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# The Fourth Estate

HARRISBURG AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## EDITORIAL

The Fourth Estate September 18, 1996

### Tupac Shakur got what he asked for:

#### American society has something to learn

The death of Death Row Records rapper, Tupac Shakur on September 13, raises some issues with which East and West Coast rap fans are familiar with. Most East Coast rap fans have a loyalty to East Coast rappers that is fierce. So fierce, that laughter and scoffs of "he had it coming," seemed acceptable at the news of Shakur's death. It was common knowledge among rap fans in New York and some here in Central Pennsylvania that, after the release of Shakur's song "Hit 'Em Off", he would not live to see '97. The rivalry and exchange of words between East and West Coast rappers may be more familiar in New York and California, but it is one that urban teens, including those in Harrisburg, can relate to, and others should be aware of as members of this nation.

The specific rivalry that deals with Tupac Shakur began back in November 1994. Shakur was shot five times in the lobby of a New York recording studio, in what police termed a robbery. Speculation arose with the release of Bad Boy rapper Biggie Smalls' song "Who Shot Ya?". From critics to the offices of Death Row Recording, including Shakur, questions began to arise about the meaning of Biggie's song, and how, if at all, did Biggie play a part in Shakur's shooting. This began the battle of the coasts.

Constant words, accusations, and disrespects flowed between the two Coasts in songs, interviews, and newspaper articles. Tupac Shakur came back with his single "Hit 'Em Off". Spouting rhymes that included death threats such as:

"Biggie Smalls just got dropped... smoke the Junior Mafia right in front of you... Biggie ... about to get murdered for the paper ... Any of you niggers from N.Y. that want to bring it, bring it. But we ain't singin' it. We bringin' drama. We gonna kill all you motherfuckers"

and personal messages to Biggie Smalls such as:

"Who Shot Me, but your punks couldn't finish it ... Five shots couldn't drop me/I took it and smiled."

Shakur also sent personal messages to East Coast groups such as Mobb Deep and the entire staff of Bad Boy Entertainment. In an East Coast supporters' eyes, this song sealed Shakur's fate, and it wasn't a pretty one.

Reading all of this and remembering it, makes it difficult to remember the reason why Tupac Shakur's death was a bad thing. Then the light shines through; regardless of the insults that were thrown, the egos that were hurt, and the threats that were issued, a human being died. Friends will mourn, family members will cry, and a mother will ask, "Why?". Is it appropriate to inform this mother who has just lost her only son who had lived just 25 years, that he died because he was a West Coast rapper who couldn't keep his mouth shut? Maybe the East Coast had nothing to do with his death. Perhaps it was a random act of violence or maybe it was someone from a rival West Coast neighborhood. It is not important at this point who did it. Right now the concern must be about how we will react.

A rapper is dead. A man raised in a poor urban neighborhood rose above the welfare and discrimination that is well known to urban youth of all races, and became a successful and wealthy entertainer. A young and healthy African-American man was once again shot down. A human being has been murdered. Is it time for the East Coast to throw a party because the "king" of the West Coast, a rival, has fallen down dead? It is time to come together and mourn. Not necessarily for the man, but for his mother and for the fact that we live in a society which finds joy in a man's death. We all are members of a society in which it is a rare occurrence for a young man, of any race, who was raised in America's ghettos, to break into wealth and success. It is time to mourn the fact that those who are "brothers" in an art form that has struggled to be accepted in mainstream America and fought for notoriety in American culture, have begun to fight among themselves. They have fallen victim to a problem that has plagued America since the Civil War. Instead of being able to stand as one, we fight our comrades just to prove who is best.

In the song, "Hit 'Em Off", Tupac Shakur stated:

"I let niggers know it's on for life."

Well then Tupac, maybe now it too can end.

### The smoke signals say: "Smokers, move on!"

By KENT ANDERSON  
NEWS EDITOR

The smoking issue recently reared its smoldering, ash and orange ember head at the latest College Forum meeting on October 15. It seems that the non-smokers are a little upset with some of the smokers' habits around campus.

Though smoking is not permitted anywhere in any of the buildings, the non-smokers are apparently determined to push the smokers further away, not even allowing them their little huddle puffs at the building entrances, like the US government of old, telling the Indians to keep going, move onto that nice little reservation over there. Wait, that land is too close to the land we want, so move away a little more.

It should be no surprise that the smokers group together at the building entrances - they feel like they have to circle the wagons, prepare for an assault by the Community College Custer, who will probably never have a last stand. The smokers will, in the end, always lose.

Seriously, the smokers could, to accommodate those of us who like breathing clean air, move their little black lung lounging further from the buildings.

Truly, I am a non-smoker, but my view has always been that if the smoke is not being blown into my face or clogging my immediate atmosphere, puff away, little

magic dragons.

But, for an overall solution, education is the key. The smokers need to be aware that some of their actions are unacceptable to the majority, so they need to respect others a little more than they do now, and, yes, some smokers, quite a few, in fact, are courteous.

At the same time, there must be a firm bond of cooperation between the faculty and the student smokers, who need to speak up if they want to protect their rights. The only way smokers can ensure that they get a fair deal is to speak up, yell, if necessary, but get involved.

Awareness of issues of this magnitude should be spread far and wide, with the help of the Senate, of course, but why were so few students aware of the Forum session that was to discuss the college's smoking policy?

Sure, the Forum is open to students, who are, in fact, welcome to attend, but who knew? If the smokers had known about this policy discussion, I don't doubt that some would have chosen to attend and voice their opinions. Everyone, including the non-smokers, should have been involved, or was the Community College Custer afraid of a last stand?

### What Forum? What issue?

By Scott Bateman



National Student News Service, 1996

### Give credit where credit is due

By KENT ANDERSON  
NEWS EDITOR

There are a wide range of religions that exist or did exist. Each one is different, some monotheistic, some multitheistic and, though each one carries its own view of life and death, all have a fundamental objective: granting answers and power to those who follow a certain perspective or dogma.

When some people have questions, problems, or situations that require extra insight, they turn to their religion. Faith in divine things gives some people the strength of will and morality to overcome the odds. But, why not look to yourself for that strength? Why not look to yourself for the qualities to define your moral fiber, to define your courage of will?

It's easy to do, to look up into the vast night sky, close your eyes, genuflect, and pray to a celestial entity for the power to find the answers to your problems. Then, when the

resolution comes, even if it was your own actions that brought it about, the attribution of the deed goes to god, who, surely, gave you the power to surmount your obstacle. Why not give yourself credit? Humans lack faith in themselves, faith in their ability to define and conquer this chaotic, nasty world of riddles and pain.

Whose hand lifted the stone? It was a human hand. Whose words closed the deal? They were words from a human, one of those flawed, emotional puzzles that, despite their failings, seem to get the job done.

It cannot be said that faith is a bad thing, yet believing in a religion, a god or gods, that fails to allow for the magnificent potential of the human mind by placing the defining qualities of the unknown in divine hands can be dangerous, divisive, limiting, and blind.

It takes only a glance through a newspaper to see the explosive consequences when two religions collide.

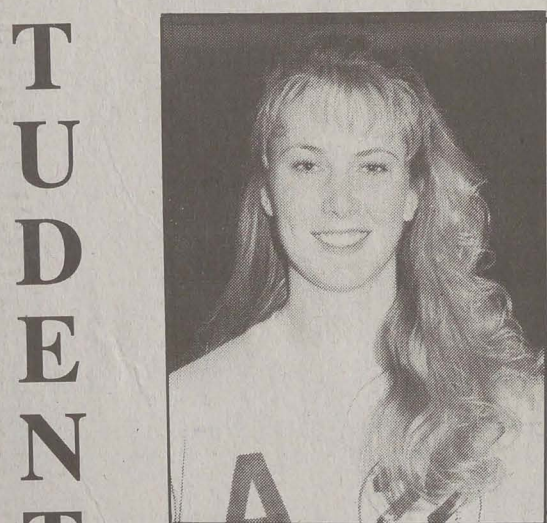
What if the warring factions about the world believed in a "religion" that was open to every perspective known to man? What if there were a form of faith that was, essentially, open-ended, a form of faith that was unfettered in its capacity to grow and change? This "religion" would not impose itself upon those who rejected it, it would not ambush you and stick a volume of its dogma in your face, attempting to control your beliefs by approaching you somewhere you cannot avoid, thus forcing you to face them.

And, because it allows for change, because it can transcend barriers without any limits on its vision, and because it unifies all, brings everyone, no matter the color, nationality or perspective, under one definition, it would not profoundly divide the world. This "religion" exists, actually. Right now, however, it is unrealized. It's called Humanity. Let it live, and give yourself, not a god or gods, the credit for living.

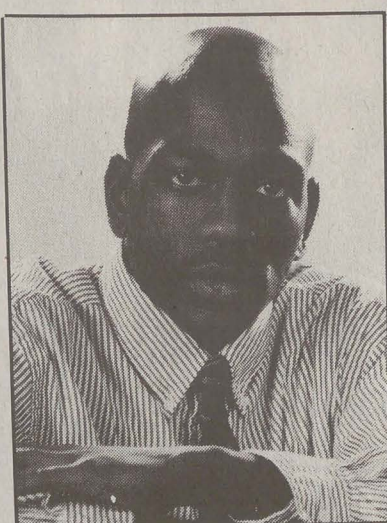
By Lyz Huffman

With the start of the new season, how do you feel about playing in the new Park Arena?

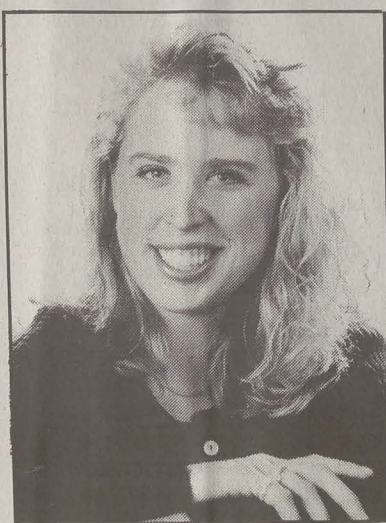
Photos by Mike Nunneley



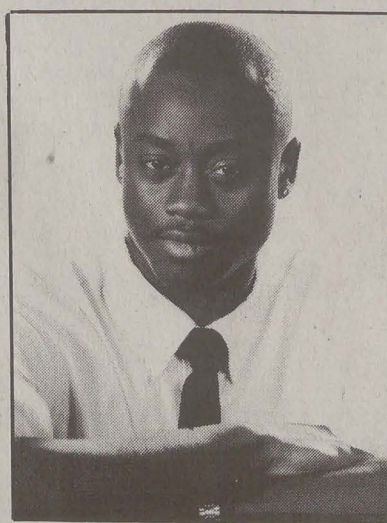
"It's going to be cool, because I think there will be a lot more people that will come to the games." BODHI WATTS



"Really exciting just having a whole new building around." TRENT DUNCAN, LUMBERJACK GUARD/FORWARD



"Very excited, it's going to be a great experience. I'm really looking forward to it." MARISA STOPPA, LADY JACK FORWARD



"I feel it's alright...." They put a lot of money into it." EMANUEL HARE, LUMBERJACK FORWARD



"I think it's good that it's attached to the Wellness Center, and it's going to be a nice meeting place for basketball games." KRISTIN HIGGINS

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