

# OPINION and REVIEW

## EDITORIALS

### Student Apathy

by Anthony DiTrollo

Probably the biggest problem on our campus is student apathy. We simply do not get enough student involvement in activities held after hours. Not many students want to be involved in student groups, either. A good example is that 3 weeks into the school year, the Student Government Association had an open meeting for anyone interested in joining S.G.A. The Student Government even called approximately 100 interested freshmen about the meeting. About 70% said they would be there. The next day, 4 freshmen showed up. This is probably not the only example. I believe a lot of other student groups could tell similar stories.

Dances are held and low turnouts of students are the results. It seems the only students that show up are the people in the groups who sponsor the events.

If you have any requests, suggested changes, or ideas for an interesting event, let the Student Government or Student Activities Commission know. Stop and see them in the Lion's Den any week day from 11:30 - 12:30 or leave a message in their mailboxes in room 115 Main Bldg.

### A Freshman's View of Penn State

by Judy Belson

College! The very word sent shivers down my spine. Being separated from all your friends, even your family, at times is scary. Proof of the big world out there, ready for all of us to tackle. The shiny golden key of knowledge. How can I leave behind everyone? Simply because it is time now that we focus on our selves, our own lives, our own futures. After all the trouble and worrying about applications and tests, it is over. The moment we have waited for in anticipation, like Miss America, has arrived.

As I write this now, I reflect on many faces. People from the past, people from the present, and hopefully, the future. College is more than just looking for "babes." It is the foundation of controlling our own futures.

When I first came to Penn State, I was very ambivalent. It's too big! There are so many classes! No one will know my name - I'll just be a number! I can't get used to so many changes and schedules! There will be no one to care about me! The Park!

But I soon found out that many of these things weren't as bad as they seemed. In my high school, the senior class was larger than the freshman class here - in only one building! Needless to say, I became used to the three buildings and student lounges quickly. I enjoy the freedom - no detentions for being late or cutting class or not having a hall pass. Going to the mall!

I became used to my schedule of classes. It's really great having a variety on different days. Because I work in the bookstore, and because I've met a lot of great, friendly people in class, I know a great deal of people who really do care. I'm not just a number! My classes can feel at times like a family. There is a unity among us. We are all different, yet share common interests, feelings, and goals. People all around Penn State care. Finally, the Park will be an interesting experience too. All of us Penn Staters meeting in one place - the Park! It may not be the Promised Land, but we all share with pride the knowledge that we are all from Penn State.

## Library Notes:

### What's All the Noise About?

by Samantha Grace

"What do YOU think of 'noise' in the library?"

"Is that a hint?" responded a student.

This was the beginning of a conversation held recently about the noise level in the library. It seems that most students who use the library don't really mind the noise, . . . unless they're the ones trying to study for that big Econ test.

"If you don't mind the noise when you are not studying, what do you do when you have to study?" "I go home," was the response. It makes you wonder why it has to be that way. One purpose of a library is to provide a quiet place where students can go to study.

As I continue to ask students why it is so easy to talk rather than study in the Delaware campus library, most answered that there is really no where else to go to talk because our campus is so small.

The library is a very comfortable, convenient place to go between classes, and

it is very easy to get caught up in the latest gossip. Sara Whildin, our campus librarian, agreed. She doesn't mind casual conversation, as long as it doesn't disturb other students and cannot be heard. Her purpose as librarian is to help students find information, not to discipline them about when and where to talk. She wants students to have access to the library and loves to see students using and enjoying the information available to them. She informed me that more study carrels are on order and will replace 12 of the lounge chairs and 2 tables. Hopefully, removing these lounge chairs will reduce the noise level.

New new cafeteria is a plus because it allows people to take their conversations there instead of the library. Ms. Whildin informed me that the old cafeteria, located in one of the modular buildings in front of the Commons, is supposed to be renovated into another student lounge. The lounge chairs from the library will be moved there, and hopefully, students will be attracted there.

It's funny how our campus library is so different from other college libraries I've visited in which I could hear a pin drop. Students wouldn't think of talking loudly there as they do here. Our library is taken for granted. When we see others talking, we find it easy to do the same.

Diversions happen so easily. You find yourself seriously trying to study, when a friend comes in, sees you, and sits down to ask how your weekend went. Of course, you answer, and before you know it, there are 10 people at one table talking about the big party on Friday night. The conversation, which starts out innocently, usually results in the students being asked to leave the library. This is something Sara Whildin does not like to do.

Last year, this was a problem which

was solved by denying a few students access to the library. Ms. Whildin described this as "an all time low" because she wants every student to be able to use the services of the library. She hopes that this doesn't happen again. But, if noise gets to be a serious problem, she will turn it over to the campus disciplinary board to rule on a solution, as it did last year.

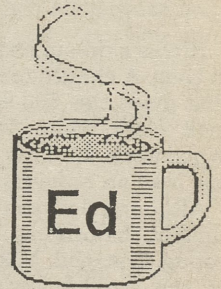
Ms. Whildin informed me that there has been "a remarkable improvement in

the noise level since last year," and she is "grateful that the students are doing their part."

What it all comes down to is self-discipline. We have to realize that school is much more important than discussing the past weekend. The students know what kind of conduct is expected of them in the library. Someday, students will learn how serious school really is to our future, and hopefully, by then, it will not be too late.

## THE FRONT DESK

By Ed Tomezsko  
Campus Executive Officer



"If it's green and wiggles, it's biology; if it smells, it's chemistry; if it doesn't work, it's physics." That phrase is what I knew about science when I decided to become a chemist back at North Catholic High School in Philadelphia.

I am troubled by the continuing reports that American students are less interested in the sciences and engineering. There are, in fact, fewer and fewer scientists and engineers in training. The net result of this decline is the loss of the American competitive edge in, what we now call, the global economy. We could become a "dependent" society for technological development. Is that a dangerously short-sighted position to hold in a global economy?

One advantage I had back at North was Father Kelly. He taught me chemistry, in spite of my unwillingness to learn it. High school was no challenge for me. Chemistry was just another one of the courses I had to take. "Just get it over with" was my philosophy. But Father Kelly had planted a seed in my brain and it sprouted. Chemistry was fun for us in laboratory - we laughed when the explosions took place, we thrived on the smoke and smells of chemistry.

College introduced me to more of the same - no challenge in the first year, not too much challenge in the second year. Enter Don, the genius and Professor of Chemistry, into my life. A lot like Father Kelly, but Don was Jewish. Don's faith is important to this story because in our Catholic society, he was very different. For example, we had to switch our chemistry social life from Friday night root beer and pizza at Martini's in Bryn Mawr, to Wednesday night because on Friday Don was in the synagogue. One advantage to the rest of us was that on Wednesday we could eat pepperoni too.

Chemistry got harder in the third and fourth year - very much harder. Physics crept into my brain and math differentiated my mental process into small pieces. Chemistry was still fun, but it had become work.

Don's influence on me was profound because he helped me learn to like working hard with my brain. We learned more about real "chemistry" from Don eating pizza or pitching horse shoes or playing baseball or touch football or talking in his office. You see, Don really cared that those of us who wanted to be chemists would know that he, too, wanted us to be chemists. He invested himself in us. And because of his involvement, we happily changed social nights for him.

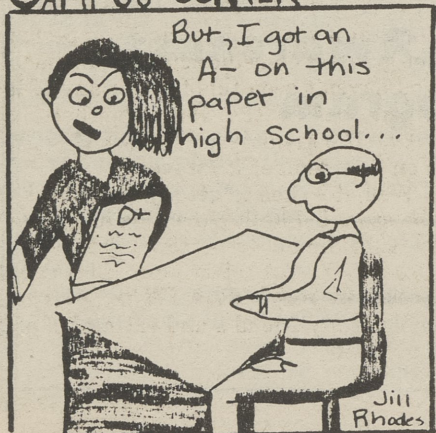
That's what a good teacher is supposed to do, help you want to be somebody. I guess the greatest compliment that Don was paid (at least in my mind at the time and without him ever knowing it) happened when I was teaching chemistry up on the third floor of the Main Building. After a particularly brilliant lecture to eighty very frazzled students, one of them came up to me, ready to kill, and said, "You really like this stuff!"

Here's the point. Those of you who are working for a career full of fun and action should look toward working hard. We have our supply of faculty, like Don, the genius, on campus now teaching full blast. Then you'll find the joy that I got from chemistry in your major.

You should think about the question at the top of the story. We do have a responsibility to a global society as well as global economy. There are lots of great questions waiting to be answered. The answers will come from hard working brains.

I took my first course in physics when I was a senior at North. I found there that I could deal more easily with smells than with things (and people) that don't work. And I do still like it.

## CAMPUS CORNER



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