

# 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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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.

## Off-campus housing plan needed

There's no question a student housing shortage exists in State College. There's also no question that Penn State needs to step up and do something about how students who live off-campus find places to live. Right now, though, only the borough seems concerned about it. Mayor Elizabeth Goreham met with UPUA President Christian Ragland to discuss the issue last week.

Students are guaranteed one year of on-campus living as a freshman, but after that all bets are off in most cases, which should be an easy problem to work around if a student's housing contract isn't renewed.

However, there is no timetable for a student to receive confirmation or rejection of housing, leaving many students with nowhere to live after most complexes have filled their apartments.

Penn State offers no real provisions for students in need of off-campus living. For non-freshmen, some still as young as 18, the prospect of picking a place to live is a challenging and intimidating task, and students often have to go through it without any assistance.

International students are often left in a worse position than students already at University Park or transferring from a

commonwealth campus. Students coming in from overseas need to find housing — again on their own — before even coming to Penn State.

The university needs to do something to help the students in need of housing. This is not a borough issue; the root of the issue is Penn State.

Student housing is going to remain a problem until someone steps in and takes a look at the whole system.

While it won't be fixed overnight, the university should start by at least implementing an organized system meant to help students find suitable housing.

## Attacks aimed at journalists' opinions unfair

By Aubrey Whelan

My name's Aubrey Whelan, and I'm a liberal.

Need more? I voted for our current president. I am embarrassingly obsessed with Hillary Clinton. I find Sarah Palin hilarious and frightening. I believe in gay marriage and universal healthcare and feminism and global warming.

A lot of people would have a problem with that paragraph. I know where they're coming from. The public tends to put journalists in a class of our own when it comes to expressing opinions — and rightfully so. We decide what's news and what's not. We shape the public opinion. And because we have that privilege, that responsibility, we're obligated to be as unbiased as we possibly can. It makes sense.

But journalists are people, too, not neutral automatons, and we're bound to have a few biases. In fact, because any journalist worth their salt will immerse themselves in the issue they're covering, we're that much more likely to develop an opinion on it, just based on sheer proximity. But unless you have the distinct privilege of being an opinion columnist, you really shouldn't be taking to the rooftops to proclaim your love for [insert cause here]. So when conservative pundit Tucker Carlson and his ilk started foaming at the mouth a few weeks ago over a private online forum called JournoList, naturally my ears perked up.

Launched in 2007, JournoList was essentially a group of about 400 center-to-left-leaning journalists and academics who chatted about politics and the media on a regular basis. No one paid much attention to it until this June, when the Carlson-run website The Daily Caller leaked a JournoList e-mail from Washington Post blogger Dave Weigel. In it, Weigel wrote that archconservative blogger Matt Drudge should set himself on fire.

Weigel resigned within hours. The Internet exploded.

And the hits just keep coming with the Daily Caller leaking more and more posts. One was a discussion that took place during the Democratic primaries where participants debated what to do about the controversy surrounding Jeremiah Wright, Barack Obama's fiery former pastor.

"If the right forces us all to either defend Wright or tear him down, no matter what we choose, we lose the game they've put on us," wrote then-Washington Independent writer Spencer Ackerman. "Instead, take one of them — Fred Barnes, Karl Rove, who cares — and call them racists."

A post from a UCLA law professor wondered if the Federal Communications Commission could revoke FOX News' broadcasting license for espousing a political agenda. Other posts suggested that commentators painted Palin's vice presidential nod as sexist.

Carlson and company are, predictably, pointing to JournoList as evidence of a liberal conspiracy to take over the media.

It's true, a lot of the posts released so far are cringeworthy at best. And at worst, the JournoList participants look like shrewd political operatives plotting to get their candidate elected.

But what Carlson seems to forget is that nearly every journalist on the list — you guessed it — an opinion writer. The cushy, left-leaning sentiments expressed on the list were barely different from the columns and blogs its authors wrote for the public.

And it's patently absurd for Carlson — an unabashed conservative himself — to bash a bunch of liberal opinion writers for toeing a party line. Take a look at FOX News, or even The Daily Caller. Isn't that what they do every day?

Everyone's a pundit these days, and that's the real problem exposed by the JournoList controversy. Were we to stumble upon a similar right-wing forum, there's no doubt the left would be writing gleeful pieces on a conservative media conspiracy.

Political reporting in this country has devolved into an echo chamber, a screaming match where pundits compete for blog hits and comments and links on the Huffington Post. We need commentary, fair and balanced or not; it's an essential part of a free press. But at the end of the day, one piece of refreshing, well-researched, unbiased news is worth more than a million JournoLists.

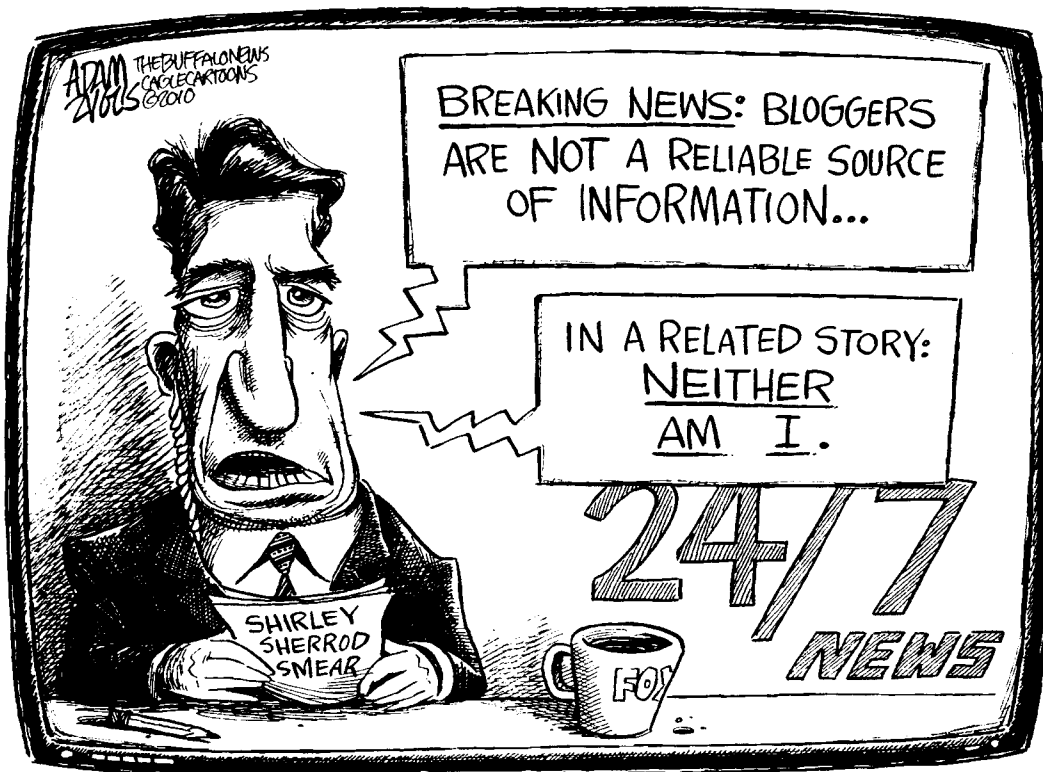
And as for the few journalists on the list who weren't openly liberal — well, everyone's allowed to have an opinion. But if you call yourself an objective journalist, for the love of Woodward and Bernstein, don't write it down. It might sound unfair, but that's the sacrifice we make as reporters.

Journalism has taken enough of a beating this past decade. Let's not give people more reasons to dismiss it.

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MY OPINION



## Lilith criticisms full of hypocrisy

By Alex Weisler

CHALK it up to being raised by a strong woman.

I've never bonded with NASCAR or even Little League. My iTunes features nine songs by Bruce Springsteen and 45 by Joan Baez. Ancient Hillary Clinton campaign speeches can still make me cry. My roommate bought me an unauthorized biography of Jewel for my 21st birthday.

And yeah, I'm straight. I went to Toronto this weekend to catch Lilith Fair, the 2010 revival of the late '90s tour founded by Sarah McLachlan and designed to "celebrate women in music."

It's no surprise that I drove six hours (across an international border!) this weekend to catch the concert. Intimate, feminist singer-songwriters are kind of my wheelhouse, so going to Lilith Fair was always a given.

What shocked me, though, was the level of vitriol and condescension directed at McLachlan and her band of empowered troubadours.

The New York Times, in a piece dissecting the influence of Lady Gaga on today's pop landscape, calls resurrecting Lilith

"You can't accuse McLachlan of peddling a monolithic view of womanhood if you're pushing for Lilith to feature just as rigid a stereotype — young, hot, writhing and Auto-Tuned."

"a doomed decision from the start." Toronto's Eye Weekly arts magazine lambastes the tour as "a standard, for-profit tour with a marketing strategy that uses sisterhood to sell singers in the same way Warped Tour uses punk's legacy to sell shoes."

Other voices are even angrier, demanding to know why Lilith's lineup doesn't look like the Billboard Hot 100, asking why Lilith is necessary in an era when Rihanna and Katy and Ke\$ha and Miley and, yes, Gaga rule the charts.

Sure, Lilith celebrates a certain type of woman — she's probably gay, she's probably 40, she's probably wearing a chunky necklace and she definitely knows all the words to "Building a Mystery."

But you can't accuse McLachlan of peddling a monolithic view of womanhood if you're pushing for Lilith to feature just as rigid a stereotype — young, hot, writhing and Auto-Tuned.

Lilith was commercial in its day, too, spotlighting folksy singer-songwriters at that bizarre and wonderful time in American music when Jewel was a superstar.

But now Lilith is all about the fringes. Lilith is necessary because no one is celebrating those women these days — no one except Sarah McLachlan.

Collegian Editor in Chief Liz Murphy and I trekked to the Molson Canadian Amphitheatre in the pouring rain Saturday night. We camped out under a giant rainbow umbrella and sat on a raincoat. We watched Mary J. Blige cover "Stairway to Heaven" and sang along to every word of McLachlan's "Adia."

When a flock of birds took off from the amphitheatre's roof at sunset, the entire arena applauded. Simply put, Lilith attracts weirdos.

But a 50-something woman in a caftan flailing around wildly during a Peter, Paul and Mary cover is no stranger than Lady Gaga showing up to an awards show in a dress made of Kermit the Frogs.

Why are we so hell-bent on celebrating just one type of woman in music? There's room for both.

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MY OPINION

### blog lines

**Footblog**

Former Penn State linebacker, Sean Lee agreed to a four-year contract with the Dallas Cowboys. ... Lee was selected by Dallas in the second round. ...

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