

From the editor . . .

You ever get the feeling that newspapers only report bad news? The *Baltimore Sun's* front page was recently littered with headlines reminding readers that only ten years ago, the worst nuclear accident in the history of American commercial operation took place. Next to that story with its accompanying mood photo of the plant's cooling towers was a story about a massive oil spill in Alaska. The spill reportedly damaged islands and endangered already endangered wildlife. Below that was a story reporting a deep division between members of congress. Check, really, any paper on any given day, and you're likely to find similarly depressing stories. Good news seems to get lost in the din of bad news.

People have asked me why there never seems to be good news reported in the papers and on television. A seemingly innocent enough question--until you examine what that question is really asking.

News organizations have the job in this society of reporting "what's out there."

Among the values news people consider when deciding what's news and what's not news are things like prominence and impact. Often, but not always, it's the bad news that has the greatest direct impact on the readers, rather than the good.

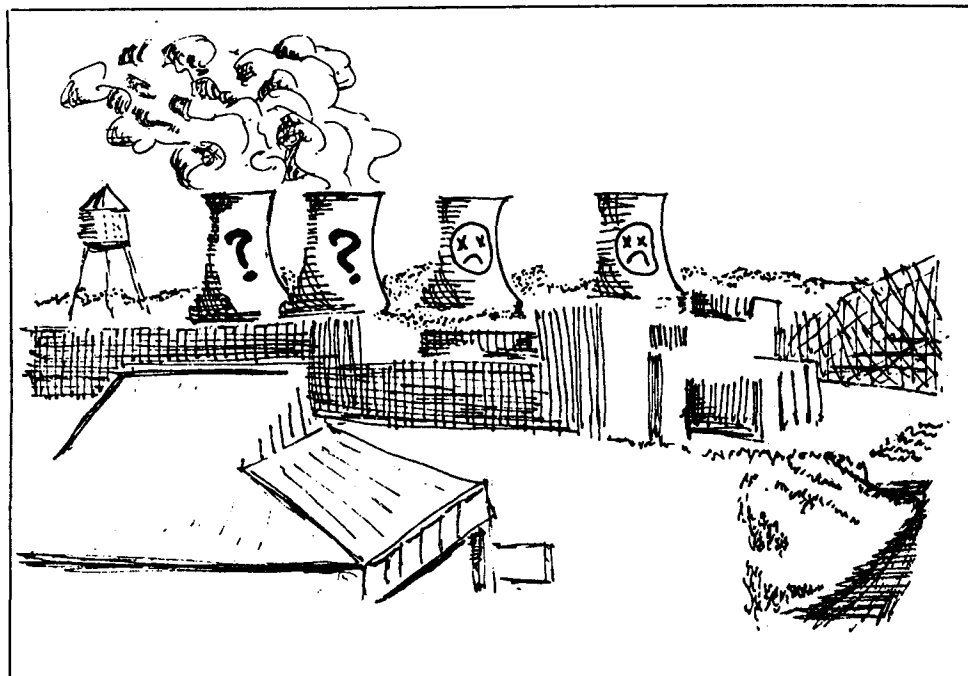
Further, newspapers function under the assumption that their reason for existing is to inform the public of what's taking place, giving readers some pertinent information upon which they may think and act.

When a professor quit in the middle of the semester, we felt it was an event that deserved some attention--not for the purpose of embarrassing the department or singling out any individuals, but to inform the student body that something was going on that might require its input.

Similarly, there have been rumors of various kinds of assaults, vandalism, and thefts on campus. While I respect the administration's claims of "confidentiality" in those cases, (no individuals should be unduly embarrassed) I sometimes think they're more interested in maintaining a squeaky-clean image than protecting people.

I, for one, am dying to know what the administration is doing about making this campus match the image they've created for it.

David Blymire, editor in chief



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

In the March 10 issue of *Capital Times*, you stated, "Words can build up or destroy . . . Words might just be the most powerful weapon we have against each other. But they can and should be used for good."

Next to your letter was a letter to the editor stating Penn State's stand against racial and cultural intolerance, which said, "The university has an obligation to maintain an environment conducive to fostering respect among various cultures represented in the University community."

Ironically, on the facing page was an article containing the words "bitch," "babe" and "slut," the phrase "you might do a song considering women as malign, destructive beings possessed by Satan," and referring to women as objects to be "picked up" and "used."

I suspect that if C.W. Heiser had used "honky," "nigger," or any other equally offensive racist term, the article would never have been printed, even as a satire.

As a female student and thereby a member of another very obvious minority at Penn State Harrisburg, I would appreciate your imposing on all of your contributing writers the same journalistic standards under which you yourself seem to labor, so that all members of the student body may be accorded the respect that we as human beings deserve.

Respectfully,
Sherry Achenbach

Dear Editor:

In the February 15, 1989 *Capital Times*, there was an article headlined as "Disgruntled Professor Resigns." The undersigned members of the MET Faculty and staff feel that there are some inaccuracies and mistaken impressions conveyed in that article. For many of us, our first inclination was to respond by addressing each item individually. Upon further consideration, we fear that such action might aggravate an already unpleasant situation that needs to be put behind us. For this reason, we would simply like the Campus Community to know that we support Professor Aungst and feel that he has always been sincere in his efforts to promote the quality of the MET Program.

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