dressing and countless other products.

Meanwhile, vegetables and other healthy selections in the grocery store are either imported from foreign countries or their producers receive little to no aid from the government.

The prices tell the story. For low-income families, the rational choice among the grocery aisles would be the cheap, less-healthy foods instead of expensive vegetables. Not surprisingly, poverty is one of the most prominent indicators for higher obesity rates.

Food production companies catering to the fast food industry use subsidized corn to feed their animals because it's cheap. In turn, fast food companies use subsidized ingredients to create food-like items on the dollar menu.

Although many of these junk-food items may seem cheap at first, we are all paying the price. With cancers, diabetes, heart disease and countless other health problems that arise from an unhealthy diet, it is estimated that we are paying more than \$75 billion a year because of our poor eating habits.

Taxpayers are paying corporations to cook for us. Consequently, companies have created a system that provides extremely cheap items containing three ingredients that our bodies are hardwired to love: salt, sugar and fat. We are all getting sick because of it.

Braden Katz is a junior at The University of Kansas and is a columnist for The University Daily Kansan.



MOONWALK



Housing issues create headaches

By Caitlin Cullerot

At some point during your Penn State career, you will be screwed by housing. It doesn't matter if you choose to live on campus or downtown. It's going to happen.

Maybe it's already happened to you. Maybe freshman year you received your housing assignment and scanned the document excitedly, imagining what your roommate would be like, if you would be best friends, if you would braid each other's hair and paint each other's nails — and then you saw the dreaded words: SUPPLEMENTAL HOUSING. Instead of living in a cozy double, you end up crammed into a room with several other students. Think it's hard to study and sleep around one other person's schedule? Try seven.

As Penn State's population continues to grow, the university has done everything possible to fit students into every crevice available. Lounges have been converted to eight-person dorm rooms. RAs have been forced to share rooms with students. And Simmons Dining Hall will soon close for renovations to create additional living space.

Instead of alleviating the

problem by building new dorms, though, the university is wrapped up in the construction of the \$215 million Millennium Science Complex and expanding the newly built arboretum. While these are both great projects, students can't exactly sleep on the arboretum lawn and bathe in its fountain.

The problem doesn't get any better if you choose to move off campus. Leasing a downtown apartment means camping out with sleeping bags and tents for hours on end in the chilly October weather, and even then you're not guaranteed a place.

I experienced this last fall, when my roommates and I bundled up in scarves and long underwear at 4 a.m. and headed to the Nevins Real Estate Management office. As we walked, we congratulated each another on our plan to arrive five hours before the office opened. Who else would be crazy enough to wait in line hours before dawn? Apparently dozens of others.

Some students were fast asleep inside tents. Others were sipping Irish coffee to try to stay awake. We headed for the end of the line, which was easily 100 people long when we arrived. The students in front of us said people had been camping out since noon the day before. Needless to say, we did not get an apartment.

To make matters worse, Nevins' policy with security deposits was to cash checks

immediately and reimburse you later if you were not offered an apartment. Because we each had about \$500 tied up in Nevins' office from early October until Thanksgiving break, none of us could afford to put down a deposit anywhere else.

After getting the bad news, we contacted every other rental company in State College, desperate to find a place. Thankfully, Associated Realty Property Management (ARPM) said it had a few places left, but would need us to come in immediately. We toured an apartment the next day and agreed to sign the lease right away so we wouldn't lose the place. We went back to the rental office with the realtor, check books and pens at the ready, but it was too late — another group was signing the lease to the very apartment we had just been shown.

Though ARPM worked with us to resolve the issue, horror stories like this illustrate just how dire the housing situation at Penn State really is. Neither the university nor the downtown realtors seem able to accommodate student needs.

At what other college is it necessary to camp out to receive adequate housing?

It's time for Penn State to acknowledge the issue and build a few extra dorms.

Caitlin Cullerot is a senior majoring in journalism and is the Collegian's Wednesday columnist. Her e-mail address is cmc5217@psu.edu.

THE DAILY Collegian

Rossilynne Skena
Editor-in-Chief

Holly Colbo
Business Manager

About the Collegian: The Daily Collegian and The Weekly Collegian are published by Collegian Inc., an independent, nonprofit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and professionals. Pennsylvania State University students write and edit both papers and solicit advertising for them. During the fall and spring semesters as well as the second six-week summer session, The Daily Collegian publishes Monday through Friday. Issues are distributed by mail to other Penn State campuses and individual subscribers.

Complaints: News and editorial complaints should be presented to the editor. Business and advertising complaints should be presented to the business manager.

Who we are

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor holding final responsibility. The letters and columns 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. It is a separate corporate institution from Penn State. Editorials are written by The Daily Collegian Board of Opinion.

Members are: Lexi Belcuffine, Matt Brown, Kevin Cirilli, Adam Clark, Rich Coleman, Matt Conte, Caitlin Cullerot, Abby Drey, Katherine Dvorak, Michael Felletter, Matt Fortuna, Mandy Hofmockel, Allison Jackovitz, Phenola Lawrence, Andrew McGill, Dave Miniaci, Nate Mink, Elizabeth Murphy, Dan Rorabaugh, Erin Rowley, Heather Schmelzlen, Caitlin Sellers, Shannon Simcox, Rossilynne Skena, Kevin Sullivan, Jacquie Tylka, Alex Weisler and Bill Wellock.

Letters

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

■ **E-mail**
collegianletters@psu.edu

■ **Online**
www.psucollegian.com

■ **Postal mail/In person**
123 S. Burrows St.
University Park, PA 16801

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.

blog lines

There is No Name on My Ballot

Gov. Ed Rendell announced yesterday that Pennsylvania is gearing up to send medical and humanitarian aid to Haiti and its earthquake victims. This announcement followed a letter sent by the governor to the departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security. Rendell said he has enlisted the planning efforts of state departments to receive Haitian patients in the near future.

Read more from **There is No Name on My Ballot** and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psu.collegian.com.

THON

"The THON community came together for its annual Road to THON dinner, a closed event last Thursday in celebration of the efforts to raise money and awareness "for the kids."

About 800 people, including THON volunteers, Four Diamonds families and corporate sponsors banded together to recognize the hard work of everyone involved with THON.

Read more from the **THON Blog** and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psu.collegian.com.