

THE COLLEGIAN

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Wednesday, April 5, 1944

All editorials represent the opinions of the writer whose initials are signed to it, and not the opinion of the corporate Collegian staff. Unsigned editorials are by the editor.

The Press vs. Thespians

The current hue and cry over Collegian's recent review of Thespians' "Time to Dance" has raised a more important issue than whether or not the show was good. By now the relative merits of the Thespian offering have been discussed and argued and apologized for to such an extent that they are a more or less moot point.

The "more important issue" is the question of freedom of the press.

One of the less violent fan-mail letters received by Collegian within the past few days referred to the review of "Time to Dance" as "a rather 'sad reflection' in itself" and went on to ask "If Collegian will not back campus activities, who in - - - will?"

The very obvious flaw in that argument is that it brings this question to mind: "If a campus activity isn't worth anyone else's acclaim, why in - - - should it expect Collegian's backing?" But that's splitting hairs and let's not be petty about it.

The main point is this:

Collegian is more than willing to back campus activities—that is a foregone conclusion; a conclusion which can be proved by the favorable preview stories that appeared in the paper before the show; a conclusion that can also be proved by any organization that has asked Collegian for news space.

That is as it should be, for any campus activity is entitled to the benefit of the doubt before the results of its work are apparent. And Collegian will always open its columns to rebuttal of any of its criticisms. It is Collegian's duty as a news agency and a public service organ to grant that benefit and that rebuttal.

The proposition, however, works two ways; and when the results of a group's work do become apparent, Collegian, as well as any other person or group, is entitled to its opinion . . . whether that opinion contains blame or acclaim, Collegian is entitled to it. That, friends, is what is called freedom of the press.

Collegian always has, and always will, back all campus activities; but Collegian never has been and never will be, a back-slapping publicity organ for any campus activity.

Letters To Editor

Other Side Of The Story

The Daily Collegian

Dear Thespian Staff:

Do not let the review of your Thespian show, "Time To Dance," which appeared in the March 31 issue of Collegian discourage you. Many of us are not in agreement with the writer. I enjoyed the show and can truthfully say that, though not as sensational, it was as good as past productions and better than some.

It is always the last show that cannot compare with past Thespian hits. Remember that the Leyden and McAdams shows used to get the same write-ups, but now, theirs are called the "shows to be remembered."

Sincerely yours,
 Frank Gullo

Dear Editor:

It is no easy matter these days to keep student activities functioning. There are so many difficulties that even the most courageous spirit is inclined to give up and acknowledge defeat. And yet the college should make every effort to see that student activities are kept going. As an example of the many difficulties that may arise, we have only to point to the recent Thespian production. No one who has not worked with Thespians or has not seen them struggle valiantly to get a production together can have any idea of what troubles beset them.

The last Thespian show was not a professional production,—the Thespians themselves will be the first to admit this, but they did have a show and a show that proved entertaining to over a thousand people. "Mim" Zartman really did a good job with the dance line, in fact I would go so far as to say that some of the dancing was up to Thespian best. Jimmy Burden's musical arrangements and his orchestra were also good. The staging of the production left much to be desired, but it is impossible to stage a musical revue without an efficient stage crew, and men these days are scarce.

On the whole Thespians are to be commended for their brave effort in trying to keep their organization going. If they succeeded in entertaining their audience, why should we find fault. There is a place on this campus for musical shows. In the past Thespians have produced some creditable entertainments, and, when conditions improve, they will probably do so again.

A. C. Cloetingh

Campuseer

By BOB KIMMEL

What started out to be a quiet enjoyable weekend wound up with some excitement after all. On the black side of the ledger there was a pretty good variety show, with the piano playing of Marine Andrew Linn furnishing, for us, the high spot of the evening. There were some other good things, too, although the skits were as bad as Mr. Tucker made them out to be when he delivered an apology midway in the show, saying, "The best we can say for them is that they are short." But in spite of the skits, the show was good.

But what started the battle that has climaxed this week in a lot of hard feelings was a review in Collegian last Friday of the Thespian Show of a week or so ago. The reporter who wrote the article, and we are willing to take an oath that we were at the desk when the piece was handed in, didn't like the show and said so. In that point of view she is not alone, for there have been many who said they thought the show was not well done, to put it politely.

So now before we consign the whole subject to oblivion, until the next production comes around, we'd like to add our two cents and see if we can't clarify the situation, at least as far as we are concerned.

Several months ago, when the announcement of the postponement of the show was made, we had made a facetious remark in a column we wrote and the editor cut it because she said she had agreed not to pan Thespians. So Collegian said nothing except the usual stories before the performance and were generous in the space given. However, by refraining from judgment or comment before the show in no way bound the paper to pat the boys and girls on the back and tell them how wonderful they are if they are not. And that is one question we are not going to attempt to decide. We know what we personally think, and we know what we've heard others say.

But the point we want to make is this: Thespians put on a show, and they advertised in advance that it was a Thespian production, which in years past has meant a certain kind of entertainment. They charged a good price for the evening's entertainment, and a fellow who laid a buck and a half on the line had a right to expect something more than a hodge-podge. And there is the crux of the matter. Most of the people to whom we've talked said that in itself, the show was not so bad when all the angles were considered. But who, they ask, wants to look at the angles at \$1.50 a couple. They want to see a show, and of the best.

Perhaps it smacks of hind-sight, but we'd be willing to bet there would have been much more applause and commendation for the Thespians, and much less of the "It Stank" kind if Thespians had been frank about all the angles in the first place. We all know that talent is scarce, that men are hard to find to work on the crews which are necessary for a smooth production, and when it is presented as such, the audience knows what to expect and is not disappointed.

Mr. Cloetingh of Players expressed his high opinion of Thespians for carrying on in spite of all the handicaps and we agree with him that they are to be commended for their work in trying to keep alive an old Penn State tradition. But we feel, too, that perhaps they have been too ambitious, and not realizing fully the exact extent of their limitations, have lowered the prestige of their organization with this last show.

And to briefly repeat ourselves, Thespians' show was good, considering the situation, but it was N. G. for the tariff at the door.

Collegiate Review

Goon: "What are you pouring whisky in your Victory garden for?"

Moron: "We planted tomatoes, and I want them to grow up stewed."

—The Gamecock of U. of So. Carolina

Taken from a freshman test paper: A morality play in which the characters are goblins, ghosts, virgins, and other supernatural characters.

—Wataugan

"Damn a prof that gives a quiz on Monday morning."

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"Damn a prof."

"Damn."

—University of Washington "Columns"

A pretty coed in a pretty sleek suit was quietly sipping a coke in a local drug store when a friendly soldier told her that she was from New York. After a while she learned that he had been employed making slack suits for a factory that sold merchandise to only New York stores. He recognized the style, put two and two together, and came out with a telephone number.

"The Pitt News"

Coeds at Montana University don't believe in love at first sight.

Despite the wartime trend, they're in no rush to get married. These facts are revealed in a campus survey of attitudes toward engagement and marriage in a sociology class titled "The Family."

The conclusions were based on answers of 95 university women proportionately allocated among the four college classes. The average age of the group was 19.

A romantic 18 per cent of those questioned looked upon "love at first sight" as a requisite to a happy marriage, but an impressive 82 per cent thought there's nothing to it.

The professor's secretary saw a magnificent blond carrying some paper enter the office smiling sweetly.

"Listen, ya lousey coed," snarled the jealous secretary, "if ya try to muscle in on my territory, I'll plant you among the potatoes."

"Hell, don't mind me," answered the other, "I'm only the professor's wife."

—Texas Ranger

Mother: Do you know where naughty girls go?

Daughter: Yes, everywhere.

—Sundial

The real trouble with our youth of today is that they were all out the night before.

—Kangaroo

