

OPINION and REVIEW

Editorial

To Smoke Or Not To Smoke

by Jennifer Darr

Smoking. Many of us do it, and many of us do not. I think by now we all know that smoking can cause deadly diseases such as emphysema, cancer, lung disease, and heart disease. However, some of us still do it. Why? There must be a reason.

Most of us who smoke started when we were in Junior high school or even elementary school. That is roughly around twelve to fourteen years of age. Let's face it; we were dumb. We fell under peer pressure. It was cool to smoke back then.

But now, as we depart adolescence and enter into adulthood, we have started to reevaluate smoking. We didn't know that it was so bad at that age, and we also didn't know that it was so addicting. (I didn't even know what the word "addictive" meant when I was thirteen.) However, addiction is real; it isn't something that people just make up to justify their actions.

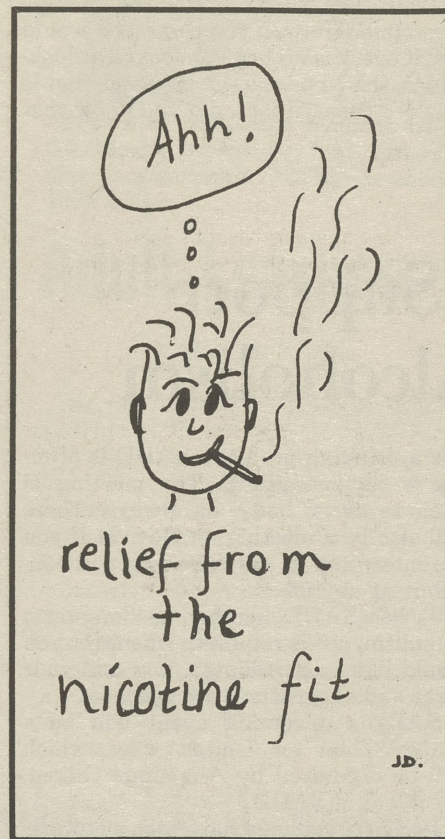
I think that the new nineties "healthy" generation has acknowledged non-smokers and their air. Furthermore, I think that non-smokers have been given a tremendous amount of well-deserved rights.

However, smokers should be given a few rights also. With all of these new laws about where one can and can't smoke, I think that some non-smokers have gotten a little too pompous. These people are the ones that are sitting more than ten feet away from you and let out a few sarcastic coughs while you are smoking.

When I smoke, I respect all others around me, smokers and non-smokers alike. But because of the few inconsiderate people who let their smoke trail into other people's faces, we "considerate smokers" have to take the rap for them.

Something that non-smokers often do is tell the smoker to "just quit". I have news for them; it is not that easy. Once, a person who I was going to a party with the next night asked me to "not smoke for the day" because smoking isn't appealing and it makes me smell like smoke. In my opinion, that is selfish and inconsiderate. That is similar to asking an overeater not to eat for a day. If I could stop for a whole day, I would quit for good. I'm sure that is the case with many other smokers.

I am not saying that smoking is a good or healthy habit, but it should be treated like the addiction that it is. Non-smokers need to take into consideration smokers' rights, just as smokers need to respect non-smokers' rights. Don't you think so?



'Physician' Has The Prescription

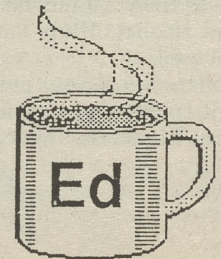
Hedgerow Theatre presents Moliere's comedy, *PHYSICIAN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF* Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8 pm through November 24. Tickets are \$12.

PHYSICIAN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF fills the prescription for laughter. In the play, Sganarelle, a woodcutter, is persuaded to pretend he is a doctor to cure the dumbness of Lucinde, who has vowed not to talk until her father, Geronte, allows her to marry the dashing Leandre instead of the wealthy Horace.

PHYSICIAN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF has been an audience favorite at Hedgerow since the 1930's. Jasper Deeter, founder of Hedgerow, played the Physician for many years. Richard Basehart played the young lover Leandre. In Hedgerow's current production, directed by Yvonne Vincic, David zum Brunnen portrays the doctor as Paul Kuhn takes on the role of Leandre. These seasoned Hedgerow actors, supported by a strong cast, promise to cure what ails you.

THE FRONT DESK

by Ed Tomezsko
Campus Executive Officer



E pluribus unum. We left you last issue in this column looking for the Great Seal to find the words *e pluribus unum* on a ribbon clutched in the beak of the American eagle. For your homework, you were to take a look at the Great Seal and think about its meaning.

Now that you have done the homework, we have a common ground to continue this discussion. The United States drew its people from all over the world. Some people arrived here escaping from oppression, some simply changed countries, some came here as an oppressed person, and others interestingly became oppressed after they got here. How could someone get oppressed after they got here, you ask? I'd ask why come in the first place if oppression is the reward. I'll answer my own question by saying cultural diversity and that basic, and flawed, tenet of society that each person needs someone to look down on, to blame for the ills, poor luck of their own person causes oppression.

Cultural diversity in itself is not the problem, but rather in a diverse society, differences are fairly obvious. Where there are differences, you will find strong desires to make comparisons. What do I have relative to what you have? Do I deserve what you have more than you deserve what you have? If I can observe a difference between you and me, do I have a right to ask the question in the first place?

Comparisons are almost an American way of life. But of what value are comparisons? My simplistic answer is they have value only if you learn something from the comparison.

A baseball player who hits .200 and gets \$3.5M a year is a good comparison point for me. When these people are interviewed on radio and television, I am struck by their language limitations - that's the teacher in me. Some of them can't string a whole sentence together. But then with \$3.5 million, who needs to? You could hire yourself a speech writer and a speech giver and never say another public word. That would be something - \$3.5 million each year for as long as your legs or your arms hold out.

The lesson here is that, on a relative scale, there are very few baseball players and thus this comparison is made on the fringe of the statistical distribution of the world's population. In other words, they're on the edges of the real world - but they do stand out. Wealth; diversity.

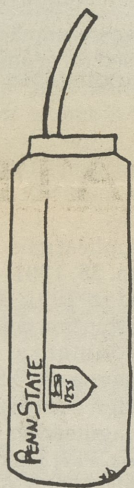
African Americans, Latinos, Southeast Asians, Far East Asians, Native Americans stand out. Racism exists, strictly related to skin color, facial features, and vocal accents. The physically handicapped people stand out. Discrimination exists for wheel chair-bound people, sometimes because they cannot negotiate tight office spaces. Sometimes less understandable reasons are given. The differences between man and woman are obvious. Yet there is gender discrimination, strictly related to gender.

Discrimination is never related to ability. Why? Because ability is not obvious at the first glance and discrimination is very quickly apparent to the person discriminated against. How many times have you heard how hard it is to find a "qualified" _____ (you fill in the blank) student, or faculty member, or employee? Discrimination is divisive to society.

Here is the point: diversity is a fact in the United States. A university ought to be building community inside the institution. A university should be the very safest place, outside of your own family, that is, to be yourself. We are here to exchange knowledge, not to worry about who has what. Here we promote intellectual freedom; we encourage intellectual experimentation. Here we challenge ideas and get better ones; we expect to find differences. Here diversity ought to be supreme. It it? You tell me.

Maybe we need to be simple with our answers to the above questions because the more we look, the more likely we are to find differences. There is no crisis related to the fact of differences among us. How we learn from the comparisons and how we utilize the learning from our differences is critical.

At Penn State, you are free to be yourself and it is a safe place to be yourself, provided each of us commits to the proposition that this is a mutually supportive environment. When we support one another, the racial discrimination, gender discrimination, religious discrimination, sexual preference discrimination disappear. Part of the educational process is to develop the courage to have principle stand out. That's not easy. *E pluribus unum* - that's you, by the way!



When you get thirsty,
do you grab
a boring can
of soda or
do you grab
a Penn
State Squeeze Bottle?

THE LION'S EYE

Vol. XXII, No. 4

The Pennsylvania State University
Delaware County Campus

November, 1990

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The LION'S EYE is published Monthly during the academic year by the students of the Delaware County Campus.

Submissions are welcome from all students, faculty and staff. Material must be typed, double spaced, and submitted in the LION'S EYE mailbox located in room 115 main building.

Letters, articles and cartoons represent only the views of their authors.

Advertisements do not necessarily reflect editorial opinion.

THE LION'S EYE regrets it cannot guarantee the return of any material submitted.

All submissions are subject to editing.