

Editorial
opinion:

Money is key to Ritenour

EVER SINCE THE Undergraduate Student Government began its open — then closed — hearings on Ritenour Health Center, they have been a point of controversy.

Most of the criticism has been directed at one man, Dr. Alexander Franco, for his method of protesting criticism of Ritenour gynecological services. He has ceased all but the most vital services: meaning that the Pill (not a vital service?) is no longer being given out there.

The whole scene is unfortunate: a great disservice has been done to University women by cutting back on the already limited gynecological services. That part of the blame has to be placed with Dr. Franco; but he is only the man in the middle. The real problem lies with the University.

RITENOUR HEALTH Center needs a larger, more well equipped staff. Ritenour Health Center needs money. It has neither, and that fact is the basis for nearly all student complaints about the service rendered there. Many of the "horror stories"

going around campus now — probably, just about all of them — would never have resulted if Ritenour had more money, more staff. It is in this sense that the USG hearings seem to have failed: they have brought out the "horror stories" without bringing out their reason for being.

Having only two gynecologists to serve this large a campus is absurd, for example. But there is little Dr. John Hargleroad, the Ritenour director, can do about it: he just doesn't have the funds to hire more. So it's no wonder the pressure would build up — not only with women anxious to be served, but with the gynecologists as well. It's a wonder any physician worth his salt would be willing to put up with Ritenour's inadequacies.

THE ANSWER to the "Ritenour problem" lies not in criticizing those who work there, or in seeing how many "horror stories" can be revealed. Money is the answer. If USG can, through these hearings, come up with a way to add funds only then will the hearings have been worthwhile.

'The Lower Depths'

Impressive PSU stage ensemble

By EARL DAVIS
Collegian Arts Critic

I shall have to be fitfully frank, direct, honest, clear, concise and straight to the point. So I shall be. Without further mincing of either metaphor or meaning, let me simply state that everyone should make a die-hard effort to see the current Studio Theatre offering of "The Lower Depths," now at the Playhouse thru Saturday.

There you will be witness to one of the most impressive ensemble efforts ever assembled on a Penn State stage, and a very thoughtful production of Maxim Gorki's celebrated naturalistic view of Russian life. Directed most confidently and successfully by John Shearin, with an atmospheric and wholly servicable set by Mike Smanko and nicely unobtrusive lighting by George Holley, it's a presentation well worth seeing.

Never mind that the play runs over three hours, and that its chief weaknesses lie in the overly expository, sometimes didactic but always intriguing Gorki script, translated by Jenny Cowan. How Gorki's indulgent observations about people are set down in print is not as important as what he's saying about people and, on stage, it's something considerably worth hearing.

The cast is of a very high caliber; with so many juicy character roles — some better delineated in detail than others — the entire cast oversteps the dangers of caricature and cardboard creations and, instead, most satisfactorily, etches simple but complicated individuals, from the leads to the lodgers in the show.

To single out any special performances would be a misdemeanor in judgment and a discredit to the company effort as a whole. Suffice it to say, cast,

that each and everyone of you deserves and should take a well-earned bow.

If I sound too salutary, I beg thy pardon. The production has its flaws on a minor scale (as what show doesn't?), but nit-picking, in my opinion, isn't of value here. The accomplishment, by all involved in the planning, production and presentation of this show should be seen by all who possibly can. You may tire of its length, rustle at its acute philosophizing, but I guarantee it'll hold your attention and command your respect with a passion rare and seldom encountered in University theatre.

I left "The Lower Depths" in a positive frame of mind, which is an achievement in itself for me. To all connected with the show, a hearty, satisfying and well deserved and exquisitely served "well done."



Senators show discourtesy

Abortion lobby avoided

By JUDI PAVLICHKO
Collegian Staff Writer

On Tuesday of this week, the Pennsylvania State Senate thumbed its nose at 700 constituents and an intrinsically democratic procedure.

Approximately 700 men and women traveled to the Capitol to lobby against restricting abortion laws in the state. Legislation was to be voted upon that day. The Senate was to pass or defeat a bill that would deeply affect the lives of many of its constituents. These 700 citizens converged on the capitol with the intent of guiding their representatives in representing them. The lobbyists were of all age groups, both sexes and were racially mixed. There was a curious sense of equality among the group, each came with the power of one vote and the beliefs of one human being. That sense of equality was perpetuated by the senators — the legislators showed a disgusting disregard that was partial to none.

Of the 15 senators I tried to speak with, only four were 'available' to me. The senators who were not 'available' met me with vague secretarial statements that the senator was very busy and no, he wouldn't be in all day, and empty offices that bespoke similar statements that no, the senator did not care to speak with any of you goddamn abortion people.

Of the four men with whom I did speak, two were trapped by lobbyists in various hallways making a beeline for the exit sign. The two men who did grant me an audience allowed me to wait for half an hour. The ensuing conversations ranged from ridiculous to incoherent.

Sen William Sesler (D — Erie) told a group of lobbyists that he had not yet read the legislation he was to vote upon in two hours. He explained that he was a lame duck senator and had calculated

that the bill would not come up during this congressional session.

Sen Thomas Nolan (D — Allegheny) was the next legislator I saw. Nolan talked with some relativity for a few minutes and then wandered off on a tangent about his feelings on form letters.

The office of Sen. Louis Coppersmith (D — Cambria) was next. Coppersmith rattled on about Nazi Germany and somehow related this to the upcoming abortion legislation. I left with his sputtering accusation that my arguments were merely theoretical. I wearily persevered. Sen. Edwin Holl (R — Montgomery) was the last senator with whom I spoke. I described myself as a Roman Catholic who believed strongly in liberalizing the present abortion laws.

Holl handed me a letter he had received from a prominent Catholic clergyman. He said he agreed with the anti-abortion sentiments expressed in the letter and raved about how 'beautiful' the letter was. I was terribly sorry that he couldn't see the beauty of my efforts to visit Holl personally and talk with him about my views.

My experiences seemed to be redescribed as I compared them with my fellow lobbyists. Disappointed voices floated through the senate halls, "No, my senator isn't in either" and "Don't bother going in that office. He's not in." Evasive conversations and downright discourtesy were experienced by all the

lobbyists. Sen William Lentz (R — Dauphin) became quite belligerent with one lobbyist and verbally forced her to leave his office. When he encountered a group of lobbyists in his office he demanded a security officer. The non-violent crowd was puzzled by this.

Another senator wondered derisively if we 'girls' were having a 'big day.' He sneered when I reminded him that we were not girls and were not there for a 'big day.'

A young woman was accosted by a senator in the building rotunda. He accused her of wanting "to have intercourse and not have to worry" about becoming pregnant.

I can't imagine any of these incidents taking place in the presence of professional lobbyists. I don't think Lentz would demand a security officer should he encounter a group of professional lobbyists waiting to take him to lunch.

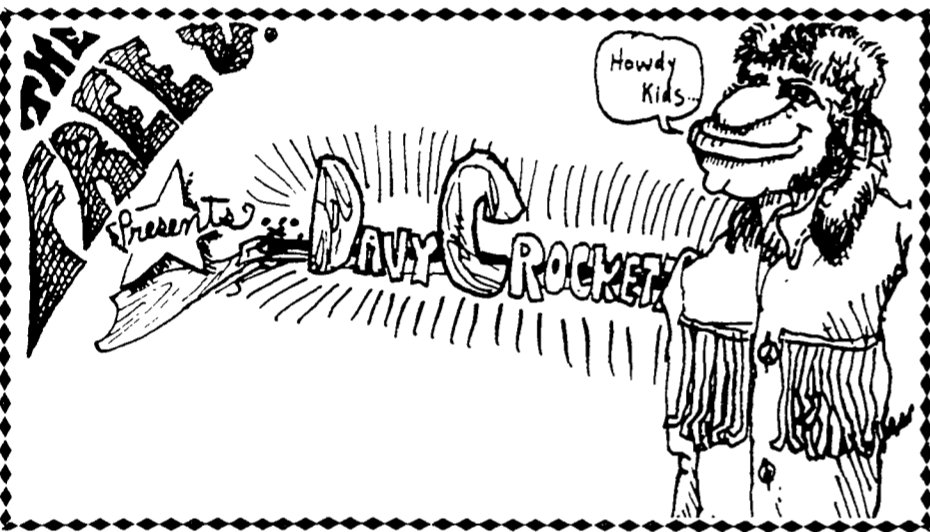
The senators treated us with negligence and disrespect. Theoretically, legislators only have as much power as we grant them. This embittering experience opened some deep questions in this constituent's mind.

A blatant disregard for the citizens' right to lobby cannot be ignored. If the representatives in this democracy are allowed to be unresponsive to the ideas and desires of their constituents then we haven't much of a democracy at all.

the Collegian

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