

UPUA to vote on safe State Patty's initiative

UPUA will vote tonight on a pledge to support the Rainbow Roundtable student organization's initiative to make State Patty's Day safe across the campus.

By Cassie Ragland

Students will vote tonight on a pledge to support a formal statement during the annual State Patty's Day celebration. The pledge, drafted by the Rainbow Roundtable student organization, asks for support from the University of Pennsylvania's various student organizations, including the Panhellenic Council (PHC) and the Caribbean Student Organization (CSA) — have already committed to participating in the initiative. Thirty student leaders have expressed support for the pledge but are waiting to see the final draft before officially endorsing it, Ragland said.

controversy from those who feel it promotes alcohol abuse and destructive behavior.

Last Friday, Ragland (junior-political science) sent an e-mail to leaders of student organizations across campus asking for their support of this pledge.

So far, he estimates between five and ten groups — including the Panhellenic Council (PHC) and the Caribbean Student Organization (CSA) — have already committed to participating in the initiative. Thirty student leaders have expressed support for the pledge but are waiting to see the final draft before officially endorsing it, Ragland said.

The final draft has yet to be finished. But as the plan currently stands, the top of the pledge will read, "May no act of ours bring shame?" followed by crime statistics from State Patty's Day 2009

If you go

What: UPUA General Assembly meeting

When: 8 tonight

Where: 302 HUB-Robeson Center

Details: The organization will be voting on a State Patty's Day pledge for safety, among other initiatives

and a list of organizations who support UPUA's stance.

Ragland said the main goal is to draw attention to the differing values emphasized in Penn State's alma mater and those seen during State Patty's Day.

"We want to reiterate the fact that we don't want to see these statistics," he said.

"We want to see a decline."

Other leaders agreed. Paul John, vice president of CSA, said the pledge is a good way to redirect the holiday by promoting more responsible behavior.

"We don't want to completely dissolve the holiday — we want people to celebrate and have pride," John (senior-political science) said. "But what we don't want people to do is go out and start drinking at seven in the morning."

This pledge is the first of several initiatives UPUA will look into to curb crime and alcohol-related incidents on the holiday, Ragland said. Other possibilities include working with local businesses to arrange alternative events that day, he said.

"The pledge is just the beginning of what we want to do to get a handle on the

situation," Ragland said.

The pledge comes one week after Rainbow Roundtable President Steve Lucas expressed a desire to see on-campus leadership take action against State Patty's Day.

Although it may not stop student participation altogether, Lucas (senior-English) said it is a step in the right direction.

He added it is ultimately up to the student leaders who sign the pledge to ensure that members of their groups exhibit safe behavior on Feb. 27.

"The student leaders who sign on to this have a responsibility to themselves in how they go about combating State Patty's Day and what actions they can take to raise awareness as to the dangerous nature of this holiday," Lucas said.

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Black homicides highest in Pa.

Philadelphia topped the list for most black homicides in the last year for the fourth year in a row, according to a new report from the Violence Policy Center.

In a report titled "Violence in Pennsylvania: A Non-Profit Report on Gun-Related Deaths in Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania," the VPC said that in 2007, there were 485 black deaths from gun violence in Pennsylvania.

Kourilsky said that the NAACP has been successful in getting the state legislature to pass gun laws, but she said that some ways to curb gun violence have been pre-empted by organizations like the National Rifle Association (NRA).

When asked if there is a responsibility on the part of the people to curb gun violence, Kourilsky said that science and education are the best ways to curb gun violence.

"Communities across the State will have to work back and forth to find some way to curb gun violence," she said.

VPC Executive Director

Sugarmann said the report is part of an effort to put a stronger focus on an issue that has been ignored for decades. Black homicides don't receive the attention they deserve, Sugarmann said.

"As a nation, we ignore gun violence unless something horrible happens," Sugarmann said. "That sharpens our focus for a brief period of time, then we go back to business as usual."

In 2007, there were 485 black homicide victims in the state, according to the report — 36.36 per 100,000 deaths.

Nationwide, there were 7,387 black homicide victims, or 20.86 people per 100,000 victims, according to the report.

When the weapon could be identified, 82 percent of black victims were shot and killed with guns, according to the report. More than 70 percent were killed with handguns.

Sugarmann said he believes some of the problem in Pennsylvania can be attributed to the inability of cities to pass any local gun laws.

Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have both expressed the desire to pass laws to curb gun violence but have been pre-empted by organizations like the National

Statistics

In 2007, there were 485 black homicide victims, 36.6 deaths per 100,000

In Pennsylvania, a gun killed 82 percent of the black victims. 73 percent of the guns were handguns

72 percent of black homicide victims knew their attacker

Source: Violence Policy Center report

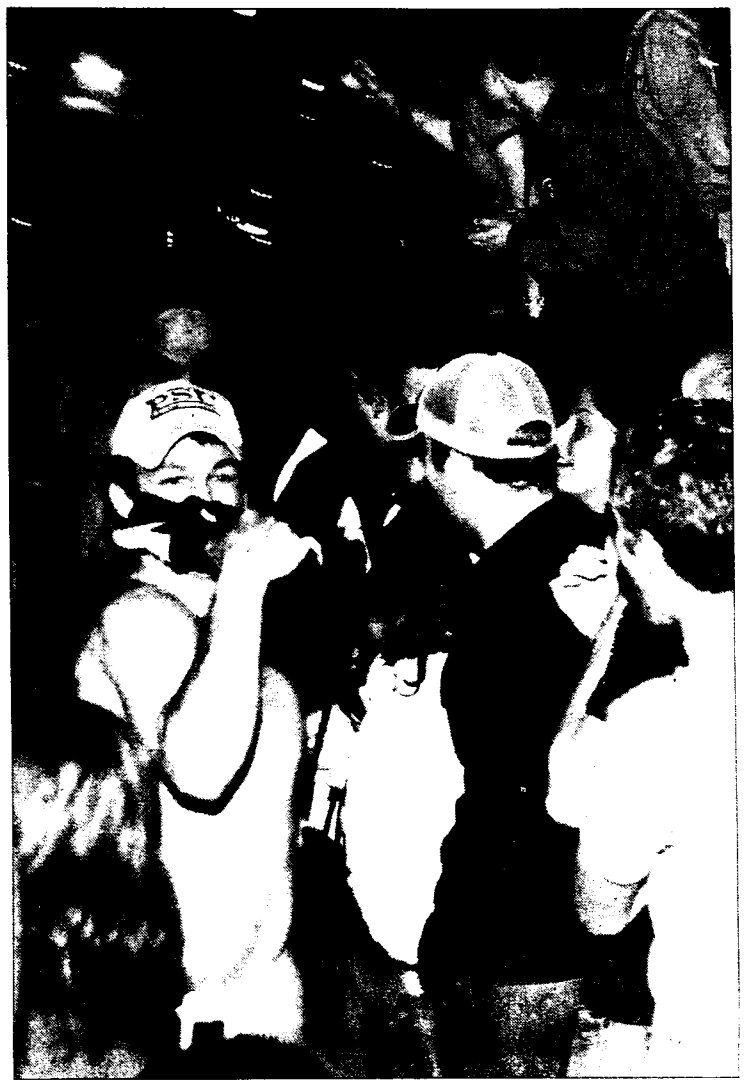
Rifle Association (NRA), Sugarmann said.

"Cities want to put tougher laws in place, but they're held hostage by the NRA and the gun industry," he said.

Gary Tuma, Gov. Ed Rendell's press secretary, said the state legislature has not had the appetite to address gun restriction recently.

However, the governor understands the impact of violent crimes from his time as the Philadelphia District Attorney and believes in the importance of education, something that cuts across race, Tuma said.

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Gregory Fine Photo

A group of students streak down Mifflin Road during the 2005 Mifflin Streak. Christopher Ferry, of the 2008 Mifflin Streak, filed a lawsuit against Penn State and the officers who he said tackled him.

Students and faculty reflect on iPad use

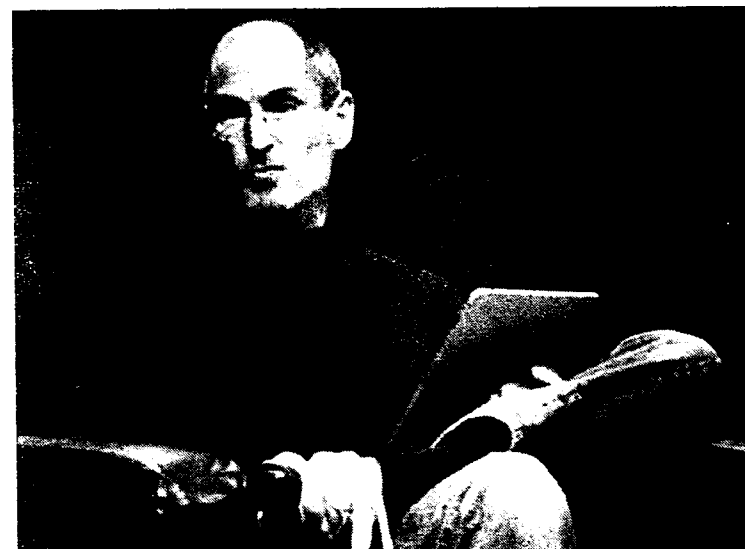
Amidst the excitement of the new technology, some students and faculty are already questioning the use of e-readers in the classroom.

The University of Pennsylvania Libraries announced that they will be providing e-readers to students to check out. The program is supervised by William R. Inge, said Preloaded with e-books and widely available to students, they can be checked out from the Course Reserves Reading Room.

But librarians are also helping students in the classroom. Behler, an assistant professor of Library Studies, said that in 2008 and is expected to "continue to grow" as more e-books become available.

And last October, Penn State Bookstore introduced a Barnes & Noble e-reader to a desk inside the bookstore. Students can now check out e-readers.

While the new e-readers are not available to all students, officials about the e-readers are two functional and they've



Paul Sakuma/Associated Press

Apple CEO Steve Jobs introduces the new iPad during an event in San Francisco in January. Students are interested in trying the new gadget.

answered many questions about the product from curious students and have sold out their original stock. A new shipment is expected in later this week.

But some Penn State students are apathetic about the new technology. Seth Egnot (sophomore-engineering) cited the hefty price tag, \$499 to \$829, as the primary reason not to buy the product.

However, textbook publishers' recent interest in the iPad may create a new use for the device, which Apple officials have touted as a possible replacement for e-readers.

Having one gadget the size of a notebook replace heavy book bags sounded enticing to Penn State student Andrea Carrara (freshman-education), who said she would be looking into how affordable the new technology is.

While neither the university nor the bookstore have current plans to sell the iPad, some students said it might spark their interest.

"If [the iPad] was offered as a rental, I would try it, but I would definitely have to try it before I would buy it," Egnot said.

Penn State wants to be removed from streaker suit

By Laura Nichols
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Penn State officials filed a brief Monday asking to be dropped from a lawsuit brought by a student who said Penn State Police assaulted him during the 2008 Mifflin Streak.

Penn State officials maintain that no member of the police acted unlawfully against Penn State student Christopher Ferry, of West Chester, and have asked to be dismissed from the suit, according to the brief.

"[Ferry's] injuries and damages, if any, were caused by his own unlawful conduct, including but not limited to resisting arrest and otherwise failing to obey the lawful commands of one or more of the Defendant officers," according to court documents.

In 2008, Ferry participated in the Mifflin Streak, an annual event on Mifflin Road where a crowd of more than 1,000 gather to watch other students sprint

the length of the road naked, according to court documents.

Ferry is charged with open lewdness, disorderly conduct and resisting arrest, according to court documents.

In December, he filed a suit against the university asking for \$150,000 in damages and said he suffered a concussion after being attacked by police, according to court documents. Ferry could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

Following his streak down the road, Ferry said he was tackled to the ground by police, sustaining a shoulder injury and a concussion, according to court documents.

Penn State Police Chief Steve Shelov and officers David Bjorkman, Melani Medina and Sean Gorman are specifically listed in the suit. Ferry said he was subjected to unlawful arrest, false imprisonment and the use of excessive force, according to court documents.

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