

Plans for Canyon high-rise tabled

The State College Planning Commission debated a new Beaver Ave. apartment building.

"We have to find some way to let everyone live together."

By Colleen Boyle
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Michael Roeckel
Planning Commission member

After heated debate on whether to build a high-rise apartment building at the site of the current Canyon Pizza, 254 Beaver Ave., members of the State College Planning Commission decided Thursday night to put off the decision until its second October meeting.

In April, the State College Borough Council voted 5-1 to ask the Planning Commission to move forward with planning changes to the building, which would move Canyon Pizza across the street and build student apartments in the area.

Commission members hope that this addition will be beneficial to students looking for housing opportunities. However, the change would be a major shift in the dynamics of that area of Beaver Ave., said commission members.

"We have so many apartment buildings so close to each other," said commission member Michael Roeckel. "We have to find some way to let everyone live together."

The commission is already encountering multiple pitfalls in plans to build the high-rise student apartment, including zoning requirements regarding how many stories the building can be. Commission members reviewed photographs of the area and the buildings surrounding it, including the Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity

house. They expressed concern that a high-rise building might take away from the atmosphere of the area.

In addition to talking about the details of the building's structure, commission members touched on the issue of the density of students living downtown and in the residential areas.

"There is a finite student population at Penn State," said commission member Ron Madrid. "Will this building relieve pressure on the neighborhood?"

Roeckel said he was concerned that bringing so many students into an already populated area might increase foot traffic into the neighborhoods, which are already plagued by drunken students walking home on the weekends.

"Another apartment building downtown," he said, "and the whole neighborhood is gone."

Some members stressed caution in proceeding forward with the plans.

"I'm concerned that we're trying to do things on the fly," said commission member Charles Gable.

However, members seemed optimistic that a consensus will be reached eventually.

"Once we get a workable alternative maybe we can start to nip some of the details," said Madrid.

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Lynn McGowan/Collegian

Luke Miller, as Brandon Cates, questions Sabrina Bierer, as Sara Hastings, on to how he has arrived in her house yet again during "Getting Sara Married" Thursday night in a No Refund Theatre production.

Witty 'Sara' delights crowd

By Hannah Rishel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

What's a girl to do when a cute — but unscrupulous — man is carted into her apartment as a "gift" from her crazy, but well-meaning aunt?

That's what No Refund Theatre is exploring this weekend with its first show of the semester.

NRT kicked off the opening night of "Getting Sara Married" Thursday evening in 111 Marrow to a crowd of dedicated theatergoers. The show will be performed again tonight at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m. in the same room for free admission, though donations are accepted.

The play focuses on the life of Sara, played by Sabrina Bierer (senior-crime, law and justice), who lives a busy life as a lawyer in New York City, with no room for a man in her life. This greatly upsets her Aunt Martha, played

by Paul Them (sophomore-economics and mathematics), who wants nothing more than to see her niece married. Aunt Martha decides to take matters into her own hands by hiring a jack-of-all-trades to knock out a man named Brandon, played by Luke Miller (senior-English), and bring him to Sara's apartment. Despite Sara's protests that she has broken the law, Aunt Martha insists it's "not kidnapping, it's matchmaking!"

The problem is that Brandon is already engaged to be married to Heather, played by Ariana Seidel (senior-English).

Melissa Zabell (senior-public relations) and Nicole Wells (junior-recreation, park and tourism management) co-directed the show.

Sarah Retchin, Crystal Jones and Ablavi Myers attended the play to support Wells, their resident assistant.

"I love Brandon's memory loss

and how he can't remember he's allergic to foods," said Jones (freshman-communications).

During the course of the first act, Brandon gets knocked out and carted to Sara's apartment two separate times, both ending in him having an allergic reaction to food she has given him.

Retchin (freshman-communications) and Undergrads (freshman-division of undergraduate studies) both said that Sara was their favorite character in the play.

"The overall character of Sara is entertaining, because she's witty and sarcastic," said Retchin.

Myers said that Sara reminded her a lot of herself, though her tolerance of Brandon being carted into her apartment and having various food allergies was "amazing."

"I also like how she can't cook," she said. "That's so New York."

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S-Plan program helps minority students feel at home

By Micah Wintner
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Growing up on the South Side of Chicago, Kyle Paolucci learned the importance of a good mentor.

Paolucci (freshman-business) said that he looked up to the manager of a clothes store he worked at as a mentor-like figure and is looking to form a similar relationship at Penn State.

That's exactly the aim of the S-Plan, a program run by the University Health Services that pairs minority students with mentors to help them make healthy choices.

Nearly 40 students gathered in the East Halls Cultural Lounge Thursday night for the S-Plan's first program of the semester.

Paolucci said the idea of having a mentor through the S-Plan program appealed him.

"It definitely sounds like something good. It'd be cool to have a big brother," he said.

Thursday night's program was designed to help introduce students to Penn State, Amirah Heath, a coordinator for the S-Plan program, said. Heath (senior-marketing and media studies) said the S-Plan program is designed to give minority students who may feel like "small fish in a big sea" a support group.

Tammara Ross, an S-Plan mentor, said she has been involved with the program since her freshman year. Ross (senior-information sciences and technology) said that going through the S-Plan program made her more aware of the resources available to her at Penn State, including UHS, the Center for Woman's students, the Center for Counseling and Psychological

Services and the LGBT Resource Center.

The S-Plan program has been around since the 90's, Linda LaSalle, associate director of educational services at UHS, said.

African Americans and Latinos tend to have higher rates of hypertension and heart disease than whites in the United States, making it important for them to be aware of the healthy options available to them, she said.

The S-Plan derives its name from the principles of support, survival and success, UHS marketing manager Beth Collitt wrote in an e-mail. Thursday's event is the first of five programs the S-Plan has planned for the semester, Heath said.

The program will host a class in the spring to try to recruit more mentors for the program, which



Kelly Rootes-Murdy/Collegian

Mentors get to know each other at the first meeting S-Plan, a program run by University Health Services in Johnston Commons.

currently has about 25, she said.

The class was originally taught by the Department of African & African-American studies but is now taught by the Department of Biobehavioral Health, Heath said.

LaSalle said she hopes the class' change in departments will attract students with a background in health education.

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Students compare online prices, beat textbook expenses

By Sarah Peters
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Students scrambling to beat rising textbook costs this fall have boosted the popularity of online comparison sites, leaving their creators scrambling to offer the best, most up-to-date services.

Book.ly is an online comparison site that has been expanded and customized for Penn State students this fall.

Students can submit their class schedules to the website, which will automatically search for their course textbooks listed on their library. Students can also search by title or ISBN number.

Book.ly Director of Marketing Lisa Cuesta said the site was created by students at the University of Pennsylvania to save students time and money in their search for textbooks.

Cuesta said students could save anywhere from 75 to 90 percent off.

"Students are saving hundreds of dollars, and when you multiply that over the years and the number of books students have to buy, it adds up really quickly," Cuesta said.

Cuesta said the site's developers acquired the required textbooks via information online and communication with professors. If students are unable to find their course information on Book.ly, they can submit it themselves to contribute to the database, Cuesta said.

About 1,000 Penn State students have used Book.ly so far, Cuesta said.

Though Book.ly's affiliates are mostly large corporations, Cuesta said the company wants to expand their partnerships to include local bookstores.

"Right now, we wanted to stick with reputable vendors that wouldn't give problems for students or Book.ly," Cuesta said. "In the future, we want to work with local businesses and student groups. We're definitely working on a ton of improvements for next semester."

Julie Kessler (senior-psychology) said she would use online comparisons such as Book.ly.

"Textbooks are such a big expense that even if you could save \$5 or \$10, I would take that opportunity," she said.

Kessler said having a search customized for Penn State would be convenient, because sometimes books purchased online are the wrong edition.

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