

OPINION

THE DAILY
Collegian

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Letters

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Today is the time to remember

We all remember what it felt like one year ago.

Helicopters circled the campus, the FBI assisted local law enforcement looking in manholes and Dumpsters and rumors flew unchecked. It was a scary time to be a Penn State student.

After almost two days of searching, Joe Dado's body was found. As a campus community we came together, held vigils and wristband sales — and then we let time pass.

Today we challenge you to relive that day. Don't become complacent.

Dado is not a symbol. He was a brother, a son, a friend and a Penn State student.

Resist the urge to make

the tragedy an example or a case study.

Though it's easier, fight the impulse to treat this clinically. Dado's death is a living and breathing event that still has ripples throughout our community.

And though Dado's legacy is his life and the people he touched, there are lessons we all can learn from his story.

The best we can hope for with tragedies like his is that some good can eventually come from it.

The event of Dado's death was a wake up call for administrators and student leaders to make necessary changes to the university's alcohol culture.

We commend them for the progress that has come so far, though we stress this is just the beginning of a long and important process.

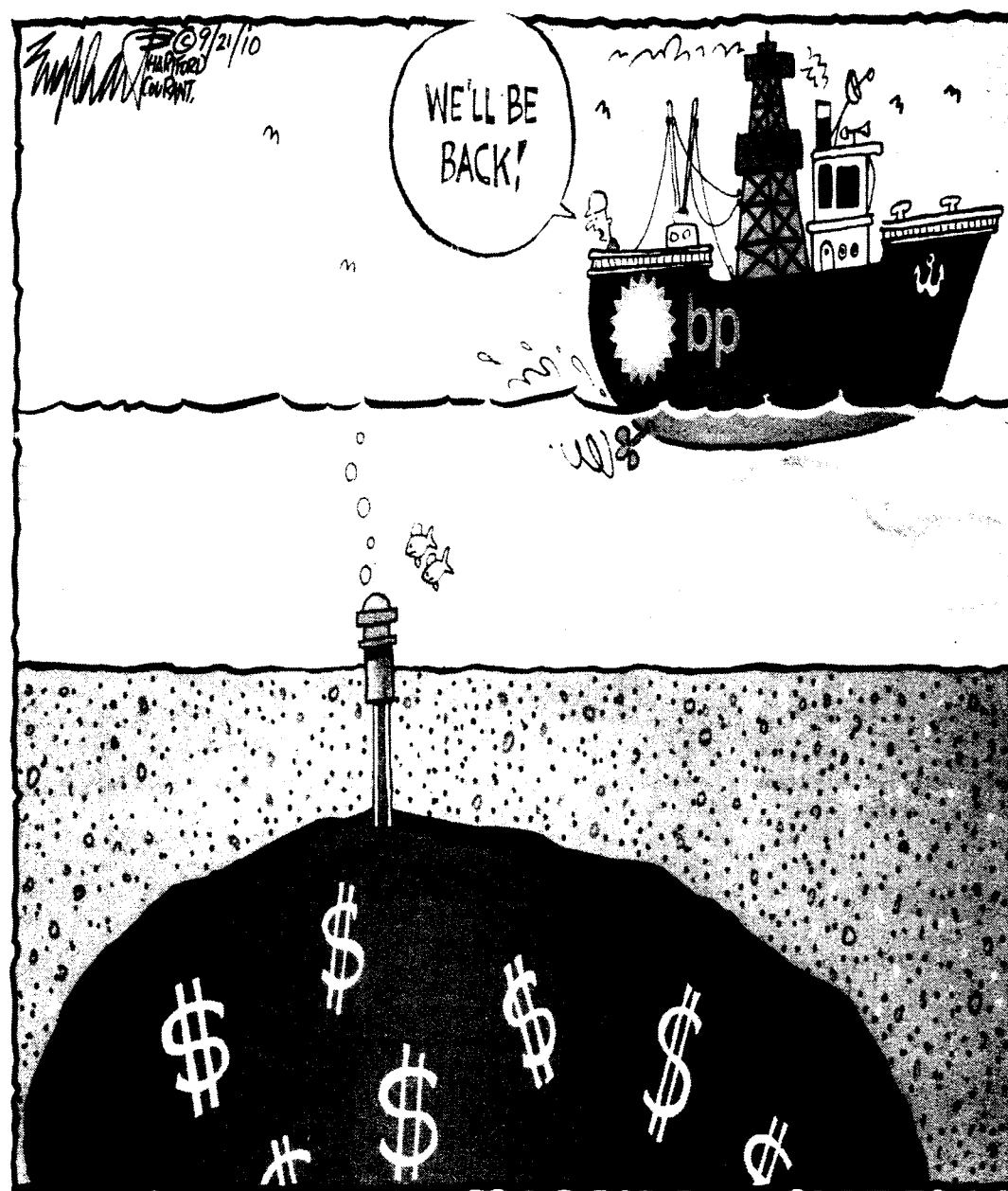
But there we go, filing away our emotions and focusing instead on policies and initiatives.

Today that's not Penn State's task.

Faced with uncertainty, fear and a terrible sense that this could have happened to any of us, the university banded together last September.

We became both a unified campus and community.

Take that one-year-old feeling and come together again today to mourn and reflect.



Danger caused by nation's pastime resonates with Penn player's suicide

By Michael Oplinger

I never thought I'd be surprised to see Owen's name on the front page of the New York Times. Of all my high school classmates, he was always the most likely one to appear prominently on the pages of the country's top newspapers.

Owen Thomas, a star football player bright enough to get into the University of Pennsylvania's prestigious Wharton School of Business, was destined to be a leader in whatever field he chose. Combine his intelligence with natural leadership ability and infectious personality and it was easy to see he would someday change the world.

I, along with everyone else who knew the captain of the Penn football team with his trademark red hair, just never expected to see his name on the front pages so soon.

But last Tuesday's New York Times featured an article about Owen that may shed light on his tragic and sudden suicide last April.

The article reveals that doctors at Boston University found evidence of chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE, in Owen's brain.

CTE is a brain disease caused by repetitive brain trauma and can lead to depression and inhibition of impulse control.

While doctors certainly could not attribute Owen's death to the disease or his football career, they also couldn't rule it out as a factor.

In April, his death sent shockwaves through the communities at Penn and Parkland High School.

Now it has a chance to have an impact throughout the much larger football community.

Evidence of CTE has been found in former NFL players, including two who have taken their own lives. But Owen is the youngest person to show signs of the disease, suggesting to doctors and researchers that it can impact athletes of all ages, professional or amateur.

Reforming football to make it safer at all ages has already started. Concussions are being taken more seriously at all levels. Coaches are beginning to see the consequences of repeated impacts to the head.

But reform can't come soon enough as football's popularity continues to increase, exposing more to the unforgiving nature of the sport.

The answer certainly isn't to ban the great game that Owen loved so dearly. Football is inherently violent, but that doesn't mean it has to be dangerous.

Continually improved equipment and increased education about head trauma will make the country's most popular sports safe for all to play.

Showing their incredible strength and courage, Owen's parents, Rev. Tom Thomas and Rev. Kathy Brearley, have chosen to release the results of the Boston University study in hopes of making football safer in Owen's memory.

Rev. Brearley is also scheduled to appear before the House Education and Labor Committee that is currently looking into the issue.

The committee hopes to increase education about con-

cussions at public schools and force players with concussion symptoms to sit out of practices and games.

While the right steps are being taken to encourage safety, Owen's tragic tale reminds us as fans that football players are human. Underneath the helmet and shoulder pads are sons, brothers and friends. They are young men playing a game they love, no less vulnerable to harm than anyone else.

As fans, it's easy to lose sight of the bigger picture, to forget the implications of every single impact caused by tackling. But next time you think about criticizing a player for jogging off the field after a big hit or taking a few plays off, please remember the potential repercussions of playing football.

Players are allowed to take breaks. They're allowed to sit out a few plays. They're human.

The Tuesday New York Times article eventually appeared on other major news outlets such as CNN.com and ESPN.com, but this is a story that can't be told enough.

To let Owen's tale fade from memory would be a disservice to his memory and his ability to impact people's lives — a power that transcends mortality, that transcends life.

If we learn from his story, his incredible, infectious spirit will live on through the millions of kids across the country safely enjoying the game he loved so much.

Owen will have changed the world, just like we always knew he would.

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blog lines

SMALL WORLD

D.C. has ups and downs

I just met and escorted newly elected D.C. mayor Vincent Gray up to the news studio. Ya know, no big deal.

And last week I did the same for the current mayor, Adrian Fenty. No offense to State College, but shaking hands with Elizabeth Goreham isn't quite the same as shaking hands with the mayor of a big metropolitan city, let alone our nation's capital. In the past week, I've also gotten to go out and record man-on-street interviews and edit radio pieces in Adobe Audition (sound editing software). Interning at WTOP just keeps getting cooler.

As for living in Washington, D.C., I'm reminded most days how careful we all have to be. There was a hostage crisis at the Discovery building less than three weeks ago. A gunman was discovered near the capitol Friday morning. A guy shot and killed his mother and himself Thursday at Johns Hopkins Hospital. And in class, one of my professors talked about what it was like being in D.C. on Sept. 11, 2001, and how scary and stressful it was locating all the Penn State students — who were here for the same program I am now — and making sure they were alright. In fact, part our contract to participate in the Washington Program includes a short disclaimer basically stating we are assuming a higher safety risk here due to the threat of terrorism...

Erica Brecher
Small World blogger

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP

EP firms up artist's talent

According to his recent biography, Eric Alexandrakis' music has been featured on channels such as MTV, ABC and VH1. Plus, with overcoming the obstacle of cancer — not once, but twice — Alexandrakis has shown his strengths through his music, commercials for cancer research, and small acting roles, according to his bio.

His recent EP, "Terra Firma," is a segment of Alexandrakis' 30 track album, which includes all original songs and one that is performed with John Taylor from Duran Duran, who discovered Alexandrakis.

"Terra Firma" provides a fusion of pop, electronic and indie-rock music that gives a unique sound to satisfy fans of all three genres.

The EP starts off with "Bloom," which personally is one of my favorite songs on Terra Firma. "Bloom" just screams to me the message "instant hit for radio." It's very upbeat and different, but at the same time it would fit with songs that are played on the radio with its danceable beats.

Joshua Glossner
Style and trends reporter

'Night Out' in New York

Fashion's Night Out was on Friday night, and tons of people — including celebrities — came out of the woodwork to attend the various events at the hot spots in New York City.

The Big Apple can be kind of intimidating at first for new visitors, but after riding the subway a time or two, you feel like a resident. I am residing in a small apartment with my new friend Jill and her roommate, so I also get to experience living the studio apartments in New York.

What's even more unique about the apartment that I'm staying in is that Dustin Hoffman used to live on the same street.

I got to walk down Times Square for the second time in my life, but this time I had more time to take pictures of the billboards and the sights.

Possibly one of the most exciting buildings I saw was the Parson's New School of Design. In case you do not recognize the name, this is where Project Runway contestants create and show their designs for TV.

I ate at John's Pizzeria with Jill and her boyfriend. One thing I was surprised about was the food and drinks were brought out more quickly than restaurants in State College. You would think it would be the other way around but I guess not...

Joshua Glossner
Style and trends reporter

As real as vampires get

With the recent vampire trend that has currently swept the entertainment industry, HBO is taking a realistic approach to its new show and adding a historical twist. The new series, called "Boardwalk Empire," is about the time period of prohibition, which generates the first round of organized crime. The show takes place in the '20s and shows how criminals put their time, money and effort into bringing banned alcohol into the country to capitalize on illegal activity.

The aspect of this show that will probably draw audiences is its derailing from the supernatural shows such as "True Blood," "Vampire Diaries" and other shows that base content on the strictly unrealistic...

Allegra O'Neill
Arts enterprise reporter

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