

Take it easy

This Saturday, thousands of students will be caught up in the spirit of the new football season. But some who have more boldness than brains may try to test the limits of University policy and the campus police by openly defying the no-drinking policy.

Despite the crazy schemes and success stories about other universities changing their dry look, students are not going to change Penn State's policy by taking matters into their own hands.

Open drinking bouts and reporting tailgaters who possess alcohol won't accomplish a thing. Unfortunately, most students are more interested in seeing what they can get away with rather than working at the legislative level towards getting the state-wide drinking age lowered.

The idea to hold drinking parties in East Halls will only result in hangovers, probable property

damage and an even more stubborn administration.

Students and RAs who want to form a coalition to expose drinking at tailgating parties, hoping to infuriate alumni into pushing for change, found their plans went limp because the same plan that was supposedly so successful at Michigan State University was subject to different laws.

Although we supported this idea at first, it seems highly impractical in light of this new information.

At Michigan State, the Board of Trustees is elected by the people and can initiate university ordinances that carry the weight of state law. If you were caught with alcohol anywhere at any age on the Michigan campus, except in the married students' quarters, you could get 90 days, \$100 or both.

But Penn State's drinking policy carries none of those serious

repercussions. Students, alumni and visitors who are discovered with alcohol inside or outside of the stadium are merely asked to return it to their car, to turn it in at the police booth and pick it up after the game or to dispose of it. No overreaction. No drama.

Don't be fooled, with so-called success stories. According to David Stormer, director of university safety, Michigan didn't lower its drinking age statewide until years after the experiment at Michigan State University.

This change in Pennsylvania law is going to take time, but if students want to see it come about they had better ignore the crackpot schemes. Administrators and legislators will sit and smirk as the overreacting students proceed to prove how incapable they are of handling their rights. Choose a responsible plan of action at the legislative level.

Work for it. Don't destroy it.

Carter wins kosher vote

Some people fault Jimmy Carter for his teeth. I don't mind them, inasmuch as I have several myself.

Others dislike him because he's from the South. Most of those people probably weren't reading the Collegian when we announced the end of the Civil War.

A great many people dislike the former Georgia governor because he is a Jesus Freak. And I'm afraid I was among the doubters, at least until early this summer when I saw the light.

Before we get to the Miracle of Schwartz, a bit of explanation is in order. I am Jewish; you'll note that the religion shares the letters "s" and "i" with the Baptists.

And that is all the two religions share. To many Jews, evangelical Christians bring back bad memories, memories of mass conversions of Jews. Many of those conversions were quite literally painful, and somewhere along the line many of us got the notion that we were unloved.

To put it more bluntly, there were many times in our history when we were given the options of (a) becoming Christians, or (b) becoming dead people.

Now along comes Jimmy Carter. He talks about love a lot, an issue ranking right up there with hiring the handicapped among controversial issues of the day. He talks about getting this country moving again, a policy acceptable to Jew and gentile alike.

All of which is well and good, but then he has to ruin it all by talking about being reborn. To be fair, Jimmy Carter hasn't played up his religion — for the most part, it is a media issue, born out of the same fervor that has brought us endless stories about Miss Lillian, Plains and softball with FBI agents.

Still, the threat of a born again president is enough to send

droves of Jewish voters into the Republican ranks, a miracle in itself.

I was in a bit of a quandry myself, until Carter changed my mind with a comment he made to a group of New Jersey rabbis. Concerned with a lack of Jewish support, Carter told the rabbis that the Jews should be the last people to discriminate against a man because of his religion.

It was one of the only comments made by any candidate in this election year that made any sense. And it was driven home later in the summer by another story I read, this one about a school board election in the South. A local church sent out surveys to the candidates in the race, demanding to know whether they were born again Christians. If they were, they apparently were fit for office.

The point is simple. If the Jews, Catholics or any other religious group in this country reject Jimmy Carter because of his religion, they've got to admit that that Southern church was right to use that criterion in choosing a school board.

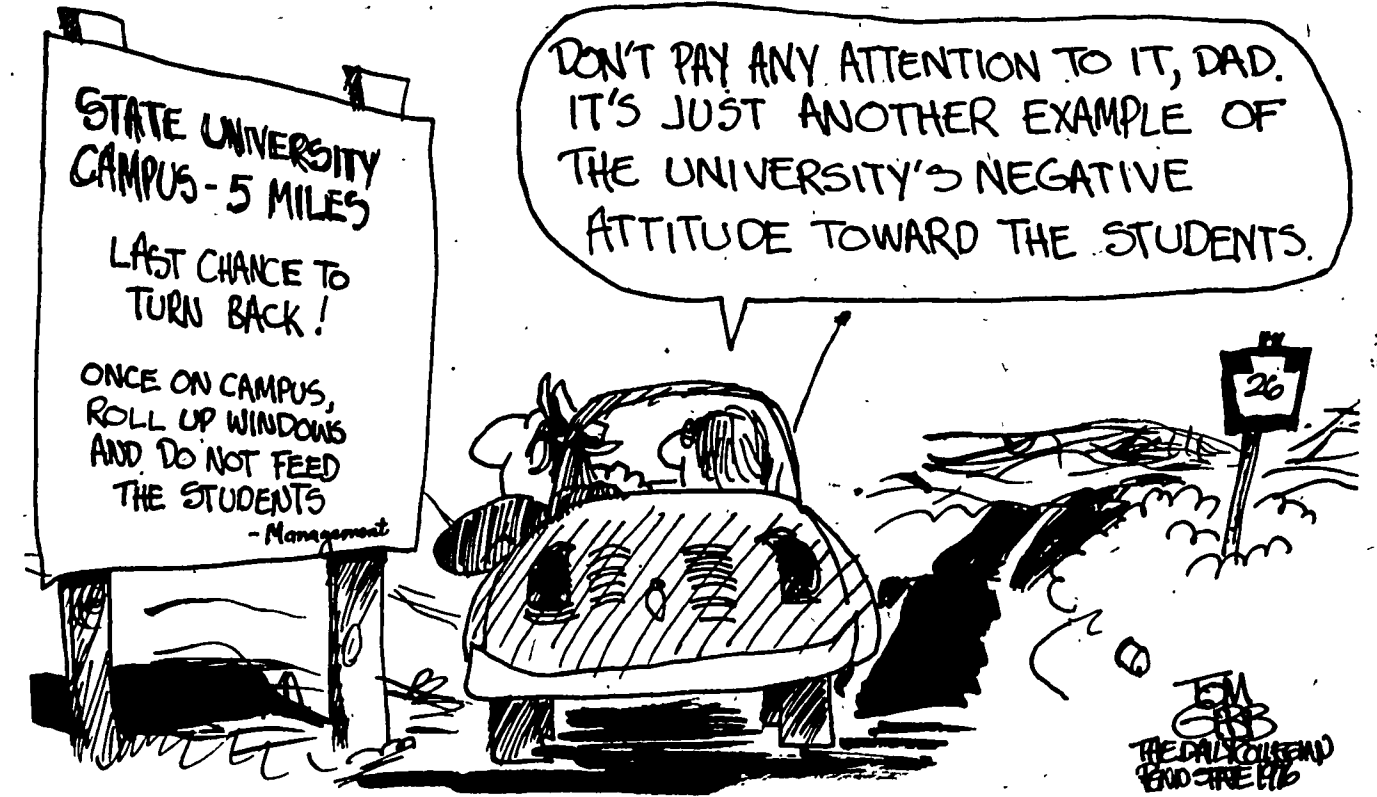


Jerry Schwartz

The religious issue is a silly issue. There are enough reasons to vote for or against Jimmy Carter without resorting to the church he goes to or the God he prays to. We can't afford to choose presidents by their religion or their race or their sex anymore. It isn't right and it isn't smart.

All that I ask of Carter or any other candidate is that he follow the Constitution. That means separation of church and state; that means no prayer in the public schools, no aid to religious schools, no effort to use the government as a huge revival meeting.

Carter has pledged to keep God out of the government and the government out of God. We can ask no more.



RAs caught in middle

By DOUGLAS L. ROOT
7th-Journalism

I am going to brave the 400-pound hamster lurking in the hall, stand up to the ugly possibilities of losing my privileges to the RA executive washroom or being forced to give back my decoder ring for blabbing the passwords and secret hand shake of the RA organization, and probably disappoint one particular editor and many curious students who have the dramatic idea that Resident Assistants are by nature and role unable to take a stand, express an opinion or an idea.

If there has ever been a time when I believe RAs have strained their vocal chords and expressed not only viewpoints, but criticism of University policy, it has been during this school year. Of course, there are some RAs who tend to overemphasize or exaggerate their positions and begin to get the feeling that their jobs are always on the chopping block. It is a shame that the possibility of an RA subverting the alcohol policy had to be dealt with by those in authority with such extreme statements as: "We could have you (RAs) all replaced within 48 hours." You see, the definition of subversion is very diverse, left largely up to individual interpretation. The results are that some will feel that they can speak out while others will be more cautious.

The thing to remember is that most of us were chosen for the job, not so that we'd blend in around a residence hall floor, or that we'd make good "yes" persons for the University to shuffle

where they will, but chosen because we had things to say, ideas to contribute, and a willingness to make decisions and take on responsibilities.

All students living in the University residence halls and the RA supervisory staff are, by now, keenly aware how every RA must feel about enforcing a policy like the one on alcohol that is regressive by nature and so blatantly out of tune with other Universities across the country. I don't think it is any secret that our jobs this year as Resident Assistants are something to be desired. Many of us spent the greater part of last year going through an exhausting set of interviews and if that wasn't enough, spent 10 weeks or Spring Term taking a three-credit course designed to make us effective in counseling and inter-personal relations.

So, what happened when most of the RAs who, like most other students, had put Happy Valley out of sight and mind for the summer, came back to find their job description changed radically from dorm resident, counselor, and friend to that of the campus heavy? We screamed. We argued. We yelled. We tried to persuade. Eventually we stopped arguing.

There was no one in any position in this University who could do anything constructive to relieve the burden of enforcement that had been placed almost squarely on our shoulders. Do we as Resident Assistants feel that we can blame people in the Division of Residential Life such as Drs. Murphy and Upcraft? I can only speak for myself.

Yet, I have the feeling that most RAs are viewing things from the middle, and we who have this perspective can only sympathize with these men. We leave the name-calling and ignorant behavior to narrow-minded students and badly misguided USG presidents. Surely no one person can be blamed for such an extreme policy. It is a sobering fact that the 21-year-old drinking law is what it is, a law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The courts do not ignore any law, no matter how small or miniscule it is considered to be by the population.

The alcohol policy, in more than one way, has served to severely limit the opportunities of the RA in getting a good relationship going with people on the floor. No matter what is said to the contrary by any University official in any capacity, we as RAs have been crippled.

Some sensitive students see our position and sympathize with us. Others will take the view of a student whom one of my RA friends met at a party last weekend downtown. My friend was asked if she would "really" write up an underage student for drinking in the residence halls. Her response was that she didn't have any choice in the matter and that she had given her word that she would. The student glared at her and then retorted, "I hate you."

Please don't hate us. Change must come about, and it will if we can direct our energies to the places where things happen, like the state legislature. Let us not quibble among ourselves. It can only serve to move us backward.

Letters to the Editor

Slumber party

TO THE EDITOR: On Tuesday night we had the pleasure of participating in a "mass slumber party" with several hundred other Penn State seniors. The many bodies strewn over the hallways of Boucke Building looked like the Battle of Gettysburg (or should we say the bread-lines of the depression.)

Surely the Student Placement Center could have operated in a more organized and efficient fashion. We found it appalling that we actually spent an entire night in Boucke simply to go through a two-minute process for scheduling interviews.

Wednesday was an equally bad experience, as we found it difficult to remain awake in classes.

We hope that the Placement Center realizes that there is a drastic need for a well-planned system.

Students simply should not have to be subjected to such a disorganized, unpleasant procedure.

Matt Ohrstein
10th-accounting
Erin L. Spira
11th-accounting

Correction

Wednesday's editorial incorrectly stated that open canvassing will allow commercial organizations to solicit buyers for their products in the dorms. Open canvassing will allow students to go door-to-door seeking support for ideas.

the Collegian








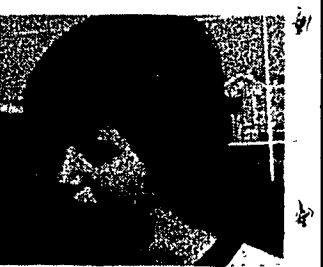
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Your opinion of the drinking policy?

Photos by Doug Henry

Interviews by Janice Mascioli

 <p>Annie Seybert (6th — therapeutic recreation) "Students could probably overcome it and prove that it's people that make parties and not alcohol."</p>	 <p>Donna Knoell (4th — landscape architecture) "It's really ridiculous of student government to change it, because they won't be able to change it. It's unfortunate the RAs have to enforce it. They won't be able to change it because it's breaking the law. The fault is with the law."</p>	 <p>Dennis Marriott (12 — computer science) "It's rather difficult to go against state rules and difficult to enforce policy when it differs from state law. They should concentrate on changing state law before changing dorm policies."</p>	 <p>Kevin Cadle (10 — physical education) "I don't know a whole bunch about it. It's not good and not worth it. People pay to come here and it's their home. They should be able to do what they want; just having alcohol isn't destructive, but can lead to it. The policy isn't going to stop anything."</p>	 <p>Craig Valda (8th—biology) "I don't believe it's right at all. Too much like reform school. We should be able to make our own decisions about alcohol. In any state around Pennsylvania you can get served for beer. In Pennsylvania it's like the Middle Ages when it comes to alcohol. Last year it was okay because there were ways to get around it."</p>	 <p>Anne Hynes (10—geological science) "It's the RA's job. I can't see the University being in violation of the state laws. The party planned in East Halls is ridiculous."</p>	 <p>Barbara Newman (9th — english literature) "They have to do it. Kind of unfair to people living on campus. But, they have to do it to keep people out of trouble because of the chugging incident. If kids had more sense about alcohol, they could be trusted."</p>	 <p>Lynn Palmero (1st—history) "Well, I think it's sort of stiff, crashing down a lot because of that one chugging incident in the summer. I'm not totally against the policy because underage drinking is against the state law. The policy gives you a second choice."</p>
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