

PENN STATE COLLEGIAN

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MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 26, 1934

VERBAL BAFFLERS BAFFLED

The debating team here is confronted with a problem. They've been trying to get students to come to their meetings, and the students persist in going to the movies. They've tried signs, posters, COLLEGIAN stories blazoning their appeal to "at least" drop in on the way to the matches. The students don't drop in.

Rather obviously, with everything except an audience taken care of through student funds, the problem is a very real one to the squad. "Students aren't interested," they wail, and the students blithely reply, "Why should we be?" People outside the oratorical world have often remarked the peculiar aversion students possess for things intellectual. The orators have a point in their favor there. In this instance, however, it appears that the points for the disinterested student more than justify his position.

Students don't avoid debates because of lack of interest in the efforts, amaraish though they may be, of their public speaking fellows. They probably go elsewhere because the verbal battlers don't put on a show that will interest them. The chief difficulty seems to be in the matter of subjects. This year, for instance, the first few debates on the NRA question attracted considerable interest. However, reargitation of what was at best second-hand material week-end after week-end certainly failed to get student support. Students can't be criticized there.

The inability of the debaters to cover more subjects seems to lie with the intercollegiate organization, which limits the topics for the convenience of arranging schedules. Debaters here aren't alone at fault, but before increasing complaints are heard, it might be well for them to look to their association.

In actual form, the debates, as run off this year, seem to be some improvement over the more old-fashioned, "canned" style of judges decision affair. The Oregon style at least offers to the speaker some spirit of competition. Its most frequent criticism is that it leaves the audience in a quandary as to just who did the best piece of work. People have a natural desire for a fight to the finish, and without some form of decision, audience or judges, the idea of competition, at least as far as the audience is concerned, is lacking. Without real controversy, the term "debater" is farcical.

Unless the teams as sponsored here now can come back, unless they can get students to show more interest in their oratorical work, there seems to be no justifiable reason why registrants should be forced to contribute fifty cents apiece, well over fifteen hundred dollars a year, for the subsidization of Penn State's public speakers.

The debating team must make a real effort to put on a show that will interest the "public" or prepare to face increasing student demands that the subsidization of public speaking be either reduced or cut off completely.

-J. B. W.

"THE DARING YOUNG MAN . . ."

Secretary of the Commonwealth Beamish's advocacy of enfranchising voters in Pennsylvania at the age of nineteen is not particularly new. From time to time during the last decade the idea has been suggested, chiefly from the classroom. But it is the first time that any executive so high in the State's officialdom has broached such a plan in recent years.

Coming as it does with a turn-over of administrations in less than a year, it may not mean very much as far as having the State Constitution amended immediately. But, at least, it is a definite indication that those who hold public trust are giving some consideration to the merits of Youth's foresight.

Not since the frontier days has American youth been brought so close to realities as today. Four years of depression have taught him, if not to think, to wonder "Where will I fit in?" and "Why are they doing it that way?" The tightness of money has taught him to watch closely over economic, political, and social progress, and even, in some instances, to demand some part in making decisions. There is no doubt, then, that he is ready for the responsibility. The original age prerequisite of twenty-one was only an arbitrary decision. Only a State amendment—voted upon by an electorate older than twenty-one—would be necessary to modify the set-up installed in 1873. If a State Constitutional Convention sixty-one years ago could write in a twenty-one year age voting requirement, then reducing that limit by two years years would not endanger the goal of intelligent voting or sane government by admitting "rattle-brained" adolescents to the executive council of the country's governmental machine.

Men in Pennsylvania colleges and universities would create the least part of the problem of educating voters up to "unemotional standards." Just what those standards are, as they exist now, remains to be defined. Gaining an intelligent vote is not something that can be attained through legislation. Certainly "immature" minds could not make more blunders than have been made in past elections. College and university students would have had the benefits of the elements of an education and instruction in the theories of economics, political, and social questions. The mass of high school graduates or less could be instructed toward intelligent

OLD MANIA

Shoot If You Must

Penn State drama reached new heights last night and no mistake. You remember the scene from "Uncle Tom's Cabin" where Liza crosses the ice, followed by a pack of yipping pomeranians? Well, that wasn't in "Redemption," but at one spot in the show, this column thought they'd run it in as an "out front" bit.

It would have been all right, we guess, if the script hadn't called for Kutzer Richards to shoot himself, a thing he does in princely fashion. Tolstoi would have enjoyed the shooting scene, else he would have rushed to the nearest exit and poisoned himself.

"Redemption" got up to Kutzer and six-shooter in fine style, but that's another story, handled by the Footlights guy. Stiff-legged, resigned nobly to his fate, Kutzer leveled the gun next his solar plexus and made ready to end it all. He snapped the trigger—horror of horrors, he was going to kill himself for real. "Click," went the deadly instrument, and "click-click-click-click" it went some more.

Now Elsie Donthett had charge of the off-stage noises. Elsie had done her dooty all right, but the cartridges she bought, at the last minute, were rim-fire, and the gun wanted center-fire. If all had gone well, there would have been explosive noises similar to a gun shot when Kutzer pulled the on-stage trigger. You, dear reader, know well enough what happened. Put yourself in the gun's place and devise a way out, if you think it was easy.

Nothing to do, then, but die somehow, said Barry-kuttermore. He died, all right. He made out as if the gun were a siletto and ran himself through, groaned, folded, and was no more. Bravo! He died with his gun loaded, amid the frantic "clicks" of the backstage mate to his weapon. But after all, it's for the best that things turned out as they did. Think how his friends would feel if he actually had shot himself!

Later, in the place unusual, three witnesses were commenting on the brain-blasting scene.

"Lousy."
"Lousy."
"Lousy."

Over the top of an adjoining booth popped Kutzer's devilish mop of stage hair, and down it popped again. He had heard all. O. Fate is cruel.

NOTICE

Will the slug who filched the ex-Maniac's overcoat and the Maniac's hat please get out of town in a heap of a hurry? Pinkerton and his entire force are, this very minute, combing the sewers for you. Anyway, how did you get into a publications dance?

Wild westerners aren't the only people who speak to strangers. An innocent male was nibbling a bite in the Oh Mane Sautwhich Shoppe when he heard the drawing voice of Co-ed Dagmar Hansen, the gal who wore the cellophane gown at a recent Poverty Dance up on the campus.

"Hay neighbor, got a cigarette?" she soothed. A little surprised, because he didn't know the girl, the man fumbled for a fag, produced one and tossed it over the flower bed to her, then turned back to his food.

"Say, neighbor, gotta match?" Dagmar again. "We can't go on. She got the match, but dear goodness, isn't it awful?"

Much as we hate to tell you, Operator No. 6 of the night squad for the College switchboard, that heckler who bothers you every night is a curly-headed Sigma Chi, which makes you the far-famed Sweet-heart of Sigma Chi, doesn't it?

-THE MANIAC

voting as easily and successfully at nineteen as at twenty-one.

The Penn State campus might become something besides a center of mere dabbling with undergraduate playthings that smack of "theory, training, and experience for the future." Pennsylvania, backward in Blue Law and child labor legislation, would be in the vanguard. And a voting franchise to idealists of nineteen would go a long way toward stamping out the evils of vote control which gains its opening foothold among the pseudo-cynics of twenty-one.—F. W. W.

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Footlights

"Redemption," adapted from "The Live Corpse" by Leon Tolstoi, and presented by the Penn State Players under the direction of Mr. Frank Neubaum, Saturday night, March 24.

- THE CAST
Anna Pavlovna.....Nellie Grant
Sasha.....Junilia Sorzano
Victor Karenin.....Alex Segal
Lisa Protosova.....Enid Stage
Fedor Protosov.....Kutzer Richards
Masha.....Both Goodman
Sophia Karenina.....Theresa Mvavintz
Princess Serebraz.....Lucas Hrichman
Ivan Alexandrov.....Richard Allen
The Magistrate.....Roger Hitzel
Twenty minor characters: a Gypsy chorus; policemen; and men and women in the dive. The Gypsy chorus directed by Helen Hays. Music by the Penn State Players' Little Symphony Orchestra, directed by John E. Ryan.

When the curtain closed after the last of the ten scenes in "Redemption" on Saturday night, the audience waited a moment and then began the usual desultory amount of handclapping. After a minute of this, the applause subsided. Then, as though they had been in another world and were just coming back to State College, they resumed the applause. This time it was louder and more insistent. The audience had seen a good, entertaining, well-handled show, and they were just beginning to realize it.

The Players' version of the Tolstoi play was of such calibre that the audience seemed to live, along with the cast, back in pre-war Russia. The excellent and numerous stage settings may have had something to do with this. At any rate, the scenery was so well-executed that no imagination was needed to visualize scenes of the Russian period that Tolstoi meant to portray.

There was a huge cast, thirty or forty in all. However, only the leads need be discussed. Miss Stage as Lisa would receive praise from most any critic. Although her enunciation was not always of the best, she accomplished the difficult task of playing with ease and naturalness an extremely emotional part. As in previous productions, Kutzer Richards (Fedor) was superior to most collegiate players. But once again he had a tendency to over-act, thus jading those of his scenes which really called for intense, dramatic acting.

Quite a few names appeared, we believe, in a Players' Dramatis Personae for the first time. Half of these newcomers were unworthy of mention; the other half we consider as definite "finds" for Messrs. Cleetingly and Neubaum. Alex Segal as

Victor Karenin handled his part just about as intelligently as it could be handled. For this reason, we humbly offer him first honors in the male division. Theresa Mvavintz (Sophia Karenina) and Ruth Goodman (Masha) were also new to our eyes. Both gave performances which we flatteringly term, "sensible," for lack of a better word.

The phoney shooting incident in the last scene was unfortunate, but thanks to Mr. Richards' speedy presence of mind in thinking of another way to die, it was not particularly noticeable. Perhaps a repetition of this could be avoided if the Players at their next

show would hand out guns and cut sheets to the audience instead of programs. One out of a couple hundred should surely give the desired effect.

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DADDY' GROFF TO RETURN FROM CHINA THIS SUMMER

George W. "Daddy" Groff will return from China early this June, to visit the College, according to Dean Ralph L. Watts, of the School of Agriculture.

The botanist will study citrus plants here. The rest of his time will probably be spent visiting his parents in California and at Washington, D. C.

GLEE CLUB ELECTIONS HELD

Anna C. Strong '35 was elected president of the Women's Glee club and Mildred F. Nieman '36 was chosen vice-president in the elections held last week. The post of secretary-treasurer will be held by Enid A. Stage '35.

New Library

This is the first of a series of letters by Willard P. Lewis, College librarian, on the need for a new central College library building.

One day last week Professor Hunter of the faculty in Iowa State College, taking special graduate work here in Industrial Education, came seeking library privileges and particularly a library faculty study or locked stack cubicle where he might keep the books with which he was working and his papers. This was a privilege to which he was accustomed in his own library and which faculty members in many institutions enjoy. Scarcely a week goes by but what we are obliged to deny a similar request from members of our own or other faculties because this crowded building possesses neither faculty studies nor stack cubicles nor other space available for such purposes. Such facilities are essential for research work, particularly in the humanities, social sciences, languages, literatures, education and psychology. Willard P. Lewis, Librarian.

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