After a long and remarkable career, Mr. Kenneth Fisher, Instructor in English at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, will be retiring at the end of the semester. “All of us have a clock inside, a voice that says, ‘Hey, it’s time to move on,’” he says. Fisher has been at Penn State for 11 years, but his career has spanned over 40 years, taking him from teaching high school, to running a freelance consulting business that led him around the world, to teaching at the university level.

Fisher received his Bachelor’s degree from King’s College and his Master’s from Fordham University. He studied for his Ph D. at SUNY Binghamton, which is now Binghamton University, but did not receive it.

Fisher met the woman who later became his wife in high school. She was the best friend of the girl he was dating at the time. After he graduated university, he met her again one evening in downtown Wilkes-Barre. They began to date and were married in 1960. “She’s my buddy,” says Fisher. “We’re not just husband and wife; we’re good friends.” Together they raised four children.

Fisher began his career as a teacher in New Jersey where he taught junior and senior high school, from 1955-66. Then he took a job in the English department at College Misericordia. Fisher was there for a total of 12 years. He served as chair of the department for the last nine years.

While at Misericordia, Fisher did part-time work as a freelance consultant and a trainer in business writing and speech for business and government agencies. When the opportunity arose to pursue this work full-time, Fisher took it and left Misericordia. Between 1978 and 1998, Fisher worked full-time with major accounting firms, including Cooper and Lybrandt, and insurance companies, such as Marshall and Clemens. He also spent four years with Dun and Bradstreet doing workshops for them around the country, sometimes visiting four cities in one week.

Fisher has traveled all around the country visiting at least one city in 46 states. He has traveled as far as Amman, Jordan, where he ran workshops. He has taught many students over the years, but he has learned much as well. “Learning is a contact sport,” he affirms. “I think the more contact we make the better we’re going to be.”

The song ‘The Song of Wandering Fisher’ took him to a village outside the city where he was running his workshops. The men that were with Fisher entered the restaurant to inquire if Fisher could dine there. A village elder agreed and Fisher was seated. He enjoyed some genuine Jordanian food, drink and conversation. Fisher assures that he was never concerned for his safety, but admits to having a strange experience upon arriving at the airport. “It was eerie getting off the plane and, instead of seeing uniformed airline attendants, there were military officers.” Security was tight because his visit occurred six months after the Pan Am Flight 103 incident in 1988.

Despite the excitement of visiting so many different cities, Fisher grew tired with the constant traveling. “People think that business travel is romantic. It’s not romantic. It’s airport, taxi, cab, hotel, restaurant, office, hotel, airport,” Fisher said. Fortunately, business began to wind down, and he was offered a position as a part-time writing tutor and part-time English instructor at PSWB in 1998. Once he was hired, he continued his freelance work part-time, but stopped a few years later.

Fisher favors his teaching jobs most of all. He especially enjoys the interaction with all the students. “Learning is a contact sport,” he affirms. “I think the more contact we make the better we’re going to be.” He likes when students participate in class and especially enjoys students who argue.

Fisher has been interested in how it affects people’s lives,” explains Fisher. This and Religion in Literature are his two favorite courses.

With his retirement approaching quickly, Fisher is already dreaming of ways to spend his free time. “I’ll travel, maybe golf a lot, I hope, read things I couldn’t read before. I like films so I’ll be watching a lot of films.” He wants to visit his eldest son, who lives in the Netherlands, as well as his other children who live in various parts of the U.S. “Maybe I’ll do some writing.” He pauses. “My big handicap is sloth,” he finishes, chuckling.

Fisher has traveled all around the country visiting at least one city in 46 states.
My Fellow Penn Staters,

Penn State University is making me a graduate. They do that when all the little plus-signs show up on your degree audit. Those little buggers are code for, “Adios, amiga.” So I guess this is the last time I’ll get to write to you like this, as your ever-faithful editor-in-chief. (Grab those scissors, folks, this is a clip-and-save note if you’re among the sentimental of the world.) You know, I’ve written to you at length about such things as getting a new Collegian email address and dropping my cell phone in a toilet, but somehow I’m drawing a blank as I attempt to write my final thoughts to the campus. I do occasionally have a difficult time condensing my thoughts into words. It’s like the transition of fog into ice, where something hazy and abstract becomes concrete and suddenly seems so pithy. The verbalization process has a way of turning deep thoughts into shallow statements. I’ve got grandiose farewells floating around in my head for the faculty who have unearthed and developed my best qualities and have become my mentors and role models. I’m eager to express my appreciation for the campus staff who have not only made my past four years run smoothly but have befriended me on so many different levels and made the whole experience fun. I want to wish my fellow graduates the best of luck as they transition into the next big phase of their lives, and I want to tell my classmates how great it was to have their company in the classroom, library, Student Commons, cafeteria, and often even outside of school. I want to thank the members of the Collegian for giving me what was probably my best experience on this campus. I want to give a shout-out to the “other side” of campus, with all those surveyors and computer people who will probably never pick up this paper and see this little hello and goodbye. I want to apologize to Marcia Nelson for answering my cell phone in the library. In my head, these all sound like great ideas worth expressing – the thoughts are so passionate and eloquent in my mind – but somewhere in the transition from my brain to the keyboard to the page, the thoughts are turning into cliché, predictable, greeting-card blurbs. How do you sign out from a community that has become a part of you and you a part of it? Words are inadequate (…says the English major and editor-in-chief).

If I had final advice, I would dispense it at this point. But I have none, nor would you take it seriously if I did, because who, after all, takes away life-changing lessons from the campus newspaper editor? I’m just a twenty-one-year-old student, learning the same things you are as I go along, making both mistakes and discoveries at the same time and not necessarily knowing the difference between the two. I don’t have life lessons to dispense, because I’m still stuck in the middle of them. Talk to the faculty and staff if you want to hear sanity and some degree of wisdom; I’m just a kid with a blank page in the Collegian to fill, and all I’ve got is jumbled-up madness to share – half-learned lessons and poorly-interpreted observations about life and Penn State Wilkes-Barre. Ever had an idea that you knew was incorrect but seemed to make so much sense? Ever walk around with opinions that you knew were crazy but that you clung to because you could somehow defend them? This past year I learned both how to deal with loss and how to ignore loss, and I still don’t know which is the better approach but denial seems safer. I learned that everything is not necessarily going to be okay but we all pretend that it will be, and I’m still not sure why. I learned that there are two things to strive for in any given college course – learning something, and getting a good grade – and you can do one without the other, but getting the good grade seems to be more important and less fun. I learned that people have good arguments for and against each religion, and since we can’t figure out which is true we base our decision on what feels good, and that doesn’t seem right to me. So, you see, I’m not really in a position to spout out wisdom. (All this time you’ve been reading letters from a fool!) I’m just trying to figure things out, and maybe I’ll come back when I’ve arrived at conclusions and write to you again as a great guru and not as a confused student editor. But for right now I’m just thinking, reflecting, and questioning, and I can’t even leave all I can really say is “thank you, and goodbye.” Thanks for letting me call myself an editor. Thanks for giving me an outlet for my thoughts and opinions for three years. And thanks for actually reading. Thank you, Penn State Wilkes-Barre staff, for being my favorite audience; although I tend to address the student body in my writing, I have always written primarily with you in mind. Thank you, Penn State Wilkes-Barre faculty, for making a writer out of me, and for convincing me that I shouldn’t be embarrassed by what I have to say. Thank you, Penn State Wilkes-Barre students, for at least being aware that your campus has a newspaper; maybe someday you’ll pick it up and read it. Thank you, Collegian team, for giving me fantastic material to read and edit for three years, comedic meetings every Tuesday and Thursday, and memories worth hanging onto for life. Thank you, Dr. Putzel, for breathing life back into the Collegian and stepping beyond the roles of “professor” and “club advisor” to become a mentor and role model for so many, especially me. You taught us so much during those meetings, and we even learned a little about newspapers. My final letter may not have brilliant advice or flowery farewells – in fact, I’m pretty sure it doesn’t even have a point – but there’s a space here in the Collegian for it, and that only exists because of all of you, and you are the ones who made me your editor and gave me this opportunity, so for one last time I shall fill this space for you to the best of my ability, with a message that can sadly be summed up in a single sentence: Thanks, and goodbye.

Sincerely,

Donna Smith
Editor-in-Chief

The Collegian Staff

Matthew Bisconti
Hollie Browning
Jeremy Burgess
Chad Dewing
Brian Dowd
Suheiry Feliciano
Melissa Gunshannon
Terrysha Lewis
Raven Little
Michelle Llewellyn
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Amanda Nolan
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Genevieve Ricca
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Hali Sanders
Donna Smith
Roger Sporre
Desiree Thorne
Dr. Steven Putzel

The Penn State Wilkes-Barre Collegian
Brian Dowd

Since the Fall semester of ’08, the Lazy Artist Surviving Society has gone through a number of changes. Since the renaming of the club from Lazy Artists to Lazy Artist Surviving Society (a renaming that no one in the club has really taken notice of), the club has held several successful Open Mic’s, gone through a power coup d’etat, and annexed their influence to the Radio Club. Perhaps the most successful accomplishment and most noticeable is the revamping of the Radio Room in the Student Commons.

If you happened to walk through the Student Commons this semester, you no doubt passed by the small booth that is the Radio Room. With a “Disc Jockey” at a computer, the Radio Room is almost always providing music to students enjoying a game of pool, volleying back and forth on table tennis, or filling one another with virtual lead in Call of Duty 4 or Vegas 2 on the X Box 360. Even students relaxing on a smoke break can listen to the music outside of the Commons by way of the exterior speakers.

If you have ever gone up to request a song, you have noticed some excellent art painted inside the booth. This reporter can recall that, like the music, the art was not always there. (Description of old look w/ graffiti)

Now, thanks to the artistic skills of artists like Keith Hizny, Seth Cepheolo, and muralist Ashley Fedack, and a little bit of coordination of now Lazy Artist President AJ Race, the room looks and sounds better than ever.

The room, however, is not without problems in the refurbishing process and remains incomplete, according to Courtney Pieszala, painter of the “Penn State Globe.” Pieszala is frustrated with the lack of participation in the student population with her “Penn State Globe.” The Globe remains a work in progress because of the need for more students to be painted en-circling it. There is a charge creating an avatar, $5 for a self portrait and $8 for a professional portrait, a fee that Pieszala thinks is reasonable and is needed to fund further refurbishment, plus you can leave your permanent mark on the campus. If you do not want to pony up 5 or 8 bucks, you can still put your name up on the wall for a small payment of 2 dollars.

*Needed still for article* AJ Race Comments Pictures of artwork.

Briana Mitchell

Many of us think of the Student Commons as the place with the cafeteria. Or the place with the bookstore. Or even the building where music is played for the campus to hear. But recently, the Student Commons has come into a new light, with a few additions already made and many renovations yet to come.

New additions to the Student Commons have included features ranging from the new billiards table to two flat-screen televisions to the facility’s new extended hours. The SAF (Student Activities Fee) Committee just recently hired three student workers for the Commons to oversee the building until about 9:15 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students from the Nittany Woodland Commons have even shown their support of the new Commons hours by coming down to shoot a few games of pool and rock out on Guitar Hero. Jackie Warnick-Piatt, Penn State Wilkes-Barre Student Activities Coordinator, might be the most ecstatic about the sudden attraction the Commons is getting, and the physical renovations that haven’t even happened yet. When asked about the new renovations done to the Commons, Warnick-Piatt exclaimed, “Well, the renovations have not even started yet. Yes, we have a new flat-screen TV and a new billiards table, but the real renovations will be done over the summer: new flooring, new ceiling tiles, new FURNITURE! That is probably what I am most excited about – the overall new look and new, comfortable furniture for our students.”

The new additions have created a new atmosphere that ultimately welcomes students in the student experience has become enhanced like that of a larger campus. “The pool table has had nonstop usage since it was delivered over spring break. This is so exciting!” said Warnick-Piatt. However, there are still some kinks to work out. “We still have a couple of details to work out – being sure individuals sign out the pool cues and billiards, just as they would sign out basketballs or racquetball equipment in the ARB Gym, and attempting to be sure everyone who wants to play gets to play, [through] some sort of time frame sign-out.”

All in all, the Student Commons has become the new hotspot. Call your friends and come on down to the Commons to have fun-filled, free night!

Hours:
Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Saturday: 12:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Andrew Race

On the weekend of April 24, 25, and 26 the Honor Society hosted a trip to Boston for the weekend to tour an array of historical sites and just to have a good time. Participants visited Walden Pond, Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, the Orchard House, and the Emerson House in Concord. In Boston, the group toured the USS Constitution. There was also some free time for the students to follow the Freedom Trail and to see the Paul Revere House, the North Church, the Boston Market, and Faneuil Hall. On the way home, the students stopped at Sturbridge Village for a tour before coming home.

Honor Society Vice President Hanade (Hannah) Abualburak said, “This trip was just a great idea! It was a great educational opportunity and just a fun time. Also, it got us all away from the area for a weekend of relaxation before finals. I could not wait for that weekend!”

Club advisors Dr. Jumpeter and Dr. Stefon ran the trip along with Mr. Bachman. It was funded by the Student Activity Fee.

Terrysha Lewis

This year the Nittany Woodland Commons is under new management. With the new management have come new renovations – new furniture, carpeting, tile floors, appliances, and more. In each apartment there are three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The location of the Nittany Woodland Commons is very convenient, considering the buildings are adjacent to the campus. There are currently two apartment buildings – one named Oak and another by the name of Hemlock. For this upcoming fall there is news of a new apartment building in the works, to be named Aspen. This building will only have single rooms. Many students from the Nittany Commons are interested in moving into the new Aspens building. As of now, there is not much information available concerning the Aspen building. Pricing on the apartments will be raised in the upcoming semester, but is still very affordable. Aside from rent, residents of each apartment are responsible for paying electric, cable, and internet which are also set at affordable prices.
Suheiry Feliciano

As a part-time retail sales associate, I encounter all sorts of discourteous behavior from customers, from subtle sarcasm to outright disrespect. Of course, none of this treatment could possibly be due to my race or ethnicity. After all, we’ve just elected a black president!

A short time ago, I had a dispute with a customer regarding a company policy. I called a manager so that the customer could present her concern to someone who might actually be able to do something about it. The customer became impatient; first she said I must be new; then her daughter, using an Anglo-Saxon word, suggested that I was a female dog. Finally, the first woman said: “It’s because you’re a foreigner.”

“Excuse me? Did you just say it’s because I’m a foreigner?” I asked in disbelief.

“Yes.”

“I was born here.”

“That doesn’t matter, you’re still a foreigner. You and your parents need to go back to where you came from.”

For years I’ve argued with my Puerto Rican family and other minority friends, telling them that, no, it is not likely that the ill treatment they receive is due to race, but that such treatment is likely due to something they have said or done. When white friends comment about the supposed “chip” on the shoulders of minorities, I’ve agreed and said that while I’m sure minorities experience racism, it’s not as common as they make it out to be. I’ve purposely distanced myself from militant minorities. I just didn’t think militancy was necessary. I often check “other” for race or ethnicity and am wary of affirmative action. Don’t affirmative action laws just serve to emphasize our differences? If minorities obsess over race, doesn’t it mean they see themselves as unequal? Aren’t we buying into it when we participate in affirmative action, which, though intended to put minorities on an equal platform with whites, often gives unfair advantages?

Don’t get me wrong. I’m not blind or naïve. It’s not lost on me when somebody observes that I’m wearing a ponytail and bangs, and says, “How Latina!” Or when questions about my culture become excessive. Or when someone assumes I like spicy foods and dance salsa. Or when somebody makes some snide comment about the hyper-sexuality and inclination to multiply of Hispanics. Or when people assume I am here illegally when they hear a very slight accent when I speak. When these things happen I just fume silently but get over it quickly.

Aren’t all men created equal? Didn’t the apostle Paul tell the Christians at Corinth that all people are equal regardless of race, class, or gender? Didn’t we abolish slavery and upturn segregation laws? And yet racism and verbal and physical abuse against minorities are not uncommon. Some may deny it, but just because one hasn’t experienced or doesn’t believe something doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. The cruel truth is that too many people are racists. Too many people think less of others because their skin is a different color. Too many people treat others differently when they hear an accent. It is unacceptable, unlawful, and immoral. The worst thing is some people don’t even know they are racist or show prejudice against other ethnicities. Have you ever assumed the cashier with the Spanish accent is “easy”? Have you ever gotten nervous as you walked past a black man? Have you ever assumed the white bank clerk was racist? At some point we all prejudge someone based on one thing or another. At some point you have judged me, or someone like me, because of my dark curly hair, dark eyes, and tan skin. At some point I have judged someone like you, and it simply should not have happened.
Okay, I understand it’s getting hot and flip flops are basically the only things anyone wants to wear, but do you have to go into Old Navy and buy all the colors? I mean, don’t feel bad, it’s not just you. My sister does it too, and I hate it. It’s like you can’t have fun spicing up your outfits in the summer because everyone is going to expect that you’re wearing those blue, black, yellow, green, purple, etc. flip flops. Old Navy flip flops are okay for the beach, but once you go into Old Navy and buy every color, it’s just tacky. You should step up your style. Go to Payless or Target (I’m sure they’re the same price, and there’s nothing wrong with Payless), and buy some nice sandals that accent your eyes or go with an outfit you just bought or are going to buy. Spoil yourself a little; you only live once, and I think everybody deserves the best when it comes to clothing. Clothes just make you feel good inside and out. Just let Old Navy go... that was so last season. Not only do I hate Old Navy flip flops, but here’s another thing; everybody is pretty in their own way, but when it comes down to makeup, I think some people around campus (and I’m not going to point any fingers) wear a little, okay, way too much good. You can’t. While we’re on the topic of divo... you just bought or are going to buy. Spoil yourself a little; you only live once, and I think everybody deserves the best when it comes to clothing. Clothes just make you feel good inside and out. Just let Old Navy go... that was so last season.

Girls: It’s 2009. It’s okay to wear a purple shirt and turquoise jeans, but only if you’re rocking them right. Oh, and summer is coming, so just remember this: YOU DO NOT WEAR UGGS WITH SKIRTS. It’s just tacky and it makes you look like you’re confused about the weather. It’s a big no-no in my book (no, really, I’m writing a book). Just because you see it on The Hills doesn’t mean it’s right for you to wear. They can do it and look good. You can’t. While on the topic of Uggs, I want to say that leggings are the worst re-trend thing that has happened to American girls. Some things our parents wore in their days should stay in their days. Okay, if I go to the club one more time and see a girl wearing her boyfriend’s T-shirt and some leggings, I’m going to shoot myself. I have one word for that: Tacky.

From me to you, I’ll let you in on a little secret: BIG SUN GLASSES ARE IN! Not only for the summer, but all year round. Big sunglasses just give that extra boost of confidence when you walk too much makeup. Makeup was made to go to the nearest Walgreens and buy the biggest shades you can find. NO. Because if your friends don’t tell you how ridiculously bad you look, come find me around campus, I’ll tell you. You have to go out and find some shades that really fit your face. Go to the mall and try on every pair they have. I’m telling you, when you find them, you’ll never put them down. Just bring out your inner diva (or divo).

While on the topic of divo... Guys: it’s just mean you’re ‘guy’ if you like to get your eyebrows done, or wear fitted jeans, or if you like to look better than your girlfriend when you go out. It just means you care about your appearance and like looking fresh, as I would say, and you should. So go out and buy that shirt from Express or the Bon-Ton, and those jeans from Abercrombie or Hollister. Live a little. Another big trend is that’s in for the summer is hair. It’s time to grab the mousse and go crazy. Kidding! But big hair is in, and it’s time to change up your look. I’m not saying you have to go as big as mine, but you should try switching up your hairstyle from time to time. I know you get tired of pony tails, because I’m tired of seeing them. Change it up a bit!

Some girls around here really need to pick a magazine, and I’m not talking about Cosmo or Oprah. NO! You can’t get a fashion sense from Oprah, and it’s summer, so reading Cosmo for relationship advice is over. Either he wants you or he doesn’t. Get over it. What you need to do is go to the closest store and grab an ELLE or Glamour magazine and try something new. Take some tips, because, trust me, you need them.

You don’t have to have Coach, Prada, Chanel, or Gucci to look nice (although it might help... kidding). But you can go to Target or Wal-Mart and find a nice outfit, shoes, and jewelry. You need to read the magazines and look at the pictures to learn how to put them together. I’m a name-brand girl myself, but I go to Target sometimes (I love their shades). Being on this campus, I have never seen so many girls that don’t care about what they have on. I mean, I understand we’re in college and you’re broke, living off your parents, and working hard to pay for school, but geez! You have to have some nice clothes somewhere in that closet of yours. At least get dressed three times out of the week, because you never know who’s looking at you. I’m not talking about all girls, because a couple of girls I have seen around are a little fierce with their clothes and makeup. Many may think (although I don’t care what you think), “What does she know? But I’ve been into fashion since the day my mother brought me the black and pink dress from Banana Republic (the Wal-Mart of the time) when I was 10. Thanks, mom, for turning me into a fashionista!

Photography by Raven Little

The Academic Commons: A Work in Progress

Desiree Thorne

If you have been in the library recently, you have probably noticed that it feels strikingly equivalent to being in a large, library-sized tent. Outside the door, there is a sign asking that you avoid construction areas, for your personal safety. There has been drilling and hammering going on almost nonstop in there, for months. Due to a chemical reaction taking place between the inside and outside layers on installation, the Academic Commons building is being renovated much, much sooner than anticipated.

For a few days earlier this semester, the building was closed altogether, and classes usually held inside, were moved to other locations. Other inconveniences have occurred such as the women’s bathroom being closed for over a week, and who can forget that odor you can not miss upon entering the building? While it appears that the construction on the Academic Commons is a costly one, the team who made it happen used worthy materials in order to make it a great place for students and faculty to enjoy. And while the biggest buzz word right now is undoubtedly “green,” it must be noted that the Academic Commons is a highly “green” building in many categories. Its lavatory facilities have special handles which do not support the wasting of water. And the installation was originally meant to be a greener alternative in using fewer resources to create heat, inside the building.

The construction is expected to last a while longer, into the summer semester, but luckily the Academic Commons building is still accessible in many ways. The library has remained open during most of the process. Also, the Cyber Café has been open on weekdays so that you can still enjoy that mid-afternoon snack.

Why’s In for Summer ‘09 and What Trends You Need to Lose

Raven Little

Care Net, the largest network of pregnancy centers in North America, hopes to open a crisis pregnancy center in Scranton in August or September of this year.

Care Net serves over 350,000 women per year at its 1,100 locations. Their purpose is to provide help to women with unplanned pregnancies by providing them with option counseling, which offers alternatives to abortion such as adoption and parenting classes. Care Net also helps men and women who have been affected by abortion and who are still dealing with the trauma.

Plans to build and establish in Scranton arose in 2008, after Care Net received several calls from women in Lackawanna County who were looking for help but could not travel to the nearest location in Montrose. Tammy Johnson, who will be Center Director in Scranton, relates the story of a Cambodian woman. “She called to request information and she just started crying,” Johnson said. “She told us she wished she called us first. She ended up going to someone in Scranton and they helped her get an abortion. Had she known about us, we’d come to us and been provided with other options.”

In order to open in Scranton, Care Net needs to raise $15,000. So far more than $8,000 has been raised. Current fundraising projects include “Baby Baby,” which pairs two new parents with one another, and “Subs for Change,” and fundraising banquetes, the next of which will take place on June 4. A silent auction will be held before dinner, the proceeds of which will go entirely to establishing the Scranton center. For more information about the Care Net and the banquet, please call Tammy Johnson at 570-470-1702.
Knowing

Chad Dewing

If only we knew what the future held for us. Everyone, on one occasion or another, has thought this to themselves, but do people really want to know? The movie Knowing is all about what is going to happen. Nicolas Cage plays John Koestler, a professor of quantum physics who is also a single parent after his wife died. One day, the local school that his son goes to decides to open its time capsule that has been buried for 50 years, and give out the contents to the children to open and look at. Koestler’s son Caleb (Chandler Canterbury) ends up getting a letter of nothing but numbers and takes it home with him. Later Koestler (Cage) finds out that there is something more to this innocent paper than first meets the eye.

This movie will definitely keep you on your feet. A way to describe this movie, in a family-oriented manner, is that the “focal matter keeps hitting the rotating oscillator.” That’s right – every five minutes it hits again with a new revelation. The whole story keeps getting bigger and bigger until it can’t get bigger anymore. This is definitely a film that will keep you on the edge of your seat, and trust me, although it’s a cliché, I don’t use that phrase lightly. You will be saying, “Oh, crap!” or “Oh, snap!” (based on your preference) every 10 to 15 minutes. I think I’m going give Knowing three and a half flaming balls of fire out of five.

An English Major's Shot at: The Twilight Series

Sarah Ferrier

Let me start this little "roast" by saying that I by no means intend to insult anyone, nor do I mean for anyone to feel the same as me when reading it. This is a simple review that has become a rant. You have been warned.

The first time I heard about the Twilight books, I saw them on the bookshelves together. They looked so odd to me – all black with a red object. They sparked my interest, but I had no idea what they were about and I had no intention of buying them.

The reason I decided to read these books was because I had seen the movie. This is one of those rare cases where the movie is ten times better than the books. I know, I didn’t think it was possible either.

I guess the best place to start the roast is by pointing out the way the book is written. It seems so generic to me. Myself being an English major’s arch-nemesis. "Awwww, a nice happy ending..." Really? How about the character Bella herself? She is a vampire and is old enough to understand big words, but they are not necessary. We as readers, you randomly come across a word that you might not know. What are these big, PSSA words doing in my Young Adult book? The books flow smoothly and are easy to read until you hit one of these biters.

As you read the Twilight series, most likely for simple enjoyment and not for educational purposes, you randomly come across a word that you might not know. What are these big words in normal conversation. How about the character Bella herself? Have you ever read about a more annoying girl in your life? She is so overly emotional, pessimistic, and clingy. This character would have been better if she had more backbone to her. She hangs with vampires and werewolves for crying out loud! How can someone be so meek and emotionally challenged and still survive? It just doesn’t seem very plausible to me, but it’s just my opinion.

I know what you're thinking. "Why did she read all four books if she knew it sucked by the first one?" A very good question, my fair reader. To be honest, when your boyfriend plays Call of Duty all day long, one might become a little bored. After watching the movie, I bought all four books thinking I was going to love them. It was kind of like reading the back of the shampoo bottle while sitting in the bathroom. We do some very odd things when we are bored, and these books were all I had. And yes, I enjoyed these books just as much as the shampoo bottle, but the shampoo bottle didn’t have a hott vampire.

I guess the real reason for this tangent isn’t the authors writing styles or her characters. It’s the tale itself. Where is my vampire? Why can’t I have a relationship like that? We are truly masochists when we read this book. I read the mushy gushy actions of the Edward character, and then I let my eyes gaze at my video game playing man. I’m not saying that I don’t love him, but maybe he will allow me to have false fantasies about him now.

On a more serious note, the majority of the people reading these books are little, prepubescent girls who do not yet know the true face of love. Now they are going to base their searching on this. It's dangerous! Our population is going to fall dramatically due to a lack of Edward-fulfilling males in our world. I think Meyer didn’t think this through very well as she wrote it or else she would have made her male leads seem more "human."

And now, the awful, unsatisfying ending! We were all pumped up for a fight, and look what saved us. Words! Not only was the whole thing incredibly predictable, but it was all too cliché. Cliché happens to be an English major’s arch nemesis. "Awww, a nice happy ending." Where are my thought-provoking mysteries that leave me wanting more? I guess I should have expected this when I didn’t want more after the first book.

Well, for fear of all the fan girls finding out where I live, I must stop here. Of course I could go on. The only good thing that came out of the Twilight experience was the ranting material I can use against my twin sisters if I ever need to make them angry. Now go on, my readers, and enjoy the oh-so-popular, dramatic, soap-opera fairy tale.

Oh, and yes, for those of you who couldn’t go on if they didn’t figure it out, I am Team Edward.
Taurus – (April 20 - May 20): Although you may feel like your love life is a little rocky, things will start to change this month. If you try to not become so attached to the person quickly and just take things slowly, you will end up with a somewhat positive relationship.

Gemini - (May 21 - June 20): You may be a little bent out of shape today. Try and let things slide! Sometimes if you choose to stretch a situation out, things tend to escalate. Blow it off and let it go.

Cancer – (June 21 - July 22): You need to work on your relationship. Relationships require work from both people. If you feel as though you’re the only one trying to make things work then maybe it’s time to just move on.

Leo – (July 23 - August 22): Dear Leo, today you may feel as though you do not have enough time to do everything you would like. Take a break and slow down your work pace. By doing so, you will get things done right and accomplish far more than you may have thought.

Virgo – (August 23 - September 22): Now is not the time to procrastinate on work just because school is almost over. Stay focused and pay close attention to what you’re learning now, because chances are it will just get harder.

Libra – (September 23 - October 22): You like to stay busy, but sometimes it’s good to take a break for yourself. Stop worrying about everyone else and focus on what you want and what you need. Take a breather; you’ll find it to be very beneficial.

Scorpio – (October 23 - November 21): Even though you hate conflict, you’ll fight for things you believe. This week, try not to let people get the best of you.

Sagittarius – (November 22 - December 21): In one day you can get more accomplished than most people do in one week. Go on a vacation, spend time with family and friends, and just relax.

Capricorn – (December 22 - January 19): If you’re single, watch out for this upcoming week. Someone has been noticing you from afar, so give them a chance. It may be a risk worth taking.

Aquarius – (January 20 - February 18): One of your close friends may be in need of a boost. You can gain some massive points by helping them out and showing them how much you care.

Pisces – (February 19 - March 20): Pisces, give yourself some time to take a break and relax. Hang out with your friends, enjoy the scenery on a random road trip, and try to take things one step at a time. You owe it to yourself!

Aries – (March 21 - April 19): Try to take care of your own issues, even if it means at your friends’ expense. It might be tough at first, but once you do it you’ll come to find that you have more time to put into your own work rather than your friends’ and the outcome will be well worth it.

Romona Blackwood

The Easter Bunny has come and gone. Now it’s time to engage in some school spirit and look forward to Penn State’s upcoming Blue and White Weekend. It’s a time where not only students but people from the community come together in large numbers to celebrate the school’s most enjoyable pastime: football. Bands of people swarm together and paint their school’s most enjoyable pastime: football. Bands of people swarm together and paint their school’s colors in a count of 40, the oil is ready.

While the oil is heating, make the batter. In a wide mixing bowl combine 2 cups of the pancake mix, 1 1/4 cups water, and about 6 teaspoons hot sauce. (Use a regular teaspoon you would stir coffee with – that’s what I did. I don’t, technically, have a set of actual measuring spoons.) Place the remaining plain 1/2 cup pancake mix in another wide mixing bowl. Arrange the batter and the bowl of plain pancake mix near the cook top and the heating oil. Line a plate with a few sheets of paper towels and keep within reach.

Once the oil is heated and ready, toss the chicken pieces in 2 teaspoons of hot sauce, then toss in the plain pancake mix and coat evenly, shaking off excess. The plain dry pancake mix will help the batter stick to the chicken pieces. Add some chicken to the batter; you are going to want to work in 3 to 4 batches coating and frying. Using a fork, toss the bits in the batter. Remove the first batch from the batter, shaking off the excess batter as you carefully add them to the hot oil. Fry for 2 minutes on the first side, or until the first side is a deep golden brown; flip and continue to fry for another 2 minutes or until deep golden brown all over. Remove from the oil and drain on the paper towel-lined plate. Season with salt. Repeat until all the popcorn chicken bites are fried. Serve immediately with refrigerated, good-quality creamy blue cheese mixed with chopped scallions and black pepper for dipping. Garnish platter with celery sticks.
A Collegian Collage...
I ran through the streets of my childhood with music in my ears and a warm breeze blowing tears from my face. I felt life again. I felt the sting of doubt send chills up my spine—I felt someone’s hands choke me. In the breeze I cried trying to understand growth, reaching for strength I was unsure I had. Onto the cracked pavement I fell with my head in my lap. I could hear myself screaming inside as I thought—Where’s that moment, the moment I’ve been waiting for all my life?

What do you think you know? Hollie Browning

You won’t understand until you see and what you see you’ll never fully believe. What do you think you know about your life? Below us a world is spinning with the indescribable. Perhaps we are searching for someone, something, so sacred that will give this “indescribable” a face.

If I have found anything at all on this “quest” it has been pieces of myself—instead. I don’t know what circles I speak in—one day I handed my heart to a careless soul and when it returned it was broken. But my mother said he was sorry—my father had been sorry a lot.

What do you think you know about your life? What have you seen of devastation, growth, loss, death, birth, fortune, success, failure and most importantly—love? The torture seems to be in not knowing and knowing that you know that clearly.

Have we allowed time to betray us? Have we no wings for our free-spirited selves to fly away? We live in a world where people have two faces: one face which we will never see and the other, a mask, that surface’s in the crowd.

What do you think you know about your life? I’ll tell you what I know about mine thus far—the “quest” is never over.

The Mystical Morning Nicole Navoczynski

It is misty, gorgeous, and ghostly this morning. The whole world is covered by an unknown cloud that appears to have fallen down from the sky. Maybe the sky just couldn’t take it anymore. Maybe there were too many puffy cotton balls in the sky for the atmosphere to handle and God ordered for one big white ghost to fall down on us and make us feel as though we will never know the difference between the sky and ground again. A person could get lost in this murky fog as well as objects could appear that weren’t there before, existing only inches away from one’s face because of such thickness. It is beautiful because it makes the world unseen and unknown. It is amazing because it can make anything reappear or disappear at any given time measured by its plentiful existence. I walk slowly, hoping not to trip over some undiscovered rock or pothole in the ground and realize the world has stopped in time for this one fleeting morning.
A last look at a bedroom you’ll never see again. A glance over your shoulder before you go past the last security checkpoint at the airport. A last embrace made longer by the desire to make the moment last forever. A gaze out the back window as the car pulls away…

When I first found out I had to switch to the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus to complete my degree, I was hardly thrilled. I questioned whether or not it was worth the long commute and even contemplated switching my major from English to Liberal Arts with an English specialty. But I love English and couldn’t give it up so easily. When my mother gave me her old car, I knew it was providential.

I came to this campus with the goal of focusing on my schoolwork, not concerned about making friends. Needing only three more semesters to complete my degree and being several years older than most students, I figured I would not develop any relationships or form any attachments to people. Boy was I wrong. I’ve had the opportunity to get to know some students and professors that I intend to stay in touch with as long as possible.

I’ve become a writer. I still have to develop as such; By no means am I where I want to be. Yet I’ve learned skills I’ll use for a lifetime. I’ve read novels, poems and short stories I may never have on my own, some I liked, some repulsed me, but all made me consider new perspectives. I’ve learned about life, people and myself.

The 45-minute commute gave me the courage to make lengthier drives, some three hours long! For someone used to living in cities where public transportation was always accessible, this is a big deal. I’ve learned how to make long drives more enjoyable, sometimes exploring new music, other times enjoying the silence and focusing on the scenery.

I’ve learned to look out for cops parked on the side of the road. I’ve learned that Penn State Wilkes-Barre is actually in some God-forsaken town called Lehman. I’ve learned that you don’t have to drive through Dallas to get to Lehman, despite what Mapquest will have you believe. I’ve learned to bring reading material in case my car slides into a snow bank and I have to wait 30 minutes for a tow truck to pull me out.

On May 16, I’ll make what will likely be my final commute to Penn State Wilkes-Barre for graduation. There will be some teary good-byes, some final, some for a short time. After graduation, we’ll say still more good-byes. We’ll leave old employments for new ones. We’ll leave those towns and cities where we were born and grew up, for towns where we will grow old and die.

As an adult learner, I have the advantage of having said some of these good-byes and knowing that though they are quite painful, they can be survived. As someone who has graduated from high school and college once before, someone who has moved around quite often, someone who has said good-bye to friends, and made new friends, someone who has had loved ones die, I can tell you this: though this may feel like the end, it truly is not. This is the accomplishment of a goal, and now you go out to accomplish more goals. I will not tell you that your life begins now, because that is ridiculous and suggests that all experience up to this point had little or no value. Nor were those experiences mere preparation. Yes, to an extent they have prepared you for what is to come, but they have also been part of the litany of experiences that will make up your life.

This is my final monologue, my final commute. I’m not sad or scared; I’m excited. I’m driving steadily on the road of life. The ride may get bumpy. There may even be a collision or two (let’s hope not). But I’m ready to drive.
Words to Leave By

To My fellow Penn Staters,

We came here as young adults, stepping into a similar yet different kind of world. We came here to grow and have the privilege of acquiring useful knowledge to use throughout the rest of our lives. What do we know of our lives so far? We know that life has been a journey, both wonderful and often scary. Each day I wake I feel as if I am viewing the world through the eyes of a different person. I feel that my view of the world has changed in some fundamental way that is increasingly overwhelming the closer graduation comes.

The walls of this university can no longer protect us or be our shelter from the outside world. We must now find that shelter within ourselves. Perhaps that is the scariest part. Or is the scariest part the realization that we have to grow up now?

In the next couple of weeks we should walk this beautiful campus that we’ve been lucky enough to attend, and look to each other with admiration. We should smile at our professors for teaching us many valuable lessons both inside and outside of the classroom, and give them as much credit as we give ourselves, because just as we’ve stayed awake many nights preparing their assignments, they too, have done the same for us – if not more. Their faces often look just as tired as ours. As a five-year student here at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, I had the chance to meet a lot of great people and was awarded the opportunity to receive an ideal education by the many brilliant minds who work here. I wish there were enough words to describe how appreciative I really am.

I want to say a very special thank you to Dr. Steven Putzel and Dr. Lynda Goldstein. Dr. Goldstein, thank you for spending an entire semester with me in my freshman year showing me how to write an essay correctly. Dr. Putzel, thank you for never letting me forget who I am and how I ended up on this campus. You both have impacted my life in ways you’ll never know. And I want to thank Mr. Kenneth Fisher for always reminding me to go tightly! I’ll hear that saying in my head for the rest of my life, especially in times of need.

I thank the Collegian staff for allowing me to be a part of our campus newspaper, and I am grateful for all of the writers who have kept the spirit alive. I can only hope the newspaper blossoms once we are gone. I thank all creative writers for consistently giving me enough material for “The Writer’s Café.” Don’t ever go one day without letting your creative voice be heard.

I thank Kristen Durso (a former Penn State student) for getting me through the last few years. Yes, Kristen, you’re right – the sun is out, the birds are singing, and it is a beautiful day after all.

I want to thank Margaret Esopi for her belief in my ability to be a good student, and Jacqueline Warnick-Platt for keeping the campus active with fun events and free food. Jackie, your spunkiness is one thing I am always going to miss.

I’d also like to mention that after years of wanting to learn an abundance of information about William Shakespeare, I finally got the chance to, thanks to Dr. Theodora Jankowski. (If it weren’t for her spelling and grammar corrections to all of my papers, I don’t know what I would’ve done). Everyone that I have mentioned is such an important asset to what makes Penn State Wilkes-Barre a good place to go to for higher education. We may have a small campus, but our faculty and staff have shown me on numerous occasions how much they care about us. I never walked out of an office disappointed or feeling like I wasn’t going to be taken care of. To the rest of the staff here at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, I thank you.

To the underclassmen reading this, I wish to extend my best wishes for your time spent here. Get to know your professors, and more importantly, let them get to know you. That is by far the best advice I can give you. The only way you can fail at anything is if you never try. Remember, life is fragile when you’re young. Think of it as a minefield – one step can destroy you or keep you safe. So proceed with caution, because everything you do from here on out affects your future in one way or another. The world will take from you what you don’t have and then ask for more. You must be ready for anything when the time comes, so prepare yourself now. Be open to learning life lessons and being proven wrong a lot – it’s all a part of growing up.

To my fellow graduates: We will soon be leaving the safety of this campus to embark on careers in our chosen fields, and although this current economic crisis will provide a daunting challenge, we must never give up hope. The future is what we make of it. As long as we do not lose sight of our goals, we can achieve anything. In the words of Walt Whitman, “Be at peace, bloody fluxes of doubters and sullen mopers; I take my place among you as much as among any; the past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same, and the night is for you, me, all, and what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me, all, precisely the same. I do not know what is untried and afterward; but I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail. Each who passes is consider’d—each who stops is consider’d—not a single one can it fail.”

Sincerely,

Hollie Browning

To Kathie, Jackie, and Margie: Thank you for putting up with my indecision these past four years and for letting me know I can always come home.

To Dr. Putzel: Thanks for believing in me and my abilities and for helping me realize that this may just be where I belong.

To my THONers: I will never forget THON, you slow turns into the field, quick trips to the Forty Fort, seagulls, road trips to see Tristen (and hear his stories!), and, most of all, THON 2009!! You guys easily made this the best THON (and best school year) for me. I’ve never had a family quite like ours. You have all the tools you need to make THON 2010 bigger and better, so don’t be afraid to use them! FTK!

Love always,

~Melissa

WE ARE...

Though I can leave with words of kindness to all the staff, with whom I established a special bond, I choose not to. Though I can leave with words of support to those who are not graduating, I shall not. Though I can leave with sorrow in my heart for leaving PSU and going on to what I love to do, I will not. For those who know me, the following statement is for you.

Sayonara Suckers! It has been a swinging good time.

Ben Steeneck