

Frats' initiative helps housing

The housing crisis at Penn State is a clear problem, and it's good to see that students are taking initiative. With several fraternities announcing they will open their doors to students, it shows a willingness from other groups to step in and help solve the housing crunch.

Seeing these fraternities taking initiative also shows that the student population is aware of the housing issue. By renting out extra rooms in the fraternity houses, it benefits both students and the fraternities; students have a

place to live, and fraternities collect room and board expenses to help pay off their leases.

While there aren't large quantities of rooms available right now, which won't do much to curb the number of homeless students, it's still a start. At the same time, the fraternities will have a few more people in their houses that can pay rent and help cover related costs.

However, there are a lot of questions to be asked about the living arrangements. Though the fraternities have established

how much space they have and their rent costs, they haven't filled the vacancies yet. For the students who move in to the fraternity houses, it remains to be seen how they adapt to living in the house and how they interact with the fraternity members.

But the fact that they are trying is good to see considering the issues surrounding off-campus living and rising student numbers. The greek community should be commended for taking initiative.

LETTERS

Borough council once again misses golden opportunity

So, the borough council isn't taking action on University Park Undergraduate Association President Christian Ragland's suggestion to add a non-voting student member to council. I'm not surprised — council is notorious for missing opportunities.

Council should see the proposed member as a direct link to students, which represent most of its constituency, regardless of voter ratios. Council could use some understanding of student concerns, just as the student leaders could use some insight into the inner workings of council. The proposed member could do both.

But council has other things to worry about. It would rather not be forced to look at a student in the eye when they berate students for the foolish actions of a few, generally. They would rather not look at a student in the eyes when they take another pass on improving student living conditions (West End project, anyone?). They would rather not be questioned when they tell the residents that all the town's problems would go away if it weren't for those pesky "miscreants" up at the school.

A non-voting student member would force some of the council members to grow a spine when they say ridiculous things like "Let's turn the lights off on Garner Street." But I don't expect that anytime soon.

Sam Loewner
Class of 2010
Former UPUA Academic Affairs Chairman

Government would be wise to decriminalize marijuana use

In response to the Aug. 5 column, "Legalizing marijuana would help California's deficit," the drug war is largely a war on marijuana smokers. In 2008, there were 847,863 marijuana arrests in the U.S., almost 90 percent for simple possession. At a time when state and local governments are laying off police, firefighters and teachers, this country continues to spend enormous public resources prosecuting Americans who prefer marijuana to martinis. The end result of this ongoing culture war is not necessarily lower rates of use.

According to a study in a press release by the State University of New York at Albany, the U.S. has higher rates of marijuana use than the Netherlands, where marijuana is legally available. An admitted former pot smoker, President Obama has thus far maintained the prohibition status quo rather than pursue real change. Would Barack Obama be in White House right now if he had been convicted of a marijuana offense in his youth?

Decriminalization is a long overdue step in the right direction. Taxing and regulating marijuana would render the drug war obsolete. As long as organized crime controls marijuana distribution, consumers will come into contact with sellers of hard drugs like cocaine and heroin. This "gateway" is a direct result of marijuana prohibition.

Robert Sharpe, MPA
Policy analyst
Common Sense for Drug Policy

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

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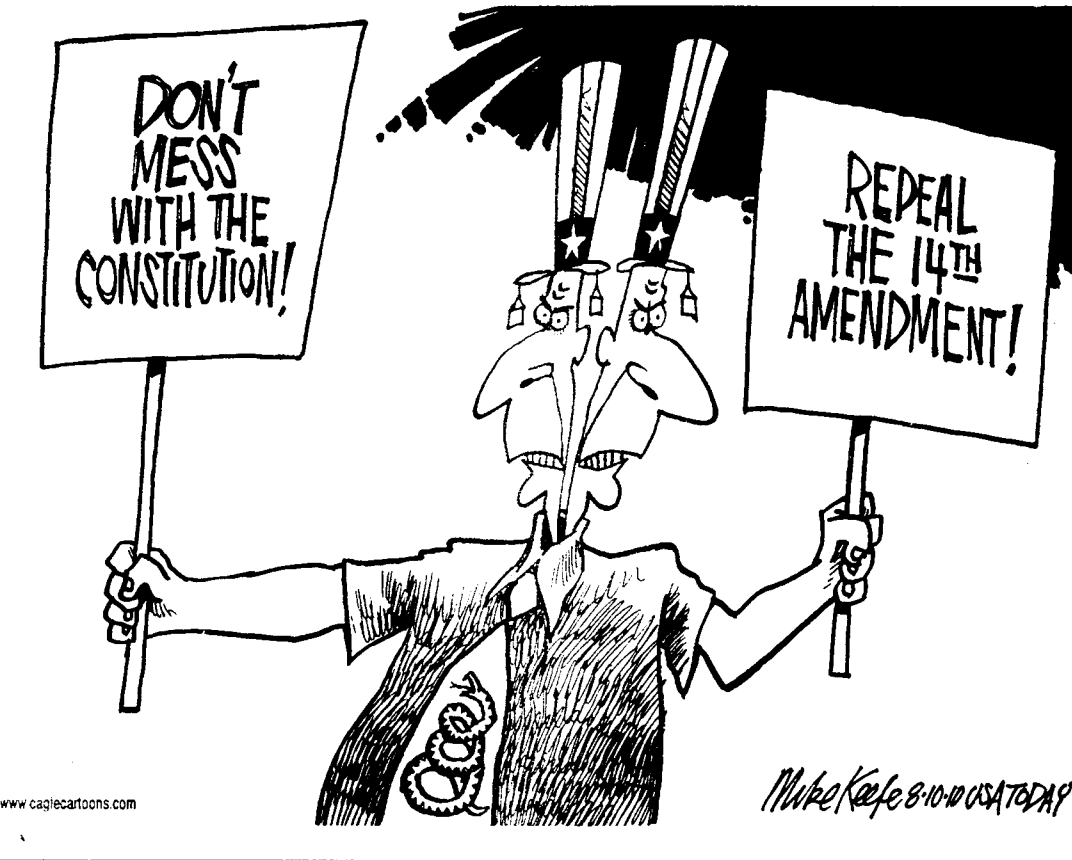
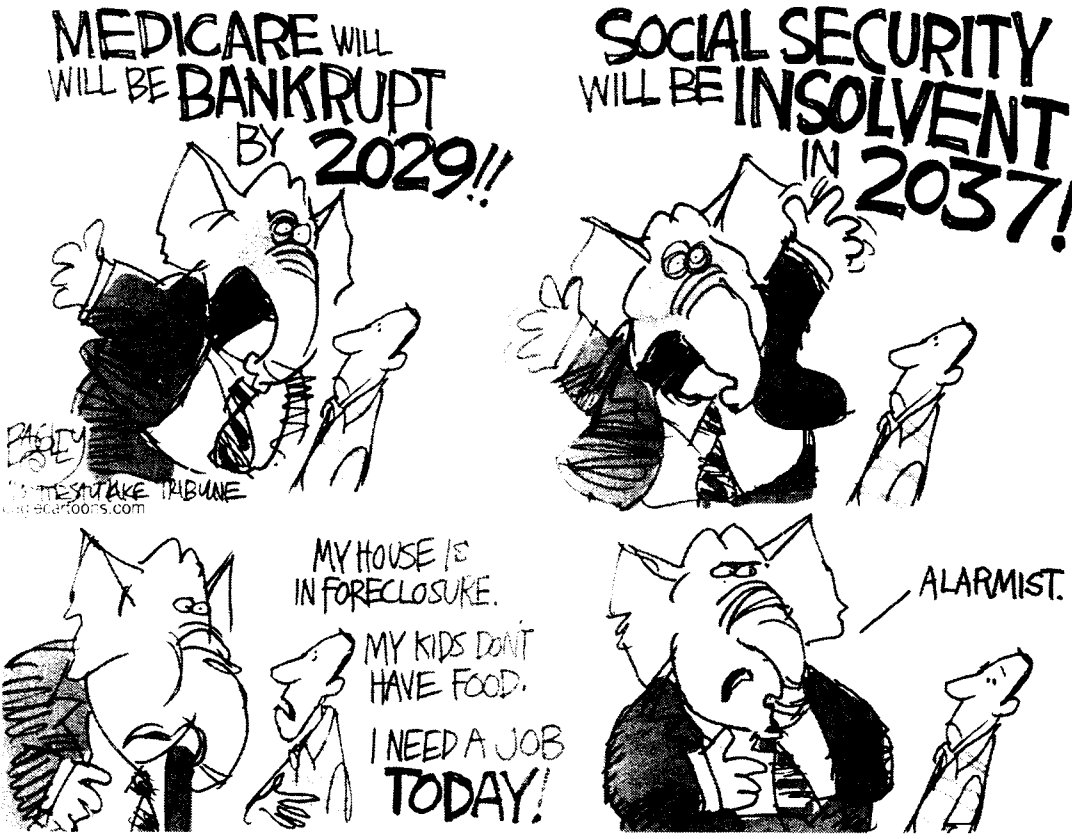
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Abroad in spring means busy fall

By Lindsay Cryer

MUCHAS fiestas y bailando. A lot of partying and dancing. That's

what a young Spanish boy told me about Seville, Spain — the city where I'm studying abroad next spring.

Needless to say, I can not wait to go.

But the only real struggle won't be physically putting myself on that international flight, but rather emotionally tearing myself from Penn State.

I've put myself into the painful mindset that I need to suppress two semesters' worth of fun into one. Is that possible? I'm not even sure.

It's like knowing that your favorite song is only playing for two more minutes at a party and trying to decide exactly which dance you want to enjoy it with. Fist pump? Pelvic thrust? Both are equally fun, but time's a tickin'.

In this case, I'd say there's probably two ways to tango.

Students studying abroad can go about their semester at Penn State as if it were any other semester. There's nothing necessarily wrong with that. It's not like we don't have enough fun at our school to begin with — despite a recent drop in ranking

on a certain Princeton Review list.

Fall semester is a perfect time to allow yourself to simply enjoy our school. It is, after all, football season. There's no better way to pack yourself into an already packed stadium with your best friends along with some of Penn State's finest fans.

It'll probably be visuals like those that I'll miss the most. I'm assuming that Spaniards won't be chanting "Somos ... Penn State" across the street to each other.

But Penn State, believe it or not, is much more than football.

And I, believe it or not, want to do more than just look forward to singing "Sweet Caroline" on a weekly basis this fall.

I don't even think I'll be doing as much with The Daily Collegian, either. On the Collegian's ladder of power, my next climb probably would have been editor. But this semester, I'll be back to reporting. You won't be seeing my name in the paper as much this upcoming fall, but that's because I'll be spending these months on other things that I want to enjoy while I have them within reach.

I've got five months to prove that THON's finest moments don't always have to be in the Bryce Jordan Center. Five months to make my friends actually want to Skype me when I'm gone. Five months to, well, pass my classes. And five

months to plan my life in Spain.

That being said, I also want to live this semester so that no part of me wishes that I were in State College more than Seville come January. With the exception of THON weekend, when I will be plastered to my laptop screen watching all 46 hours live, I want to actually want to be in Spain.

I'm not even sure how to go about this other than do my best to have a semester that I will be content looking back on as I'm looking forward to a one-way ticket to Europe. I assume it'll end up being a good blend of hearty laughs, late nights and time selfishly spent with the ones that I want to spend it with.

I probably won't be dating either. Sorry, boys, but I really don't want to have to say "novio Americano" — American boyfriend — to the Alejandros, Fernandos and Robertos in my near future.

I think this is all rather doable, though.

So take a look at my picture. If you see that face somewhere on campus, come say hi. But don't expect to talk to me for too long, because I've got five months or so to enjoy being a junior at Penn State.

Let's be real, though. I'll still be looking forward to "muchas fiestas y bailando."

Lindsay Cryer is a junior majoring in journalism and is the Collegian's Wednesday columnist. Her e-mail address is lbc146@psu.edu.



MY OPINION

blog lines

FOOTBLOG

Two Lions earn nominations

Tailback Evan Royster and defensive end Jack Crawford have been nominated for two prominent college football awards.

Royster, a redshirt senior, is in consideration for the Maxwell Award — given to the college football player of the year — for the second time in as many years. Crawford, a junior, is up for the Chuck Bednarik Award, which is handed to college football's defensive player of the year. The Maxwell Football Club presents both honors.

For the second straight season, Royster is also in consideration for the player of the year award presented by the Walter Camp Football Foundation.

Brendan Monahan
Football reporter

CAN YOU DIG IT?

Former Lions represent U.S.

Three recent Nittany Lion alumnae continue to dominate on the volleyball court. But instead of their familiar confines of Rec Hall, Nicole Fawcett, Class of 2009, Megan Hodge, Class of 2010 and Alisha Glass, Class of 2010, are making headlines on volleyball courts in Gdynia, Poland — more than 4,000 miles away from State College.

The trio make up a part of the 13-member U.S. women's national team roster participating in this month's FIVB World Grand Prix.

The 12-team international competition is considered one of the major tuneup tournaments for the 2010 FIVB World Championships in November.

And the former Lions have already made an impact for their country.

On Saturday, Team USA, ranked No. 4 in the world, fell to Germany in straight sets. Hodge posted 12 kills, four blocks and 13 digs. ...

Emily Kaplan
Women's volleyball reporter

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