

OPINION

THE DAILY
Collegian

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Office a waste of resources

The University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) opened the doors of its new downtown office last week, more than six months after purchasing its lease.

Despite the fact that UPUA already has an office in the HUB-Robeson Center, the student government spent \$5,200 in leftover funds from the 2008-2009 budget on the 12-month lease, which began in June.

Unused funds from the budget are typically returned to the Student Activity Fee "pot" at the end of June, and UPUA opted to spend the funds before they were lost.

The association's decision was anything

but student-centered.

The opening of a downtown office just steps away from campus is a waste of money and university resources.

UPUA's budget is funded by the Student Activity Fee, and for the association to needlessly spend such an exorbitant amount of money on an office that remained vacant for the first six months of its lease is irresponsible.

Had UPUA not spent the money, it would have been returned to the University Park Allocation Committee to be spent more effectively.

To his credit, UPUA President Gavin Keirans has acknowledged the

association "rush[ed] into the situation" and has questioned whether it warrants some "sanctions."

However, Chairman of the Assembly Mark Cannon asserts that the vacant office was not a waste of funds and referred to the student center as a "revolutionary idea."

It is worrisome that some members of UPUA feel the luxury of a second office so close to campus is a necessity.

UPUA is supposed to be a voice for students, but wasting thousands of dollars on a vacant office funded by the student activity fee is not in anyone's best interest.

State Patty's Day "holiday" more than just a big party

When I arrived on campus a year and a half ago and heard about State Patty's Day, I loved it. When I got accepted to Penn State, my alumni parents began relating their old State College stories to me. These stories included my father and his roommate's wacky costumes in the Phi Psi 500 and my mother's antics at Gentle Thursday on the HUB Lawn. These are the college memories that are special to them and something they will cherish their entire lives.

I'm sure these events led to some less than desirable consequences, but that doesn't degrade the events in their minds. Sure, the Phi Psi 500 had a philanthropic reason, but my dad never talked about that aspect. The events were more than just huge parties. Those events brought the student body together and brought close friends even closer. State Patty's Day is our Phi Psi 500 or our Gentle Thursday. Long live State Patty's Day!

Paul Hook
sophomore-biochemistry

Celebrity support of THON helps promote true mission

After the reading the Feb. 2 article, "Celebrity THON tweets worry local," I was really frustrated. Why would having celebrity endorsement be a problem? Having the celebrity tweets does us a great favor — they raise awareness. When I go canning on the streets asking for money, many people outside the state of Pennsylvania do not know THON well or even at all. If anything, having the celebrities tweet about THON helps to raise awareness, which in turn, can help to raise money.

If people are really worried about who can stake ownership to THON, then maybe it is not what I thought it was. If you are only helping to raise money for THON for personal gain or glory, then you are missing the point. The THON mission is "to conquer pediatric cancer by providing outstanding emotional and financial support to the children, families, researchers and staff of The Four Diamonds Fund." Having celebrities show their support is excellent and can only help THON with its fight to cure pediatric cancer. If you go out canning for the last trip, remember THON is "For the kids!"

Brian Fejka
senior-electrical engineering

Responsibility for obesity still rests with individual choice

In response to the wire column, "Food Choices a Subsidized U.S. Sickness," I would agree that the United States has an obesity problem, but subsidized corn is far from the reason. As mentioned, food companies use high fructose corn syrup, but that's only because they can't afford the price of sugar. The U.S. pays about three times the world price for sugar because of our highly government protected domestic sugar market. If companies could afford sugar, they would use it, still leaving us with an obesity problem.

Although subsidizing vegetables would lower the price for consumers, the difference would be made up by the government, which gets its money from us. Subsidized agricultural markets have been far from successful, as seen in both the U.S. dairy industry and the European Union. Subsidized industries distort the market to cause a host of problems. In the end, the obesity problem still falls on individual choice, not lack of government intervention.

Brandon Dunlap
sophomore-agribusiness management



Petty differences not worth the time

By Jacquie Tylka

There is literally a wall of hate in my apartment. It is covered in pictures

and words drawn on computer paper of all the things my roommates and I don't like. There must be more than 50 pieces of paper with things that, as we say, "grind our gears," and we shoot them all with Nerf guns.

Toothpaste in the sink, serving sizes (who eats just two cookies anyway?), natural disasters, war, WWE Champion Sheamus and Mario's nemeses can all be found on that wall.

Given that we are four girls, it makes me wonder how other people channel their hate. What do they do when something is grinding their gears? Do they fight? Use slurs? Keep it inside until they emotionally explode with rage?

All of those things are a lot worse than using a \$10 Nerf gun to shoot at computer paper.

Obviously, walls like the one in my apartment are not going to stop terrible things like wars, hate crimes or other acts of violence, but putting it out there that you don't like something leaves the topic open for discussion.

Maybe that discussion could change your mind, or at the very

least, open your eyes to something different.

It is hard to keep them closed forever, especially at a place like Penn State. There is diversity everywhere. There are majorities and minorities. Differences in race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, voting preference — and even little things like favorite sports teams, class seating fondness and brand partiality — are present throughout State College and beyond, so we have to find a way to deal with the different.

Because here is the obvious secret: We aren't all made from the same mold. We aren't all gingerbread men and women wandering around, agreeing that the Muffin Man is God. We have different hairstyles, different skin colors and different backgrounds. Rarely do any two people agree on every single thing.

An example, albeit a weaker one, is the constant Pittsburgh-Philadelphia battle. Which city is better? I say Steelers, you say Eagles. Tomato, tomahto. Who is to say who is right and who is wrong? Both cities have things to offer.

The same person who shouted profanities at me as I walked down Beaver Avenue in a Steelers jersey could have been standing next to me at the Penn State game the day before, where we embraced and sang "Hey Baby" like we were best friends.

We just don't know it because our eyes aren't open, and all we see is "their" black and gold to

"their" green and white.

Why does there have to be a "they"?

That is something I am learning when I shoot the things that grind our gears on my apartment wall. Some of them are harmless — such as toothpaste in the sink — but others could be offensive to people if they walked in. That was and is not the goal of the wall; the goal was to have fun. So I may leave up Mario's nemeses, but I may take down some of the others, like "people from New Jersey." I can't believe that even made the wall. My own family lives in New Jersey — some born and raised there — so I don't hate them. Some of the best friends I have made at Penn State are from there — how did that get on MY wall?

But that is what I am learning through this silly little game in my apartment. Some things just aren't worth hating or stereotyping, and it takes a few rounds with Nerf guns to realize it.

Whatever it is you do — and there are plenty of options if you take the time to look — I hope you try. There are too many really terrible things in this world to focus on the petty differences, so I want to change, and I hope you do too.

If I don't, I may just end up on my own wall, grinding my own gears.

Jacquie Tylka is a senior majoring in journalism and is the Collegian's Thursday columnist. Her e-mail address is jmt5094@psu.edu.

blog lines

Snap, Crackle, Pop

The 2010 Oscar nominations were announced Tuesday morning, and while there was a whole lot of predictability, there were some good and bad surprises as well.

For the first time, the Oscars nominated 10 films for best picture instead of the usual five, a concept that, on one hand, helps to include the great but risky films that would have been edged out, but also forces some not-so-great films to make the cut as well.

If this had been a five-pick year, the choices would have been "Avatar," "The Hurt Locker," "Inglourious Basterds," "Up in the Air" and "Precious." With the expansion, it's awesome to see the wonderful Pixar film "Up" included as not just an animated feature, and the sci-fi hit "District 9" as well.

Read more from **Snap, Crackle, Pop** and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psuollegian.com.

Hardwood Hits

Minnesota point guard Al Nolen has played his last game for the Golden Gophers this season after his appeal for reinstatement was denied by the NCAA.

Nolen was ruled academically ineligible two weeks ago. The junior guard appealed to a special NCAA committee, but with the denial is done for the year.

Though Nolen can still travel and practice with his team, he won't be able to take the floor when Minnesota plays Penn State Saturday. For a team seeking its first Big Ten win, the Lions could benefit from the loss of Nolen.

Read more from **Hardwood Hits** and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psuollegian.com.