

# High time for change

Madness, impotence, violent criminal behavior and other personal disasters and social deviances have long been attributed to the use of a certain evil weed. You know which one.

Since the days of "Reefer Madness" dire predictions about the consequences of smoking marijuana have been spread by educators, parents and the government. Sen. James O. Eastland, Miss., said in 1974, "If the cannabis epidemic continues to spread... we may find ourselves saddled with a large population of semi-zombies."

But not a single study has proved convincingly that smoking pot is harmful. Consumer Reports conducted an exhaustive review of studies done up to 1972 to determine the effects of smoking pot. They found a general pattern: When a research finding can be

readily checked, an allegation of adverse effects is relatively short-lived. No damage is found and after awhile the allegation is dropped, often to be replaced by allegations of some other kind of damage due to smoking pot. If the test procedure is difficult or very expensive, repeat studies are not run in other labs so their allegations of damage continue to be cited. Many unpublished studies fail to show significant ill effects from use of pot even at extraordinarily high dosage levels, according to Consumer Reports.

On the other hand, alcohol and nicotine are demonstrably harmful drugs, but individuals who possess them are not fined or imprisoned.

Efforts to prevent use of pot through legal penalties have failed. The National Institute on Drug Abuse reported in 1974 that, despite skyrocketing pot busts in the last few years, pot use

remained at an all-time high. There have been nearly one million pot arrests since 1972 — and pot remains universally available.

Besides being ineffective, penalties doled out to people who get busted may have caused more harm to those punished than use of the drug itself. Legislators in several states, including Alaska and Oregon, have realized that the state has no right to ruin individuals' lives "for their own good." These states have decriminalized possession of small amounts of pot.

Now Pennsylvania's marijuana laws are being examined. The House Law and Justice Committee has held hearings throughout the state in connection with House Bill 1699, which would list possession of 30 grams or less of pot as a summary offense and impose a \$100 fine but no jail sentence. Violators would be treated

somewhat like traffic violators. Possession of 30 grams is now a misdemeanor and carries a penalty of 30 days in jail or a \$500 fine.

But passage of the bill looks doubtful. In the first place, our state legislators are very conservative; how can we expect to see marijuana decriminalized when the drinking age hasn't been lowered in Pennsylvania while it has been lowered in all surrounding states? In the second place, this is an election year and legislators will shy away from passing controversial bills.

Before the bill can be passed, the myths surrounding marijuana must be dispelled. Write to your state legislators and urge them to vote in favor of the bill. Or, if you favor police intervention in private affairs and the imprisonment of individuals for actions that can harm no one but themselves, urge them to vote against House Bill 1699.

THE COLOSSUS OF RHODESIA



## From the editor

# Launching line of attack

At every party, whenever I'm introduced, someone inevitably speaks "the line."

"You're the Collegian editor?" (They always say this with surprise, as if they expect me to be 6'3", wear a green visor, have inkstained fingernails and newsprint smeared all over my face.)

I never lie about who or what I am to these people, though often I'm sorely tempted to insist Sheila McCauley is either a twin sister or a figment of Collegian imagination.

What follows every introduction is "the line," — the reason I wish I could get away with wearing dark sunglasses and a fake nose at parties.

"Hey, are you going to do a story on us? You want my picture for the front page?" — This is "the line." "Heh, heh, heh" always finished it so I won't think they really expect a story about the great party I went to in Dypso House.

What follows is even worse and I call it "the attack." Usually Joe Drunk launches a tirade of his gripes about the Collegian. I try to explain that I'm off duty as editor and it's the only night I have to relax, really, and frankly, right now I really don't want to know how we shafted the Tiddlywinks Club this week.

It's useless, though. My sweetest voice and toothiest grin do nothing against the fury of a Tiddlywinker scorned. But at least they never see the

grimace that sits behind that innocuous smile.

Once in a while, however, people I'm introduced to don't believe I'm the Collegian editor. These are the parties I enjoy most. Once the host introduces me as the editor and Joe Drunk tells me he doesn't believe it, I can lean over and conspiratorily tell him "I'm not." Now he's totally confused and usually weaves off to find the host and get the true story.



Sheila McCauley

The sad thing is, I'd love to talk to these people when I'm in the office. Just last week a USG senator came in to talk about the Collegian — to complain about a few things and to ask questions about a lot more. That's the kind of interest I really enjoy. The Collegian is the only newspaper most students see when they're up here and it fascinates me to see how we affect our readers. We always have reasons for covering certain events the way we do, but sometimes

instead of asking, the way USG senator Joe Aloia did, readers assume the worst — that the Collegian either doesn't care or doesn't know how.

It's not the Joe Aloias who bring out my grimace. It's people like Joe Aloia who, despite disagreements about coverage, have a genuine interest in this newspaper and therefore deserve all the praise and consideration they can get from me.

No, it's the self-interested, publicity seekers who disturb me. They call up and demand a Tiddlywink story every week or ask for extensive coverage of Trivia Week. Even when we explain problems with space and our interest in writing stories that have a human angle, they persist. They refuse to believe their existence does not necessarily make them newsworthy or interesting to our readers. They're the people who speak "the line" and launch "the attack" just like all the Joe Drunks who make me roll my eyes — but unlike Joe Drunk, they mean it.

What I keep waiting for is a chance to use a line of my own — "You're a Collegian reader?" (said with surprise, or course) "I don't believe it. Why don't you write letters to the editor, then? And how about all those human interest stories the Collegian misses because you guys don't tip us off to them? And by the way..."

# Letters to the Editor

## East blunder

**TO THE EDITOR:** I for one thought that the recent East Week program was an excellent idea. It was a break from the monotonous pains of studying which I have been suffering through for three and a half terms now. This program gave many students a chance to throw the books on the floor, get out and do something different for awhile. The majority of the programs scheduled were organized very well and I speak here in the sense of time. However, the concert was, in my opinion, a blunder and a half.

First of all, it was scheduled on a Saturday night without any consideration that that night might be the best time for some students to study. Why was the concert planned for that evening? Why wasn't it planned for the afternoon when most people want to be outside playing tennis, catching frisbees or listening to music while they sun themselves? Did it ever occur to you people that not everyone wanted to watch a road rally but would much rather sit in the green grass and listen to music? Why do you think people turn their stereo speakers out their windows in the afternoon and not at night? Did you, our elected representatives, ever ask yourselves these questions when it came time to schedule the concert?

Second, I never saw or even heard of anyone asking any students housed in the quad area if they cared if the concert was held there. Hence, you people, the ones that we the students elected to represent us have not taken us into consideration when you made this decision. Thank you!

Third, the concert infringed on the right of some students to study and therefore, for some students who elected you, you have been so kind as to come back and slap their faces. Was this part of your campaign?

Of all the places that could have been used for the concert, you, the should-be-responsible people who chose Johnston Quad, have shown us, the students, that your competence in holding such an office leaves much to be desired.

In closing, let me emphasize that to be human means to make mistakes. However, you were not elected to make mistakes and I trust that you shall start showing us, the students, what exactly you were elected for.

G.F. Blatt  
4th-secondary education

## Wrong priorities

**TO THE EDITOR:** To Mr. Seth (4-2376), who seems full of explanations on behalf of police actions, please explain to us the arrest of Rick Seguso, a Bruce Springsteen aide.

We had the privilege of being with the band after the concert. We found the group to be totally involved with their music and with pleasing their audience. It's a shame, then, that the band found themselves disillusioned and confused, rather than elated after such a great performance, because of one incident involving Seguso.

No one could believe it. Seguso questioned the initial accusation, which according to The Daily Blotter (Issue 37), and the band itself, was that he illegally removed a rope barrier. Consequently, resisting arrest was added to the charge. Even Bruce himself was at the station half of the night trying to find out what was going on.

As anyone who "sat" in the front knows, the audience would have torn through if the rope wasn't cut first. So Seguso's action might indeed have been in the best interest of the audience's safety.

Because the police felt it necessary to direct so much at-

tention to one, rather small incident, others were virtually overlooked (theft of three hats from Clarence Clemon's wardrobe, one being the hat on the cover of the LP: "Born To Run," a collector's item). What, Mr. Seth, are police priorities in matters of this kind?

As a result of how the police conducted themselves in this instance, one of the group members himself was prompted to remark that it hardly seems worth it to return to PSU next year.

Why must the students suffer because of the possible mishandling of an incident which occurred at an admittedly "stressful" point in the concert?

Nancy Farmer  
10th-psychology  
Tina Centrella  
8th-finance

## Entertainment

**TO THE EDITOR:** I'm writing in response to Jon Saltzman's letter in which he criticized "airheads" for not sharing his interests in television programming. Specifically, Mr. Saltzman mentioned that several women became angered or disinterested when their soap opera was pre-empted by a talk show.

From reading his letter, it seems to me that Mr. Saltzman is guilty of making several unsubstantiated inferences. For instance, he sees fit to question whether or not women think. What does one's choice of leisure activity have to do with one's ability to think? Clearly, many people watch TV merely to relax and may not care to be "intellectually stimulated" at the time. I'm sure that the talk show could have been enjoyable to many, and that some of the women could have expressed their dissatisfaction in a more mature manner. But surely this does not preclude their right to express preferences which differ from his own. I shudder to think of the melee that would occur had Mr. Saltzman unintentionally pre-empted a Flyer's game of the Phillies vs. the Pirates.

Clearly, all of the above are good forms of entertainment which appeal to many people. Could we only show more acceptance for those individuals who are different from ourselves?

One line to the gentleman who was upset by all of the "ratty females" in State College... Perhaps these people are here for more than just your aesthetic appreciation. Again, let us all have more acceptance for one another.

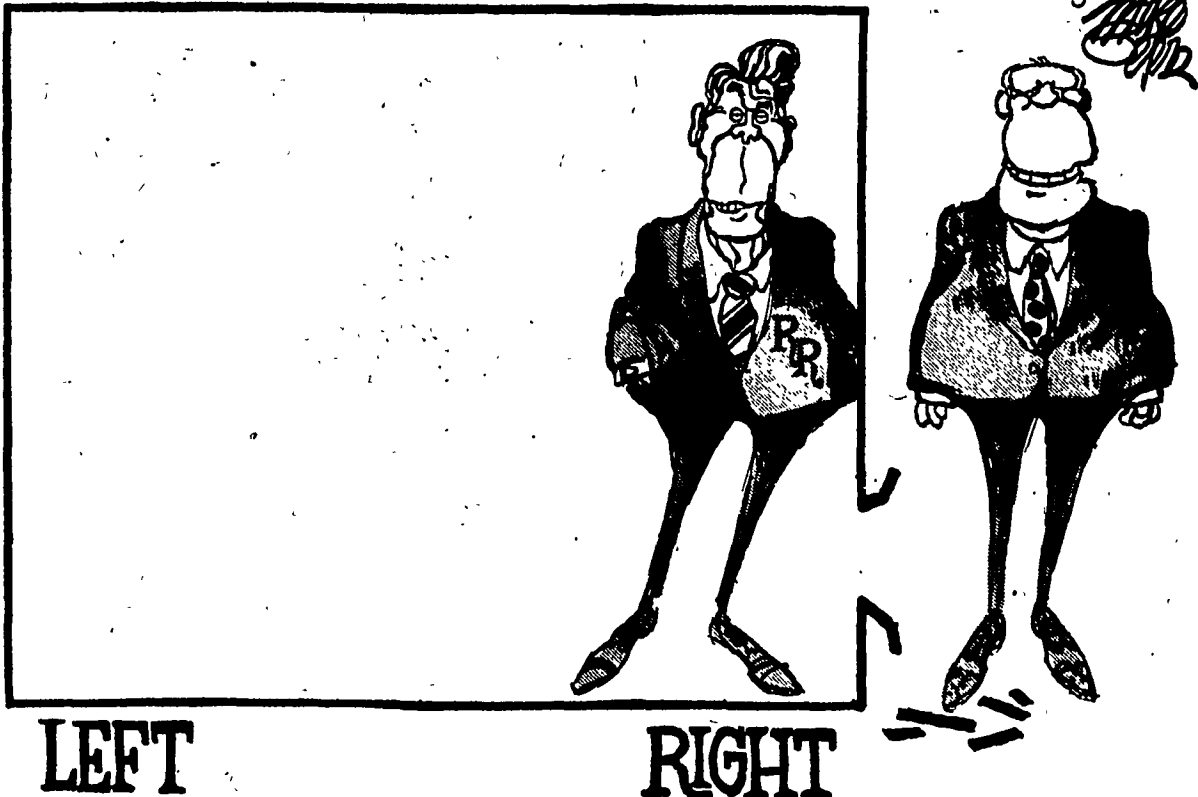
Tom Bayer  
9th-psychology

# the Collegian

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# Should marijuana be decriminalized?

Photos by Chris Newkumet  
Interviews by Charlene Sampedro



Richard E. Grubb (vice-president for Administrative Affairs) I'm not for decriminalizing the pusher or dealer. I'm not for legalizing it either. But I have kids in junior high and if they ever smoked it, I'd want to be the one to correct them. I wouldn't want them to have a criminal record from it.



Mark Peattie (Professor of Japanese History) Yes, I think each case should be decided on its merits. I'm not for putting kids in the slammer for a little pot.



Robert J. Maddox (Professor of History) Yes, I'd apply the same standards as alcohol. Of course it should be kept from children. Adults should be able to choose their own poison. Prohibition has shown this type of law is impossible to enforce.



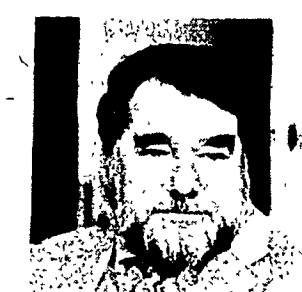
Forrest Malakoff (Professor of Sociology) Yes, I think individuals should have the right to make the decision for themselves what they want to do. No one should impose their values on another person.



Robert Secor (Associate Professor of English) Yes, it seems that there have never been indications that marijuana is any more harmful than alcohol. The laws are unenforceable anyway. Also there hasn't been any direct correlation between marijuana and hard drugs.



Mrs. Eileen Glenn (secretary of international programs in liberal arts) I'm against marijuana. I would rather not see it decriminalized or legal. You kids are crazy, but then we had our things too, like moonshine.



Vincent P. Norris (associate professor of Journalism) Yes, I think it should be decriminalized and also legalized. People are going to smoke it whether it's legal or not. At least they'd be partially protected from adulterated products. It's not any worse than tobacco cigarettes or booze.



Rev. Quentin L. Chaut: I don't think it should be a crime. I don't think the simple fact that somebody's caught with marijuana should give them a criminal record. I think it's out of proportion. On the other hand, I'm opposed to drug pushers.

Of 25 people interviewed, 20 said yes, 2 said no and 3 were undecided.