

THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

"For A Better Penn State"

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Wednesday, October 8, 1941

A Freshman Can't Make Up His Mind

Westbrook Pegler recently published a letter of a freshman in college. This letter, Pegler says, was not from the boy whom they call Dummy, who is a cheap and shiftless little cynic with a mind and spirit fed on scandal and swing, but the other one, who is a freshman and has written to his mother. It merits repetition and follows:

The son of George Spelvin, American—not the one they call Dummy, who is a cheap and shiftless little cynic with a mind and spirit fed on scandal and swing, but the other one, who is a freshman at college—has written a letter to his mother as follows:

"I received a very bedraggled letter from you yesterday. Have you taken to chewing your letters before you mail them or am I to blame this laceration on the post office?"

"I have selected my room for next year and made out my schedule of courses. Our room is very nice, but there is much doubt that I shall ever occupy this room.

"There is considerable talk of war here. It is, in fact, the principal topic of conversation at table now, as never before. The question now is when rather than whether. So there is considerable bother in my mind. Of those who are taking the military science course only the best will be accepted into the advanced course, beginning junior year. I have only been doing D work in this course, so this obviously lets me out. For this reason I have decided not to take the course next year, as the elementary course by itself is worth nothing as far as the draft or any preferment in the army itself goes.

"As far as the summer job goes, I am not going to let it stand in the way of this thing. Few of us feel that we will get through more than next year, if that. New draft legislation and things coming up make it look as if our sophomore year will be our last, and, although I try to make plans as if I were going to stay four years, personally, I don't think so.

"The whole thing is that I am really terribly confused. I don't know what to think and, because there's no surety of any kind of future, I can't plan. I am utterly unable to make up my mind, and, all in all, it is a most unpleasant affair. I feel that I ought to spend my summer in something that would be really profitable, not in the way of experience for a future job or anything like that, but rather something that will get me ahead in the Army, when I go.

"Senator Nye was up here the other day preaching the cause of peace. It was strange how angry his speech made me. The ostrich over again. He spent his time denouncing the New Deal and declaring that this was not our war and that we would be fools to make again the same mistakes of 1917, as if the situation were exactly the same.

"I realize that this is a very chaotic sort of letter, but I am sort of chaotic myself these days. Really, I don't want any part of this beastly business. I want for years or more of college. I want to read good books and get a good liberal education. I want to learn to appreciate the fine things in life. I am just beginning to realize what a storehouse there is in the past. It is as if I had just caught a glimpse through the keyhole of a great world. I am suddenly consumed with a great passion to learn. There are literally scores of courses I want to take. I want to study music, drama, art (from a comprehensive rather than a productive view), philosophy, other languages, psychology (spelled better than that, I trust).

"I want to write. I want to read, travel, do things. Dammit, I want to live.

"I cannot imagine what has produced this very glum letter from one who was supposed to cheer you up. It may be the reaction to the war news in the papers and to many individual worries of my friends."

Having read the letter, Mrs. Spelvin, American, went off to a corner and worried, but her other son, Dummy, said he was practically set. He is fixing to join a band touring the camps to cheer up the soldiers and get indispensable



THE FACULTY SAYS . . .

HAROLD P. ZELKO

Instructor In Public Speaking

Much has been said of late, and rightly so, about student-faculty relations at Penn State. The recent appointment of a committee to study methods of improving these relations is a significant move in the right direction. But it is very difficult to determine where this improvement should start and in what direction it should move, largely because the causes of the condition are complex and confusing.

Students can easily accuse the faculty of being at fault and the faculty in turn can blame the student body. But this gets us nowhere. Let us assume that there is room for improvement in both quarters. Certainly the faculty recognizes its shortcomings along this line.

I propose to dwell briefly here on what appears to me to be a basic cause for the poor relationship—a cause which stems rather definitely from the student body. I speak of the time-worn tradition which has come to be known as apple-polishing. To me, the practice of apple-polishing is not a bad one. On the contrary, a student discussing his course or other problems with his instructor before or after class, in the classroom, in an office, at the instructor's home, on the campus, in front of the Corner, or wherever else it might be, is an ambassador for better student-faculty relations.

One major fallacy in the student's mind in condemning the practice is to assume that the faculty always looks upon this as apple-polishing. You give your faculty little credit if you think they have no power of discernment regarding the evaluation of a student who so converses with them.

The point is this. How can we expect to promote better student-faculty relations while this mysterious stigma of "apple-polisher" is hurled at students by their fellows for doing the very thing we are trying to promote? My proposal, therefore, is this. Let's all talk with our instructors more outside the classroom. Call it apple-polishing, conversation, bull-session or what you will . . . but let's do it!

I propose an Anti-Apple-Polishing Campaign (i.e. anti-the term only) which might get started through the medium of an Anti-Apple-Polishing Week. During this week students would make it a point to talk freely with their instructors outside the classroom and vice-versa. We might have planned programs to promote student-faculty relations in other ways during this week. We might, as a matter of fact, spend the week concentrating on doing all we can to know each other better. Perhaps after that we might have broken down this vicious traditional attitude of the student body, and one of the strongest barriers to good student-faculty relations will have been eliminated or at least weakened.

CAMPUS CALENDAR

TODAY

Rehearsal, Glee Club, 10 Sparks, 7 p. m.

Thespian tryouts in Little Theatre, Old Main, 7 p. m.

"Cider Feed" for all electrical engineering students, especially freshmen, EE building, 7:30 p. m.

PSCA freshman project committee meets, 304 Old Main, 4:15 p. m.

IMA Central Council meeting, 305 Old Main, 7 p. m.

PSCA Community Service committee meets in Penn State in China room, 7 p. m.

PSCA Speakers and Public Meetings committee meets in Hugh Beaver room, 7 p. m.

Sophomore men editorial candidates for the Collegian, 312 Old Main, 4 p. m.

Sophomores and juniors play hockey, Holmes Field, 4 p. m.

Badminton Club, 2 White Hall, 6:30 p. m.

Bowling Club, White Hall alleys, 6:30 p. m.

Bridge Club, Recreation Room, White Hall, 6:30 p. m.

Rifle Club, Rifle Range, White Hall, 6:30 p. m.

Archery Club, 3 White Hall, 6:30 p. m.

Honorary Badminton Club, 3 White Hall, 7 p. m.

PSCA freshman forum publicity committee meets in 304 Old Main, 6:30 p. m.

Meeting of Alpha Lambda Delta in 220 Mac Hall, at 5 p. m.

TOMORROW

Swimming Club, White Hall pool, 7 p. m.

Meeting of all candidates for La

Garden Days Program Registration Drops

A decrease of nearly 100 from last year's registration figure was shown yesterday as only a few more than 50 persons attended the opening sessions of the annual Garden Days program which opened yesterday and will close at noon tomorrow.

College faculty members on the program are C. S. Anderson, professor of rural education; John R. Bracken, professor of landscape architecture; J. R. Culbert, assistant in ornamental horticulture; F. V. Grau, instructor in agronomy extension; C. B. Link, instructor in floriculture; Warren B. Mack, head of the department of horticulture; R. P. Meahl, assistant professor of nursery industry; Stevenson W. Fletcher, dean of the School of Agriculture; and E. I. Wilde, professor of ornamental horticulture.

Vie junior board, 318 Old Main, 4 p. m.

Grange cider party, 405 Old Main, 7 p. m.

Hillel Coffee Round Table, Foundation, 133 W. Beaver ave., 4:15 p. m.

Red Cross Group meeting, Hillel Foundation, 3 p. m.

Education Student Council meeting, 108 Burrows, 8 p. m.

Eugene H. Lederer

REAL ESTATE

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State College

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(Delivered Before Breakfast, Tuesday Through Saturday)

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REMEMBER!!

THE COLLEGIAN DANCE

THE FIRST BIG DANCE OF THE YEAR

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TO COLLEGIAN SUBSCRIBERS

Friday, October 10.