

VOICES

VOICES OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA



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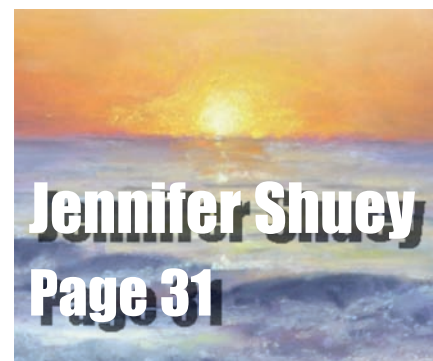
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February 2012

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The courage to ask hard questions

When I heard the first reports of Joe Paterno's deteriorating condition on Jan. 21, a heaviness filled my chest.

I felt sad for all the misery he faced in final months—the surfacing of a horrific scandal, his undignified firing from the job he loved, vicious attacks on his character and several devastating Penn State football defeats. I'm sure that he, more than any of us, grappled with the question of whether he should have done more to bring Jerry Sandusky's alleged crimes to light.

I also felt sad for the Paterno family, for loss upon loss that piled up in the past months. And I felt sad for the Penn State



from the desk of managing editor

Lucy Bryan Green

community, that their fallen hero faced such a swift and inglorious end.

Yet the events following Joe Paterno's death—the viewings in the Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, the funeral procession attended by thousands, the memorial service whose 10,000 tickets were claimed in seven minutes—provided some much needed catharsis.

Setting aside the shame that has been upon us since November, we gave ourselves permission to relive some of Penn State's greatest moments on and off the football field. We watched as many of Paterno's vocal critics now praised his legacy as a coach, educator and philanthropist. We remembered what it felt like to be united by Penn State pride.

Joe Paterno's death stirred in us a hope that we might, as a community, heal from the terrible thing that happened here. And that is good.

But we must not let our eagerness for restoration (and our impulse to protect Joe Paterno's legacy), prevent us from facing the fact that we failed 10 (or more) of our young boys by letting them fall victim to a sexual predator.

The desire to "move on" is compelling, but we will never find true healing unless

we ask the hard questions: How did this happen? What institutional, social and psychological factors contributed to this tragedy? And what can we do to ensure that it will never happen again?

Here at Voices, we are asking those questions. The first in a two part series, this month's cover story examines how our state law, university policy and community members might better protect our children.

As always, we value your readership and support. We are seeking a University section editor, and we are always in need of committed writers, distributors and copy editors. If you are interested in helping Voices to continue publishing thoughtful, fearless and free news, send me an email or show up at our weekly staff meeting: Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m. in Irving's Bagels.

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