

# Voices

The Centre Region's Independent  
Community Newspaper

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## BOARD OF EDITORS

managing editor  
Suzan Erem  
suzan@lastdraft.com

interim managing editor  
Ben Brewer  
benjaminjbrewer@gmail.com

politics and economics  
Ben Brewer  
politics@voicesweb.org

community & lifestyles  
Anne Marie Toccket  
community@voicesweb.org

university  
Melinda Skutnick  
university@voicesweb.com

environment  
Cindy Hyrszko  
environment@voicesweb.org

arts & entertainment  
Zach Kelly  
arts@voicesweb.org

opinion  
Paul Durrenberger  
oped@voicesweb.org

**ART & DESIGN STAFF**  
Cassandra Derr, Mali Campbell

**PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
Doug Bauman, Katie Reed

**CIRCULATION**  
Suzanne Weinstein and Roxanne Toto  
circulation@voicesweb.org

**ADVERTISING INQUIRIES**  
advertising@voicesweb.org

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
president  
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axg2@psu.edu

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mdwatson@aol.com

treasurer  
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pauldurren@verizon.net

members-at-large  
MIKE CASPER  
mcc4@psu.edu

DAVID PEERY

# A community paper requires communal effort

*from the desk of*  
**Ben Brewer**

Well, we did it. We managed to get this issue published without Suzan Erem, the managing editor and lifeblood of *Voices*.

Suzan writes stories, mentors interns, shakes down advertisers and, most importantly, provides the inspiration to keep the rest of us chugging away. She does all that and more—without ever accepting a penny for her efforts.

Suzan Erem is my hero.

But singlehandedly keeping the crazy experiment that is *Voices* going takes its toll. We need more catalysts, and not just because Suzan deserves more than the one-month break she took this summer.

In this issue, we chronicle the efforts of Penn State students and owner Greg Gabbard to keep City Lights Records—the area's last remaining independent record store—alive. Without a plurality of contributors, *Voices* inevitably re-creates the consolidation, hierarchy and homogeneity of neoliberal capitalism, which destroys local stores like City Lights and replaces them

with supercenters.

Only through large-scale cooperative action will we be able to dismantle transnational corporations in order to reclaim local autonomy and celebrate diversity. Otherwise, big business will continue to extend its empire, colonizing not just academia, as big pharma has done at Penn State, but all other spheres of life.

*Voices* requires no less a collective effort. *Voices* is a community paper. We need a community of editors who know the Centre Region and are committed to changing it for the better. That's especially true now as we look to fill three vacated editorial positions.

We need a community of writers. This month, Chris Lee turned a night on the town into a meditation on the state of the local music scene. Allan Stoekl wrote about a visit by a band of bicycle-based activists called the Pedal People.

Neither Chris nor Allan is a staff writer for *Voices*. They both simply had a good story to tell. *Voices* exists so that community members may tell their stories.

We also exist to educate the next generation of journalists. The students who intern with us learn to think and write critically in a way uncharacteristic of the corporate press.

Intern Janet Robbins' article on campus activism makes clear the priorities of today's college students: Beer and football take precedence over sexual assault education and the environment. We welcome veteran activists and longtime community members to help mentor young writers and editors and stem the tide of apathy that consumes the nation's young adults.

There are alternatives to self-indulgent activism. With *Voices*, you can help radicalize younger generations, report on issues of interest to you and promote the diversity of perspectives that a community newspaper can—and must—provide.

## Top Stories in This Issue

### POLITICS & ECONOMICS

Last local record store struggles to stay afloat *by Nicholas Rys*.....3  
Pedal People ride dirty to keep Massachusetts clean *by Allan Stoekl* .....3

### COMMUNITY & LIFESTYLES

Local instructor shares passion for yoga *by Heather House*.....5  
Achievements of State High's brightest overlooked *by Arthur Goldschmidt*.....5

### UNIVERSITY

PSU students rally around beer, football *by Janet Robbins* .....9  
University eliminates trans fats in cafeterias *by Alex Blatter*.....9

### ENVIRONMENT

Banks of Boalsburg's Tannery Run get face lift *by Leslie Rosenbaum*.....13  
Global climate change to take toll on Pa. *by Nicole Gallo*.....13

### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Local music scene not just stale cover bands *by Chris Lee*.....16  
Documentary filmmaker explores 'bear' culture *by Jeffrey Carton* .....16

### OPINION

Penn State football players' antics nothing new *by Murali Balaji* .....20  
University-industrial complex puts profit over people *by Aaron Troisi*.....20

### COLUMNISTS

Birdwatch *by Alice Fuller*.....14  
Bright Ideas *by Andy Lau*.....15  
Cosmo.....24

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### MAILING ADDRESS:

**Voices of Central Pennsylvania**  
133 S. Allen St.  
State College, PA 16801  
**TELEPHONE:**  
(814) 234-1699

**For faster response send email**  
**ON THE WEB:**

**voices@voicesweb.org**  
**www.voicesweb.org**

Submissions should be directed to the appropriate section editor.

*Voices* of Central Pennsylvania is an all-volunteer organization. We gratefully accept contributions and bequests to support our efforts.