

PENN STATE COLLEGIAN

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MONDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 12, 1934

THE CROWDED AUDITORIUM which greeted the first number of the Artists' Course series last week was undoubtedly gratifying to those who have been working for the resumption of the feature. The overwhelming response points to a definite interest in things cultural on this campus.

AT LAST SOMEBODY HAS suggested something which we have needed around here for a long time. The government is thinking about giving out free gum drops in the way of armories, and we might as well get our hand in the bag too.

FODDER, FUEL, AND FOOLS

It is about time that somebody came to the defense of the student body. Undergraduate dailies have warred by the printed word and speakers have thundered from rostrums that the average student in American colleges and universities refuses to think or even take cognizance of current problems that confront the world.

Only recently the Daily Cardinal, University of Wisconsin undergraduate daily, howled in characteristic tenor, "This almost universal lethargy among university students is ominous. When even university students refuse to think, what hope can be held out for democracy?"

True, the average undergraduate refuses to think. But the world at large errs grossly in contending that it is his fault. Rather, the fault lies, fundamentally, with the American college and university, in home training, in lack of lofty ideals, in a cynical attitude, and in a multi-phase of complex and interrelated causes.

In college there is no reason for him to think. Memorize? Yes. But not real thinking. He must fulfill a certain standard of requirements as to courses and proficiency in them. With even such a slight task, he, being an American citizen, tends to cast one eye toward the material requirements.

Those who howl loudest for undergraduate action contend that American prestige suffers, that America falters where others lead. But they err again, for education will do more than any one other thing to bring about a weakened America.

Probably the only thing that will make the average student actually think for himself is to remove the American college and university from "grist mill" methods. Evidently somebody has seen the handwriting on the wall, for Boston University, on January 11, announced that traditional A, B, C, D, F grades would be supplanted in the Education School with "honors," "satisfactory," and "doubtful."

Meanwhile, Penn State, proud of her leadership in speech clinics, adaptive physical education for cripples, and the abolition of direct athletic subsidization, etc., but still clinging to her antiquated honor point system, fears to take a step in the right direction.

-F. W. W.

OLD MANIA

You may have lost patience with tuxedo collars, freshmen as marks for loans, and your appetite for social functions, during Ye Senior Ball week-end but we got educated musically to the point where we know exactly what the score is.

It all happened through one of the Collegian's struggling sophomore reporters who came to us with a tale full of trade secrets, etc. It seems that Bert Lown (the fellow who played for the Ball in case you don't remember) was regaling the lads at the local lodge of Phi Sigma Delta. One of the boys, after applauding three or four orchestral anecdotes, decided to ask a few questions.

At any rate, one of the boys ups and asks, "Well, Mr. Lown, just where do you find the inspirations for your compositions?" (It seems as though Mr. Lown is credited with 'Bye, Bye Blues,' 'The Pagan Love Song,' and several other once-popular ditties.)

"Well," prefaced Mr. Lown, not to be out-welled, "Sometimes you can write a song and sometimes you can't. One can't just sit down and rattle off a popular song, one must be in the mood; one must sense the creative urge that characterizes the artist at work etc. etc."

Mr. Lown even compared himself to an author by saying, "You must feel like creating music just as an author must feel like writing before he can create literature."

Mr. Lown was about to digress further on the business of artistry et al when the lad interrupted again. This time he wanted a specific example of the artist at work, so to speak.

"Just how did you write 'Bye, Bye Blues,' Mr. Lown?" he wanted to know.

At this point everybody stole up good and close and prepared for something akin to a confession story or a major revelation. It was going to be even bigger than Bernreuter on sex.

"First," quoth Mr. Lown, "you always have to face the fact you are not permitted to steal more than two-and-one-half bars of music going forwards."

This was interesting, but the general reaction was "so what?" Then came the great secret.

"Take 'Bye, Bye Blues,'" Mr. Lown continued, "that tune is merely 'The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise' written backwards; there's no law against that!"

Well, we were educated. Since the lesson we have tried Mr. Lown's recipe and hope to have a lulu of a torch song from the reverse of 'Nearer My God To Thee' ready for Broadway by the middle of next week. Incidentally, we have discovered that the inverse technique is aided by an occasional hand stand.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform those interested (and those who know the gentleman) that the black derby hat so conscientiously carted about by Avon King Burke, Phi Psi gallant, (a gen'mun' of the ole south, s'ch) was manufactured at Number 1, Bond Street, Piccadilly Square, London, by the Official Hatters To His Majesty, the King of England. We make this announcement for the benefit of the Burke, the public, and the hat, which we hope will hence remain atop the Burke curls and not in the Burke hand as an anti-American advertisement.

FLOTSAM

La Belle Fletejer responds to Boots Frizzell's dating invitation, "I'll have to ask my mother" . . . Roneone and Quin subbing in Mr. Lown's outfit for a brief space Friday night . . . and the latest song title gag: 'I gutter rat to sing the blues' . . . 'Fish' Mateer rushing after refills at the unusual . . . that dope shouting 'Carpea!' at the wrestling match . . . and um-hum, quite so, the Burgoons were in town . . . And why doesn't Dean Whitmore take down his Xmas tree? . . . Bill Hansen dashing across Locust Lane today with tomato juice for buxom import who just will not go home. -THE MANIAC

Letter Box

To the Editor:

For the past several weeks I have been reading with much interest the editorials in your paper on "An American Youth Movement?" Your analysis of the situation of American students and of their present organizations is quite clear. Indeed, it is because of your evident interest in this subject that I am taking the liberty to present a few thoughts for your consideration.

First, I wish to quote from your editorial of January 25th: "Likewise, the National Student Federation of America does not give very real promise at the present time of leading youth out of the darkness. . . . Yet the N. S. F. A. has the best chance for leadership. The delegates to its conventions are truly representative. They have had training in leadership and administration which the radicals lack. If these abilities should be coupled with a more liberal viewpoint and a less superior attitude, the opportunity for progress would be much greater."

Granted that the first part of your statement is true, that does not pre-empt in the least the challenge which appears in the second portion. Although the present situation of the Federation may not be all that it should, this does not say that the organization lacks the real means for arousing American students to thoughtful action and of affording adequate expression for their efforts. We, the officers of the N. S. F. A., are fully cognizant of this fact and are willing to admit that the Federation has only begun to scrape the surface of its large storehouse of possibilities.

The recent student sessions in Washington furnished us with some evidence of youth's awakening to the situation about it. In spite of the reports of the press, the fact remains that these student meetings did take some very progressive and commendable stands on certain matters. American young people have had so far to come to get up the ranks of action that many spectators have lost sight of what little progress they have made in recent months. Moreover, a number of incidents have been occurring since the Washington meeting adjourned that afford ample evidence of youth's growing interest in public affairs. Witness the work that has been done by student leaders to set up a Laboratory for Leadership in Public Affairs, in Washington. Witness the recent efforts made by a number of campus leaders to clean up the political conditions in their respective cities—the most notable case being that of the Tulane student body in New Orleans. Look at the wholesale protests that have been coming from the college ranks against the R. O. T. C. Examine your current college publications and you will find much discussion on what form an American youth movement should take. Thus, it goes without further proof that the masses of our young people today are definitely more interested in public action than ever before.

The chief question for consideration, therefore, is not so much—Are American Students Active? but rather—How Will The Students Express Themselves? This will doubtless be through an adequate organization. This organization, we of the N. S. F.

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A. believe, will be the National Student Federation of America. Quoting from your editorial again, we find this: "The N. S. F. A. has the best chance for leadership." It appears then we are agreed that the N. S. F. A. is the organization to shoulder the burden.

Realizing this situation, the officers of the Federation have begun work on a plan whereby we hope to so enlarge the activity and influence of the organization that it will be well to afford American youth the outlet for expression and action that it has been needing for some time. Of course, we are confronted with grave obstacles nevertheless we are firmly resolved to make available the machinery for which all of us have been looking. Our new program will carry the Federation not only to every corner of the campus but to every group of American youth which is interested in a "better social order."

The details for this general program of expansion are now being studied and developed. A report on the new plan should be forthcoming shortly. You may, therefore, rest assured that the organization which you have designated as having "the best chance for leadership" on this occasion is definitely at work and shall have telling results very soon. The purpose of this communication, consequently, is to inform you at

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Penn State of the work that is being done within the N. S. F. A. and to ascertain if you and your fellow students are interested in going along with us on this project. After all, it is going to take the aid of every far-sighted campus to put this plan across properly, and we intend to start soliciting every possible source of aid for assistance just as soon as "the formula for expansion" is ready. Do you think that we could interest you?

Your recent series of editorials has opened the way for action on your campus. The National Student Federation is anxious to see you follow along the pathway you have made.

Sincerely yours,
John A. Lang
President, National Student Federation of America.

To the Editor:
A vicious rumor has been circulating that a laudatory article, "Journalism Comes of Age," appearing in the January issue of the Alumni News was written by none other than the head of that department. Because many COLLEGIAN readers may have or will read that article I feel that it is someone's duty to ask that the rumor be cleared up.

To those of us who know Professor Banner and have worked around him there can be little doubt of the authorship of the article. Professor Banner never could have misrepresented the facts in the situation by such over-drawal as has the writer of that article. It is difficult to conceive how anyone knowing the facts could have laid on so lavishly the

(Continued on page four)

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