

# 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.

# Suites should be open to all

Penn State recently announced it will be renovating South Halls to create about 70 new dorm rooms. Some of these will be suites — a living option that will include a kitchen, private bath, lounge area, living room and even air conditioning. The Housing and Food Services department said it is thinking about moving smaller groups like sororities and fraternities into these brand-new suites.

The creation of new living space is always a good thing, especially when 500 upperclassmen were turned away from on-campus housing this year. It is obviously a huge problem

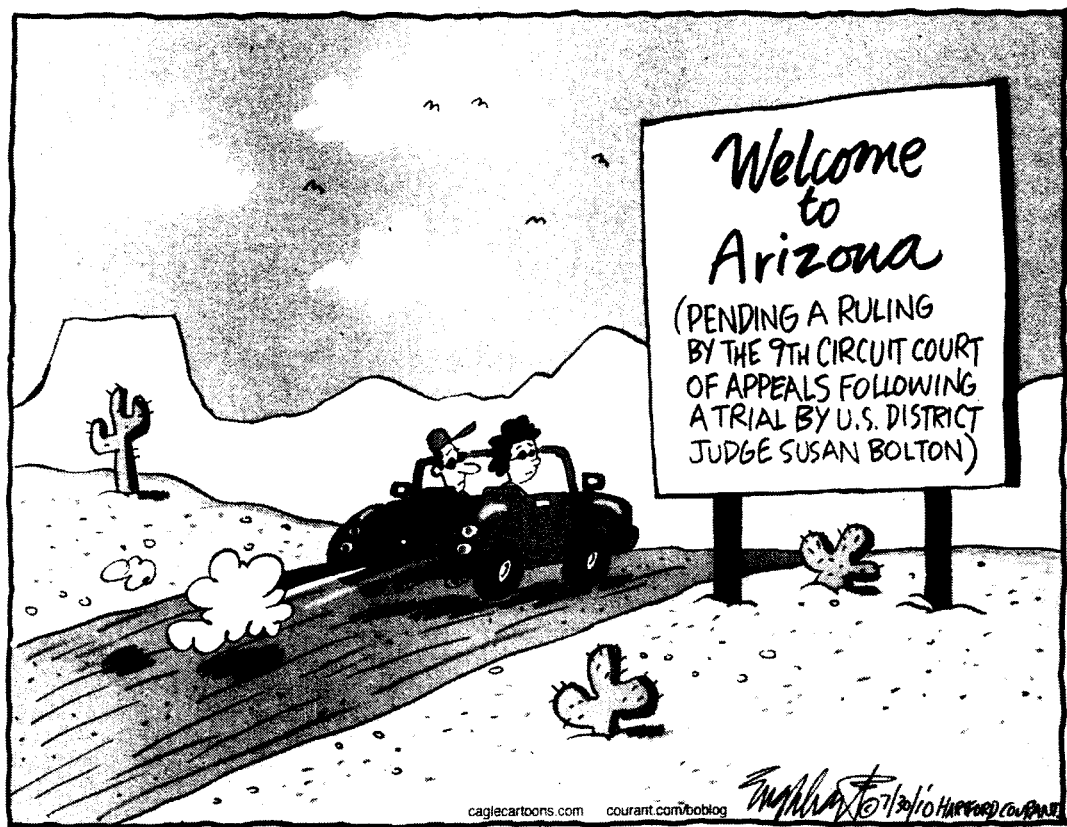
when the school can't house everyone it takes in. If each new suite accommodated two people, it could create housing for about 140 students. It's a step in the right direction, making sure more and more students are secure in getting an on-campus spot.

Also, it keeps Penn State aesthetically competitive as plenty of other schools around Pennsylvania are revamping their living options and offering suites to anyone willing to pay a little extra.

What doesn't sit well is the fact that Penn State is looking to allot these suites to a certain group

of students. If the school is going to build suites, they should be offered to anyone willing to sacrifice their dollar to get a little cool air and extra space in their dorm before offering it to groups of students who already have housing options with a sorority or fraternity.

New suites and dorms house more students and the renovations keep Penn State evolving and changing, which is definitely a good thing. Hopefully, Penn State realizes everyone deserves a shot at these new spaces, which sound like palaces compared to the tiny, old rooms in East Halls.



## blog lines

### SMALL WORLD

#### English major adapting to Italian-speaking Todi

Along with 22 other Penn State students, I spent the first half of my summer living in Todi, Italy, a small hill town nestled in Italy's central region of Umbria. As my first time traveling outside of the U.S., my trip across the Atlantic Ocean to that little country shaped like a boot has left me with one of my best college memories so far and a strong desire to one day experience other parts of the world, as well as return to Italy.

Since I am an English major, my life is pretty much all about the English language. Needless to say, spending six weeks in a house where almost no English was spoken was a bit of a challenge for me. Unlike most other study abroad programs offered, this particular one gave students like me the opportunity to live with Italian families — most of whom did not speak any English. Despite having had taken Italian during my past three semesters at Penn State, I was still really worried about being able to communicate with Signora and Signore Belli, our host parents. This unease was intensified by the fact that two of my roommates didn't know any Italian and thus would be relying on my other roommate and me to translate.

[...] In Todi, things were very different. As the only Americans, we stuck out like sore thumbs. In fact, people were not above staring at us while we made our daily trek up the hill and our attempts at speaking Italian were actually required in order to communicate. We were also able to experience the everyday workings of an Italian household, where our host mother took on all the household duties, refusing our help with even the smallest of tasks including washing our own clothes or dishes. Our house did not have a computer or Internet, and our host parents did not have a microwave or clothes drier. ...

Alaina Gallagher  
Reporter

Read more from the rest 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).

# Sherrod situation deals journalism serious blow

By Matt Fortuna

**M**AYBE there is someone in the James Building I really don't like and would like to see fired.

Maybe there is gossip in a classroom or at a bar that I just can't resist from exploiting.

Maybe there is someone I have covered in my three-plus years here who really rubbed me the wrong way and now I have decided to use my platform writing for this paper to get my revenge.

No matter how delusional or justified I may think I am in any of the above cases, it would take an awful lot for me to convince my superiors to take action. And they in turn would have to take a lot of time to decide whether it warrants sending someone packing or smearing someone's name and reputation across campus.

They know the power of the pen. They know not to move forward in a potentially damaging situation without thoroughly investigating and researching all available evidence.

They are a few steps ahead of our government, at least based on its handling of the Shirley Sherrod case.

"It's embarrassing for the state of journalism in general. There once was a time when it took real work and reporting for people with power to react the way the White House just did to a blogger."

It makes the spineless way the people in charge of this country acted all the more troubling. And it trivializes good journalism during a time when — as the saying goes — "everyone is a reporter."

Is that really all it takes to get someone fired by the White House: An edited video posted by a blogger with a clear agenda — one that was not even investigated before the trigger was pulled?

Sherrod was forced to resign as the Georgia State Director of Rural Development for the United States Department of Agriculture after conservative blogger Andrew Breitbart posted portions of a speech Sherrod, who is black, gave to an NAACP audience. The video showed Sherrod saying she did not fully help a white farmer 24 years ago.

Sherrod pled her innocence, saying her comments were taken out of context. The NAACP — which had condemned her originally — posted the full 43-minute video. The farmer Sherrod was speaking about publicly came to her defense.

And, just like that, the president asked her to come back.

It's an embarrassing injustice to Sherrod, sure. But from a newspaper writer's standpoint, it's embarrassing for the state of journalism in general.

There once was a time when it took real work and reporting for people with power to react the way the White House just did to a blogger.

Just look at Watergate or, to a lesser extent, Morgan Spurlock. Or, in the case of sports reporting — the alleged "toy department" — the many revelations of steroid use in athletics that were uncovered by the San Francisco Chronicle's Lance Williams and Mark Fainaru-Wada, both of whom were ready to go to jail before revealing their sources.

They spent the effort to make sure the story was right, unlike Breitbart, who simply blamed the liberal media for posting the video that sparked the Sherrod saga. And unlike Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, whose knee-jerk reaction to Breitbart — asking Sherrod to step down — showed anything but leadership.

What has happened to doing

homework and not reacting to every piece of trash thrown to the wall before we even wait and see if it sticks or not?

Granted, this may sound a little self-serving coming from a journalist, but we are also the same breed of people who are trained not to believe anyone who tells us today is Friday before we whip out our calendars and make sure of it ourselves.

Or to not believe our mothers love us simply because they tell us they do.

So why did the left cower to the right the minute something potentially damaging surfaced, with absolutely no fact checking done?

Who knows? But let's look, of all places, to Sunday's season premiere of "Mad Men," a show set in the 1960s that offered an interesting quote — one we should all keep in mind before we ever go to press with something we write about someone else.

The morning a not-so-flattering profile of the character Don Draper runs in Advertising Age, Don asks Roger Sterling why he has so many copies in his office.

Roger's reply? "I wanted to get them all before everyone else did."

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