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OUR OPINION

Respect of Arts Fest visitors best method to deter crime, not Beaver Ave. cameras

This is the first year that the cameras on Beaver Avenue will be operational during the Central Pennsylvania Festival of the Arts.

The cameras were inoperable last year because a networking cable was not ready, but this year, everything is ready to roll.

State College police plan to monitor the cameras more this weekend than they usually do. The question is, what difference will it make?

Probably very little.

The incredible influx of people that the State College area sees during Arts Fest leads to more activity in town and on campus and inevitably, more crime. That fact will probably not change, even with the cameras monitoring the Beaver Canyon area.

There is no doubt that there will already be an increased number of police officers patrolling the streets.

If that hasn't been deterrent enough for some people during previous festivals, then this year will not prove to be any different, even with the monitoring of cameras.

The cameras' operation would not have prevented the riots during Arts Fest in 1998 and 2000, and it won't prevent anything from happening this year either.

If people are making a disturbance, they're not going to change their actions because they suddenly remember that there are video cameras monitoring the street.

Using the footage filmed by cameras in its normal capacity — to verify witness accounts of particular incidents — should be just as useful, if not more, during Arts Fest.

But the presence of cameras this year should not be the main deterrent against criminal activity. It shouldn't have to be a deterrent at all.

Those visiting State College from out of town should remember that this is a town — not just the site of a huge, popular arts festival — and that people live here.

Those residents are here when the roads are closed and the stages are being constructed. And they're still here after the whole thing is over, when booths are being torn down, the remnants of visitors' weekend fun is scattered throughout the town, and the normal summer calm returns to State College.

Cameras aside, students and visitors alike should realize that Arts Fest weekend is certainly a time to have fun and enjoy the event. However, they should also realize that the fact that a big event like Arts Fest is going on does not give everyone justification to act disrespectful or destructive of both the town and the people in it.

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OPINION

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

THURSDAY, July 8, 2004 | 3



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Slot machines good for state's economy

In response to the Collegian editorial ("State taking chance by relying on funds from slot machines for budget, tax relief," July 6), Pennsylvania is no longer the strong industrial state that it used to be.

According to the Keystone Research Center, an estimated 106,142 manufacturing jobs disappeared from 1994 to 2000. That number is even greater today.

The slot machine bill was something that was sorely needed in Pennsylvania.

Take my hometown, Erie, for example.

In 2002, International Paper closed its Erie plant after being a local fixture for over 104 years. This move was demoralizing to the local economy and the displaced employees. But the move was understandable — the machines were old and the plant was stagnant; it was inefficient to keep the plant open.

However, even more devastating was the fact that 213 acres of prime lakefront property would be blighted by the abandoned property.

Enter MTR Gaming Group. MTR decided that the IP site would be perfect venue for a new

racetrack, with the contingency that slot machines would be used.

With the passing of the bill on July 5, the racetrack took a giant step toward reality. New, decent paying jobs will be available in Erie.

Many regions in the state will benefit from the new slot bill and the results will strengthen the state's economy. Millions upon millions of dollars will pour into the state and provide long overdue tax relief.

Pennsylvania needs develop into new markets instead of reminiscing of the industrial past. Gov. Rendell and the state representatives took a giant step for the future of Pennsylvania.

It was a necessary "crap shoot," and I am satisfied that the state has taken this action for our future.

Brian Henry
junior - accounting

'Fahrenheit' far from being documentary

I hate to break it to Debra Bell (Letter unfairly judges 'Fahrenheit' review, July 6) or anyone else who has disillusioned themselves into thinking that Michael Moore's film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, is a documentary, but it takes more than interviews and news clippings to

be a documentary. According to **dictionary.com**, a documentary must be based on documents, presenting the facts objectively without editorializing.

If **dictionary.com** does not suit your fancy, try Merriam Webster online, and you will find nearly the same definition.

The fact remains that Moore was neither objective nor without editorializing.

In addition, his use of "facts" was more than questionable, it bordered on fraud.

Quite plainly his movie is a nothing more than a propaganda piece; to think otherwise is simply fanciful.

Jason Warner
Class of 1999

Troops, country both need public support

This letter is in response to the most ridiculous and absurd letter from James Leatherman ("Students in danger with national draft," July 6).

First off, you can't be for the troops and support them in their noble effort and at the same time be against the war.

How ridiculous is that? This is like telling your wife you love her, but you're against the marriage. As a veteran of the Army, trust

me, I wouldn't want some communist and coward like you sitting next to me in my foxhole fighting the enemy.

In case you don't realize it, our country and everything this great nation stands for is under attack right now by radical Islamists. I seriously doubt the brave men and women on the front lines, who are putting their lives on the line every day so you can continue to blame America, would want you beside them, too.

There is no doubt that if America is hit again in another 9/11-style attack, our government is going to have to look hard and seriously at the prospect of reinstating the draft.

Cowards like James Leatherman, who I'm sure benefited from the government by accepting student loans during his college days at Penn State, will be the first to climb aboard the "free-loader express" to Canada. America doesn't need wimps and cowards like you.

It's people like you, Mr. Leatherman, who are undermining our war effort and threatening our livelihoods.

Maybe you should just leave the country now if America can't count on your support when it needs you the most.

Dave Swiderski
senior - accounting, Harrisburg campus

STAFF COLUMN

New responsibility offers challenges, lessons

By Jennette Hannah

Me, in two simultaneous positions of authority.

The idea 4 years ago, or even last year, would have made me snicker. Enforcing rules? Being responsible for others? Making decisions?

"I don't think so," is what I would have told you.

And yet, here I am — not only responsible for a few reporters, but for about 40 freshmen as well.

I am the kind of person who is terrified of making a mistake — one who fears failure to the nth degree.

To undertake two such serious positions scared the living daylights out of me.

But after much contemplation, much hopping back and forth about whether or not I'd be able to handle two responsibilities at the same time, I decided to shut my eyes, hope for the best and just do it.

Call me crazy, but I hate backing down from a challenge at the expense of being called a quitter. I

guess it goes back to the days of being teased and having my hair pulled because I was the only girl on the soccer team.

I'd rather be overwhelmed than miss out on an opportunity.

Some might ask, "why on earth would you want to live with freshmen in the dorms?" Others might wonder, "why would anyone want to live at the beck and call of news writing?"

I have no easy, one-word answer. But I do know that despite many uncertainties, thus far I love both jobs.

Living among freshmen is an entirely different beast ... and I don't mean that in a derogatory sense.

In just these past two weeks, it has reminded me that people can exist outside the realm of breaking news. Trust me, that's easy to forget.

After one of the most horrific days in my brief stint as editor, a few of the girls from my floor tipped over to me while I was eating in the dining commons with a few other resident assistants — and then they started singing "Happy Birthday," loudly enough to turn the heads of those around me. Granted, it wasn't my birthday, but it was just enough to make me blush, laugh and realize how lucky I am. It is, indeed, the little things that count.

Each one of the girls on my floor, most just out of high school, has a sparkling personality that truly is a joy to come home to each day. Hearing about their endeavors, their trials and triumphs, and their awesome (or not-so-awesome) professors make me chuckle.

Answering questions that I remember once asking when I was a freshman, such as how to get a fitness pass or what to do if their computer doesn't work, makes me smile.

The role of a RA, albeit hard to define, is one of friend, mother, confidante, advice-giver, companion and unfortunately, disciplinarian.

Though I just turned 20 last week, 17 and 18 years of age seem like a world away, and I can't help but wonder where the time has gone.

When I came to college, I thought I knew everything about everything, and you couldn't convince me otherwise. "My girls," as I like to call them, are fresh-faced and just beginning their journey into the unknown.

Compare that to the less cozy world of reporting, which doesn't necessarily include the niceties of friendship.

The role of an editor precedes that of friend. You're responsible for the representation of a 20,000 circulation daily. The burden of

truth and accuracy rests not only with the reporter, but with editors as well. If you misquote a source, misspell a name or miss a big story, your credibility, as well as that of the paper, comes into question.

As a junior who is desperately trying to decide what I want to do with the rest of my life, desperately trying to decide if I will make the great leap and study abroad next spring, I have realized that I know next to nothing — that there is so much to learn that it's overwhelming.

But by embracing new challenges and facing my fears, I suppose I am learning more than I would if I had settled to confining myself to a classroom education for four years.

If I had let myself be swayed by the possibility of failure, I wouldn't be an editor this summer after one semester as a staff reporter, and I certainly wouldn't have a wonderful family of 18 year olds to go home to every night.

And by the way, if you happen to get assigned to the fourth floor of Bigler Hall in East for the fall semester, well, you just met your RA.

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