

The Lectern, No. 2

# Daring, Receptive Minds Needed by the 'Conversants'

By DR. HOWARD A. CUTLER, Director of General Education

A university is a great conversation, a conversation directed toward fuller understanding.

The conversation requires an involvement and a participation not attained by all who frequent the classroom. An active interchange is essential to conversation, and this interchange demands a giving and receiving by all who would be a part of it. Students must bring something to the conversation; instructors must be receptive. Instructors plan what they have to bring, but how alert are they in reception? Students plan to be receptive, but how generous are they with their ideas, preparations, and artistic expressions? The responsibility for the exchange is mutual among conversants.

Recently, I met a former enrollee who had not planned to be receptive. He gave generously of his time and knowledge. The former he had in abundance; the latter was in short supply. He had been receptive to very little since the ninth grade, so his chatter was soon unacceptable to both fraternity and classroom. He never participated in the conversation, for he had nothing to give because he refused to receive.

To be actively receptive is to lay oneself open to destruction and creation. Such receptivity can be both terrifying and vitalizing. Like a single character-fault in Greek tragedy, a single idea can shatter an otherwise beautiful



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Dr. Cutler is the second guest writer of The Lectern, new weekly feature of The Daily Collegian.

to gain a greater potentiality for understanding. Without the risks of this receptivity, there is no gain, but only a loss of even such understanding as now exists. The demise of cultures bears witness.

There is a vitalizing aspect to the clash of ideas in a receptive mind left ajar by uncertainty. Science has progressed rapidly because scientists are so uncertain of their answers. Certainty abolishes the need for creativity. When all the questions have been asked and answered, there is no need for conversation, no need for a university.

The university is dedicated not to finding definitive answers or furnishing conclusions, but to asking questions and tracing the consequences of possible answers. Constant awareness of the partial nature of knowledge spurs further search, which often skirts the brink of indecision.

The requirements of the great conversation are rigorous. It demands strict adherence to the rules of internal consistency, of presentation of assumptions, of correspondence with observation, and of accuracy of reporting. The commitment to report the truth as one sees it is the responsibility called academic freedom. This responsibility is essential to the goal of fuller understanding, and without it the university—the great conversation—soon ceases to be.

Those whose lack of contributions or absence of receptivity renders them unable or unwilling to participate in the great conversation have no part in a university, even though they are physically present. Courses which have THE ANSWERS should not be taught, but should be embalmed in books and preserved as conversation pieces in the library. It might also be appropriate to embalm instructors who are so uninteresting that they cannot even entertain a doubt.

Those who would participate must seek out the other hungry ones and engage in the responsible and free conversation which is the university.

whole. We risk the destruction of a personality, and institution, or a culture by entertaining such questions as:

What if there are no significant differences in the significant human traits of all races of man? What if the principle of conservation of parity is not borne out by observation? What if the humanistic concept of God is no longer a workable hypothesis? What if there is no basic regularity in nature? What if there is only sequence without causation? What if money, man's ingenuity, and time—plenty of time—cannot solve man's problems?

But in taking this risk, we stand

# Art Works Shown By Faculty, Alumni

Several faculty members and former students of art at the University have works displayed in the 154th annual exhibition of water colors, prints, and drawings at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

Samuel C. Sabean, associate professor of art, is represented by a water color, titled "Water Color—College."

Stuart H. Frost, instructor in art, exhibits two pen and ink drawings, "The Tree House" and "The Mirror," and Bruce Shobaken, instructor in art, shows a woodcut, "Jazz Series II."

Six paintings and drawings form an invited group honoring Dr. Albert Christ-Janer, former director of the School of the Arts at the University and now dean of the School of Art at Pratt Art Institute.

Hobson Pittman, who teaches oil painting at the University during the summer, shows six watercolors, and Chen Chi, a visiting artist who will teach water color this summer at the University, is represented by two.

Included among former students whose works are exhibited are Warren Rohrer, now of Philadelphia; Dan Miller, Philadelphia; Hib Sabin, Pittsburgh; Gordon Sleigh, Philipsburg;

Hiram Williams, Austin, Tex.; Douglas Lockwood, Seaford, Del.; and Donald Uhlin, a graduate student in art education from State College.

The exhibit, which will continue until March 1, has been termed by newspaper critics as one of the best, especially since it includes drawings and prints with the water colors. The graphic section was rated unusually strong.

## Geography Prof Named Encyclopedia Consultant

Dr. George F. Deasy, professor of geography, has been appointed consultant in physical geography to the editor-in-chief of Collier's Encyclopedia.

Deasy's work will deal with the revision of many articles in such fields as cartography, climatology, physiography, and biogeography.

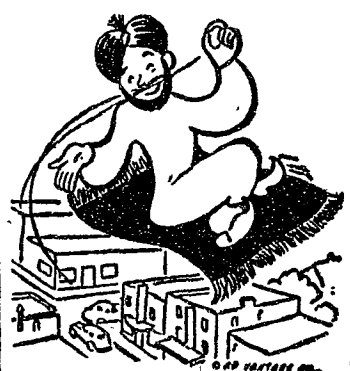
## Sauers Retires As Fire Chief

Thomas Sauers Jr., superintendent of the chemistry-physics shop at Osmond Laboratory, has retired as chief of the Alpha Fire Company of State College.

Sauers, who served as volunteer fire chief for 11 years, will continue in his University position, which he has held for 28 years. He was previously an instrument maker in the shop.

Sauers said he retired primarily because of the press of his responsibilities and the need to give more time to his University job.

He will be succeeded as fire chief by George H. Miley, borough police department patrolman and former first assistant fire chief.



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