

Dark Ages

It's not at all surprising that some members of Gov. Shapp's House Labor Relations Committee are making not-so-wisecracks about gays. Any legislature narrow enough to refuse 18-year-olds alcoholic beverages, is bound to be equally intolerant towards homosexuals.

Ralph Garzia, D-Delaware, was the most eloquent. "I think it's best not havin' 'em nowhere. Let's get rid of 'em," he philosophized last week. His remarks typified the slurs made by other committee members.

The committee has nothing to do with whether gays should or should not exist in Pennsylvania. The committee's job is to consider only whether gays should be ban-

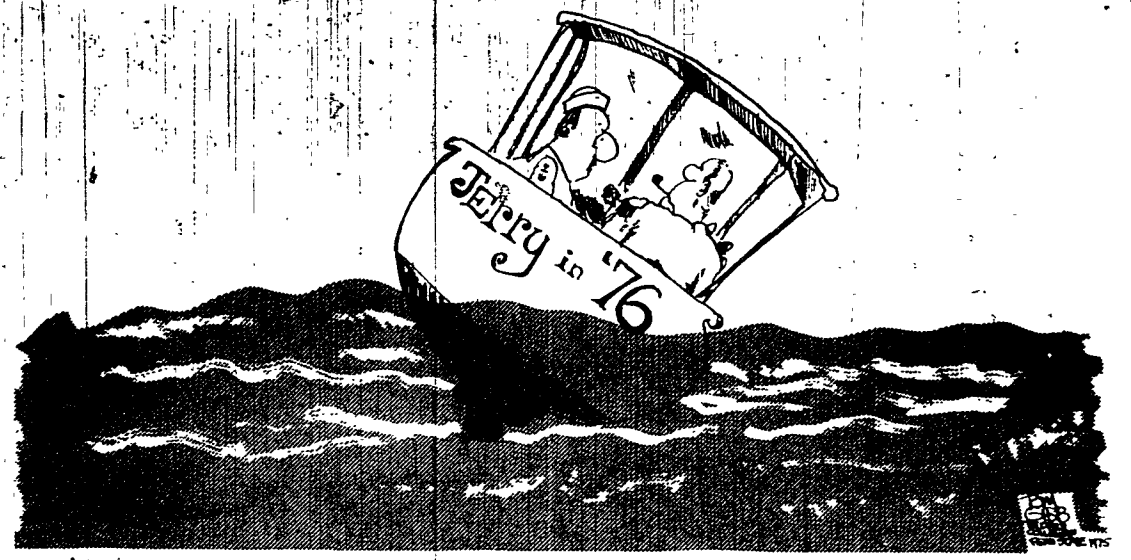
ned from working as state policemen, prison guards or at other state institutions.

The issue is an old one. Gov. Shapp already vetoed a bill that would have banned such state employment. But the legislature wants to have another go at eliminating gays from the state payroll. The fear is that gays will use their authority as state policemen or whatever, to get sexual favors.

Whatever the outcome of this latest attempt, it's going to upset a lot of people, gays and heterosexuals both. And because the issue is such a sensitive one, thoughtful, objective legislators should deal with the bill. Instead, we have blatantly prejudiced committee members who show no

reasoning in their remarks and who prefer to attack gay existence in general rather than deciding if a problem exists.

Most times, laws change when attitudes change. The decriminalization of marijuana in many states, has come about as a result of attitude changes about the harmfulness of grass. The 18-year-old drinking age comes about in states where legislatures realize society now considers 18-year-olds to be responsible citizens. The Pennsylvania legislature, however, has consistently remained in a Dark Age when it comes to attitude changes. This final slur against gays may very well keep it there.



EXCUSE ME, MR. PRESIDENT... IS IT MY IMAGINATION, OR DO WE KEEP LEANING TO THE RIGHT?

One cynic's 'tidy little sunbeam'

By EARL DAVIS
Collegian Columnist

Memo to Sheila and Jerry:

You wanna know what it is I'd really like to do in one of my upcoming columns? Just for a switch, you understand, only for a change, simply as a radical re-evaluation of everything under our sun. I would really get off trying to write a positive assessment for once. A communique as devoid of cynicism as I could possibly make it. Dig?

I'm sure you catch my drift. A pice-on the holiday spirit, perhaps, or maybe even a tidy little sunbeam bereft of my usual and customary societal gripes and grumbings. Something almost intimately sincere, if you will. Risky? Hell, yes. Worth a try, though, methinks. What's the verdict, gang? Think it'll play?

Before I go any further, I feel I owe you two some sort of explanation for this suddenly intense desire to repent in print. See, Sheila and Jerry (I would put you first, Jer, but you know how finicky females are these days about billings and such), what happened 'was thusty — no, wait, lemme back up a sec. See, I was out at the Mall the other day and ... well, something hit me. Matter of fact, it smacked me right upside the head.

No, it wasn't the usual Archie Bunker-isms that ordinarily abound up here (and without Carroll O'Connor's redeeming qualities, too, I might add). No, this was something completely different. It was an event that only comes around once a year. Right about now, to be nit-pickingly exact about it.

'Twas a voice. A soothing voice. Quite pleasant. Almost irresistible. Of a man (and nyahhhh to you there, Sheila, babeeee). The gentleman has since departed this cosmically mortal spitball we call Earth; in fact, he died almost a decade ago. But that's the glorious thing about talent, any kind of talent: if it's genuine, there's really no such thing as overstaying its welcome.

He's a singer, by the way. An original. Now, naturally, I'm aware that you rarely find both descriptions in the same sentence, usually with good reason.

But this guy definitely deserves that dual accolade, sincerely so. Who is he? Now, now, that would be telling, wouldn't it? Patience; people, patience; it's a virtue worth discovering.

See, when I heard this fellow's voice, believe it or not, I felt a wee bit better. Amazingly, everything made a bit more sense than it had only a few seconds before, and problems didn't seem as pressing as they'd appeared minutes earlier. And, I'll be damned, I actually felt downright genial. So genial, in fact, that you'll never guess what I did next. Intrigued? Drop down a bit.

I stopped in my tracks. And then I did something that's rather rare for me — I started humming. OUT LOUD, for God's sake. No doubt the unholy noise emanating from me brought a bevy of curiosity-plagued stares my way, and might even have confirmed certain in-bred suspicions about the race I arbitrarily represent. But you wanna know something else?

Truth to tell, I really didn't give a damn. 'Cause for a fantastically swift second; Camelot could possibly become a reality. Oh, not in our time, not even — sorry, Prez Ford — in our children's children's. But ... eventually, maybe, in some approximation. Yep, Man had his purpose — Earth, for once, its future. And, crazy as it may sound, I even had the ridiculous sensation that we might muddle through our mortal insecurities some day. And even emerge what? Oh, I suppose enlightened will do.

I'm not kidding you, Jerry, it was a helluva scary sensation. I mean, do you realize what it is for a card-carrying cynical romanticist to actually admit to the world at large that he momentarily forgot the wars and actually contemplated what little significant wonders abound in this world? I tell you, if this keeps up, I may even start believing we might gain the wisdom NOT to commit global genocide in the name of our all-righteous national security. Sure makes a man wonder don't it?

Well, Sheila, I'll let you go now; I know you've got a stack of eager articles awaiting your attention. But do me a favor, will ya? Leave me a note on the billboard or

in my mailbox — hey, wait a minute, I just remembered: I don't even HAVE a mailbox; let's get on the ball down there, Carnegie — re my question, hokay? You know, about the merits of a positive column, I mean.

I don't really think it'll go over up here, the way most student, faculty and administrators are these days with their know-it-all selves. Too idealistic in tone for them, probably. Wager you wouldn't even get a single letter in response, to boot. Nah, not worth our time, your paper, their ink or my thought. So just forget the whole thing, okay?

I won't — write it, I mean. No, no, no, no, my mind's made up. Uh-uh, no way. And nothin' you say or do is gonna make me change my stance one iota, either. I don't WANT a furlishginner roast beef sandwich from Arby's, Sheila; they taste like Trigger, anyway. Hey, Jerry, come on, be real, willa? For why? Truly and sincerely: what for?

I mean, look, do you really — honestly now — expect these dedicated folks to admit that part of the recurrent Christmas spirit has to do, in some crucially subtle manner, with the mellow voice of Nat King Cole? Hell, these morons probably believe it's Johnny Mathis or some damn body. No, I don't think I'll write it, after all.

Yeah; that's it; just chalk it all up to me fantasizing out loud again, another in the increasingly long line of insignificant Davis Doodlings. No merit, no muscle, no residual memories. Right.

Nobody'll pay any attention, anyway; they never do. There you go, fella, that's it, kid; you're there all over again. Feel that old familiar acid creep back into your veins? Ah, yes, cynicism: opium for the modern man. Cut the mirages out. Your mind just played a doozie of a con job on your emotions, Davis, that's all. You only THOUGHT you felt what you did. Fleeting illusion, fast sensation. Pure and simple.

I don't know, Sheila. Beat's me Jerry. Can't explain it. I got no answers ... I must be comin' down with somethin', I guess ... diagnosis, Doctors?

THE SIX LIVES OF HENRY THE KISSINGER



From the editor

Personally, it's ridiculous

By JERRY SCHWARTZ
Collegian Editor

The chairperson of the Doomsday Society last night said that unless personkind changes drastically, life as we know it is doomed ...

Check the dictionary. There is no such word as chairperson, just as there is no such word as personkind. One doesn't person a lifeboat, nor does one yell "person alive!"

An exaggeration? Yes. But there are people, mostly ardent believers in women's liberation, who would change the language you read in the newspaper to suit their political aims — whether or not that change is warranted.

The change is not warranted: Words like mankind, chairman and spokesman do not imply masculinity — as Theodore Bernstein, copy editor for the New York Times wrote recently. "We should realize that 'man' in one meaning always has been and still is a generic term for human being and when used as such carries no sense of masculinity."

There you have it. "Man" is often used in a neuter way, much in the spirit of German "mensch." A spokesman is not necessarily a man; mankind is not the society of men.

I think our readers understand that, just as most people understand that. Yet the mass media have felt pressure from some parts of the community to change the language in some way to avoid the suffix "-man," or any other letter combination that smacks of sexism to them.

George Orwell called it politicization of the English language. Any time the language is perverted for political ends, whether it be for "preventive reaction strikes" or personkind, there is an attempt underway to mold minds. Humpty Dumpty, in "Alice in Wonderland," claims that the meaning of a word isn't important — just what he wants it to mean. These people agree and they want to be the masters of both the meaning of words and working of minds.

This is not to say that the language shouldn't change — it changes all the time to meet the needs of a changing world. But newspapers and political groups shouldn't dictate change. Change should come when the people who read the language and speak it make the change — not before.

And this is not to say that women are at all unjustified in protesting a male-dominated society. As Bernstein writes, "Women have enough real issues of

equality that they are justified in fighting for without devoting energy to such trivia ... Above all, let's not make the Times look silly."

Let's not make women look silly, either. Let's drop these perversions of the language.

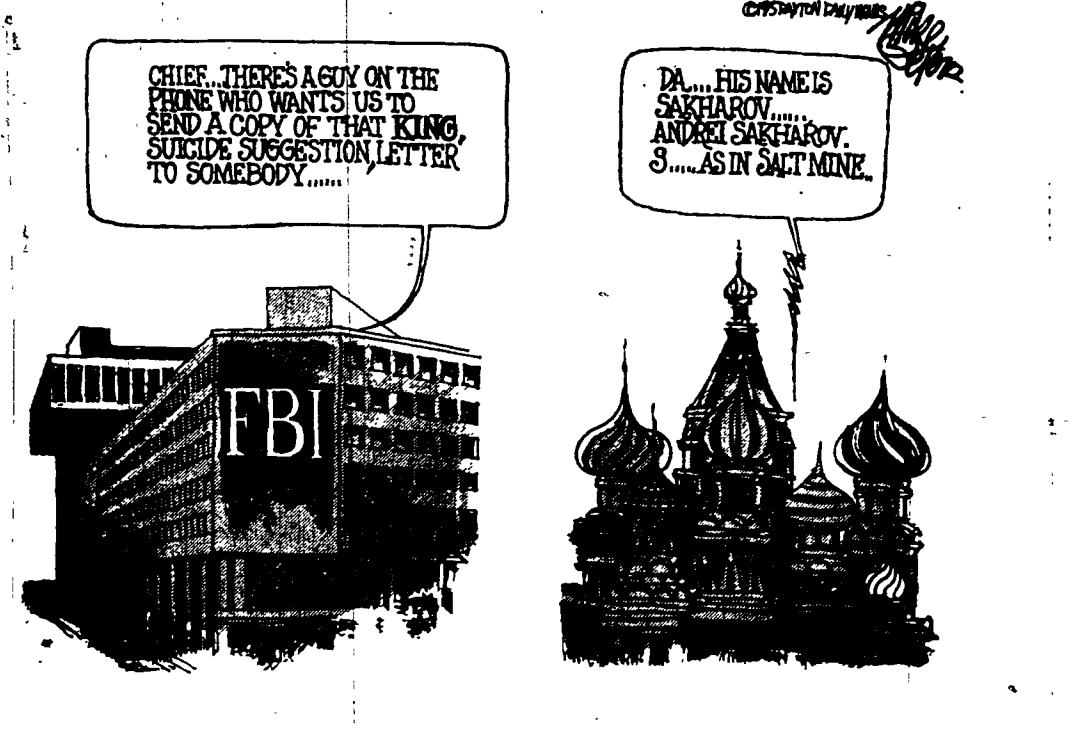
We ran a very depressing story on the front page Friday. It was about students and the holidays and about the suicide that sometimes occurs on festivals like Christmas.

We received a call the next day from a woman in town. She had read the story and she was very concerned. She wanted to help by taking in several students for the holidays, giving them Christmas dinner and making their lives a lot more bearable. We referred her to some people who could help her out.

Sometimes, working on a newspaper can be a very rewarding experience.

A note on our columnists: Articles on this page are the opinions of the authors. This extends even to the editorials, which are my opinion.

None of the columnists can claim to be the voice of the Collegian. And we don't censor our columnists' ideas — we edit their writing.



Letters to the Editor

Naughty

TO THE EDITOR: I feel compelled to respond to Sabah Wali's letter of 12-12-75 regarding definitions. Sabah, you have been very naughty! It's against the laws of civilized man (woman) to lie. I looked up the definition of Zionism, and found Rubin's quote true to Webster's rendering. Your definition, however, looks as though it was taken straight from the PLO (sic) handbook on inciting riots, racism, and generally 'not nice things.' Evidently you found it necessary to take your definition from 'yellow material,' as no modern, free thinking press, uses the phrase 'colonizing their own race' in reference to Zionism.

The implication in your 'definition' (sic) is, of course, racism. I defy you to show me a paragraph, sentence, or even one word in Zionist literature or ideology, which is implicitly, blatantly, or even subtly racist. Now, if you must see racism, look at those countries which voted for the so-called UN resolution which is aimed at the debasement of Jews all around the world (camouflaged by using the word Zionists). In Uganda, Idi Amin has slaughtered up to 250,000 human beings for being non-Ugandan. In Saudi Arabia, they have forbidden American companies working there to hire American Women,

American Jews, or American Blacks. In Syria, Jews are not allowed to travel out of their ghettos without military passes, they are not allowed to serve in government or civil service (there are Arabs even within the Israeli Parliament), and are continually harassed in a manner reminiscent of Nazi Germany. For documented evidence of this, and other examples of racism in the Islamic Arab nations, I urge you to write Senator Church in Washington, D.C.

You ask us to believe that the invitation of Yassir Arafat and his band of terrorists, to the land of Israel, will bring peace. Please be serious! Look at his record. Thrown out of Egypt, thrown out of Jordan, and now, embroiled in a battle to the death of all Christians in Lebanon. These are his true feelings for a secular state in the Holy Land. On Oct. 20, 1973, while speaking in Arabic to a delegation of Palestinian (sic) leaders he stated, "We shall never have peace so long as there is even one Jew alive in occupied Palestine." He makes no qualms about the fact that should he ever get possession of the West Bank of the Jordan River, he will use it as a springboard for attack on the State of Israel, with the aim of total destruction. A peace loving man?

Sabah, I urge you to remember that Israel was created by a vote in the UN, not by some conquering Jewish army plowing through the Holy Land with supersonic planes, and tanks. It

was the Arabs who chose not to abide by this decision, and therefore they have no one to blame but themselves for their problems (Palestinian etc...). Don't forget that there were 800,000 Jews living in Arab lands before 1948, all their property was confiscated by those Arab governments, and they were thrown out. Israel, who is of a great deal less means than the Arabs managed to settle all of their Jewish brethren. Can the Arabs not do the same for their own?

These false ideas you have about Jews and Zionism were no doubt, ingrained into you as a child. I urge you to discard these immature prejudices, and perhaps, Sabah, we will both see 'peace in our time.' Shalom.

B. David Schwartz
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The Daily Collegian encourages comments on news coverage, editorial policy and campus and off-campus affairs. Letters should be typewritten, double spaced, signed by no more than two persons and no longer than 30 lines. Students' letters should include the name, term and major of the writer.

Letters should be brought to the Collegian office, 126 Carnegie, in person so proper identification of the writer can be made, although names can be withheld on request. If letters are received by mail, the Collegian will contact the signer for verification before publication. Letters cannot be returned.

the Collegian

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