

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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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.

Increased fine needs guidelines

State Sen. Jake Corman has proposed a bill to raise the maximum fine for underage drinking and alcohol-related offenses from \$300 to \$1,000.

The increase to a fee that hasn't changed since the 1970s is meant to act as a deterrent to underage drinking.

While curbing underage drinking is a challenge that should be taken on, this measure can only be effective if it is marketed properly.

Students must know about the consequences before choosing to drink

in order to be deterred by the increased fines.

We doubt that the proposed change will stop underage students from drinking completely, but it may make them think twice about drinking excessively.

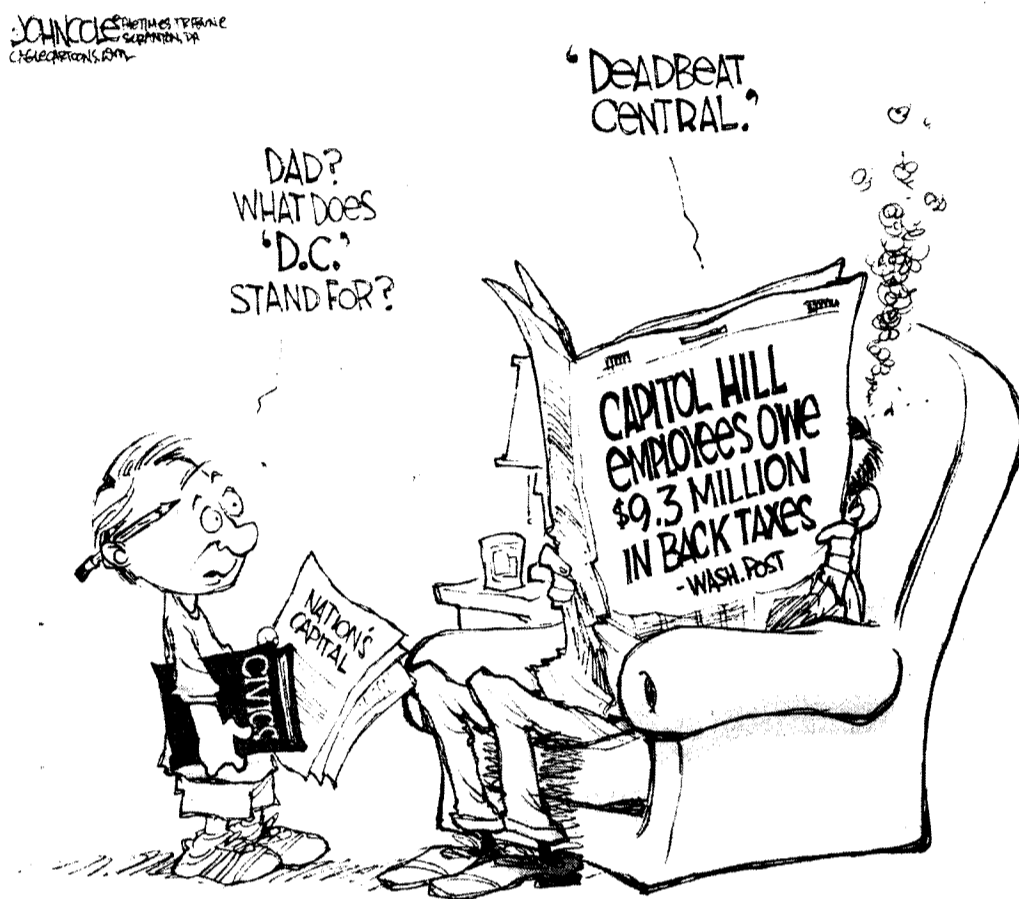
The proposed legislation also has a few kinks, like fact that students or community members could be fined even more money because they live in a college town. This doesn't seem like a just addition to the new penalties.

Overall, the legislation could be beneficial for

Penn State, which often targets the extreme and destructive behavior that stems from drinking.

But if the maximum fine is to increase, there must be a sliding scale to determine the amount to which each underage drinker will be fined. The maximum fine should be reserved for the most flagrant offenses.

If the fine increases, there should be loose guidelines established to prevent unfair fines given to underage drinkers who maintain control and aren't being destructive.



High rise marks town-gown debate

By Jessica Uzar

FINDING student housing is one of many stressful tasks in college, particularly here at Penn State. Each fall, a large number of students flood the on-campus and off-campus housing market.



MY OPINION

These students compete for a limited number of the "most-wanted" places to live.

The majority of students want to live somewhere near campus that has cheap rent. The condition of the place or the amount of space are sometimes forfeited if the price is right.

But the apartments closest to campus, mostly those between the two Are You Hungry locations, sell fast.

If students aren't on the ball, they're forced to retreat further away from campus and from their friends.

Then their friends have to walk 20 minutes to visit them (Leah, you're lucky I like you and your cooking or I would not walk that far).

For those students, or those who simply wish to be further from campus, they must move further out into the neighborhoods and surrounding areas. If

that's what they wish for, then they are happy and satisfied. If not, they are grumbling because now they have to pay for bus or car transportation to and from campus for classes, meetings and social events.

This problem of housing shortage will only grow worse as the student population continues to grow every year.

So what's the solution?

More housing, like the proposed high-rise apartment building where Canyon Pizza is currently located.

But the debate of its construction marks one of the many problems that arise between town and gown. Gown wants — and needs — more housing options. But town — rightly so — is worried about the continued misbehavior of students in these neighborhoods.

The town (and more specifically the State College Planning Commission) is running into a few issues before they can make a decision on the plans.

One issue is zoning regulations. Some are worried that changing the zoning laws for that address and allowing a high rise will affect the look of the area. It will, yes. But not in a dramatic fashion. There are already buildings like Penn Towers and Beaver Terrace that rise eight to 11 stories. Adding another building that is around the same height should not be a problem.

I don't think State College will ever have to worry about looking like the downtown of a major city.

The charm of the campus is one of the things I fell in love with when I visited the school and I believe the university will work to always keep that charm.

The committee is also worried that another apartment building would increase drunken student foot traffic through the neighborhoods on the weekends. I actually think the opposite would be true. The more students you concentrate downtown, the more that aren't forced to live in apartment buildings further from campus, so they don't have to walk as far to get home.

An increase in the student density is another issue brought up by the commission, but this is not the reason for the drinking problems the town has.

I think this new apartment building is a great idea and should be allowed to go forward. I hope the borough council and planning commission look to student and university input. This is an issue that could really strengthen the relationship between town and student leaders and the community in general.

Jessica Uzar is a junior majoring in journalism and political science and is the Collegian's Wednesday columnist. Her e-mail is jlu125@psu.edu

Penn State fans displayed great behavior at away game

On behalf of my Bama friends and family (including my Alabama college freshman son), I want to let ya'll know what a pleasure it was to have the Penn State fans in Tuscaloosa last weekend.

It was our honor to encounter such a wonderful collection of fans from "up north," all of whom were very courteous and seemingly happy to have made the trip; the final game score notwithstanding. The heat and humidity were challenging for our visitors, but we sincerely hope that everyone who made the effort to travel such a great distance found the destination to be entertaining and worthwhile. You should know that, without a doubt, Alabama fans think the world of Joe Paterno and his friendship and camaraderie with our beloved Bear Bryant. Paterno and Penn State are class acts, and we look forward to your return to Alabama in the future.

My family, friends and I look forward to our trip to University Park next year! Best wishes for your remaining season.

Terry Calcote
University of Alabama, Class of 1979

Nittany Lions have best fans, displayed that in Alabama

I am writing to thank and congratulate some of the best fans in college football. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting a number of visitors in Tuscaloosa last weekend. I hope you all were treated well and enjoyed your visit.

I look forward to visiting your campus next year. Again, thank you all for being such wonderful ambassadors for your fine university.

Perry Jackson
University of Alabama, Class of 1999

Islamic texts do incite the violence of Muslim radicals

After reading Tuesday's column "Unjust hate defies meaning of 9/11," I find myself left with a question. Michael Oplinger wrote: "Al Qaeda remains a small group acting on a twisted interpretation of a religious text."

Mr. Oplinger, have you read any of the Islamic texts?

The Quran and the Hadith (a critical tool used by Muslim scholars to interpret the Quran) are documents consumed by violence and savagery. Even with the most forgiving liberal hermeneutics, buttressed by claims of mistranslation, a purely objective look at the Islamic texts reveal an inherently violent God. To be sure, Islamic texts are just as violent as the other Abrahamic faiths.

The knee-jerk reaction that Al Qaeda is "distorting," "twisting," and "misinterpreting" the faith is false — the fundamentalist have the book on their side. Why be surprised by this? These texts were written in a time when barbarism was a social and cultural banality.

Saalim Abdul Carter
Class of 2007

blog lines

FOOTBLOG

Mid-week football news

Football reporters Audrey Snyder and Brendan Monahan discuss the news coming out of Joe Paterno's weekly press conference...

Joe Paterno addressed the media and discussed the Alabama loss and what the team needs to do as it moves forward...

Jack Crawford was also made available to the media and spoke about bouncing back against Kent State...

Football beat reporters

CAN YOU DIG IT?

Volleyers at the White House

Check out these videos from NCAA Champions Day, including a snippet of President Obama's speech, a clip of Sen. John Kerry meandering through the crowd and a look at the TCU women's rifle team and their very festive wardrobe choice...

Emily Kaplan
Women's volleyball reporter

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP

I can feel your Halo

Do you know where you're going to be at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday? Even though I have a COMM 180 test Tuesday morning, an eight-page paper for ENGL 487 due Thursday and hours of more homework ahead of me this week, I'm going out Monday night.

Not to the bars — but to the midnight release of "Halo: Reach."

Yeah, it's super nerdy. I'm even wearing Halo t-shirts to mark the occasion, and all three Halo original soundtracks may or may not be stuck on repeat on my iPod...

Zach Gelger
Police/fire/courts reporter

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