

EDITORIALS

On Smeal, Christmas And A Whole Lot More

By: Claire DeSantis

There were a few issues that I wanted to address this week—quite a few. One was Eleanor Smeal. (I didn't necessarily want to address her, but I did want to address the issues she discussed.) Another was the film "The Day After" which after seeing the amount of copy we received on the topic, I have decided not to address at all. The third was Christmas, and all of you who read this column faithfully will surely know that I would not pass up an opportunity to write about a holiday.

There were a few other issues that I had wanted to bring up, but frankly have decided not to. I will address Ms. Smeal, though and, as I said, wouldn't miss an opportunity to talk about Christmas.

When I decided to attend the Eleanor Smeal talk a few weeks ago, I was unsure as to how I would feel at the end. I was, honestly, a little indifferent to the whole evening. That was before I arrived at the scene. Since that night, a whole lot of things have changed.

It seemed that Ms. Smeal, in addressing her topic, "Women's Issues in the '80's," answered plenty of questions for me and finally hit on what it was that had been bothering me for so long.

I had always considered myself a "bra-burning feminist" but had never actually done anything except not wear a brassiere sometimes and talk about how I hated to be patronized at home about being female. They do that all the time.

What Eleanor Smeal did do was make plenty of people present (and I use plenty, and not "all") feel as if they could indeed do something to realize the rights of women.

You see, the problem is that too many people, like myself, do exactly what I had been doing all along—sit back and talk about how nice it would be if women were guaranteed equal pay for equal work, etc. Too few of us go out and try to get involved, try to address the issue face to face. I don't deny my guilt, but things have changed within myself. Somehow, the issue seems all too important to let it slide.

I don't solely address women when I write this. I address those men sensitive and rational enough to understand that the issue at hand does need the support of so many more people and everyone's help is needed.

I have spoken to a few people that did not enjoy or agree with Ms. Smeal's views. I feel it is important to add that, though these viewpoints were male, these men felt it important enough to attend and I give them credit for caring that much.

On Christmas, I think I should reiterate that this is one of my favorite holidays to address. So much preparation for one day, it seems almost a little crazy, especially when so many of us miss the point completely. Somehow I still believe that it should be considered the religious holiday that it is. It's almost funny that I keep forgetting it is a religious holiday! With all of the decorations, the gift buying, the baking and cooking, it seems as if the celebration of Christ's birth is lost. I've even met people who question the existence of a god and still celebrate Christmas.

In spite of all of my quandry about Christmas, and all of the frustration I feel when I think of what it has become, I still enjoy the season.

We who staff the Collegian hope that everyone here at Penn State-Behrend has a wonderful holiday season. Try to remember the true reason we celebrate the holidays during your preparation and celebration.

And just as an added note: If you are going to be drinking, please be conscientious about your driving and care enough about friends and family to care about theirs. After all is said and done, it is the season of love.

And so it goes until next year... I'm finding it sad that this is my final Christmas editorial at Behrend. That in itself makes my wish for "Happy Holidays" even more special in its expression. And it accompanies my wish for many, many more...

EDITOR'S NOTE: The photo shown in the "Roving Reporter" column, Nov. 11 edition, was not that of Jackie Wroblewski, as the opinion implies, but of Carolyn Brust.

Our apologies to both parties.

Letters to the Editor

The Myth Of Neutrality

Dear Editor:

Acceptance appears to be a necessary follower of compromise. I'm referring to double standards, and the myth of neutrality.

Why is it, I must ask, that when a conservative suggests that something is offensive and should be removed, he or she is labeled "a narrow minded book burning censor?"

If liberals point out areas offensive to them (such as Nativity scenes on public property), and suggest removal, they are called "protectors of our civil liberties."

If athiests point out areas offensive to them (such as prayer in schools), and suggest removal, they are called "defenders of pluralism."

If feminists point out areas offensive to them (such as textbooks which depict some women as being satisfied housewives), and suggest removal, they are called "champions of academic freedom."

If humanists point out areas offensive to them (such as schools having equal time for Creation science), and suggest removal, they are called "architects of progressive free thought."

I suppose freedom exists only for those who wish to control it.

Cordially Tyrannized,
Michael R. Kitchen

Reagan Policies Supported

When I first read the article "Reagan's Policies Critized" by Gerald Kely my initial reaction was "Who the hell is Mao Tse-tung?" This may sound rather naive on my part and I apologize to all those who have studied or

who are studying the history and politics of China.

But now that I understand that Mao Tse-tung was at best a heartless tyrant, I fail to understand how Mr. Kelly could ever compare his policies to those of Ronald Reagan. I do not understand the motives of any person in the United States who could condemn such actions which in turn provide security world-wide. The intervention into Grenada by our military was not a "senseless military adventure" but instead was an attempt to show not only the Soviet Union and Cuba, but the rest of the world as well, that the United States will not sit by idle while Communist regimes threaten the freedoms and rights of individuals around the world.

Simply by being able to write such a liberal article, Mr. Kelly should realize how much he enjoys the freedoms found here in the United States. I doubt highly if he would have had the same satisfaction in Grenada before the United States liberated the oppressed people living there. I also found that Mr. Kelly avoided two key issues involved in the situation in Grenada. First, I found that he failed to note that there was an airstrip being constructed on Grenada by Cuban engineers. Once completed, this airfield would have been capable of handling military aircraft from Cuba as well as other Communist points around the world.

Therefore, by eliminating that "link" in the Communist chain, not only does the Caribbean community become more secure but other non-Communist countries around the world (including the U.S.) benefit as well. Second, I found that Mr. Kelly grossly failed to note the most important fact involved in Grenada and that is the simple fact that practically all Grenadians were greatly pleased to see the United States abolish the tyrannical government which had brutally taken power on their island.

I realize that the price of intervention is often very costly. Lives were lost in Grenada, and to me that is a terrible tragedy. But I feel that Mr. Kelly, as well as others living in the United States, should realize that the price of isolation might be more costly.

Personally, I am tired of apathetic people who continually condemn the actions of our government. But then again I acknowledge the fact that because our government is what it is today, that everyone is entitled to their opinion - as I have just stated mine.

Todd Kightlinger

Grenadian Invasion Addressed

This letter is in reply to Gerald Kelly's editorial in the November 11, 1983 issue of the Collegian.

You were so negative on President Reagan, it seems you forgot some of the positive things that came out of the Grenadian invasion.

Did you ever stop to think that if Reagan had not been so decisive that we Americans might have suffered another "Iranian Crisis"? You say this threat was not real, but the students who were there said the threat was very real. You obviously did not listen to their views of the situation which was first hand.

Let us not forget the attitudes and views of the Grenadian people. I think their state of mind can be summed-up by the fact that the American Freedom Fighters had to protect the coup leader from his own people so they could not do to him what the Italians did to Mussolini at the end of WWII.

Another fact you obviously overlooked was the weapons confiscated on that tiny island. There were enough weapons to outfit every man, woman, and child -

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A Great Miracle Happened There

By: Risa Glick

Jewish people around the world have just completed the celebration of Hanukkah—known to many as the festival of lights.

Some of you may ask—What is Hanukkah?

Hanukkah is an eight-day festival beginning on the 25th day of the Jewish month Kislev and lasting through the 2nd day of the Jewish month of Tevet.

As with other festivals in the cycle of the Jewish year, there seems to be a dual origin to Hanukkah—seasonal and historical. The historical story is quite well known. Judah and Maccabee led a revolt against the Hellenistic Syrians who occupied the land of Israel around 165 B.C.E.—and for some reason he was victorious. There is a miracle associated with this victory. Some say that when the Temple was to be rededicated only one cruse of sacramental oil was found. Although this was only supposed to burn for one day, it

miraculously lasted for eight full days, during which time other oil was prepared. Others maintain that the victory in itself constitutes the miracle.

The seasonal referents of Hanukkah are much less known and, in some ways, much more stimulating. Long before the Maccabees, there was some kind of established winter festival at this season of the year. The motifs were several. One had to do with the gradual increase in daylight after the ominous, steadily darkening days of late autumn. A number of legends connect Hanukkah with the winter solstice, which occurs during the holiday. Another motif had to do with the kindling of fire, reported as an ancient Jewish custom at the dedication of the Temple altar. A third was a festive act, which included the carrying of wands wreathed with leaves, branches with their fruit, and palm fronds.

Whether Hanukkah draws its source from the historic, the seasonal, or as is most likely, from some combination of the two, it is clear that the central motif is light. It is customary to kindle the lights of the menorah during Hanukkah. We begin with one candle and increase to eight as the holiday progresses.

There is a widespread custom of giving Hanukkah gelt (money) and presents during the holiday. There is a long tradition of playing games of chance during the evenings of Hanukkah. The most widely played game is dreidel—a derivative of an old German gambling game. It is played with a four-sided top—on each side of which is one of the Hebrew letters, nun, gimmel, heh, and shin. Although these represent various gambling terms, they have been reinterpreted to mean a great miracle happened there.

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