

OPINION

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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collegianletters@psu.edu

■ **Online**
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■ **Postal mail/In person**
123 S. Burrowes St.
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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.

Arts Fest boosts town morale

State College sure knows how to throw a party.

Though it has seemed near dead for weeks, the borough of State College came back to life this weekend in a big way for the 44th annual Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts.

We think the festival's organizers and volunteers pulled the five days off with aplomb despite Mother Nature doing her best to dehydrate and then dampen the festival's patrons.

This year, Arts Fest found itself in the middle of a heat wave that turned into massive thunderstorms. And with the

exception of a few concert cancellations and some smudged chalk on Hiester Street, we think the approximately 100,000 visitors to State College hardly noticed.

Students, too, seemed to exercise some restraint and respect. Arts Fest can be a summer homecoming of sort, but the bar crawls and apartment parties didn't get out of hand. We applaud those who chose to drink responsibly and are grateful that nothing on the scale of the 1998 Arts Fest riot came about. The extra police presence just didn't seem all that necessary.

Arts Fest is a much-

needed boost to the local economy, sending patrons into bars and restaurants that are otherwise stuck in the same old summer doldrums.

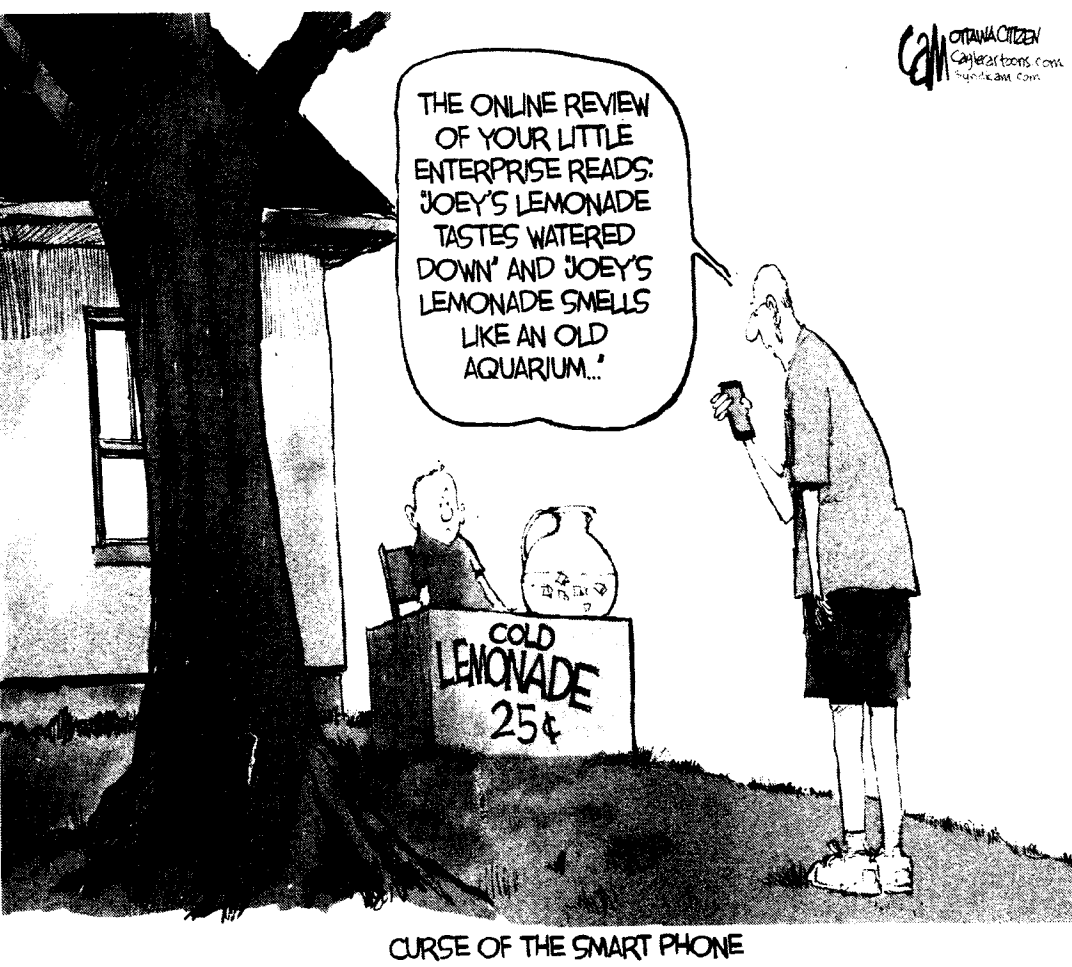
Like it does every year, the festival served its dual purpose. Families got the chance to wander through campus, browsing booths and listening to music. Students and alumni used the weekend to reconnect with friends, making downtown feel like the fall again — even if just for a few days.

Arts Fest is a second wind to a town that can get slow and stifling in the summer. We are happy it went off without much of a hitch.

Videos smoother on iPhones thanks to Apple's HTML5 use

I think it would have been fair to point out to those of your readers in the July 8 column "Apple, Jobs creating illegal monopoly with HTML5" who aren't familiar with the subject that HTML5 is a completely open web standard. The same HTML5 that technicians are writing for iPhones will render just fine on all modern web browsers, not just Safari and Mobile Safari. In other words, developers are coding for an open standard that Apple, Google, Opera, Mozilla, and, to some extent, Microsoft support. To clear up some confusion on the Droids' flash issue, at its current status the flash on Droids is rather slow and absolutely kills the battery. Also, many ads are entirely flash and websites load slower because of them when flash is installed on your phone. YouTube and Vimeo both fully support HTML5 and that runs much smoother than flash. And who do I have to thank for that? Apple. I may not agree completely with Apple's firm stance against flash, and there are certainly reasons to not support it. However, there is certainly nothing illegal about what Apple is doing.

Steve Ryan
senior-aerospace engineering



blog lines

Snap, Crackle, Pop

When you meet ceramics artist Mariko Swisher, you might not be surprised to learn that she grew up in a small town in northern Japan and moved to Tokyo in her 20s. But you likely couldn't predict how it goes from there. In Tokyo, she met an American artist, became his English student, married him and moved to Manhattan before eventually returning to a small town, this time in Lancaster, Pa. In New York she attended the Parsons New School for Design, but the ceramics spark came when she saw a friend making pottery.

For the past 13 years she has traveled from Ann Arbor, Mich., to sell her original earrings. "I think it's the best run show in the country," said jewelry artist Sharon Donovan about the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts. "I love Happy Valley." Donovan's jewelry is made of multicolor beads weaved into either a silver or gold frame, and she's very particular about the end result. "I'll spend four days of weaving it over and over again until I'm happy."

I absolutely adore anything vintage, which is why I was super excited when I saw Elaine's of Sarasota at Arts Fest. She had a booth full of purses, which are made of at least 75 percent recycled material. Elaine uses cigar boxes as the foundation of her purses and then adds items such as fabric, trim and, her favorite, records. She has made purses with the Beatles', the Rolling Stones' and Elvis' records. But the coolest thing about the purses is she hasn't repeated one design in the seven years she has been making her creations.

Patrick O'Neill is a fabric artist that can easily be classified as an Arts Fest veteran. He has set up his booth in downtown State College for about 20 years, he said. He comes here not just to showcase his work, but said it's also because he loves the community, town and patrons. O'Neill classifies his pieces as wearable, functional art. He began working in textiles because he wanted to make something that people could use every day. "I like the fact that my form follows function," O'Neill said. He makes a variety of items including jackets, purses, hats and pants, and all of his pieces are made of fine linens, jacquards and silks from around the world. O'Neill added that his clothing can be found in retailers across the country.

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

Webster's closure deals tragic blow to State College

By Aubrey Whelan

SOMETIMES you walk into a place and you just know: You belong there. The apartment I lived in last semester in France is one of those places. The Daily Collegian's newsroom is another. And Webster's Bookstore Café, the soon-to-be late, great used bookstore at 128 S. Allen St., is one of them, too.

I went to Webster's for the first time literally hours after I had moved into my dorm room in Simmons Hall freshman year. State College is a small town, but when you're fresh out of high school and more than a little overwhelmed by the sheer number of people on campus, you need places like Webster's.

Over the years, the little storefront with the rainbow flags and progressive bumper stickers and

flyers advertising local artists has become a sort of second home.

It's where I buy creative last-minute birthday presents (nothing like a good pulp novel or an old-school record). It's where I study for tests — I credit my passing grade in Honors Astronomical Universe (ASTRO 001H) entirely to my mammoth, chai-tea-fueled study sessions there. It's where I once participated in the most awkward (and, so far, only) poetry reading of my life solely to get extra credit for a creative writing class. The experience was enough to make me swear off rhyming verse forever.

It's where I shop for ancient French textbooks and out-of-print novels, where I people-watch like it's my job, where I bond with aging hippies, where I go to unwind after a rough day in class.

In short, it is everything a bookstore should be and more.

So there is nothing that depresses me more than the signs currently plastered on the store's front windows: "Lost Lease. Everything Must Go."

The bookstore is behind on its rent payments, owner Elaine Meder-Wilgus said last week, and the landlord has terminated the lease.

It's been a rough few months for State College icons. The Webster's closing comes right on the heels of the loss of City Lights Records, the musical oasis tucked below street level at 316 E. College Ave. Greg Gabbard, who maintained the store for 25 years, closed up shop in February, citing — what else? — the economy.

I'm not one to point fingers or throw blame around, at least in this situation. The closing isn't a case of the big, bad landlord versus the plucky indie bookstore, but just a depressing sign of the times in State College.

Sure, I can go to Starbucks for my next caffeine-induced cram session. I can people-watch from the HUB lawn. I can catch the bus to the mall and buy my books at Barnes and Noble. But it won't be Webster's.

State College isn't defined by the Panera on Beaver Avenue or the

Walmart on North Atherton. No one comes to town because you can smell Abercrombie cologne all the way down Allen Street on a breezy day.

It's the indie bands at Chronic Town and the unashamedly awful food at the Diner and the foreign films at the State Theatre and the books stacked to the ceiling at Webster's that give this town its soul.

And when Webster's closes, we won't just be losing a bunch of dog-eared books and admittedly excellent cups of chai tea. We'll be losing a part of what makes this place real, and that is a tragedy indeed.

So, if you're on campus for the summer or even just visiting for the weekend, do this town a favor and stop by Webster's for a cup of tea, pick up a book and soak it all in. State College is changing, and we've got to savor it while it lasts.

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