

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.

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.

EDITORIAL: THON 2011 CONTROVERSY

THON meeting lacked results

There has been a lot of controversy recently regarding the new regulations for Penn State's Interfraternity Council/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, involving the greek community, independent organizations and THON Overall Committee members.

Upon invitation from IFC President Max Wendkos, leaders met on Sunday to discuss concerns and to look into ways to continue involving students and the THON community in important decisions.

We applaud these leaders for taking a step toward a solution by calling for and participating

in this meeting. It is good to see that all parties are ready and willing to listen and discuss.

However, no concrete decisions resulted from this meeting, and there are no additional meetings scheduled to discuss ideas in the future.

This is a problem.

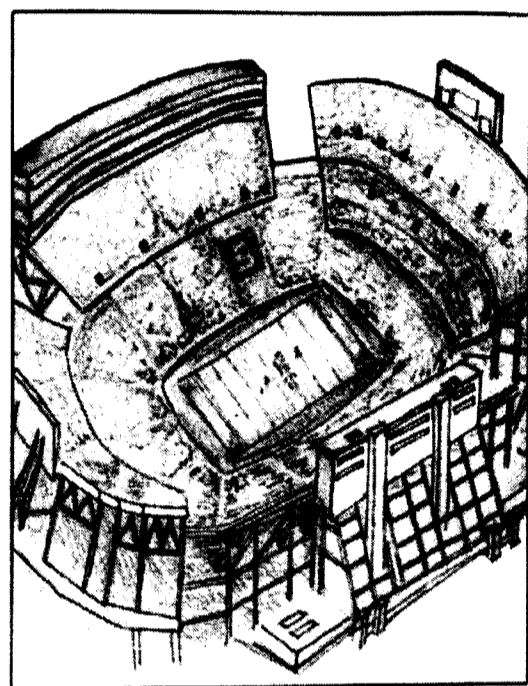
Opinions, suggestions and ideas brought up at the meeting need to be explored further at another meeting if they are going to be seriously considered by THON leaders. They also need to be acted upon and turned into concrete actions and solutions to power struggle.

THON officials have

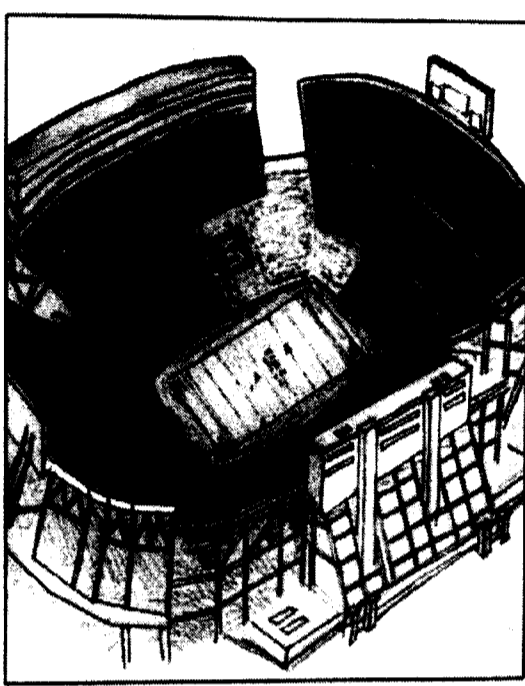
promised to continue this dialogue between their committee and THON supporters throughout our campus. We expect them to live up to their word.

The community — specifically the students and smaller organizations involved in THON — is looking for more input, so THON leaders should put their differences and disagreements aside and listen a little more to what these groups of students have to say.

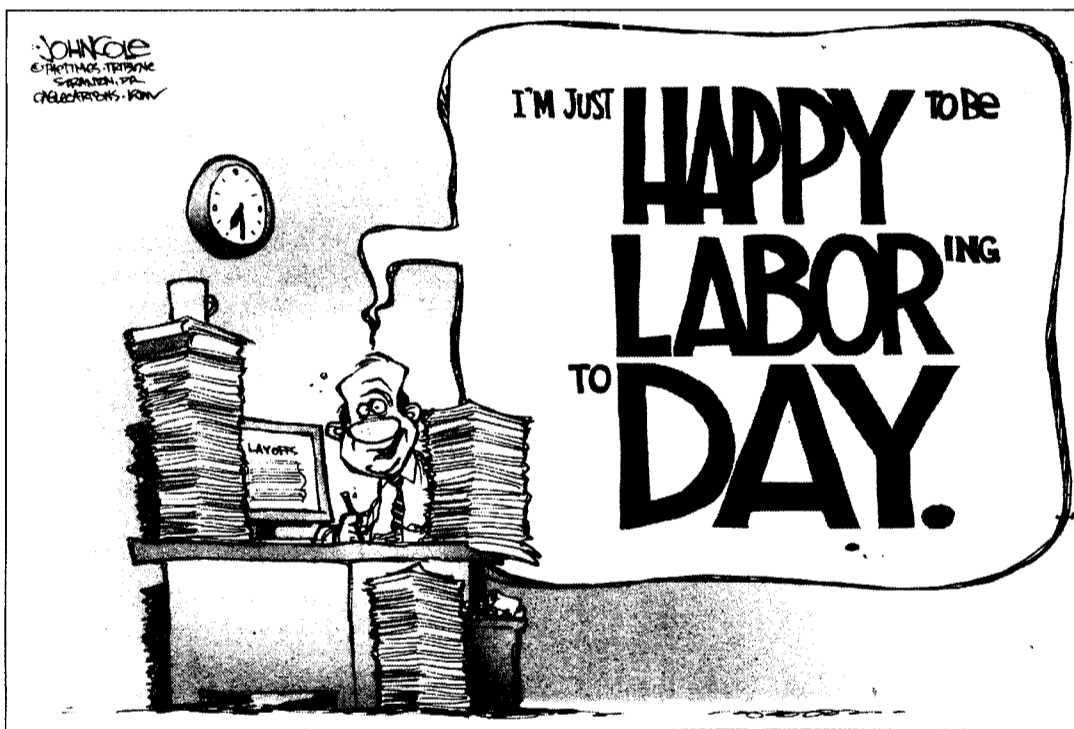
More input from more organizations would allow for more informed and universally accepted decisions from the Overall Committee members.



2009 White Out



Slight
2010 White Out



QUEST COLUMNIST

Youth should embrace outdoors

By Joshua Potter

In a 2002 British study, researchers asked 109 schoolchildren to identify 20 flash cards — 10 common species of wildlife drawn randomly from a set of 100 cards and 10 Pokémon character cards drawn from a set of 150.

By age eight, children were able to identify three-quarters of the Pokémon cards, but were capable of identifying only half of the items found in nature.

With an understatement that is typical of academics, the authors remarked that, "conservationists are doing less well than the creators of Pokémon at inspiring interest in their subjects."

Research indicates what many of us already know intuitively — that children are losing their connection to the natural world.

By extension, their understanding of the fundamental principles of how our planet works has diminished. Without a relationship with nature, children may never develop an ethic of care needed to be a steward of the planet.

In the 35 years Shaver's Creek Environmental Center has been in operation here at

Penn State, we have seen a change in the way in which children interact with their environment.

Many studies reveal that children today are spending much less time in the outdoors, and more time indoors in structured activities than just a generation ago due to lack of public space, safety concerns and ubiquity of electronic media. A 2006 study in "Pediatrics" reported that over the course of a year the average American child spends 1,023 hours in front of the television compared to 900 hours in school. There has been an undeniable shift in the way children experience nature.

This concept has reached the mainstream media in recent years. "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder," the Richard Louv bestselling book, sparked national debate on the need for children to spend more time in nature. Louv's book correlates the reduction of time children are spending outside with a multitude of ill effects, including attention disorders, obesity, stress and depression. His call for reconnecting with nature by getting children outdoors has resonated with parents, educators, health professionals and even the First Lady, culminating in a national campaign to "Leave No Child Inside."

At Shaver's Creek, part of Penn State Outreach, we are

doing our best to combat "nature-deficit disorder." Through our Penn State course offerings and programs for elementary and secondary school children, we use nature as a means to nurture cognitive development, support emotional maturation and strengthen people's capacity for creativity, problem solving and decision-making.

We believe that the best way to relate natural science concepts to children is to engage them in hands-on learning in the outdoors. According to Yale University researcher Stephen Kellert, all forms of contact with nature are valuable in their own right, but only direct experience provides the "intimacy, adventure or surprise, all of which (and much more) provide the basis for substantive development." Here at Shaver's Creek, we encourage our visitors to "never stop discovering." We believe that a healthy relationship with nature will lead to more personal well being, as well as a healthier planet.

We invite Penn State students and the community to get involved and to reconnect with nature. Shaver's Creek is a resource for you.

Joshua Potter is the marketing coordinator of Shaver's Creek Environmental Center. His e-mail is jpotter@psu.edu. This column also features research by Rob Andrejewski, doctoral candidate at Shaver's Creek.

LETTERS

Undeniable that Americans should not be welfare state

A recent study has confirmed what many Americans have feared: America is now the Welfare State. Fifty million of the 300 million people in this country are now dependent on Medicaid, which is a social welfare system for the poor, and 40 million people receive food stamps. Citizens are eligible for unemployment benefits for up to 99 weeks. Think about 99 weeks and comprehend what it would take to be without work for that long. We have made recent "strides" to supply health care to the general public and there are rumblings of "cap and trade," which would supply the Environmental Protection Agency the right to tax nearly any citizen based on their individual carbon dioxide production (seriously, hold your breath).

We must ask ourselves what is all this government spending really doing? Do these policies of welfare and regulation really have the best interest of the American people in mind? Although the answer to these questions will be debated, the results are undeniable. Expanding welfare programs and handing out entitlements to the public only increases dependency, causing a snowball effect that will ultimately bankrupt and ruin the country.

Let's reclaim the American dream (life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness) and get things the old fashioned way — through ambition and relentless hard work. Let us never forget there was once a time when working yourself out of poverty was the only option.

Andrew Chansky
senior-science

America's 'greed' is better than economic complacency

In response to Thursday's letter "Greed destroys America," which stated, "we, as Americans, are never satisfied with where we are at" as if it were a bad thing.

I, for one, would hate to live in a country where people were economically complacent. What Corey calls "greed" is what others call self-interest, which is the driver of innovation and growth in a free economy. Corey goes on to say that we pay people too much for certain jobs because we are "paying for things that are a want instead of paying for necessities." God forbid greedy Americans desire to live in something more than a subsistence economy. If that's the definition of greed, then I say "God bless America."

Kal Kaapro
graduate-law

Going vegan is the best way to become energy-efficient

I enjoyed reading about Penn State's creative methods for sustainable living in Thursday's article "Penn State researches canola as energy source." However, there is a much cheaper way to make dining halls more sustainable: add more vegan food.

According to an extensive United Nations study, raising animals for food contributes more to climate change than all cars, boats and trains combined.

The amount of resources wasted on producing animal-derived products is staggering. We currently feed more than 70 percent of the grains grown in the U.S. to animals raised for food. Similarly, nearly half of the water and 80 percent of agricultural land consumed in this country are used for livestock, rather than direct consumption by humans. Passing these resources through animals — who use up 90 percent of the energy they consume simply by living their lives — requires exponentially more land, water and other resources than simply eating plants directly.

Drew Winter
College Campaigns Assistant, peta2

blog lines

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP

Sampled music vamps rap

So I've never been the type to go for hip hop. I've always enjoyed the occasional Top 40 rap hit or the classics that everyone plays at their parties. But lately, I've REALLY been into it. And I think I've found the perfect blend of my old and new music tastes.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you... "The Kids" by B.o.B. A perfectly remixed blend of my new favorite genre and the music that has always been my favorite...

Lindsey Cryer
Music reporter

CAN YOU DIG IT?

Breakdown of first matches

Home fans will have their first chance to see the Penn State women's volleyball team this season when it hosts three matches this weekend.

The No. 1 Nittany Lions will put their 3-0 record and 105-match winning streak on the line against Seton Hall, Colgate and VCU. Here's a breakdown of each team.

Player to Watch: Outside hitter Sarah Osmun. Though she's hitting just .162, Osmun is the Pirates' go-to attacker and leads the team with 4.00 kills/set.

Ryan Loy
Women's volleyball reporter

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