

Community and Lifestyles

Confederate flag gets rebel yell at high school

by Alice Mancino

The Confederate flag has raised hackles at State College Area High School, according to interviews and a poll conducted by the school's newspaper.

"The September survey asked about whether racism exists at State High. One student's answer was essentially yes, fleetingly referencing the presence of Confederate flags on pickup trucks in the parking lots as evidence," said sophomore Annie Boggess, co-editor of the Opinion section of the *Lions' Digest*, State High's student-run newspaper. Boggess, who is white, has been encouraging the student body to debate the issue.

"While I do not necessarily condone trying to change others' opinions, I think open discussion is crucial. I think that as students we are all obligated to become informed and enter these conversations," she said.

Heated debates ensued when high school sophomore Skylar Peters responded with another article for the paper. She wrote as a member of a social group known as the "hicks," which identifies with the Confederate flag. The article was accompanied by a photo of the student wearing a sweatshirt with a large flag on the front.

"I obviously am a supporter of the flag mainly because of who I am," explained Peters. "No one really understands, and it seems no one wants to. We're not wearing the flag to offend anyone; it's who we are. It's plainly us, and the flag is our symbol for it."

Peters said the symbol has nothing to do with racism but with pride and heritage.

"Whether we're from the South or not, it's still a flag we associate with. What I don't get is why we have to go up in front of everyone and explain why we're wearing what we are."

Students and teachers upset by the article responded in print that it is a symbol of racism. Other students wrote arguing that many students who identify with the flag are not from the South.

Hate or heritage?

In 1963, U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy went to Montgomery, Ala., to encourage Gov. George Wallace to integrate one of the state's universities. In response to the request, Wallace raised the Confederate flag, which flew until 1993. South Carolina raised a Confederate flag over its capitol building in 1961 in response to the civil rights movement and didn't lower it until a massive boycott and march by the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People drew 46,000 people to its steps in 2000. The flag still flies on the capitol grounds near a memorial for Confederate soldiers.

Those who object to the flag question what the "lifestyle" Peters referred to really is.

"To me, it basically represents a group where we share the same interests. We all like to hunt, fish and ride. We all fit the definition of 'redneck,'" she said. "We're a group of people who are more than friends, almost like a family. We're all there for each other, all the time, no matter what. It's a nice feeling to have to know there's a group of people who love and care for you."

"Neo-Confederates" are a rapidly growing group of Confederate flag supporters who also endorse political candidates and hold flag rallies. Members of hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan also use the Confederate flag.

The KKK was formed by Confederate soldiers after the U.S. Civil War to intimidate and harass blacks who tried to improve their social standing. Of eight State High students questioned about why they choose to display the flag, one cited the Civil War.

Memory in Black and White by Paul

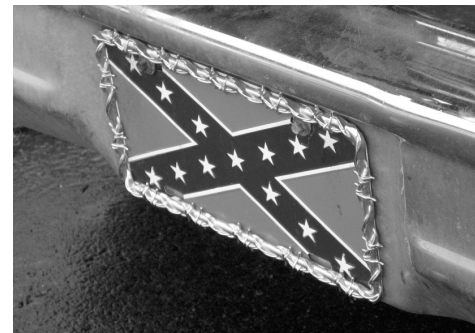


Photo by Alice Mancino
The display of Confederate flags on vehicles and T-shirts has ignited controversy at the State College Area High School.

Shackel looks at the transformation of the Confederate flag from Civil War identification to social statement. Controversy surrounding the flag can be traced back to the significance of monuments after the war.

"People claim that (the flag) is just a symbol of pride towards the South, but I believe there must be some other symbol of equal importance," said Rohit Ananth, a State High alumnus of East Indian descent who said he used to see the flag on several trucks in the school's parking lots. "It's important, I think, to be proud of your country, territo-

see *Flag*, pg. 8

Ahimsa Village offers cooperative, sustainable living

by Adam Eshleman

While most Centre County residents contentedly go about their lives giving little thought to their environmental impact, one Julian couple has taken it upon themselves to demonstrate and teach sustainable living.

Kelle Kersten and Bob Flatley began Ahimsa Village in November 2006 to serve as an exemplary community offering education programs designed to teach environmentally sound living habits.

"We're entering an interesting period in human history," Flatley said, explaining that oil production has peaked and within five or 10 years will start falling, resulting in global shortages.

"We're going to have to learn to live with less," he said.

"No one knows what will happen with oil and our way of life," Kersten said. "We want to learn to live in a new way, and what

"We're going to have to learn to live with less. The most effective way to live with less is working as a community."

--Bob Flatley

we learn we can teach others. We want to develop the skills necessary to deal with changes."

The most important of these skills, they said, is living and working together for the common good.

"The most effective way to live with less is working as a community," Flatley said.

According to Flatley, the "very shallow" modern sense of community is a recent and unnatural occurrence that has given rise to major societal problems. He said returning to our natural state of cooperation—like the tribal model we used for tens of thousands of years—will be key to our survival as a species.

"What we need is a change of lifestyle," he said. "Our lives need to become more interdependent and community-based."

"Ahimsa" is a Sanskrit word meaning "no harm." True to its title, Ahimsa Village—located outside the small town of Julian, about 25 minutes north of State College—hopes to soon be serving as a community center for peace and nonviolence.

Flatley said our judgmental tendencies hinder our ability to "resolve conflicts in a mutually satisfying manner." Ahimsa will teach compassionate communication. That is, methods of communication that rationally weigh both sides of a dispute to reach an equally gratifying resolution.

"Ahimsa is about learning to be peaceful rather than how to be the winner or the best," said Barbara Andersen, who created a nearby Zen mediation center. "It's a spiritual model as well as a practical model."

Flatley and Kersten said Andersen was a major inspiration for Ahimsa Village, and her support and guidance were integral to its inception.

The facet of Ahimsa's mission that members take most seriously is education. They offer weekly classes and workshops on all aspects of sustainable living. They also host a children's summer camp that stresses the importance of the natural world.

Flatley and Kersten are particularly interested in children's education.

"Children are the future," Flatley said. "It's critical to teach them they can be living

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For natural, nutritional sweetness, use honey

by Kimberly Wong

If ever there were an area of expertise for the loveable bear with no brain, Winnie the Pooh, it certainly would be honey. In his humble words, honey, the *raison d'être* of bees, was made so you could eat it.

Aside from the pure pleasure derived from licking a spoonful (or pawful) of honey, this gooey substance and the masterminds behind it actually save society from a dull bread-and-water diet, while serving as a vehicle of health benefits.

Honeybees indirectly sweeten our palates by pollinating 80 percent of the nation's most treasured flowering crops, which total one-third of the human diet. Among them are classic favorites such as apples, citrus fruits, kiwis, berries and melons. Savory picks include nuts, celery, squash and broccoli.

Bee pollination improves crop yield and quality to the tune of a yearly 14 billion dollars. In addition, honeybees generate millions of dollars' worth of sales through honey, beeswax, propolis, venom and

LOCAL Tidbits

pollen.

While pollen serves as one food source for honeybees, the other is flower nectar, which is condensed into honey. Nectar is collected and mixed with enzymes in stomach-like sacs within the bee and carried back to the hive.

There, other bees dehydrate the mixture through a process of chewing, regurgitation and fanning—using the same wings that beat 13,800 times a minute to carry them 15 miles in an hour.

The finished honey is stored for future use in the honeycomb, where it is sealed with a layer of wax. Just one teaspoon of honey will provide enough fuel for a bee to fly around the world. In a year, a colony of honeybees, averaging 50,000 bees, consumes at least 120 pounds of honey.

Thus, it is hardly surprising that honey is the only substance that provides all the nec-

essary nutrients to sustain life. This miraculous golden syrup is 80 percent natural sugars, 18 percent water and 2 percent vitamins and minerals, such as B vitamins, calcium and potassium.

However, honey is most touted by modern research as a useful antimicrobial agent and antioxidant. Most recently, the Penn State College of Medicine found that buckwheat honey alleviated cough symptoms better than cough suppressants. It reduced the severity and frequency of nighttime cough better than over-the-counter cold medications.

On this note, a caution with honey: Do not feed honey to children under one. There is a risk for infant botulism, due to children's immature digestive systems. Luckily, for adults, there are no health risks associated with the consumption of honey.

While a honeybee flies up to seven miles from the hive in search of food each day and spends its lifetime producing one-twelfth teaspoon of honey, you only need to travel to find a local beekeeper's honey stashed around State College for a modest 12 ounces.

None of the 300 different types of honey purchased elsewhere will have the same distinctive taste and color as that harvested in central Pennsylvania. Color and flavor depend on the nectar source, and flowers vary with geography and climate. The

orange blossom, white sweet clover, buckwheat and Japanese knotweed honeys retain their uniqueness through variations in flavor compounds.

Also available in Centre County are both raw and pasteurized honey. Raw honeys are neither pasteurized nor filtered, and are thought to offer more antioxidative benefits than heat-treated, translucent honeys.

In selecting honeys, a sound rule of thumb is that the darker the color, the deeper the flavor. Similarly, the softer the color, the milder the taste. In either case, honey can replace sugar in most recipes.

Keep in mind, however, that honey is far sweeter than processed white sugar and contains a little water as well. Therefore, try one-half cup of honey for every one cup of sugar. At the same time, for every cup of sugar replaced, decrease the amount of liquid added by one-fourth cup.

Due to its acidity (it has a pH of around 4) and its high sugar content, both of which discourage the growth of spoilage microorganisms, honey can be stored in an airtight container almost indefinitely.

Spring is well underway with buzzing honeybees pollinating all sorts of local wildflowers to create succulent, flavorful honeys.

The felicitous combinations of these honeys with good taste are endless—join in on the honey revival à la Winnie!

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Honey Fruit Tart

This surefire crowd-pleaser will have everyone abuzz over its tantalizing buttery crust paired with aromatic natural sweetness. What better way to showcase the fresh flavors of spring's bounty than with locally harvested honey!

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 cup heavy cream | 6. Heat combined mixture until it simmers, whisking constantly |
| 1 cup milk | 7. Remove from heat and whisk in butter |
| 5 tablespoons honey | 8. Cover with plastic wrap pressed directly onto the surface |
| 4 egg yolks | 9. Chill at least four hours before using |
| 1/4 cup cornstarch | 9 graham crackers, crushed |
| 4 tablespoons butter, cut into cubes | 5 tablespoons butter, melted |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 2 teaspoons sugar |
| 1. Heat cream, milk and honey in a saucepan over medium heat until honey dissolves | 1/4 teaspoon salt |
| 2. In a separate bowl, whisk yolks, corn starch and salt for 1 minute, until mixture becomes pale yellow and thick | 1. Combine all ingredients |
| 3. One ladleful at a time, add hot cream mixture into yolks while whisking | 2. Press firmly into a 9-inch tart pan |
| 4. Repeat until half of the cream mixture has been added | 3. Bake 10 minutes at 400 F until browned |
| 5. Whisking the remaining cream mixture, slowly add yolk mixture into the saucepan | 4. Let cool |
| | 3 cups assorted seasonal fruit (sliced strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, peaches) |
| | 1. Fill crust with pastry cream |
| | 2. Arrange fruit in concentric circles, starting from the center. |

from *Flag*, pg. 6

ry, etc., but not at the expense of others. Opponents of the Confederate flag see it as an overt symbol of racism. Others view the flag as a symbol of rebellion against the federal government of the United States.”

A teaching moment

History teacher Deborah Poveromo, after writing an article responding to Peters, invited Penn State professor William Blair, a Civil War historian, to speak on the heritage-versus-hate debate over the flag. Students attended the forum in January, filling the North Building auditorium. Blair said the flag is, in fact, identified as a symbol supporting slavery in the Confederate constitution. Blair argued that the solution is to accept slavery as part of American history.

“Once we lose that denial then the flag will become harmless,” he said.

Skylar Peters and other students who identify with the Confederate flag were present at the assembly and heard the presentation covering the history of the flag.

Penn State sociology professor Samuel Richards told *Voices* there are gray areas

“It’s important, I think, to be proud of your country, territory, etc., but not at the expense of others. At the end of the day, we have to watch that we don’t offend our neighbors.”

--Rohit Ananth

surrounding the appearance of flags as lifestyle symbols. He was not present at the high school assembly.

“Essentially the United States was divided for many years over slavery and the emergence of a ‘Northern culture’ and ‘Southern culture,’” Richards said. “For the most part, the two ‘cultures’ shared similar features, but there were some notable differences in mannerisms, mores, music, dance, food, etc. At the end of the Civil War, the defeated South was stinging, and many Southerners never fully embraced Northern ideas or culture. Keep in mind that defeated people usually find it difficult to fully embrace the ways of the people who defeated them, and this was no less true in the Southern states.”

“The feeling of defeat never went away and Southerners want to celebrate the differences in culture,” he added. “How should they do that? Fly a flag with a sweet potato

pie on it? Okra? Peaches? Well, people use the Confederate flag, which makes sense—except that the flag was born out of the slave-holding South, and the specific battle flag represents the attempt to keep slavery in place.”

The debate continues

State High students have taken the opportunity to voice their opinions on the social-networking Web site Facebook. A forum called “Racism is not okay” accumulated more than 500 members in two weeks. Despite the posted wishes of the group’s creator sophomore Brittany Hamilton, some members posted comments insulting Peters. Comments have focused largely on displays of the flag and not on larger problems of racism in school. Students have commented that the site also groups people of the same race together, generalizing opinions.

Skyra Blanchard, a member of the online group, is an English teacher who wrote a

response from an black’s perspective.

“I want people to do two things,” Blanchard said. “(First), become knowledgeable about the history not only surrounding the flag, but the history of the atmosphere and evils of slavery. In my mind, these things go hand in hand, so it is important to understand the historical perspective. Secondly, I want people to make up their minds about where they stand. If, at this point, people are comfortable knowingly hurting other people’s feelings and making people uncomfortable, then what is another person who feels differently to do? For me it’s not about persuading people that the way I or another person might feel is ‘right or wrong.’ It’s about knowing the facts and, in an educated manner, acting accordingly.”

The State College Area School District has expanded its definition of harassment in response to the debates. The policy now includes verbal as well as nonverbal forms of harassment.

“At the end of the day, we have to watch that we don’t offend our neighbors,” said

see *Flag*, pg. 9

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from Ahimsa, pg. 6

differently than they are now.”

Ahimsa Village's mission is just beginning. Presently there are only three core members, including Flatley and Kersten, who is the only permanent resident.

But interest is growing. Through working with the Penn State faculty, creating a Web site, posting flyers around Centre County and registering with Intentional Communities, the most visited directory of communal living locales on the Web, Ahimsa has amassed a list of more than 100 supporters.

“We've had a lot of people expressing interest in moving in and expanding the house,” Kersten said.

Ahimsa's founders envision a community of two or three other families with children harmoniously living and working together to grow their own food, operate an alternative education center and spread a message of peace and compassion.

Ahimsa is striving toward self-sufficiency, although they have yet to achieve it entirely.

“We're not off the grid or anything like

that,” Kersten said, “though we're trying to move in that direction.”

A wood stove heats the house, and composting toilets minimize septic strain. They cultivate much of their food from their own land. But due to drought and pesky deer, last year's harvest left a lot to be desired.

Members are hoping to install solar collectors to heat their water. They'd also like to use solar energy to power electric fences and other items essential to operating a farm.

With the 65 acres of forest on Ahimsa's land, members are beginning to practice agroforestry, which involves using the forest to produce commercial crops other than timber. They produce mushrooms, maple sugar, ginseng and other forest herbs.

Another environmental endeavor members are working to achieve is permaculture—a system of sustainable, self-supporting agriculture.

Ahimsa is trying to develop a community-supported agriculture program. In this model, members share the cost of farming, allowing for cheaper produce. In five years, they see the CSA becoming a viable enterprise, and hope it will generate enough surplus to donate to homeless shelters.

“I'm excited about their mission,” Andersen said of Ahimsa. “I think they're very serious, hardworking, committed individuals.”

“Penn State is not a progressive institution, and Centre County is not a progressive area, so this is where the work needs to be done,” she said.



Photo by Ryan Gilmore
Kelle Kersten founded Ahimsa Village in Julian in 2006 to teach and demonstrate cooperative and sustainable living.

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Ananth. “I do not believe it is offensive to be cross with those who portray the flag so readily, but it is not right for those who display the flag to be cross with those who are trying to remove the flag.”

“I think the flag issue is ridiculous,” Peters said. “It's our lifestyle symbol, it's who we are and it's who our family is as well.”

Bogges, the student journalist, remains hopeful that more discussion will lead to increased respect among the student body.

“Becoming educated and being open-minded are two things that I strongly believe in,” she said. “The discussion of racism really brought that to light for me. I am sincerely glad that the issue was brought up in our school and am proud if I had anything to do with catalyzing it. I cannot stress enough how much I care about us as a generation, and us as a country, becoming informed both about current issues and our own history and entering into intelligent conversation with the goal of moving forward toward true equality and social change.”

Penn State PRIDE Week 2008

Tuesday, April 1

FREE HIV Testing
9:00am-2:00pm
The AIDS Project

Live Homosexual Acts
10:00am-1:00pm
106 HUB

"After Stonewall"
(Documentary & Discussion)
8:00-10:00pm
TBA

Wednesday, April 2

PRIDE Week Rally
12:00pm
Old Main

"Tara's Crossing"
a play by Jeffrey Solomon
7:00pm
HUB Auditorium

Coffee Social
9:00pm
Webster's Bookstore Cafe

Thursday, April 3

Greeks & TAYZ
\$100,000 Pyramid
7:00pm
101 Life

for more information:
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ighta@psu.edu • 814.863.1248

Friday, April 4

FREE HIV Testing
10:00am-4:00pm
Ritenour

Dinner at Baby's
7:00-9:00pm
Baby's Diner

Drag Show
10:00pm-12:00am
Alumni Hall

Guest Bartenders
12:00-2:00am
Chumley's

Saturday, April 5

Saturday Specials
12:00-8:00pm
Chumley's

Post PRIDE Events

3rd Annual Undertones Pageant
April 18
10:00pm
Heritage Hall

Rod Ribbon AIDS Walk
April 19
12:00pm (registration)
Central Parklet

Cartoonist Howard Cruse
April 21
7:00pm
Foster Auditorium

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