

# Dismissed

The dorm experience. It frightened us, shocked us, educated us. It broadened our viewpoints and increased our friendships.

And, it opened our eyes. Since it may have been a few terms since you had the pleasure of dorm life, it's now time for another lesson.

Last May, a South Halls resident assistant informed his area coordinator that he was a homosexual; three days later, the RA was told he would not be rehired after Spring Term ended.

The Residential Life staff manual requires that any dismissed RA be given 30 days notice and that he or she receive written reason for the action. The RA who made his sexual preference public received neither until

June 28. Even then, however, the RA felt that the reasons given only disguised the truth.

He was gay, and apparently that is not "the kind" of person Residential Life desires on its staff. If so, it's their mistake — and their loss.

What attention was paid to the RA's past record? What regard was given to that RA's right to live a private life?

Perhaps Residential Life viewed a homosexual staff member as a "threat" to the students in his charge. But it is difficult in this liberal-minded age to conceive of persons still clinging to the stereotype of some "sick" friend taking advantage of young boys.

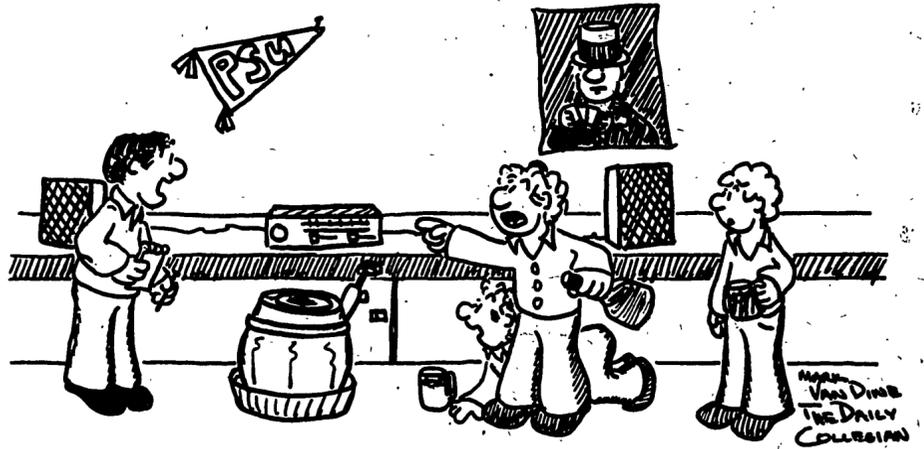
Perhaps Residential Life felt uncomfortable keeping someone on

its staff who deviated from what they saw as the sexual norm. But if one of the responsibilities of an RA is to help students grow and mature, then the RA who was dismissed should not be viewed as a hindrance.

Any individual who has the courage to rise above petty biases, hypocrisy and cruel conventions, should be applauded — not fired.

Residential Life could have taught students much about tolerance, compassion and open-mindedness from the incident. Instead, students learned about distrust, contempt and discrimination.

Residential Life opened up our eyes. But we don't like what they had to show us.



# Ellis Island marks state of 'land of opportunity'

Most of the passengers were elderly, speaking many languages. One old woman said to another, "Are you Italian?" and was answered in that rapid-fire tongue. Something about the Milanese.

The creaky ferry, its surface lumpy from untold layers of paint, circled around Ellis Island, a few hundred yards from the derelict piers of New Jersey. After several tries, the boat bumped against the landing and a ranger reached out to secure it. Straddling the dock and the listing ferry, the ranger grasped the elbows of the old women as they lumbered off the boat. "Careful now, Ma'am," he said to each respectfully. "We haven't had time to build a proper dock yet."

We gathered at the end of the pier, amidst the overgrown bushes and the piles of lumber. The youngest and the fastest walkers stood at the front of the group, the few children dancing around, staring at the ranger's Smokey Bear hat. The old men and women straggled in behind, breathing heavily and fanning themselves in the July heat. One woman had draped a handkerchief over her head.

"Hello, my name is Wyshinski," the young man said. "I'm a National Park Service ranger for the Department of the Interior. I'd like to welcome you to Ellis Island, which served as an immigration station between the years 1900 and 1954. You have landed here at the island's former coaling station because the original ferry slip where the immigrants landed has been condemned. You'll see it later on the New York side of the island. I must ask you to stay to the designated areas of the tour because only these have been made safe. I would also like to remind you that the immigrants who arrived here did not get

this kind of welcome. They were ordered to move along, quickly, without explanation. So follow me, please, and no straggling."

## Kathleen Pavelko

The buildings on Ellis Island are brick, of an ornate style no longer associated with institutional architecture. They were built in 1900, after a fire which destroyed the original wooden buildings. We followed the rapidly disappearing ranger into the doorless entrance of one of the buildings. The dark hallway was like a mine — the walls were shored up with wooden beams, and above, the ceiling was covered with plywood to keep the plaster from falling. Opening off the hallway at unexpected places were large, empty rooms, their grimy paint peeling from every surface. The tiles which lined the walls halfway to the ceiling were cracked; fallen tiles lay in mounds here and there in the hall.

We emerged, blinking, into a courtyard and were led at a trot by the ranger to an enormous building on the other side. He stopped at the doorway and waited for us to catch up and to catch our breath. "We are now entering the baggage area, where the immigrants first arrived," he said. One stocky man in front of me muttered, "This is where I had to leave my baggage in 1905."

The baggage room was like those we had glimpsed along the

hallway — cavernous areas littered with crushed tiles and plaster, paint hanging from wall and ceiling. We walked between the gratings which divided the room into narrow corridors, as the immigrants had walked with their baggage. At the end of the baggage room, a narrow door. And then, on the other side, the "great hall," the main processing area. The hall was three stories high and occupied nearly the entire building. A wide staircase in the center of the room led to the railed balcony on the second-floor level, where the men's and women's dormitories were located.

"Hurry, quick!" the immigrants were told, as they were pushed towards the stairway. As they crowded up the stairs, they were inspected by physicians. Those limping, or breathing hard were marked with chalk for later examination. All of us would have been marked. At the top came the questions, usually through an interpreter: Name, country, how much money, do you have a job, are you alone here?

But the questions posed a dilemma — to lie or be honest? Many immigrants had been hired while still in their native villages, hoping that a job in hand would assure their entry into the United States. Yet proof of a job put the immigrant in violation of an 1885 contract labor law forbidding the overseas hiring of labor.

Do you have any money? To immigrants accustomed to petty officials who stole from the unwary, the answer seemed to be to have none. Yet the penniless immigrant could be detained because he might become a public charge.

Processing through Ellis Island for the lucky 80 per cent took three to four hours. But for the 20 per cent detained with chalk

marks — "H" for heart, "X" for mental defects, or "SI," the dreaded Special Inquiry — the processing could take weeks or even months. If marked with an SI, the immigrant faced questioning from three immigration inspectors. Because he was not a citizen, the immigrant had no right to a lawyer, although an appeal could be made through one of the Social Welfare agencies which aided immigrants.

From the medical opinion, however, there could be no appeal. Many of the children suffered from glaucoma and other contagious eye diseases and could not be admitted to the country. A diseased child under ten was deported, accompanied by one parent. A child over ten could be sent back alone, because those deported were sent back at the expense of the steamship company which had brought them.

Irving Howe calls Ellis Island "the nearest earthly likeness to the final Day of Judgment." Nearly 12 million immigrants passed through Ellis Island, and they called it the Island of Tears. Although 20 per cent were detained, only two per cent were deported — a quarter of a million persons.

Those accepted into the country were sent — at government expense — across the bay to New York, where they could settle or make rail connections for points further west. The ferry which took them, the "Ellis Island," now lies half sunk and rotting in the island's original ferry slip.

The National Park Service estimates that \$50 million will be required to restore Ellis Island (only \$1.5 million has been appropriated so far). Perhaps the "Ellis Island" will be excluded from the restoration so that all may see how run-down we've allowed the land of opportunity to become.

## From the editor

# 'Official' word often meaningless

**"Put it in writing. Ask your questions, type them out and then we'll respond to them — in writing. That way you'll get real answers and they'll be accurate. There will be no room for editorializing."**  
Bud Goehring, director of transportation at Penn State.

Nor will there be room for any real questions nor a chance for any true answers. What you will get, if you're lucky, is the official word. What you will probably end up with is an unanswered question.

The Collegian found this out. After ten days, Charles Shilke, University Airport manager, called to say he completed the answers to Collegian questions concerning the University Park airport.

Shilke had told the Collegian that he, Bud Goehring, director of transportation and Richard Crowley, vice president for business services, would only respond to written questions. So the Collegian reporters prepared a set of 13 questions for Shilke.

Shilke, who had been out sick, told a Collegian reporter that he couldn't have the questions until that Friday. Come Friday, Shilke said the answers would be ready Monday. On Monday, Shilke said the questions were being approved by his bosses — Goehring and Crowley.

Had Collegian reporters been allowed to ask their questions in person, would Goehring and Crowley have been there to okay Shilke's answers? Probably. Particularly since the Collegian's first interview with Goehring found Crowley on hand to clear up any questions that Goehring couldn't answer.

Although one-on-one interviews are more to my liking, I can't complain about talking to several sources at the same time. Sometimes there is some good interaction between the interviewers and the subjects. However, when questions have to be in writing this exchange is thwarted. And more often than not the questions are misunderstood.

For example, when the Collegian asked Shilke if it was true that it had actually been more than a year since the last 'official' correspondence with the Federal Aviation Administration, Shilke said he didn't un-

## Jan Selinger

derstand what we meant by 'official' correspondence. Perhaps, we could have made the original question clearer, but had Shilke not understood the question, he should have called for a clarification or better yet allowed us to question him in person.

Instead Shilke typed out a nice, neat, but for the most part worthless, inter-office memo in response to Collegian questions.

We had heard that the airport was requesting a fifth staff pilot and had even completed all the necessary paper work. We asked Shilke if this was true.

To this Shilke wrote: "Over a period of time the

utility, attributes and advantages of a fifth staff pilot has been discussed." No definitive yes or no.

The Collegian, however, did get a definitive answer as well as an actual real-life in-person interview with George H. Lovette, assistant vice president for business.

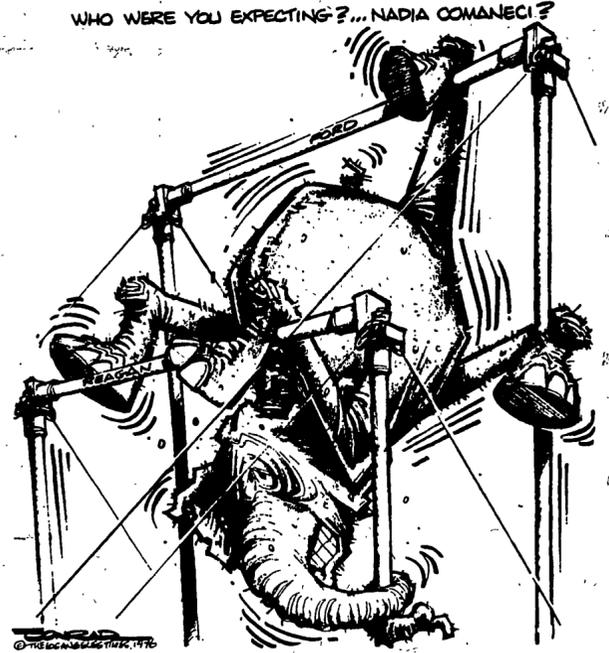
Lovette said that they have been constantly studying the possibility of a fifth staff pilot whose addition would cut down on the number of outside charters that the airport would have to use. However, Lovette told a Collegian reporter that up until this time no fifth staff pilot has been requested.

When we asked Shilke if the airport operates on a profit basis, Shilke replied: "I am not in a position to make comment on this question."

Lovette, who explained that the airport operates on a break-even basis, agreed that revealing this information was not up to Shilke. It looks like Shilke's job is to manage the airport, apparently not to deal with the press.

From the looks of things, it appears that airport officials are sticking to the suggested procedures for handling questions from the media spelled out in the June issue of "Intercom." They are refusing to comment on matters outside their expertise.

We can grudgingly tolerate 'chain of command' filtering of information. We can try to understand the reason for stoppage of important information channels. And we can try and figure out why certain questions must be in writing. However, I find it an irritating double standard.



ANOTHER INTRUDER GOES OVER THE WHITE HOUSE FENCE.



# Mars trip—wasted or wondrous?

Public apathy notwithstanding, the Viking landing on Mars stands as one of the greatest scientific feats of all time. The near-perfect performance of Viking I is a tribute to the technical brilliance of workers and scientists involved in America's space program, a tribute that is magnified in light of two Russian failures to accomplish the same feat.

I imagine that volumes have already been written about every conceivable aspect of this Martian flight. Hours probably have been spent in discussion, speculation, and explanation about Mars and the new knowledge we have gained from Viking.

But through all this jabber, I find one thing lacking by all except a small minority of people, and that is a sense of true wonder, of awe, at what America has accomplished.

Granted, the moon landing had all of the drama and suspense of a life and death situation. It was a much greater achievement than the Mars landing, emotionally if not technically, and it deserves all the excitement that it generated. The awe inspired by the moon landing is a direct consequence of a primordial urge that man possesses to reach up and touch the moon, to experience the alien environment of a heavenly body that is totally alien yet totally familiar.

Though Mars, like the moon, is alien, it lacks that combination of familiarity

and strangeness that the moon has. Mars is essentially alien. The moon is an eternal companion.

There are some, though, here on earth, who do marvel at the Viking landing. Their wonder goes beyond the sentiments expressed by President Ford when he said, "We've gone from a flight of a few seconds and a few hundred feet to a year-long flight to Mars, crossing some 440 million miles of space."

## Tom Reeher

There are some scientists, writers, and artists who are expressing wonder at the Mars landing in terms of a visionary perspective. They see the landing as an event even more significant to the future of the space program than the moon landing. And they see past this beginning to a future even more spectacular than any comparison between the Wright brothers and Viking I.

With the success of the Mars landing, man has proven that he can reach far out into the universe and explore and gain knowledge while sitting safely, millions of miles away, on earth.

The obvious question, then, is what will follow Viking I? What is it that these visionaries see?

First of all, there's Viking II, due on Mars in September. It success is vir-

tually assured by the success of its predecessor, and the knowledge gained from Viking I will enable the new robot to make a more sophisticated study of the planet.

After Viking II, scientists will surely petition the government for more funds for more missions to Mars and beyond. The success of their ventures up to this point will be an invaluable asset in obtaining those funds, make no mistake.

Already, scientists have plans for the construction of space colonies that would mine ores from the moon and contain up to 10,000 people. These colonies are feasible with today's technology. Though the colonization effort would require an initial investment of 100 billion dollars (Apollo cost 39 billion) there would be a dollar return from the project that would eventually show a profit.

One of the scientist visionaries, Dr. Gerard K. O'Neill of Princeton University, says, "Probably the most direct, immediate (benefit to life on earth) would be in making a contribution to the energy problem. We've looked at the possibility of building big, fairly conventional power stations located in an orbit that would keep them over the same spot on earth and beam microwave power back to earth."

If all this seems a bit off track, remember that, had Viking I failed miserably, the credibility and

momentum of America's space effort would have suffered, making talk of space stations much harder to accept.

But the fact is that the success on Mars will prompt more space exploration.

I think that one basic goal, perhaps the ultimate goal, of space exploration is to discover life somewhere in the universe, to prove that man is not alone. Viking I represents the first real chance that man has had to find that life.

Man must grow with his technology, though. There are lessons to be learned in space as well as knowledge to be gained. Science fiction writer Ray Bradbury insists that Viking will discover life on Mars, or at least evidence of a past life. If it doesn't, then the search will go on and Viking I will soon be just another name in the space program. However, if it does discover life, then the Mars landing will go down in history as the most wondrous feat yet accomplished by man.

## the Collegian

JANICE SELINGER  
Summer Editor  
NADINE KINSEY  
Business Manager