

# Bombs away

Bombs can be old cars, beautiful blondes, disappointing grades or fake threats made against Penn State students and faculty in the Human Development Building.

For the past three weeks someone used the terror tactic of hidden bombs to cancel classes and confound professors and students. On four separate occasions this anonymous threatener has closed the building to the wary and wasted valuable class time for hundreds of students.

Bombs were never found in the building but caution dictates that professors take each threat seriously and refuse to subject their students to the risk of an explosion.

The culprit in this case may be seeking to intimidate a faculty

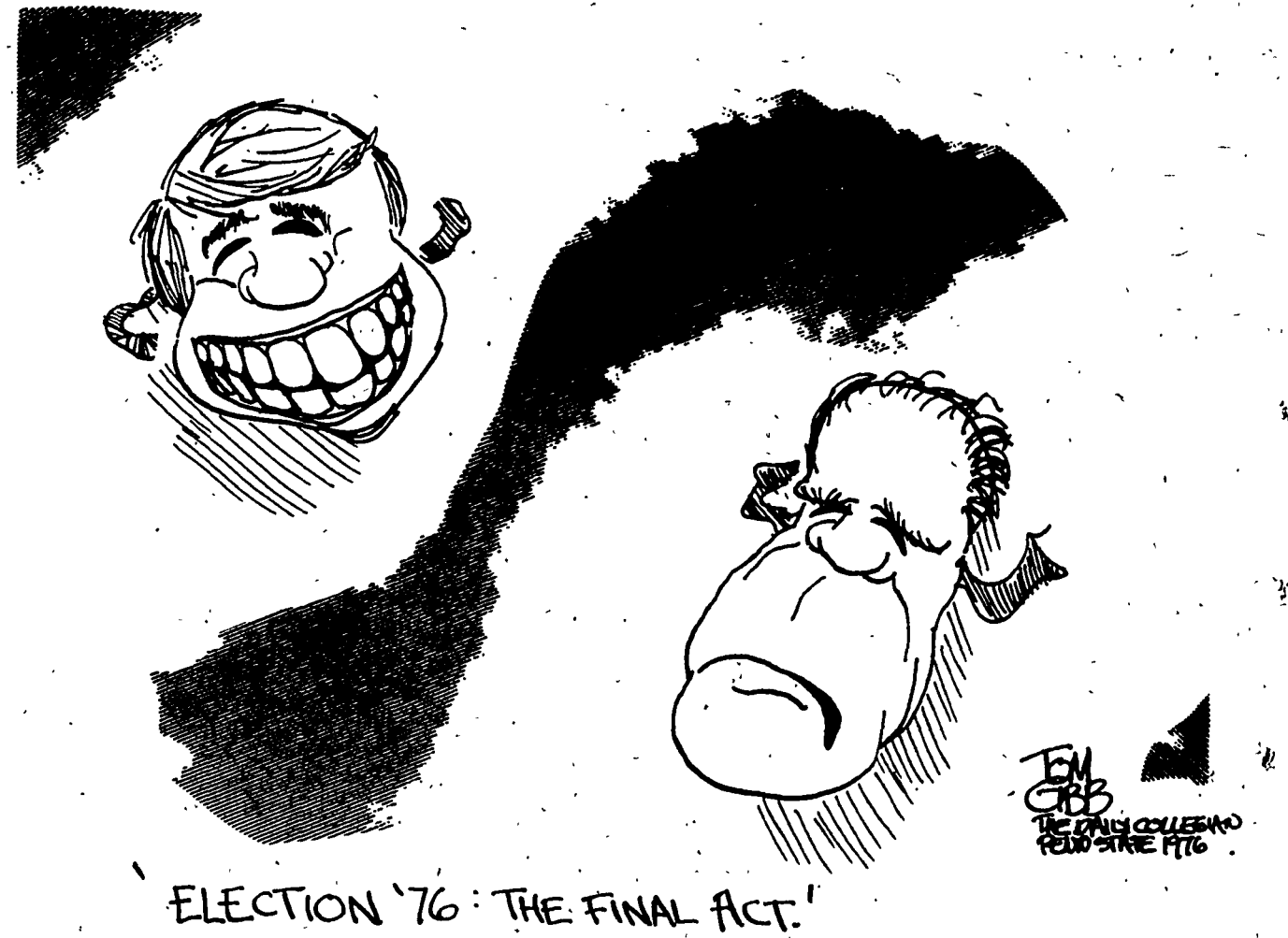
member or to purposely break up a particular class—each of the four threats came at the same time of day. He certainly is achieving one thing; a monumental loss of time, money and students' opportunity to learn. Some courses taught in the Human Development Building have lost a tenth of their class time because of the bully with fake bombs.

With less than two weeks left in the term, each class meeting takes on a greater importance to students trying to wrap the course up. If this anonymous caller is a student he is grossly mistreating his peers and should be ashamed of his infantile play for attention or revenge. If the caller is not a student the crime is no less heinous; he is not only destroying the con-

structive efforts of others but tormenting them with threats of bomb explosions.

Meanwhile, the Human Development Building is besieged, students are angry because of class cancellations and the police have no motive or suspect. They will eventually track down these anonymous calls and find the culprit if he chooses to continue his threats.

We urge the bomber to end his sinister calls and to make public any grievances he may have. Intimidation and repeated threats upon the safety of hundreds of people can be no way to solve difficulties. It certainly is no way to make friends.



# English taught too literally for aspiring writers

By VAN R. KANE  
10th-writing option

A friend of mine wants to be a writer. He takes every opportunity to write: features for his high school paper, articles for a branch campus publication, short stories for himself. What I've seen of his stories excites me. His words share experiences and views of life that I'd never considered. He could well become a professional writer, but because the English Department is playing games with the Writing Option, he may never have the chance.

This term my friend is taking English 109 which was meant to be the basic professional writing course. His instructor is helpful, knowledgeable, and sometimes interesting — and unqualified to teach professional writing. The instructor's credentials, interests, and abilities are all in English literature. He's never tried to write for anything but the literary journals.

My friend tells me he can't see any difference between his course and any other literature course except he's expected to write more compositions.

My instructor for English 109, when I took it two years ago, was a writer. We read several short stories, but not to find

symbolism or hidden meanings. Instead our instructor showed us how the author's words told what he had to say.

We had one criterion for our written assignments: write like professionals. We wrote two essays, two short stories, and one article. My papers were returned with so many comments that I often couldn't read what I had written. I missed a few nights sleep that term, but I learned a lot about writing.

I've realized since, after taking several more writing courses, that it is essential for a beginning writer to learn his craft from established authors. An article, for example, may require participation in an event and several interviews along with the library work. Complex subjects must be explained to the layman; the reader's interest must be kept; a feel must be given for the unfamiliar place or thing. Fiction is more difficult: plot, characterization, suspense, dialogue. The writer has to keep in mind the audience he's writing for and then he has to sell his work to an editor. Only a professional writer will have handled these problems daily.

When the English Department developed the Writing Option, it had the nucleus of a first-rate writing program. Writers taught almost all the sections of the writing courses. The training received by the first students in the Writing Option

could only be improved upon by making writing their livelihood.

Recently, however, literature courses disguised as writing courses have become common. While half the English majors are in the Writing Option, only one-fifth of the English Department's faculty consists of writers. There are no longer enough writers to teach all the writing courses: instead of hiring more writers, the department puts literature professors behind the lectern.

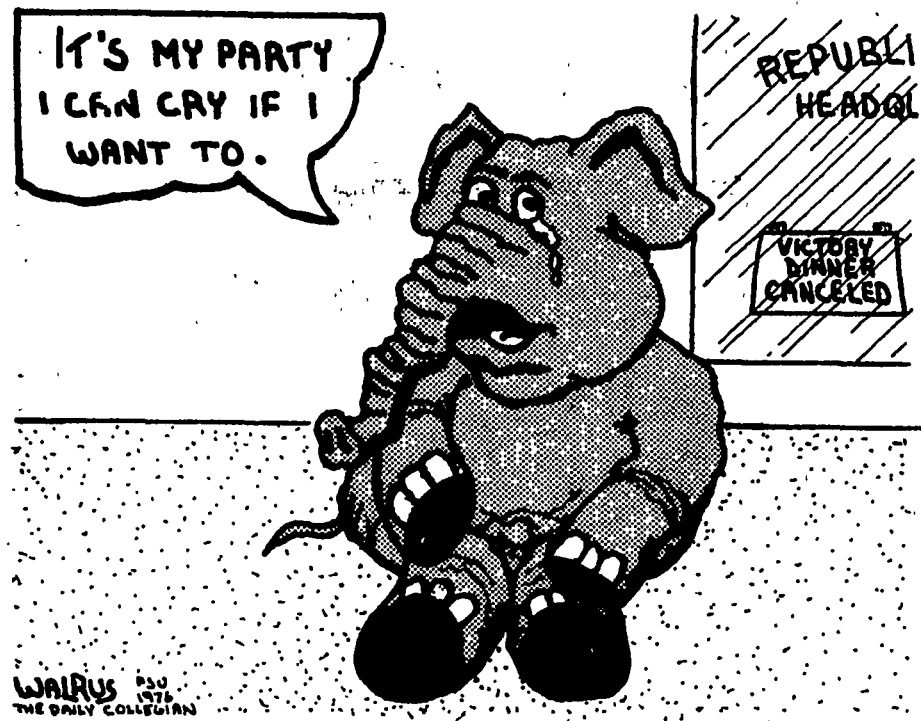
Why? I believe the literature people are afraid of the Writing Option's success. A literature professor has admitted that English could offer three times as many sections of its writing courses as it does now and still have no trouble filling them. Hiring the writers to teach all these sections would mean that the hiring of literature professors would have to be frozen. It might even become necessary to lay-off untenured literature people.

When positions have become open in the Writing Option, literature PhD's get the jobs. I'm told that the resumes of prominent writers who have applied for the same jobs are ignored. The English Department seems unconcerned about the educations of half its students.

The literature professors don't seem to understand that the purpose of the Writing Option is to produce professional writers. When a survey showed that 80 per cent of the Writing Option's graduates had jobs as writers or editors, they weren't impressed. They wanted to know if any of the graduates had published a novel. People trained to study literature see writing only as a means to produce more literature.

Several weeks ago, six professors wrote the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts asking the Writing Option be separated from English and be merged with the School of Journalism. The English Department's response was to fire Leonard Rubinstein, a writer, as the director of the Writing Option, and then to abolish the position.

When I took English 109, I never expected anything to come of it; my instructors for English 1 and 3 had made it clear that I had no talent for writing. Yet I recently sold my first article. The improvement was not because of my talent, but because of the talent of the writers who taught me. My friend who's taking English 109 this term deserves the same opportunity. And as long as the Writing Option is part of the English Department, he'll never get it.



# Life is tight inside the closet...

By SANDY STUMBAUGH  
Collegian Columnist

I am one of the chosen minority who spends her free time in a closet, commonly known as my dorm room.

It came as a shock when I first opened the door to my room and found a 5-foot by 10-foot cubicle. I prayed I had made a mistake and rechecked the door to make sure it didn't say "janitor's closet." No such luck.

Did University housing really expect two people to live in that crack in the wall? Apparently so.

For those of you who aren't aware of what it's like to live in a single room converted to a double, let me elucidate.

Imagine, if you will, two people scheduling their days from beginning to end so that they don't have to be in the room at the same time. Now let me explain that my roommate and I get along fine and we aren't trying to avoid each other. The fact is that there just isn't enough space in the room for the two of us to move about freely.

Usually we time our mornings so that one or the other of us gets up first and gets ready for class. Unfortunately we

aren't always so methodical about our activities. Many are the times when we both scramble in front of the mirror in the morning and I strangle her with my hair dryer cord or she stabs my eye with her mascara wand.

However, the most atrocious aspect of the room was the bunk beds. I say "was" because those bunk beds are a nightmare of the past in our room now. They were taken apart long ago.

During the brief time the bunk beds were in our room, I was the "lucky" person to get the top bunk. I'm taller than my roommate and so I didn't have as much trouble climbing to the top as she did. I had a terrible fear of coming home some night in a slightly inebriated state, falling onto my bed and in order to make the room stop spinning, putting my foot over the edge of the bed only to crash to the floor in a groaning heap. Hence, at the expense of removing one of the desks and for the sake of my sanity the bunk beds were taken apart.

Since my roommate and I were bestowed with this room, we haven't done too much entertaining. I can just imagine what a party would be like in

that room.

You say you're looking for George? Oh yes, I think he's in the closet with Vivian and Marty. Irene? Oh she's under one of the beds talking to John. And Bruce? There he is peeking out from underneath the desk. Be careful, you almost stepped on Joe's hand.

Of course this oversized shoe box has its advantages, too. My roommate and I only have half as much dirt to clean as students with regular rooms. Also, we don't have any problem with cockroaches since they don't like the cramped conditions. And finally, I don't have to worry about my mother visiting too often because she has a terrible case of claustrophobia and can't stand being in my room for more than five minutes.

Unfortunately, the disadvantages seem to outweigh the advantages. If I only had to sleep in that room it probably wouldn't be so bad since there is enough space for two beds, but that is all there is room for. However, I also have to get dressed, study and entertain there, and I don't think University housing took these small aspects of my lifestyle into consideration when it decided to

# Letters to the Editor

## Appreciation

**TO THE EDITOR:** We would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Sigma Chi, and Delta Upsilon for their support in the recent College Area Auxiliary Antique Show for the benefit of the Centre Community Hospital. They provided enthusiastic crews to assist in setting up the show and dismantling the equipment at the conclusion. It is gratifying to have the much needed help from such public spirited students.

Mrs. W. R. Fortney  
Mrs. W. K. Reed  
Show chairmen

## Good move

**TO THE EDITOR:** Concerning the record review on Elton John's "Blue Moves," I suggest Bob Frick check his copy. It must be defective. What he probably listened to was "Rock of the Westies" with the wrong label. If he thinks that "Goodbye Yellowbrick Road" was Elton's pinnacle of success, then he shouldn't even begin to think of "Blue Moves" as a disappointment. This album has all the class and originality of the old Elton we have all come to know and love. The first consideration of this album as drive forces the listener to believe that Mr. Frick should be doing record reviews for Mad Magazine. (Sorry, Mad.)

I only have two parting notes. I, too, have been disappointed with the Elton post-Yellowbrick Road, but this latest album shows definite signs to the road to recovery. And in 1975, the number two album of the year in terms of sales featured an artist whose vocals can be considered awful at best. The album to which I am referring is Bruce Springsteen's "Born to Run." Elton's "thin, screechy vocals" luckily don't compare to the vocals of Springsteen.

Incidentally, the number one album of 1975? "Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy" by you-know-who.

Ken Frobowitz  
2nd-business administration

## Heavenly days

**TO THE EDITOR:** I would like to make a couple of interesting points concerning an advertisement you ran on Oct. 29 for the movie "The Burning Hell" sponsored by the Penn State Overcomers.

The ad warns, "20,000 degrees Fahrenheit and not a drop of water..." presumably in reference to the temperature of hell. I confess that I have not seen the movie so I do not know what the basis of this claim is, but one can easily show that it is exaggerated.

Revelations 21:8 states, "But the fearful, and unbelieving... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." In order for brimstone (i.e. sulfur) to form a lake, the temperature would have to be less than the critical temperature for sulfur which is only 1900 degrees F. Compared to 20,000 degrees F. that's almost chilly. Furthermore, liquid sulfur can only reach that temperature when the pressure is 116 times that on Earth. If hell is at the same pressure as Earth, it could not be hotter than 833 degrees F.

While I am on the subject of Biblical temperatures, I would also like to point out a calculation of the temperature of heaven presented in "A Ransom Walk in Science" by Robert L. Weber, who is a faculty member here at Penn State. Using the Stefan-Boltzmann law for thermal radiation and a quotation from Isaiah 30:26, it is found that the temperature of heaven must be 980 degrees F. Hence, if we suppose that hell is indeed at 830 degrees F, we can say conclusively that heaven is literally hotter than hell.

Penn State Overcomers, go to heaven!

Paul Cowan  
graduate-physics

# ...if you can even get one

By LAURA SHERICK  
Collegian Staff Writer

Russian roulette is not a fun game to play. I'm sure some thrill-seekers get their jollies out of playing that wonderful game, but I never had any intention of joining their ranks, until —

I tried to buy a dorm contract last week.

Funny thing, how the University does not publicize the fact that if you buy a contract, you get a space — not the space you wanted but a space.

I doubt if many people know this. I constantly see signs around campus saying, "Dorm Contract — West Halls" or "Dorm Contract — Centre." These poor people think that they will be able to sell their contracts if someone who wants West or Centre is willing to buy. Sorry, folks. It doesn't work that way.

According to the people in housing assignments, buying up a dorm contract merely insures a student a dorm space. The lady in the office explained that I was doing a fellow student "a favor" by taking over her contract.

If I didn't want to keep the contract at some point during my days in the dorms, it was my seller's responsibility to take

care of the contract. I could leave for Acapulco tomorrow, refuse to pay my bill, and she would be stuck. I don't think that's terribly fair to either side. It puts a great deal of responsibility on me, as the buyer, to not rock the boat and play along, if I get East and wanted West. It puts a great deal of indebtedness to me on my friend, the dorm contract seller, because I have her in the palm of my hot little hand.

I hardly think that is a good way to start off a relationship.

In all fairness, I believe it would be difficult to convince students of the existence of this regulation. I'm sure students are not prone to read about the amazingly complex and astoundingly hard-to-understand rules and by-laws of this University, except in those instances when they wish to drop-add, drop out, re-matriculate, pre-register or pay their bills and fines.

But why can't the administration change the rule? To me, it seems more sensible to use the transfer-type of arrangement when dorm contracts are bought and sold. Why can't a student who lives off-campus buy a room from a seller, and by-pass administrative re-

location? Leave it to the students, they know what they want. And they're less likely to hate the bureaucracy if they are not shunted around like cattle.

And perhaps, if they make their own mistakes, they may learn to appreciate the value of computer programs and business-like clerks.

Russian roulette. I want West and don't want East. I work in Carnegie Building and I dislike lonely midnight walks across parking lot 80. I looked for a room in West and dealt with a girl in West.

I may settle for Centre, or maybe North, or at the worst, South. The others are too far for a long, dark walk in the winter nights.

I suppose it's more fair to transfer students to leave it to Shields Building. I think it's more fair to townies to leave it to students.

But I don't suppose it'll change. Not enough people complain. Few people put Shields to the test.

Maybe I will. That's Russian roulette, too.

Well, it's the thrill of the thing, you know. Wish me luck.

**the Collegian**  
daily

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