

Letters to the Editor

Dear Stacy—There are NO PLANS WHATEVER to reduce the hours of the Penn State Harrisburg Library, contrary to the suggestion in a Letter to the Editor appearing in the November 18 issue. At present, the Library is open 94-3/4 hours per week. The operating schedule is by far the longest at any Campus College Library; as an SGA study confirmed two years ago. We are again extending our pre-final exam hours starting December 1, a week before other Penn State Libraries, including those at University Park, typically do so.

Friday and Saturday evening hours were not offered before the new library opened in January 2000, but the Library expanded its operating schedule in response to a suggestion from SGA, with financial support from the College Administration. In order to anticipate additional student needs, the Library also began opening earlier on Sundays (12:00 rather than 1:00) and weekday mornings (7:45 rather than 8:00).

In a serious financial exigency, the Library might consider an earlier closing on Saturday evenings as one of several cost-reduction options. Other units would face similar needs to economize. Should that ever occur, we would implement cutbacks carefully, in order to do the least possible harm to our students. However, no exigency of that magnitude appears imminent. I could not, even in my worst fiscal nightmares, imagine a situation in which the Library would eliminate weekend or evening hours. Those hours are essential for any academic institution, but they are crucial for a College with a large non-traditional population.

I hope this response will quell an unfortunate rumor. The Penn State Harrisburg Library is widely respected in American higher education, even being hailed as one of nine "champion libraries" in the United States last year by a South African planning team. We are deeply committed to delivering the "excellence in education" mentioned in the letter through our services, facilities, collections, technology and people. Access to the environment of the physical library, as well as its print and electronic resources, is vital to our students' academic success. We are dedicated to maintaining and expanding that access, not to restricting it.

Thank you for printing my response.

Sincerely yours,

Harold B. Shill, Ph.D.
Director

Men's and Women's
Hair Cuts



Nexus
Products

Olmsted Plaza Barber Shop

Jamesway Plaza No. 10

944-9364

Shop Hours

Monday-Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Friday

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Saturday

8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Front Cover:

The Nittany Lion helps dig the hole for the Meade Heights Time Capsule in The Village. Looking on is Provost and Dean Madlyn Hanes (center) and Joann Coleman (far left) amongst others.

Cover photo and design by Stacy De Angelo

Psychiana Dreaming

By Cathie McCormick for The Capital Times



I found salvation in a lecture over pizza and Pepsi. My savior gives much and demands little. He offers training in speaking directly to the almighty. He seeks no gratitude or adoration and does not recruit evangelists or sign me up for fundraising committees. I've already ordered a bracelet emblazoned with, "WWFBRD?" to remind me of his quiet life of support and service. I only wonder why it took me so long to find him.

I guess the adage, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears," is true. I'm ready for Frank B. Robinson. Until Nov. 7, he did not exist—at least not for me and the other pizza eaters in the Oliver LaGrone

Cultural Arts Center. In the name of research, Dr. Jessica Dorman, PSH assistant professor of American studies and literature visited Warsaw, Idaho last summer on a quest. She sought to discover the secrets of Psychiana, a mid-twentieth-century cult advertised in pulp magazines of the period. In keeping with the genre, the ads promised answers to health problems and debt. For a few dollars, Psychiana members would receive life-altering lessons and a direct connection to God. Dorman assumed Warsaw housed a delusional zealot or greedy scam artist—maybe both. She found a man. She uncovered an enigma. She came away changed—as I did from hearing her story.

Psychiana's creator, Frank B. Robinson, orchestrated the religion while maintaining the lifestyle of a quiet, successful businessman in the small Idaho town from 1929 until his death in 1948. He was a master of print advertising and his ads recruited thousands of followers. He did not promote his organization in Warsaw, but he did employ many of its residents. Robinson's wife and



Founder Frank B. Robinson

"She found a man. She uncovered an enigma. She came away changed—as I did from hearing her story"

children retained their membership in a local Protestant church. He infrequently visited Seattle to record promotional radio shows. He did not encourage visits from Psychiana followers—or

try to organize them into a community. Robinson spent most of his workdays personally responding to letters from potential or current members. These letters were warm and heartfelt, Dorman said. For a fee of a few dollars, members received instructions that amounted to what we now call positive affirmations and daily meditation. Robinson suggested that Psychiana initiates meditate at a certain time each day—knowing that he, and other followers, did the same. He told them the shared energy would make a difference. At the height of its success Psychiana earned a comfortable, but not extravagant living for Robinson and his family, Dorman said. According to letters Robinson received, peoples' lives were changed.

This doesn't surprise me. Unlike the religion of my youth, Robinson did not dole out commandments, guilty expectations or punishment for sins. He did not expect blind acceptance of hard to understand concepts like, "three persons in one God." He did not place himself as the intermediary between the people and the almighty. He did not ask for a tithing of people's annual salaries. His followers did not feel the anxiety of holier-than-thou competition with fellow church members. Robinson simply shared his enlightenment methods—for a modest (we'd call it a shipping and handling) fee. He did not ask the followers to believe something they didn't experience directly. Psychiana members relaxed, took a deep breath and stayed home. No showy sign of faith or membership.

Here is a man who shunned fame and settled for modest financial success. He provided jobs. His business sold hope and empowerment. He ministered one-on-one to correspondents. He lived a quiet, uncomplicated life. It didn't have to be that way. Thousands signed on for his by-mail training. It's a short trip from there to a conference and retreat center/ashram, speaking engagements, radio shows or tent-revival evangelism. Robinson chose differently.

My frantic, complicated life needed the example. Robinson is a prophet who can truly say, "do what I do."

Thank GOD... FOR THE ATOMIC BOMB!

POWER! POWER! POWER!

FREE

PSYCHIANA
MOSCOW, IDAHO

One of Psychiana's posters