

# OPINION

THE DAILY  
**Collegian**

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**About the Collegian:** The Daily Collegian and The Weekly Collegian are published by Collegian Inc., an independent, nonprofit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and professionals. Pennsylvania State University students write and edit both papers and solicit advertising for them. During the fall and spring semesters as well as the second six-week summer session, The Daily Collegian publishes Monday through Friday. Issues are distributed by mail to other Penn State campuses and individual subscribers.

**Complaints:** News and editorial complaints should be presented to the editor. Business and advertising complaints should be presented to the business manager.

## Who we are

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor holding final responsibility. The letters and columns expressed on the editorial pages are not necessarily those of The Daily Collegian, Collegian Inc. or The Pennsylvania State University. Collegian Inc., publishers of The Daily Collegian and related publications, is a separate corporate institution from Penn State. Editorials are written by The Daily Collegian Board of Opinion.

Members are:  
Kevin Cirilli, Jenna Ekdahl, Bill Landis, Elizabeth Murphy, Laura Nichols, Edgar Ramirez, Andrew Robinson, Heather Schmelzlen, Jared Shanker, Katie Sullivan, Alex Weisler, Steph Witt and Chris Zook.

## Letters

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

■ **E-mail**  
collegianletters@psu.edu  
■ **Online**  
www.psucollegian.com  
■ **Postal mail/In person**  
123 S. Burrowes St.  
University Park, PA 16801

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.

## Green area a positive solution

The saga is finally coming to a close.

The former Phi Delta Theta fraternity house — now in the hands of Penn State after a protracted legal battle with the building's former tenants — is slated for demolition. The university plans to develop a "green space" at the property, and the century-old house will be torn down.

Some in the greek community — like Interfraternity Council President Max Wendkos — have decried the university's decision, citing the

house's historic significance.

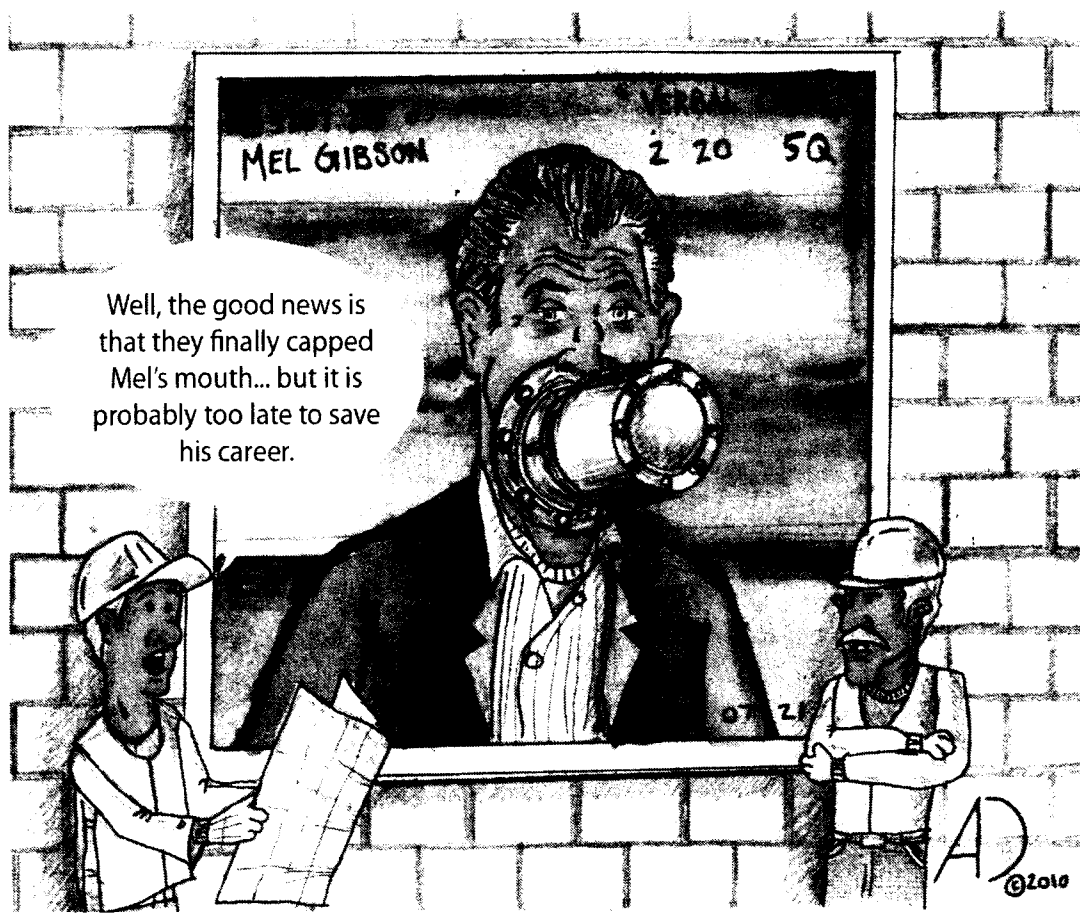
We see both sides of the story, but we ultimately agree with the university's decision. A park-like area will jibe well with the house's neighbors — Penn State landmarks like West Halls and the IST Building.

Though it's disappointing that a historic house will be torn down, it's clear that the building's former tenants didn't care much for its legacy or dignity. The house fell into disrepair in the the fraternity's care.

It's not the university's job to restore the house — and it's not as if the university has the millions of dollars the project would require just lying around somewhere.

It's a shame that a building that has seen so much Penn State history is ending its run with such little dignity.

Still, the university's decision to create an aesthetically pleasing "green space" in the center of campus seems reasonable and represents a chance for the property's legacy to be redeemed.



Well, the good news is that they finally capped Mel's mouth... but it is probably too late to save his career.



## Bottled water hurting environment and your wallets

By Andrew Metcalf

**W**OULD you pay \$30,000 for a sandwich? What if I told you that the bread is the healthiest bread available, flown in halfway across the world from the finest farmers? What if I gave it to you in a nice plastic box, keeping the sandwich clean and requiring nothing more than being thrown away after you use it?

Would you buy this sandwich? Probably not.

You can get a sandwich at your local deli for about one five-thousandth of my price.

So why do we pay that much more for bottled water? We have readily available tap water which costs us on average \$0.002 per gallon, yet we spend upwards of \$1.00 for a 16-oz bottle of water. Sure, no one claims that the water from your tap comes from artisan springs in Fiji, but they aren't demanding that you pay five thousand times more for the water either.

Bottled water companies very cleverly market its product, convincing consumers water from mountains in remote places is superior to tap water. In reality, the water quality is about the same.

Bottled water is regulated far less strictly than tap water.

Disposable plastic bottles are unarguably terrible for the environment. They require large amounts of oil, water and energy to produce. They are typically manufactured in third world countries with less stringent pollution regulations, and the toxic runoff from the production is often dumped directly into local waterways.

We throw away or litter about three-quarters of the plastic bottles we consume, but even those that are recycled never get remade into another plastic bottle. Unlike aluminum and glass containers, which can be recycled infinitely, plastic can typically only be "downcycled" — turned into products such as plastic bags or blended into other materials. While this might be better than a landfill, it is still a non-solution.

In truth, bottled water is no more damaging to the environment than any other bottled beverage. Many drink companies waste carbon shipping their product all over the world before it reaches you, and the plastic bottles they use are equally non-recyclable.

The reason environmentalists target bottled water in particular is that it's completely nonessential. If you want a drink of Dr. Pepper, you have to buy it in some sort of container — cities don't provide us with municipal supplies of Dr. Pepper.

However, if you want a drink of water, it's easy and cheap to get it from the tap.

We are enormously fortunate to have access to clean and safe drinking water for an immeasurably low cost. Many places in the world have no such thing.

Sure, our municipal water infrastructure costs billions per year in taxes to construct and maintain, but I doubt anyone would be willing to cut that cost. We use our water supply to take showers, wash our dishes and water our plants. Most products you see in a store depend on clean and cheap water at some point in their supply chain.

We need to maintain a municipal water system, so why shouldn't we take advantage of it and drink its water? Buying bottled water, given our access to safe and exponentially cheaper tap water, is both environmentally inexcusable and fiscally foolish.

I'm not trying to argue that bottled water is completely useless — it's incredibly vital for emergency situations. But I don't think the supply for those instances requires the massive bottled water industry we've set up today. A very small fraction of the bottled water we produce in the world goes to situations where safe tap water is unavailable. The manufacturing facilities required to meet that demand would cost far less than the \$101 billion the world spends annually on

bottled water, according to The Water Project.

I would love it if we stopped drinking bottled water entirely in developed countries, but I don't think a ban on its production or sale is the appropriate step to take. A more sensible solution is to vote with our wallets, but on a larger scale.

Specifically, institutions such as local governments and universities should consider eliminating bottled water purchases from their budgets. This would mostly translate to bottled water no longer being available at catering events or sold at student stores. Reusable bottles or cups combined with water bottles and pitchers would easily pick up the slack.

Such measures could potentially save a university like Penn State tens of thousands of dollars. Would that be enough to fix massive deficits? Of course not.

But in this economy, every dollar counts. It could potentially translate to one or two staff members keeping their jobs.

If organizations around the country enacted similar purchasing bans, bottled water companies would have to reduce production levels, eventually breaking our addiction to this wasteful product.

Andrew Metcalf is a senior majoring in computer science and is the Collegian's Thursday columnist. His e-mail address is adm5129@psu.edu.

## blog lines

### EDITOR IN CHIEF

#### No Liz, no Alex, no problem

On Monday, The Daily Collegian was written, produced and edited without both the editor in chief (me) and the managing editor (my partner in crime, Alex Weisler).

And it's all Buffalo's fault. Alex and I took a break from the office this weekend and traveled to Toronto for Liliith Fair. After belting out Mary J. Blige and Sarah McLachlan all night long Saturday, we hopped in the car Sunday at a gingerly 7:30 a.m. We had a board of editors meeting to catch in State College later that afternoon.

About two hours into the drive, we stopped for coffee at Tim Hortons — in Buffalo.

Just outside, to be exact. We were in the beautiful destination of Tonawanda, N.Y. All I know about Tonawanda is that I have a tough time pronouncing it, and it is also the location of my Ford Taurus's near-demise.

Almost immediately after pulling out of the store, the Taurus began emitting plumes of smoke and the smell of burning rubber filled the car.

Alex pulled over into a shopping complex parking lot and we just stared at each other. "The paper," we both said with a scared laugh.

[...]  
We were not leaving Buffalo — my car couldn't be worked on until the morning. We made a hotel reservation at nearby Buffalo suburb Amherst.

... On the side of the road we finalized a plan: Visual Editor Heather Schmelzlen would serve in our roles for the day, reading all of the news content in the paper and making decisions about layout and headlines.

We were asking a lot of a staff that is already very small. We were asking even more of Heather.

Somehow, it worked. It wasn't like any other day in the newsroom on Sunday, but it definitely didn't show ...

[...]  
So, I salute this summer staff ...  
Elizabeth Murphy  
Editor in Chief

Read more of The Daily Collegian's blogs at [psu.collegian.com/blogs](http://psu.collegian.com/blogs).

#### Wanted: Web Intern

The Collegian is seeking a web intern for the fall semester to join its award-winning web team. This position offers a merit-based \$1,000 scholarship per semester.

We are diving into several new web initiatives this fall including a brand new website, and are looking for applicants with a working knowledge of HTML, CSS and proficiency in at least one of the following: Javascript, Flash, PHP, Perl, ASPnet, or C#. We are also looking into mobile applications, as well, so a knowledge of or interest in learning about mobile development is encouraged but not required.

You will be working with the Web Editor, who also has a knowledge of these technologies. This position requires a flexible but steady time commitment. Your responsibilities will vary based on your skills, but could include designing pages and/or interactive pieces for our site, writing scripts to parse and reformat old stories or communicate with public APIs (Twitter, Tumblr, etc), or designing back-end management systems, among other things.

An interest in journalism and being a part of an independent student newspaper is highly encouraged, as well.

To apply, send a resume and cover letter to Editor in Chief Elizabeth Murphy at [editorinchief@psu.collegian.com](mailto:editorinchief@psu.collegian.com).