

# Tax smart but not worth effort

With State College struggling to find more sources of revenue, a proposed drink tax has been brought back to the table.

The proposal would place a 10 percent tax on poured alcoholic beverages served at bars, which would benefit the borough greatly in the long run.

And it's a mere dime on the dollar for customers. In consideration of such a (relatively) low priced item as a drink, it isn't a lot to ask.

Even if you spend a good deal of time at a bar on a certain evening, this will really only add a couple of dollars to your bill.

State College Mayor Elizabeth Goreham argues the tax is reasonable because of the large amount of money the borough spends on alcohol related services. Things such as heightened police surveillance and clean-up crews are a direct consequence of the area's bar scene.

Further, Goreham argues that the tax is a voluntary one. Similar to cigarettes and lottery tickets, the tax will be placed on a service that is not required of one's health or well-being.

We support this in principle, but we've been down this road before.

The same tax was propositioned at the end of 2008, but nothing came of it. At the time, Goreham even went so far as to call it her "dream tax," hinting at a certain unattainability of such legislation.

The fact that it is an election year casts doubt as well on whether local politicians would enact such a visible tax. Such action, so close to a polling date, would certainly resonate in voter's opinions.

As such, it's curious as to why the borough council would even initiate a debate it likely won't be able to follow through on.

# Deficit spending could hurt U.S. like in Greece

By Tony Spadaccia

WHILE President Obama travels across America to promote his plan to transform health care into a nationwide entitlement, tens of thousands of Greek citizens riot in the Athens streets. They are protesting spending cuts and tax hikes implemented by their government in response to a severe debt crisis. While these two events may be occurring on opposite ends of the Earth, the press might as well cover them together, because they are both part of the same story. The only difference between the two is the timeline — America is on the verge of adding to its collection of entitlement programs, while the Greek economy has already been broken by them.

Driven by lavish spending on social programs and public employees, Greece's overall national debt has grown to a frightening 113 percent of its GDP. This burgeoning debt has led many of the lenders the Greek government relied on to worry that the small nation won't be able to finance almost \$23 billion worth of government bonds maturing in April and May. If these lenders were to walk away, Greece would almost certainly default on the rest of its future obligations. Such a scenario would pose significant problems for other European Union nations. It would undermine investors' confidence in the ability of other struggling European countries, like Spain, Portugal and Italy, to pay their debts, creating a domino effect that could threaten the very existence of the euro.

If the EU decides to rescue Greece from default, then Germans will likely finance it. Historically one of the world's great economic powers, Germany has the largest economy in the EU, which, in a sense, makes it a victim of its own success as it is the only European nation capable of providing enough money to finance the Greek debt. But a German rescue is by no means guaranteed. Germany has a high national debt of its own, and the idea of a Greek bailout is tremendously unpopular among German citizens.

But Greece is only the beginning; a quick look at the fiscal health of all EU countries reveals an entire continent unraveling due to the massive debts incurred by the unrestrained growth of the European welfare state. After years of pouring money into social programs and public employee benefit packages, Europe is finding that a steadily decreasing number of private-sector workers are around to pay for it all. In fact, Europe's problem is magnified because its population is not only aging — it's shrinking. Experts believe Europe will lose an estimated 30 million working-aged people by 2050, which would significantly reduce its share of the world's economy and leave fewer workers to pay for the retirement benefits of more retirees.

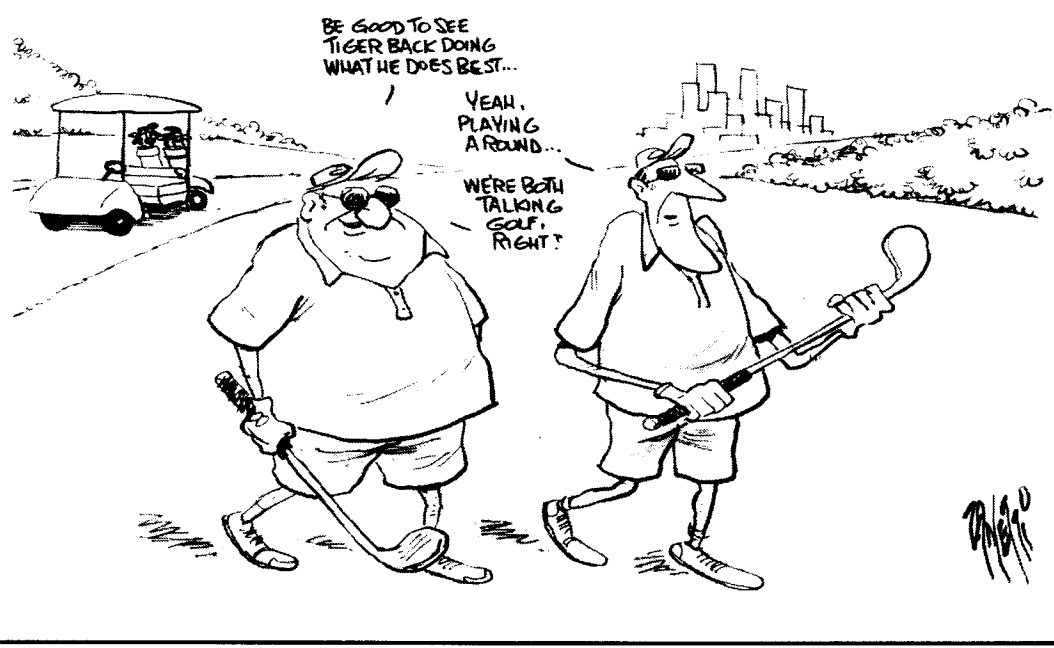
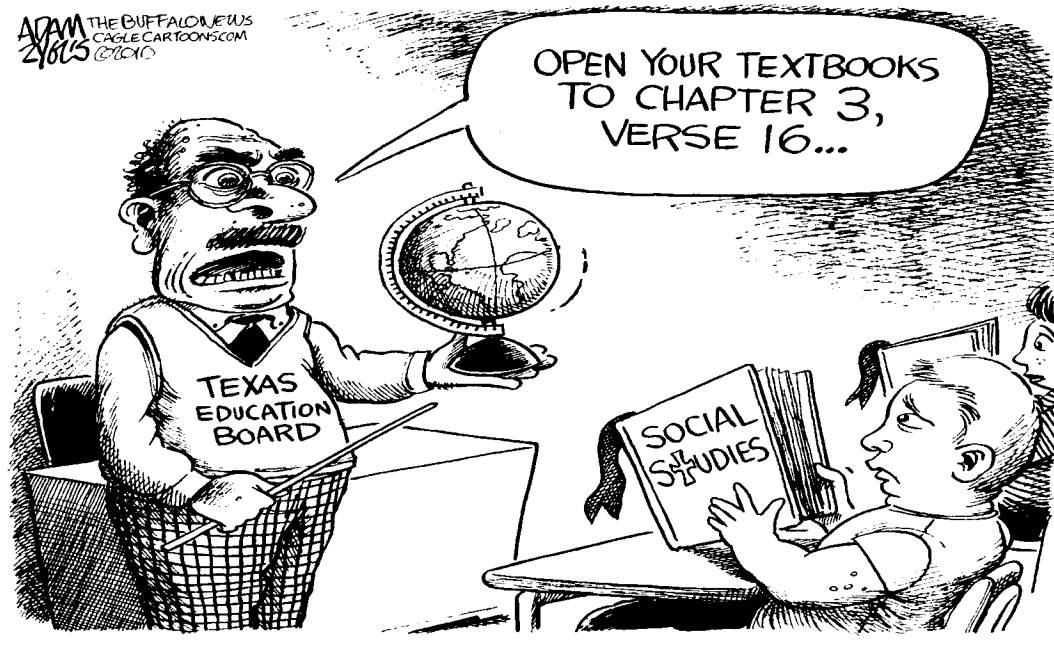
What is happening in Europe today is a warning to America that blind devotion to the welfare state inevitably leads to financial peril. If our elected officials refuse to live up to their obligation to be responsible stewards of taxpayers' money, then our country will share Europe's fate. The United States is not immune from financial collapse. It's already happening right now in California.

With a budget deficit of more than \$20 billion, California is bankrupt, and much like Greece, social welfare programs and public employee unions are to blame. Although California represents 12 percent of the total U.S. population, it holds 32 percent of all welfare cases. Only 22 percent of welfare recipients in California who are able to work are actually working, revealing a broken system that is failing residents by incentivizing a culture of government dependency.

In 2008, a state commission valued California's unfunded pension liability at \$63.5 billion. Over the last 10 years, pension costs for public employees in California have increased about 2,000 percent, while state revenues increased 24 percent, and more than 15,000 government retirees statewide receive pensions exceeding \$100,000 a year.

Piece by piece in developed countries around the world, we are witnessing the slow demise of the welfare state as it crumbles beneath its own weight. Today it is Greece, tomorrow it will be Spain, then Portugal, Italy, Ireland and Japan. For our sake, we must demand that Congress stop the deficit spending and rein in the unsustainable entitlements because America's youth will ultimately bear its burdens.

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## THE DAILY Collegian

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# Focus must be on bands, not name

By Rich Coleman

HAVE you heard of Lollapalooza? How about Bonnaroo?

These two things have two things in common. They are both music festivals and both have stupid-sounding names.

The first one, Lollapalooza, started in 1991 and was probably one of the most influential festivals for alternative music in that time period.

Was it because Perry Farrel of Jane's Addiction named it after a gag from a "Three Stooges" episode?

No. No one thought twice about a music festival named "Lollapalooza" because the bands on the bill were relevant and showed promise.

So, the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) went from one extreme to the other in the handling of this festival — and I'm of course referring to the shift in mentality from, "Hey bro, wanna throw a music festival, like, right before finals week? It would be killer, we could get free Rita's and that white rapper from West Chester," to, "All in favor of 'Last Call,' say aye." — is currently boggling my mind. So there have been articles, tweets and blog posts dedicated specifically to the naming of a music festival, and they're still 0-for-1. And UPUA is fostering this meaningless discussion.

On Tuesday night, about an hour after "Lost," Gavin Kierans (@StudentBodyPrez) tweeted that the name, "Last Call," was vetoed by UPUA — "vetoed" makes it sound so official — and

that, gasp!, it would be left up to the students.

Should naming a festival be this elaborate? Nope. Not really. You could name this festival Purple Monkey Dishwasher-alooza and if there were halfway decent bands there that 1. didn't suck and 2. didn't suck, then I would happily be there wearing a T-shirt with the name "Purple-Monkey-Dishwasher-a-looza" on it.

So, "Hey," I thought to myself, "Lost" is over, I've got nothing to do, let's go vote on a name." I was one credit shy of technically being a senior last semester, so this would be my way of voting for a senior class gift, in some weird lazy-journalism-major kind of way.

Then I took a look at these choices: Apogee, Cadence, Finale, Saraswati ... The Last Stop? Really?

UPUA got so worn out after four names that it used the name of an old Dave Matthews Band song as a name idea? Outstanding.

You know what though? Who cares about the name? Sure, "Last Call" reminded everyone of "Last Call with Carson Daly" and it has some drinking connotation, but as long as it isn't Asher Roth or The Spill Canvas headlining then I don't care. Besides, I doubt an indirect reference to drinking is going to be the final thing that makes everybody say, "See? I knew Penn State only cared about drinking!" That already happened with this year's State Patty's.

So far, there has been a lot of talk about what the name of this festival should be. Digging through Collegian back issues, I found a quote from Mike Wallace about a possible name change on Feb. 2 of this year. "I was joking when I first said it — not about the name, but the

entire idea. It just seemed too impossible to pull off," Wallace said of Wallypalooza. "It ended up happening and becoming a successful event. I don't see why you would change a good thing."

You know what? I agree. I mean, Asher Roth might not be my or any other self-respecting music fan's idea of, uh, "listenable," but UPUA was successful in getting another music festival at Penn State. This school is so saturated with football for an entire semester that it's pretty wonderful our summers have an Arts Fest and our springs have two music festivals — mediocre they may be, but at least we're trying.

My advice? Drop the name drama. Keep it as Wallypalooza. Sure, it's just the name of our student president's buddy with "alooza" attached to it, but if you bring the talent, they will come. Bring bands that college students want to see, not high schoolers.

Movin' On has yet to embrace this concept — though, big ups for Raekwon — but at least Wallypalooza had the right idea. They booked a guy whose single was, "I Love College."

A name is just a name. Just like "rock" and "jazz" are just genre names, Lollapalooza and Bonnaroo are just festival names, and when people check their lineups every summer, it's not because they really like the name ... it's the bands and the entertainment they're focusing on.

"Last Call with Wallypalooza." There, the name situation is fixed. If you want students to vote, make it for something that matters, like, I don't know. Bands?

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## blog lines

### Footblog

Several former Nittany Lion football players put their talent and athleticism on display for NFL personnel Wednesday at Holuba Hall, as they hoped to improve their stock for the upcoming NFL Draft.

Check the Footblog for extra tidbits from Penn State's Pro Day, including quotes, numbers and future plans from players such as Navorro Bowman, Daryll Clark, Sean Lee and Anthony Morelli.

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