



How Alpha Tau Omega, Zeta Tau Alpha became the top-raising organizations of THON 2019

By Grace Miller
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Greek organizations Alpha Tau Omega and Zeta Tau Alpha have been Penn State THON partners for 28 years, and the top fundraising organizations to support the philanthropy for over 25 years.

This year, the two organizations raised \$254,355.04 of the \$10,621,683.76 total, about two percent of THON's total earnings.

"It's not about how much money we raise or being number one," Ryan Geroulo, ATO president said. "We just like trying our hardest, but seeing the number up there and being the number one organization is like the cherry on top."

Geroulo (sophomore-computer engineering) said they basically have the same fundraising tactics as other organizations. This includes things like THONvelopes, canvassing, ribboning and online donations. However, they bring something extra.

"We just put in exponentially more time than everyone else," Geroulo said. "It's like an everyday occurrence for us."

Geroulo said ATO and ZTA are so dedicated to THON that it's become a staple of their organizational culture.

"Initially, our house and Zeta, if you join one of our organizations, you kind of have to know that we're super involved in THON," Geroulo said.

Because they raised so much, ZTA finance chair Natalie Wagner said that there have been rumors circulating that their total was "matched" or "sponsored." One of the rumors in particular suggests that Pepsi matched their donations.

Wagner (senior-security risk analysis) said none of the rumors are true.

"We don't have any corporate sponsors," Wagner said. "We're not matched. We just work really, really hard."

Wagner said as the finance chair, she watched every single donation come in to create their total.

"I just don't want to see... our whole entire chapter and ATO's work discredited by just saying somebody comes in and just gives us that money," Wagner said.

Despite raising so much, ATO and ZTA faced some unique challenges this year.

After canvassing was banned for safety reasons, they had to come up with innovative ways to gather funds. The groups found success with weekly ribboning outside of local Waffle House locations.

"I think that's what set us apart because it's so easy to say, 'Well, nobody's allowed to Centre County canvas, and nobody's allowed to go canvassing anymore' once it got taken away," ZTA's THON chair Alyssa Fairweather said. "But instead of looking at it from that angle, we looked at it like, 'How can we do better now?'"

Fairweather (senior-early childhood education) said that throughout January, many of their members spent hours volunteering their time selling ribbons. The tables were usually run from around 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"We knew a lot of people wanted to donate because they all are so familiar with THON, but we just couldn't reach them," Fairweather said. "So this was one way."

In fact, on many of the checks they received from ribboning, Fairweather said they saw names of community members who would often donate through canvassing. Ribboning allowed them to reach a demographic they would've otherwise lost from the new regulations.

Also crucial to their success, Fairweather said, was the participation of the members in the organizations.

"The new pledge classes from last year are all just super involved and love THON. That really showed," Fairweather said. "It was so much of their hard work, and we couldn't have done the ribbon sales without the participation that we got."

Knowing they were working to help their five THON families helped motivate everyone in ATO and ZTA throughout the year.

"I think it makes you open up your eyes," Geroulo said. "There's families out there who aren't as like, I guess the word is lucky, as we are. They have to deal with some very tense and very tough situations."

Fairweather said they try to capture that feeling members get during the final total

reveal, and encourage them to use that feeling as motivation to contribute.

"[We don't fundraise] just because it's our job," Fairweather said. "It's because of the cause and because of how amazing it is that we want to put in this effort and we know that so many people in our organization feel the same way."

The connections the greek organizations have made with their THON families have not only motivated them internally, but have impacted the THON families themselves.

One of Fairweather's favorite memories from fundraising was during a canvassing trip her sophomore year. She, along with other members, stayed at the house of their THON child, Tucker.

She remembers looking through a scrapbook of Tucker's story with his mother. She shared something that stuck with Fairweather.

"They literally told me that they credit ATO and Zeta for saving his life," she said. "They planned his funeral twice, but because of experimental medicine and all of the money that we raised, he was able to survive something that they didn't think he was going to survive. Twice."

Fairweather had a similar moment with ATO and ZTA's newest THON child, Joyce, who rapped at THON.

"Joyce, our new

THON child, has already said, like when the dancers went and met with her... 'These people are my brothers and sisters,' and that was the first time we met her."

Like Fairweather, the opportunity to grow close with the families has been huge for, Shane Heacox, the THON chair of ATO. Heacox said he's specifically gotten very close to Tucker, who is now one of his best friends.

"He's not really our THON kid anymore," Heacox said. "He's just friends with everyone in our [organization]."

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"We don't have any corporate sponsors. We're not matched. We just work really, really hard."

Natalie Wagner
ZTA finance chair

Pictured: ATO-ZTA during THON 2018 in the Bryce Jordan Center.
Photo by John Stinely.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion adds to its team

By Lilly Forsyth
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

accountant and an Ecuadorian father who works in information technology.

Pazmino described the town she grew up in as a "melting pot" of Hispanic cultures, allowing her to live within a different demographic than the one found in Centre County. When she attended Kean University, which is located in a neighboring town, her exposure to cultures expanded when she joined Mu Sigma Upsilon — a multicultural sorority.

Though she did not enter college with a dream of joining greek life, attending sorority-sponsored events such as resume workshops and game nights made her excited to be involved in the chapter.

"It was very much a lot of different women from a lot of different backgrounds, and they all had a voice," Pazmino said. "It also resonated with me because they were all very strong individuals, and I grew up with that very strong female role."

Pazmino said her mother was the strong female role in her life and was "always was there" for every recital, softball game, appointment or question.

"I could ask her anything, I could tell her anything and it wasn't a punishment," Pazmino said. "It wasn't, 'Don't talk about it or don't discuss it.' My mother educated me and expanded my



Chushi Hu/Collegian

Karina Pazmino, administrative support assistant for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, sits in her office on Tuesday, Feb. 26.

mind because she always talked to me."

Having someone she could confide in while growing up influenced Pazmino's interactions with friends or sorority "littles" — sorority pledges who Pazmino was tasked with mentoring as a "big."

"Working with girls in my organization as a mentor, as a

big, [I realized] they felt isolated in college. They felt alone. They didn't feel they had a place. I thought, 'That's such a small percentage that I talk to. How many students like that exist?'" Pazmino said.

She came to the realization that younger people tend to be questioned about their understanding of their individual self. Pazmino

didn't agree with this mentality, explaining it "isn't anyone's place to tell you you're wrong."

"If someone is asking a question or an opinion, it's someone's place to dive deeper, ask where this is coming from, where are the roots and give suggestions," Pazmino said. "It's a matter of giving them a good base to keep forming, like planting a tree. It's about having good roots, so they can keep growing up big and strong."

When she first considered her current position, the students she was working with in minority greek organizations praised her would-be boss Gary Abdullah, who is the assistant dean of Diversity and Inclusion for the college.

Pazmino's first impression of Abdullah occurred during Mr. Burgundy and Grey, an annual event showcasing influential male students on campus. Abdullah was a judge during the event, and Pazmino recalled seeing him interact with students she often worked with.

"I know that they are not the quickest to warm up to, but they seemed very at ease around him," she said.

Now in the position for several weeks, Abdullah has formed his own opinions of Pazmino.

See **INCLUSION**, Page 2.

Wonder Woman, Baymax and a few dragons moved into the Carnegie Building a few weeks ago when Karina Pazmino walked through the doors of room 206.

As the new administrative support assistant for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at the Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications, Pazmino, 32, said she is ready to provide students with a place to feel included and find help for most of their problems.

A wall of "Funko Pop!" figurines sits behind Pazmino, who can often be seen staring at multiple planners and balancing dozens of emails.

"I am a huge nerd, in every nerd way possible," Pazmino said. "I'm an academic nerd, book nerd, comic book nerd, a makeup nerd. It is bad."

Pazmino explained that each of her figurines represent empowering women, which is a lesson she wants to express to students she works with.

"These were characters I looked up to when I was growing up," she said. "I remember waking up before my mom to watch Sailor Moon."

Growing up in Elizabeth, New Jersey, Pazmino is the daughter of a Dominican mother who is an

SONIC TOWN



Zack Gething/Collegian

Kirk Wydner, graduate student at Penn State, performs on stage during an open mic at Chronic Town on Wednesday, Feb. 27.

Local church packs food for impoverished children

By Gabriella Hornack
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

On Saturday, Feb. 23, the State College Alliance Church teamed up with Feed My Starving Children, a nonprofit Christian organization raising money to combat world hunger, to host a Mobile-Pack event. Christopher Grant got his first taste of community service 10 years ago at a food-packing event. Ever since, he has been looking for another chance to donate his time and service to a worthy cause. In 2018, Grant, an associate professor of biology at Juniata College, connected with a friend living out in the Midwest who has an affiliation with Feed My Starving Children.

“I was quite familiar with this organization through those venues,” Grant said. “My wife and I kind of felt like this was something we’d be able to bring to the local community.”

With the State College Alliance Church’s latest expansion project, they were able to host this major event with plenty of room to pack food in the gymnasium. “There are certain requirements needed to host,” Grant said. “It just made perfect sense to hold it in our church. It allows us to have significant Juniata, Penn State and local community involvement.”

Grant said many people played a role in the organization and execution of Saturday’s event. The church relied heavily on corporate sponsors and donations to help fund the event and spread awareness for their cause. The church also organized a hospitality team, headed by Grant’s wife, which ensured the volunteers were on task and focused.

“When I first started this, I had no idea how much work it was going to be,” Grant said. “There have been so many people who played a role in making this happen.”

Grant said his own job was to surround himself with really good people who were able to handle logistical measures, a strict timeline and a financial budget.

However, on Jan. 9, the event only had about 10 volunteers signed up, and was nowhere near reaching their financial goals, according to Grant.

“Luckily, over the following monthly period, the whole event blew up. We surpassed our financial expectations and grew our number of volunteers to help accommodate more people and more meals,” Grant said.

Grant said that as a professor, he has noticed the current college demographic is “much more service-oriented” than past generations.

This excitement to serve



Courtesy of Bill Jester

Community members pack food at the State College Alliance Church in partnership with Feed My Starving Children on Feb. 23.

helped shape the outcomes of this past weekend.

“When you think about world hunger, you think about the commercials showing starving children in far distant countries, and it often leaves us feeling helpless,” Grant said. “When it comes to serving, there is very little that you can do better in your life with two hours of your time.”

Lead pastor of the State College Alliance Church Aaron Henning said he was eager to host the event after hearing such great things from Grant.

“Saturday was beyond expectation,” Henning said. “All of the goals we were setting along the way got surpassed even during the event.”

The church was originally trying to raise \$11,000 and get 500 volunteers. However, due to high demand, they expanded the volunteer quota to 600.

In total, the church packed around 147,000 meals, which is 17,500 more than planned. According to Henning, these numbers amount to roughly 404 children being provided with meals for an entire year just due to the turnout of this event alone.

Henning also mentioned that, due to the polar vortex and sub-zero weather, the Feed My Starving Children organization was behind in production.

“The weather has really affected them this year,” Henning said. “So, whenever they have a packing event like ours that supercedes its goals, it definitely helps their bigger picture.”

When he wasn’t greeting and welcoming people into the church, Henning got to experience the process along with the volunteers by working a two-hour shift.

“I went through all the motions with check-ins, registration and orientation in the worship sanctuary area,” Henning said. “We then moved into the gymnasium

The Gala was also a favorite memory of Wagner.

She cherishes the memory of the Gala because it was when she, along with the other THON chairs, announced to the rest of ATO and ZTA that they were getting a new THON child, Joyce.

“I honestly think that was my favorite memory because it was so exciting,” Wagner said.

“It reminds us what THON is about and I think that also reminded us why we were at the Gala. Why we were fundraising.”

Wagner, along with Heacox and Fairweather, all danced at THON this year.

Altogether, ATO and ZTA had 13 members on the floor, five of whom applied to dance independently.

“It just really couldn’t have been better,” Wagner said.

where the actual food packaging began.”

Henning said that his church has had only “great experiences” with community service, both locally and on trips overseas.

“Anytime you serve together, you form a bond. I think that was magnified on a pretty big scale for this event,” Henning said. “We saw all ages, from old folks to young kids and everything in between. It was a great event to connect the community.

Ed Babcock retired from his head elder position at the State College Alliance Church just a day before the food-packing event.

He took this opportunity as a way to transition out of the role and take a more administrative volunteer position.

As an accounting professor in the Smeal College of Business, Babcock has also taken part in fundraising and financial matters.

“Even though I’m an accountant, I’m really kind of a ‘pitch-man’ and enjoy promoting things I deeply care about,” Babcock said. “I assisted Aaron and Christopher with spreading awareness, promoting the event and helping people understand the blessing of service.”

Since the turnout for the food pack was so overwhelmingly impressive, Babcock said his hope for the future is to have a Penn State-exclusive food pack that allows college students to have the opportunity to serve.

“This event mobilized over 600 people for a common, wonderful cause,” Babcock said.

“It didn’t matter what your religious background was or if you even go to church. It was all about helping kids who need us most.”

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For the first time, all five of their THON families attended THON.

“We got so lucky this year that we had all five of them there and it just so showed,” Fairweather said. “It was incredible.”

ATO and ZTA’s close relationship aided the organizations in their fundraising efforts as well.

Fairweather said the two greek organizations often go by “Zetaus,” a combination of both of the names.

They use the slogan, “One word, one love, one org.”

“It’s not like two organizations,” Wagner said. “We’re one, and also it’s so great that we’ve stayed together for all of those years.”

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Gates for Justice needs no leader

By Jacqueline Miller
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Most groups require elections and definitive leadership to keep themselves together. However, Standing at the Gates for Justice is not most groups.

Since the last presidential election, a group of people have been standing in front of the Allen Street Gates from 4 to 5 p.m. every Monday.

Unless classes are canceled or the weather would make it unsafe for them to stand outside for extended periods of time, the group will be found at the Standing at the Gates for Justice Vigil held every week, like clockwork.

Even though the time and place stays the same, the focus of their demonstrations is not nearly as static.

Every week, each activist brings their own sign. Their topic changes depending on whatever each individual feels passionate about in the news cycle that week. They also keep up with campus-related events and try to raise awareness about current issues the participants feel are relevant.

“We try to keep up on the news,” Tyson Daniels, who attends the demonstrations, said.

Daniels, a 32-year-old resident of State College, even uses whiteboards as signs because the topic he wants to demonstrate for changes so often.

However, when a particularly important topic comes up, a citizen unaffiliated with the group may reach out to them, or one participant may contact the rest of the regulars and organize a demonstration.

This group is often contacted and joined by other organizations on campus, including Planned Parenthood, MoveOn and LGBTQ activist groups.

“Because the group does not have a specific leader, it is organically shaped by the people who participate,” Ben Wideman, the campus pastor for the University Mennonite Church, said via email.

These demonstrations are largely political, and often re-

volve around a social justice issue. Their signs raise awareness for everything from police brutality to climate change and clean energy.

“We try to stand up for what we’re for more than what we are against,” DeeAnn Wylie, who attends the demonstrations, said.

Daniels added they often are “supporting people who are being attacked.”

Soon after President Donald Trump was elected to office, 3rd Way Collective, an organization on campus dedicated to “Peace, Justice, and Faith at Penn State,” helped organize a sort of protest downtown.

Tensions had reached a fever-pitch due to current events including, but not limited to, the ban on immigration from Muslim-majority countries, the Women’s March and the election itself.

“It kind of got volatile, after the ban,” Wylie, 60, said. “Some people stopped coming after that.”

Other groups showed up and caused a contentious situation by counter-protesting.

Some of the earliest organizers stopped showing up after being threatened. Their numbers have fluctuated since then, but a core group of “die-hards” consistently appear.

“It was, like, a whole weekend of protesting,” Daniels said. “This was the thing on Monday that I came to and I just kind of kept coming.”

Wylie added that her “main reason for coming is I don’t want people to think that this is normal or okay.”

For such a consistent group of people, they represent the ever-changing political climate they live in. They provide an impetus for people to learn more about the world around them and about people they believe are overlooked and suffering.

It is important for them to remind State College’s citizens and students that there are people who care about others and want a safe and equitable world.

“I’ll stand here until I think that we take care of each other in a better way,” Wylie said. “No exceptions.”



John Stinely/Collegian

From left, Charlie O’Neill, DeeAnn Wylie, Sarah Malone, and Ben Wideman, all of State College stand with signs in front of the Allen Street Gates on Monday, Jan. 14.

Inclusion

FROM Page 1.

“She’s excellent,” Abdullah said. “I’m blessed to have her. She is a woman that has a lot of intelligence and has a big heart.”

Abdullah said Pazmino keeps him so organized that he joked she has threatened to lock him out from his own calendar to prevent him from spreading himself too thin.

Pazmino keeps herself busy studying toward an associate degree in labor and employment relations. Balancing work and school allows Pazmino to relate more to students who are in similar situations.

Additionally, she uses her research and customer service skills gained from her studies to help students and friends on topics such as resume building, unemployment and medical insurance.

Pazmino is also in the midst of wedding planning for a ceremony planned for Oct. 3. Pazmino met her fiancé, Frankie Martinez, 10 years ago, but revealed that when they initially met she was “not interested at the time.”

However, after a few years of frequent interaction because their friends were in overlapping social circles, a banquet changed the course of things.

“He did a very stalker-ish thing,” Pazmino said. “I went to the ladies’ room. He put my phone number in my phone — this is why I lock my phone now by the way — and texted himself and saved my number.”

From there, the two continued to talk, eventually dated, and fi-

nally, Martinez proposed during a birthday celebration for Pazmino. When her cake was brought out, she — still unsuspecting of what was to happen — was told to close her eyes, but she worried about burning her hair.

“Like a typical mother, my mom said, ‘Close your eyes’ and I said, ‘Yes ma’am,’” Pazmino said, “and when I opened them he was down on one knee.”

Pazmino describes Martinez as her “home” and someone who keeps her “grounded.”

“I see her doing great things with this office,” Martinez said. “Sometimes the saying is, ‘Behind a great mind of a man is a woman,’ and she’s that. I think she’ll be a very good gatekeeper to the students at the university.”

Martinez said he thinks Pazmino will be able to provide a platform to students, give advice based on her experiences and provide them with a space to have a voice.

From the students she has interacted with so far in her office, she can see the “untapped potential” within them. “I can see the shining stars that just need a little bit of brightening,” Pazmino said, smiling. “There’s nothing better than seeing someone’s potential and seeing them grow.”

She also had some advice for students who may not know what they want to do with their future.

“Never lock yourself into one thing because you never know what you can expand into to,” she said. “We are part of the generation that has the opportunity to do everything they want in their life.”

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\$254K

FROM Page 1.

Tucker, a high school senior, just got accepted into Penn State.

In a fundraising effort, ATO and ZTA put on a Gala instead of the traditional golf tournament that Heacox said usually only reached ATO families.

This event allowed the THON families to meet the families of organization members.

Heacox said this event is one of his favorite memories, as it was the first time Tucker got to meet his family. “Instantly everyone bonded,” Heacox said. “Since then, he’s been at one of our family tailgates for a football game, he’s been at my house and we’ve all just developed an even better bond together.”

Dr. Seuss' legacy calls for deeper consideration

OUR VIEW

While clearly an influential author, Seuss has a past that needs to be examined more closely

This week marks “Read Across America,” when teachers across the country and across all age groups encourage students to consume various books in pursuit of fully grasping the importance and magnitude of reading.

For many younger students, their teachers will likely encourage and promote the works of Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known to millions of children and adults as Dr. Seuss.

However, Seuss' past transgressions — including the inclusion of what are perceived by many to be racist trope bearing characters in his books “And to Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street” and “If I Ran the Zoo” — have some in the education field calling into question the merits of still teaching Seuss in this day and age.

This sentiment has been held in academia for the past several years, but with the publishing of an NPR article, these criticisms of Seuss have recently entered public consciousness.

It can be debated what the appropriate course of action is to take with Seuss' books or whether they are indeed racist.

But to simply disregard and blacklist Seuss might ignore the importance his rather revolutionary style had in sparking creativity in children, the amount of children his books taught to read and the art in his writing. With an asterisk attached.

Nearly half of the Collegian's Board of Editors have a parent who is either currently involved or once was involved in education, and many of them viewed teaching Seuss's works as beneficial. But not standing alone.

Despite the benefits, that does not mean Seuss is above reproach nor does it mean the claims of racism should not be examined.

After all, this is the same esteemed children's author who created clear anti-Japanese propaganda during World War II and reportedly drove his ex-wife to commit suicide after having an affair.

But the point of this editorial is not to put Seuss on trial for his past.

Instead, the point is that there are lessons to be learned from teaching Seuss and acknowledging the issues within his books at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.

For instance, if a kindergarten or first grade teacher were to teach the gravity of the racial bias present in “And to Think That I Saw it on Mulberry Street,” there is a reasonable debate to be had about whether or not children that young and that impressionable can truly think critically about Seuss' works, to the degree necessary.

That's not to say children that young can't be precocious — they certainly can be.

The issue is that explicitly calling out racism is more complex than a teacher simply opening a

book and pointing to one of Seuss' characters.

Many children, regardless of how intelligent, would likely fail to grasp fully the nuance behind such an important term necessary to understand, or what exactly it even is that makes something racist, bias or otherwise ignorant.

Let's be clear. The point is not to pacify education about race and other important issues, because that just does everyone a disservice, especially when people who have never encountered other cultures experience them for the first time.

Instead, the goal has to be to radically shake up the way we teach our kids and to say to first and second graders that Seuss has plenty of merits, but as those kids get older, highlight the undebatable necessity to reflect on Seuss and his impacts while

also critiquing him.

Children need to be exposed to different viewpoints as early and often as possible, including many more works than just “Green Eggs and Ham,” but also in a tasteful way so as they get older in life, they are prepared for all types of situations. To simply ban problematic books rids generations of the opportunity to learn from them.

Whether Seuss is really the best way to convey that message remains to be seen.

But it's clear Seuss was both a less-than-savory character, while also writing books like “The Lorax” (environmentalism), “The Sneetches” (anti-Semitism and discrimination) and “The Grinch” (consumerism and greed), which all serve as allegories for larger societal issues, thus making his legacy complex and worthy of deeper consideration.

Ultimately though, for all of those reasons, eradicating Seuss from curriculums seems a bit extreme, as well as nearly impossible, though criticism is certainly fair — and necessary.

MY VIEW |Madeline Messa

‘Weigh’ the options when criticizing other body types

“Just eat a few hamburgers.” I'm sure I've eaten at least one burger for every time someone said that to me, and I'm still underweight.

People tell me I have lucky genes and high metabolism, or that they would kill to be able to eat whatever they want without any consequences.

Sure, it may be great that I can finish a whole pizza by myself.

But I doubt anyone would envy my ability to overlap my thumb and pinky when I wrap them around my twiggy wrist.

I have always been waging a war with the numbers on the scale.

While everyone seems to be concerned with keeping those digits down, I internally beg for mine to go up.

Though I personally do not have an eating disorder, Feb. 25 to March 3 is this year's National Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

It bothers me that weight is something so prevalent in people's lives.

I would be perfectly content with my size if I was not so frustrated by the attitude around it.

Unfortunately, it seems people have a hunger that can only be satiated by passing judgment on others.

Anyone who is struggling to lose weight might be angry with me because of my difficulties to do the opposite.

My curse of being forever skinny makes people envious.

There is no sympathy for my effort to escape my underweight BMI of 17.5.

Everyone assumes it's easy and throws so-called advice at me like the sentence that began this column.

I've tried protein shakes, junk food, calorie tracking and even ditching exercise.

I feel self-conscious when I go for long-distance runs.

I worry because people will assume I have the opposite problem of what I do; I worry they will think I don't recognize how thin I am and that I am trying to lose weight.

Because of concerns for what strangers think of me, I ditched any thoughts of my health and put my focus toward putting on a few pounds.

I used an app to track my food intake, and even the app did not sympathize with my effort to gain weight.

I put in my goal to put on five to 10 pounds, but it was obvious the diet tracker was pro-

grammed only for weight loss.

It sent me notifications at the end of each day praising me for coming in under my daily calorie goal.

It's funny now, but it was a punch to the gut at the time.

It might as well have said, “Congrats! You failed.”

It hurts every time the number on the scale goes down.

I'm frustrated every time a pair of skinny jeans looks baggy on me.

I'm embarrassed every time I'm told to eat more but am also asked where it all goes when I finish a meal.

Having a struggling relationship with food goes both ways — multiple ways, even — and we need to remember that before judging people just on the way they look.

More likely than not, everyone around you has some kind of



Zack Gething/Collegian

Participants of the PA NEDA Walk pose for a group picture at Sydney Friedman Park on April 8, 2018

personal struggle.

Keep that in mind the next time you're tempted to make a joke about someone's weight.

I don't have a problem with food; I have a problem with people who care enough to have a problem with me.

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3 IN A ROW

Penn State dominates No. 17 Maryland from start to finish, using a balanced offensive attack to pick up its third-straight victory

By Matt Lingerman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Get one percent better.
That's been the daily mantra of Pat Chambers and his team all season long.
And over the Nittany Lions' recent 5-2 run, that improvement has been made evident on the court.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

But in Penn State's 78-61 rout of No. 17 Maryland on Wednesday night, the blue and white put on a performance which proved that saving a penny every day will eventually add up.

"You always go back to the first time we played them, and that was a long time ago," Chambers said. "If you go back in watch us in November and December, and now you watch us, that's growth. That's improvement."

That first bout with the Terps — a 66-59 loss in College Park to open Big Ten play — began a 10-game conference losing streak for Penn State which pushed it comfortably in the basement of the league.

Lamar Stevens scored 19 points, but on a meager 9-of-24 from the field. All 15 of the team's bench points came from Rasir Bolton. For large parts of the contest, the lid was firmly on the basket.

But out of the gates on Wednesday, the Nittany Lions looked like a different team from that Dec. 1 contest.

Because they are.
"The first half of conference play, our young guys really had to learn how to win in Big Ten," Stevens said. "It's just a whole different level. It's the best league in the country. When everybody dialed in and believed in coach Chambers is when we were able to get over that hump. We knew we were talented, but it's just another level of toughness and focus that you have to dial into to win in this league."



Ken Minamoto/Collegian

Rasir Bolton (13) dribbles toward the net during the game against Maryland at the Bryce Jordan Center on Feb. 27. The Nittany Lions defeated the Terrapins, 78-61.

It's no secret that during Penn State's 10-game skid, most of the losses were not blow outs, but rather close defeats in which the Nittany Lions were on the wrong end of an unlucky bounce or missed call.

But after beating a quality opponent in then-No. 13 Virginia Tech and hanging close with other conference giants, it became obvious Penn State had the ability to beat good teams.

Now that Penn State has made visible improvements — from defending to rebounding to shooting — and gotten over the proverbial hump, it shouldn't come as a surprise that Penn State is not only beating good teams, but dominating them.

"Something I see is the connectivity and the relationships among the players and staff. I think that type of culture can really push you through to winning," Chambers said. "Even during the toughest time in January, we didn't panic, they just kept showing up, kept coming back. That says a lot about the leadership of the players."

With three Big Ten games remaining before they head to Chicago for the Big Ten Tournament, the Nittany Lions have a real chance to finish the season on a five-game win streak and emerge out of the bottom four of the conference, earning a first round bye in the process.

Chambers' team is doing what

every coach hopes is the case for his team: peaking as the season reaches its final stretch.

"I said to them, there's still room for growth here. Some teams, at this point of the season, they're not gonna get any better, this is where they are," Chambers said. "But I'm so excited to go back to work tomorrow... and I'm gonna make sure they know that. Keep improving, because it's there and that's what makes it exciting going down the stretch here."

And perhaps most importantly, those improvement are from everybody.

"I think we're starting to just get contributions from everybody. I don't think there's any guy that

steps on the court that doesn't have an impact on the game," Stevens said.

"That's from top to bottom, and you need that in this league. We have talented guys, so when you get contributions from everybody we're a dangerous team."

As a result of the midseason drought, Penn State's hopes of finally earning an NCAA Tournament bid as an at-large are slim, and playing its best basketball come season's end when the ultimate postseason goal may be out of reach may seem sour to some.

But it's indisputable the Nittany Lions have followed their goal and improved by many one-percent increments, and a penny saved is a penny earned.

Those pennies are finally starting to add up just in time to cash them in.

"As a staff, you want to be the best you can be by the end of the year, and we're doing that," Chambers said. "You want your players to continue to develop and get better — you're seeing that."

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"The first half of conference play, our young guys really had to learn how to win in the Big Ten. It's the best league in the country. When everybody dialed in and believed in coach Chambers is when we were able to get over the hump."

Lamar Stevens
Junior forward

The NCAA champ you've never heard of

By David Pollak
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Stephen Nedoroscik may be the most quirky athlete at Penn State.

MEN'S GYMNASTICS

He's a two-time NCAA gymnastics champion on pommel horse and will most likely dominate the competition for a third year in a row, too.

But he also has the creative talent of solving a Rubik's cube outrageously fast and wears non-prescription goggles during meets.

Some have a stigma of college athletes being different than the average student, saying that they're not human in a way.

But trophy case aside, Nedoroscik isn't much different from the other 45,000 students trying to find their way in State College.

Men's gymnastics doesn't have as large of a following as women's gymnastics and the sport in general is very niche.

For most in the United States, a young boy doesn't usually say, 'I want to be a gymnast.' In fact, there are only 16 NCAA programs in the country for men's gymnastics.

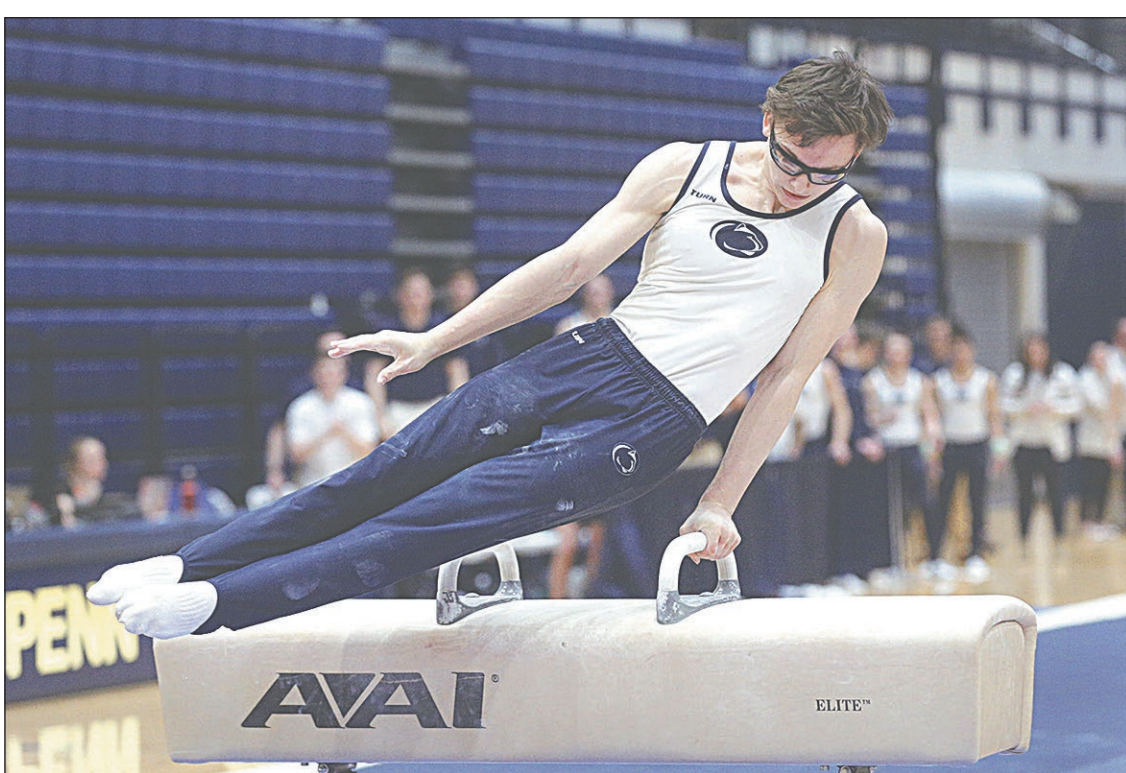
But that's where Nedoroscik is different, as gymnastics was his passion from a young age.

"I didn't play any other sports in high school," Nedoroscik said. "As a really young child I was always climbing. I remember I used to climb up to the top of the door frame and hang from there. It was pretty obvious from there that I had a lot of strength and so my mom decided to put me into a small class when I was around four. The first day that I was there I climbed a 15-foot rope, and from there on it just stuck with me."

What's special about Nedoroscik is how he competes in only one event, whereas most other gymnasts compete in more than one, if not all of them.

Even though he specializes in only pommel horse, he's the best in the country at it.

"Growing up I was a decent all-around gymnast, but once I got to high school it seemed that



Courtesy of Penn State Athletics

Stephen Nedoroscik competes on the pommel horse against Nebraska on March 17, 2018.

pommel horse was the only event that was still progressing for me and I was rapidly progressing in it," Nedoroscik said. "Junior year I qualified to the Junior Olympic Nationals and I won my first nationals, then I won my senior year and that's what hooked the eyes of a lot of schools in that I can be a really good pommel horse specialist."

When asked to describe what pommel horse is to someone who doesn't follow gymnastics, Nedoroscik smiled and laughed.

"Pommel horse is basically break dancing on a slab of leather with a couple of wooden handles, with all sorts of break dancing moves," Nedoroscik said.

Nedoroscik recently competed at the Winter Cup, in which he won the pommel horse title with ease, with a pair of performances that eclipsed the coveted 15,000 mark.

To put that into perspective, no other competitor came close to scoring a 15,000, and he did it twice — back to back.

With that performance, Nedoroscik claimed a spot on the 12-

man roster to represent the USA in the World Cup next month in Doha, Qatar. His mom, Cheryl, recalled what was running through her mind when the news broke to them.

"I was so excited that I wanted to cry," Cheryl Nedoroscik said. "It was a dream come true, and now he has the chance to be an Olympian if he performs well there. It's right there for him and I want him to have that."

While Nedoroscik has established his name in the gymnastics world, there was a time around third grade when he decided to quit gymnastics because he "just got tired of the sport," his mother said.

"We didn't want to force anything on to him, but after two months he wanted to go back," Cheryl said.

Added Cheryl: "Stephen is just a ray of sunshine, positive, successful, a hard worker and determined person. He loves his team more than anything and will be right there cheering for them whether he performs well or poorly. There will be times when

I wish him good luck and hope that he places high and he'll respond 'Mom, what are you talking about? I'm going to win this.'"

His family members aren't the only to shed high praise on Nedoroscik, as his teammates and head coach Randy Jepson speak highly of what he means to the team.

When first asked how to describe Nedoroscik, Jepson said, "If you look up the definition of 'nerd' in the dictionary, you'll find Stephen Nedoroscik with his goggles in there, and he'd take that comment with a sense of pride."

"We'll be in practice and Stephen will be rattling off some type of equation or theorem and I have no clue what he's talking about, but it makes me laugh," Jepson continued. "He has a great sense of humor."

One of Nedoroscik's teammates and best friends, Sam Zakutney, spoke about what type of guy he is and his role on the team.

"Stephen is a perfectionist. He really trusts that he'll get the job done and he's a very naturally talented guy, but his work ethic

is what puts him above the next guy," Zakutney said. "He's one of the louder guys on our team during meets. Two routines after he's finished his he's already lost his voice, so he'll cheer more than anyone else and we really appreciate that."

While Nedoroscik is classy in the gym, he's also a brain in the classroom.

A native of Worcester, Massachusetts, he found his love for engineering in his early high school days at Worcester Technical High School, where his trade was electromechanical engineering. To day, he's majoring in electrical engineering.

"I pretty much decided what I was interested in while I was in middle school," Nedoroscik said. "Freshman year in high school we went through a process where we explore all sorts of shops and I picked ones that I just thought were interesting. The two that stuck out to me the most were straight electrical and automation technology."

Being a collegiate athlete is a lot on a person's plate in itself, and being an engineering major makes it even harder to balance the day out.

For Nedoroscik, he doesn't have much free time between classes, schoolwork and training in the gym, but it doesn't faze him.

"It's pretty much just work all day, but it's not bad because I'm interested in the subject," Nedoroscik said.

"It's mostly just classes all morning, workout later, and then when I go back home after the workout I take around an hour or so to eat and shower, and then it's homework for the rest of the night. If I'm lucky, I'll be playing Smash Bros or something."

With just over a year left as a college gymnast remaining, Nedoroscik can reflect on his time at Penn State pretty concisely.

"I just want to be known as the guy who got it done," Nedoroscik said.

"I just want to leave a legacy behind me as a guy who was really good at pommel horse."

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MY VIEW | SHANE CONNELLY

One loss is not the end of the world for men’s lacrosse

Don’t go sounding the alarms just yet. Penn State’s season is far from over.



The Nittany Lions didn’t get the result they wanted in their road trip to Connecticut. That much is obvious. Yale was too much for them to bear. More

specifically, faceoff specialist TD Ierlan was too much for Gerard Arceri. Arceri turned in a shocking 4-for-23 day at the faceoff X.

Without the usual dominant performance from its star faceoff man, Penn State suffered mightily. The defense held its own considering the number of offensive possessions for the Bulldogs. Penn State’s offense looked like normal at times but also suffered through long droughts, and with Yale winning faceoff after faceoff, it was next to impossible for the Nittany Lions to keep up the scoring.

They lost. But to say this team can’t keep up with the best teams in the country is too reactionary at this moment.

Despite some offensive troubles and an atypical showing turned in by Arceri, Penn State lost by only one point. The Nittany Lions were in the game until the final buzzer, and the dagger was only planted when Nick McEvoy failed to win the final-minute draw after Grant Ament made the score 14-13.

It was a hard loss, but really a moral victory. Even though coach Jeff Tambroni and his team aren’t scheduling quality opponents for anything but signature wins for a tournament resume, the shortcoming

doesn’t hurt too much.

To start, this result did minimal damage to Penn State’s current ranking. The team still remains in the top-five of the latest USILA Coaches Poll as well as both US Lacrosse and Inside Lacrosse media polls.

Only falling from No. 2 to No. 5 is a win in itself.

Penn State’s explosive start to the season earned respect from throughout the lacrosse community, something that losing by just one goal to the defending national champions cannot instantly take away.

The Nittany Lions have room to breathe right now. They will face a Penn team that is off to a rough 0-2 start at home this weekend, a perfect opportunity to bounce back and put the Yale loss in the rearview. Arceri needs this game for his confidence. In 2018, he went 18-for-20 against the Quakers, blazing the trail for a Penn State win.

Arceri will have to face a different foe in Hofstra transfer Kyle Gallagher after last year’s faceoff man Chris Santangelo graduated, but it’s the chance to return to form that matters more to Arceri than anything else.

The Penn State offense will likely fix itself once it can get more possessions. Ament and Mac O’Keefe both still put up solid efforts against Yale. Ament had two goals and seven assists, while O’Keefe, who was on the receiving end of plenty of Ament’s passes, notched five goals.

The duo did struggle to keep the ball on that side of the field, however. Ament and O’Keefe accounted for eight of the 18 total turnovers by Penn State.



Noah Riffe/Colegian

Midfielder Gerard Arceri (40) battles for the ball during the men’s lacrosse game against Robert Morris at Holuba Hall on Feb. 9.

So while the most obvious focus is Arceri’s rebound, offense could use some polishing as well. The Penn game provides the chance to clean things up.

The only pressure surrounding this weekend’s game is the fact that the opportunity must be snatched up, because the road doesn’t get any easier afterward.

The Nittany Lions head to The Crown Classic to face No. 3 Cornell on a quick turnaround, just six days after facing the Quakers. The game against the Big Red is followed by Jacksonville two days later. If Penn State struggles here, then it is time to hit the panic button. While the Yale game caught most of the attention when the 2019 schedule

was released, Cornell is another pivotal out-of-conference battle.

There’s no lack of motivation for this matchup either.

The Big Red took down Penn State in 2018, so what better way to get revenge than to spoil their perfect season this year?

That being said, it is crucial the Nittany Lions from Weeks 1 through 3 show up to play against Cornell. The scheduling of top-tier opponents is all for naught if Penn State can’t get wins over them.

But let’s speculate and say the worst case scenario occurs for the Nittany Lions: they have two losses to Yale and Cornell respectively heading into Big Ten play. That first conference game against No. 2 Maryland

is elevated from an important game to a must-win.

Unless the Terrapins stumble on the way to the latter half of the season, they will be the team to beat in the Big Ten. They will also provide Penn State one more chance to put a big stamp on its tournament resume.

The Nittany Lions have never beaten Maryland once in program history, so betting on a win here is likely not a great gamble. Even if they manage to finally break through that barrier, there are still the other four teams in the conference to deal with in the regular season as well as the all-important Big Ten Tournament. Luckily for Penn State, the season is young. The Nittany Lions are still in a very good place, and they can stay there if they return to their winning ways they established in the first three games.

Letting the loss to Yale hang around into the coming weeks or failing to execute against the upper-echelon of teams they will face will quickly cloud any view of a NCAA title run.

The only thing that is certain right now is the current uncertainty of Division I lacrosse. There are three more months of chaos to come, and if it’s anything like the first few weeks, it will be a wild ride.

Teams once thought of as sure-things will be upset. Others that were counted out will come roaring back late in the year. Relatively unknown programs will pop up on radars.

If Penn State wants to stay out of the mess, all it can do is start consistently winning again.

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Ankara	D	A	X	S	U	H	Z	K	G	T	D	O	A	B	A	K	U	A
Athens	U	K	Z	V	M	X	E	S	I	R	A	P	R	U	S	A	L	F
Baku	Z	N	D	U	B	L	I	N	M	R	Y	U	D	B	R	E	F	L
Belfast	T	A	H	B	G	R	Z	Z	S	H	S	W	I	M	A	Y	B	E
Berlin	H	B	W	E	K	S	N	I	M	S	A	F	F	O	W	D	A	B
Bern	E	D	I	R	X	Y	N	E	E	P	K	N	F	S	Q	M	C	L
Brussels	L	M	W	L	K	A	N	L	J	T	B	V	R	C	P	I	O	G
Cardiff	S	O	O	I	I	J	S	C	F	E	G	A	R	O	E	N	C	L
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Helsinki	N	Z	Z	D	A	Q	I	G	F	M	W	V	M	O	E	G	Y	O
Kiev	K	X	S	W	E	C	A	J	R	K	D	O	N	J	U	N	G	S
Lisbon	I	I	X	B	U	Z	O	H	B	S	G	I	D	B	O	K	R	X
London	D	V	E	C	G	O	R	Y	J	O	B	S	R	B	R	A	I	Y
Madrid	U	L	T	V	A	S	B	L	K	F	V	R	S	D	H	H	G	G
Minsk	T	H	G	E	R	L	B	P	K	I	F	I	F	S	A	T	A	V
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Bigar’s Stars

By JACQUELINE BIGAR

Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019

www.jacquelinebigar.com

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★ You assume the lead in whatever you decide to do. Your instincts help you design a situation that encourages others to agree and pitch in. All the positive thinking helps hit a home run, pleasing you and almost everyone. Tonight: A must appearance.
TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★★ You have discussed a decision or project with each person involved. The time has come to pitch your idea to those who need to make a decision. Help others see the big picture. You might be quite feisty and touchy, especially by the end of the day. Tonight: Off to the gym. Time for a workout.
GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★ You could be stunned by what occurs and the realization that ensues. You might need to think more in terms of processing rather than blindly making assumptions that have worked for you in the past. Understand that people change. Tonight: Go with a suggestion.
CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Defer to others, and get down to basics. You have certain errands to run and ideas that need to be executed and completed. Allowing others to deal with the frivolous details could make everyone happy. Tonight: Follow a friend’s lead.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★ Pace yourself, and move past an unexpected hassle. Try not to get stuck or go over a story again and again. Understand where you’re coming from and what might be needed to make an idea become a reality. Tonight: Be more upbeat.
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★★ A decision is forthcoming. It might be easier for you to manipulate a project and situation than you thought possible. If someone is unpredictable, take that behavior as a given; you might find that you’re right. Tonight: Make weekend plans.
LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★ You might want to slow down and do some solid thinking. Sometimes, you move so quickly that you don’t consider the long-run implications. A family member lets you know how uncomfortable he or she is over a domestic matter. Tonight: Relax.
SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★★ Before you take action, consider your options. When you recognize that the time has come to act on a decision, you smile from ear to ear. Because you decide to make calls and touch base with others, you might be out and about or on your cell. Tonight: Think “weekend plans.”

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★ Be aware of the costs of continuing as you have. Others might not agree with your decision; they might let you know. Maintain your sense of humor, as you might receive some offbeat comments and suggestions. Stay secure in your choices. Tonight: Make it your treat.
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★ You might be difficult to stop. Someone might feel frustrated. Sometimes, stopping and making an assessment is the only thing that can help. You have far more control and influence than you think. Use it well. Tonight: As you like.
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★ You might not be pleased by what’s going on, you could feel helpless. Have a long-overdue personal conversation with a key person in your life. If you want this talk to succeed, be vulnerable and open. Your feelings of helplessness will vanish soon enough. Tonight: Get a good night’s sleep.
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★★ Dealing with others could be frustrating. If you’re not careful, a conversation easily could misfire. If you want to celebrate a new tie and agreement, then listen, share and be open. Don’t make any situation more difficult. Tonight: Kicking up your heels.

YOUR BIRTHDAY MESSAGE:
This year, you will experience more excitement than you have for a long time. Be careful with financial upset; you could experience a problem. However, upset surrounding day-to-day life and in conversation might be exciting and can be worked with.
If single, you find that you meet high-energy people through friends or when you’re in a group. **If you’re attached,** you and your partner enjoy each other’s company and often can be found chatting away. Listen to advice from CAPRICORN.

BORN TODAY
Singer Jason Aldean (1977), actress Ali Larter (1976), author Daniel Handler (1970)

Crossword

Across

1 Engrossed

5 Rand McNally book

10 Frisbee

14 Banned spray

15 Percolate

16 Sans purpose

17 Mentor

18 Royal card game

19 Calf’s meat

20 Serious collision

22 Raise

24 Foofaraws

26 Not clerical

27 Measured portions of medicine

30 Gullible one

32 Abnormal mass of tissue

36 Maintenance

38 Fraternity letter

40 Do roadwork

41 Drop in on

42 Japanese massage

45 Barbie’s beau

46 Barbra’s “A Star Is Born” co-star

48 Slip into

49 Prince of Monaco

51 NY team, familiarly

53 Puppy’s bite

55 Flings

56 Beast of burden

58 To go stealthily or furtively

60 Filling material

64 Some pots

68 Sanctuary

69 Sends packing

71 Infinitesimal amount

72 Consumer

73 Pontificate

74 Unwanted e-mail

75 Kind of top

76 Shade of green

77 Unit of length

Down

1 Maid’s cloths

2 Reunion attendee

3 Prefix with graph

4 Part of a board

5 Vocally

6 Musical times

7 Chemist’s workplace

8 Big plot

9 Beach souvenir

10 Portion out

11 It comes to mind

12 Bed board

13 Actor MacLachlan

21 Flexible pipes

23 Consume

25 Demonic

27 Somewhat dark

28 Drama set to music

29 Coil of yarn

31 Butter serving

33 Constructs

34 Blatant

35 Lets out

37 Third degree?

39 Can. neighbor

43 Charged item

44 Stomach woe

47 High-flying singer

50 Religious ceremony

52 Hang loosely

54 Easy on the eyes

57 Shish ____

59 Painting holder

60 Border on

61 Big butte

62 Call from the flock

63 “Encore!”

65 Arizona Indian

66 Abbr. at the end of a list

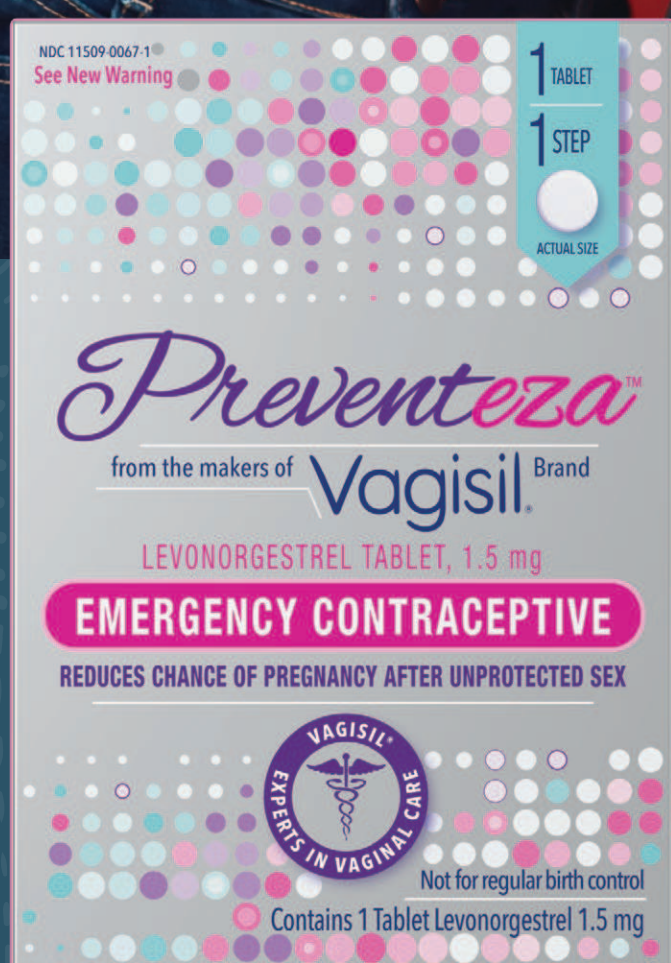
67 Handle

70 Paddle

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