

# Students Cheer Arrival Of First Free Lance, Collegian Predecessor

Sixty-eight years ago in April, a boisterous crowd of Penn State students cheered as the Bellefonte Central pulled into Struble's station and a trainman handed a package to a self-conscious young man.

The young man was a staff member of the Free Lance, predecessor of the Daily Collegian, and the package contained the first edition of the newly founded Penn State publication.

Students accompanied the young journalist in an inaugural march down College avenue to the gateway on Allen street, where, an even larger body of students waited to give the new monthly a collegiate welcome.

Thus, the first official student newspaper-literary magazine was born. Its first issue, printed in two columns, was the size of Time magazine, with a blue board cover. William Fisher, class of 1887, was the first editor.

### Travels Rocky Road

The Free Lance lived for 17 years, but traveled a rocky road. The editors tried to keep their readers informed as to the happenings in the College community, with suitable editorial comment and criticism where they felt necessary.

However, the editors found meeting the monthly deadline was almost impossible. One editor said, "The March issue came out on April 21, and contained news of Feb. 2."

The Free Lance struggled financially and was printed in Bellefonte, State College, Williamsport, and Lancaster during its short life span.

Students' appetite for "stale" campus news became slack, and eight years later the Free Lance became a pocket-size literary magazine. The last issue was pub-

lished in April, 1904, nine years later.

The next fall, with almost the same staff as the Free Lance, a pert weekly newspaper, the State Collegian, was formed. It was a four page paper, three columns wide. From the beginning the paper adopted a liberal editorial policy and operated without censorship from College administration. This "hands off" policy did not mean the staff emerged unscolded for some of its editorial stands.

Six years later the paper expanded to five columns, tabloid size, the same as today's Daily Collegian, and changed its masthead to the Penn State Collegian.

### War Interrupts

World War I caused the only interruption of the Collegian in its history. The presses were stilled for three months because of acute shortages of ink and paper. After the war, the Collegian ran eight columns and published twice a week. At this time the editors began commenting on national news. They editorialized in favor of coal strikes, and for a semi-wet county on the liquor question.

In the '30's, the staffs became leaders in student campaigns, which included advocating abolition of compulsory chapel, reorganization of the football and athletic policies, and centralization of student government. During these years the offices were moved from

their cramped quarters downtown to the third floor of Old Main.

### Daily Collegian Emerges

The final transformation of the Collegian took place ten years later when it became the Daily Collegian published five times a week. The paper again became tabloid size, five columns in width with either four or eight page issues. The Collegian offices were moved to the basement of Carnegie Hall, where they now are located. This step necessitated a board of directors consisting of nine administrative members.

World War II gave Collegian its most recent set-back. With the diminishing student body, it was forced to drop its subscription plan, and students were assessed a fee for the paper. War shortages of material and manpower cut the issues to a weekly basis, but the Collegian painfully recovered from two to four or five issues per week.

A daily summary of news now gives the student at the breakfast table a glance at national affairs.

The short news flashes were started in 1942 to keep the student informed about the war.

The "free press" at Penn State seems to have been established by Dean Arthur R. Warnock and the late President Ralph D. Hetzel.

President Hetzel expressed his viewpoint to a new Collegian editor. "I do not want to get into the business of editing a student newspaper," he said, "and that is what I would be doing if I should tell

you what you could or could not print. No member of the College administration will censor your copy in advance of publication.

And no member of the administration will help you get out of any jams you may get into by reason of what you publish."

The Collegian proved its caliber in December, 1947, by winning the All-American honor rating for superiority in publishing and editing of a collegiate newspaper.

## Traditional Customs Bout Provides Boxers

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When old timers from college get together they have a tendency to talk endlessly about their respective Alma Maters. Stories by the thousands have been handed down, some true, some not but, nevertheless, enjoyable. By permission from one of these teller of tales the following story is ushered forth about this campus in the days when—

It seems, to get out from under the hazing of the upperclass the freshman men would meet the sophomore men on College Avenue and engage in a battle of sorts.

Leo Houck, who was at that time head boxing coach, used to obtain a grandstand seat at these affairs. Upon spotting a freshman or sophomore with superior defensive ability, Leo would send one of his assistants to bring this boy or boys to him and offer him a tryout for the team.

Although my informant refused to disclose how he fared in these battles he did say it was very rewarding to be a winner!

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## I am NOT too young!

I may not be 100 years old, but I've been around this campus for a couple of years and I know what's goin' on.

Who am I? Well, my real name's the Penn State Book Exchange . . . but you can call me BX like most people do.

Well anyhow . . . like I said, I've been around here and I've met lots of students who go to Penn State. I've been watching, too . . . and I noticed all of the improvement around campus in the last few years.

I try to keep all of the students supplied with school needs . . . and I'm gonna make some improvements too. See . . . I'm moving into my new home in the Hetzel Union Building. Come on over and visit me.

But, gee whiz . . . what I'm really tryin' to say is that I think Penn State is great!! And even though I'm just a kid, I want to wish Penn State University a HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY!!

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