

# 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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■ **Postal mail/In person**  
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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 it receives. Letters chosen also run on The Daily Collegian Online and may be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters become

## Schools should join state group

University Park Undergraduate Association President Christian Ragland and other UPUA representatives traveled to Harrisburg last weekend to propose the formation of a Pennsylvania Student Association, but they did not receive much support from student representatives from state-funded schools.

Ragland will forge on with in developing the association, which will now only involve the four state-related schools — Penn State, Temple University, University of Pittsburgh and Lincoln University.

We understand the smaller state schools' hesitation in joining an association with a much larger

Penn State, and that the issue of tuition increases affects them less. However, we believe the power of Penn State's voice would allow for the concerns of Pennsylvania schools of all sizes to be better heard by the state.

The more schools behind one voice, the stronger it sounds.

We see no negative consequences in the open communication between all Pennsylvania schools within an organization with the ability to truly enact change. When a lot of differing opinions come together, only good can result.

What one school does to help their students curb financial costs can be used to help students at

another similar school.

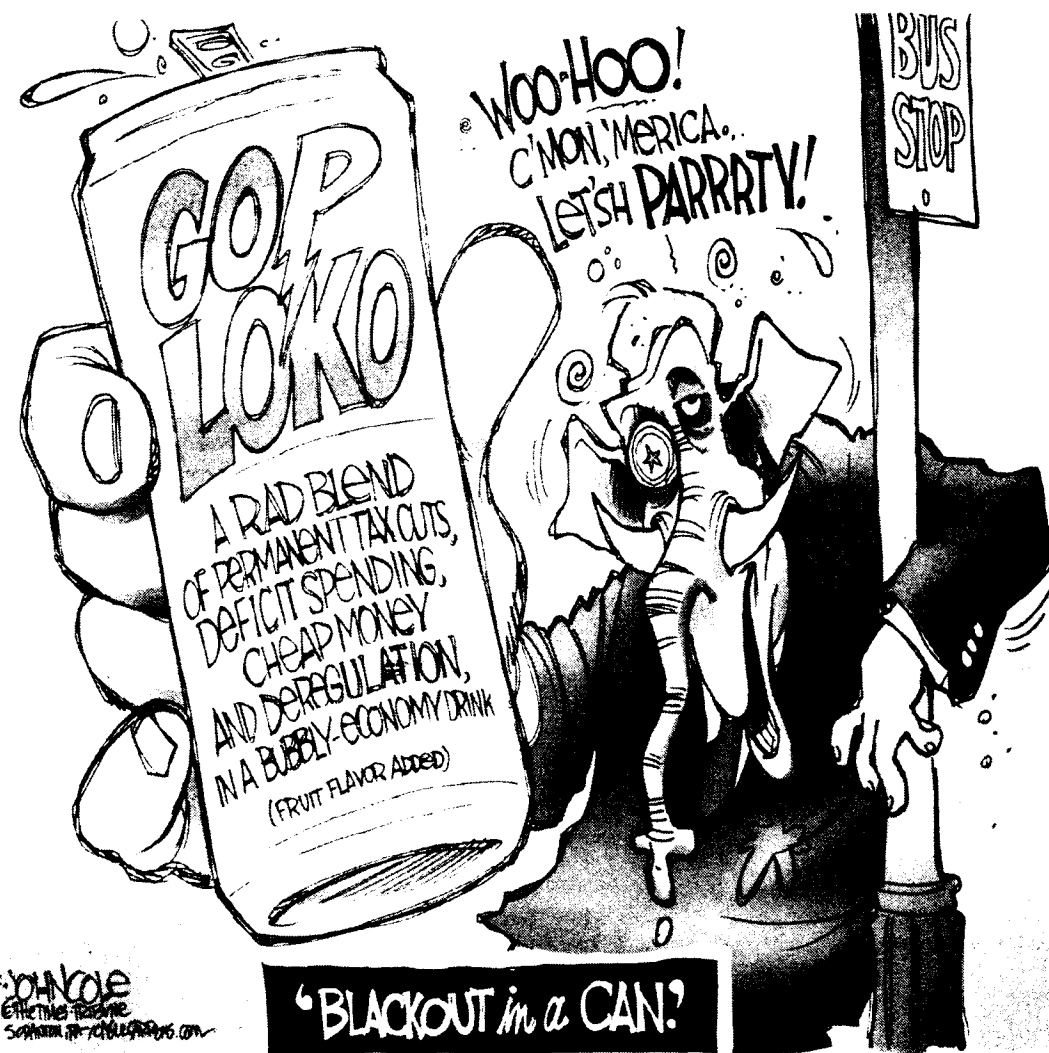
Organizations like the Pennsylvania Student Association have already proven successful in other states, including Michigan and California.

Why can't Pennsylvania be the next success story?

Christian Ragland should continue his pursuit of open communication among school representatives and the Board of Student Government Presidents.

The sharing of ideas and hearing differing opinions can only benefit student groups.

But other student representatives should also realize that the positives outweigh the negatives with the formation of this association.



## Regarding race, Penn State prone to "blocking the sun with a finger"

By Sergio Rodríguez Ávila

THE quote "blocking the sun with a finger" (tapar el sol con el dedo) is a very common expression where I come from. El Salvador, a small Spanish-speaking country smaller than the size of Massachusetts in Central America.

Unlike most of my fellow Salvadorans, I have been given the opportunity to pursue higher education in the United States, at Penn State. Just like all other international students, everything I learn here (not only academically, but from my daily experiences), I will bring back to my country.

As a Latino student, I can proudly say I am attending, and will soon graduate from, a university where diversity is very important and different races live together in harmony. But, after more than three years of living here, saying racism does not exist at Penn State is equivalent to "blocking the sun with a finger."

This expression means that often, we can clearly see things that need to be changed, but we think that by ignoring them or pretending they are not there, the issue will cease to exist.

Throughout the last three and a half years studying at Penn State, the fact that I am Latino has most of the time not been an issue, regarding to race discrimination.

But recent news and experiences have made me desire to speak up and inform Penn State students that racism is not a thing of the past, but quite apparent in the present.

I first started to notice racism as an issue during the last presidential elections. After speaking

at the time, some planning to vote for and others against Obama, they would often mention that the way they decided to vote was greatly influenced by the fact that Obama was black. Voting for or against Obama solely because he is black is clearly racist, no matter which is your race.

Students believe that in the last presidential election, racism was in some way defeated with Obama's triumph. On the contrary, if racism was not really an issue, voters should not have cared if he were white or not.

Several polls suggested Penn State students overwhelmingly voted for Obama, and that many felt and feel proud as if this means that in some way, we are a university that is completely accepting of diversity.

Clearly, Penn State is very welcoming to all races and ways of thinking, but there is much more work to be done.

After the presidential elections, I started to become more aware of this issue and thinking of race-related issues I had been a victim of since my arrival. Many of you would probably hope for the opposite, but since I came here, I have had some bad experiences related to my Latin American origin that were not very pleasant.

It is important to mention that the amount of fingers on one of my hands is more than enough to count how many there have been.

The interesting part, though, is most of them have been recent.

Like most Latinos, soccer, or fútbol as we call it, is one of my passions. My Latino friends and I came up with a soccer team and are participating in the intramural soccer tournament here at Penn State, organized by the soccer club.

During many games, we have been "suggested" to leave America and speak only English by other predominantly white

often when we are winning. Many would agree that when you are losing, it is somewhat "normal" to take out your anger on the opposing team by some sort of insult.

It is interesting, though, that race and country of origin is the first insult to come to their mind.

About a month ago, a close friend of mine was almost stabbed with a knife by a fraternity member because he was speaking Spanish. Thank God my friend avoided the knife and only got his shirt cut.

During the last Michigan game, a married couple was verbally harassed because the woman was white and her husband black.

They had to leave the game early, the couple admits, after the woman received racial slurs due to her relationship with her husband.

Clearly, these examples are just a few bad apples in the bunch. What I intend by relaying these experiences is to urge that whenever you see something like this, and do nothing about it, you become an accomplice.

It is not only the fact that minority students in tournaments such as intramural soccer are insulted with racial slurs — it is also that no one in their teams or the organizers do anything about it.

It is not that a Latino almost got stabbed for speaking Spanish — it is the fact that the attacker's other fraternity members did not do anything to stop it or report the incident to the authorities.

It is not the bad experience that a diverse married couple was insulted — it is the fact that no one stopped the insults.

Every time we say, "We are, Penn State," truly mean the plural part of the cheer.

Sergio Rodríguez Ávila is a senior majoring in economics and is an international student from El Salvador. His

## LETTERS

### Four Loko ban is un-American

I know connecting alcoholic beverages with American freedom sounds ridiculous, but the FDA's threat of legal action regarding Four Loko's ingredients is an absurd violation of the freedom every citizen has to consume whatever they wish, even if it may be hazardous to their health. Phillip Carrington was right with his Red Bull analogy. What's next? Will the FDA ban energy drinks because they can be mixed with vodka? The government dictating what businesses can and cannot sell is not only foolish, it's un-American.

Kyle Nelson  
senior-international politics

### Local businesses are vanishing

In response to Monday's column, "Local businesses integral downtown," bravo to Katie Sullivan for taking on the influx of chains that have been creeping into State College over the last several years. Like her, I have fallen victim to them where I live, on occasion, out of convenience. However, when I visit Happy Valley, whether on business or for fun, I make it a point to support those places I went to as a student. I encourage my fellow alumni, as well as all current students, to please support the local downtown restaurants and shops that you will never find anywhere else.

Michael White  
Class of 2003

### Hooligans only help rally team

I am writing in response to Wednesday's letter "Hooligans cause game bedlam." First I would like to say that I am a proud member of Hertzog's Hooligans, which is actually our namesake. Second I would like to state the definition of ignorance as defined by Webster's Dictionary: "The state of being ignorant, lack of knowledge, education or awareness."

For the entire season, a group of passionate fans have shown up for the men's soccer games. I take pride in your statements saying that we hooligans "protest after every referee call that goes against Penn State, even when the call is correct." I think I speak for our entire group when I say, does your statement about our protest and lack of knowledge of the beautiful game transfer over to other sports? Would you have written in to the Collegian because the student section at a football game yelled when referee made a call they disliked? I didn't think so.

As for your accusations against Hertzog's Hooligans for stealing the Akron jerseys, I'd like to say that we had nothing to do with it, and maybe if you would pay more attention, you would know that we were the ones who were trying to find them. In closing, I would just like to say that the team's so called "fans," such as you, Mr. Flick, impede on the growth of the beautiful game in this wonderful country of ours.

Jesse Shadle  
senior-recreation, park and tourism management

### Dorms should open for game

I am writing in response to the news that dorms will be opening at 8 a.m. the day of the Michigan State football game. For this game, instead of its normal Wednesday night start, Paternoville will begin on Friday afternoon. I do Paternoville for every home game, and all of our group members live in the dorms. As we are eager to camp out for one last time this year, we realize that there is a possibility that Paternoville could be shut down due to weather. In this case, campers are forced to take down their tents and move inside for the night. If this were to happen, Paternoville residents camping out for Michigan State who live in dorms would be left without a place to stay for the night without paying to get into the dorms early.

The university needs to better prepare themselves for situations like this in the future. If there is a home game the Saturday after Thanksgiving, the dorms should open Friday night. Regardless of whether you do Paternoville or not, students should have the opportunity to come back to State College the night before the game in order to avoid the heavy game day traffic Saturday morning. Opening the dorms earlier would encourage more student attendance, something that has been an issue with alumni all season long. With people already questioning the quality of student attendance at kickoff, Nov. 27 could provide student section with more criticism than before.

Troy Weller  
sophomore-broadcast journalism

### Hunting as a sport has profits

As the fall sets in each year in Pennsylvania, it appears that collegiate and professional sports take the center stage. But there is another sport that hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvania citizens are members of. That is hunting. Hunting is the state's first true sport, as early settlers hunted for family survival. Hunting is the only sport that literally has life dependent on the outcome. It is a sport that has been passed down from grandfather to grandson and father to daughter. Early archery season for deer is over, and bear season begins its three day campaign this Saturday, but people most often hear of the rifle season for deer.

Many letters are sent in condemning hunting as "unethical." Hunting and hunters are conservationists. Hunting provides cheap and good food to families. It is local, and uses less resources than buying groceries shipped in from other states or countries. Instead of criticizing hunters this year, let's rather wish them a safe hunt, as many are injured or die each season. Good luck, shoot straight and be safe.

Matthew Truesdale  
Class of 2010