

NOVEMBER

## Crime reflects drinking culture

Given State College's reputation as one of the safest cities in the country, the recent stabbings at the 797 Lounge and Knights of Columbus came as a surprise to the area's residents.

But we believe Penn State's reputation as a drinking school may be partially to blame.

Both incidents involved alcohol, students and people from out of town. Large events, such as Homecoming and Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts, attract many

non-students to State College because of the party atmosphere these events create and encourage.

When these people visit, they seem determined to drink themselves out of control in order to keep up with their perception of Penn State students' habits.

The incidents show that Penn State's reputation as a place to drink heavily may be getting too big for the town.

Many visitors talk about drinking excessively as the highlight of their

weekends in State College.

Given other incidents at the bar, 797 Lounge should look into increased security measures to avoid becoming a place known as unsafe and prone to violence.

While the incidents are rare and State College is still a safe town, these recent occurrences could be a reflection of what Penn State has become — a university with a large portion of the student body proud of an unsafe drinking culture.

## Lion 'turnaround' is unlikely

In response to Monday's article "Mid-season turnarounds can be done," I am sorry but you are comparing apples to oranges. How old was the head coach in 1964 compared to 83 year old JoePa today? Also, we currently have a completely inept offensive coaching staff that just cannot put together a game plan to allow the players a chance to succeed. Should there be a turnaround it will solely be the result of player talent, not the coaching staff.

Watch any college game and look at how involved and in control the head coach is. JoePa is just there. He is unable to perform the tasks that the job requires — such as recruiting. How long would you last on your job if you could not perform the requirements of the position? Start the national search now for a new head coach and staff while the program can be salvaged. Waiting one more year is going to mean two years of lost recruiting and require several years to turn it around.

Yes, JoePa is an icon and thanks for everything, but that is history. If he has the right to dictate when he is going to leave while we watch the program flounder than I have the right as a season ticket holder to expect reimbursement for the inferior product that I am paying for, not to expect to pay more. Come on President Spanier and Tim Curley, it is the typical elderly person that cannot make such an important decision so it is up to you to do what is in the best interest of the future of Penn State football and make the decision for him. After all, it is your job.

Rick Herman  
Class of 1975

## Face-to-face is also cathartic

In response to Monday's letter "Defriending solves problems," the writer mentioned how "defriending" someone on Facebook could be a cathartic act, something that would purge your life of the annoying people who are in your world. Those who are leaving the snarky comments on your Facebook page should be punished by having one less friend on their iEgos.

But at the risk of sounding snarky myself, a better solution would be not to judge your life by the amount of people you barely know in a list. Try going out and speaking with people, then consider deleting your Facebook account. Trust me, it would be much more cleansing to get that constant need of validation off of your back.

Timothy Rinehart  
Class of 2008

## Front page should be diverse

In response to Monday's article "Community wears pride," as happy as I am for "Lady GayGay" in winning this year's drag show, I really question the newsworthiness of the event and the necessity to put a large photo on the front page of The Daily Collegian. In fact if I did not know any better I would think the only thing that happened on campus the past week were Coming Out Week events. Most of these were positive events that benefit the LGBTQA community and deserve a fair amount of press, but when a drag show where contestants go out into the audience and give lap dances while 400 other people laugh at them is the best news article we can come up with over a three-day period it really makes me find more value in The Onion and Phroth than in this newspaper. I know I do not have to read The Collegian, but then where am I expected to get my crossword that I do each day during class?

Kevin Nichols  
senior-finance

### THE DAILY Collegian

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**About the Collegian:** The Daily Collegian and The Weekly Collegian are published by Collegian Inc., an independent, nonprofit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and professionals. Pennsylvania State University students write and edit both papers and solicit advertising for them. During the fall and spring semesters as well as the second six-week summer session, The Daily Collegian publishes Monday through Friday. Issues are distributed by mail to other Penn State campuses and subscribers.

**Complaints:** News and editorial complaints should be presented to the editor. Business and advertising complaints should be presented to the business manager.

### Who we are

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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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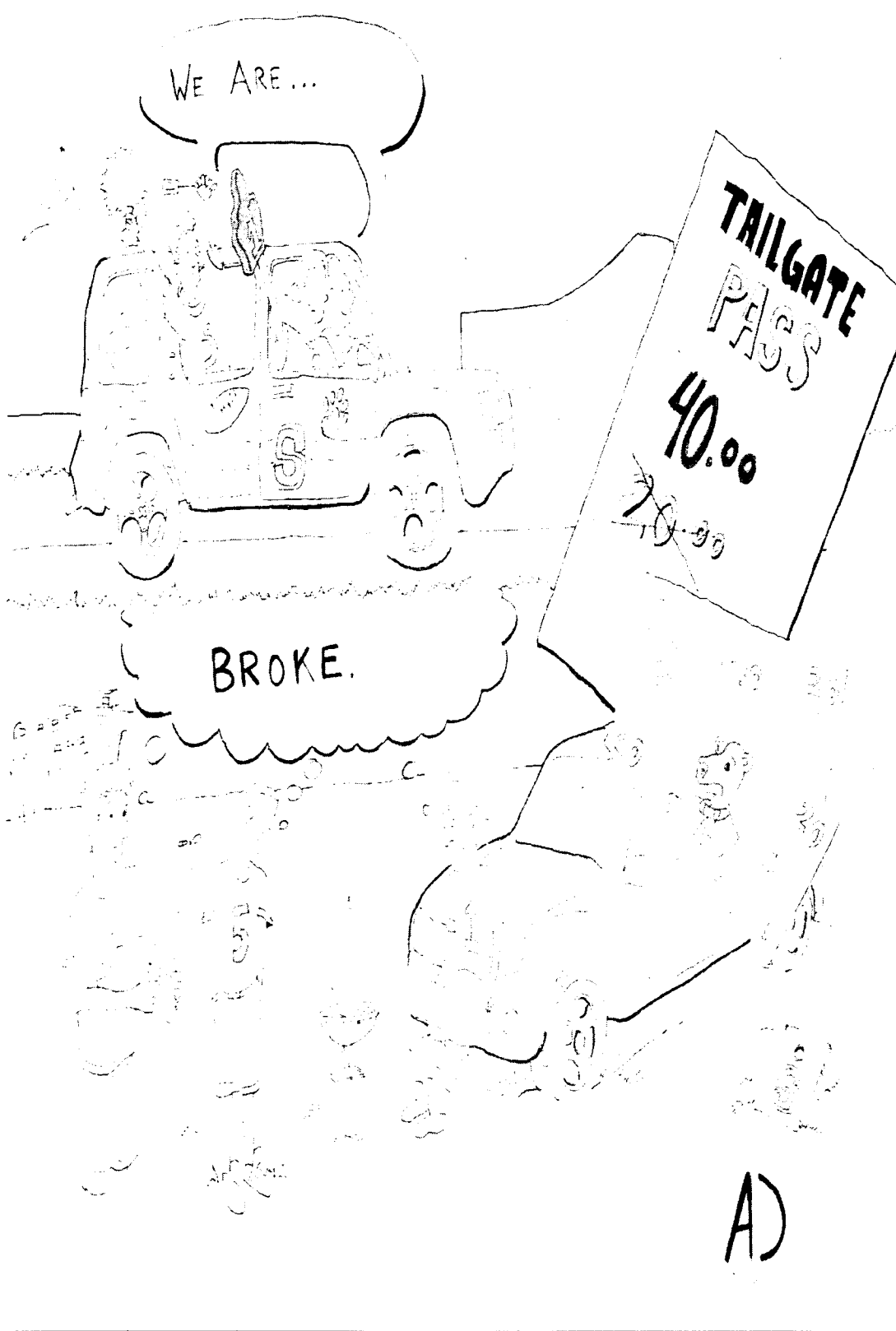
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## Education should be election issue

By Michael Oplinger

RARELY does the resignation of a school district leader make national news.

Yet last week when Michelle Rhee announced she was stepping down as chancellor of the Washington D.C. public school system, the news appeared on multiple major news outlets.

While the departure of the controversial yet successful Rhee may have negative effects on the turnaround of D.C. schools, it has fueled an important national discussion about one of the country's biggest yet ignored issues — the need for education reform.

In her three years as chancellor, Rhee tenaciously pursued reforms that led to increased test scores and the end of decades of declining enrollment. But Rhee, an alumna of Teach for America, employed controversial policies to get the results. She closed dozens of underperforming schools and fired ineffective teachers, after persuading union leaders for the power to do so.

Rhee's disregard for the political implications of her actions represent the attitude needed to truly make changes to the education system. It's a movement that calls for devoted, driven pioneers to shake things up and reform to quit.

Her personality has given her publicity as one of the leaders in the movement to fix public education, including a spotlight in the recently released education documentary "Waiting for

Superman." She also collaborated with educators from across the country to release a manifesto called "How to fix our schools," which was printed in the Washington Post.

In it, the reform leaders call for recruiting better teachers, equipping them with the best technology possible and making public charter schools a more viable option.

Others have suggested paying teachers more to lure the top students into the profession or training current teachers to continually improve classrooms.

No one can be sure what reforms will work, but at least a conversation has been started among the public — even if Congress has rarely discussed it.

Education reform has long been a campaign promise from candidates of both parties.

But like many other campaign promises, it has rarely been delivered, as evidenced by the failing school system in the city where laws are made.

Politicians argue for smaller class sizes while also promoting a smaller budget for social programs such as education. Like many other things politicians say, this seems contradictory, unless they simply want fewer kids to go to school.

To make things worse, this year, it seems to be absent from debates completely. I recently watched a debate between candidates for U.S. Representative for my hometown 15th district, covering much of Allentown and the surrounding area.

During the hour-long debate, not one of the three candidates mentioned education once, unless they were bragging about their own academic work. Though they're competing to

represent a district with a rather large disparity between the poor urban schools and wealthy suburban schools, the candidates bickered childishly about who supported bank bailouts, stimulus packages and health care reform bills.

While important to note, those issues are things of the past. Instead of focusing on how to better the future, politicians have spent most of their time looking back and attempting to point fingers.

But education reform needs a forward-thinking mindset. An issue as important as this can't afford to wallow in the mistakes of the past.

Education is supposed to be the great equalizer. In theory, all students are supposed to have access to quality education, no matter what background or area the kids come from.

If the United States hopes to regain its status as a leader in industry and innovation, it must make sure it utilizes its natural human resources. To fail to properly train all students could waste enormous potential.

In a country billed as the land of opportunity, education is the true provider of opportunity. Education opens the doors for students to realize their potential and provide a better future.

To continue to keep those doors closed for some students because of disparities between school quality will leave many children behind.

And the country will stay behind with them.

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## blog lines

### INCOGNITO

#### Words from the web team

Welcome to the Collegian's web staff blog, Incognito. My name is Andrew Metcalf, and I'm the Web editor here at the Collegian.

It's been a hectic couple of weeks since we launched the new site, and though things are coming together there are certainly still several parts of the site that remain unfinished. The site transition hasn't been smooth the whole way, and some parts of the site have taken longer than we anticipated. We're getting it together, but you'll probably notice the odd broken link or missing story for the short term.

I'd like to talk a little bit about why we made this blog.

First, the Collegian's web staff more than tripled in size this year, jumping from two to seven, so we felt we had enough people to keep a blog like this going. We may occasionally use this blog as a soapbox for whatever's on our mind, but we'll try to mostly keep it relevant to the Collegian's web presence.

Second, we have put a lot of new functionality into this site, and we wanted the chance to explain it all. Plus, we've still got a ton of new features yet to debut, and we may preview some of those here.

Finally, we wanted to have a good forum to solicit ideas and feedback, an effort that we regret to say has been slightly scattered up to this point.

We want your feedback on anything about the site — complaints, suggestions, confusion, whatever. We'll attempt to respond to any substantive comments left on this blog.

Andrew Metcalf  
Web editor

Read more of The Daily Collegian's blogs at [psu.collegian.com/blogs](http://psu.collegian.com/blogs).