Michelle Llewellyn

On Friday, December 14, 2007, members of the Penn State Wilkes-Barre Collegian visited a class of Lehman Head Start students in St. Paul’s Lutheran Church. After conducting a children’s book drive on campus, we were able to read aloud some of our childhood favorites, and present the kids with books to take home with them.

The Head Start program provides pre-school education for children between the ages of three and five. The Luzerne County Head Start center’s mission statement asserts that the organization is “dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for low-income children and their families in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties,” and that their staff members strive to achieve this mission by “providing early care and education for pregnant women and children birth to five, emphasizing healthy outcomes and school readiness; promoting family self-sufficiency; and partnering with individuals, school districts, and our community.”

The Collegian staff decided to conduct a children’s book drive to fulfill part of our club’s SGA-regulated community service requirements. Donna Smith, our paper’s editor, who organized the drive and the reading, said, “Conducting drives on campus is often a quick and fun way to complete this requirement while benefiting members of the

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Maternal Family And Health Services

Kristen Durso

"Alright, Beatrice, feet in the stirrups." Just what every woman loves to hear. Yeah, right. Being a young woman, I know how important my health is, especially my sexual health. I know going to the gynecologist isn’t a comfortable. Still others may not find any need to go because they may think they are perfectly healthy. But, no matter what reasons are holding you back, taking the precautions to protect yourself is important.

Few young women on campus know that there are people at Penn State Wilkes-Barre who can assist with problems such as prescribing birth control or giving annual exams. There is a program called the Maternal Family and Health Services, (MFHS) serving Penn State Schuylkill, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, and Wilkes University. Here at PSU Wilkes-Barre, MFHS offers counseling, education, and pregnancy testing, as well as GYN exams and contraceptive supplies. MFHS is here to help those young women who may not be able to get the necessary care to keep themselves healthy. While some young women may assume that these services cost a lot, the truth is these services may cost next to nothing. According to Sharon, one of the Nurse Practitioners at MFHS, this February the government introduced a program called The State of Pennsylvania Select Plan. When I spoke with Sharon she did not have details about this program since it was so new. What she did tell me was this plan benefits women age 18-44. These women would have to give proof of residency in Pennsylvania and fall in a certain income bracket to be considered for this program. If she meets this criterion, a woman could receive gynecological exams, birth control, and HPV tests, just to name a few, for free. Sharon believes that most young women attending college would qualify for this plan. Having Maternal Family and Health Services at Penn State Wilkes-Barre is a huge advantage, especially for those young women who really need these services. If you would like more information about this program, please contact Linda McDade, campus nurse, at 675-9250 or see the nurse in her office located in the ARB. You can also e-mail the nurse at lcm14@psu.edu. The Maternal Health and Family Services will be on the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus on Monday, March 3 and Monday, April 28 in the ARB from 12-3pm.

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My Fellow Collegians,

We are caught in the middle of another bleak winter here at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, but there are still plenty of activities happening on campus to keep everyone occupied. As always, your campus newspaper staff is trying to stay on top of things to keep you updated on the latest news and upcoming events. We have also compiled another array of special feature articles to provide entertainment during these long winter days. With a growing newspaper staff, we are now offering a few new features, perspectives, and opinions, mixed in with the old familiar voices of last semester. February is a significant month, and we on The Collegian have done our part to highlight important topics such as Black History Month, American Heart Month, and the ongoing presidential campaign. On page 5 you’ll find an explanation of how February came to be observed as Black History Month, and the article “Number One Lady Killer” (below) has been provided with the hope of increasing heart health awareness on campus. Approaching hot topics from a collegian’s point of view is what we do best, and the presidential campaign has been covered from two different perspectives in this issue. Be sure to check out both “Vote!” (front cover) and “Ron Paul” (page 5) before you make your big decision this spring!

The most obvious change to this month’s issue of The Collegian is its brand-new newspaper format. Though we now look more like America’s great papers such as The New York Times and The Chicago Tribune, we have one advantage that those larger papers do not: we provide the fresh, new voices of our own emerging generation. We are the nation’s scholars and professionals in training. We have our own opinions, interests, and ideas, and it is the goal of The Collegian to let those voices be heard. So sprawl out on a couch in the new library, and enjoy the February issue of The Collegian. We welcome your comments and feedback, so feel free to send in letters to the editor; note that we cannot print anonymous letters. If you can’t figure out how to fold the new paper, seek help from a member of the older generation. We’ll get the hang of this eventually.

Sincerely,
Donna Smith, Editor in Chief

Lady Killer
Suheiry Feliciano

It is certainly not breast cancer. The number one killer of women is heart disease. In 2003, 267, 902 deaths among women were attributed to cancer with only 41, 566 of those deaths caused by breast cancer. That same year, deaths in women due to heart disease were nearly double the total of deaths due to cancer at 483,842.

Heart disease, generally perceived as a “man’s disease,” was the cause of death of 459,096 females, compared to 410,628 men in 2004. 38% of women who have heart attacks die within one year compared to 25% of men. More women than men die of stroke. Despite the serious threat that heart disease poses to women, according to the American Heart Association, only 13% of women in America believe that heart disease and stroke are the greatest health threat to women. Clearly there is a lack of knowledge and understanding among most women regarding their most deadly health threat. We may ask, what is being done to raise awareness?

The American Heart Association has founded the Go Red For Women movement, which educates women about the dangers of health disease through local and national events. On February 1st, 2008, thousands of women, companies, and organizations and cities across America wore red and made donations to the American Heart Association, to support ongoing research and education about women and heart disease.

Articles such as this one also help raise awareness by bringing it to the attention of readers, particularly young students, who can begin to take preventative measures at a young age. This in turn may, in the future, decrease deaths related to heart disease among women. Knowledge should ultimately lead to action.

Taking preventative measures now can help in the long run. These include eating healthy and nutritious foods from all of the food groups, getting at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week, not smoking or being around those who smoke, drinking in moderation, managing your weight and keeping your cholesterol down. You should also know your family health history, as your chances of heart disease increase if someone in your family suffers from heart disease.

For more information on heart disease in women and details on preventative measures, visit the American Heart Association website at americanheart.org.
PSU-WB Clubs

Twelve Clubs Unearthed on Campus

Donna Smith

Have our campus clubs turned into secret societies? For the freshmen and transfer students who join us each year, it may seem so. While incoming students are told that there are plenty of ways to get involved in clubs and activities on campus, finding these alleged groups and events can be tricky. Undercover investigators have recently discovered a dozen clubs that have been assembling in various places around campus, and are encouraging students to get involved.

Along with the number of student societies that were uncovered, it has also been found that several formerly-active clubs have recently moved into “inactive status”. Among these are the former Health Club, The Lazy Artist Society, the Students for Justice, and the Information Systems and Technology Club. The recent “lack of involvement” in these student organizations serves as evidence that student participation on our campus is diminishing.

Without participation there can be no clubs. Clubs provide opportunities such as trips, community service projects, and visiting speakers, not to mention a sense of camaraderie that comes with meeting others of like interest. Students are encouraged to take an active role in the remaining campus clubs, lest they too perish.

Here, for your convenience, we have revealed information about the not-so-secret societies and clubs meeting on campus. To join, just drop in on a club during their regular meeting times; admission is free and food is often provided. If you are interested in “reactivating” any of the “inactive” clubs or looking to start up a new club, see Jackie W-Piatt, Student Activities Coordinator, in Commons 129 for the “How To’s” or “New Club Process”. You can also email Jackie at (JackieWP@psu.edu).

Active Campus Clubs

The Collegian
(The Thursdays at 12:10 in the Writing Center, H 212) The Penn State Wilkes-Barre student newspaper effectively voices the opinions and interests of the PSW-B students. The Collegian helps to keep students in close touch with the campus by way of news items, sports, events, seminars, club activities, and more.

Business Club
(102) The Business Club offers the campus and community opportunities to attend on-campus lectures, off-campus seminars, and field trips to better help them after graduation in the business world. Meetings begin on March 5.

Lambda Sigma
(Mondays at 12:00 in T 19) This is the National Honor Society for Surveying majors. Membership is offered to sophomore, junior, and senior Surveying majors through election, based upon demonstrated academic achievement, leadership, and service. The Honor Society provides social events and professional lectures in surveying to the membership and their guests.

Radio Club
(Fridays at 12:00 in the Radio Club Room in the Commons) The Radio Club provides musical entertainment in the Student Commons, relates campus happenings, news and events, and offers their services to other student clubs/organizations to help make their events fun and entertaining.

4 Seasons
(Mondays at 12:05 in the ARB) The 4 Seasons Club does a variety of activities throughout the year, which include everything from skiing and camping, from mountain biking to canoeing.

Student Government Association
(Wednesdays at 12:10 in H 105) All Penn State Wilkes-Barre students are members of the SGA, the organization that represents students’ interests on campus. In addition to accurately communicating student concerns to the administration, the SGA has the following responsibilities:

1. It reviews new student organizations for recognition.
2. It allocates associated Student Activity Funds to registered clubs/organizations.
3. It coordinates the activities of all campus clubs/organizations.
4. It represents the campus at student conferences.

Students in good academic and social standing are eligible for election for Executive Board positions in the SGA.

Surveying Society
(Mondays at 12:00 in T 19) The Surveying Society provides students with exposure to the surveying profession through guest speakers, field trips, and attendance to state and national professional conferences.

Engineering Club
(Fridays at 12:00 in T 14 or 24) The Engineering Club provides speakers and lecturers to the campus community on various fields of engineering: civil, mechanical, and electrical to name a few.

Honor Society
(Fridays at 12:20 in H 105) The purpose of this organization is to provide co- and extra-curricular enrichment for selected members of the student body qualified on the basis of scholastic aptitude, test scores, and/or high school or college grade point average (GPA).

Local Environment Revolution
(Fridays at 12:15 in H 105) The purpose of this organization is to preserve and protect our local environment through community service projects, while also enjoying many outdoor activities; to create and promote environmental awareness among and between its members and the school community.

Lion Ambassadors
(Mondays at 12:30 in ARB 101) Members are trained as Campus tour guides and act as official student hosts and hostesses for the campus. Ambassadors assist in the details of various campus-sponsored events involving the community, like when community groups and organizations hold meetings on campus, banquets, or conferences.
Jeremy Murphy

Since the 1950s, the use of anabolic steroids and other illegal performance drugs has increased ten-fold throughout all levels of the sporting world. The FDA states, “Steroids are a synthetic version of the hormone called testosterone.” Testosterone is the main hormone for controlling the development of bones, muscles, and hair growth within the male body. The FDA reports, “The average adult male naturally produces 2.5 to 11 mg of testosterone daily.”

On the other hand, the average steroid abuser usually takes more than 100 mg daily. Although the effects of steroid use are well known among many athletic organizations throughout the world, the athletes demand for them has greatly increased. The demand for them has increased so much that the black market has been making over $100 million dollars a year in sales!

If you have been paying attention to newspaper headlines as of late, you have probably heard about the governmental inquiry into the use of steroids in Major League Baseball. As a result of this inquiry, the Mitchell Report was released stating that over 86 current and former MLB players had some connection to using steroids or other illegal substances during their baseball career. Players such as Roger Clemens, Barry Bonds, Miguel Tejada, and Andy Pettitte are among the list in The Mitchell Report. The Mitchell Report was the result of a year-long inquiry into steroid use within Major League Baseball. Many who have followed the proceedings of the inquiry, however, feel that the report is flawed because it has targeted players that have used steroids as a way of rehabilitation.

Along with the MLB steroid inquiry, there have been other issues of athletes being involved with illegal performance drugs over the past year. Olympic runner Marion Jones was sentenced to prison for six months because she lied to federal agents about using steroids. In the world of professional wrestling, two-time world champion Chris Benoit killed his wife and child possibly because of long-time steroid use. With all of these current issues surrounding the use of steroids, should the U.S. Government go deeper into its investigation of steroid use in sports?

The U.S. Government needs to take control of this steroid problem before it gets worse. There should be a national sports guideline on the use of illegal performance drugs in sports that would override all current guidelines in sports organizations. This national guideline should define what illegal performance drugs are and they should list all of them for easy access. With this, new steroid testing organizations will be able to modify their current policies on steroid use to fit the U.S. Government’s national guideline. There should also be stiffer penalties within this guideline that are more strict than current guidelines within sports organizations. These stiff penalties should include heavy fines that would be given to sports organizations that are unable to gain some control on the rising steroid problem. Along with the heavy fines, there should be a zero-tolerance policy that will bar any athlete for life who is caught using steroids for an unfair advantage.

This guideline shouldn’t just apply to professional sports, but also to college sports and high school level sports. Many sports enthusiasts state that because of certain guidelines within the NCAA and high school organizations such as the PIAA, a national guideline wouldn’t be possible due to the “wording” within the charters of these organizations. Those who deny the fact that illegal performance drugs are used in the world of scholastic sports need to come to terms with the fact that they live in a world where anything is possible.

Giving Back

Continued from Page 1

community. What better things to collect than books! As a campus newspaper club, it is our duty and privilege to encourage reading.”

Though collecting books was relatively easy, finding recipients for them wasn’t. Donna said “Believe it or not, I had a very hard time finding an organization who needed children’s books.” After contacting several places without any luck, Donna, after acting on a suggestion from Dr. Putzel, finally found an organization that would accept and enjoy the books we collected. The organization who needed children’s books was Twinkle Little Star,” and watched the children play a fun memory game. “That was probably the most meaningful part of the entire event for us,” said Donna.

Debbie Maskalis, a staff member at the Head Start center, said, “We try to expose [the children] to people in the community, and the organization loves to see the type of interaction we had with the kids. When asked if they would like to see us again, Maskalis said, “Sure—we welcome you.” Activities such as “volunteering in the classroom, reading to the children, and [taking] the children out into the community on ‘study trips’” are beneficial to the personal and educational growth of the children. Donna said, “We will probably continue to take the time to read to the children in the program, and I would personally like to see us have more hands-on interaction with the kids and be able to perhaps lead them in games or do other activities in which we would get to know them a little bit better.”

Though collecting books and reading to this group of preschoolers was an event intended simply to fulfill a requirement, the experience proved to be a much more significant one for everyone involved. The children were exposed to reading as a fun and interesting activity. Hopefully, they will retain this perspective as they grow older. The Collegian staff members experienced the unmatchable satisfaction of giving, and were transported back to a time when learning was fun.

VOTE!

Continued from Page 1

election, but while that may have been true in the 1800s, it certainly is not true any longer. Every single vote counts. Every opinion, every mind. Every single one of us. We count, and as a matter of fact, we’re the cream of the crop. We are the educated students of America. We will be the ones performing surgeries and writing books. We will be getting PhDs. We will be traveling the world and practicing law. We’ll be programming computers across the country. We will be surveying and building the rest of America.

It’s our time to take a stand. If we want health care, a retirement plan comparable to or better than those of the Baby Boom generation, and lower student loans with the help of more grants, then we need to vote. Would you ask for a raise at your dream job and then throw the money in the garbage once you got it? Probably not. However, that is what so many people are doing with their right to vote. Citizens fought long and hard for it, only to eventually have us spend more time and energy voting for American Idol than for the President of the United States. This year the Pennsylvania primaries will play a huge role in choosing the nominee of the Democratic Party.

In addition to choosing some names on that screen in the primaries this spring, go out and do a little research. Know who you’re voting for and what he or she stands for. Better yet, stand for something too. To vote in the primaries you must be a registered Democrat or Republican. You have until March 24 to register in time for the April 22 primaries.
We all know the feeling: the scratchy throat, the runny nose, the constant sneezing. It’s the cold season. Half of the campus has already had a sickness at the beginning of the year, nicknamed the “fresher flu.” Along with the everyday cold, there have been cases of bronchitis, laryngitis, and influenza. However, there are the select few of us that have yet to get sick. How do some people stay healthy? Many people have their own systems on how to keep healthy, and for everyone it’s different. Some methods are simple, others are quite tedious. But, hey! If it prevents you from missing another one of Mr. Bachman’s morning classes because your nose is stuffed up so much that you can’t breathe, I’m sure he wouldn’t mind if you follow one of your own routines as well.

We’ve all been told when we were younger that it is important to consume a sufficient amount of vitamin C. Now that we’re all a little bit older, we are able to understand why. Especially at a college setting, where stress appears to be the norm in our daily lives, one’s immune system is compromised even more. Vitamin C helps revitalize and strengthen your immune system. Also, vitamin C comes from foods like chicken, orange juice, and something like Gatorade or Vitamin Water. All of those will aid the immune system.

We all know that in order to keep away from colds, it is important to consume a sufficient amount of vitamin C. Now that we’re all a little bit older, we are able to understand why. Especially at a college setting, where stress appears to be the norm in our daily lives, one’s immune system is compromised even more. Vitamin C helps revitalize and strengthen your immune system. Also, vitamin C comes from foods like chicken, orange juice, and something like Gatorade or Vitamin Water. All of those will aid the immune system.

Another simple way to keep from getting sick is drinking enough fluids. Liquids flush out your system. Therefore, if you do happen to feel sick at any point, drinking water will help boost your immune system to get rid of the bad bacteria in your body. It’s suggested that the drink be something natural or something containing vitamins. My top-rated drinks for flushing out our systems would be the never-fail option of water, orange juice, and something like Gatorade or Vitamin Water. All of those will aid the immune system.

We all know that in order to keep a clean and healthy lifestyle, we must always wash our hands. There are millions of germs on almost every surface that lay waiting for an unsuspecting victim. In order to ensure your health, simply washing your hands can help in a huge way. We, as a people, continue to put our hands to and around our face, carrying bacteria that could make us sick. By being conscious of what we do with our hands, the probability of catching a cold will become slimmer.

If you do happen to catch a cold this semester, one of the main things that people forget will help them is relaxing. Stress only makes a cold stay longer, as opposed to getting it out of the system. Green tea, a bowl of chicken noodle soup, and warm slippers should do the trick for a few days.

The “sniffles” season is far from over. However, there are ways to avoid sickness and colds just by being aware of certain surroundings, and keeping clean. I’m sure Mr. Bachman would appreciate it, as well as the rest of your professors.
I
The phone rings, a couple breathes silence the fear, and her voice deepens then fades. Perhaps there's nothing left to say since hello, goodbye is easier said then done. She had dreams though and you weren't a part of them. I watch her there on the pine-green sofa stealing the last bit of your confidence. People won't ever return what they've taken away. Years ago she was a child running up and down the sidewalk, giggling loudly and playing hopscotch. She closes her eyes to escape the day, to find someone better, to remember a time that was greater but she was all she had left.

II
Thunder shook loudly in the hollowness of my bones—I feel life all around me—I felt an stop, go, reverse, and finally take it's course. The city fountains crashed into their lighted pools, cars hurried, restaurants and bars screamed with people. This particular moment was like a scene in some weird movie that I had been starring in. I felt foreign and rants and bars screamed with people. This particular moment was like a scene in some weird movie that I had been starring in. I felt foreign

...
**I Am Legend**

Rob Winkler

At the risk of sounding like a cliché, the review of this movie must be prefaced with: "The book was better." While the movie was quite enjoyable, it did not have the same atmosphere as Richard Matheson’s 1954 classic of the same name.

The story centers almost entirely around the protagonist, Robert Neville, who appears to be the only survivor of a pandemic man-made virus. Robert Neville is a virologist and Lieutenant Colonel in the Military, with a brooding determination to find a cure for the disease.

Sufferers of the virus do not die. They lose their hair and all color in their skin, and have an intense aversion to light, especially sunlight. These "dark seekers" exhibit extreme aggression and are very reminiscent of the classic vampires.

The best scenes of the movie show Neville (played by Will Smith) during his daily grind of foraging for food, researching the virus, hunting, talking to mannequins, and traveling around a barren New York City. These scenes truly capture Matheson’s aura of apocalypse and isolation, and also allow Smith to shine with his acting. The later moments of the film, which I do not want to spoil, are well done and entertaining but marred by a little too much Hollywood influence.

"I am Legend" is the third film adaptation of Matheson’s short story, and by far the best. The book has an intense aversion to light, especially sunlight. That should get you through it.

**Cloverfield**

Jeremy Murphy

I have never been a big fan of monster movies. I have always found them to be too tacky and too farfetched. But, after seeing Cloverfield, I have gained a new level of respect for the monster movie genre. It isn’t your ordinary monster movie because it doesn’t use cheap animation and bad acting to bring across the story. The reason why this film is different from your usual monster movie is because it was filmed using an ordinary DV video camera that you could buy in any electronics store. Because of this "shaky camera work", the film comes across to the viewer as an actual event that took place in New York City.

The film follows five friends who throw a party for their best friend Rob (Michael Stahl-David), who is going to be moving to Japan to start a new job. Before the party starts, Rob’s brother Jason (Mike Vogel) is given the task of videotaping all of the final goodbyes for Rob from his girlfriend Lilly (Jessica Lucas), but Jason doesn’t feel comfortable with the task, so he gives it to Hud (T. J. Miller). Hud takes on the task of videotaping, but he is more worried about wooing Marlena (Lizzy Caplan), on whom he has a huge crush.

As the party begins to die down, the city is hit with a sudden earthquake that causes the people at the party to go up on the top of their apartment building to investigate. While they are on top of the roof, a huge explosion is viewed from the center of Manhattan, along with a primeval roar that causes the people to flee to the street. As they come onto the street, another explosion occurs and the head of the Statue of Liberty falls onto the street. For the rest of the film, the audience witnesses through the lens of Hud’s DV video camera the attack of the Cloverfield Monster on Manhattan and how it effects the lives of the five young New Yorkers.

I personally found the movie to be a cinematic masterpiece. I say that it’s a masterpiece because it gives the viewer a feeling of "true fear" by experiencing the Cloverfield Monster’s attack on Manhattan through the lens of a video camera. Anyone who goes to see this film needs to watch it as if it was an event that has actually happened. If you try to look beyond the movie by asking complex questions to comfort your reasoning, you won’t enjoy it. If you are able to see it with an open mind, and make yourself believe that the event did happen, you will love the movie. Cloverfield will have you on the edge of your seat and will leave you begging for more.

**27 Dresses**

Rob Winkler

Seeing that this is the Valentine’s Day issue of the Collegian, it’s only fitting that I include a review of a romantic comedy. While this genre is not one of my favorites, I have a girlfriend, and after forcing her to go see my crush, mindless, and occasionally violent movies, I figured she deserved a turn to pick out the film. She picked “27 Dresses”, a film starring Katherine Heigl as Jane and James Marsden as Kevin, and we caught the sneak peak at Cinemark.

I am going to try something new here. I will write a review from two perspectives: one for guys and one for girls, mostly to protect my masculinity.

For Girls: Katherine Heigl plays the overly-neurotic and non-confrontational Jane, the perpetual bridesmaid who has never said “No” to anyone in her life. She loves weddings, everything about them, and is sought after by her friends to help plan their weddings where she always ends up doing everything. She pines for her boss George (played by Edward Burns), who is totally oblivious to her feelings for him. She eventually meets Kevin, whose vocalized hatred for weddings initially earns her ire. Kevin paradoxically writes a wedding column for a newspaper under the pseudonym “Malcolm.” What’s even more ironic is that Jane is obsessed with, and collects, all of his columns. To Jane’s chagrin, George falls for her sister while she comes in to New York to visit, and shortly after they are engaged. Now, she has to plan her sister’s wedding to the man she is in love with, while Kevin is secretly writing a story about her and her 27 dresses. I’ll leave the rest of the movie to your imagination (or viewing), although there are not really any surprises or twists in the plot. It’s an interesting tale with a pretty solid cast, especially Heigl and Marsden. They have good chemistry on-screen, and it shows in one particular scene that everyone in the theater should enjoy.

For Guys: If you absolutely, positively, with- out a doubt cannot stand “chick-flicks,” this movie is not for you. It is a quintessential chick-flick in almost every respect. That said, if you have an open mind about film (or no choice in the matter), I feel it is my duty, as a survivor, to point out some things in this film that you will find enjoyable. One, unexpectedly good element of this movie is James Marsden’s character. He’s calm, confident, spontaneous, and...well...funny. He avoids most of the overly-clichéd "bad-boy" and "perfect man" stereotypes that are so painfully prevalent in most chick-flicks and is just a normal guy, one you can almost relate to, but with a wit so quick it had to be written in a script. His chemistry with Heigl is notable, especially in one particular scene that takes Elton John’s “Bennie and the Jets” to hilarious new heights. Heigl is also solid, as she suc- cessfully plays the neurotic, tightly-wound Jane who cannot seem to get a grip on her life. Her inability to open up and speak her mind often leads to funny con- sequences, and it provides something to relate to, be- cause I think we’ve all been in that position. My final advice is that if you still find yourself going to a good time at this movie, remember that James Mars- den played Cyclops in the X-Men movies. So, every time he opens his eyes, imagine him as Cyclops blasting something. That should get you through it.
An Unforgettable Experience

Kristen Durso

I’m baaaack! For some of you who don’t know, I have just returned from a wonderful study abroad trip to England. Being abroad has changed me, not only as a student, but as an individual. Before I left for Europe, I was a young woman yearning for an adventure and wanting to experience a piece of the world. Now that I have had that experience, I have noticed that I feel more independent, more open-minded, and more understanding of others. What my opinions once were have changed from exploring and experiencing the world. I remember traveling over to Europe thinking, as most Americans do, that there may be some animosity toward Americans that I would encounter while traveling to different countries in Europe. The truth was the people in most of the places I traveled to were quite welcoming. It is easy to judge other people, but once you have immersed yourself in different cultures and different languages you learn a bit about who you are as a person and a lot about your own culture.

Some people may ask, “what can I gain from studying abroad?” Studying abroad and being at the “Uni” connected me with people from all around the world. I met fellow students from France, China, and Germany. The language and cultural differences were amazing to me. There were times when I would stop to just hear a conversation between two Italians or two Parisians. The different languages were so sweet-sounding to the ear. Learning in a classroom is very important, don’t get me wrong, I did learn a lot while in England, but to go to a different country and see how that country lives from the food they eat, to the language they speak is more of a learning experience than you could get in a classroom. You learn to appreciate other people and their culture, but also to appreciate your own. The relationships that you make while studying abroad are gifts that cannot be taken away from you.

Many ask me if leaving England was difficult for me. The answer is, yes, leaving was very difficult for me. I did miss my family and friends, but there was something so right about being in England. I left a part of myself behind. I miss eating unusual foods like fried mars bars or “haggis” (a popular food of Scotland) and I miss hopping on a plane, unplanned, to Ireland or Italy. I miss all of the people I met and friends I traveled with. I miss the diversity. Being back in the Wyoming Valley has been an adjustment. Sometimes, the world seems smaller for me being here. I have seen a bit of the world which makes my perspective on life bigger than before I left. Studying abroad was the best thing that ever happened in my life. Studying abroad really does change you.