

OPINION

THE DAILY
Collegian

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Kelsey Thompson
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Letters

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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.

EDITORIAL: STATE BUDGET

School cuts hurt students most

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell signed the state budget on Wednesday, officially setting the state's spending for the 2010-2011 year.

Once again, the budget will not be in Penn State's favor.

The new budget, which made it through the General Assembly last week, will allocate \$333.9 million to Penn State. If that number sounds familiar, it's because it's the same total appropriations the university received from last year's budget.

As a result, Penn State will have to implement a wide-ranging budget cut of 1 to 2 percent for every Penn State department — both academic

and administrative. So as the university loses money, so do the students, who will be forced to offset some of the fiscal losses from the budget. It is inevitable that tuition will rise once again, a growing trend over the last few years.

During these difficult economic and financial times — Penn State isn't the only university feeling the effects of a tight budget — we understand that there will have to be some sacrifices on both the university's and students' parts.

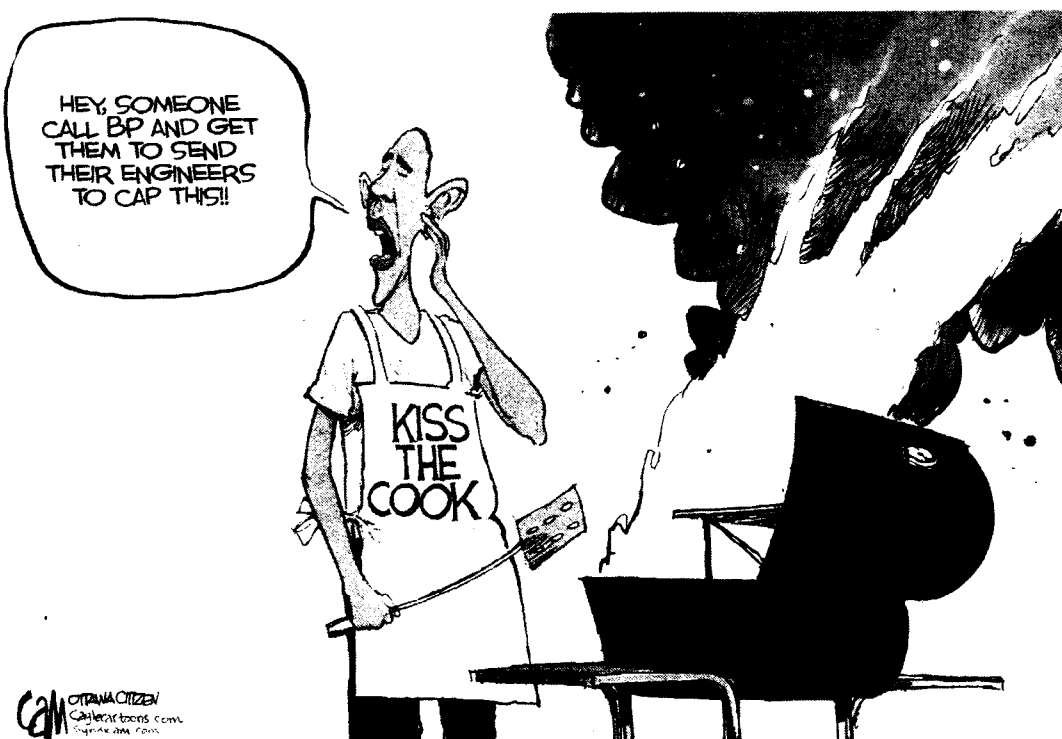
However, Penn State should have been more active in trying to procure more state funding. It might not seem like a lot,

but a 1 to 2 percent cut across the board is a big hit, and students are going to feel those cuts more than anyone else. Not only will students be paying more to attend Penn State, but they will be paying more for departments with tightened resources.

As all of this is happening, Penn State President Graham Spanier recently received a raise, which is a puzzling decision when the rest of the university, including other members of the administration, are suffering.

Students should let their anger be known to the university, instead of just taking yet another punch directly on the chin.

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Silly Bandz fun for college kids, too

By Lindsay Cryer

HELLO, my name is Lindsay and I'm a 20-year-old proud mother of four.

My litter includes a yellow triceratops, an orange brachiosaurus and a green tyrannosaurus rex that I've appropriately named Reptar. No, I'm not the owner of a dinosaur farm, because my fourth silly band is a melon-colored penguin.

They've been called Zanybandz or just Bandz, but most people know these trendy bracelets by the original brand, Silly Bandz.

I've seen zoo animals, dinosaurs, sea creatures and even an ironically named "Art Fest pack," which includes fiddles, paintbrushes and ballerinas. My most recent purchase, "Hollywood pack," supplied my little dumplings with a dollar sign-shaped band and a stretch limousine-shaped band.

You want tie-dye bands? Done. Color changing bands? They exist, too.

So naturally, kids would love them. And, by that, I mean kids ages 5 to 25.

Youngsters in grade school seem to have gone bananas over them. These silicone rubber fun-shaped bands are innocent, right?

Right and wrong. They are

"I just think we've found the Furby of the 21st century. People fight over them, popularity is ranked because of them, and, in two years, we'll hate when they wake up in the back of our closets."

not intended for harm or social injustice, but like any other useful trend, they've been made into such.

I've heard of the bands being traded, held at ransom and even used as a premise for bullying. Schools have also banned them for reasons of "distraction" and of potential harm. The wearing of too many bandz, apparently, has been cutting off the circulation of these tikes.

It's incredible that these innocent little bands, which are yet to have any sort of sexual connotation like the previous "sex bracelets," have caused some damage.

If only the little kids could learn how to play well with others, like us, the big kids, have learned.

In my most recent trip to State College, I learned these bands are something even college-aged kids aren't too good for. Mixed in with introductory questions, "How are you?" or "Do you even belong at this party?" is now "What kind of Silly Bandz are you wearing?"

I found that these bands are not only a conversational dime-piece, though, but also a real trading piece. Upon encountering a very friendly girl that very

weekend, I also encountered her Tinker Bell — yes, Tinker Bell — shaped band. I told her that I would do almost anything to snatch it.

After she gratefully declined, I accepted defeat, unlike what our elementary counterparts would do. Talk about a solid college education.

I wouldn't say that this trend is dumb. I'm sure some budding toy designer just had an "Aha!" moment and is now soaking in a golden-laced bubble bath because of it.

I just think we've found the Furby of the 21st century. People fight over them, popularity is ranked because of them, and, in two years, we'll hate when they wake up in the back of our closets. (Maybe that's just the Furby.)

But it's not dumb because we bought into it. I bought into it — six times.

Truth be told, I love my Silly Bandz. And I will still do nearly anything for that Tinker-Bell-shaped silly band.

Lindsay Cryer is a junior majoring in journalism and is the Collegian's Wednesday columnist. Her e-mail address is lbc146@psu.edu.

Fourth of July last holiday to lose meaning

We celebrated the 234th birthday of the United States of America on Sunday.

Many Americans commemorated this event by eating hot dogs, swimming or enjoying cold alcoholic beverages while watching fireworks glow in the background. Even President Barack Obama hosted a barbecue in the backyard of the White House.

But during all these celebrations, did Americans really celebrate independence, or is this holiday just an excuse to drink and enjoy an extra day off?

Independence Day is the anniversary of our Founding Fathers adopting and signing the Declaration of Independence, which announced our intention to escape the rule of Great Britain.

In the beginning, annual readings of the Declaration were a common way to commemorate the holiday in all states.

In 1785, the first parade was held in Bristol, Rhode Island, and it still continues each year.

Fireworks were first used in celebration of the holiday in 1863. But as the years passed, celebrations of Independence Day changed with the times.

In 1917, the world famous Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest started between four immigrants and the winner was said to be the most patriotic.

As time passed, the contest grew into a Fourth of July staple. People from all over the world come to Coney Island each year on July 4 weekend to compete in the contest. As the popularity of the contest grew, the reason for the contest became who could eat the most hot dogs, not who was the most patriotic.

Some contestants aren't even American, like Takeru Kobayashi, who won consecutively from 2001 to 2006.

In order to revive the American spirit behind the contest, I think they should only allow Americans to enter the contest. This will boost American morale and restore the patriotism that was most important in the first place.

Fireworks are another important part of the holiday. Most states hold fireworks displays, even though they are illegal in some states. The most famous display is over the Hudson River in New York City.

However, this year, many cities eliminated fireworks displays because of the economy. On average, a 20-minute fireworks display could easily cost up to \$20,000. Due to the recession, many states don't budget that much money for a display, and I agree with their decision.

Blowing thousands of dollars is another example of how the celebration has grown out of hand. Traditions aside, let's remember the situation of our economy and put things in perspective.

Millions of dollars could have been saved this year alone had every state halted the fireworks displays. I like pretty lights in the sky just as much as the next person, but that's not the point of the holiday.

The Fourth of July has also become a shopping holiday. Many retail stores like Sears and Macy's have huge "blowout sales" to persuade customers to come into the stores over the extended weekend. Car dealerships also use the model cars to increase sales before the new model cars come out for the next year. Just like with Christmas and Easter, the Fourth of July has grown into a consumer holiday. I don't think the Founding Fathers were worried about sales when they were signing the Declaration of Independence.

It's clear Independence Day has lost its meaning. These days, it seems like it's only good for sales, food and a good show.

Most holidays have suffered the same fate and I don't see that changing any time soon.

You can blame it on American selfishness or just a change in the times, but I can tell you one thing: If you take away their day off, you'll see Americans arm their lives 1776.

Brittany Davis is a columnist for the Daily Reveille at Louisiana State University. Her e-mail address is bdavis@sureville.com.

blog lines

Small World

To some, the most beautiful sight to see on the Fourth of July was not the fireworks display over the Hudson, but the firework art display on the small houseboat docked on the riverside.

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

There is No Name on My Ballot

Since the passage of SB 1070, which requires police to ask for a suspect's citizenship papers, more candidates for public office in Arizona have had the tenacity to propose tougher restrictions on illegal immigrants. The latest development is a threat by Arizona Corporation Commission candidate Anthony Wong to cut off power and gas service to illegal immigrants. Utilities would have to check the citizenship status of its customers.

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