



Weekend a reason to be proud

It's the largest student-run philanthropy in the world, and it shows no sign of slowing down. Ask anyone who participates in the Interfraternity Council/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, and they'll tell you that every year is a special year when it comes to THON. It's no surprise either, considering nearly every year the total money raised for the Four Diamonds Fund is higher than the previous year's. Even in 2009 when the economic situation of our country was beginning to take a turn for the worst, the power of charity was not affected, as the total reached nearly \$7.5 million — the highest yet.

No matter what the 2010 total is revealed to be this weekend, there is a certain element of pride that all those involved with THON should feel. Think about it. This year THON was thrust further into the spotlight thanks to celebrities like Khloe Kardashian and Perez Hilton, who both wield plenty of influence on their fans and followers. This year's THON also showed generosity and a willingness to help fellow students when it came to raising money. Who can forget junior Pat Howley's unexpected pledge of more than \$1,500? It seemed like an unattainable goal for him to reach by himself, but the IFC

and alumnus Chris Bonzo pledged to match Howley's donation, proving that charity and philanthropy are what matters most during THON. So whether or not the total surpasses last year's, be proud of yourselves this weekend. With the money raised year in and year out, the chance of survival for children with cancer can only increase. Today, up to 75 percent of children with cancer can be cured; let's increase that number, too. To everyone involved in THON, good luck. The dedication you all show for the kids should be commended and just shows how dedicated we all can be.

America runs risk of being too politically correct

By Tanija Smoot

WHITE House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel apologized to the Special Olympics after tactlessly calling a group of liberals who planned to run attack ads against the Obama administration "f--- retarded." Emanuel joined 54,000 Americans in an effort to stop the use of the "r-word." This obvious PR move on Emanuel's behalf has raised an interesting question: Has America become too politically correct?

Upon hearing the vulgar remark, Sarah Palin criticized Emanuel for his poor word choice. The mother of a child with Down's syndrome, Palin compared the word "retarded" to the "n-word" and demanded that Emanuel should be removed from his position for one insensitive remark. Don Imus flashback, anyone? As tasteless and inconsiderate as Emanuel's remark was, according to the First Amendment, every American, including Emanuel, has the right to freedom of speech. However, it seems as though America has started to censor itself, almost to the point of extremity.

Forty years ago, Americans would greet each other with "Merry Christmas" wishes and school halls would be decorated with Christmas trees and Santa Clauses without political backlash. Fast forward decades later, in a more diverse nation, some American schools forbid those Christmas trees and Santa Clauses, and many feel obligated to say "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas" for fear of being seen as insensitive or worse, anti-Semitic.

If Emanuel were to be fired, America would be contradicting the First Amendment and, in some ways, censoring Emanuel. In supposedly the freest nation in the world, the American voice is being drowned out by a wave of political correctness.

Like the Red Scare of the '40s and '50s, Americans are becoming increasingly more afraid of expressing their thoughts so as not to offend anyone or be "blacklisted."

Say you are against affirmative action, and you are automatically deemed a racist. Say you do not support Americans invading Iraq, you are assumed to be "unpatriotic" or "against of the troops."

What makes political correctness more damaging, besides scaring controversial or unconventional ideas or ways of thinking out the door, is that political correctness is not equally distributed among the American population. For instance, why is it socially acceptable for a black American to say the "n-word," but all hell breaks loose when a white person uses the "n-word" in the same context? Isn't the word offensive either way? Why censor one and not the other?

When will the madness end? When will Americans be allowed to say what they want to say, where they want, and how they want to say it, without having to walk on egg shells? I'm not saying that Americans shouldn't exercise some restraint or sensitivity; we should.

But at the end of the day, this is America, land of the free, home of the brave. Here, you are free to express your opinion — but no one has to listen to it.

Tanija Smoot is a columnist for The Lantern and a student at Ohio State University.

THE DAILY Collegian

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Letters

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

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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.



Letter misses true KissOut point; event about love and equality

In response to the Feb. 16 letter, "Lack of judgment shown in front page photo selection," a lot of people don't see the KissOut for what it is. It is about love that is rarely seen in the media or talked about.

As a participant, I heard many hateful comments made about something that is done often and only thought of as obscene if the participants are of the same gender.

The LGBTQA community has to often look at media that doesn't consider us worth mentioning. So rather than sit back and do nothing, we went and participated in an event that clearly was worth mentioning.

Though often marketed as "left-wing only," gay ideals actually aren't. I've met quite a few gay Republicans, so please don't say The Daily Collegian isn't thinking about Republicans when they feature the KissOut on the front cover, because they are. A person's political party doesn't tell you everything about them.

As for the Collegian covering each meeting the LGBTQA community has, it helps out a lot of students who aren't out and don't know there is an LGBTQA community here. It's important to remember that we are a part of Penn State, too.

Lianna Newman
senior-media studies
President-Undertones

Monday was a very interesting day for my boyfriend and I.

We have been dating for more than four months and have struggled with having to hide our affection in public. Something as simple as holding hands downtown or around campus puts a knot in our stomachs. We attended the KissOut to help sort through our own fears.

After we were published kissing in a photo on the front of The Daily Collegian, we received verbal compliments and congratulatory texts from both people we knew and didn't know. Individuals were thanking us for actively standing up for LGBT rights.

I wanted to thank the Collegian for publishing the photo. It showed us that we have more support here at Penn State than we previously thought and helped alleviate the stress of hiding our affection.

But when Coleman Butterworth complained in his letter Tuesday about our kiss being explicit, appalling and biased toward the left, I can't help but wonder how the right to kiss someone in public is trying to push a political agenda? I am not a political science major, and I know little of Democrats and Republicans. I was just kissing the person I love in public, not realizing it had such political clout.

Jeremy La Master
junior-biology

I personally think the KissOut is an awesome idea. People should understand and give more respect to the people who want to be open and encourage the ones who might not be too sure

about the subject. Loving yourself for who you are is how people need to live, and the people around them need to be supportive and not judge. I hope that this tradition keeps going in the future and more people become comfortable with their sexuality.

Jessie Coughlin
freshman-art education

Decision on 'don't ask, don't tell' shouldn't be purely a social one

Kevin Sullivan's Feb. 16 column about repealing "don't ask, don't tell" was an interesting discussion on the topic. However, there are a few things that need to be addressed. First, the military is no place for social engineering. Second, while John McCain did indicate he would support such a move if the military leadership desired, he didn't mean political appointees. Third, the RAND study also noted that there was no appreciable negative impact on military readiness with the then-current policy toward homosexuals. That aside, a study that's 17 years old is not worth much more than a footnote to today's situation.

Finally, the only issue of importance is what, if any, impact such a change will have on the armed forces' readiness, both short- and long-term.

I'm not opposed in principle to repealing "don't ask, don't tell," however such a decision should be based on readiness impact, not social engineering. President Barack Obama's commission won't be looking at it from that standpoint, which in my opinion, dangerously stacks the deck.

Stan Allsopp
Class of 1970

Volunteers must show humility, avoid post-THON Facebook groups

In my three years at Penn State, the Interfraternity Council/Panhellenic Dance Marathon has been without question one of the biggest parts of my life as a student. I have danced, been on multiple committees and canned numerous times. I lost multiple grandparents to cancer and am firmly behind the cause. That being said, there is one specific part of THON that really irks me. After the total is raised, students scream, applaud and are filled with joy. I understand that and share those feelings. These students also go on Facebook and post the total in pride. Although some may consider it a little pompous, I have no problem with this either.

However, in at least the past three years, a Facebook group has emerged titled, "Our school raised \$X,XXX,XXX ... What did your school do?" This I have a problem with. As the largest student-run philanthropy in the world, it is our responsibility to set a good example for universities across the nation that model their philanthropies after ours. A title like this sends the complete wrong message about THON.

To the creator of these groups and the thousands who join them, please refrain from doing so. It is important to remember that the best charity is anonymous. While it is OK to take pride in the year-long fundraising effort, it is imperative we remember that at the heart of these efforts are the kids we are helping.

Ryan Staloff
junior-journalism and economics

blog lines

Footblog

WPSU's online auction ended at noon yesterday, and the winning bid for Joe Paterno's glasses went for \$7,550 to michelle081.

With the online process over, the next step is the 18th Annual Connoisseur's Dinner and live auction on Saturday. It is at this live auction that the online bidder — or a proxy sent to represent the bidder — has a chance to win the glasses.

Read more from the Footblog and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psucollegian.com/blogs.

Small World

With her shoes, belt and coat off, and her laptop and iPhone out of the bag and on the TSA conveyer belt, she walked through the metal detector, self-assured and confident. Then the shoes, belt and coat went back on, laptop and iPhone flew back in the bag, then the bag was on her shoulder. Finally, she looked back ... and waved ... and smiled. Then she was gone.

Read more from the study abroad blog Small World and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psucollegian.com/blogs.

Snap, Crackle, Pop

For a moment, I almost forgot that women's roles in Shakespearean plays were acted by men. And all great writers of the time, including Shakespeare and his contemporaries, were men.

That's why I was so surprised to hear the first female playwright to have her work performed at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London will have her play put on this season.

Read more from the arts blog Snap, Crackle, Pop and the rest of The Daily Collegian's blogs at psucollegian.com/blogs.