

Student tax scare

Some sly political maneuvers are being taken to scare students away from the polls. A fallacy is being spread: register to vote in Centre County and by establishing residency you are eligible for taxation.

The lie comes down to: is voting locally worth paying a \$5 per capita county tax, a \$5 per capita State College tax, a \$10 per capita school district tax and a \$1.96 occupational tax by the school district.

The truth is only students who have earned more than \$1,800 a year are eligible for taxation. Anyone making less who is taxed can apply for exoneration from the school district taxes by petitioning the State College Area School District.

Only about two per cent of all University students earn more than

\$1,800 a year. As for the rest of the students, if the school district makes a favorable decision, the county and borough usually go along.

This is not meant as an argument against students paying local taxes. Students receive police protection, sewage service and water supply from the community. Those living downtown benefit from all borough services. But students should be treated like all other citizens earning such a minimal sum.

Students can seek exoneration two ways: by declaring their inability to pay or by declaring non-residency.

Faced with a possible \$21.96 tax bill, students may not realize that exoneration for financial reasons exists, but instead make their hometown ties stronger.

County Tax Assessor David

Barr's alternate plans for putting students on the tax rolls won't clear matters. Both are pitches for non-residency! One plan would call for sending each student a notice to be returned in five days, indicating if he is a citizen of Centre County. The other would be to tax all the students and send a note explaining the procedures for declaring non-residency.

If either of these unfortunate plans goes through and the county and borough does not follow the school district decision regarding exoneration, students may have to decide if they want to pay a "poll tax" or cast away their right to vote.

Election day grows closer while the decision on how to compile the tax rolls is being made. Maybe the notes will come in October. Trick or treat.

Police war on bikes

State College police are cracking down on bicyclists who chain their bikes to lampposts, parking meters and other sidewalk fixtures.

This sustained effort to enforce a 1945 ordinance may do more than throw people off the streets and onto the sidewalks.

It has drawn attention to the fact that State College is a town of car-lovers. Asphalt paths have been provided from houses to business centers and shopping malls. Parking space has been con-

veniently provided directly in front of stores.

The only downtown bike parking facilities are racks near Hammond on the University side of College Avenue and behind the Tavern restaurant.

Everybody says they like bikes. The Centre Regional Planning Commission staff is working on a parks and open spaces study. They advocate the use of non-motorized vehicles. Some local officials say bike riding should be encouraged as an alternative to automobile traffic.

Everyone, bikers will tell you, can ride a bike. Worked by leg-power, bikes do not cause air or noise pollution. Compact, bikes do not cause traffic congestion. They are time-saving exercise machines.

Sure, bicycles should not be chained to lampposts and parking meters. But there are not enough centrally located bike racks. State College would be better off if the borough council looked into cheap, functional racks and places to put them.

the Collegian

Forum

The Daily Collegian welcomes responsible comment from interested townspeople, faculty members, alumni, undergraduates and graduates. Anyone interested in submitting a column should contact the Editorial Editor, Box 467, State College, Pa. 16801. Telephone 865-1828. Offices in 126 Carnegie.

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James J. Kilpatrick

Papa knows best

Today's topic is Richard O. Simpson, or more precisely, the state of mind symbolized so vividly by Simpson's statement of August 22. The gentleman is chairman of the new Federal Consumer Product Safety Commission. He proposes to ban some or all cigarettes by bureaucratic decree.

In a speech and interview in Newark three weeks ago, Simpson said he would welcome a petition from members of Congress, asking for his commission to take such action. He would then go through the motions of gathering evidence and hearing industry comments. His own mind is already closed: "We have a serious expectation of achieving a ban. We should and will be able to achieve it."

The chairman is not at all deterred by what would appear to be a threshold problem of the law. His commission was created by the Consumer Product Safety Act, which specifically excludes tobacco products from the commission's jurisdiction. However, the commission is charged with administering the Hazardous Substances Act, which does not exclude tobacco.

The bureaucratic rule as to jurisdiction — it is part of the Simpson Syndrome — is that any field not excluded is included. The chairman is ready to declare that cigarette tobacco is a toxic substance, a cause of cancer and death; once his ban takes effect, he would invoke "criminal penalties" against the manufacture of forbidden cigarettes, and send the makers to prison.

At the bottom of the Simpson

Syndrome is the bureaucratic conviction that Papa Knows Best. But it is not merely the notion that government knows what is good for the people; this is coupled to the despotic assertion that government has power to make the people be good. If the people will not stop smoking by their own voluntary action, Simpson would effectively compel them to stop smoking by imposing his will upon their erring behavior.

Tocqueville foresaw this "new form of tyranny" a full century before George Orwell developed the theme in his novel "1984." Americans, he warned, one day would surrender their liberties to bureaucratic masters who desired only to do good for their subjects. In the end, the people would become timid sheep, obedient to government shepherds.

Such benevolent paternalism acts upon our body politic like a leech, draining the blood from traditions and institutions. The chief practitioner of this dreadful phlebotomy is Ralph Nader, who would strip our life of risk and variety, but Nader is not alone. The vitamin-mineral decrees recently imposed by the Food and Drug Administration are classic manifestations of the Simpson Syndrome. Some of the idiot regulations of the Federal Trade Commission are products of the same stultifying despotism that increasingly is imposed on our society. Our Big Brothers do not come singly; they come in whole families, suffocating us with kindness, with love, and with power.

The Hazardous Substances Act applies to any substance "which has the capacity to produce personal injury or illness to man" through ingestion, inhalation or absorption. The act thus applies to a whole universe of consumer products that can be eaten, drunk, touched or breathed. Virtually everything in our daily life has "the capacity" to cause injury or illness.

Are we to understand that the chairman proposes to restrict or to ban all of these? Does the gentleman know nothing of the dreary history of Prohibition? Does he truly suppose that his benevolence would be docilely accepted by the sheep of his pasture? Very nearly half of all adults now smoke or have smoked. Despite warnings and exhortations, the consumption of cigarettes increases. In proposing to impose either tar-nicotine restrictions or a total ban, Simpson is inviting every remembered evil of bootlegging, smuggling, gang warfare and contempt for law.

Do Americans truly desire a society that is perfectly safe, a society purged of every trace of smog, germs, rough places and sharp edges? Do we want to live in a beautiful cocoon, padded in styrofoam layers of bureaucratic protection? I deny it absolutely. But that is the kind of antiseptic society envisioned by our new masters. They lovingly would see our freedoms, like so many cigarettes, go up in smoke and be cast out in the trash with other hazardous things.



"Blessed are those who have not heard, but still believe me!"

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