

2008 Olympics stirs controversy over China

By **TAJA JONES**
Catch 22

A deep-red flag, brightened by the images of one large yellow star and a parading sequence of smaller stars, is the symbol of hope, guidance and the unconditional devotion of a nation to millions of Chinese. But to others, it inspires controversy. This year, the flag of the People's Republic of China will be highly visible as it flies over the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"There is really nothing else like [the Olympics] in the world," said Joseph Torsella, president and chief executive officer of the National Constitution Center and co-chair of Philadelphia's 2005 failed bid for the 2016 Olympic games. Torsella said the Olympics provide a unique opportunity when countries come together and support a specific cause — that of the athletes.

Despite the prospective absence of various European leaders, including UK



Nicole Heath

Constitution Center CEO Joe Torsella.

Prime Minister Gordon Brown, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the Olympic events will gain worldwide attention for

China.

For some, the Olympics are a golden opportunity to witness China's great development as a commercial nation. But for many others, the games provide an opportunity to focus on the country's numerous human-rights violations.

Support of the Sudanese Khartoum regime — responsible for the atrocities in Darfur — and the fresh terrorization of Buddhist monks and other Tibetans during anti-China protests are among the factors that contribute to the controversy swirling around this year's Olympics.

For Brown, Merkel and Sarkozy, China's overall bad record in the human-rights department is too much to overlook, but Chinese officials hope to use the Olympics as a window to their success in development. Some, like Torsella, believe that hosting the Olympics will motivate China to accepting a more Western way

of life.

"Bringing the games to China will force them to do that ... it will introduce some change with Chinese society," Torsella said.

Elisha Rubin's new documentary, "The People's Republic of Capitalism," reveals the changes that have taken place already.

The documentary shows how jobs are moving from the United States to China and highlights the self-censorship and absence of independent media in the country.

Rubin, who showed excerpts from her documentary at a program at the Constitution Center, doesn't think the Olympics will foster acceptance of democracy in China. From what she saw, "Democracy is not a big thing that people are clamoring for." ★

Fame: A blessing and a curse

Celebrities must cope with loss of privacy

By **ROSELLA ELEANOR**
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She was the hottest witch on TV. Now, Alyssa Milano is proving she really does lead a "Charmed" life.

Or does she?

Milano, in town to promote her clothing line TOUCH, stood next to NBC 10's Tim Furlong with a camera about 12 inches from her face. The interview with Furlong was the first of several press tapings and interviews during her crowded day. Scheduled for later were the CBS, FOX, and ABC affiliates, CW57, Comcast SportsNet, then the *Trentonian* and *South Philly Review*.

Despite this packed schedule, Milano took time to speak with this student journalist about living and working in the public eye. The pros and cons of which, she said, were obvious.

The pros: "I think it's an amazing livelihood," Milano said. "You get to have a public voice that's strong enough to affect and empower people around the world, and

that's an awesome thing."

The major con: "Now, especially in this generation with the Internet, I think that the privacy loss is definitely a con." She laughed. "I'd love to be able to go out in my UGGs and my pimple medicine with my hair up in a ponytail, but they take pictures of you and it lives forever on the Internet."

Other than the loss of privacy, Milano said that working long hours is another negative aspect of a show-business career.

Asked to consider the effects of fame on family life and relationships, Milano said it hasn't had much impact on her family life. She said that although she has been in a relationship for a year-and-a-half, it has been hard for her to find men who are comfortable with her success. But, she said, "Relationships are hard no matter what you do."

Milano's transition from private citizen



Kobal/WireImage.com

Alyssa Milano, star of "Charmed"

to celebrity happened at a young age. The actress started on "Who's The Boss?" at age 11.

"I think when you're a kid, you just sort of take what's given to you. It's what's always been normal to me."

Celebrity comes in many forms. Actors, sports stars and politicians all get used to living life in the limelight. And for most, it's a blessing and a curse.

One of the positive aspects of fame for Gov. Rendell is his effect on people. "I get to change lives every day," he said.

Many celebrities use their fame to the advantage of others. Milano, for example, does much charitable work. She is a National Ambassador for UNICEF and has worked with the Global Network for Neglected Tropical Disease Control (GNNTDC).

Being a role model is another aspect of celebrity that has both positive and nega-

tive sides. Tennis star and five-time Wimbledon champion Venus Williams is a role model even for her equally famous sister, Serena.

"If I change my hair," she said during a news conference before the Philadelphia Freedoms tennis match at the King of Prussia Mall, "so does Serena."

But being a role model can backfire. Consider the controversy when "Zoey 101" star Jamie-Lynn Spears announced at age 16 that she was pregnant. As a Nickelodeon star, her pregnancy proved to be an embarrassment to the network, although it ultimately stuck by her.

Privacy loss is the No. 1 downside to being a celebrity. Even public officials learn to expect that the watchful eyes of fans and the media will be on them at all times.

For Rendell and Mayor Nutter, this means that even something as insignificant as a walk down the street is a public outing. Rendell and Nutter both laughed as they told their own version of the "I really hate to bother you ..." encounters with so-called fans. "If you hate to bother me, why do you?" Rendell said, laughing.

But, he added: "It's part of your job to stop and talk to people." ★