

OPINION

THE DAILY
Collegian

Elizabeth Murphy
Editor in Chief

Kelsey Thompson
Business Manager

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.psu.collegian.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.

PSU should focus on positives

The Princeton Review's school rankings were released this week, and Penn State is no longer considered the No. 1 party school in America.

After spending a year atop the party school rankings in The Princeton Review's "The Best 373 Colleges," Penn State dropped two spots to third, behind the University of Georgia and Ohio University.

Though some Penn State students will be upset to see the tag go, this is a positive for Penn State as it tries to clean up the image and reputation the poll gave the school last year. The ranking brought nothing but bad attention to the school

from administrators, parents and students, those who attended Penn State and even those who didn't. It was a black eye for the university.

A number of leaders in the Penn State community have already questioned the merit of the rankings. Students who wish to complete the survey simply go to a website, and on average only 325 students from each campus take the survey.

And despite the rankings' lack of sufficient empirical evidence, they do hold social relevance among parents and students when it comes to choosing a college. There is a lot of weight assigned to these rankings, and,

overall, they are helpful.

Students should be careful not to get hung up on just the party school rankings. There are 62 total Top 20 lists, nearly all of which carry more significance than the party rankings.

More so than dropping in the party rankings, Penn State should be applauded for its rankings among many of the positive lists.

Once again, the university ranked No. 1 in the Students Pack the Stadiums ranking. It also ranked No. 2 for Best Career Services, No. 4 for best athletic facilities, No. 6 for Best College Newspaper and No. 17 for Happiest Students.

LETTERS

Kudos to Penn State fans for top student section ranking

In response to the article "Penn State receives top ranking for student sports fans," I would like to say congratulations. No, it does not come as a surprise to anyone that Penn State fans are the best in the nation. We have so many incredible traditions like Paternoville, White House games and chest painting, it would be a surprise if we didn't rank high among sports fans.

While writing a research paper this semester in response to White House games at Penn State, I have found that fan support truly does influence the players, school and community.

But I would also agree with the statement in the article stating, "it's mostly football that wins Penn State this ranking." I would like to challenge Penn State as a fan base to not just be known for its football fans but also support other Penn State teams. It will make our fans even higher ranked across the nation.

Abby Kun
sophomore-architectural engineering

Case finding officer innocent unfair to rest of the country

Earlier this week, in spite of evidence to the contrary, a State College police officer was found not guilty of driving at an unsafe speed. The article "Officer not guilty after hitting PSU student with car" states, "A crash reconstruction report issued by the Pennsylvania State Police indicated that Muse was driving 36 to 39 mph, Pennsylvania State Police at Rockview said."

Yet, if any other civilian hit a student while driving 11 to 14 mph over the limit, the police would have them in custody.

On June 27, because the words of an individual did not please the delicate sensibilities of the authorities, police officers — with the aid of medical workers — introduced a chemical to a student's body to stop his oration. Treavor Gelsing was sedated in an attempt to prevent him from continuing to yell obscenities. This certainly seems like an "unusual punishment" that's prohibited by the Constitution's Eighth Amendment.

At what point are we as citizens going to stand up and stop the ever encroaching police state that is shown to be growing ever more powerful in State College, as well as the rest of our United States?

Christopher Snyder
Class of 1995

Lower party school ranking of no concern to Penn State

I grabbed Wednesday's Collegian with eager anticipation, only to be horribly disappointed that Penn State had dropped to the No. 3 party school, according to The Princeton Review.

Except I wasn't. I feel The Princeton Review's ranking system is horribly inadequate to truly rank a statistic such as top party school. How could the review possibly measure this in a scientific matter?

The review relies on a survey that states an average of 325 students per school filled it out. First, we must assume everyone filling this out is doing so in an honest manner, not just to talk up the school's party scene. Assuming this, then a poll of less than 0.8 percent of the student population, a horribly inadequate number, determined our ranking.

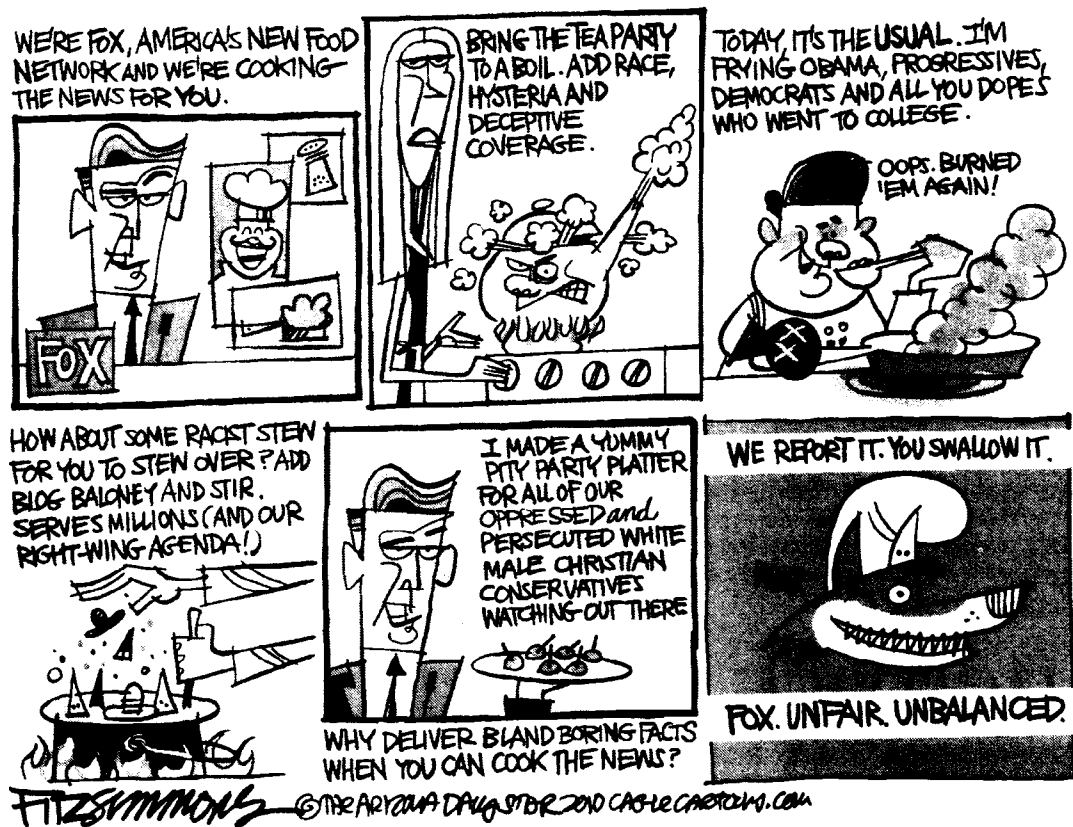
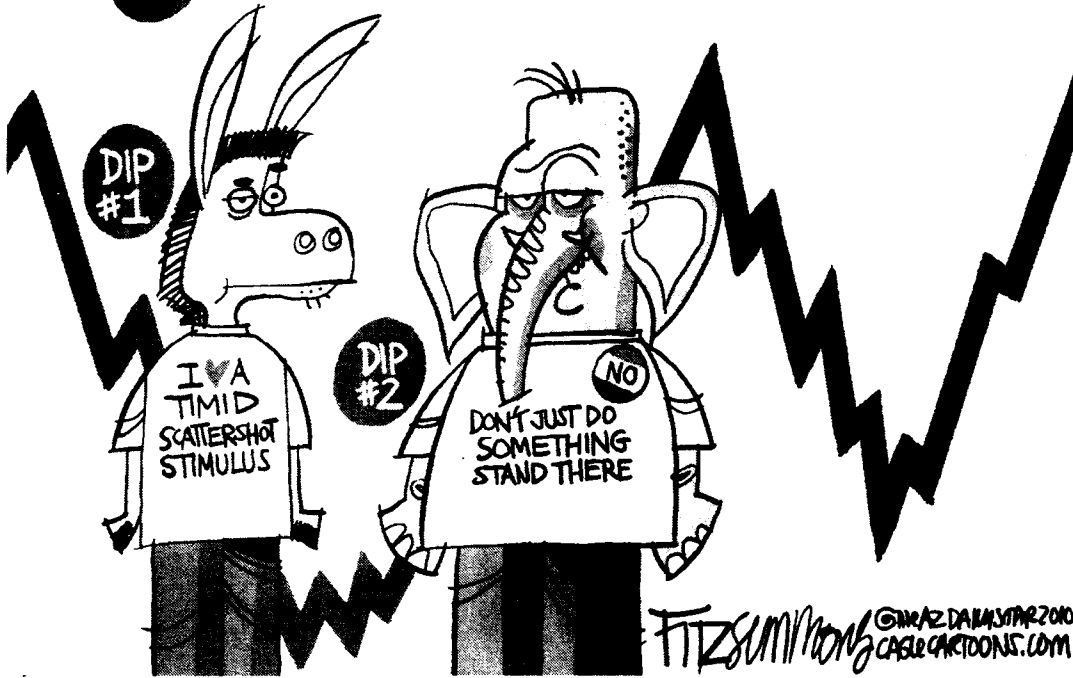
I'm not saying that we would've stayed at No. 1 had more people filled out the survey — perhaps quite the opposite. I'm saying who cares. Both the university and student population should put little stock into this overly hyped and insufficient survey.

I say the students should just keep doing your thing; everyone knows we party harder than the University of Georgia and Ohio University anyway.

Jake Wiest
junior-architectural engineering

Q. WHAT IS A DOUBLE DIP RECESSION?

A. A SECOND RECESSION BROUGHT ON BY TWO DIPS.



Legalizing marijuana would help California's deficit

By Andrew Metcalf

We live in a representative democracy. We entrust our elected officials to make legislative decisions on our behalf that hopefully represents our views and best interests.

However, there are certainly some hot-button issues that I would like to have a direct vote on, which is why I find ballot initiatives so awesome. Almost half of the states in this country — including Pennsylvania — support their own form of direct democracy in the form of ballot initiatives, but no state does this more famously than California.

One measure on California's ballot this year, Proposition 19, legalizes and heavily taxes marijuana for recreational use by adults 21 and older.

Driving while under the influence of marijuana would remain a crime, and employers would retain the ability to fire employees for showing up to work under the influence.

Proposition 19 enjoys a lead in most polls. That lead is impressive given that both gubernatorial candidates, both of California's current senators, and a Senatorial candi-

date have all come out against the proposition.

Like any early poll, however, the results are liable to change before Election Day depending on the advertising push each side makes.

Still, I think Californians will — and should — pass Proposition 19. Marijuana use, when not driving or operating machinery, is essentially a victimless crime and is certainly no more dangerous than alcohol. Laws designed to protect us from ourselves always throw into question our right to privacy, and marijuana's legality is no exception.

I don't buy the argument that legalizing marijuana would increase the amount of child and teenage users. Those under 21 who want to obtain marijuana can already get it, and those who previously were discouraged by marijuana's illegality won't have any new incentive to obtain it — it will remain illegal for them.

For a financially strapped state like California, legalizing marijuana makes even more sense. The enforcement of marijuana-related crimes cost California billions and saturates the state's already overflowing prisons.

Furthermore, though it's hard to estimate an exact figure, the tax would likely bring in well over a billion dollars in new tax revenues. For a state that has a \$19.1 billion deficit this year, this new income could prove invaluable.

Since the law would allow individuals to grow their own small amounts of the plant, this initiative could also potentially create a huge dent in drug traffic from Mexican cartels. Marijuana makes up an estimated 60 percent of the drugs smuggled across the United States-Mexico border.

If Proposition 19 passes, we will enter into an interesting conundrum: Marijuana is a Schedule I Controlled Substance under federal law, making it illegal for virtually all purposes. California legalized marijuana for medical use in 1996 and 13 other states have followed since. After this passed, federal agents still prosecuted patients who were complying with their state's marijuana laws.

Finally in 2009, the Obama administration instructed federal agents not to bother prosecuting marijuana users complying within their state's laws, calling these prosecutions a "waste of resources."

However, it's unclear whether the attorney general will give a similar pass to legal recreational marijuana. If not, we could see federal agents continuing to make arrests, citing federal law above state law.

My guess is that we'll see the legislation tied up in lawsuits long before the new law takes effect. It's likely California's Supreme Court will address the law, and because the law completely contradicts the national law, I wouldn't be surprised

to see the federal Supreme Court or even Congress get involved.

That chaos is an exciting prospect to me, since it would spur the media and the country into a real discussion of the issue. Like healthcare, you'll likely see name-calling and mudslinging, but you might also see some truly interesting discussions and points on both sides of the issue.

In the end, the legislation may be declared unconstitutional, but it will have at least been a valuable first step in the legalization of marijuana.

A final note: Unlike California, Pennsylvania places far fewer propositions on its ballot. In the last Pennsylvania election, there was one statewide ballot measure dealing with funding for municipal water and sewer facilities, which, though important, isn't exactly a hot-button issue.

On the topic of marijuana legalization and so many other issues, I feel like making far more liberal use of ballot initiatives would be a great idea. Seeing popular and controversial topics directly on the ballot would be a great way to energize voters, inspire increased political activism, and potentially restore our dwindling trust in the government.

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