

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

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EDITORIAL

Court ruling aside, Boy Scouts should rethink anti-gay policy

The Supreme Court ruled last week by a 5-to-4 vote that the Boy Scouts have a constitutional right to exclude gay members because opposition to homosexuality was part of the organization's "expressive message."

Regardless of the Supreme Court ruling, the Boy Scouts should rethink their policy excluding gays from their organization.

James Dale, a former troop leader, an Eagle Scout and popular member for 12 years who was dismissed from the Boy Scouts because he is gay, did nothing else to warrant his dismissal. He had no record of molesting children and his past involvement with the Boy Scouts showed nothing but dedication and loyalty to the organization.

Sexual preference does not have anything to do with the purpose of the Boy Scouts.

According to the Boy Scouts' home page, www.bsa.scouting.org, the purpose of the Boy Scouts is to provide an educational program for boys and young adults to build character, to train in the responsibilities of a participating citizenship and to

develop personal fitness. But limiting members on the basis of their sexuality narrows the focus of the Boy Scouts and skirts the educational aspect of teaching boys to be comfortable with their sexuality and people with preferences different than their own.

The Boy Scout's decision to ban gays sends a message to potential Boy Scout members that it is not all right to be gay and that understanding sexual preferences other than heterosexual is not necessary.

By allowing gay members in the Boy Scouts, other members who may not otherwise be exposed to people with other sexual preferences have the opportunity to learn and understand better about gays.

Discriminating against homosexuals is no different than discriminating against minorities, something the Supreme Court has outlawed. By excluding homosexuals, the Boy Scouts is missing out on having dedicated members such as Dale. And more importantly, the group is missing what seems to be its entire purpose of developing responsible citizens.

Who we are

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Supreme Court ruling was sound but Boy Scouts need to move ahead

By Daryl Lang

One Wednesday last April, I skipped class and drove to Washington, D.C., to sit in on a Supreme Court hearing in the case of Boy Scouts of America vs. James Dale.

If you've followed this case, you know that Dale was a Boy Scout all through school, and earned the top rank of Eagle Scout.

In college, he became a scout leader at a troop in New Jersey.

He also came out, became co-president of a gay and lesbian student group at Rutgers University, and was identified in a newspaper article as a gay activist.

That newspaper clipping caught the attention of the brass at the BSA, who kicked Dale out of the scouting program simply for being gay.

Dale challenged the BSA under an anti-



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discrimination law in New Jersey, a law designed to prevent restaurants and other businesses from refusing to serve someone because of their sexual orientation.

The case went all the way to the Supreme Court, and Dale lost.

The court said the Boy Scouts have a constitutional right to pick their own leaders.

I'm no lawyer, but I can see why the Supreme Court ruled the way they did. However, I am an Eagle Scout, and I still can't see why the national BSA sticks by this hurtful, backward policy.

The scouting program did a lot of good for me, and it's mortifying to watch it get so much publicity as it unleashes hatred on guys like Dale.

Scouts pride themselves on old-fashioned values, and I support that Boy Scout programs are rare nuggets of wholesome goodness in a time when young people are bombarded with commercialized, mass-marketed violence.

Scouting is a chance to spend time with friends.

It's about hiking through the forest and paddling canoes around on lakes.

It's crickets and guitars, campfires and

pine needles, pancakes and granola bars, mountains and sunsets.

Scout programs also instill a sense of dignity in its members.

Keep the environment clean. Respect the American flag. Do volunteer work in your town. Treat other people well.

For me, kicking the gay guys out of your tree house runs squarely against the values scouting taught me.

Put plainly, I believe loving another man shouldn't automatically disqualify a man from being an active member of society.

We can debate the words of the Bible until our veins bulge and we fall over dizzy, but it's irrelevant in the case of the scouts; they're not a Christian group.

Several of my Boy Scout pals were Jewish; one was Buddhist; others weren't really religious at all.

I don't think any of my scouting peers were avowed homosexuals while we were in the program, but it's a safe bet that some of them are now.

They might go on to adopt children, or not. They might want to be scout leaders, or not.

Probably not.

The old guys in charge at scout headquarters are terrified of gay people. They rationalize this fear by calling it a moral statement.

Really, the unspoken line at BSA is that gay scout leaders are only interested in luring young Webelos into the woods to do uncomfortable sexual things.

A lot of scouting parents also labor under this stereotype. It's wrong.

Dale, for one, is a role model for scouts — a well-spoken gentleman who succeeded in scouting, assumed leadership in his community and shows respect for his country. Remember: The BSA never had any complaints about his conduct as a scout leader.

Of course, troops should always keep an eye out for troubled leaders, gay or otherwise. No person's sex life should ever intersect his scout life.

Indeed, the BSA has very strict guidelines to prevent child abuse, and my experience is that troops generally follow them to the letter. These are good rules.

But the current BSA statement — basically saying that all gay men are unwelcome creeps — benefits no one, and should have been dropped long ago.

Most scoutmasters probably don't give the policy much thought, and pray they never have to. And for the boys, packing their duffel bags for summer camp is more pressing than a national policy about sexuality.

Meanwhile, the whole program was staid when the national BSA decided to push their "moral" argument all the way to the Supreme Court, instead of inviting Dale back into the organization.

You see, scouts like me are no longer just the product of a value-driven youth leadership program.

Now we're tagged as a bunch of gay haters, wherever we go, whenever we apply for a job.

I suspect the BSA will drop their anti-gay policy by the time I'm old enough to have a son in their program.

But until then, I've got to decide whether I should keep calling myself an Eagle Scout.

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Female columnist admits to reading, enjoying Playboy, for its articles, of course

By Candice Jackson

I have a confession to make. A dirty little secret I'm forcing myself to admit. It's not the sort of thing I normally tell people, since it tends to elicit disbelieving stares or snide comments.

Truth is, though, I don't think it's really something I should be ashamed of.

More people do it than most would assume; it's just a little embarrassing to own up to.

I read *Playboy*.

There, I said it. And yes, I know it's a little unusual.

It is, after all, "entertainment for men." It says so right on the cover.

To be honest, I'm not even sure if I'm allowed — there might be some sort of clause hidden in the fine print forbidding females from even cracking it open, let alone enjoying it on a regular basis.

So what am I doing with a subscription? Simple — I think it's great.

As a columnist, I find myself picking up several different magazines and newspapers in any given week.

I enjoy a wide variety of them. *Entertainment Weekly*, *The Utne Reader*, *Newsweek* — hell, I even have a special place in my heart for *The Onion*, the newspaper industry's answer to National Lampoon magazine.

Yes, I read the articles.

And though you have to flip past the centerfolds, the ads for sex manuals and the latest exploits of Little Annie Fanny to get to the good stuff, I've actually found that this, the best-known and loved of the skin mags, is actually filled with is one of the few magazines I find consistently turns out well-written, timely, and, above all, entertaining articles.

Of course, I didn't discover this completely on my own. Can you really imagine me asking for a copy at the local bookstore?

"Ahem . . . yeah, um, could you get me a copy of one of the magazines behind the counter?"

Nope, I discovered *Playboy* the way I imagine most people do.

I borrowed a copy of the magazine from my brother.

He and my dad had decided to celebrate

"I think what surprised me most about picking up *Playboy* was the realization that it's simply not the seedy, sexist soft-porn rag I was led to believe it was."

my moving into the dorms last year (and, therefore, complete male occupation of the house) with a subscription — sort of their way of asserting male dominance of our home.

But gradually, I also began picking it up as casually as I'd pick up a copy of the paper from the coffee table.

OK, so it's a little silly.

Although I can sit here and argue that *Playboy* has more to it than pretty pictures, it's still strange, I'll admit.

After all, isn't the point of "men's magazines" to cater to a very specific demographic?

Namely, hormone-ridden heterosexual males.

But over the years, *Playboy* has become more than young girls posing in stiletto heels and little else.

Just in recent months, fiction by Chuck Palahniuk, author of *Fight Club* and Mario Puzo, who created the *Godfather* trilogy, have been featured, and the magazine's interviews are legendary.

And have you seen the *Playboy* adviser column lately?

Where else can you get advice on how to get laid and the perfect way to mix a martini?

Now that's good writing.

I think what surprised me most about picking up *Playboy* was the realization that it's simply not the seedy, sexist soft-porn rag I was led to believe it was.

Fifty years ago, when Editor in Chief Hugh Hefner first began publishing his dream, it was cutting-edge, different and scandalous.

Not so today, and if you don't believe me, compare it to the most recent copy of *Cosmopolitan* or any other woman's magazine

on the market that uses barely-dressed cover models and eating disorder victims to boost sales. At least *Playboy* playmates are allowed to have curves.

Though *Cosmopolitan* doesn't include nude photos in its pages (though some of the fashion spreads come pretty close) you've got to admit that content doesn't vary from one to the other.

Cosmopolitan may give you the "modern woman" take on sex, but it's still all about sex.

At least *Playboy* does it with a little style. So I read *Playboy*.

Big deal.

It's smart, it's funny and it gives me something to have in common with my male friends.

True, I can't really fully appreciate the "main attraction" of the latest issue.

But while the male readers are checking out her surgically-enhanced assets, at least I can admire her cute outfits.

Candice Jackson is a columnist for the *Kentucky Kernel* at the University of Kentucky. Her column appeared on U-Wire.

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Enjoy Napster while it's still legal

By Jon Fassnacht

Napster. Say that word around a record executive or a professional musician and you're likely to see a look of utter disgust and fright. Mutter it around college students and you'll see smiles from ear to ear.

And so it goes with the battle against Napster, a battle that will wrap up within the next year with Napster ending up in the loser's bracket.

For those not in the know, Napster is a music-file-swapping search engine created by 19-year-old Shawn Fanning, a dropout from Northeastern University.

All prospective members need to do is download the software from napster.com and they are free to begin. The user types in a song title and artist and a list of members who have the song on their hard drive appears.

The user then clicks on one and the song is stored on his hard drive — for free.



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The person can do this as many times as he likes.

Inherent, but oddly missing, from this string of events is one word that is going to be Napster's downfall — copyright.

Basically, these songs are owned by the artists and their record companies, and swapping them for free without reimbursing them for their product is illegal.

We're all familiar with copyright law here in capitalist America.

Every time you watch a movie at home, that FBI warning always precedes the presentation, taunting the viewer with words like "jail" and "\$250,000 fine" for illegal copying.

The law states it is legal to make a copy of a copyrighted item if it is used for your own archives (e.g. you copy your CD onto a cassette tape so you can listen to it in a walkman) or for educational purposes.

So where does Napster fit into this?

It doesn't fit, and this is what has many up in arms.

Recently Frank Biondi Jr., one of the entertainment industry's top executives, issued a statement saying "(Napster is) an incredible search engine, and there's a large core of Internet users out there that think free is the right price (for music)."

Sure they do. But so do all the video and CD bootleggers in the nation. If a cop finds someone selling illegal copies of a copyrighted product on the streets, they can arrest him or levy a severe fine or both. Why is Napster so different?

In lieu of profits lost, the Recording Industry Association of America, Metallica, Dr. Dre andTVT Records have all filed lawsuits, and more are sure to follow.

To add insult to injury, 120 universities have banned it for legal reasons, including our very own Penn State.

A recent addition to Penn State's access account application for faculty and staff states that using programs such as Napster is against university policy and anyone caught using them will be severely punished.

Although the search engine has been backed by a few artists, including Limp Bizkit, who is in the middle of a free summer tour sponsored by Napster, its foes in high places far outweigh its supporters and they will do anything they can to destroy it. Enjoy it while you can.

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