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ELWAKIL REMOVED

UPUA president voted out 1 week after being sworn in

By Tyler Nolt
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The University Park Undergraduate Association voted to remove President Rasha Elwakil from the assembly last Wednesday, one week after she was sworn in.

After over three hours of discussion, the motion to remove Elwakil passed by a vote of 28-8-1.

The motion for Elwakil's removal was brought forward by Middle Eastern and North American (MENA) Caucus representative E Saba, whose concerns were echoed by several other representatives.

"There have been many discussions in rooms with leadership," Speaker of the Assembly Kat Hogan said. "The largest grievance that I have as speaker of the assembly is that last year, issues were brought up ... and there was the lack of moving forward in a productive manner."

The meeting began as a closed session to protect the reputation of Elwakil and the representatives who wanted to speak, according to a statement the UPUA released last Friday. However, after approximately 14 minutes, the session was reopened by the representatives for the remainder of the meeting.

In last Friday's statement, the UPUA outlined "removable offenses" that allegedly occurred during Elwakil's term as vice president of the 19th Assembly.

The statement cites a pattern of "minimal improvement in Elwakil's professionalism, communication and the ability to work successfully in a team environment" after feedback from representatives on multiple occasions. She also allegedly interfered in the 20th Assembly's internal election process by offering vocal support for candidates, which "effectively suppressed the will of the student body, reflected by the legislative branch," according to the UPUA statement.

Additionally, the statement said Elwakil lacked communication and professionalism in the dissemination of information regarding ICE resources, a project the Justice & Equity Committee had already taken charge of. The resource post, according to UPUA leadership, contains "factual inaccuracies, unusable links and plagiarism." It remains visible on the UPUA Instagram despite requests from representatives that it be taken down and is signed off by Elwakil.

According to the constitution, the vice president is appointed to create and run the Internal Works Board. While the constitution states that "the off-cycle Internal Works Board shall meet at least five times per semester," the 19th assembly only saw two meetings under Elwakil.

The statement also said Elwakil's goal of prioritizing safe spaces on campus during uncertain times never came to fruition. With no meetings scheduled to discuss the matter further and no follow-ups from interested representatives, the project was dropped without making progress.

Additionally, according to the chairs of five committees in the 19th Assembly who presented for Elwakil's removal, boundaries were reportedly overstepped, particularly regarding the committee chairs and their duties. An example provided was during the planning of International Peace Day last fall, when legislation was reportedly written entirely by Elwakil with little input from the Student Engagement and Wellness Committee, which had put forth the legislation to host the event.

Penn State's chapter of the NAACP criticized UPUA's decision to remove Elwakil "behind closed doors, without explanation or public discourse." A letter signed by former UPUA chief justices from the 15th-18th assemblies raised constitutional



Jacob DeLuca/Collegian

Rasha Elwakil (left) answers a question, while Fletcher Port (right) takes notes during the Executive Town Hall for the 2025 UPUA Election on April 1, 2025 in Freeman Auditorium in University Park, Pa.

concerns with the vote to remove Elwakil.

"At the end of the day, what (Chief Justice of the 16th-17th Assembly Andrew) Waldman and I wanted to defend was the procedure. That is my greatest concern here," Hayden D'Elena, chief justice of the 17th and 18th Assemblies, said. "We have due process for a reason, and as it comes to me, this was a complete violation of due process."

According to the UPUA constitution, the highest ranking member of the judicial board should oversee the process of removing a member of the executive branch. However, because a chief justice hadn't been elected for the 20th Assembly, that role was passed on to vice president Fletcher Port.

D'Elena said that because there was no concrete evidence of this being an urgent matter, the

vote for removal could have been tabled until after a chief justice was appointed, which would've helped eliminate the possible conflict of interest with Port overseeing the hearing.

"Impeaching a president on a rushed and sloppy process is closer to an organized coup than it is a fair endeavor," the letter read. "If you do not care about procedure, then you do not care about fairness and equity."

The UPUA's bylaws require that individuals undergoing a vote for removal receive at least one week's notice, and the statement claims Elwakil "disregarded her right, opting to start the process immediately."

A change.org petition has gained over 500 signatures, calling for the assembly to "critically reevaluate the recent impeachment proceedings and uphold the constitutional values that form

the foundation of our student government."

"I was unjustly removed from an organization that has been my home for the past three years," Elwakil told the Collegian. "This decision did not follow the procedures outlined in our governing documents. My removal was not a reflection of my qualifications or capabilities, but rather the result of personal grievances and oversights that did unfortunately happen in previous assemblies."

Elwakil and Port were sworn in on April 16 after winning this spring's election by a 44-vote margin. The UPUA announced Port would assume the presidency, and the assembly will work to select a new vice president, who will be confirmed by the legislative branch.

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PSU BLACKOUT

By Mercedes Hamilton
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

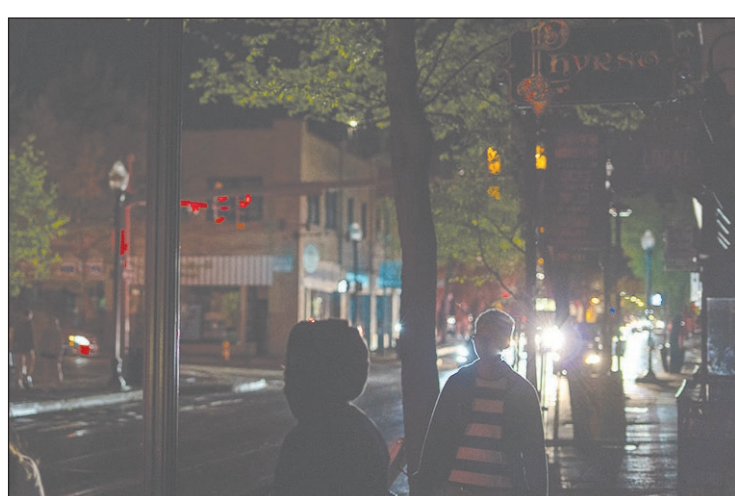
A powerful windstorm called a derecho tore through Centre County on Tuesday evening, leaving property damage, fallen trees and no power for tens of thousands of residents.

At the height of the storm, about 35,000 Centre County residents lost power. As of 7:45 p.m. Wednesday, 28,764 were still without electricity, including 7,913 in State College, according to First Energy's outage map.

According to Todd Meyers, a spokesperson for FirstEnergy, crews began damage assessment Tuesday evening but had to resume the following morning due to the rapidly approaching night-fall.

In addition to crews from Penelec and Met-Ed, which serve Centre County, Meyers said about 100 additional line workers arrived in State College Wednesday morning to assist with repairs, with another 100 expected to arrive tomorrow.

Crews are working to determine an estimated time of restoration (ETR) as they continue



Alex Osman/Collegian

Pedestrians walk down Beaver Avenue on Tuesday, April 29, 2025. A storm caused power outages around Centre County.

assessing the extent of the damage and how many workers will be needed, Meyers said. He added that an ETR is expected by tomorrow afternoon, and full restoration will likely take several days.

Meyers said the company's biggest priority is ensuring no one comes in contact with any energized wires.

Customers should assume all

fallen or low-hanging power lines are energized and dangerous.

Meyer advised the public to stay at least 30 feet away and proceed with caution where lines are tangled in trees or other debris. Report downed lines ASAP by calling 911.

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SEVIS begins reactivating visas

By Annelise Hanson
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

The U.S. government has begun reactivating the SEVIS (Student and Exchange Visitor Information System) status of some Penn State students whose visas had been terminated earlier this month, the university confirmed.

According to the Associated Press, the government is reversing the termination of legal status for international students after many filed court challenges

against the Trump administration.

The university has not responded to questions about how many Penn State students were initially affected and how many have since had their status reactivated.

The Centre Daily Times reported that Centre County District Attorney Bernie Cantorna said at least 25 students had their visas revoked as of April 25, mostly due to retail theft.

According to a statement from

the university, Penn State Global's International Student and Scholar Advising Office is closely monitoring the situation and has been in direct contact with students whose SEVIS status has been reactivated.

Penn State will continue to track updates from the government and provide support to affected students, a university spokesperson said.

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‘We shouldn’t lose this opportunity’

Faculty Senate votes for university to affirm core values of higher education

By Pragya Sinha
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State's Faculty Senate voted for the university to endorse a national statement affirming the core mission and values of higher education during its meeting on Tuesday.

139 senators voted in favor and 21 voted against.

The document was based on a resolution passed by the University of Virginia's Faculty Senate. Governing bodies at Ohio State and the University of Nebraska had also endorsed it.

The "Statement in Support of the Core Mission and Values of Higher Education" was circulated among major U.S. universities in response to political pressures, including cuts to research funding, attacks on academic freedom and the rollback of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs.

The statement argued that cuts to research funding would undermine scientific innovation, societal progress and the U.S.'s global leadership. It emphasized that peer-reviewed academic research leads to evidence-based expertise, not partisan viewpoints, affirmed support for academic freedom and free speech for citizens and noncitizens alike, opposed targeted harassment of faculty and upheld the right to peaceful assembly without retaliation.

It also reaffirmed legal and moral obligations against discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex and disability.

During preliminary

discussions, some faculty members raised concerns that supporting the statement could paint a target on Penn State amid heightened political scrutiny.

Cynthia Simmons, professor of mass media law, argued that staying silent in the face of attacks on academic freedom and DEI sends the wrong message to students and family.

"I don't think there's any opposition to diversity, equity, inclusion and the research projects going on at our and other campuses," she said. "The question is: Do we say nothing and wait while others are targeted to allow the legal process to take its time and run its course, or do we stand up in a way that is very visible to our students and the parents who might want to send their children here — that we believe in their values?"

Keith Shapiro, associate professor of art, reinforced that point, framing the vote as an opportunity for Penn State to show leadership.

"I think this is an opportunity for (the) Penn State Senate to lead by example, and we shouldn't lose this opportunity," Shapiro said.

Other faculty senators also shared concerns about Penn State's relative silence in recent months, with some citing missed opportunities to join peer institutions in signing legal briefs or public statements.

The vote signals a step toward more visible advocacy, according to the Faculty Senate, as universities nationwide continue to navigate political pressures.

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‘If I can just get through this’

Penn State students share hazing experiences

By Jade D’Agostino and Michelle Diamond
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Content warning: This story contains descriptions of alleged hazing activities, some of which are sexual in nature.

For decades, social fraternities and sororities at Penn State have been at the center of publicized hazing scandals, drawing headlines, public outrage and disciplinary action from the university. However, hazing that occurs within social Greek organizations only scratches the surface of a larger issue at Penn State.

Hazing quietly continues in other areas of campus life, including student organizations and professional fraternities across Penn State.

Anna Marcovitch joined a music group within her first few weeks on campus during her first year. Marcovitch chose to keep the music group’s name anonymous to protect the organization’s status on campus.

“I knew going into college that I didn’t want to be in a sorority because it just wasn’t what I was into ... and so I tried to join (the music group), and it was kind of the same thing,” Marcovitch, a second-year studying psychology, said.

Marcovitch said that after auditioning and being accepted into the group, she received an anonymous text to meet at the now-closed downtown McDonald’s in the evening.

After waiting at the McDonald’s for “quite a long time,” an initiated member of the group arrived and ordered the five new members not to speak while forming a single-file line. They were then led to an apartment about 10 minutes away.

At the apartment, shots of alcohol were lined up on a counter; Marcovitch said she was the only new member that did not drink any alcohol. The new members were then given a piece of paper with a list of activities to complete on it.

“One of the first activities was that we were supposed to take a naughty picture ... I took the picture because I didn’t feel like being in it,” Marcovitch said.

According to Marcovitch, many of the activities had sexual connotations, such as choosing which of the older initiated members she most wanted to “sleep with,” and giving a hickey to someone in the apartment.

“They were making me use my body in ways that I wasn’t



Alexandra Antoniono/Collegian

Anna Marcovitch, a second-year studying psychology, poses for a picture on Saturday, March 29, 2025.

Marcovitch joined a campus music group and was hazed by the members of the organization.

comfortable with,” Marcovitch said.

In the aftermath of that night, Marcovitch said she researched “sexual hazing” and remains unsure whether to classify the activities as sexual assault.

According to Marcovitch, the new members had to choose a picture of a celebrity that was hung up on the wall and then had to make out with the picture they chose in front of everyone.

“They were yelling at me to use more tongue when I was making out with this picture of a celebrity on the wall, and I didn’t want to do it, and I was obviously uncomfortable,” Marcovitch said. “It didn’t make any sense why we had to do that.”

Marcovitch said there was an activity called “finger peen” that all five new members completed.

“Everyone lined up and put a finger where a penis would be, and then you knelt in front of them and acted like you were giving them a blow job,” Marcovitch said. “It just felt like something I didn’t want to be doing, but I didn’t really have a choice because everyone else was doing it.”

According to Marcovitch, all of the initiated members holding up their fingers were older than her, mostly upperclassmen. She was told the initiated members normally put whipped cream on their fingers during this activity, but they didn’t have any.

Jane is a second-year student at Penn State who rushed a professional fraternity. She chose to remain anonymous and keep the

fraternity’s name anonymous to maintain her membership in the group. She decided to pledge the fraternity for academic purposes and to build connections for her future career.

“I’m really shocked that they were hazing at all because I was like, ‘Oh, this isn’t a social frat, so why?’” Jane said.

Jane said the new pledges met at 8 p.m. every day for three weeks to complete required “challenges.” She said she did not feel comfortable sharing the specific details of the hazing because it could reveal the identity of her fraternity.

“The whole time, I was like, ‘Is this even worth it? Do I actually even want to be a part of this fraternity?’” Jane said.

According to Jane, the executive members’ quick switch in attitude was the most surprising part of the initiation process.

“All the exec people were so nice to us during the rush process, and then when we were officially pledges, they were so mean to us,” she said.

Currently an active member of the fraternity, Jane said she thinks hazing is “horrible.”

“Multiple kids have died from hazing, and it’s illegal and it should not be happening,” Jane said.

Marcovitch said she wants people to know that if even one person is uncomfortable with hazing, that’s enough for it to stop.

After her experience with hazing, Marcovitch said she could not get over the events that took

place. She said she felt uncomfortable with everyone at the apartment, as she thought the activities fell into a gray area of consent.

“I messaged the president of the group afterwards and kind of tried to leave, but he sort of convinced me to stay,” Marcovitch said. “They said that they already loved me, and they felt like I was already a part of the group.”

Marcovitch left the group after a few weeks of messaging with the president, and has yet to join another student-led music group on campus.

Frank Linus, a fourth-year studying political science at Penn State, participated in the Penn State 2+2 Plan and said he experienced hazing by the Friends of the Commonwealth, an alumni interest group, once he came to University Park last year.

“It started when I got an email ... and it was titled something along the lines of ‘Commonwealth Heroes,’” Linus said. “At the time, I was within the Penn State Council of Commonwealth Student Governments, and I was looking to run for president of the organization, so that’s how I suspected that I was recruited for this organization.”

With little information about the organization, Linus decided to try it.

“I was under the impression that it was something I had to do if I wanted to be president,” Linus said.

Linus said Friends of the Commonwealth recruits students

from the student government, Lion Ambassadors and THON who have participated in the 2+2 Plan.

As he said he was asked to do, Linus showed up to the meeting spot at night, and was met by a group of people who were also starting the recruitment process. They were then told to participate in a scavenger hunt.

“They would make us do things like shout ‘We Are Penn State’ to 10 random passersby, or sing the Penn State fight song or alma mater as loud as we could,” Linus said.

One of the students participating in the scavenger hunt received a phone call from an initiated member, who told them to sing louder.

“So, they were definitely making us do these things,” Linus said.

After feeling uncomfortable due to the actions the students were forced to take part in, Linus said he decided to report what was happening to the Office of Student Accountability and Conflict Response.

However, Linus said he was told that the university could not do anything to address the hazing because Friends of the Commonwealth is not a registered organization at Penn State.

A Penn State spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment about the Office of Student Accountability’s decision and Friends of the Commonwealth’s organizational status at Penn State.

“I would also like to note that somebody who ran the hazing is now employed at Penn State, and she now works at Penn State Health,” Linus said.

After his experience with Friends of the Commonwealth, Linus said he’s felt general anxiety walking around campus and is “worried that (he’s) going to run into certain individuals.”

Marcovitch said she stayed until the final activity at the apartment, which ended around 2 a.m., because she said she felt obligated to participate in everything.

“The whole thing with hazing is that you kind of feel like you have to do it if you want to be in that group,” Marcovitch said. “The group was completely unrelated to whatever we were doing, and so I was like, ‘if I can just get through this, then it’ll be fine.’”

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DOC proposes closing local prison, boot camp

By Nandini Sanghvi
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

In February, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary Laurel R. Harry accepted a steering committee’s recommendation to close SCI Rockview and Quehanna Boot Camp.

Following the DOC’s involvement in Pennsylvania’s Resource Evaluation and Mission Alignment Project, the proposal’s approval initiated a public comment period of at least three months, leading to a series of listening sessions and public hearings across the region.

Centre County Commissioners have estimated a closure would lead to an annual economic loss of \$118 million across Centre, Clinton and Clearfield counties. Rep. Paul Takac said the proposal would “affect our communities, schools and local economy.”

“The recommendation to close both SCI Rockview and the Quehanna Boot Camp could affect close to 900 jobs in our area,” Takac said. “This could have a devastating impact on workers and their families.”

Though workers at the correctional facilities have been guaranteed a job at other institutions, Takac said “hours of added commute time could disrupt their domestic lives.”

Hayley Cassel, the spouse of a corrections officer at SCI Rockview, said the closure “would negatively impact the ability of general family dynamics.”

“It’s going to change every aspect of our lives, from my kids getting to school in the morning to my ability to get to my job on time,” Cassel, a teacher at Stay and Play preschool, said. “Depending on the shift that my spouse is on, he may not be around for practices or recitals. He won’t be able to put the kids to bed at night, something we highly value to help family routine.”



Kevin Chang/Collegian

The front of the State Correctional Institution Rockview on Tuesday, April 8th, 2025, in Bellefonte, Pa. Closing both SCI Rockview and the Quehanna Boot Camp could affect close to 900 jobs, according to Rep. Paul Takac.

Increased commute time and schedule disruptions have far-reaching consequences. According to Takac, these changes could significantly reduce the availability of volunteers for essential community services.

“We’ve heard from folks who run volunteer fire companies and EMS companies that they will have fewer people around,” Takac said. “They’re worried that people who currently invest a lot of their time in those local community organizations won’t be able to do so if they’re adding two hours of commute time or more every single day.”

Aaron Cassel, a corrections officer at SCI Rockview, expressed his concerns about the closure potentially resulting in outmigration. According to Cassel, “the Rockview community is effective because it is there,” and “keeping it together is highly important.”

“You’re going to see teachers, volunteers, community leaders and workers in general leave,” Aaron Cassel said. “When those

workers leave the facilities, it’s going to force others to operate at 100% manpower capacity. It’s going to erase jobs at Rockview and other facilities. That’s thousands of jobs off the table immediately.”

Furthermore, the relocation of inmates at SCI Rockview could have significant ramifications, with nearly half of the inmates at the facility having mental health needs, according to Takac.

“We received hundreds of letters, including almost a hundred from inmates, who said that a shift from their current location, where they felt stable, could be damaging to their wellbeing,” Takac said. “Putting them out in other locations that may not have the same experience in taking care of them could have very detrimental impacts on their mental health, rehabilitation and therapy.”

Two of the most effective correctional facilities in Pennsylvania according to Sen. Cris Dush, SCI Rockview and Quehanna Boot Camp have some of the

lowest rates of recidivism in the state. The proposed closures have also sparked concerns about potential impacts on the safety of the community.

“The prison closing makes you question whether the department is warehousing inmates,” Julie Heintzelman, corrections chair for labor union SEIU Local 668, said. “I’m worried about staff safety, burnout, and that this is going to lead to more recidivism and more victims.”

The DOC suggested that shutting down SCI Rockview and Quehanna Boot Camp could save the state \$74 million in maintenance and upgrade costs. However, according to Takac, historical precedent indicates these savings may not materialize.

“Previous closures have resulted in large ongoing maintenance costs that are required regardless of whether the facilities are active or not,” Takac said. “The DOC has also cited many infrastructural upgrades and improvements that I’m told have

already been completed, so it’s unclear what the actual savings would be.”

Citing the features of Rockview that make it distinct from other facilities, Takac argued the significant capital investments the DOC used to justify closing Rockview make it less sensible to shut down the facility.

“The DOC has already stated that certain elements of Rockview will likely remain open,” Takac said. “The question is, will other parts of Rockview also remain open? How many of those could be maintained and remain open under the management of SCI Benner?”

According to Takac, these facilities include a wood furniture plant, chapel, education building and housing units, all of which are “unique and important components of the Rockview complex.”

According to Takac, an ideal outcome of the DOC’s final decision would be to “recognize that keeping SCI Rockview open is in the best interests of everyone.”

“Short of that, they should take a nuanced approach to the decommissioning of individual components within Rockview,” Takac said. “They should try to maximize investments already made and maximize the benefits to the inmates.”

However, should SCI Rockview and Quehanna Boot Camp close, Takac emphasized that the government is ready to provide the necessary support.

“We are prepared to work with local businesses and community leaders to try and alleviate stresses for folks affected,” Takac said. “Right now, our focus is on trying to make sure we’re making the best decisions we can for everyone involved.”

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Presenting ‘A Freaking Bad Musical’

By Mia Lopez
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Inside a Penn State classroom, “Chemistry 101” is scribbled across a cardboard, but what students are about to learn goes far beyond elements.

Led by writer Evan Stocker, a group of students presented “A Freaking Bad Musical” based on the television drama “Breaking Bad” at Thomas 100 on Thursday, with continuous showings until Saturday.

High school chemistry teacher Walter White had just been diagnosed with stage three lung cancer, and breaking the news to his wife and son became more difficult than he anticipated.

With his modest teaching salary and medical expenses rising to the surface, White understood the need for immediate funds. He took his opportunity to make some quick cash by blackmailing his student Jesse Pinkman, catching him in the act of looking for meth.

The two of them took the chance and left without a trace. Using White’s chemical expertise to start the production, they drove an RV out deep in the desert of New Mexico with their tools to avoid getting caught.

Their mobile lab turned into a powerhouse operation while tensions were rising back in Albuquerque. The wife filed for divorce, the son became Jesse’s shadow and Uncle Hank, a DEA agent, was curiously preoccupied with his growing love for the Muppets.

What began as a desperate act for money transformed into an intense double life with no plan in tact.

The musical showcased the comedic unraveling of White’s life, which left the audience in laughter by the end.

Becca Williams mentioned how hysterical it was having been confused since she had never watched the show.

“It was really funny. I was so confused the whole time,” Wil-

liams, a first-year studying English, said. “I’ve also never seen ‘Breaking Bad,’ but now I know everything I need to know about it and it was great.”

Williams also shared her favorite part about the performance.

“I liked the love, the relationship that was shared between Mr. White and Jesse,” Williams said. “I thought it was beautiful.”

Ella Enck commented on how she believed the musical was better than the original.

“10 out of 10 better than the show,” Enck, performance attendee, said. “It was so original. They make it their own thing.”

Lila Dibble noted her amusement at Jesse’s antics.

“I really liked when Jessie kept drinking the chemicals,” Dibble said. “I thought that was really funny.”

The cast closed the second act by dancing to “I’m a Believer” by The Monkees and members took their final bows.



Samantha Oropeza/Collegian

Actors portraying Jesse Pinkman, left, and Walter White, right, act during the Breaking Bad Musical in the Thomas Building on April 24, 2025 in University Park, Pa.

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Second Floor Stand-Up rolls community, comedy into one

By Emma Strickling
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

It’s nighttime at Penn State — professors and other employees in the Carnegie Building have gone home. Seats are being filled in the theatre; a lot more empty this week.

The music stops playing and the lights begin to dim.

The emcee walks up to the microphone.

It’s open mic night with Second Floor Stand-Up.

Second Floor Stand-Up has been a Penn State club since about 2009 — and possibly even longer.

It holds open mic nights every Tuesday, where anyone can write their name on the chalkboard and await their turn to take the stage, regardless if it’s their first time doing stand-up, or their 21st time.

Each performer has five minutes to perform their set. Afterward, they receive feedback on

what worked, what didn’t and how the set could improve. Even if you don’t take your turn at the mic, you can still watch and have a laugh, if the opportunity presents itself.

Nicholas Just, a member and performer at Second Floor Stand-Up, said he found out about the club when it was tabling last year in the HUB-Robeson Center, and he was convinced by the president at the time to come and check it out.

“I’ve always been interested in stand-up, interested in doing it myself,” Just, a third-year studying journalism, said. “I’ve been going consistently since then. It’s been really fun.”

Just said one of the things he enjoys about the performing is the interaction between him and the audience.

“The audience members are just as part of this as the comedians, they like to get involved,” Just said. “They know what we’re going to say sometimes when

we’re using old materials, so they make it a lot more fun, too.”

Nathan Ra, the vice president of Second Floor Stand-Up, said his process for writing stand-up material is more spontaneous.

“If I think of something funny, or I see something funny, or I’m talking to somebody and something funny comes up, I’ll write it down,” Ra, a fourth-year studying mechanical engineering, said. “Later, I’ll try to write and expand on it more.”

Ra said one of the things he’s learned from performing stand-up is developing confidence, especially while public speaking.

“It’s such a chill club where you can practice,” Ra said. “You can go up and bomb, but it really doesn’t matter. Everybody’s going to bomb at least one night or another. It doesn’t put as much pressure on you, like public speaking.”

Vivaan Singh, the president of Second Floor Stand-Up, said having regular audience attendance

is something the club really values.

“We have people who come and watch every week,” Singh, a third-year student studying computer science, said. “They never go up, and I feel like that’s the goal of running a comedy club. You’re always going to get comedians, because comedians are passionate about it, but if you get the same people showing up again and again, you’re creating something of value.”

For those who might be nervous to try stand-up for the first time, Singh’s advice would be to come and watch first.

“The first time I came, I had no intention of going up, and I didn’t,” Singh said. “As soon as I ended that first night of watching, I knew that if they can go up, so can I. Eventually you will get comfortable.”

When it comes to the future direction of the club, Singh said he hopes to increase club size while at the same time not making it

too commercial. “It still should be underground,” Singh said. “What makes this fun is that everyone knows everyone, and everyone is having a good time, but with the future, the goal should always be a home for people who are passionate about comedy. If you like doing comedy, you can come and do it. Whether you are going to be good or bad, just pull up and give it a shot.”

Singh encourages anyone interested in finding a community or who enjoy stand-up to check out the club.

“It’s very community based. Anyone is free to come, and everyone who comes usually ends up having a good time,” Singh said.

“We are going to graduate at some point, but this club is going to exist for years to come.”

The final open mic night of the semester will be April 29 at 8:30 p.m. in 113 Carnegie Building.

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Lion’s Paw Alumni Association



We proudly congratulate the Class of 2025 for an outstanding year of service to Penn State!

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Sanchita Bhusari | Carson Pedaci |
| Emma Bohse | Mason Reber |
| Karley Garcia | Kevin Schuyler |
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MY VIEW | JADZIA SANTIAGO

Lessons learned as a leader



Santiago As of last week, it's official: for one full, calendar year, I've been the president of Writers Organizing to Represent Diverse Stories. And wouldn't you know it, they're hold-

ing me hostage — AHEM — welcoming me back for another year. We're an organization still working to get back on our feet after the pandemic, especially because we've changed so drastically from what we once were. So, it's no surprise that this has been a year of trial and error, especially for me.

Whether you're heading into your first leadership year or you're just looking for some insight into what it's like to work with your fellow students, you've come to the right column. Without further ado, here are six things I learned in my first year as a student leader.

Put your foot down

I know, I know, very scary, but I put this first for a reason. As a leader, your organization trusted you in your area of expertise.

Sometimes, you need to reassert that role. Everyone has their own ideas, but you have to remember that you get the final say.

Not only that, but mishaps and catastrophes are almost inevitable, and you have to stand strong as you navigate through them. You can't be a lighthouse if you let yourself be toppled over; no matter how well-intentioned the waves.

Trust your gut, let it guide you. Take advice where needed, yes, but remember that you're at the wheel.

Let stuff happen

Speaking of inevitability, you need to know when to let go.

Maybe you're outnumbered in a vote, or there's nothing you can do about something crucial going wrong. In the worst cases, there's conflict bubbling under the surface, daring you to dive into it in pursuit of damage control.

In these cases, you need to accept that things will happen how they happen. You'll come out on the other side, no matter how things go.

If you try to stop anything bad from happening ever, you miss

out on the opportunity for learning experiences, and sometimes major wake-up calls. Don't always dive after the falling plates — you'll only cut yourself.

You will mess up ... horribly

This all said, for the love of all that is holy, do NOT get an ego, because you'll be humbled.

It might not be catastrophic, but no matter the magnitude of the mistake, it'll be embarrassing. Regardless of your expertise, you're human, and thus imperfect.

This is especially true in high-stress situations. Even if you don't think you will, you'll drop the ball in one way or another.

Learn to take accountability for the ways in which you fall short, because it'll help the people you work with to trust you — and let them know that they can make mistakes, too.

Let people help you

Additionally, you need to know that you can't do everything. I know that it feels like you're obligated to, and in some situations, if you don't do something, it doesn't get done.

But chances are, you're not running your organization alone. Your team is there to support you, and it's high time that you delegate some tasks.

Take a minute to think about who you'd rather work under: a leader who distributes tasks evenly and lets them all get done, or a leader who takes on all the tasks themselves and then lets a few of them fall by the wayside, because no one person can handle all of that.

I need you to understand that it's not a personal failing to need some help. It doesn't make you a bad leader at all — in fact, it makes you a better one.

You'll hate it

Unfortunately, this is also a reality.

There will be some days where you'll wake up and ask your blank ceiling, "What the hell did I get myself into?"

There will be ups and downs, times when you're so stressed you want to rip out your hair. Maybe nobody is cooperating, or one of you missed the mark and you're frustrated with them, or yourself.

Or maybe it's nobody's fault. As I mentioned earlier, not

everything is in your control. You and your team can do everything right, and at the last minute, lightning can strike.

Every organization has its moments, and in those times, there's something crucial you need to remember:

You'll love it

At the end of the day, you're here because you love what you do (I promise, W.O.R.D.S. isn't holding me hostage).

For every low moment, there's a moment you'll enjoy. You'll laugh with your team, get passionate about moving forward and celebrate some major successes.

It might be tough at some points, but when the smoke clears, when all is said and done, you'll find what you were doing this for all along: the reward of joy.

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Cartoon by Nate Campbell

MY VIEW | EMMA LESSICK

Adjusting after study abroad in Australia



Lessick You pour so much of yourself into preparing — mentally and physically — for the adventure of studying abroad as a Penn State student. But people discuss the reality of returning home, or in my case, returning to the small hometown I once came from, where the closest location to buy groceries is the Amish market a couple of minutes down the road.

Where evening walks often include an encounter with riders on horseback, as I listen to the trit-trot of the horse's hooves.

Where I wake up in the mornings to nothing but green pastures, white picket fences, beautiful sun rays and sometimes the smell of cow manure. Sure, the last bit isn't so glamorous, but hey, it's home.

It's been refreshing to walk back through the front doors of my house and be with my family and pets whom I adore.

I arrived back in Pennsylvania just the other day, and let's just say ... I'm currently nocturnal. The jet lag is REAL. Don't let

anyone tell you otherwise.

Actually, I think I need my own classification of sleep and awakeness. I'm awake at times during the night and day. On the flip side, I'm also sleeping during the day and night. It's like I'm in limbo.

On top of that, all of my friends are still in their semester at school, so I just pace around my house trying to check off my to-do list for the day.

My list still includes unpacking my overweight suitcases. Seriously, if you look up "overpacker" in the dictionary, my name is headlining the term.

Also, my whole routine is GONE. For someone who lives by her planner and prides herself on creating a picturesque life with her morning coffee, healthy proteins, matching workout set and productive goal setting, let's just say I feel a little lost.

I'm doing my best to get back into a routine, but it's been challenging as I try to adapt to this

new version of normal. Honestly, I'm not even sure what "normal" looks like for me anymore.

Another aspect of coming back home is all of the wellness appointments I need to catch up on. Doctor, dentist, chiropractor and maybe even a hair appointment. I just finished up with my dentist appointment. Stupid cavities.

What I'm trying to say is it takes a lot of moving parts to feel whole again after being away from the United States for so long. Just when you think you're finally organized and ready to take on the next day, a new task pops into your head.

"I need to email my advisor and set up a meeting."

"I need to clean my room, go through my closet and get rid of the clothes I don't want anymore."

"I need to start packing for my summer internship."

It's an endless list. I used to think the hardest part of com-

ing home would be the 30-hour travel day from Australia to Philadelphia. But honestly, it's this constant feeling of being out of sync, scattered and always a few steps behind.

For the Penn State students returning home from your semester abroad, this is your reminder that it's perfectly normal to feel this way. If you're feeling a little disorientated, overwhelmed, or even unsure of what day it is, you're not alone.

Adjusting to being back home from such a life-changing experience takes time and patience. It's OK if your routine isn't perfect, your suitcase isn't unpacked or your sleep schedule is upside-down.

This in-between phase is part of the journey, too. Eventually, all of the pieces will fall into place. Until then, be kind to yourself. Remember, settling back in is just as much a process as preparing to leave.

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From PHL to PSU

Philadelphia's all-time girls scorer Shayla Smith brings grit to Penn State

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Shayla Smith committed to Penn State on April 29, 2024, as one of the top high school basketball players in eastern Pennsylvania.

Fast-forward a year, and Smith has become the all-time girls leading scorer in Philadelphia basketball history while leading her team to a PIAA 4A semifinal appearance.

While the 5-foot-10 guard will come to Penn State this summer with big collegiate aspirations, basketball wasn't the starting block for the young, physical athlete.

"When (Shayla) was young, she played football with pads and helmets," Universal Audenried Charter High School women's basketball coach Kevin Slaughter said. "So, when I got to see her, she was really aggressive and strong."

Smith began playing serious, organized basketball in eighth grade, but before that, she was the quarterback for her neighborhood football team for three years. Between playing football and roughhousing with her brothers, Smith's grit was built from an early age.

"Shayla had the one thing that was different in my 14-year coaching career. She played like a boy," Slaughter said. "It wasn't like she's a tomboy, she's just very aggressive."

When Smith first began playing school basketball in eighth grade, she knew the potential she could have due to this physicality.

"My first game, I thought I was just better than everybody because I grew up playing with boys a lot," Smith said. "When I finally started playing against girls, it was like, 'Oh, I'm better than you.' I started watching girl's basketball and seeing college players, and I thought I could play against them."

Around this time, Slaughter developed an interest in Smith and wanted to bring her on a visit to Audenried, where he hoped she would play for him over the next four years.

"Shayla is a Muslim, and our school was a big Muslim community," Slaughter said. "It was



Courtesy of Marcellus Boone

Guard Shayla Smith poses in front of a "We Are" sign during her official Penn State visit. Smith is set to join the Lady Lions after becoming the highest scoring player in Philadelphia girls basketball history.

kind of like a segue for her to tell her parents, 'There's going to be other people there that look like me.'"

During her visit, Slaughter had Smith compete against former Audenried star and then-South Carolina Upstate guard Denijsha Wilson in a one-on-one competition, where Smith blew them both away. "(Denijsha) pulled me to the side and said, 'I was playing for real,'" Slaughter said. "She was like, 'I first came out joking around a bit thinking this kid's gonna be easy, but by the third game, I was really playing for real.'"

As Smith began her career at Audenried, she became an instant success, scoring 16.8 points per game in her freshman season. However, it was Year 2 when Smith became the real deal.

Halfway through her sophomore season, Smith suited up against a team from South Carolina and shot lights out.

"Shayla just dominated the game," Slaughter said. "She was shooting Steph Curry 3-pointers, Trae Young 3-pointers. They were long and deep."

Despite only being a sophomore, Smith was being pulled out after just three quarters of action because of the success she had on the court.

"I got a lot of sportsmanship, and there would be games we

were beating some of the teams in Philly, and Shayla would play three quarters and score 30 points," Slaughter said. "I'd tell her, 'I'm taking you out because we're up 60 points. There's no reason for you to be in the game.'"

However, Smith didn't just see success on the court as a young player. She was also thrust into leadership roles on the team as team captain after just one year of experience.

"At the time, honestly, she didn't fit the mold as a leader, but I wanted her to be in that spot so she could start to learn," Audenried assistant coach Marcellus Boone said. "Shayla isn't a vocal person, but she'll pull you aside, she'll talk to you softly."

As Year 2 wrapped up, Smith had averaged 24.8 points and 15.6 rebounds as she led the team to a deep playoff run.

In the public league championship, Smith got into early foul trouble and was benched for most of the game. However, with a slight, single-digit lead entering the fourth quarter, her coaches took a chance on her to help her team win its first championship.

"We literally said, 'Shayla, you can't play no defense. Don't get involved in any collisions. Don't give the referees any reason to possibly call a foul,'" Boone said. "She listened to us, but it was such a close game with our rivals,

and there was a moment where we were only up three, and in my opinion, she hit the biggest shot in our history."

Without a shot clock in PIAA basketball, Audenried could've dribbled out the clock. However, Smith didn't trust her team's ability to keep the ball, so she came down the court and made a long 3-pointer right in front of her bench to win the game.

As Smith came off of one of the biggest moments in her career, she began thinking about college recruitment and her chances as a Division I prospect.

"I told her when recruiting her that we were the best coaching staff for her," Boone said. "We were going to allow her to blossom, and that's what happened. So based on that, I told her when she was picking a school, 'Forget the name of the school, understand who you're playing for, the person, and if they remind you anything like us, then that's the school you pick.'"

Following visits with several schools, Smith had her mind set on two – Penn State and St. John's – whose coaches reminded her of her high school coaches.

After advice from Slaughter and Boone, an obvious choice emerged where Smith would begin her college career.

"The first time I talked to coach (Carolyn Kieger) after she of-

fered her, she said, 'I'll be honest with you, I'm not recruiting her for defense. She can put the ball in the basket at a high clip, and that's what I need,'" Slaughter said. "When she made that statement to me, the light went off in my head. Ding, we got a winner."

Smith continued to make a name for herself in her junior year as one of the best basketball players in Philadelphia history.

Scoring 25.3 points per game in Year 3, Smith's stats boosted her college profile. However, that wasn't the only thing that stood out to her coaches.

"What Shayla has that a lot of kids these days don't have is an ability to avoid distraction," Boone said. "So, if it's a party that all of the kids and her friends want to go to, Shayla might want to go, but Shayla would do two hours in the gym before she goes, and by the time we finished working out, she just wanted to eat and go to bed."

As Smith continued to succeed and stuff the stat sheet, she drew closer and closer to one of the biggest records in Philadelphia history: the all-time scoring record.

With weeks left in her senior year, Smith recorded her 2,502nd career point, breaking the scoring record and becoming Philadelphia's all-time leading scorer in girl's basketball.

"(Becoming Philadelphia's leading scorer) meant a lot, because there was a lot of people that said things like 'I'm only scoring a lot of points because we don't play no competition, but I scored most of my points against teams that were outside our league and outside the city,'" Smith said.

As Smith's high school career wrapped up, she earned numerous awards for her time at Audenried, including becoming a two-time Public League Player of the Year.

With her high school career in the rearview, Smith is now focused on big goals at Penn State and beyond.

"I want to go to the league, I want to win a Big Ten championship, make it to the tournament and make it far in the tournament," Smith said.

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Stalwart defenders

By Andrew Mercer
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

At the core of every great hockey team is a stalwart goaltender who protects the net and their team with their very life. Goalies aren't simply there to make saves whenever the defense allows a shot on goal. They're leaders, motivators and even heroes.

Penn State knows this all too well. With the 2024-25 season having some of the lowest lows and ending on the highest note in program history, none of its success could have been achieved without its talented netminders.

Starting goaltender Arsenii Sergeev was originally a transfer-portal acquisition from UConn. Although he was a Husky before he was a Nittany Lion, Sergeev's impact on Happy Valley was nothing short of monumental.

"The magnitude is really large for one season," coach Guy Gadowsky said. "He was only here for one year, but he's just so Penn State in just how classy and grateful he is and how hard he competes."

Sergeev finished with a .919 save percentage and 2.54 goals-against average, manning the goal-crease in 33 games throughout the season. Instrumental to Penn State's journey to the Frozen Four in St. Louis, a program first, Sergeev's play landed him a contract with the NHL's Calgary Flames.

"(Arsenii's) just a very lovable guy that happens to compete extremely hard," Gadowsky said.

But for five games, the crease was held by an unlikely backup. Previously the goaltender for the Penn State Ice Lions of the ACHA, John Seifarth was given an opportunity to be the third-string following a successful walk-on tryout.

In late November, Seifarth stepped up when the blue and white needed him most, as Sergeev was sidelined due to a lower-body injury.

In his first series as a starter, Seifarth and company swept Colgate at Pegula Ice Arena, earning the No. 2 spot on SportsCenter's Top 10 when he reached behind his back to make a save with

his stick. Following two losses to Ohio State, Seifarth ended his stretch with a victory over Army at Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C.

"(Seifarth's story) gets me every time," Gadowsky said. "It's amazing to think that, if it wasn't for that, none of this might've happened. There's a lot of people who realize how special that was."

With the starting role up for grabs, the coaching staff looked through various avenues to find goalies with the ability to fill Sergeev's skates. In the end, Penn State signed Josh Fleming from the QMJHL and transfer Kevin Reidler from Nebraska-Omaha.

Fleming finished his 2024-25 season playing 53 games for the Acadie-Bathurst Titans, recording a .908 save percentage and 3.08 goals-against-average.

"(Coach Julianio Pagliero) speaks very highly of his technique," Gadowsky said about Fleming. "And he happens to be a really, really good guy as well."

Reidler played eight games with the Mavericks, finishing with a 4-1 record while sporting a .920 save percentage and 2.74 goals-against-average. Drafted by the Ottawa Senators in the fifth round of the 2022 NHL Draft, Reidler has already drawn comparisons to Sergeev.

"I hate to put this on (Reidler), but he's sort of like 'Arsenii 2.0' because we wanted to get a guy that was just a really great, popular teammate," Gadowsky said. "He's similar to Arsenii. He's very tall, he competes, he's a little aggressive, but I think the thing that puts us over the top with him is what everybody said about him as a teammate."

As Sergeev's departure closes one chapter, the arrival of both Fleming and Reidler opens another. With a fresh goaltending tandem ready to inherit the Frozen Four legacy, Penn State's net remains in promising hands.

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Looking for LBs

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Penn State has a long history of elite linebackers. From LaVar Arrington to Jack Ham, "LBU" has been churning out talent since the late 1900s with a record 72 NFL draft picks, and the position has always been a defining piece of the Nittany Lions' defense.

But that's changed in 2025. A position that's usually a strength is looking more like a weakness, and the depth only continues to get thinner. The Blue-White Game featured just seven healthy linebackers, only three of which have ever seen the field for Penn State.

"I think we're in good shape, but there's some concerns there," Franklin said. "I think we got enough in the room, but to get through an entire season, if we get some injuries, it could get challenging."

The already thin depth took a hit before the Blue-White Game when Ta'Mere Robinson entered the transfer portal. Robinson was set for a sizable role this season as the only player with experience playing the MIKE for the Nittany Lions, but opted for greener pastures instead.

Redshirt freshman Anthony Specca, who started at the MIKE for Team Blue on Saturday, said Robinson's departure was "unexpected," but saw it as a wake-up call for him and the rest of the linebacker room.

"We didn't really like, talk about it, and so it was kind of a hit (when Robinson left). But, I mean, we all knew what it was when he left — we all had to step up," Specca said. "No one took a step back. We all just kind of pushed forward."

Although the linebackers are taking it upon themselves to step up, Franklin still knows there's a leak in his roster that needs fixing, and he aired that out following the Blue-White Game. Specca, however, isn't

phased by the possibility of a new addition to his position group.

"I mean, long as they can play, I want them in the room, and I don't really care," Specca said. "I mean, I think that if we can get guys to play that fit that's great for the room. We need more depth, so I'm happy to have another teammate."

Veteran Dom DeLuca would like to see any portal addition fit the culture of the room he's currently leading. The team captain said he'd be all for a guy "that's going to bring up our standard" and hold the rest of the linebackers accountable.

As for how the linebackers are handling the chance of a potential add, Specca said the room hasn't discussed it, but "it's in the air." DeLuca, meanwhile, is leaving all those decisions up to his coaches.

The redshirt senior did, however, give his pitch to any potential linebacker thinking about joining Penn State for its 2025 campaign.

"Penn State's a great team. Always have a great defense, and if you want to make plays, this is where you got to come," DeLuca said. "We're going to be a great team. I mean, we're going to be elite."

It's clear, though, that Franklin is ready to dip into the portal for a linebacker. He acknowledged how the Nittany Lions aren't "a big portal team," but they'll fill holes when they need to, and linebacker is certainly a gaping one.

"We lost a guy that we didn't anticipate losing. As you guys know we're not a big portal team, but you know, we're going to have to address some issues," Franklin said. "So if there is a linebacker out there that wants to come and be a part of our program and play for LBU, the most historic linebacker program in the history of college football, there's an opportunity here to join the room and compete."

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Megan Miller/Collégian

Penn State goaltender Arsenii Sergeev skates during a break in the NCAA Regional Finals against UConn on March 30, 2025.

Congratulations!

Graduating News Division Team of Spring 2025



Ethan Capitano



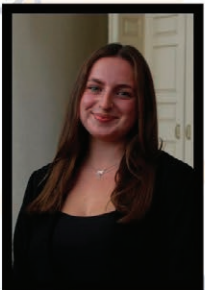
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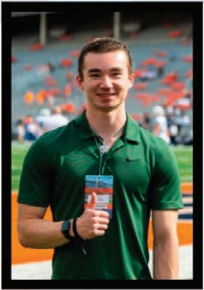
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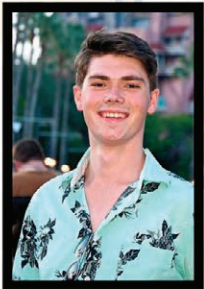
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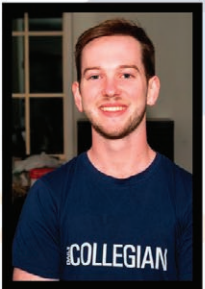
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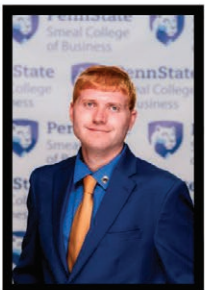
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“Believe you can and you’re halfway there.” ~ Theodore Roosevelt



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- Across**

1 Wordsworth works
6 Garden tool
11 Sleep acronym
14 Pitch-black
15 Emperor of Rome
16 Book collector's suffix
17 Combatant
19 Believer's suffix
20 Icelandic monetary unit
21 Masked man with a stick
23 Wood cutters
26 Duck's home
28 Broadway musical "and Bess"
29 Hodgepodge
30 Cousin of a herring
32 ____ compos mentis
33 Letter writer
36 Flowering shrub
38 "If only ____ listened ..."
39 Tease
41 Pilot's announcement, for short
42 Some forensic evidence
45 Alarmed
48 One who suspends an action, at law
50 Even if, briefly
- 51 "The Black Stallion" boy
53 Not prerecorded
54 Sibilant sound
56 Words of confidence
58 Affirmative votes
59 Donkey's cry
61 Litmus reddeners
63 Contents of some barrels
64 Student lodging
69 It was dropped in the 60's
70 Come to pass
71 Debonair
72 German resort
73 Commence
74 Implant
- Down**

1 Stop on a crawl
2 Bit of binary code
3 Building wing
4 Sissy
5 Cookbook direction
6 Shorthand experts
7 Carnivorous freshwater fish
8 Had a little lamb
9 Kind of beetle
10 Prevent legally
11 Track holder
12 National flag
13 Pirate's pal
18 Elephant grp.
- 22 First-rate
23 Campus figure, briefly
24 Sheltered, in a way
25 They're on boats and cars
27 Stupor
31 Facts and figures
34 Police blotter abbr.
35 Old Italian money
37 Family dog, for short
40 Sandwich shop
43 ____ Scotia
44 Trojan ally, in the "Iliad"
46 British blackjack
47 Illinois city
49 Mustard family plant
50 Religious belief
52 Seal on a letter
54 Like some milk
55 Grant's successor
57 Government agency for health (Abbr.)
60 Custom
62 Teaspoonful, maybe
65 Inits. on a rocket
66 Typewriter key
67 First family member
68 Called the shots