

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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www.psuocollegian.com
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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.

EDITORIAL: THON REGULATIONS

New THON rules divert focus

The 2011 THON rulebook released Monday revealed changes in policies for the upcoming year that THON officials hope will make the event fair for all participating student groups.

Changes include different requirements and categories for participating student organizations, and a shorter list of recognition for top fundraisers.

Dissent among members of the greek community and the THON overall committee also ignited after the announcement that the Interfraternity and Panhellenic Councils would not be part of the selection for the Greeks 4 Kids communications liaisons this year.

In light of these changes and controversy, we urge

the executive members of THON to make it easier for students to participate in this worthy cause, rather than harder.

More time and effort should be designated to the preparation for the big event in the Bryce Jordan Center instead of these outlying and minute details.

We also don't understand why THON executives are potentially alienating the greek community from the philanthropy when it is undoubtedly both its founding body and its biggest fundraisers.

Changes like reducing the announcement of totals to only the top five groups in each category — meant to combat the competitive spirit of THON — could also

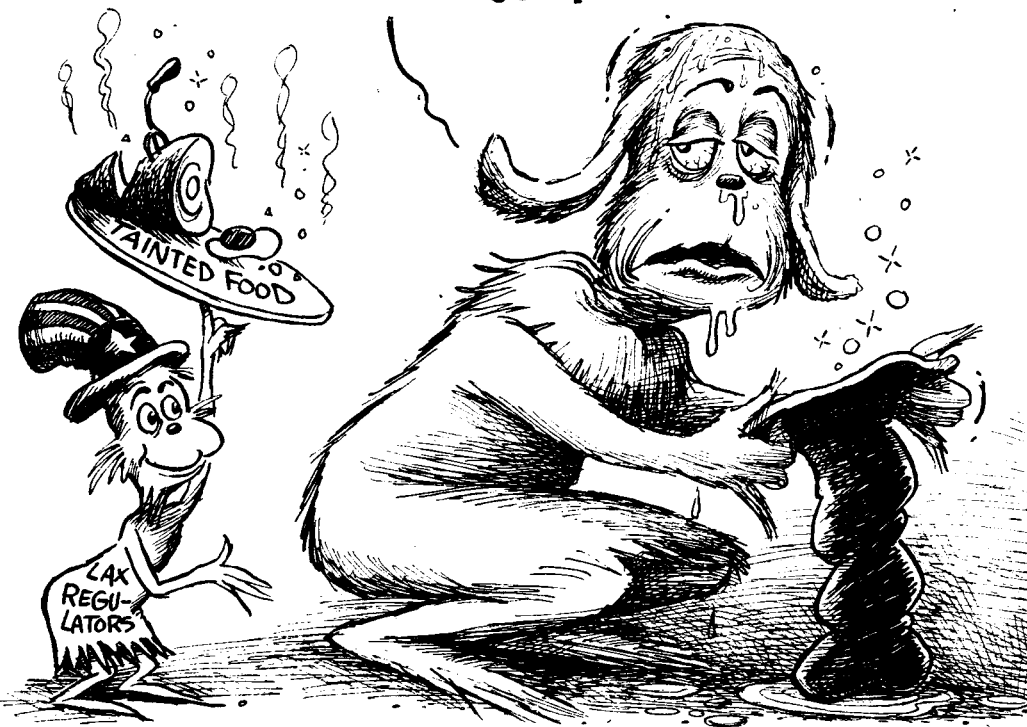
reduce the total of money raised for the kids. And will this reduction whittle away THON's internal competition in trying to beat that grand total year after year?

We doubt it. Unless the competitive nature of THON becomes a detriment to the cause, we believe it has a healthy place in this philanthropy.

THON needs to be more transparent in the decision-making process, and allow input from the student groups and leaders they serve before making these decisions.

Keep one main thing in perspective: The real reason for THON — to raise money for kids with cancer — should never be forgotten.

I do not like them Uncle Sam,
I do not like Green Eggs & Ham.



COLUMNIST

Starbucks wireless won't add charm

By Amanda Elser

It's sort of embarrassing to admit now, but a large reason why I applied to Penn State was because I could envision myself sitting under the large trees on campus doing homework. But after a few weeks stumbling around

University Park I realized that the giant tree roots under the enormous elms on the Old Main lawn were anything but a cozy, study atmosphere.

Plus, ants are gross. So I redirected my study ambitions towards coffee shops downtown. Too timid to venture into unknown neighborhood cafes, I entered the tried and true Starbucks.

When I stationed myself in the back corner and opened my laptop, I realized the Caffeine Empire had failed me. There was no free wireless access, and let's face it, there is no point in studying if you can't be Facebook stalking simultaneously.

But the Seattle-based chain has recently made big steps in redeeming itself. Since July 1, Starbucks offers free, unlimited, one-click Wi-Fi access in all of

its U.S. store locations. This means new freshmen can bring their laptops, iPads or any other gizmo or gadget to either of the two downtown locations and gain instant access to the Internet without paying or having to create a username and password. But other than students living in Centre Court, who conveniently don't have to leave their building to grab a dark roast cup of Joe, I seriously doubt whether free Wi-Fi will change the dynamic of State College coffee shops.

Before this summer, students still had an abundance of familiar options to itch their coffee scratch. Dunkin' Donuts not only offers free Internet, but is open an unyielding 24 hours. Panera Bread also indulges your appetite and your mini-fear.

Free Internet may be just another attempt by Starbucks corporate to capitalize on a certain market. One of the mega-company's slogans is "expect more than coffee." This used to just include buttery pastries and Tazo teas, but with the addition of Internet access this slogan reveals an attempt at an even higher standard of customer service.

Starbucks prides itself with being a daily stop on their customer's regular routine. And perhaps with the closing of Webster's Bookstore Café on

Allen Street the locals who enjoyed Webster's friendly community atmosphere will find refuge in a Starbucks commune. Or maybe they will stick to other neighborhood coffee shops who have been offering free Wi-Fi for a few years now. Either way, another place to check email is neither a bad nor a new thing and here in State College they are a bit behind the times.

Local businesses have prided themselves for being a refuge for the State College community offering a range of amenities for their loyal fans. At Saint's, patrons can enjoy their cappuccino in large mugs with pretty floral designs in the froth. Inside Irving's, they offer a cozy atmosphere in the lower level equipped with a fire place and a couple of couches, perfect for sipping on hot apple cider.

These two locations are also family-owned and operated, which is a refreshing step away from Starbucks chains that just don't offer that State College charm.

Starbucks installing internet access to customers is definitely not a bad thing, but they will always be missing that special quirk that makes a State College coffee shop your daily stop.

Amanda Elser is a senior majoring in journalism and is the Collegian's Thursday columnist. Her e-mail is ale5045@psu.edu

Student vets ought to be visible

From a recent graduate and war veteran, I commend The Daily Collegian for featuring the growing military veteran community so early in the semester. Veterans and other adult learners peak on campus during post war periods, but they have always been a portion of the undergraduate community.

To my fellow veterans, this means there still exists a responsibility to be equal participants with all students in serving our campus and community. Every student is called by the Alma Mater to be "For the Glory of Old State." It requires modesty to remember that exceptional young leaders on our campus have a great deal to teach us despite not yet having left the academy.

The experience and discipline that older students possess is wasted if you keep other undergraduates at arms length. Step forward again and meet a new challenge to improve Penn State. Doing otherwise is a disservice to the university we're all proud to say we love.

Matt Smith
Class of 2010

Debt hard on single parents

I am a single parent sending my only child to Penn State as an out-of-state student. I make two-thirds of the average median income as a middle school teacher in our hometown of Fairfield County, CT. I read the article on student debt with interest and disappointment.

As a teacher and single parent, I hoped to receive significant student aid. Instead, we received only 8 percent of the annual tuition in government loans. I called the financial aid office requesting an appointment to discuss options and was told there was nothing they could do. I wanted to drive the five hours and have them say it to me in person but I was dissuaded.

I trusted the statistic printed in the literature that the average student leaves the university with no more than \$28,000 in debt following an undergraduate degree. Instead, with personal loans, I expect to owe in excess of \$100,000. As a single parent and teacher earning less than the average income in my home, I have sympathy for other students who must be significantly worse off and hope they earn more aid and support than we were provided.

Jill Jansson
Stamford, CT

Islamophobia shows in issue

Mr. Settle's letter on Wednesday titled "Islam still threat post-9/11" is a contribution of a national campaign of misinformation designed to marginalize American Muslims and demonize. The letter, which took verses from the Quran out of context, is identical to the right wing campaign that falsely accused Shirley Sherrod of racism. Furthermore, I disagree with Penn State's College Republicans Vice President Mr. Christina's argument in Wednesday's article that "sensitivity is key here" regarding the Islamic center being built two blocks from Ground Zero. Sensitivity is not an excuse for bigotry.

Constitutional rights must always take the precedent over peoples' sensitivities, something that Republicans often shove down our throats and which Mr. Christina ought to know. The argument that it is sensitive is only true if we buy into the perverted logic of Islamophobia. It's unfortunate that particular individuals, politicians and groups around the country have seized on the legitimate emotions generated by the horrific Sept. 11 terror attacks to promote their Islamophobic agenda.

Shadi Ghayep
graduate-nuclear engineering

Wrongful to blame Muslims

Upon reading the letter to the editor "Islam still threat post-9/11" written by Samuel Settle in Wednesday's Collegian, I was surprised by Mr. Settle's willingness to publicly spout ideas so clearly rooted in bigotry and wrongful blame. The letter disputes the building of the "Ground Zero Mosque," calling it a repugnant project.

In his letter, Mr. Settle claims Islam threatens all non-Muslims. This is exactly the kind of generality that lends to the more polarized and prejudice world we live in today. Mr. Settle seems to forget that not every follower of Islam had a hand in the Sept. 11 attacks, and that every person cannot be blamed for the actions of a band of extremists.

Mr. Settle has adopted an "us vs. them" mentality towards Muslims. Has he forgotten that Muslims exist in America? Has he forgotten that freedom of religious expression is one of the beliefs that this country is built on? He seems to be forgetting one of the most important freedoms that we are endowed with as Americans — the freedom of religious expression.

Rob Ghormoz
senior-political science
Penn State College Democrats President

blog lines

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP

The Clarks at State Theatre

If the Eagles are a bit out of your price range, don't worry — they're not the only band coming to town that night. The Clarks will perform with special guest Bishop Clay at 8 p.m. on Oct. 22 at the State Theatre, 130 W. College Ave...

David Strader
Film reporter

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