

# Penn State Collegian

Published semi-weekly during the College year by students of the Pennsylvania State College, in the interest of Students, Faculty, Alumni, and Friends of the College.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 1924

## THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES

The proposal of the College to abolish June houseparty has been food for much thought on the part of the undergraduates. But it takes no great reflection to see the similarity that exists between the present situation of the fraternities and the one that confronted Damocles more than two thousand years ago.

Now classical mythology is a subject that is far removed from the curriculums of the practical-minded agriculturists and engineers of this institution, and for their benefit it will be well to recall that famous legend. Damocles was invited to dine with the tyrant ruler of Syracuse. Surrounded by the luxuries of that ancient court, he suddenly perceived a great sword suspended above his head by a single thread. There it hung as a constant threat to the monarch of Syracuse.

The comparison is obvious. The fraternities at Penn State are in the royal shoes of Damocles. The sword that threatens them is the abolishment of the June houseparty.

But it will be remembered that the legend makes no mention of the fatal weapon ever disturbing the regal hairs of that ancient tyrant's head. Probably he was a just and benevolent ruler and so was spared.

Again there is the obvious comparison. The fraternities at Penn State have been "benevolent" to the institution. Co-operation with the College in its policies, loyal support of its financial campaigns, and the sending out of their members into the field of college activities, working for the advancement and best interests of Penn State, have been advanced as arguments by student leaders.

Dean Warnock has stated recently that the fraternities have fallen down on two major counts. Scholarship and moral conduct at fraternity social functions are low. He points to better conditions in some colleges and the students cite worse conditions in others. The problem resolves itself into the perplexing question of "how high is low?"

Whatever arguments student leaders may advance, the fact remains that reform is the object of the college authorities in taking action against houseparty. There are minor problems, it is true, but their solution is not difficult.

Next week the College Senate meets. Upon its vote depends the fate of the June houseparty. The members of the Senate will make a wise decision if they keep the sword of houseparty abolishment suspended above the heads of the fraternities. With that constant threat as a prod it is certain that these organizations will take steps to insure a thorough house-cleaning.

But let the College Senate cut the thread and the sword of houseparty abolishment will fall to wound deeply the spirit of fraternity men. The incentive for reform will be gone, and where will be the gain for the benefits that result from such action will be small in comparison.

### A REMINDER

Aristotle, that ancient Greek philosopher who lived some twenty-two hundred years ago, is noted and remembered for some of the thoughts which he developed and taught at that time. Some of his wisdom has been handed down from generation to generation as worthy of record, but many theories which he compounded have been disproved or replaced by those who came after his day. However, one teaching which he advanced and which later became obsolete and unacceptable so far as present day standards are concerned, can be directed to Penn State with both barrels and hit a problem on the campus with decided accuracy.

The ancient sage taught that a body in motion will come to rest unless there be a force to keep it moving. Newton took exception to this, but it can be applied directly to the question of Penn State customs and sportsmanship. A position of 'rest' seems to be a natural condition for all movements, material or mental. Unless the undergraduates are constantly prodded and reminded at intervals regarding the unconscious laxness in their attitude toward and regard for customs and traditions of the College, the tendency is for the marks of true student spirit to suffer and deteriorate.

During the earlier part of the year, soon after the College opened, the 'hello' habit was at its best on the campus and seemed more strongly rooted than at any previous time. Men in the majority of cases greeted each other with evident pleasure. But the time has come when they must be prodded. No doubt the dreariness of the winter season served to dampen the habit considerably. Now, however, the time has come when each man must take it upon himself to give new life to this most necessary and desirable tradition. And it is all too evident that the freshmen are among the most negligent in this matter.

Another point of weakness is to be found in the cheering and singing at indoor athletic events. Although this year has been no worse in this respect than previous seasons, nevertheless there has been room for much improvement. And again the freshmen must be singled out. That they are not yet fully and thoroughly acquainted with the songs and cheers was clearly brought to light over the past week end. The gathering together of first year men in the fall before football season for cheering practice is commendable. If such mass meetings were held again at this time of year, the songs and cheers would be renewed and refreshed and in some cases taught, for it appears that there are many who do not know them.

## RESULTS OF GLEE CLUB CONTEST ARE ANNOUNCED

The complete results and the titles of the clubs that took part in the eighth annual intercollegiate Glee Club contest held in New York, recently, are as follows:

First—Yale, 288, second—Columbia and Syracuse (tied), 280, third—Harvard, 236, fourth—Penn State and Cornell (tied), 217, fifth—Dartmouth, 207, sixth—New York University, 211, seventh—Middlebury, 213, eighth—University of Pennsylvania and Princeton (tied), 212, ninth—Westley, 211, 237, and tenth—Amherst, 231.

The clubs were ranked on the point system with a maximum of three hundred points. The Penn State Glee Club was among the three clubs that received a perfect rating on the rendition of the light song.

## Thoughts of Others

### WEEK-ENDS

Cutting classes on week-ends is a matter that is not regarded with favor by the majority of professors in Pennsylvania State College. It appears that this same problem presents itself in many institutions and colleges are at a loss as to how to deal with the matter. The importance of the degree of the offense.

The following article, taken from the Yale "Daily News," gives some idea of the situation at Yale.

Members of the faculty teaching undergraduate courses which meet on Saturdays have become accustomed, though not reconciled to seeing from ten to twenty-five percent of the class room empty. The cutting of one or more lectures on the part of the students who feel in law of compulsion to visit New York weekly, is taken as an incidental and reliable accomplishment of that event. What is implied in this attitude?

The implication is clearly that such classes are less important than the engagement out of town. This view may be right, every man is the best judge of the relative importance of his own engagements. But it means that the educational purpose of the undergraduate in question is second in rank to some other purpose. The weekly exodus constitutes a negation of the idea of a full-time education. It is not that study is the primary business of the students. There is no need to labor over this point. It is almost self-evident that constant indulgence in Saturday cutting results that they are reducing their class work to something below a decent minimum.

The powers that be, can hardly be expected to sympathize with this view. They will most certainly not remove the present penalty on week-end absence. The required attendance at Sunday Church, they could not be blamed for following the example of other colleges in making these penalties prohibitory. True this would be a genuine paternalism, but it would be hard to convince the unbiased that it was needless. It would be a plain case of limiting freedom in order to prevent the abuse of educational opportunities.

There is not so far as we know, imminent danger of such a drastic step. Nor do we advocate it, it is much better that the situation should be remedied by a salutary restriction on the part of the students themselves. The problem requires more serious attention from the undergraduate body, if it hopes to show that demands for greater freedom in harmony with the scholarly purpose of the University.

### DIRECTOR GRANT IS HONORED AT ROCHESTER CONFERENCE

At the eighth annual convention of the Eastern Music Supervisors Conference held at Rochester, New York, on March fourth, Richard W. Grant, director of music at Penn State, was elected the new president.

The Eastern Music Supervisors' Convention has a membership of between seven and eight hundred and is one of the outstanding organizations that are influential in the development and growth of public school music. Director Grant is a charter member of the organization.

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## Letter Box

March 11th, 1924  
Mr. T. E. Helm, Editor,  
Penn State Collegian,  
State College, Penna.  
Dear Mr. Editor:

Now that the novelty and excitement of the reforms lately proposed by the College Senate have worn off, the time has come when every student should soberly consider the merits of the situation. Many of us get up where we are and thoughtfully accept most things the students' minds. If our problems are to be successfully solved.

During the present year so many reforms have come from the College authorities contrary to student sentiment as to fix indelibly the impression that as far as the faculty is concerned student government is in existence in name only. Have the older men on the campus forgotten that Penn State has always pointed with pride to her student self-government system which is the very best of Penn State spirit? This is the only conclusion that any thinking Penn State student in each in the present situation.

Two years ago the College Senate came into being and since the establishment of its standing committee on Student Welfare the faculty has taken a lively interest in matters which formerly belonged to the various branches of student government. First here, for the powers of any of these bodies extend has never been settled. A proper arrangement would have been a co-operative working scheme so that both student and faculty views could have been combined and mutual understandings reached. Is it too little to ask a closer coordination of the student and faculty sections of our governing system? Such a union would give both sections a better point of view and enable both to work more intelligently.

Student Council does not hold its powers on such a lofty plane as not to recognize the more mature judgment of the men on the faculty. I feel it realizes that it must look to these more mature minds for a large amount of guidance. But when the Council finds that its sentiments are directly opposed and overlooked in matters of student welfare there is a loss, and a very sound one, for complaint.

Every Penn State man regards the recent ruling of the Board of Trustees concerning student cuts as a direct violation of personal rights. It is with a great deal of interest that the students will watch the carrying out of this ruling.

On the matter of College Calendar

conditions, they will almost inevitably choose the light.

Every student hopes for a more harmonious working together of students and faculty. Today that spirit is seriously undermined and I think that this is not due entirely to the student point of view. In fact I have much of the blame at the door of the faculty.

The name quickly the faculty points that students are jealous of the good name of the college and strive to do to do that which is right in their minds the more quickly our problems will be solved with mutual satisfaction. The ultimate goal in the conduct of college life can come about only when there is the utmost mutual trust in the oneness of purpose of student and teacher and the sincere confidence of each in the devotion of all to the institution to which they owe equal allegiance.

Very respectfully yours,  
DONALD V. BAUDLER

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