

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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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 that 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.

Good to see prevention efforts

Citing a decrease in thefts and fights, the State College Police Department has deemed the Neighborhood Enforcement and Alcohol Team effective in reducing crime in the Highlands neighborhood.

Given recent violent incidents in State College, it's good to see the police being proactive with a program that actually works.

NEAT focuses on making "pre-party contacts," which provides a much needed increase in student-police relations.

This measure attempts to bridge the disconnect between students and law enforcement by establishing a mutual understanding of acceptable conduct.

The goal is to prevent parties from spiraling out of control. With this program, the police and hosts will already have a relationship, if the parties do get out of hand.

The consistency of having the same officers patrol the area also helps.

If hosts becoming familiar with the patrolling officers cause parties to be less rowdy and violent,

then the NEAT program should be continued and expanded to other problem areas.

Unlike the previously proposed Nuisance Gathering Ordinance, which takes effect after the violation, the NEAT program encourages preventative measures to avoid violence, theft and criminal mischief.

With alcohol-related behavior a constant problem, the police deserve credit for acting on the issues, rather than simply reacting with strict consequences.



Election research goes beyond surface

By Katie Sullivan

I was in sixth grade during the 2000 presidential election. We followed the campaigns and the controversy in my history class, and in the process we learned the basics about voting and how the government functioned.

Following election day, my friend came to school and said her mom voted for George W. Bush. When I, a young product of a fairly Democratic family, asked why, her explanation was simple: Bush was way cuter than the frumpy Al Gore.

Thank you, parental unit, for aiding in the election of one of the greatest presidents of all time.

Not. Four years later it was like déjà vu when John Kerry's Frankenstein-ish looks lost him the vote of a Pennsylvania housewife.

Even at age 12, something about an adult voting based on the politician's looks irked me.

But now, 10 years later, on the brink of my 22nd birthday, I hear of people voting based on ridiculous criteria. Which politicians' spouse dresses better? Who has the funniest ad campaigns? Enie-meenie-minee-moeing the names in the voting box. The reasons are endless, but no one is less pathetic than the other.

Mid-term elections are coming up in exactly eight days, and though this is not the presidential election, it is no less important. The representatives elected on Nov. 2 will dictate the future of Pennsylvania and the nation for the next four years. Votes should be based on policy, along with economic and social agendas, rather than which candidate looks better in a three-piece suit, or skirt for that matter.

Don't know much about the candidates?

The remedy to this epidemic of people who vote without candidate criteria is simple: Take 10 minutes each day to look up each congressional, gubernatorial, state legislature and country representative candidate. Research one or two candidates per day. Write down three things you support about their political platform and three things you disagree with.

Next Monday, the night before the election, make a decision. Know who you are voting for going into the booth. When you are about to pull the lever or touch the electronic screen, don't think about who looked better in their campaign ads, but rather who you actually believe will bring positive change to Centre County.

It's easy. Just yesterday I spent the afternoon in a small room with 15 student editors and one congressional candidate after the other.

To prepare for the question and answer session, I went on the candidates' Web sites and

researched their beliefs, supported policies and endorsed bills — no self-respecting journalist wants to look like an uneducated idiot when speaking with a potential political official. After questions about education, health care and civil rights, the editorial board made its decision about who to endorse.

It only took me a few minutes before each candidate arrived to make a relatively informed decision about who to lend my support.

You don't need to be a journalist, political activist or news junkie to cast an informed and important vote. You just have to be a United States citizen who cares about the direction this country will go.

In a world where everyone's whining and moaning about the economy, the war, health care and everything else there possibly is to complain about, this is our chance to get our voices heard through local representation.

You might have a thing for gubernatorial candidate Dan Onorato's smiling dimples, or you may want to look deeply into his opponent Tom Corbett's blue eyes. But please, base your vote on something a little deeper than the politician's exterior.

Do a little research and base your vote on the issues.

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Lions' past can't be forgotten

In response to Friday's letter "PSU football still a business," has Mr. Herman already forgotten the past five seasons of Penn State football? In that time we have had two Big Ten championships and an 11-2 season. We've also won four of five bowl games in that time. So much blame is put on coaching and "conservative" play calling when in reality, play calling has very little to do with success in football.

It's the execution of the called play that makes the difference. The fact is that we have a true freshman quarterback, an injured defense and an offensive line that can't even get the best half back tandem in the Big Ten going. It's called a "rebuilding year," and it happens. If you bought your season tickets because you honestly thought we were going to contend for the Big Ten title this year than you made what the business world would call a "bad investment." The thing that bothered me the most about Mr. Herman's letter was that he only focused on JoePa's football record and forgets that the players are in college. What about the fact that Joe Paterno has shown incredible interest in higher education. He even donated an unbelievable sum of money to have a library built. How many football coaches can say that? Penn State consistently has one of the highest graduation rates among its players and that is a direct effect of Joe Paterno's teachings. Mr. Herman insists that JoePa and the Penn State coaches owe him something when in reality the Penn State community owes JoePa more than he could ever owe the Penn State community.

John Boyle
senior-architectural engineering

LGBT supporters can do more

On Oct. 20, I showed my support for the LGBTQA community by wearing purple. I was pleasantly surprised when I saw that many other students also participated in this sign of support. While I do agree that presenting a united front, albeit through clothing, is effective, I also believe that there are other and more proactive ways to show that we sympathize.

For example, if every one of the allies who wore purple on Oct. 20 joined an LGBTQA group on campus, I believe that their outreach to troubled and "at-risk" teenagers would double. Yes, showing support through wearing purple was a way to reflect to the LGBTQA community that you are on their side, but there is so much more that needs to be done. Awareness needs to be spread, harassment needs to be combated and suicide needs to be erased as an option. I wholeheartedly believe that the tragic ending to Tyler Clementi's young life could have been avoided had he known that there is a tremendous outpouring of support from not only the LGBTQ community, but also the allies. If by joining one of the LGBTQA groups on campus and expanding their outreach prevents an incident such as Tyler's on Penn State's campus, ultimately saving a life, why not join? We need to show these individuals that suicide is never the answer and that it gets better, they just need to be here to see it.

Jordanna Lembo
freshman-psychology

1964 season good comparison

In response to the Oct. 18 article "Mid-season turnarounds can be done," this was an exceptional article. The reporter talked to some outstanding people who weren't out to just bash the team and the coaches. Regardless of their record, they were winners, and "heroes" after the way they pulled their season together. They had good things to say about an "unknown" young assistant coach, in whom they still indicate confidence. The current students should have the opportunity to witness what State College was like after that Ohio State win. It was absolute bedlam — and with only half as many students as there are on campus today. Thanks for the excellent reporting.

Bob Casey
Class of 1966

blog lines

SMALL WORLD A scary night

A few weeks ago, two drunk Russians followed me home from the metro at night. I told them I couldn't understand them (though the fact that they were making fun of me transcended the language barrier). One of them kept trying to nudge me against a fence. It was definitely one of the scariest moments of my life; I was pretty sure something terrible was about to happen to me.

Luckily, one of the guys ran off to meet his friends. The other guy told me we should wait, but I bolted and luckily I got home safely.

I like to think that if they had kept following me, the militia who patrol my street would have helped me out, but with a name like "militia," they aren't exactly the most approachable people, and I'm not sure how willing they are to help foreigners. The scariest things about Russia are definitely not its famed mafia (to which, apparently, the old ladies who sell flowers in the metro give their proceeds) or the threat of being kidnapped by a prostitution ring and needing Liam Neeson to save you, or even terrorism. The scariest things about Russia have more to do with adjusting to the issues that make living in a big city like St. Petersburg difficult...

Erin Rowley
Small World blogger

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