

The Daily Collegian

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FLIPPING

Board of Trustees votes to close Commonwealth campuses

The Penn State Board of Trustees has voted 25-8 to proceed with the recommendation to close Commonwealth campuses at DuBois, Fayetteville, Altoona, and Wilkes-Barre. The decision was announced after a contentious meeting where the board considered the financial strain on the university system.

THE

FLIPPING

PAGE

Kampersal, players talk Frozen Faceoff

Head coach Mike Kampersal and the Penn State women's hockey team discussed their performance during the Frozen Faceoff tournament. The team showed resilience and teamwork throughout the competition.

Trustees approve compensation for Bendapudi

The Board of Trustees has approved the compensation package for Neeli Bendapudi, the university's president. The package includes a base salary and a performance-based bonus.

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Peer support helps students redefine their identities

By Mia Debelevich
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN



Aayan Hamdani/Collegian

Jason Whitney, director of Penn State's Collegiate Recovery Community, sits on a couch in their lounge in Pasquerilla Spiritual Center on Friday, March 10, 2026 in University Park, Pa.

of Addiction Recovery (ROAR).

"It's an amazing thing, how this is a population of students that ordinarily struggle tremendously in college, but then with proper support, they tend to outperform the typical student," Whitney said. "If you have even a dozen friends who are also in recovery, that really often turns the volume down on all of the social pressures to drink and do drugs."

Whitney said the CRC differs from that of regular group recovery meetings — like Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous — because students are surrounded by people living the same life they are: same campus, same social pressures, same age. A middle-aged person in group recovery settings may offer wisdom, but not that.

Students also relate more to their peers, which in turn makes them feel more seen. Students in recovery are often collectively working toward a brighter future, and hoping their recovery and academics will support that future, the ATQ study found.

"What students have at stake is their future," Whitney said. "For older people, more of their life has been lived and more is known."

While the CRC has its space in Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, this is a rarity among other universities. Whitney said many collegiate recovery programs struggle to find a space to definitively operate, which can weaken the sense of community important in students' recovery. The CRC's warmly lit office provides constant access to this community, central to its success. In addition to its office, ROAR house's founding in 2015 provides a 24/7 sober space and community.

Additionally, these programs tend to grow very slowly. Whitney said many students in their programs prefer anonymity to avoid taking on the stigmatized identity frequently associated with addiction and recovery; nobody wants to be somebody with a problem. As a result, it's hard to get the CRC's name out there for others to know it's there to join.

"It's socially discrediting in various ways," Whitney said. "But I would also argue that recovery, I mean, it's not the worst status you can have."

Julia Donato is currently a sober third-year studying psychology, but her story with addiction started young. By age 10, Donato was using drinking as a "way to escape." Finding friends who normalized this in her teenage years made it easier to deny her alcoholism was a problem.

Because a lot of Penn State students drink, Donato said, she thought she would easily find an-

other crowd that drank the same as her when she came to college.

Donato's assumptions of what her new friends would be like soon proved false. She found her friends didn't relate to her drinking seven days a week and regularly skipping classes.

"I crashed and burned quickly," Donato said. "I didn't make it through one semester up here. And then I got sober."

When Donato returned to Penn State from rehab, she wanted nothing to do with the CRC. She thought it sounded "lame." During her first semester back, her GPA was a 1.8.

Eventually, she attended one of the CRC's weekly game nights. She now serves as Lions for Recovery's president and lives in ROAR house.

She said her grades have improved every semester since she's gotten more involved with the CRC. Her current GPA is 3.8.

"The CRC changed my life," Donato said. "Having this community makes a lot of things easier."

According to Whitney, there are currently around 17 students in the CRC, down from 29 in 2025. This fluctuation is common, as retention is made difficult by the very concept of college being a temporary space; students graduate, and by the time they join the CRC, they're only there for around three semesters. Getting consistent activity in the program then becomes an issue too.

But this means students in the CRC are graduating at high rates. And even as it has to continuously replenish numbers, the small group means the program can serve them "very deeply." It's easier to allocate time and attention, and students have reported substantial, sustained mental health increases upon joining.

They tend to thrive in peer recovery rather than remain psychologically stagnant. However, mental health progress can remain out of reach for many students who haven't first addressed their substance abuse; students whose mental health disorders co-occur with their substance use usually have to be treated for everything at the same time.

Noah, a third-year who requested anonymity due to fear of stigma, is one of those students. He said the CRC provided a "sigh of relief" when he came to University Park. Uninterested in the typical student experience of drinking, of going to bars, he was worried he'd be all alone.

Noah said he grew up with a stable family in a good home, and there weren't any childhood signs that foreshadowed his addiction. But as he got older, he started

struggling with his mental health. Within this struggle, he recalls searching for anything to make him feel good about himself.

"I never felt like I belonged," Noah said. "I could be in a room full of my friends, and I would still just feel this lonely feeling."

At 14, he found his mother's wine and drank a bottle and a half before throwing up in her bed. He remembers thinking being drunk felt amazing, that he was fixed, in a sense; that alcohol was a solution for that isolating feeling he hadn't found any other way to shake.

"The feeling of friction between myself went away when I was high or drunk," Noah said. "It would always feel bad when I wasn't high."

He said the longer he used, the more drugs to feel that same baseline of "okay." He dropped out of high school. He watched several of his friends overdose. Toward the end of his addiction, opiates were his drug of choice.

Noah then hit a point where he realized he could either get clean or end up dead. By 17, he was in rehab focusing on sobriety, followed by his placement in a secondary treatment care facility.

There, he met people he could finally relate to. For the first time, he said he felt like he had a community and that his life was moving in an upward direction. He highlighted peer support as one of the most beneficial things in his recovery.

The fact that he was having fun with these other people in recovery, he said, gave him hope. This hope is what helped him stick through his first year of sobriety.

After getting his GED, working in restaurants for a couple of years and completing two years at Penn State Scranton, Noah came to main campus. At the time of his transfer, he was going through a "rough patch," exacerbated by the worry that he wouldn't find a sober community in State College.

The CRC turned this anxiety around.

"Having this group of young people with similar experiences and way of looking at life, it helped so much," Noah said. "There's a safe space to be myself and not mute myself."

He's now on the CRC's planning committee and leads peer seminars. He said he enjoys the service work behind the community.

"I really feel like I'm part of something where I can help others, and also help myself," Noah said. "Having this here was a huge help to my mental health."

Though students aren't at the CRC for incredibly long periods of

time, they still return post-graduation. Alumni regularly attend events and keep in touch.

Sean, a 2025 graduate who requested anonymity due to fear of stigma, applied to Penn State after meeting Whitney and learning about the CRC. He said this was the only way he could see himself staying sober.

Having come from an Irish-Catholic family, drinking was a large part of his culture. He had his first drink around 14 and recalls blacking out almost every time he drank in high school.

"I grew up idolizing booze," he said. "I never realized I was uncomfortable until I started doing drugs like alcohol and marijuana and it just gave me comfort in my own skin."

Once COVID hit his senior year, the consequences that came from getting caught drinking dissipated. At the same time, his addiction progressed. He said he spent a lot of time drinking alone in his basement, playing Fortnite.

"It's exactly as glamorous as it sounds," Sean said.

He chose his college, Santa Clara University, for two reasons: warm weather and legal weed. Friends came easy, even if they noticed he did more drugs than them. His mental health was rapidly declining, and he said he was extremely suicidal, even with therapy.

After a certain point, the drugs and alcohol stopped giving him peace of mind and became a mere necessity.

His addiction ended after a two week stretch on cocaine put him in a drug-induced psychosis. He was placed in a psych ward, then a longer term rehab where he began committing to sobriety. This is also where he got connected with Whitney.

Sean went to four or five meetings a week once he joined the CRC. He said peer support is exactly as it sounds: people helping people.

"I don't know if I could have stayed sober without the CRC," he said. "Penn State's a very party-oriented school. Drinking, football games, tailgating. That's kind of the culture. So to have that nook where I can not only be away from that, but also having fun, was the key thing for me."

Between Santa Clara and Penn State, he had two very different college experiences. The former he described as one that burned to the ground. The latter was a place with nothing but growth and memories he still cherishes.

"Every single day I would go to the CRC room and hear other people's experiences, and that always gave me so much joy and hope and peace of mind knowing that it'll get better," Sean said. "Not only to get through my own challenges, my own tribulations, but to then pass on the wisdom I had to newer people and continue that cycle of building each other up and letting each other know we're not alone."

He graduated from Penn State with a 4.0 GPA. Now getting his master's degree in social work, he's working as a neuropsychologist assistant.

Sean said what he gained at the CRC still sticks with him. He's learned how to show up for life every day, whether the day is good or bad. He said he's considering becoming a therapist and wants to work with people with substance abuse disorders.

"I wouldn't be where I am today without the CRC," Sean said.

To email reporter: mfd5887@psu.edu
Follow her on X @ [miadebelevich](https://twitter.com/miadebelevich)

Former Penn State men's lacrosse players reflect on season-ending injuries

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A little over 20 minutes into Penn State's first NCAA quarterfinal appearance in a few years, then-junior Jack Posey's career changed in 2023 when he made a simple, routine play. As he planted his leg and made the cut, he fell to the ground in pain and knew something serious had happened.

The Nittany Lions were experiencing one of their best seasons in recent years, facing Army in the quarterfinals with a spot in championship weekend on the line.

For the South Riding, Virginia, native, that was a dream come true after coming in as an under-rated recruit. With a full-time role in the starting lineup in 2023, the big game turned into a nightmare moment for him.

"I was filled with rage, anger, sadness and a heavy wave of disappointment," Posey said. "We were one game away from the Final Four, and all the work I had put in, all the sacrifices, it almost felt like it was for nothing. It was just like, 'how cruel can this world be?'"

The mental impact of a season-ending injury was once rarely

discussed in locker rooms and the news. But it has now become part of everyday conversations as similar themes have surfaced this season.

Former quarterback Drew Al-lar faced intense scrutiny and heightened pressure this season, highlighting the mental health challenges tied to injury and time away from competition.

"If you're the type of person that has a strong sense of social competitiveness, which many athletes get, you get frustrated like you're almost being left behind," Dr. Andrew Friesen, a mental performance consultant and associate professor at Penn State Berks, said. "It hits on mental health from a number of different perspectives, and the most obvious is the loss of physical capacity."

This becomes even more prevalent when an athlete is dealing with a longer-term injury, or one that is lingering or persistent throughout the season, or even their career, Friesen added.

"When we're looking at an actual loss of physical capacity, you're no longer the athlete you once have been," he said. "If you were the type of athlete that may have been on the cusp of making the jump to professionals, now

you have a very easy excuse for someone to look you over. All these factors are all body blows that you have to absorb for your mental health."

That same season, Kevin Parnham broke his collarbone in the season opener, missing nearly two months of action during his sophomore season. The year before, the Tewksbury, New Jersey, native started in all 14 games.

"Sitting on the sidelines through those practices (and games) is one of the worst things," Parnham said. "That's when you realize just how badly you want to get back."

While Parnham returned at the end of March and played the rest of the season, including through the NCAA quarterfinal and semifinal that Posey missed, he experienced déjà vu his junior season.

Parnham started the season opener against Colgate the following year and broke his collarbone again, despite having a metal plate in his shoulder, ultimately missing over two months of action this time around.

"(Repeated injuries) take its toll because everyone comes here to play at a certain level," Billy said. "They have certain expectations, and when those expectations aren't met, it's a challenge."

When the two lacrosse stars were injured during their careers, those challenges were met with constant support from teammates, family, friends and the athletics department as a whole.

After Posey was helped off the field and into the locker room during the NCAA quarterfinals in Philadelphia, Pat Kraft, the Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics, was one of the first people in the locker room to check on Posey.

"He was very accessible to the students," Posey said. "He cared so much about us and our success and our mental health, just putting us in positions to be successful."

In addition to Kraft being there to support Posey during the game, he continued to be a familiar face in his recovery process, meeting with him in the fall to check on his progress and overall well-being.

"He really means all that, and man, I can't thank him enough," Posey said. "He's just an incredible leader of men and women. He was telling how the guys still needed me to go out and lead them. He came in and saw me crying, met me where I was and pushed me to be the leader that he knew I needed to be."

During the long stretches of

their careers where Posey and Parnham couldn't compete, let alone practice, they began to find new roles within the team to use their expertise.

"We let (athletes) know that there's other ways that they can help the team," Dr. Gregory Billy, 15-year team physician for Penn State Athletics, said. "They can assist the team as an assistant or athlete coach, and they find that that role can be very gratifying for them."

As the two progressed through their injuries and worked their way back to full strength, they finished off their collegiate careers and both landed spots in the Professional Lacrosse League.

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To email reporter: nda5168@psu.edu
Follow him on X @ [aberegg_noah](https://twitter.com/aberegg_noah)

HEAR FROM OUR DEPARTING SENIORS

My life is straight out of Dr. Seuss' book, "Oh, The Places You'll Go!"



Avery Hill

I was a weird kid.

But at the time, I had no clue the places I'd go would be the Super Bowl, the Paris Paralympics and the College Football Playoff. I had no clue I'd achieve what I'd achieve by 21 years of age. But "Oh, The Places You'll Go!" is not just about the achievements. It's the ups and downs. The life lessons learned.

It's why I'll never stop.

You see, I entered college without a clue in the world of what to expect. I didn't know there was a student newspaper. I didn't know I would actually be considered to go to Hallmark Sports Events. And I certainly didn't know I'd cover Penn State football, especially for a coach not named James Franklin.

But what I did know is that I wanted to leave an impact, and I can humbly say I did that. Through it all, I can't complain.

As a candidate, I joined the men's hockey beat with no experience writing period and casual knowledge of collegiate hockey.

Enter Joe Tuman, my candidate buddy and friend, who helped me through the process. I

was immediately intrigued by his work ethic, along with the rest of the incredible beat I worked with: Jim Hartnett and Gracie Carella.

Their care for the sport was the standard — or shall I say, the Culture.

It clearly rubbed off.

As a first-year journalist, I spent my nights in the HUB cranking out story after story, staying late enough to let the cleaning crew disrupt my peace as they shuffled chairs and tables across the floor.

I'll never forget the dopamine rush I'd get as I waited for my editors to read my stories. It was a true feeling of pride in myself and what I'd got to do. It was just the beginning, and I didn't take it for granted.

It's why I'll never stop.

But my two semesters of experience covering men's hockey are just a small part of my story.

Nearing the end of the spring semester covering softball, my editors, Joel Haas and Sam Woloson, approached me about becoming a summer editor.

I had no interest prior. I was young and a bit milquetoast.

I remember when they first mentioned it to the entire staff, and I thought there was no way I could've seen myself as a leader.

But once they personally advised me, I figured I'd take the shot.

That opportunity became a transformational experience in my journalistic ability, and it was one of many examples of how those around me have helped me get to this point.

But I can't mention those

who've supported me without mentioning my very first editing duo. Joel's one of them, but alongside him is the Collegian Hall of Famer himself: Andrew Buckman.

Andrew held me to a standard and made sure I knew when I brought in a good story. He also wasn't shy to text me about being biased, or about its versus their.

It was my absolute pleasure to return the favor and edit for his "Buckman semester."

Joel has grown to be one of my closest friends in the Collegian. His leadership by example, ridiculous engagement-farming tactics and continuous support for me throughout my time have meant the world.

But as I progressed through beats, I met the man, the Meatball Monday, the Lyle Alenstein, who I started working with on the women's basketball beat during our sophomore year.

His drive to crank out three stories a day and impeccable sports memorization skills, also known as "ball knowledge," have made me push myself more.

He's also been my favorite person to run into at Champ's.

And then there's Lexie Linderman, whom I've seen blossom since she was a candidate on men's hockey my sophomore year.

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On a very cold September morning in 2022, a completely different version of myself stepped foot on Penn State's campus for the first time. A campus I had no desire to spend four years of my life at.

My dad and step mom convinced me to take the journey, with my dad insisting I just give the school a look and see the area.

At the risk of sounding too cheesy, it was love at first sight. The massive campus, downtown, people and air were all so quintessentially "college," which was perfect for me.

When I got my acceptance email, I was at work and started crying in the backroom. I knew the next four years would be some of the best in my life, and I knew there was one organization I needed to join.

The Daily Collegian.

It was everything I wanted. I spent months reading articles, made sure to visit its booth first at the involvement fair freshman year and ensured my application was pristine.

Now, looking back at that young girl sitting in the office for her interview, I don't even recognize her. See, when I first arrived on this campus and began my candidacy, I was a very shy, nervous person. I never liked

talking to new people, I didn't want to put myself out there and I second-guessed every decision I ever made.

Naturally, journalism was the perfect profession for me.

Despite this, I knew I had to grow because I loved writing and everything The Collegian did. I knew I needed to push down my fears and begin my life.

So, that's exactly what I did. I began telling myself that embarrassment was just a social construct and I hit the town for my mock article.

When I joined the first News Budget meeting as a candidate in Fall 2023, I remember looking at all of the talented people around me. I felt like a minnow in a very big ocean, but I knew that I wanted to become a shark, or at least a bigger fish. Therefore, I, again, shoved down all my fears and picked up my very first, real article.

This article, "Professors share how 'late' scheduling procedures can impact learning," is now framed in my apartment.

Over the years, I became a mental health and wellness reporter, and later a culture and identity reporter. These two beats gave me some of my best work, most cherished memories and impactful connections.

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Slightly over a month into my freshman year, I got sick. It felt like a cold, so I treated it as such.



Lyle Alenstein

But when Central Michigan came to town on Sept. 24, 2022, I had someone tell me I looked green in Beaver Stadium.

The next day, I was diagnosed with pneumonia at University Health Services.

As all good moms do, mine immediately drove to State College and got an Airbnb to try to nurse me back to health. I applaud your efforts, Mom, but I was a wreck,

violently coughing, had a spiking fever and consistently went from having chills to freakishly sweating.

That Friday, we moved to a different Airbnb, one that had been purchased months prior as my younger brother, Will, and my dad visited for the Northwestern football game. They went to it because I convinced them I was fine, but in reality, I was hacking up a lung and felt like death.

Not sure why I told them to go, or why they listened to me, but we can move on. Either way, it's one hell of a way for the family to visit you at college for the first time.

On Sunday, I moved into Mount Nittany Medical Center, where I said goodbye to my mom and Will while having several needles

injecting me with IVs and fluids. My oxygen was low, and my white blood cells were crazily spiking.

After six days of no sleep, taking insane amounts of medications and my dad running around State College getting me food so I didn't have to eat the hospital stuff, I made it out. After one more sleep in a different Airbnb, I returned home to Briarcliff Manor, New York, to recover for a few days.

Then I returned to school, my lungs permanently damaged and still coughing a ton. From November to winter break (with a case of the flu the week before Thanksgiving, where I went home again), my days were spent going to class and coming back to Geary Hall, sleeping and slam-

ming antibiotics.

By April, I was feeling somewhat like myself. I made some friends and covered a few baseball games for The Daily Collegian after not doing anything in the fall on the women's soccer beat. I returned home for the summer and somehow passed all my classes.

I had a great summer, spending time with family and friends from home. I was still operating on tons of medication and had countless doctor appointments, but I felt normalish.

One afternoon, I was going on a walk around my neighborhood with my Mom, reflecting on my freshman year. I admitted that it sucked, mainly pointing at my health as the reason. She asked if

I had thought about transferring. I immediately said no.

Truth be told, I had thought about it a lot my freshman year. I thought about it when I returned that fall, in the spring and that summer.

The reason was I didn't know what my social life would look like. I had some friends, but despite hanging out with them, part of me felt like I was the kid clinging on.

Continue reading:



Lion's Paw Alumni Association



We proudly congratulate the Class of 2026 for an outstanding year of service to Penn State!

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We warmly welcome the Class of 2027 in anticipation of an exceptional year!

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Addison Court tenants ponder uncertain future



Jonathon Chiu/Collegian

John Harris sits in his apartment in Arnold Addison Court on Friday, March 20, 2026 in State College, Pa.

By Jonathon Chiu
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

At 82, John Harris is many things. A cancer survivor currently in remission. A member of and frequent donor to various organizations such as Amnesty International, Earthjustice and the American Civil Liberties Union. A longtime Democrat who briefly attended the first and third No Kings protests. Harris is also a 1966 Penn State graduate who enjoys speaking with current and former students during his visits to the Corner Room, where his order always includes peanut butter on toast and a cup of coffee. Harris said he enjoys the close proximity of the Corner Room to his home of 28 years, Arnold Addison Court — also known as Addison Court, since both are located in downtown State College. Addison Court, located at 120 E. Beaver Ave. between the Pugh Centre, Schlow Centre Region Library and a CATA office, is currently managed by the real estate company Calibre Residential. It was opened in 1994 to

niently, by foot and that's been very nice because I don't have a car and don't drive," Harris said. Should Addison Court be torn down, Harris said he's still unsure where he'll go next.

Lily Persio, who talks with Harris when she works in the Corner Room, said her conversations with him can range from being about the restaurant's coffee to his letters to the editors sometimes featured in local newspapers. "I think it's cool to see someone who's been here all their life and they still love it," Persio, a graduate student studying business administration, said. "It's nice to see people that love this place so much that they've always wanted to stay. I feel like sometimes I just always wanna stay." Harris said the sale and redevelopment of Addison Court would cause there to be less affordable housing in State College for lower and middle class people as well as the disabled.

"To have it torn down, all of their ability to live at the center of town will be destroyed in favor of student housing," Harris

"If you look around now, you see all these buildings getting knocked down for these luxury apartments and, unfortunately, Addison Court might become one," Emily Morgan, a CVS employee who first met Harris around 2021, said. "I just see what State College might be going for — that look of they don't want to have these 'townies,' maybe, 'cause they think, 'Well, this is a college town,' and they don't want the elderly and those with disabilities to coincide with the town." During a State College Borough Council meeting on Jan. 12, several Addison Court tenants, some of whom were accompanied by family members, made public comments expressing concerns that the building's residents were being forced out of the downtown area to make room for more student housing in the borough.

In a public comment during the council's meeting on April 20, Addison Court resident Kathryn Santora said she's unable to find an apartment in State College able to support her disability nor where she can use the Housing

to leave." Before his resignation, former council member Josh Portney introduced a proposal to place the building under eminent

to make Encore better match the Pugh Centre in appearance, leading to an April 20 presentation by PrimeCore CEO Ara Kervandjian



Firstname Lastname/Organization

John Harris gives a public comment during a State College Borough Council meeting on Monday, April 20 in State College, Pa. Harris said the borough should look for ways to preserve Addison Court so its tenants can continue living downtown.

domain, which is described as "the power of the Commonwealth to take private property for public use in return for just compensation." However, Addison Court doesn't meet the requirements set by the 2006 Property Rights Protection Act, which requires the building to be declared condemned in order to be seizeable by the borough. The borough is considering buying Addison Court, according to comment from Borough Manager Tom Fountaine following the April 20 borough council meeting. But, he said there wasn't enough information to make a decision. This uncertainty hasn't stopped Harris from contacting borough and county officials — like Pennsylvania House Rep. Scott Conklin (D-Centre) — and otherwise speak-

and former State College Zoning Officer Herman Slaybaugh. The council voted 6-1 to have the request be reviewed by the Planning Commission to see how the borough can best assist Addison Court's tenants.

Several Addison Court residents were also present on April 20, many of whom having attended the council's Jan. 12 meeting. In a public comment, Rodger Weir, who's lived in Addison Court since 1999, said after he expressed concerns about lapses in the building's maintenance, management started to slip lease violations under his door about his service animal. He said these violations "looked like retaliation."

"I think the attitude in the county was to say, 'The landlord put up the money to put up the building



Jonathon Chiu/Collegian

John Harris speaks with Abigail Sola, a fourth-year studying rehabilitation and human services, in the Corner Room on Friday, March 6, 2026 in State College, Pa. Harris said Sola is his favorite person to talk to when he visits.

provide affordable housing to elderly and disabled individuals in the State College community under the low income housing tax credit program. Addison Court's 30-year lease within the program expired on Dec. 31, 2024. The building is currently in talks to be redeveloped following its sale by its current owner, Beaver Court Associates.

"I've been able to continue to go there, living here very conve-

said. "That will be five people to a bedroom and huge profits to the real estate industry, which is unfortunate." Real estate development firm PrimeCore Properties presented a preliminary land development plan to the borough in early January. The plan outlines that a mixed-use structure, called Encore, will be built in place of Addison Court, featuring residential, office and commercial spaces.

Choice Voucher Program, also called Section 8, to make housing more affordable Santora said she can't move out of State College due to limited transportation options that can help her get to the borough.

"We can walk around anywhere without any problems. I can walk at any hour of the day with my dog and not have one issue," Sandi Tyger, another Addison Court tenant, said. "People don't want



Jon Chiu/Collegian

John Harris walks down Allen Street on his way to the Corner Room for his afternoon coffee on Friday, March 6, 2026 in State College, Pa.

ing out about Addison Court in any way he can.

On April 17, tenants received a letter signed by Calibre Residential Vice President James Hook, which said the building was now contracted to a new organization, though it didn't state which one. The letter also said a group, later revealed during the April 20 borough council meeting to be Continental Real Estate Management, would assist in relocating tenants out of Addison Court.

On April 3, PrimeCore requested an amendment to the height restrictions around Addison Court

and he has the right to do anything he wants to with it, including selling it," Harris said. "I paid rent in the building for the whole 28 years, starting at \$500 then and \$1,100 now, and that constitutes a kind of investment in the building on my part and I think all the tenants have the same status and we all think that it's nice to have the diversity downtown that we've brought. There isn't any need for student housing in exactly this spot."



Jon Chiu/Collegian

John Harris sits with Sandi Tyger, an Addison Court tenant, on a bench outside Schlow Centre Region Library on Thursday, March 26, 2026 in State College, Pa.

CONGRATULATIONS

GRADUATING STAFF OF 2026



SAMANTHA LEE



ELLA BERNHEISEL



JULIA FREDERICK



ZACK O'BRIEN



EMMA STRICKLING



EMMA LESSICK



NADYA SOLOMETO



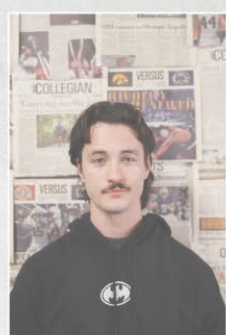
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AVERY HILL



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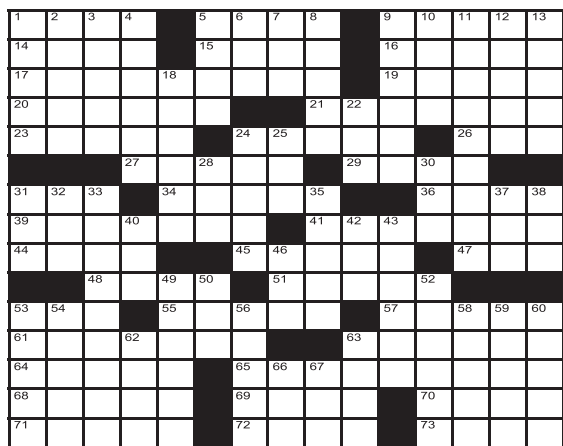
AJ PIAZZA

SKYLAR WILLIAMSON, SARA O'CONNELL, CIARA SAFINA, VASCO CHEN, JULIA KUSHNER, JADZIA SANTIAGO, ARUZHAN YEGEMBERDI, JORJE DURANGO, VIDA LASHGARI

Crossword

Across

- 1 Stew ingredients
- 5 Fast planes
- 9 The basic unit of money in Libya
- 14 Porcelain clay
- 15 Turn ___ profit
- 16 Building material
- 17 Common south-central Asian mammal
- 19 Perfect, or normal, feather
- 20 Ford model
- 21 In writing
- 23 1976 Streisand flick, "___ is Born"
- 24 Student
- 26 Escort's offering
- 27 Rap sheet listing
- 29 It has a head and hops
- 31 Head honcho
- 34 Off-the-cuff
- 36 Sweetheart
- 39 Turn to one's advantage
- 41 Leporides
- 44 Like centenarians
- 45 Bluenose
- 47 Linda ___
- 48 Supergirl's alias
- 51 Abominable Snowman
- 53 Where to get down
- 53 Cricket wicket
- 55 Club publication
- 57 Breakfast bread
- 61 Purchase order
- 63 Panhandle site
- 64 In the buff
- 65 Letter opener
- 68 Baseball datum
- 69 Lady of Spain
- 70 Mermaid feature



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- 71 Stew seasoning
- 72 Catchall abbr.
- 73 Peccadilloes
- Down**
- 1 Kind of salad
- 2 Fitzgerald and others
- 3 More or less
- 4 Small-time dictator in ancient Persia
- 5 Barbed comments
- 6 Helm heading
- 7 Leaves in a bag
- 8 Razor sharpener
- 9 Color with streaks or blotches
- 10 Creative spark
- 11 One of a kind
- 12 Baseball's Doubleday
- 13 Fortify again
- 18 Cry of triumph
- 22 Pen point
- 24 Small vascular growth
- 25 Mentalist Geller
- 28 Ore, neighbor
- 30 Outward flow
- 31 Actress Thurman
- 32 Henpeck
- 33 Comical approval
- 35 UCLA player
- 37 Did lunch
- 38 Draw upon
- 40 Dutch city
- 42 Recipe instruction
- 43 Weevil, e.g.
- 46 New Deal prog.
- 49 Walk unsteadily
- 50 Ill temper
- 52 Dinner choices
- 53 Pioneer in Surrealism
- 54 Poet's "below"
- 56 Rank
- 58 Very, in music
- 59 Coil of yarn
- 60 Asian weight units
- 62 Paper purchase
- 63 ___ Sea (Amu Darya's outlet)
- 66 Morse E
- 67 Kind of test

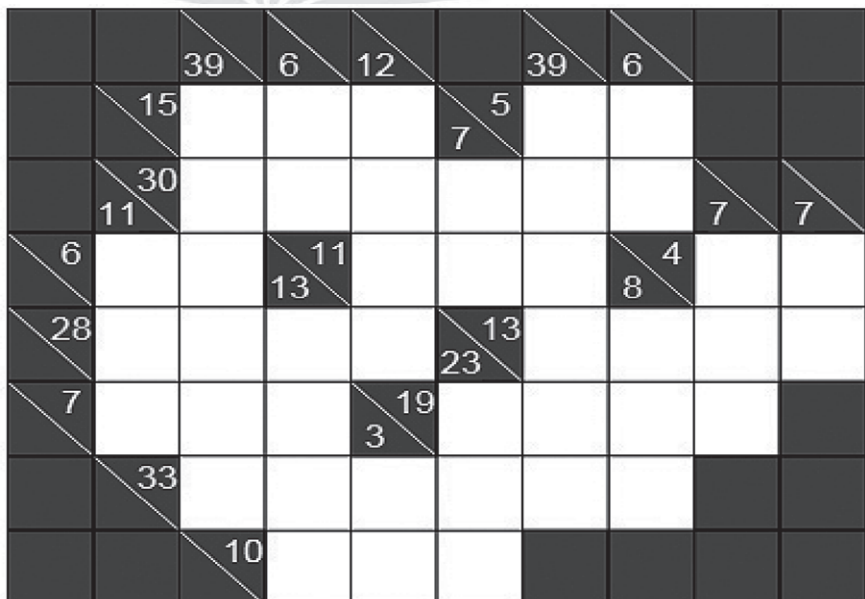
su|do|ku

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Kakuro (Cross Sums)

The rules are easy to learn: A number above the diagonal line in a black square is the sum of the white squares to the right of it. A number below the diagonal line is the sum of the white squares in the sequence below it. You may only use the digits 1 to 9, and a digit may be used only once in any sequence.



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WORD SEARCH

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Crime Scene Investigation



- Analyze
- Arson
- Autopsy
- Blood
- Bomb
- Bones
- Bullet
- Camera
- Evidence
- Fiber
- Fingerprints
- Forensics
- Gun
- Hair
- Identify
- Investigate
- Knife
- Microscope
- Murder
- Poison
- Police
- Residue
- Sample
- Scene
- Suspect
- Test
- Tissue
- Tracks
- Weapon
- Wounds

HEAR FROM OUR DEPARTING SENIORS

I'll never forget the night before my college freshman year move-in re-watching "Gilmore Girls," "The Loretas' First Day at Yale" alongside my family, wondering what my next four years would hold.

While Rory, one of the show's protagonists, undoubtedly has her flaws, I can't ignore some of the parallels in my life to hers.

I consider this my absolute comfort show, and my first time watching will forever be a sacred memory of my childhood. Consequently, I can't deny how my perspective of the show has contributed to my thought process at times to reality.

I'll start at the beginning, I'm blessed to have the best parents and best friends in them just as Rory has her mom, Lorelai, and her father-figure Luke.

My parents have always been my biggest inspiration and supporters, I'm so grateful for their guidance, support and most of all, friendship.

Just as the show journeys through Rory's upbringing in the idyllic Stars Hollow, memories of my small town childhood hold that same comfort and glow.

Rory spent much of her upbringing with a coffee in hand and book in the other. Similarly, I often found myself enjoying that same combination, and still do.

She wouldn't be herself without her love of reading, which she states in her high school graduation, as one of the "two worlds" she lives in. Similarly, I define my second world as one dominated by a fascination with storytelling. Some of my fondest childhood memories are of being read bedtime stories by my parents and my dad recounting his day at work while at the dinner table (the stories involving dogs whose names and photos were readily available were always my favorite).



Emma Naysmith

In high school, just as Rory met a bold blonde, who grew into her best friend, I'm blessed to have had mine since before pre-school.

Kiersten McNeely, I can't remember a time without you and I wouldn't want it any other way. Our friendship, shared memories and above all, sisterhood, means more to me than you will ever know.

Also in high school, Rory and I both joined our school newspaper. She and I both furthered our journalism careers to our college publications.

Joining The Daily Collegian changed so many aspects of my life both personally and professionally.

For that, I thank all of the leadership before me, and everyone I've ever had the opportunity to work with on staff.

Additionally, to those I've had the pleasure of interviewing, thank you for trusting me to share your stories.

Being news editor the fall semester during an immensely politically polarized time and presidential election pushed me more than I could've ever imagined.

I'm very thankful for my wonderful co-editor Kaitlyn Murphy, without you and our trauma bond, I wouldn't have survived the semester.

Just as Rory dated a boy on the paper, so did I. I'll always believe Rory and Logan were meant to be in so many ways.

To Abby Shanley (former business manager, woohoo!), I'm grateful to the Collegian and an off-campus location we spent way too many hours at for crossing our paths.

Meeting you and Jess Davidson (shout-out Facebook and Irving's) was a highlight of my college experience.

Continue reading:



One of my favorite authors recently is Emily Henry. Known for her rom-com plots, witty dialogue and heartfelt moments, she writes books that feel like they can appeal to anyone.



Nadya Solomoto

My personal top pick of hers is the 2023 novel "Happy Place." The book follows a woman named Harriet, who takes an annual trip to Maine with her group of friends. When the yearly vacation is announced to be ending, Harriet panics, thinking that if there's no trip, there's no reason for her friends to get together anymore.

I first read this book in the middle of my freshman year at Penn State, when I wasn't sure what the next four years of my life would look like.

Now, as the clock runs down on my time here, I can confidently say I've garnered a love for every aspect of it.

Growing up, my "happy place" was always with my family — even if I didn't always show it. My parents made it a habit to make every free night a family night, whether that meant going out for dinner, watching a new movie or just lounging around telling jokes.

I always had grandiose plans to leave home and go far away for school, so when choosing where to attend, it made sense for me to pick somewhere three hours away.

However, driving up to move in with my dad, not-so-expertly hiding tears behind his sunglasses, my mom's voice wavering in every sentence and my sister squeezed too close to me in the back seat, I was a ball of nerves.

What if I chose the wrong school on a whim? How could I handle being in the middle of nowhere? All of it swirled

in my mind until we pulled up to Martin Hall.

As the year went on and I found my footing on campus through friends and classes, I wanted to try my hand at writing. Journalism was something I knew I wanted to pursue in college, so at the Involvement Fair, I went in search of the right club for me.

Which is where I found the Collegian. I've spent all four years of my undergraduate studies on lifestyle staff. First as a candidate, then a reporter and eventually, an editor.

Throughout my time on staff, all of my editors — Sarah and Victoria, Fernanda and Milan, Cearra, Ritamarie and Kaitlyn Murphy — were some of the best people I've had the privilege of working for.

Even though each year brought new challenges and changes, the Collegian was always a constant bright spot. Bringing in an article never felt like a chore, but a fun task each week.

During my time as a reporter, I learned firsthand about other people's experiences and perspectives in college. Without the Collegian, where else could I explore clubs on fungi, archery or paleontology for a day?

When I got the opportunity to be an editor, I was more than thrilled. The position was a mini-goal I had set for myself as a freshman, so being able to hold the role for three semesters has been incredibly rewarding.

However, while the Collegian was certainly a large part of my time at Penn State, there's also been so much more that encompasses it.

Sophomore year, I had the opportunity to study abroad in London, and it was one of the greatest times stayed with me.

Continue reading:



There's a simple piece of advice that I didn't fully understand when I first got to this campus: say yes. At the time, I thought it was so cliché to say. But looking back now, I can honestly say that the moments that defined my time here all started with one thing: saying yes.



Zack O'Brien

When I first arrived, I was comfortable staying in what I knew. It's so easy to just stick to the familiar; routines, people, expectations. Saying no is safe. But what I didn't realize then is that saying no also limits how much you experience, how much you grow, and ultimately who you become.

Some of the most important opportunities I had at Penn State started as situations I wasn't fully ready for:

"Zack, do you want to apply for Vice President of the Business Division?"

"Yes."

"Zack, do you want to take over as Business Manager of The Collegian?"

"Yes."

"Zack, do you accept your full time position offer?"

"Yes."

See, these are all moments I just said yes, and they ultimately compounded on top of each other. There were times I questioned whether I was qualified, whether I could do it, or could handle the situation. But every time I said yes anyway, I grew into those opportunities.

That's the thing about saying yes, it doesn't mean you're necessarily prepared,

it means you're willing.

These all built on top of each other, leading me to find myself doing things I never could have imagined. Leading the Business Division, joining a fraternity, going to Penn State. None of that would have happened if I had waited until I felt "ready".

It's not just about the major moments either. Saying yes to spontaneous plans, late night hang outs, I mean even going to the gaff on a Thursday night. Those are just some of the moments that turned into core memories of mine, the ones you don't realize are important until they are.

Now, as I get ready to leave Penn State, I realize that saying yes is bigger than just a college mindset, it's something that will shape the rest of my path down what we call life. There will always be reasons to say no. To play it safe, avoid a risk, to stay comfortable. But if there is anything Penn State has taught me, it's that the best opportunities usually come disguised as things that feel uncertain.

Saying yes opened so many doors for me. It led me to so many great opportunities, my best friends, and genuinely a completely different version of myself. I sometimes feel uncertain about my future, but I'm honestly okay with that. Because I know whatever comes my way, I'll approach them the same way I did here, being willing to say yes.

Continue reading:



My American father, raised in Philadelphia, and my Palestinian mother, raised in Jerusalem, grew up in two very different worlds. They encountered different challenges, celebrated different triumphs and started their life stories from opposite sides of the world.



George Keene

In 2002, their paths crossed, and together, they took me on a journey that couldn't have been more perfect, a journey that has led me to where I am today.

A little over 22 years ago, I was born in the American Hospital of Dubai, approximately 6,980 miles from University Park, Pennsylvania. Just 15 months later my brother, Kevin, was born in May 2005, and 15 months after that my sister, Christina, joined the family.

After Dubai, we spent four years in Bulgaria before moving to Cairo, where I attended Cairo American College. Moving there during the revolution in the early 2010s as an 8-year-old was a shock to my system. Halfway through our stint in Egypt, my mother, brother, sister and I were evacuated back to the United States. We were separated from my father for about half a year, and it was challenging living in the States while my dad had to continue to work in a place filled with instability and violence. Nobody tells you how to navigate switching schools in the middle of the school year and how to deal with a family being apart.

A couple of years later, we moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where I attended grades seven through nine. These three years at the Interna-

tional School of Kuala Lumpur changed the course of my life. I played sports, met people from around the world and learned several important life lessons, most importantly, the value of diversity.

In 2019, I moved to Nairobi, Kenya, where I spent half a school year at the International School of Kenya, before the COVID-19 pandemic sent us back to the United States again. We were separated from my father again, and we lived in a Residence Inn hotel in Crystal City, Virginia, before finally finding our next home in York, Pennsylvania.

In 2022, I stood on a stage in my high school gym and delivered a speech to my fellow high school graduates. In that speech, I shared that changing the world seems like a daunting task, but together, with each of us creating our own little waves, we could create a tsunami that could change the world. This remains true and is becoming more necessary than ever. Despite all that was happening, I believed there were better days ahead.

Six years later, here I am, writing this column in State College, Pennsylvania, and little has changed.

We continue to live in a world where diversity isn't celebrated, but attacked. We live in a world where hate, war and violence overshadow love, diplomacy and peace. We stand idly by and watch injustice happen, we allow others to spread hate-filled rhetoric and we don't stand up against evil.

Every graduate from every university across the world is about to embark on their own life story. Each of us is in charge of our own. Choose to write a story filled with happiness, kindness and love. Don't be afraid of change, embrace diversity and savor the good moments and fight through the bad.

Continue reading:



"Life doesn't give us purpose... We give life purpose." - Barry Allen

In December 2020, a week after turning 18, I sat on the Old Main steps and accepted my offer of admission to Penn State. I was so proud to put "PSU '25" in my Instagram bio.

2025. Boy, if only I knew.

I missed that mark, huh? Still, that year ended up being the most important year of my life.

I'm choosing to make the memory of my college experience what I make of it. I will look back fondly on all five years. 2025, though, that one's important.

2025 was the worst year of my life.

I reached my lowest point ever. Three years of problems finally caught up to me. I had to face the fact that I was not graduating that May. I had plenty of other stuff going on too, and everything compounded. I was a wreck for most of the spring.

2025 was the best year of my life.

I proved to myself that my issues were real, but I could overcome them. I proved to myself that I could actually succeed. I proved to myself that I was allowed to be happy. I proved to myself that I could control my life. I grew up.

Funny how that works out.

Looking back, I feel strangely lucky. It's not fun having to do a fifth year (or pay for one), but in a big picture kinda way, it was worth it.

I got a do-over. A re-do. A second chance. Not everybody has that privilege.

I got a year to re-center myself, appreciate where I am, repair friendships, make new ones and above all, actually be happy.

College isn't just one year, though. There were three Osmans at Penn State.

The first Osman was that bright-eyed kid early on who thought he had everything figured out.

The second Osman got bitch-slapped

by life and pretended everything was fine. This Osman thought he had grown up but wasn't mature enough to face himself. This Osman became unrecognizable without realizing it.

The third Osman was born after that spring of 2025. This Osman finally saw growth as a forever incomplete but active process instead of just something to reflect on after the fact. This Osman finally took control of his life. This is the Osman I am now. This is the Osman I should've been all along.

I finally stopped letting life happen to me. I decided to start giving life purpose.

Now, this Osman can look back on the people who impacted all three versions.

Caleb Robert Craig, you old man, the first new friend I made at Penn State. I didn't get out much freshman year, so I'm glad you were on that Hamilton Hall ground floor. Sophomore year was odd to say the least, but I'm glad you were there for that too.

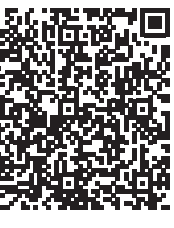
Sophia, my Collegian mom, you inspired me to work harder, be a leader and follow in your footsteps. Almost literally.

Jade Campos, thanks for introducing me to the Collegian. I'd say that worked out well.

Avani, Kareena, Josie and Juice, you made those middle years. Thanks for letting me watch movies on your couch and pound 'ronas on your balcony. Yashu, even though I didn't get to know you 'till later, I'm glad you're my friend.

Andrew Gille, I've been pals with you for longer than almost anyone in this column. From McDonalds and the State Theatre to 3:46 Sunrise, thanks for being by my side for so long.

Continue reading:



"The thing about new beginnings is that they require something else to end." - Blair Waldorf, Gossip Girl



Isaabella Viteri

"But if it weren't crazy, they wouldn't call it a leap of faith." - Eleanor Shellstrop, The Good Place

"Believing in even the possibility of a happy ending is a powerful thing, but living with that kind of belief, that's the most powerful thing of all. That's hope." - Mary Margaret, Once Upon a Time

I've watched these shows over and over, but their endings are starting to hit differently now. Leaving hurts, even when it comes with the excitement of what's next. When we're younger, we treat every milestone like a finish line. Now it feels more like a checkpoint in a much longer race. We spend so much time looking ahead that we forget to slow down and take in the moments that matter.

And now, whether I like it or not, this is one of those endings.

It's not just the end of college. It's the last time living with these friends, the last late-night Taco Bell runs and the last random drives where nothing and everything mattered at the same time. It's the last time playing with the athletic bands that gave me purpose for four years, the last time marching through the football tunnel and the last time watching Penn State men's hockey as a student and falling in love with the sport over and over again. As much as that hurts, I know something else, too. If I were able to experience this kind of joy once, I can find it again in a different chapter of life.

Looking back, coming to Penn State was one of my first real leaps of faith. I moved more than 12 hours away from home without ever visiting campus.

Someone once mentioned the school, and for some reason, it stuck. No school in Georgia felt right, and I didn't have a family connection guiding me. So I applied, got in and committed before I even saw it in person.

When my mom and I finally arrived for New Student Orientation, stepping out of that tiny airport and into Pennsylvania felt surreal. It was beautiful, unfamiliar and overwhelming all at once. I got lost more times than I can count, and honestly, I still do. But something about that visit confirmed I had made the right decision.

That didn't mean it was easy.

I started as an aerospace engineering major in Air Force ROTC while also being in Blue Band. My schedule was packed with early morning training, 8 a.m. classes and constant pressure. I thought I had everything planned out, including a career, a path and a version of success that made sense on paper.

By November, I was overwhelmed and questioning everything. I remember calling my mom in tears, unsure if I could keep going. She told me to finish the semester and that we would figure things out after. That moment, and her belief in me, is a big part of why I'm still here.

Eventually, I stopped trying to force a version of my life that didn't feel right and started paying attention to what actually made me happy. I changed my major to advertising, found my place in The Daily Collegian and leaned into the communities that made Penn State feel like home.

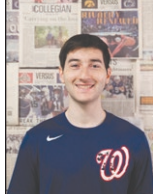
Somehow, four years later, things worked out. Just not in the way I expected.

Continue Reading:



HEAR FROM OUR DEPARTING SENIORS

Many students enter college anxious about making new friends or whether their fake ID will work at bars.



Greg Finberg

That wasn't me. Mainly because there are only a few people I enjoy talking to, and I hate going out to loud, cramped places. But also because I was concerned with something else. How would I break into the sports industry? At 5-foot-8 and four years past my basketball prime, my NBA dreams had succumbed to reality. I knew playing wasn't my destiny. So what next? What avenues could I explore to find a job in sports?

I knew I wanted to cover the Washington Wizards, which I had done briefly in high school. So I created a blog called "Wizards Wave," where I wrote weekly stories about the team and its happenings. But I still wanted more. I wanted to be on-site and experience true reporting. I wanted to learn "real" sports journalism.

So, as a sophomore, I applied for a role on the sports staff at The Daily Collegian.

I'll never forget walking into the Willard Building, decked in a full suit and with my newly crafted resume in hand to greet Liam Wichser, the sports editor at the time.

Liam was wearing a hoodie, shorts and a grin that told me everything I needed to know about how stupid I was for wearing a suit to this clearly relaxed interview.

I got a job as a reporter on the men's hockey beat, one I was excited to dive into. But to be honest, I thought I was above the Collegian.

So it was a rude awakening when my hockey tweets got zero engagement. My articles were wordy, my coverage was that of someone simply going through the motions and I again found myself asking: Is this what I want to do? I had quickly lost my passion for a pro-

fession I'd only recently found. I needed someone to show me why I should continue, someone who embodied everything great about sports journalism.

Enter Avery Hill. From our first interaction, Avery's dedication and passion for journalism impressed me. I noticed how much he enjoyed his coverage. I witnessed the care he showed each word he typed into his stories.

More importantly, Avery had fun with journalism. He enjoyed his job, which is the main thing I sought when entering Penn State. So I adopted that same mentality.

I entered my second year with the Collegian — my junior year of college — hoping to grace the men's basketball staff. Mike Rhoades had just finished his first season at Penn State, and as someone hoping to cover basketball professionally, I wanted to gain experience at the collegiate level.

But sometimes, better opportunities present themselves. I was contacted by Sam Woloson, my old sports editor and the Collegian's managing editor at the time, about applying for the vacant sports editor position for the fall 2024 semester.

I was honored that Sam considered me a worthy candidate. I was also terrified.

I felt like I could never relax because there was always a read or an update or a staff issue that needed handling. But that's sports journalism, and I loved every second of it. I loved the grind. I loved the leadership. And I loved churning out sports news to thousands of readers.

I took a summer off after editing before returning to the men's hockey beat. Some likened my return to LeBron's homecoming with the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2014. I'll take the modest route and say my return was more like King Mack's second stint at Penn State — brief but effective.

Continue reading:



If I'm going to be completely honest, when I stepped onto the HUB-



Emma Lessick

Robeson Center's lawn during the involvement fair as a freshman, I had no idea what The Daily Collegian was. I didn't know that it was a news organization or a school paper. I didn't know what opportunities it could offer me, or the person it would help me become.

And I certainly couldn't have imagined just how much joy, purpose and how many amazing people it would bring into my life over the last few years.

In the midst of all the uncertainty that came with freshman year, there was one thing I held onto — Teresa. My closest and best friend, my roommate, my sister from another mister and now my editor too.

Trusting her felt easier than facing anything alone. So when she joined the Collegian, so did I.

Fast forward three years.

Ugh. Now, if I'm still going to be completely honest here, I never really wanted to write a senior column. I didn't feel like I had much worth saying. But Teresa insisted.

So here I am. Writing my senior column.

I have spent my college years on the photo staff, capturing moments from a variety of lifestyle events, news and sports. Don't get me wrong, I had already been doing some photography before college — it wasn't my first time picking up a camera, but it was more for the fun of it.

Back then, it was just something I enjoyed without thinking too much

about where it could take me.

The Collegian changed that.

It pushed me, challenged me and ultimately took my photography further than I ever thought possible. It opened doors I didn't even know existed and gave me opportunities I never imagined for myself.

And for that, I will always be grateful.

"Check the doc" has been one of the most consistent parts of my college routine — even more reliable than my sleep schedule.

Every day, like clockwork, I would get the message "Check the doc" and have to log in to the photo assignment sheet and see where I needed to be and what events I was covering.

Now, as I am getting ready to graduate, I keep thinking I forgot something, until I realize there's no more doc to check.

Among the vast opportunities gifted to me, the best one of all ... the people. Sienna, Sammy, Andrew, George, Mercedes and of course Teresa.

Sammy — MY QUEEN. Girl, I will miss your witty, funny and most of the time inappropriate jokes. You can always make me laugh and I always looked forward to seeing you. I only really came to the photo budget because of you. But I swear if I get one more "check the doc" notification...

Andrew — You are pretty much always at the table, so at this point, I just expect you to be there. Thank you for being dependable. You always add a smile to my day.

George — King George. Although I haven't seen you in months, I hope this semester is treating you well. From introducing me to movies to the Grinch costume you wore over Christmas, watching you coach basketball, your energy and positive attitude always made my day.

Continue reading:



Millions of years ago, dinosaurs ruled the Earth.



Joe Klein

But without social media and video games, they were eventually replaced by humans who, with said inventions, messed up the planet worse than dinosaurs ever could. I bring this up because many things in life don't seem to go so well, including my decision freshman year to be a food science major, only to later be met with the Grim Reaper that is CHEM 110.

The switch to photojournalism was obvious; I spent my entire childhood pestering my parents about how I wanted to be a journalist like my uncle.

Uncle Joey wrote a column, "Queen's Queens," that had become regular reading fodder from my Uncle Alan growing up. Photography had been an ongoing hobby, whether in my free time on my phone, shooting film back home in New York City or away in London. I had gotten an eye for it in high school, thanks to my baseball coach and first photography mentor, Bryan Ciminelli.

Plus, entering the major junior year wasn't all that bad, even though I was in a completely new environment and now two years behind the other photojournalism classmates.

I centered myself on one objective: catch up. With the help of everyone around me, I can confidently say I did, now having one of the top student awards in the topic.

It's now time to leave and enter the "real world," but these past two years were some of the best I've lived and I would never trade them.

Through my experiences, I've realized that I do have some mantras I use to push through even the most grueling insanity.

Here are some of the ones that helped me.

Tip 1: Love what you do. If your heart truly is not intimate with it, it may not be for you.

Tip 2: Always push for access, even if you don't think you will get it. Growing up, my parents always told me to ask again or ask someone else after being rejected, because you never know what'll happen the second time.

My junior year, I got turned down by every equipment desk on campus for renting a camera, until I asked Professor John Pandygraft after my first photo night, an event the photojournalism community has to get together, bond and learn. After hearing my story, he helped me in many ways to create my first photojournalistic portfolio, which allowed me to join the Collegian.

Tip 3: Always ask questions; too many are better than none. My first photo editors, Kate (Photo Goat) Hildebrand and Chris (Big Dawg) Eutsler, know this better than anyone.

Tip 4: Don't stay in your own comfort zone; get out of your lane. At the end of my junior year, I had decided to create a cooking column, which was insanely hard for someone who sucks at writing. Luckily, thanks to fate, I was able to meet Professor Walter Middlebrook, previously my uncle's editor at Newsday, who ended up becoming what I think my uncle would have been had he been alive.

But thanks to him, "Klein's Kitchen" turned out to be something I sincerely enjoyed creating.

Tip 5: Play and have fun! This is a lesson I learned in a high school film class, but it has shaped the way I approach everything.

Continue reading:



Well, my time at Penn State is coming to a close, which means my time at



AJ Piazza

The Daily Collegian is coming to an end. It's crazy to think this moment has arrived. Through all the ups and downs, being on the sports staff really helped me put one foot forward in achieving my goals and dreams. Now that the end is near, it's time to recap this whole experience.

I remember walking into the new side of Willard, walking down the wooden stairs and being like WOAHH! There were a lot of clubs and opportunities, which was a lot to take in all at once. I made my way through and found the Collegian and never looked back.

Let's start from the beginning. I joined in the fall of 2022 on the men's soccer beat; it was the first step to my dream of becoming a sports journalist. I enjoyed my time on the beat, but what I was really excited about was covering men's lacrosse.

Lacrosse was a sport that meant a lot to me. It was big in my family, as many of my family members played the game. I never got to play, so being able to be on the beat was a great feeling. My first year on the staff, the team made the Final Four, which made it a really fun season to cover.

Enter my third year. DANANANANANA (for those who don't know it's "Super Mario Bros." theme music) This is the biggest and most important one. I really started to focus on not just my writing and reporting as a sports journalist, but also the people I

was doing it with.

This was the start of memories and traditions.

I decided to take my talents back to the men's soccer beat, which ended up being worth it, because I was working toward one goal. Being On. The Wrestling. Beat. That was my main focus for my junior year.

I applied to be a part of the wrestling staff and nervously waited for the results, but it was good news; I got the position. This was one of the first moments I knew my work had paid off.

Back on the wrestling beat this year, I had the opportunity to travel to Cleveland to report on Penn State's fifth straight national championship, and have a HOLLYWOOD moment. I ended my career on the men's lacrosse beat, marking my fourth year on the beat.

Memories

When I turned 21, it became a weekly tradition, either Brother's Tuesday or Cafe Wednesday. When it comes to Brothers Tuesday, Alex Osman and Zach Karpf way to put me onto it. Talking some football with our burgers was always an exciting part of my week.

Never forget when I almost joined the photo staff. Kate Hildebrand and Chris Eutsler always made being at the table a great time. I couldn't transfer from sports staff to photo, though, so I had to take myself out of the portal.

To Evan, you made being on the wrestling beat a blast. The jokes that were made on The Mat Return are some I will never forget, mostly because of Evan. That's all folks! That's the end of my Penn State journey.

Continue reading:



Shelley is my infamous car with nearly 100,000 miles on her. She got keyed outside of my frat house. She has no hubcaps, because they were taken by the Secret Service. (Yes, this actually happened.) But more than Shelley just being a car I'm desperately trying to replace with a Tesla, Shelley has been the vehicle for a ton college memories and the reason I can leave Penn State feeling so fulfilled.



Evan Smith

So let's pretend Shelley's a Delorlian and travel back in time.

2023

I know what you're thinking, of course, Evan is starting his senior column after his sophomore year, he just has to be weird all the time. Well, yes, but for me, this is kind of part one of graduating, as I'm heading out of Altoona and up to State College.

My first two years of college certainly happened. If you had told anyone from high school I became a frat boy, they would've laughed at you, but Altoona was a weird place. I mean, its two most famous exports are Luigi Mangione and Altoona Style Pizza. I once tried Altoona Style Pizza.

If you want some of the full Altoona stories, just find me and say one of these words: Harrisburg, Firefly, UFC, Elton, Blonde, Magic, Harrisburg 2, Drake, Newman, Pitt, Wawa, Halls.

I know I sound like I hated my time at Altoona, but I didn't. It was fun at the moment, but it wasn't fulfilling nor what I wanted out of my college experience. I found that when I joined CommRadio.

I was sick of wasting time, then I remembered I have free will and a Shelley, so I drove up to State College twice a week and got into the club before telling them, "Surprise, I don't go here!" I then would DoorDash around downtown until I had enough money to pay for the gas to get home and

repeat the process multiple times a week. If you really want something, don't let minuscule setbacks get in your way.

It was all worth the hassle because working gave me a taste of my dream job. It drove me to do more, driving Shelley all across the East Coast for opportunities. You can't regret not doing something if you just do everything.

Now I have the chance to live out my dream college experience, hopefully I can make it happen.

Better late than never, I guess.

2025

The first decision I made at University Park shaped the course of my next two weeks: I joined Onward State. Yep, didn't see that one coming, did ya? But after meeting with Nick Stone(Cold)sifer, it was clear the Collegian was the best decision for me, only having two* years up here at Penn State.

For what it's worth, two Onward photographers agreed with this sentiment after finding out my major was, quote, "journalism." I only chose journalism as a step into broadcasting. I never liked writing; in fact, I hated it.

However, it didn't take long for the Daily Collegian to make me fall in love with real journalism.

My whole college experience has taught me to relax and take every opportunity. So I don't know where I'm going to end up after college yet, but I know I'm going to succeed and be happy. If my words haven't said the quiet part out loud yet, thank you, Penn State and everyone I've met here. I'll hate the goodbyes, but I won't forget the good times.

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FOR MORE
SENIOR COLUMNS

Senior Column | Time made me bolder

In true Mercedes fashion, I'm sitting in the Willard Building past midnight with tears in my eyes and a rapidly approaching deadline. The voices of the people I've spent every waking minute with this year slip through in my headphones over Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide" as I struggle to put the last four years into a few thousand words.

If I'm being honest, I didn't want to come to Penn State. It was actually the very last school I applied to, and I waited all the way until March to do it.

I grew up in Brooklyn and had my eyes set on a college in the SUNY system or my mom's alma mater, Syracuse University. But during COVID, we moved to Pennsylvania, and financially, a state school made the most sense.

I don't care much for sports or parties, and the thought of attending a PWI in the middle of nowhere Pennsylvania scared the crap out of me.

After exploring downtown on admitted students day, my mom and I trudged up Shortlidge Road. The bright blue news box at the bus stop in front of the White Building caught my eye. I flipped through the student newspaper in awe, sweat dripping down my forehead as my mom raved about the beautiful campus.

As an incoming English major who loved to write, I immediately decided I'd apply for The Daily Collegian when I arrived on



Geraldine Cruz-Hernandez/Collegian

Mercedes Hamilton poses in front of her office.

campus in the fall. At the time, I had no idea just how much this newspaper would change my life.

During my first few months, I wasn't quite sure if I was going to stay at Penn State. It took me a long time to make friends and find my place. I missed my mom, and I desperately wanted to go home. The only thing I had to look forward to was Monday night lifestyle budget meetings, and hopefully, seeing my byline in the paper on Friday morning.

I kept to myself. I didn't talk to many people, and I left Willard as soon as I finished my work. Even the newsroom felt a bit overwhelming and isolating at times. And the first few interviews were terrifying — walking up to strangers to chat with me for an article in the paper made

me deeply uncomfortable.

But I loved to write, and quickly realized and became inspired by the impact and legacy of our paper. So I picked up as many stories as I could.

By the end of the semester, I was in the Bellisario College of Communications walk-in advising, begging them to override me into COMM 160: Basic News Writing Skills, which you had to be a communications major to enroll in. I added journalism as a second major as soon as I could.

The summer after my freshman year, I was surprised to be selected as news editor. I stuttered during staff meetings and flinched every time I got a Slack ping, hoping I hadn't made a mistake. And that I did, but I got into the swing of things. The

tight deadlines and constant chaos were exhilarating. It was then I knew I wanted to work my way up to editor-in-chief.

The Daily Collegian has consumed my entire college experience. I've edited stories on the beach during family vacations over the summer, skipped practices and performances with my dance team and sacrificed outings with my friends.

A few days ago, when my best friend from home visited for the first time and I showed her the office, she told me she thought Willard was my dorm because she always sees my little "Find My iPhone" icon there late at night.

Even when I studied abroad, I continued writing for the paper and joined midnight Zoom calls

from my Dublin apartment.

From investigating a slew of hateful, racist anonymous emails several professors received to diving into the university's shameful history with Indigenous peoples, the work I was able to produce has taught me so much about empathy, ethics and accountability.

By the time I began working on my proposal, I had worked across a few Collegian staffs, from news to lifestyle to ops to social media.

And still, nothing could have prepared me for this year as editor-in-chief.

It was a really difficult year.

There were so many challenges I couldn't have even anticipated, like navigating nearly the school year without a general manager and losing many valued staff members for using artificial intelligence to write stories

Continue reading:



Mercedes Hamilton is a senior majoring in English and journalism. She was The Daily Collegian's 2025-26 editor-in-chief until 6:15 a.m. Thursday morning.

Senior Column | Everything after this is off the record

Correction: In a previous version of Amy's life plan she thought she would major in political science and become a lawyer. She has since found her passion for journalism and owes it all to The Daily Collegian.

I love The Daily Collegian.

No amount of journalism training could prepare me for how to write my final column and say goodbye to the place that has been my home for the past four years. I'll always cherish the memories I made here, the people I've met and the stories I've written.

When I first arrived at Penn State, I had no plans to become a journalist. I had never written for my high school paper and I wasn't a journalism major. I learned about the Collegian my first day on Penn State's campus through former Editor-in-Chief Megan Swift, who happened to be my mentor during Schreyer New Student Orientation.

This, along with an intense interest in Penn State football, was what initially drew me to apply.

After being devastated I didn't get student football tickets my freshman year, I thought I'd join the student newspaper instead and cover the football team day one. Unfortunately for my



Courtesy of Joe Tuman

Amy Schafer poses in front of the Collegian's office with the newspaper.

freshman self, that's not how the Collegian works. Luckily, I found something even better than access to the football field — a passion for journalism.

I applied to the sports staff, but ended up getting placed on the news staff as a candidate. A wise woman on staff named Teagan Mayr convinced me that I should give it a try, and that I was going to love news reporting.

As usual, Teagan was right.

My first ever breaking news coverage for the Collegian was a "politically provocative" comedy night uncensored

America hosted featuring Proud Boys founder Gavin McInnes and comedian Alex Stein.

I was originally assigned to cover the speakers, but when the protest turned violent, I learned to be flexible. I worked with the other reporters to pivot and cover the protest instead, producing a triple byline coverage. One of the Collegian photographers at the protest got pepper-sprayed in the face and kept taking photos. After witnessing this, there was no doubt in my mind that news was the staff I was meant to be placed on. I was insanely

impressed by the dedication everyone had to the work they do and knew this was going to be somewhere I felt at home.

I've learned so much from this outlet, not only about journalism but about myself. I have spent more time in the Willard Building and Collegian office than my own home. Being at the helm of this outlet first as a borough reporter, then news editor, editor-in-chief and now business manager has challenged me in ways that have made me grow into the person I am today.

I will forever hold a special place in my heart for The Daily Collegian. Thank you for everything.

Continue reading:



Amy Schafer is a senior majoring in public relations, global and international studies and women's, gender and sexuality studies and minoring in Spanish. She was The Daily Collegian's 2025-26 business manager until 6:15 a.m. Thursday morning.

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Letters should be about 400-600 words. Student letters should include class year, major and campus. Letters from alumni should include graduation year. All writers should provide their email address and phone number

for verification. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Members of organizations must include their titles if the topic they write about is connected with the aim of their groups. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters. The Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all letters. Letters chosen run on The Daily Collegian website and may be selected for publication in the print edition. All letters become property of Collegian Inc.

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Daily Collegian

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'You can be good at multiple things'

Michela Barbanente bridges softball, broadcasting

By Gianna Dowling
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

From the months of February through May, many see Michela Barbanente as the starting second baseman of the Penn State softball team. However, Barbanente's representation in college athletics goes far beyond the batter's box.

When Barbanente's not on the field repping the blue and white, she can be found analyzing a game from the broadcasting booth or reporting from the sidelines. The junior is currently pursuing a degree in Broadcast Journalism, with aspirations of a career in sports broadcasting.

As a member of Big Ten Plus Student U, Barbanente gets the rare opportunity of experiencing the world of college sports from both the perspective of the broadcaster and the athlete.

"Being able to perform on the field, it's one thing, but being able to perform in the classroom and being able to be passionate about something you want to do outside of your sport, I also think is something to value," Barbanente said. "You can be good at multiple things, and that's really a blessing."

Last season marked a breakout year for Barbanente, where she started 49 of the team's 51 games. Additionally, Barbanente completed the year with a single-season career best eight home runs and her 36 RBI ranked fourth on the team.

The Itasca, Illinois, native's strong sophomore performance resulted in her being named one of the Nittany Lions' four captains ahead of the 2026 season.

"Our captains this year, I think they've done an incredible job of leading our team," coach Clarisa Crowell said on Feb. 11.

This season, Barbanente has started every game for the blue and white, increasing her numbers, batting .295 with a .308 average in conference play.

"Everybody hears her name a lot in a lot of different realms, because (Barbanente) just does so much for not only our program, but our department," Crowell said in February. "Very fortunate that we've got kids in this program that just love being here,



Matt Cropp/Collegian

Utility Michela Barbanente (1) throws the ball during the Penn State Softball game against Maryland.

and are bought into what we're doing."

Barbanente's pride for Penn State goes without saying, and she felt this from the moment her recruiting journey started.

"I just could not say no to here, like there was just no way. I wanted to be a part of a change, I wanted to be a part of this program that was developing," Barbanente said. "Being a part of this has been such an honor, and I could not thank my 16-year-old self enough for being here."

The junior's passion for the Nittany Lion faithful goes beyond her effort on the softball field; it's something that she brings into broadcasting as well.

"I love Tracy Wolfson because I love her pride for her school and I think that's going to be what I'm like," Barbanente said. "I know in broadcasting, you're not supposed to be like, 'oh, I love this,' but what you're passionate about is what you're passionate about."

While it wasn't until high school that Barbanente realized she had a chance to play softball at a Power 4 level, the Penn State second baseman had her mind set on pursuing broadcasting at a younger age.

"I went to a WGN field trip with one of my friends who knew somebody who was an anchor when I was in seventh grade," Barbanente said, "From that moment, I was like, this, this is what I want to do."

Perhaps the biggest benefit of broadcasting a game as an athlete yourself is relatability, and

knowing what it's like to be in a player's shoes.

"It gives perspective that no amount of prep can truly offer," Jack Rachinsky, who frequently broadcasts alongside Barbanente, said. "I can do all the stats, all the charts in the world, but I haven't been in a locker room, I haven't been in a huddle."

When Barbanente's on the mic, her experience as a competitor offers unique insights and brings deeper, more personal connections to the athletes she's covering. Barbanente understands the emotional highs and lows of competition and how a single play can change a game, or how a player can struggle individually yet still contribute to a team's success.

"I know how it feels to win and also go 0-for-3 and feel like I didn't do anything, but understand the team is so much bigger than myself," Barbanente said. "It's those little moments that are so big in our lives that maybe you don't really see as an outsider looking in."

That lived experience allows for a better storytelling approach with a deeper sense of awareness. Understanding what athletes go through behind the scenes, while highlighting details that might otherwise be overlooked, gives the audience a more complete picture of the game.

"For any sport, the mentality of student-athletes remains the same," Rachinsky said, "So you have that depth, or you can add a new layer, because you can go on about a story about how you deal with a certain situation."

For Barbanente, connecting with players and viewers goes beyond the relatability of being an athlete; she's also finding a way to connect through language. In addition to Broadcast Journalism, Barbanente studies Spanish, hoping one day to use it in her broadcasting career.

"I do want to work in the MLB one day, if that's the path that I choose to go down, so understanding that you have 30 to 50 percent of your players are Spanish speakers," Barbanente said. "If you can be able to communicate with them, I think it just opens up so many more jobs."

When it comes to bringing broadcasting and softball together, Barbanente often finds her skills and techniques from each overlapping.

"I talk to myself a lot, especially in at-bats or on defense, and I catch myself using the same exact mechanisms and routines when I'm about to go on air," Barbanente said, "The exact same way I prepare myself to perform in big moments in softball is the exact same way I prepare myself to go on air."

Whether Barbanente's stepping into the batter's box or sitting behind a microphone, the routine is the same. The pressure might look different on the surface, but internally, she approaches both environments with the same mindset.

"When I struggle in softball, it's when I don't trust myself and when I struggle in broadcasting is probably when I don't trust my-

self," Barbanente said. "It's like (the) same thing, different font and I don't think it can actually be more clear, because the more I think about it, the more those two really translate."

Recently, Barbanente saw her two worlds collide. After Penn State defeated Saint Francis on April 21, the junior got the untraditional opportunity to conduct a Big Ten Plus post-game interview with her teammate, Cara Bohner.

The interview became an unexpected bucket-list moment for Barbanente. The junior captain had been introduced to the idea of interviewing one of her own teammates, but wasn't sure the opportunity would present itself as the season was winding down.

"It was so cool to be able to do that, and especially with Cara Bohner, somebody who has grown up in the area watching Penn State softball games," Barbanente said.

"(Bohner is) somebody who doesn't really get the spotlight as much as she should for the impact that she really has on our team and our teammates."

One of the most noticeable features a broadcaster presents is their personality. Barbanente has shown her impact in both the dugout and broadcast, with her key characteristic coming from her personality.

"She's always got a smile on her face, she's hilarious, she's very positive, a great person to be around," Rachinsky said. "That shines through, especially when she's gotten more comfortable, where you can see that personality shine and you want to tune in for longer."

The biggest embrace that Barbanente has taken away from both softball and broadcasting is knowing it's possible to succeed in multiple pursuits. She approaches her goals with determination, believing that success depends on effort and mindset.

"If you want it, go get it, everything's there for you, it's a matter of how you're gonna attack it," Barbanente said. "In no place am I the softball player I want to be today, or the broadcaster I want to be today, but I understand the ceilings out there and just to keep climbing."

To email reporter: gmd5738@psu.edu
Follow her on X@[giannamd32](https://twitter.com/giannamd32)

Lacrosse parents reflect

By Noah Aberegg
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

For the last four years, David Ho, Beth Golder — the parents of Erika Ho and Maggie Driver — and other parents of Penn State women's lacrosse's senior class have spent weekend after weekend at Panzer Stadium in the spring.

On April 16, they traveled to Panzer Stadium for the last time, watching their daughters play the final home game of their collegiate careers.

"That makes me cry," Ho told The Daily Collegian. "It's been such a wonderful experience to watch her grow as a person and a player."

While the families have officially been united since their daughters joined Penn State their freshman years, they've known each other much longer through connections in the lacrosse world.

"We are connected in so many ways," Golder said. "When your child plays at this elite level, you've pretty much dedicated your whole life. It's the hotels, the summers when they're little, the club teams. We've pretty much all had the same journey."

When the then-freshmen parents arrived on campus four years ago, they were welcomed with a beginning-of-the-season barbecue and an opportunity to meet the parents who've been there the last few years.

Among the interactions and greetings was an opportunity to learn the traditions of the Penn State program, including the cheers and expectations on gameday.

"This extended family that's been together for the last four years has just been so amazing," Ho said. "As a freshman parent, you show up on the sidelines during fall competitions and you're lost; you don't know what to expect. The parents were just so easy to show the ropes, like this is

what expectations are during our games."

Throughout the season, the parents have traveled to almost every home and away game, filling the bleachers.

While their cheering may not be heard or comprehended because of all the other noise on the field, they've made it a point to show up and stand out regardless.

"I don't think they really listen to what goes on," Ho said. "I think they know our presence of us being there and that we've got their back, whether win or lose, that we still love them and at the end of the day, they're still Nittany Lions."

While each family has had a unique journey to Penn State and during their four years on the team, Golder has experienced her daughter grow to be one of the best defenders in the Big Ten, ending her career with First Team All-Big Ten honors.

"It's incredibly special," Golder said. "She's been playing lacrosse since kindergarten. Penn State was her dream school, and to see that come true, it's been an incredible experience. We're a Penn State family."

Over the past four years, the team has experienced its fair share of highs and lows, from a pair of NCAA Tournament appearances to a losing record in 2025.

This season, the team welcomed new head coach Kayla Treanor, who has embraced the support from the parents and been grateful for everything they do for the program. "They are just an incredible group," Treanor told the Collegian. "I think that's a big part of why we've had success as a team this year."

Over the last several years, various parents have stepped up to take charge and lead the group, ensuring the traditions continue as they have in the past.

While the Spilker family doesn't have a senior on Penn State's squad this year, they've been a continuous mentor to younger

families, having been with the Nittany Lions for 11 of the past 13 years with three daughters playing on the team.

"The Spilker family has been spectacular," Ho said. "They're really a true foundation of, 'Hey, this is what goes on, this is what to expect.' They've been really good mentors to follow."

Various duties are split among the senior parents — currently with seven seniors — to ensure game day is successful.

Among the duties is waving a Penn State flag and hitting a cowbell after every goal, which is currently done by Kevin Kelly — Emma Kelly's dad — and Golder.

"We've always made a point to support one another and to support everybody's kids," Golder said. "I think that's what makes our team so special. I'm the bell ringer for our team, and my child's a defender, so I never get to ring the bell for my kid since she doesn't score. It's so neat that every time I ring that bell, I'm ringing it for somebody else's kid."

Between the traditions, care and support from the parents toward the team, Treanor is grateful for the actions of the parents and what they've done for Penn State.

"In a lot of ways, they are in our locker room, whatever their messaging is to their daughter is how the kids feel," Treanor said. "Across the board, we've got parents who are really supportive and are bought into this culture of what is best for the team and team first."

With the regular season finished and a spot in the NCAA Tournament looming until Sunday's selection show, the senior parents' time is almost done at Penn State.

"(Penn State) is such a special place," Ho said. "I'm gonna miss it so much."

To email reporter: nda5168@psu.edu
To follow him on X@[aberegg_noah](https://twitter.com/aberegg_noah)

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER SPRING BALL?

By Lexie Linderman
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

With spring ball coming to a close at Beaver Stadium on Saturday, Penn State will now have some time off before picking back up in June.

Matt Campbell said Tuesday that he and the entire staff were planning to meet ahead of Blue-White Practice to assess each player on the roster and their strengths and weaknesses. Campbell confirmed Saturday that process has been completed and also offered some more insight as to what's next for Penn State operationally. "Knowing that the storm of a college football season's coming, how are we all aligned, everybody in our program, to what the communication style is going to be to every one of our players," Campbell said. "We'll meet with every player Tuesday. Then on Wednesday through the finals, I'll meet with every player. I think the key is everybody being aligned to where is the growth, what do you have to do?"

Campbell said the next four months until Week 1 are "critical for this team to grow themselves forward." But he added this spring was "positive," sticking with the notion from last Tuesday that the Nittany Lions haven't wasted a practice.

With two new coordinators at Penn State, there's still plenty of work to do with installing the offensive and defensive schemes. It's a bit easier for the offense, as the players who followed Campbell and Taylor Mouser know the playbook already, but there are still important play-makers who are still learning.

When the Nittany Lions return at the end of May, Campbell said they will put plenty of their effort into the schematics as they continue to grow into what the staff envisions as this

year's Penn State team, even if the scheme isn't where Campbell thinks the most growth is needed.

"Can we continue to have great discipline and detail in our academics and how we finish in the classroom?" Campbell said. "Can we have great discipline and detail in humility, myself and all of us, in terms of evaluating what we just did? The end piece of it is probably most important. The storm is coming. We're going to have adversity."

For the players, there's still two or so weeks until the long May break they have when coaches are out recruiting. As one of the veteran leaders, Rocco Becht is thrilled with the opportunity they have to grow before heading home.

"But really, right now, until this big May break, we'll be in the film room, watching back over spring ball, and as soon as we get back from May, that's when we'll hit out on the field," Becht said. "We'll start doing routes, we'll start doing different types of throws and different types of coverages. And so I'm excited for that to progress with those receivers."

But soon, everyone will go their separate ways for a bit. Brett Eskildsen and Koby Howard have a trip booked to Los Angeles to do some more work together, while others are set to return home to keep training.

When they return to Happy Valley, it won't be "standoffish" as Cooper Cousins described it when they first were in the building together — it will be a family reuniting. "We're just one big family. Everybody in that building is so close, and everybody in that building is so together," Cousins said. "This has probably been one of the closest teams I've been a part of, and it's not just seniors hanging out with seniors, it's seniors hanging out with freshmen or early enrollees. We're all one big family."

To email reporter: ajl7167@psu.edu
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