

Opinion

Spanier opposes sweatshop progress

by Chris Stevens

Nearly 10 years ago students camped out on Old Main demanding the Penn State take steps to solve the problem that our apparel is produced in sweatshops. On November 17th members of United Students Against Sweatshops met again with President Spanier to try and solve this problem.

Since our first meeting, a year ago, President Spanier had taken some steps that appeared as though he was finally willing to take comprehensive and sustainable action on this issue. In January he joined the Worker Rights Consortium's (WRC) Above and Beyond Program, and in February, after much pressure from USAS and a visit to the University Park campus of Russell workers, he punished Russell Athletic for violating workers' rights to form a union when they closed their plant after a successful union drive.

In our meeting of November 17, President Spanier came to the table and announced that he had solved the problem and pointed to the Above and Beyond Program. This program has all of the same

principles of the Designated Suppliers Program (DSP), but the Above and Beyond program only affects one brand, one factory and 300 workers. The DSP, on the other hand applies these reforms to the whole supply chain to insure that all of a university's apparel is made in factories that respect human rights.

President Spanier has taken a step forward, but the problem is yet to be solved. These 300 workers will produce a few of shirts for us that won't be made in sweatshops, but the rest of our apparel will still be made in sweatshops. This is great for the workers in the one Above and Beyond factory, but the program falls short of addressing the deeper causes of the sweatshop problem.

We explained to President Spanier dozens of times that this was a good step, but that it is not a solution. The next step that he



We came to the meeting on November 17th in good faith assuming that both parties wanted to work together and have constructive dialogue on this issue, but we were clearly mistaken.

should take is to address the whole problem by signing onto the DSP. But he either failed to understand or refused to listen to our concern and continued proclaiming Above and Beyond as the solution and the Alternative to the DSP.

Scott Nova, the executive director of the WRC, stated that programs such as the Above and Beyond are only a step in the right direction. He then said that it is necessary to address the entire system and its affects on all its workers and the DSP is the only program that does this.

We came to the meeting on November 17th in good faith assuming that both parties wanted to work together and have constructive dialogue on this issue, but we were clearly mistaken. President Spanier repeatedly held up his "alternative" to the DSP,

the Above and Beyond program, with no interest in dialogue.

President Spanier has said he has two reasons for not signing onto the DSP. The first is that the DSP does not exist. This is just not true. The DSP is an actual program that you can easily find online at worker-rights.org. The nearly 50 university presidents that have signed onto the DSP would also disagree with President Spanier on whether the DSP exists. President Spanier should join ranks with the presidents of these universities to support the DSP.

His second argument is that it violates anti-trust laws. Prominent lawyers have

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An open letter to Penn State ag dean

by Lou Hass

Dear Dean McPheron,

Your vision for the Rockview land, although commendable in many respects, unfortunately depicts a rather myopic approach to the land's most propitious use.

To begin with, you should try to recognize the Rockview tract for the potential it presents not only for Penn State, but for the County and the Commonwealth as well. As frequently expressed by the local media, various conservation organizations, the public and the university itself, the land is an inimitable jewel that has lain relatively unscathed for almost a century.

Not to use it wisely for the benefit of current and future generations would be an anathema. But also of considerable importance, as a result of the overwhelming urban sprawl that has threatened the aesthetic

Encourage the establishment of an effective, ecologically oriented conservancy with the juridical responsibility of overseeing the environmental health of the entire Spring Creek watershed....

ambience of the greater Centre region, the tract has emerged as a unique buffer that, if set aside permanently, could become an effective bulwark against the ugly onslaught of recklessly planned municipal proliferation.

Unquestionably, this gift must be saved not only in perpetuity, but also in the most effective manner possible. In doing so, many yet unappreciated advantages will undoubtedly ensue.

For example, preservation of the Rockview area could:

Establish a unique wilderness classroom

(~2.8 square miles)—more than twice the size of New York City's Central Park—for the intellectually curious of all ages and backgrounds (including academic) to study multiple species (both flora and fauna) in their primitive environments.

Provide a natural enclave for biological, geological and ecological research.

Initiate a serious endeavor to salvage threatened indigenous wildlife species and their habitats.

Set aside a pristine area, endowed with nature's ambience, as a place of respite for the jaded soul.

Provide an inspiration—an epicenter of sensitivity—for constructive, imaginative constraint against rampant municipal growth.

Generate a model for study by other communities caught in the throes of chaotic municipal development.

Encourage the establishment of an effective, ecologically oriented conservancy with the juridical responsibility of overseeing the environmental health of the entire Spring Creek watershed, recognizing the disasters that have already befallen Spring Creek and its tributaries.

Penn State could very well fit into this vision and by doing so, demonstrably reinforce its 2001 Faculty Senate Resolution "...[to] create and abide by a land ethic that

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Letters to the editor

Thank you for Jessica Brown article

Thank you for the article regarding my former student, Jessica Brown (Out of one student's short life comes art).

You took a lot of information and put it together in a comfortably readable way. In addition, you have taken the two sides of life—the dark and the light—and presented them in a very bal-

anced way.

I really appreciate your compassionate and sensitive handling of the subject matter.

Richard Alden
State College

Line, plane, spiral and light in art

Introducing the modern, Cezanne said all art should be in reference to the solid, the line, the plane.

Jessica Brown, in the excitement of this spirit, strings the hospitality of the Corner Room around a circling spiral of playful blue. So, sparkled with intelligence, the restaurant greets the world.

Now all art shows the shining world through the augurs of line and plane and spiral—forms that mathematics was the first to play through to the truth.

All of this, the work of man, is gathered up in light which contains altogether the meaning that each of us seeks. Welcomed here, through her intelligence, Jessica now stands within the smile behind the world.

P.S. I think the Corner Room should have her work, on loan perhaps, for a contribution to charity.

John Harris.
State College

Pig flu author missed the point

Miss Markle: Perhaps if the Obama administration had shut down the border with Mexico where the Swine Flu originated rather than take a "Oh well, the horses are out of the barn" approach, those 87 chil-

dren you mention would not have contracted the virus and died.

Joel Carlson
State College

Thank you for women and safety article

I just wanted to send a quick thank you for the recent article on the safety of women in State College. I found it to be interesting, well written, and quite informative. As a rape survivor myself, I am always sensitive to the way we are portrayed. I found this

article to be sensitive and definitely needed. Thank you so much for talking about such an important issue.

Dominique Marsalek
State College

Whitey Blue's income

by David M. Silverman

I was talking the other day to Whitey Blue, longtime Centre Region resident and hard-nose.

People often ask me what you do for a living, Whitey. What do you do?

"Tell them it's none of their g__d business!"

But since you have such strong opinions on many issues, it would help people understand you if they knew what field you were

in.

"Look, I'm not some peon, living from payday to payday and ortgaged to the hilt. I have a very comfortable income, but where it's from is my business—not that of the general boobosie, as H.L. Mencken called them."

Wouldn't your opinions carry more weight if the readers knew where you're coming from?

"I'm not trying to win a popularity contest. I'll say what I damned well believe!"



by Tom Baker

Still The ONE!

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Source: SBMG's Radio Market report for State College, PA, Spring 2009.
MSA, Adults 25-54 AQH. Total broadcast week.

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promotes stewardship of natural processes, ecosystems, and the conservation of green space.”

With greater than 10,000 acres (~16 square miles) of sylvan, agrarian and riparian land at its disposal, it is difficult to perceive why the College of Agricultural Sciences would need to acquire additional land...unless, of course, there is something remarkably exceptional about the character of the tract being considered.

But, other than for convenience, neither you nor your colleagues have convincingly justified Rockview land acquisition. The mere stipulation that the tract would be dedicated to several long-term, vitally-important research projects is, of itself, hardly persuasive. Moreover, the statement that the agricultural school lacks sufficient acreage to consign to these projects needs to be adequately explained, as well as credibly documented.

Notwithstanding, however, many of the research proposals you mention (e.g., forest management, invasive plant management, American chestnut restoration, environmental resource management, public educational programs, etc.) might well be accomplished within the confines of a natural preserve set aside by the state.

I can't think of a more noble cause, for example, than to use an adjoining sanctuary for enhanced research on the restoration of the American chestnut, the once "mighty giant" that, a century ago, inundated Pennsylvania's hills and rendered them magnificently "snow bound" under a deluge of early spring blossoms.

Curb the ecometastasis gnawing at the heart of Centre County by working harmoniously with local conservation-minded individuals and organizations.

At this juncture, I would like to invite you, along with President Spanier and his Board of Trustees, to recognize the powerful conservation movement gripping the nation as well as our own community and to accept the responsibility for promoting that vital endeavor.

Curb the ecometastasis gnawing at the heart of Centre County by working harmoniously with local conservation-minded individuals and organizations. In doing so, reaffirm the principle on which Penn State was founded: to teach people how to use the land judiciously for the welfare of humankind and other living creatures.

Even more commendable, undertake the challenging, yet rewarding, yoke of leadership by showing the way to preserve this gorgeous enclave (the greater Centre region) that Penn State has helped to create and to sustain for more than a century and a half.

A good start would be to endorse the perpetual salvation of the Rockview tract—unencumbered by onerous legality (e.g., land easement) and fully intact (i.e., all 1,800 acres)—for the mutual benefit of us all.

Lou Hass is a retired professor of Biological Chemistry and taught at the M. S. Hershey Medical Center for 20 years.

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issued statements that affirm that the DSP doesn't violate anti-trust laws. The WRC has also submitted the DSP to the Department of Justice and will get a Business Review letter in less than a year stating that in their opinion it doesn't violate anti-trust laws. This has not stopped other universities in showing their support of the DSP and joining the program. Nonetheless if President Spanier is concerned about this then he can do what many other university presidents have done and put a conditional statement in his letter to the WRC saying he'll only be involved in the DSP if it is found not to violate anti-trust laws..

We have voiced our concern to President Spanier on numerous occasions. We have been to his office countless times and have given him thousands of petitions of concerned students and community members that want him to take meaningful action on this issue. His response to these concerned students and community members has continually been to stall progress.

Russell Athletic thought it could disregard student opinion when it closed an apparel factory in Honduras because the workers decided to form a union. But then over 100 schools ended licensing agreements with Russell including Penn State and significant pressure was put on Sports Authority and Dick's Sporting Goods to terminate their contracts with Russell. Russell realized the power of students and conceded to the students and negotiated with the union to re-open the factory with the union representing the workers. All the fired

His response to these concerned students and community members has continually been to stall progress.

workers will be rehired and Russell is signing a policy of neutrality on the issue of unions.

President Spanier is trying to do the same thing that Russell thought they could do: ignore student power. He has managed to ignore student voice on the sweatshop issue for 10 years, and it became clear during our meeting with him that he was going to continue that policy. The administration talked in circles and ignored our responses. When it became apparent that President Spanier was not listening to us and did not come to the meeting in good faith, we walked out of the meeting.

It was clear he wasn't listening to student voices at all, and it was plain that he does not respect student power. We are now going to take our message to the larger community. We will be contacting the Board of Trustees, donors and members of the State College community. We are confident that everyone wants Penn State's apparel made under ethical conditions and we ask for your support in our efforts to bring Penn State into the DSP to ensure that our apparel is made under humane conditions.

For more information contact
sweatfreepennstate@gmail.com

Chris Stevens is a member of United Students Against Sweatshops.

ATTN: State College Borough Residents
post all opinions and get feedback!

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'The eyes of guests are perceptive'—Icelandic saying

Jessica Arends, instructor in the Penn State Intensive English Program, sent Voices these essays. She asked international students to write about local issues.

Inadequate housing in State College

When I moved to State College to study in the Penn State Intensive English Communication Program, I never thought I would find difficulty renting a house. I revealed that State College has inadequate housing. It is one of the most serious problems that mainly students and faculty at University Park face.

The continuous increase of students enrolling at the university has led to insufficient amount of housing. According to the Penn State Web site (October, 2008), there are more than 40,000 students enrolled and on-campus housing is only available to about 13,000. Also, according to the Penn State Web site Fact Book, the total number of faculty and staff is 12,142.

Recently the housing issue is reaching a critical situation and the problem is becoming a serious concern for the people of State College. During the last few weeks, the Daily Collegian (Sept. 30, 2009) reported from outside GN Associates Realtors. There was a long line of students that stretched along Beaver Avenue staying all night trying to lease living space. In addition, most landlords have taken advantage of the situation and have already sent letters to the renters upping the rent. Last week both my classmates and my partner received letters from landlords asking them to increase their monthly rent.

I propose that the Penn State University

and State College local government work together in order to make plans to extend the State College Area and build new down room buildings with sufficient amount of housing space. Also, the local State College government has to build new suitable houses at comfortable places. Moreover people of this borough should make an official request to appropriate authorities and explain to them the positive aspects of having new housing. This can be done by writing letters and forming a petition by collecting signatures from students and other members of community.

State College authorities and Penn State University have to build new houses around University Park and in the city in order to cover the needs of houses and to allow the city to have an adequate number of houses parallel with the number of people. If this is not done housing costs will continue to rise, not allowing less wealthy students to live comfortably while attending Penn State. In addition, the higher cost of rent, the more financially independent students will have to work and the time they will have to devote to study. Also, the faculty and staff of the university will have to live further away from campus and devote more time commuting.

Zahira Alhafi
State College

Good grades or good education?

Is our goal as students to get an A or to learn with the best teacher? Is the university helping students that want to be the best? Many awful and idle students get more than 3.5 GPA taking the same subjects as others, only by selecting the easiest teacher and not the superior one.

The students go to the Internet and search Web sites like www.pickaprof.com and www.ratemyprofessors.com and for who is the teacher that gives better grades and less homework. This way they can select the easier professor and upgrade their GPA. These people are being helped by the errant system of organization in the institution. This is a serious problem that affects the

quality of the university. This creates an environment where you can be better than your friends, know more, do harder work, but at the same time have a worse GPA.

There are teachers that give fewer assignments than others, creating a big interest in students to go to their class. Also, each professor corrects in a different way, this can affect your score compared with others students. A good example can be seen when comparing the SAT writing part. You make your essay and submit, in that moment two different teachers score the essay. For a big

see Grades, pg. 31

Many feel the pressure of rising rents

The percentage of people who live in rented houses or apartments is about 74 percent in State College and the percentage of single people in the city is 81 percent. Those statistics show how important the solution of increasing housing is to many State College residents.

State College is in the middle of Pennsylvania with beautiful mountains and great spots. It is suitable for students and families who seek a quiet place and safe environment for their children. Because of Penn State and its students, the property owners have a big business in State College. They have no concern of finding tenants for their apartments. The cost of rent is relatively high in the city, but the problem is that the owners are increasing prices every year or so. They are not afraid because students keep coming each year. Many students and ordinary working people are feeling the pressure of these costs. This can be added to

the overall high cost of living in State College, which makes it important for the housing prices to be stable.

The borough council, in cooperation with property owners, has to find a solution to this problem to make the prices affordable. Investors or business people can build new buildings to make prices go down. Penn State can be a partner with some companies in building new compounds with lower prices. The borough council could put some penalties over property owners who increase prices over a certain limit. Penn State could negotiate with owners to have discount prices for students.

If prices of housing continue increasing students and many people might think of leaving the city at last to cheaper places and that will not be in the favor of State College.

Sahar Alabbad
State College

Penn State lacks healthy food choices

Whether it is 2.5 pounds, five pounds or sixteen pounds, the gain of weight for freshmen is a fact and it depends on every student how it will be managed. At Penn State University there are not enough places on-campus for students who want to eat healthy food. They are trying to find different spaces for eating their fruits and veggies, but the only place in which they can find these is in Simmons Dining Hall. In the rest of the dining commons in East, South, North, West and Pollock Halls and the HUB, only a few areas have healthy food.

In the article from The Daily Collegian on Oct. 8, "Students attempt to help save healthy dining hall, sell T-shirts," Mark Jones said that Simmons is "the only location on campus where health-conscious students can get both taste and variety in the same place..."

The students' health is being affected because of this university's policy of always offering the same type of food. Burgers, pizza, French fries, cheese steaks, more burgers, ice cream, and lots of other high calorie food are the typical things anyone can find in a dining commons.

However, why is this an issue? And why do students need to eat fruits and vegetables often? Busy lives, like students' lives require food that is nutritious, energizing and easy to eat on the go. Fruits and vegetables are easy, good and a natural source of energy that provides nutrients your body needs to keep going with the studies and other activities.

The possible solutions for this issue are opening more places with variety of healthy food like Simmons, and doing a campaign spreading pamphlets in favor of veggies and fruits outside of the university's dining commons. Therefore, if no action is taken, the future health problems in students might be having high blood pressure, Diabetes II, risk of a heart disease and certain cancers and, of course, weight gain.

Eating healthy food will increase students' performance, that's why Penn State should create more places with nutritious food that will prevent future health issues in its alumni.

Johnatan Fincheltub T.
State College

ASK Cosmo



Campus and Culture from the Canine Perspective

Dear Cosmo,

I ate lunch last week at a Chinese restaurant with a co-worker, and when the check came, she refused to read her fortune cookie because she said it was prohibited in the Bible. She said fortune telling was considered sorcery and was therefore evil. Is that really the case, and does it apply to fortune cookies? Have we all been practicing abominations all these years?

Signed, Fearing Fortune Cookie Fate

Dear They're Just Desserts,

I'm sure we've all probably been abominating away with wild abandon without realizing it according to somebody's rule-book. But to think that we've been in cahoots with the Evil One by divining the future from fortune cookies, I would plead utter cahootlessness. First of all, do you believe that people are gullible enough to actually base important decisions on the graffiti they find in their food? Does the fortune cookie have the same level of veracity as, say, a flyer stuck under your wiper at a shopping center? An unsolicited e-mail that will increase your potency and improve your credit rating? Some charismatic critic who doesn't think outside the microscope?

I think my definition of evil runs more along the lines of knowing that something is profoundly wrong, and then opting to do it anyway. Now I may wind up roasting marshmallows in hell for getting it all wrong, but I think our motives figure into those equations as much as our misdeeds do. And I don't think it's all that sinister to be entertained by a ribbon of paper which

on one side encourages me to learn a handy Chinese phrase and on the other offers me some smidgeon of insight or flattery and then suggests a few lucky numbers.

Of course, there's the old gag of adding the phrase "in bed," or "between the sheets" after each fortune. That hardly expiates the allegedly sinful nature of fortune cookie fortunes, but it does place them in a whole new context. How can you possibly take the modified fortunes seriously? "You will be rewarded for your kindness and generosity...inbed" or "Face facts with dignity...between the sheets." Lake of Fire, table for two...

But if you worry that your post-meal kibble could be channeling malevolent powers, and you're inadvertently dabbling in the Dark Side, then simply do what we do at our house: play Reversal Of Fortune. If you think fortunes are a bunch of hooey, then simply make them state the exact opposite. Then maybe the re-aimed version can zero in somewhere in the neighborhood of the truth. Instead of "You will find a bushel of money," simply change it to, "You will LOSE a bushel of money." And when the fortune doesn't come true, you'll feel GREAT!

With a fortune such as "Do all things with love," why not try simple negation as a

going to have meetings every three months where they should plan a schedule off the assignments and evaluations that students are going to have. Then the evaluation department is going to be in charge of checking all the evaluations and homework. That way all students are going to be evaluated equally. Creating an organized department in each subject is a big issue that Penn State needs to do to improve in quality.

Yehiel Bassan
State College

modification strategy? Then you get, "DON'T do all things with love," or "Do NO things with love," or "Do all things WITHOUT love." I mean, if fortunes are supposed to be evil, they might as well tutor you in becoming a complete sociopath.

Or, you can pick seemingly opposite meanings for some of the words in fortune. Then you can have "Do all things with hatred" or "Do all things with indifference." And if you really want to skew the meaning even further, add the tried-and-true suffix, so that you have "Do all things with indifference in bed."

If you're not into the whole negativity thing, you can substitute related concepts for any of the nouns. Sometimes the new advice can be inspiring, or even a little kinky. What do you do with a fortune that reads, "Do all places with love?" That sounds charming! It's probably a little better than "Do all people with love," especially if you're a closet leg-humper. And if you think "between the sheets" is too suggestive, come up with another tagline, like "right upside the head" or "while taking a nice dump." Then you get quality counsel such as, "Avert misunderstanding with calm, poise and balance...right upside the head" or "Good sense is the master of human life...while taking a nice dump."

If all that fails, just pull out all the stops for total free-form fortune reversals. Instead of "Ignorance never settles a question," you can have "Ignorance ALWAYS settles a question...right upside the head...while taking a nice dump between the sheets."

I hope you realize I'm trying to get at the truth here, one way or another. I think it's the quality of fortunes, not the quantity that could spell doom. And in deference to your co-worker, I'd quote Proverbs 21:6, that says "A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare." The truthful ones, maybe not so much.

Dear Cosmo,

It's holiday season and time for giving, so whatever your religious persuasion is, what would you like in terms of a gift? Signed, Making My List

Dear Mr.Blackwell,

I hope it's not the worst stressed list. My persuasive powers are pretty strong when it comes to getting my human to let me out, or plate up the crunchie, or let me add some new noseprints to the windshield. But in terms of religious persuasion, I can barely keep track of the error of my own ways, let alone convince anyone else of theirs.

But in terms of gifts, I just want the basic, regular stuff: peace on earth, common sense in this hemisphere, environmental stewardship on this continent, charity in this country, budgetary acuity in this state and pedestrians with a clue in this town. I'd like motorists to hang up and drive; motorcyclists to wear long pants and helmets; bicyclists to observe the same right-of-way rules as cars; joggers to include self-preservation as part of their healthy regimen as they blindly cross roads; and get those little textaholics to glance up from their screens before they're midway through an intersection. Also, I'd like it if they could loosen up the earbuds and crank down the volume just a little bit...at least enough that the screeching of tires and the blood-curdling scream, "DUMB ASS!" come through as more than a whisper, and has a chance of registering, even subliminally, in at least some part of their brains.

I don't ask for much. My humans would probably appreciate a nice, waterproof, odor resistant tree that doesn't remind me of a fire hydrant. And to all readers, I wish a Merry Christmas, and Happy Hanukkah, a meaningful Umra (lesser pilgrimage to Mecca), a Joyous Kwanza, a Sparkling Solstice, a Restful Winter Break, and a Happy New Year for all the rest of you heathens.

from Grades, pg. 30

surprise we saw that the two essays have different scores. The two faculty members grade the essays in different ways.

Now for this there is a great solution that can make this school greater, every class and every subject should have a department. This department is going to be formed by teachers and directors who are going to be in charge of the schedule and evaluation. The schedule department is

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