

Penn State Collegian

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

A CURRENT EVENTS TEST

Everyone recognizes such names as Herbert Hoover, Calvin Coolidge and Al Smith, and to a certain degree can identify each with events that have made history within the past few months and years. If the average college student, however, were required to outline the Cruise Bill and tell its ultimate fate, to co-ordinate Leon Trotsky with communism in Soviet Russia, to relate such names as Colonel Henry L. Stimson, Colonel Robert W. Stewart, Baron von Huenfeld and General Bramwell Booth to current events, to state a major cause for the recent rapid drop in the stock market, or to attempt a refutation of St. John Ivin's attack upon the American theater, it is quite possible that a long line of goose eggs would be chalked up as a register of his empty-headedness. Of course, every hand would be waving frantically to blurt forth the answer if the whereabouts of Gene Tunney, the activities of Jack Sharkey, or the basketball record of Mudville college were in question.

College students neglect the newspaper. That is a well-known fact. The ordinary student gains an occasional glimpse of happenings foreign to sports and his particular institution through a stray news reel. The newspaper is put in the category of Latin, Greek and smallpox.

Every now and then, an enterprising student awakens from his lethargy, and begins to absorb a little of the day's news, but perhaps he would have profited more by parroting his fellows and plodding along in the old rut, since a Penn State professor self-importantly remarked some time ago that no faith can be placed in the accuracy of the newspaper anyway. It behooves the engineer to know his mathematics, the farmer should have a thorough knowledge of the fundamentals of agriculture, but neither can lead a well-rounded life without knowing something of current events.

Last year a number of Eastern colleges and universities collaborated in sponsoring a current events test, a valuable trophy being awarded to the winner. Individual competitions were held by the institutions concerned. Each winner then represented his alma mater at an intercollegiate contest.

Naturally enough, such a contest appeals most strongly to that select group of students who keep abreast of the day's news without prodding. The possibility occurs, nevertheless, that the contest would reach out and interest students previously self-centered. There is everything to gain through such an innovation as an events test, and nothing to lose.

A current events test at Penn State need not necessarily be an intercollegiate affair at first, although that is preferable. An all-Collegiate contest would suffice at the outset. Doubtless, if it were to be held under faculty supervision, the necessary preparations would fall to the lot of the School of Liberal Arts. As well, a contest such as suggested provides a worthy topic for consideration by Student Council. The idea is respectfully submitted to both

R. P. S.

PSYCHOLOGICAL POSSIBILITIES

People of the present day, according to psychologists of behavioristic nature, use only about twenty per cent of their gray matter and are therefore wasting time and energy.

These statements were generally accepted, most people taking them with a fair-sized grain of salt. Recently, however, the psychological insult struck home on one man and he forged himself to the fore of a group of educators and claimed that any man of "average" intelligence and normal health could do anything he set his mind on doing. To uphold his bold statement he offered to prove it. Being of middle age, he offered himself as a subject to master any field, which this group of intelligentsia decided would be most difficult. They accepted. He was to learn to play the violin-cello, of which he knew absolutely nothing, in the period of six months. Scuffling at the length of time given him, averring that it was too long for a real test, he changed it to sixty days, thirty days of which he intended to spend in Europe.

The end of the experiment came abruptly—for the intelligentsia. Dr. Frederick B. Robinson, president of the College of the City of New York and advocate of mental concentration, appeared before his inquisitors and played such selections as Handel's "Largo," Massenet's "Elegie," Pergolesi's "Tre Giorni," and Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." All in thirty days time.

It was a sad rebuttal for the eminent psychologists but it proved certain points. It, in fact, did more, if people will but heed the lesson it teaches. Many students of

average intelligence and better are falling behind their classmates, dropping out to face the problems of the world as best they can with the equipment nature has presented them—but undeveloped. Try as they will, with few exceptions, failure and remorse stalk relentlessly on their trail, as it did in college.

To use a term psychologists refute, they lack will-power. These unfortunate persons find certain things not to their liking and refuse to concentrate on them and in so doing admit defeat. Dr. Robinson has solved their problems. His next task will be educating the average type to a point of acceptance and practice. If he succeeds it will mean a great change in college conditions of the present day. If carried out far enough it will mean the practical elimination of the long lists of students leaving college because of low marks.

Dr. Robinson is not in favor of the popular system of cramming before an examination, regarding this question in a different light. His main point, which he attempted to prove, was that concentrated study is all that is necessary to learn a thing.

Q. E. B.

Collegiate Definitions

NUMBER 11—REGISTRATION

Registration is that process whereby the collegian declares his intent of submitting to the yoke of study for another period of eighteen weeks. The procedure involves much juggling of courses, examination of bank books, and argument with would-be advisors. Following severe straining and mental effort, the student is listed, enrolled, and his good purpose entered in the archives of his chosen institution.

The resultant schedule can be described by only one of two terms, it is terrible, or else it is a snap. The first implies 8 o'clock classes, dead hours, or a week with the total hours approaching forty. And as the newly registered one regards the mess, the sleepy look in his eye portends no good for the first hours. Such a schedule provides ample opportunity for self-pity. The holder of the "snap" becomes a fresh-air fiend, at it were, and never thinks of sleeping in the morning; but arises, takes a beauty walk, plays golf and tennis, or eats ice cream and cake.

At some time during the registering racket the harassed student matches bravely up to a booth marked "treasure" and slaps down a hundred dollars or so. But as the end of the semester approaches he usually discovers that he has walked out without his package.

The Bullophor's Chair

"Why do students cram for examinations?"
Smithers: That's easy. So they'll pass the course.
"That's not exactly what I meant. In a comparatively few hours of concentrated study the student may stuff his head full enough of facts to pass the examination, but those facts will not stay with him. By the time final week is over it's ten to one that he's forgotten all of the knowledge he crammed."
I should have asked you why students put off so much studying until the eleventh hour?"

Smithers: Because they're too lazy, I guess.
"Well, Smithers, I guess you're right. They're too damn lazy to study more than two weeks of the semester. Now I've heard that college is a place not only to absorb facts and figures but also to learn the correct habits of mind and living. Is that true, Smithers?"

Smithers: Certainly. Facts and figures aren't any good if you don't know how to use them. If you are nothing more than a storehouse of knowledge, you'd be placed in a dusty niche to grow old and moth-eaten waiting for someone to consult you, like an encyclopedia in a public library.

"Then I don't suppose the world has much use for a procrastinator?"
Smithers: Of course not.

"Students, I suppose, carry their mental habits with them after graduation?"
Smithers: It's a tough job to change after the plastic age is past.

"Well, I suppose the examiners will have a tough job after they graduate. Ho-hum."

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Berates R. O. T. C.
February 8, 1929

To the Editor:
With the filing of the first semester grades, a general wave of criticism of R. O. T. C. is sweeping the student body. Not one of the most popular courses at any time, the number of failures on this term is arousing unusual condemnation of both the subject and the manner in which it is conducted.

It appears that the new army officers are making a determined attempt to make a regular course out of what is universally regarded by the students as a "grape" and the blight of the freshman and sophomore, and perhaps, junior, years. By means of weekly exams and embarrassing oral questions, they are trying to determine how much the forced-to-be soldier knows about where the third five on the ten rank directs his first five shots and how many inches the rifle put should be from the third toe of the right foot in parade rest.

The amount of work the department would like the student to do is easily equal to the usual three-credit course. Thanks to the student on the left with the book in his lap, however, this is unnecessary. And why, anyway, the classes? It seems to me, after marching over the same field for four semesters through driving rain, pelting hail, sweltering heat, and biting cold, that the effort and hours of the drill period are commensurate to the one credit awarded for passing. If we must do the three credit quantity, why not the three credit mark?

Up to this time the value of knowing how to shoot a rifle, to steal over a section of ground without the enemy hearing me, and driver's knowledge has been a rather doubtful. Not one of a hundred students, I am certain, will ever have occasion to use the material disseminated in R. O. T. C. What, therefore, can be the excuse for the recitations, except perhaps to torture the unlucky victim. In former years, the hour has given many a student the opportunity to catch up on his sleep. Now the officers have become so impatient as to rudely arouse any gently-snoring individual with visions of more pleasant things than drawing contours. Something should be done about this.

And why, I should also like to know, does the length of the whisks on the chin have something to do with our marks? Further, I wonder if the officers are really so optimistic as to expect the students to possess their uniforms.

What is undoubtedly the prize of them all is the fact that the officers seem to be laboring under the delusion that the men in the classes are yet in the grade school category. I know of one student, whose work in the class was of a two average, who received a minus two because of talking in class the day anyone to sit in an R. O. T. C. lecture and not either fall asleep or exchange notes with his neighbor.

A "ROOKED" ROOKIE

Thoughts of Others

The Immaturity of Students

A famous university dean said recently, "The youth of college age today is immature morally and as a social being as it is undeveloped intellectually." If this were intended as an uncomplimentary criticism we would have put its author down as one who has grown old in his service to college students. But we prefer to believe that he was attempting to chart in this cryptic way the modern purpose of higher education. If each one of these things were not true of all of us who are associated with the colleges, what further need would there be for the college? The glory of youth and the hope of progress in this world lie in that very capacity for moral, social and intellectual development to which the dean points. This is doubly true because students themselves are coming increasingly to rec-

ognize that education is something more than the acquiring of a few facts, skills and rules. To use a Russellian phrase, they are claiming the right to "participate in their own education." In no phase of college life has this been more true than in the Christian Associations. The genius of these societies is that they represent the organized Christian conscience of each local campus, tackling the job of creating a newer and a better moral and religious life.

Immaturity in rare cases means a permanent incapacity for growth, but, as applied to college youth today, it may mean that the moral and intellectual sap is flowing freely and it is yet unobscured by those tougher fibers which come with maturity.

Is College Worthwhile?
"A college education is not a necessity to success in the business world," stated Merle Crowell, editor of the American Magazine, in an interview. Mr. Crowell visited the campus to take part in the program of a newspaper conference, delivering an address on "The Open Gate."

"While a college education is not a necessity, it is most certainly an asset. It is in reality a tool, whereby the college man can help himself in his chosen profession," he elaborated.

The editor and publisher further has a distinct view of the attitude of the college man after graduation. "If the college graduate can forget that he is a college graduate and humble himself enough to learn his business from the ground up, he will no doubt surpass the non-college man. This, however, many college men are unable to do."

COLLEGIANS IN THE MOVIES

Editor's Note: The following is one of a series of articles, written on Hollywood life, by the editor of the University of Southern California's Daily Trojan, which will be published in the COLLEGIAN at regular intervals.

By Virgil M. Pinkley
What can you learn from a man in three minutes? Perhaps the best answer would be that the man is a writer. The writer had three minutes with Jesse L. Lasky, first vice-president of the Paramount Famous Lasky Corporation, and learned a great deal. "Know what you want, go get it, have a purpose in life, always give more than is expected, know your field, don't try to beat a master at his own game, work with a fixed purpose, and many other expressions were uttered by Jesse Lasky as he drew quick conclusions to each statement."

Mr. Lasky is a pioneer and one of the foremost motion picture producers in the world today. Jesse Lasky attended the University of Santa Clara. His chief associate in the Hollywood studios is B. F. Schubert, from the City College of New York. The millions of dollars that are spent annually by the Paramount studios goes through the hands of these college-trained men. They place the studios approval on the selection of a picture, or the signing of an actor or writer. Upon their judgment, the success of their company depends.

After talking with Jesse Lasky and watching him work in the studio, one can easily understand why his company has won a majority of the awards for the best picture made during each of the past five years over all other studios combined. He walks through the studio with a spry, quick step. His eyes move in all directions and he makes mental notes as he surveys all that is going on. Although a young man, he has the knowledge and experience of men many years his senior.

"The trouble with the average college graduate," he said, "is that he does not know what he wants. How is anyone in a studio going to place a young man or woman when they have no idea of what they would like to do?"

"This studio is looking for young men and women. We want young blood, provided it is capable of doing the work required. Not long ago, I had a successful maker of golf clubs

ask me for a position. When I asked him what he could do, he replied all he had ever done was make golf clubs. My advice to him was to continue to make golf clubs."

That was the story Jesse Lasky told the writer when asked how a college man or woman could get into motion pictures.

He was asked about "pull" and answered, "Talk of 'pull' is common among those on the outside. Do you think we are going to spend thousands of dollars and months of work by all departments, and then let unskilled persons handle the work and make a failure of it? The rule of every studio is to place capable people in positions, because pictures must make money if a company is to continue to make them."

One of the methods used by Jesse Lasky to create interest among all those individuals employed by Paramount is the establishment of two large boards which record day by day the time schedule of new pictures and the box office success enjoyed by pictures already released.

During the year 1927, the picture "Underworld" directed by Joseph von Sternberg, featuring an all-star cast, won first place based on box office receipts. The picture elevated George Bancroft to stardom and the director was awarded \$10,000.

The other board has the name of every picture being made, on what stage or location it is being filmed, the director, the star, or cast and the number of days it is ahead, or behind

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schedule. While the boards are only one of the many plans used by Jesse Lasky to promote economy in the studio and interest on the part of every employee, others could be given if space allowed. From Jesse L. Lasky down to the office-boys, college trained men and women are found in the Paramount studios and more such men and women are needed and wanted.

Twenty Years Ago

Our five made a record of winning three games in one week when Franklin and Marshall was easily defeated last Friday to the tune of 49 to 3. Waha caged eight field goals during the melee and Barnett finished with just one to his credit. Our study aggregation scored nineteen points before the visitor's even threw a foul.

Rules for the flag scrap are that no men will be handcuffed with anything but rope; all athletes in training are debilitated, the use of machines, ladders, climbers or other injury-causing implements is barred and no man will have a permanent station affixed to the pole after 5 a. m.

A Groff meeting is planned for the chapel services of February 21 at which General Beaver will speak and an interesting program is assured.

As usual the amount asked of the Legislature by the College is made up of two parts, namely a sum necessary for the support of the College during the next two years and a deficiency appropriation to cover the shortage due to the insufficient appropriations of two years ago.

After the regular YMCA meeting Sunday evening, Professor Crockett gave a half hour's reading from Longfellow. The reader was thoroughly enjoyed by those in attendance.



AND
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TUESDAY—Catham—
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TUESDAY—Nittany—
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