

Home heating costs put pressure on agencies

Military recruiters working the teen crowd

Old Gregg School still serving the community

New feature! Tips and tricks for Your Green House

Penn State's culture of fear strikes close to home

Grateful Dead do more than rock for change

Bill Bragg speaks to *Voices* about life, politics, music

Opinions and columns: Bauman, Creager, Dickison, Hallock, Cosmo, Birdwatch and more

November 2008



# The 'P' is for Privileged

The new condo/hotel: Good for our economy?

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# When local issues reflects national ones

from the desk of managing editor  
**Suzan Erem**

This issue goes to press just days before the most historic election of our times. It's difficult to publish a monthly paper not knowing how it'll turn out five days later, but since our focus is local, we just kept our eyes on the local horizon and plugged away.

Our community so closely reflects national trends that we can often bring the two together. Our cover story starting on Page 9 for example, speaks to the growing gap between the rich and the poor in our country. Right here in Happy Valley we have this super-luxurious condo/hotel project going up that doesn't pay construction workers enough to live where they work and promises little more than low-wage service jobs when it's done. Those workers won't be able to buy homes here or send their children to Penn State. Builders say it's "good for the local economy" but The P will never replace Corning or Cerro.

And then we have the harmful behavior of Penn State staff (Page 15). I can't blame the individuals involved. This kind of behavior, and the culture of fear that keeps

people of conscience from coming forward, starts at the top, just as it does nationally. President Graham Spanier lamented recently to the readers of the Chronicle of Higher Education that student activism just isn't what it used to be, and yet he not only supports prosecuting to the fullest the minor protests at Old Main but his own faculty and staff advise a student to quit working for *Voices* when it becomes obvious that the administration is unhappy with the work we do and the way we do it.

Yes, we're hoping and working hard for a new day. Our country is not what it could be and it has deteriorated on our watch. The first election in which I voted was 1981 and it has been downhill ever since, from record budget deficits and contracts on America to White House scandals, major wars, American-sponsored torture and a global economic crisis that will take decades to turn around.

But we have to start somewhere. So no matter the results of this presidential election, with your ongoing support *Voices* will be here as your local paper providing you with independent, local journalism, celebrating our local successes and talents and letting our common humanity define who we are as a community and as a newspaper. That makes *Voices* biased in favor of the people who live here instead of powerful business interests or major institutions. That's what makes us different from other media. That's our mission.

*Voices* welcomes everyone to respond to what we publish, to join in the decisions about that and to help any way you can. If you see a mistake, send a correction; if you'd like to register an opinion, send it to oped@voicesweb.org.

Whether you're feeling energized or dejected about the election results, call and we'll get you busy building a better Centre County. Rather stay home? Then please donate what you can so we can keep growing a truly free press in our community.

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