Opinion

A poem for Penn State

The following poem was submitted by Dr. Robert Lima, Professor Emeritus of Spanish and Comparative Literature at the Pennsylvania State University, from his collection Tracking the Minotaur.

This Late the Idols Ply Their Trade

Shattered idols walk the dreamland now, treading grey cities fervently, deciphering spheres, punishing the gold leaf of their frocks masochistically.

This late the idols ply their trade, tramping on the the vestiges of night, bearing a sense of decadence that grips the moss-scent city and posthumously tortures laughter.

Dread idols are appearing furled in flags rent from the temples of divinities.

They pass to fields of sacred wheat thrashing and absorbing without effort the remnant stalks once virginal.

These idols are the twisted beggars ploughing fields in winter, divining seeds, crushing flowers of frost.

They lift their feet ten quilted steps, emphatically, in a moment's definition, to decompose the rain.

Idols are shattered on earth, disciplined to our variations, reacting in solemn processions.

Broken idols pieced on fallow land are splintered noiselessly in night.

Whitey Blue on elections

by David Silverman

I was talking the other day to Whitey Blue, long-time Centre Area resident and hard-nose.

Whitey, do you have any thoughts about a guy under 21 running for a township supervisor office?

"I sure do! If the guy comes from the right background, I would waive any restriction for the office."

What do you define as the right background?

"A guy who was brought up in the correct, right-wing background; not some 'do-good' sort of person."

Would he be mature enough to conduct township business?

"With his 'right' background he would be able to recognize any of the give-away programs the liberals endorse and put them down!"

P.S. I wrote this before the election, Nov. 8, when, as you know, an 18-year old got elected. I have no idea where he stands politically, but if he turns out to be real right-wing, my article still stands.

When I was 18 I enlisted in the U.S. Army and served overseas for almost 5 years, including combat duty. If you are old enough to fight (and maybe die) for this country, you should be able to hold political office.



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Caring for our Environment.

Important questions in the wake of scandal

by Art Goldschmidt

The Sandusky scandal that has enveloped Penn State, especially University Park, should not have taken us by surprise. The dominance of the football program has plagued the university for many decades. Longer indeed than Joe Paterno has been alive

In the early 1920s Coach Hugo Bezdek was the dominant leader at Penn State, more so than John Thomas, who was an innovative president whom almost no one remembers. The feeding frenzy of the print and electronic media has led to silly statements and enabled many letter writers to call for cancelling the football season, ending the football program, or even shutting down Penn State.

To start with some basics, it will be up to the courts to determine what Sandusky did, where he did it, who saw him do it, and who reported what to whom. Until then, we writThe trustees were wrong to fire Joe Paterno when he had already told his players that he was going to step down at the end of the football season.

ers should not try him or the alleged witnesses.

The truly injured parties are the boys, now young men, who would have been harmed, indeed traumatized, by these reported acts of criminal rape. Penn State should try to find them and offer them counseling or other appropriate help. We know that both men and women who were sexually abused as children have psychological problems but some can be rehabilitated.

The trustees were wrong to fire Joe Paterno when he had already told his players that he was going to step down at the end of the football season. He could no longer do much

coaching, but he had become a symbol to both the players and the fans. It rarely serves an institution to turn people into symbols.

We all owe Joe a lot for his contributions to the welfare of the university and his frequent statements in support of higher learning. Most of the students who demonstrated against his dismissal were exercising their constitutional rights, but those who destroyed property or assaulted other people deserve to be tried.

They did not add to Penn State's honor and glory. The trustees had a stronger case for firing Graham Spanier, even if many of us recognize his contribution's to the university's advancement. Yet his involvement in the Sandusky affair remains murky.

More likely, the trustees reacted in panic and under pressure from Governor Corbett, who probably nurses higher political ambitions.

The decision of the trustees to form an investigating committee led by themselves was okay, but many of us who worked for Penn State would place greater faith in a report produced by an independent investigating team. Preferably one that included members with expertise in child abuse issues, the psychology of sexual predators, and the problems of higher education management.

Two more points deserve to be made. Penn State is notoriously a top-down university. The faculty have little influence except in curricular affairs, and few teachers care as

see Important, pg. 32

"Occupy" movement renews hope for change

by Robert Baillie

I'm 63. I've been watching the "Occupy" movement for a while now. It's the most hopeful sign of change I've seen since the 1960s

Once every generation or so, a movement inexplicably takes off and grows exponentially. In the early 60s, we saw young black men and women stoically sitting at segregated lunch counters while white customers squirted ketchup on them. Those images galvanized many people in America. As we

know now, this marked the beginning of the end of legalized segregation.

In 1989, we witnessed the abrupt and shocking fall of the Berlin Wall. Earlier this year, Mohamed Bouazizi, a young man in Tunisia, set himself on fire to protest his treatment by local officials. None of the high-paid talking heads on TV predicted that this act would lead to the peaceful overthrow of the governments of Tunisia and Egypt, and the non-peaceful overthrow of the government of Libya.

"Occupy Wall Street" (OWS) officially

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began on Sept. 17. Like most people, I paid little attention at first. Two weeks later, I saw postings on DailyKos.com about mass arrests taking place at OWS. There were live video feeds of the arrests, which I began to watch online. Thousands of others were watching, too. Almost without exception, these (mostly) young people conducted themselves with dignity as the police arrested them, one by one. Gandhi and Martin Luther King would have been proud of them.

The rest is history. No one predicted that

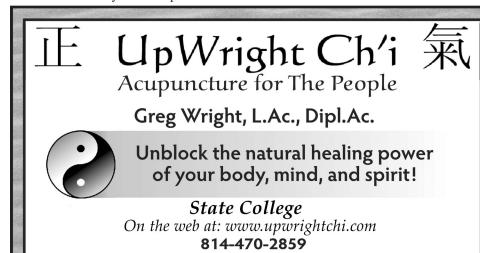
the occupiers would ignite a national conversation about economic inequality in America. They have issued no specific demands. But from the mere fact that they are occupying Wall Street, and not, say, Broadway, we know in our gut why they are there. Their chants, "They got bailed out, we got sold out," and "We are the 99%" need no further explanation.

For years, U.S. government has been

see Occupy, pg. 33



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Local vote bans fracking

by Braden Crooks

On Nov. 8, State College became the first place in the nation to enact community and environmental rights to ban fracking by a popular vote.

This Charter Amendment creates the rights to clean water, clean air, and a healthy environment. It enfranchises local decision-making on environmental issues, and bans the commercial extraction of natural gas within the borough.

This is the first amendment petitioned onto the ballot by citizens in State College, and with the 72 percent vote is perhaps now the most formally supported issue the voters of State College have ever presented to their local government.

The task now is clear: respect and implement the will of the people. The people in elected office and borough government represent the people of State College, and their primary duty is to carry out what the people have made it clear they want.

There are so many people and groups that came together to make this happen. The people of Groundswell, Sierra Club Moshannon Group, The Environmental Coalition of Centre County, Eco-Action, Occupy Penn State, the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, and the brave local politicians who stood with the people on this issue.

Most of all, this incredible moment is owed to the 1,024 people who petitioned to put our Community Bill of Rights and Fracking Ban on the ballot, and the overwhelming majority of voters who voted yes on November 8th.

This victory belongs to them. Make no mistake; the people of State College did something they can be proud of.

The voters sent a clear and loud message: we have the right to a sustainable future. We will stand up for local democracy and stand up against the fracking industry.

This vote was made all the more important by the recent push in Harrisburg to keep communities from having a say in their future when it comes to fracking. This industry lead effort is anti-democratic and wrong. We need to stand up against :

The terrible costs of fracking: to water,

to air and to property; the cost on infrastructure and the cost on ecologies; the costs to people and to the land are all borne by communities. All these consequences take place on the level of communities. Then on this level decisions about fracking should be possible.

Any American, for or against fracking, can see the obvious injustice of limiting local democratic decision-making on any issue, let alone one that poses such a mortal threat to the livelihood of communities everywhere.

Well, the voters have made it clear: Corporations might control Harrisburg, but they don't run our town. Whether this industry and Harrisburg are trying to stop people from having a say in their own future or not, every community should still ban fracking.

This is about taking a stand. That's what citizens are beginning to do all across America as we begin to take responsibility for the great problems that face us.

This amendment isn't just about energy independence from fossil fuel rich countries across the globe. It's about energy independence from the global corporations that control fossil fuels.

It isn't just about creating jobs so a few more people can work. It's about creating a sustainable economy that works for people.

And it isn't just about how dangerous and unsafe fracking is.

It's about how unnecessary it is when all the billions of dollars being tossed down the drill hole could be put toward real long-term energy solutions like wind, solar and energy efficiency—so much so that we would never need this gas.

It's clear to me that solving the problem of fracking will take more than just stopping fracking.

Solving these problems will take creative action. Creative in the sense that we the people will take responsibility to create the world as we wish it could be. Community and Environmental Rights are the first bold step in this direction.

This is the long haul. It will take more effort on behalf of more people than we can know. But it is good, it is worthwhile, and at the end of this road is our best chance at a resilient and sustainable future.

from Important, pg. 31

much about what the university does as they strive to advance within their own professions or disciplines. The critical decisions are made by administrators who claim they are fulfilling the decisions of the trustees.

What the trustees work from in their public deliberations are thick dockets containing far more verbiage than most of them can read and absorb. If they make decisions, they are more apt to result from private conversations among their most influential members. Penn State keeps its important records secret, no matter what the state legislators, or the public, might demand.

One possible good outcome from the scandal would be the opening of Penn State's records and more accountability from both administrators and faculty.

The other point is that football should not have to carry the weight of Penn State's whole entire sports program. The athletics department should make a serious effort to

December 2011/January 2012

promote an interest in other sports in which men and women compete, such as basketball, volleyball, wrestling, and gymnastics, ones that attract fans to attend. This doesn't mean that football should disappear or be downgraded, but it should no longer be the main reason why Penn State is known to the world.

How much does the public know about the ground-breaking research of many faculty members?

How do we recognize those who win awards for scientific breakthroughs, or whose work funds the research of post-doctoral fellows and graduate students through government and foundation grants, or who win Fulbright grants to teach and conduct research in other countries?

How well do we publicize the success of our graduates in the professions, in business, in education, and indeed in various professional sports?

Finally, it is time that we discuss and try to answer the following important questions:

What is a university for?

What constitutes "success with honor?"

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from Occupy, pg. 31

moving toward plutocracy.

The workplace rights of the middle class have been under attack by the very rich and by corporations. Even our most basic right to vote is being restricted by Republicans who are trying to pass laws requiring certain very specific forms of ID in order to vote. The richest one percent are now taking about 20 percent of all the income in America, twice as much as 30 years ago. As a direct result, the share going to the middle class has all but disappeared.

The richest one percent now own 40 percent of all wealth. If everyone had an equal chance at becoming rich, this inequality would be bad enough. But upward mobility in the United States is declining and is now less than in many European countries.

With less upward mobility, we may soon have an entrenched, permanent aristocracy based on inherited wealth. Justice Louis Brandeis once said, "We can have concentrated wealth in the hands of a few or we can have democracy, but we can't have both."

The economic system is rigged to benefit those who are already well-off. Most of us who do actual work to earn a salary pay higher income and Social Security tax rates than the super-rich.

Conservatives told us that if we lower taxes on the rich, these so-called "job creators" will create jobs for us. We lowered their taxes. Now, where are those jobs? It was all a big lie: the real goal was to lower taxes on the rich. There was also a fringe benefit: reducing government revenues makes it more difficult to fund government

Lifestyles

of Central PA

Community

We are in the middle of a class war. Warren Buffett admits that his class started it, and that his class is winning.

programs that benefit the middle class, programs that conservatives don't like anyway.

To top it all off, Social Security and Medicare are threatened by politicians who refuse to ask the rich to pay even a little more in taxes. We are in the middle of a class war. Warren Buffett admits that his class started it, and that his class is winning.

Occupiers in a number of cities have been assisting homeowners threatened with fore-closure, and in some cases, have vowed to nonviolently resist evictions of the homeowners. The Occupy movement has, for the first time in a long time, given me hope that young people will turn things around.

At 1 a.m. on Nov. 15, New York Mayor (and billionaire) Michael Bloomberg banned all news media while the police forcibly removed OWS from the park. As with any social movement, there is no way to predict how this will play out. The anger at corruption on Wall Street and in politics is still there. Most of what I've read suggests that the protestors are as determined as ever.

I think it's time for those of us in the 99% to stand up and fight back. I thank the occupiers for taking the lead. I hope the rest of America supports them.

You can follow what's happening with OWS at http://occupywallst.org.

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ASK Cosmo



Dear Cosmo,

I know you're always ready to criticize the university, so I bet you're delighted with the latest headlines about the sex abuse scandal in Penn State's athletic department. So go ahead, why don't you just get it out of your system? Take your cheap shots and just go for the throat.

Signed, Turning A Deaf Ear.

Dear that's Already Been Tried,

The only throat I'll go for is my own — to produce a heartfelt growl after I finish gagging. As a dog, I'm sometimes an insightful observer of human nature, but I can't begin to understand it, let alone explain it. For one thing, people have this weird ability to create great meaning for non-events — like the McRib... And then they completely subtract meaning from significant events — like the Million Man March.

Campus and Culture from the Canine Perspective

Sometimes people really bang the gong to make a profound, symbolic public statement about some ideal, and sometimes they want to slink away from the scene on tiptoe, but crank up the flak on anyone who tries to voice dissent. Sometimes they blame the victim, sometimes they blame the accuser, sometimes they want select parties to be held blameless, and sometimes they just hope to ignore an issue until it goes away.

Sometimes they circle the wagons, sometimes the buzzards start to circle, sometimes the inner circle burns the witches, and sometimes the participants just circle the drain.

Sometimes the public displays are all "Kumbaya," featuring candlelight vigils and fences decorated with flowers, cards, ribbons and stuffed animals. Sometimes they're all "Yee-ha!" and people just riot and tip over news vans. Sometimes they're all just "Wha?" and we get to wait a few months to learn what the subsequent and overdue shoe-drops actually mean.

Human nature has a hair trigger and

see Cosmo, pg. 34



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from Cosmo, pg. 33

there's no shortage of snipers wanting to "shoot the messenger." Despite all the Sturm und Drang that media frenzies produce, as well as the collateral damage from media drive-bys, I'm not sure that media were the bad guys this time around. I did think that tipping over the local news van was a bit hooliganesque, yet it "made for good TV." But I was a little lost on the precise MEANING of that action. We should punish those attempting to inform us? Couldn't muster a big enough posse for the CNN truck, so you went for Channel 10's van?

One man was arrested for trying to use a T-shirt to light the news van on fire. The meaning of that act really loses something in the translation. But it does show fanatic devotion—he was willing to give up the shirt off his back to upgrade his status from garden-variety asshole to flaming asshole. Is a 44 year-old out-of-towner considered a "stakeholder?"

The eloquence of senseless gestures spoke volumes about the common sense available to a mob in mid-tantrum. They also yodeled the frustration felt by the gathered "activists." But unlike their cartipping counterparts in strife-torn corners of the globe, this local snit wasn't a response to the imposition of a regime change, or a leadership coup, or a great human rights violation, or some economic collapse.

Oops, check that. Maybe that's exactly how the student crowd saw it. Firing the beloved football coach suddenly transformed them into victims of a heartless regime change, leadership coup, and human rights violation. It's a short hop from yee-ha to jihad.

It wasn't quite Koran-burnin' dumb, but it was right up there as a misguided response. Some commercial prayer rugs come equipped with a compass, but it's pretty hard to establish magnetic north on the local moral compass.

The student riot wasn't about the alleged molestations, nor about any handling or non-handling of the abuse complaints, nor about any long-term consequences, nor even about the firing of the university's president. It was just about firing the iconic head coach three days before his last home game, just hours after he'd hoped to avoid further mess with a pre-emptive retirement announcement.

I'm glad that students are letting their voices be heard, and I'm glad that peaceful mass demonstrations are part of their rights as Americans. But I hope they learn to express disappointment a little more peacefully, and zero in on an issue base that's actually meaningful. Civil disobedience is too important a tool to squander on non-bread-and-butter trivia such as the cloudy personnel issues surrounding rich and powerful guys.

So that's the extent of my university-bashing—sorry to disappoint. As far as going for the throat, I figure that's somewhere between the head and the heart, and that's a heck of a lot better than all the below-the-belt stuff allegedly transacted

see Cosmo, pg. 35



Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

-Martin Luther King Jr.

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Sudoku

	1			5		9	8	
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Instructions:

Fill in the grid so every row, every column and every three-by-three box contains the digits 1 through 9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reason and logic.

The solution to this month's puzzle can be found on page 35 of this issue.

By Peter Morris

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from Cosmo, pg. 34

behind the scenes for some time now.

You can't convict someone without a fair trial, but it's not bad public health policy to quarantine the sick ones.

Dear Cosmo,

Everybody's complaining about adults committing unnatural acts on minors. It's not just at Penn State, but at schools and churches all around the country. What distinguishes an unnatural act from a natural act?

Signed, Nature Boy

Dear Wild Child,

I shudder to think that you have to ask, but I suppose it's time somebody spelled it out. I suppose it's human nature which determines it...but for some humans, some pretty creepy stuff comes quite naturally.

Human nature could describe the most noble acts and sentiments, but it could also describe the most vile acts and attitudes. It depends on the human. Sometimes I think God kinda screwed up giving you guys free will. So I guess we need a more objective standard.

I've sniffed the odd crotch and humped a leg or two in my day, but that's a completely natural act for a canine. We've got a girl dog who's been spayed, and she tries to hump our girl cat, who's also been

That seems like an odd choice, and probably wrong on some level, but I wouldn't characterize that as particularly

unnatural, either. They're consenting full-growns, and we're just dumb animals.

I know of other dogs who hump rolled up rugs, pillows, sofa arms. And then there are the penguins who may not always cultivate "gender appropriate" relationships for the prudes at public zoos.

What's natural and what's unnatural? Sometimes Mother Nature is a bitch. Other times, it's just a bitch to understand her. But we're just dumb animals.

So, enter humans, all full of reason, free will, justice and concern over image. Why are "unnatural acts" considered such a grey area when perpetrated on their fellow humans?

In case nobody has spelled this out for you yet, here's a primer. Guys have weeners, and girls have girl-weeners. Sometimes they like to touch their own, or somebody else's, or have them come in contact with someone else's body parts.

Are you with me so far?

If one party is an adult and one party is a minor, then any kind of weener-involvement for the purpose of stimulating anybody's weener is illegal... except maybe in Dubai.

It doesn't matter if it's man-boy, mangirl, woman-boy or woman-girl. It's illegal. Even if it were legal, it's still sick and wrong. Responsible adults are charged to report any lapses in this restriction.

If one party is a minor, there is no such thing as consent. Period. And deliberate contact with someone's weener is sexual. Period. And sexual contact without consent is criminal sexual assault. Period. And if the point of such activities is to please one's weener, then the motives are

Letters to the editor

I am writing regarding the November issue of Voices, particularly your coverage of Marcellus issues. While my comments are specific to Voices, they pertain to media, academic and popular discourse on this topic.

The process of hydraulic fracturing, or "fracing," has received much attention, but the proliferation of the terms "frack" and "fracking" are inaccurate.

Perhaps some glossed over my usage, please take note: I did not use a "k." Phonetically speaking the "k" is required to give the word the hard ending to which we are accustomed, but that is not how the word fracture is abbreviated.

"Fracing" is a specific industry abbreviation; it is not a word. "Fracing" refers to the process of stimulating unconventional energy formations, while "fracking" used throughout Voices (and many publications) has many alternative meanings, most

socially, legally and morally unacceptable, evil, self-centered, sadistic and creepy.

Is this somehow unclear to anybody with a brain, or a heart, or a soul?

The only questions that remain are whether this abuse actually took place, who knew about it, who did what, and who was responsible to do what and when. Keep it simple. The world is my fire hydrant, and I've got a bladder full of opinions. I trust you to be able to tell if I'm just pissing in your ear. Please accept no less from anyone else.

notably it is the cleaner version of a dirty four letter word beginning with "f" and ending in "k"—I'll allow you to fill in the blanks.

This alternative (albeit incorrect) spelling has been adopted by activist groups to elicit excitement, rage, etc., and is misspelled by the media, academics and the public either because they are misinformed or pushing an agenda.

Though I do understand the phonetic significance of the "k," in this case it need not apply—there is no "k" in fracture.

If this lesson teaches us anything, it is that Marcellus issues are polarizing, so polarizing that we can not even agree on how to properly spell a process some support and others despise.

Matthew Filteau State College

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