

Bad company

Herbert Fineman will remain Pennsylvania's most powerful legislator despite the fact that his last name may not be a reflection of his character. Fineman, Speaker of the House, has been indicted for accepting kickbacks.

A resolution which would have ordered Fineman to step down from his post as Speaker was defeated in a House vote Monday. Although an indictment does not convict a person of a crime, it is an indication that there is enough evidence to support a trial. Evidently it does not bother the House that someone who may even be suspected of a crime will hold such a prominent position amongst the lawmakers of the state. In fact, it is if not disgusting, ironic that the lawmakers them-

selves are sheltering such a person.

Fineman would retain his status as a legislator unless he was convicted. But until a trial is held, it is a miscarriage of justice to allow a person of questionable ethics to keep a powerful position. Rep. Martin Mullen (D-Phila.) was correct when he stated that keeping Fineman as Speaker would be setting a bad precedent.

Fineman says that the vote to retain him as Speaker reaffirms that the Constitution is alive and that a Speaker, just as any other citizen, is entitled to constitutional guarantees.

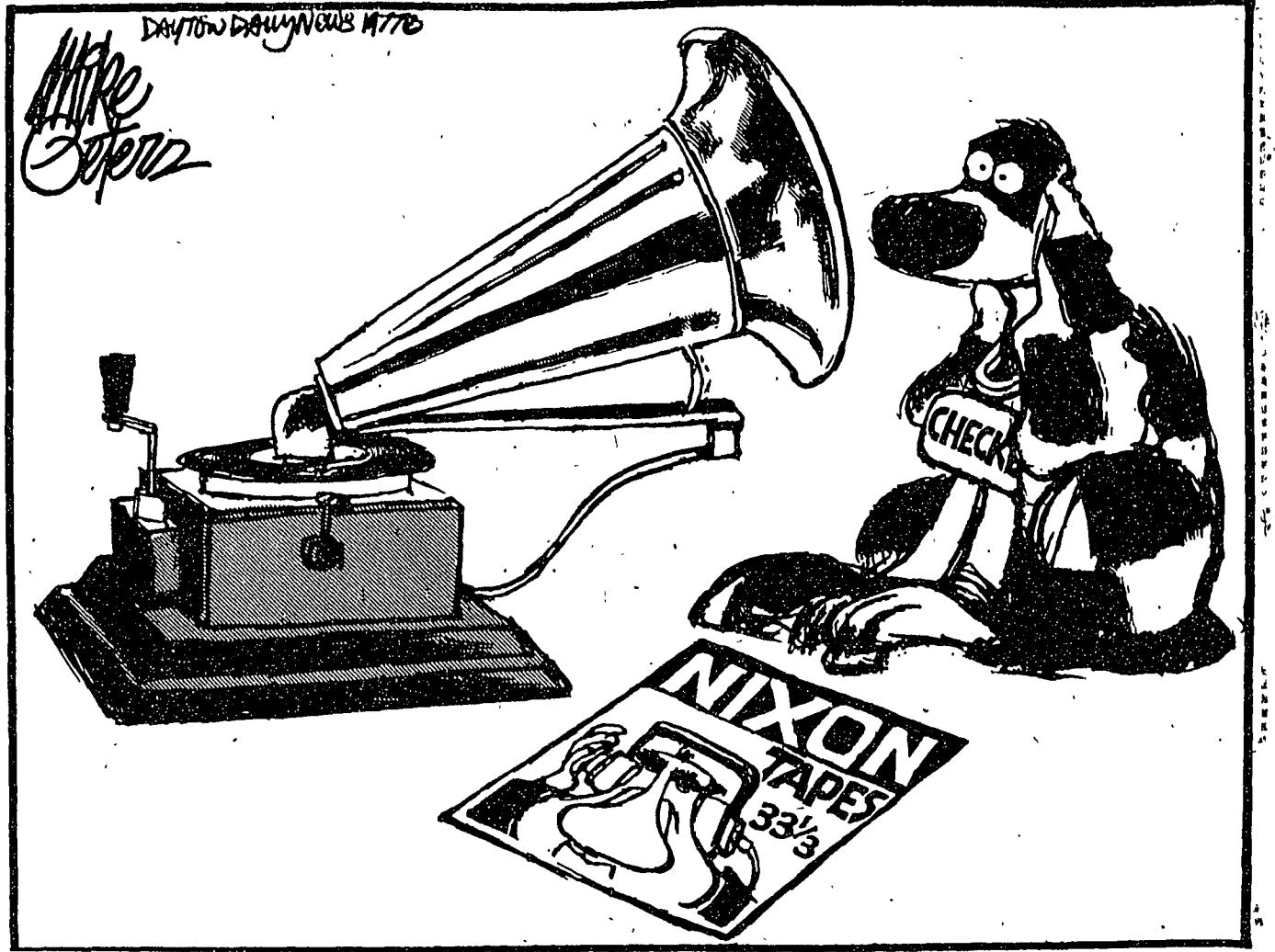
Graveyards from Mount Vernon to Monticello must have rumbled over that one. Although Fineman has the constitutional right to keep his job as legislator until proven

guilty, the House could still choose to remove him from prominence within the legislature.

The power behind the vote to retain Fineman as Speaker seems to be emanating from the office of Philadelphia's favorite mogul, Frank Rizzo. It seems that Rizzo and other city officials fear losing financial aid for the city if Fineman loses his post.

The fact that one man and a few cohorts can sway so much opinion in a body of legislators reduces the House of Representatives to a real travesty.

Fineman may be safe as long as the pressure is kept on the legislators. Unless, of course, they might, as a collective body, begin thinking for themselves, and voting accordingly.



Far out world of sixties—gone but not forgotten

Back in the late sixties, along with Nixon, Haight-Ashbury, Iron Butterfly and student activism a particular idiom developed among the nation's young people.

It was an amalgam of revitalized beatnikese, black jargon, Newspeak, nonsense and computer language and it had a special charm and appeal. Sad to say most of the words and phrases that made up this idiom have fallen into disuse, the victims of changing times and concerns. Although some linger on, the vast majority have gone the way of the Monkees and flower children. They wouldn't fit in today, anyway, but they were fun while they lasted.

Whatever happened to "far out" (and its variants "farm out," and "really way out there")? What a great phrase it was: Its indefinite meaning made it applicable to virtually any situation. Positive or negative, anything and anyone could be far out. Like much of the late sixties slang, its function was more to indicate kinship and camaraderie than to describe anything. Mere mention of the phrase, along with sufficiently long hair and sufficiently old jeans made the speaker one of a well-defined group.

And if something or someone actually transcended the realm-of far out, the logical place for it to be was "outsite," another utterance of near-universal application. A gorgeous,

micro-minid go-go girl and a cruel, hippie-beating nark could both be outsite in the same sentence without any loss of credibility.



George Dignow

"Stranger in a Strange Land" brought us "grok" and "grokking." A nice, primal, gutsy word, that one. Because I didn't read the book until 1973, I always had trouble with grok. Someone would deliver a completely cogent sentence, then tie it up with the half-hearted inquiry "grok me?" or, more simply, "grok?" I didn't: I alternately thought the speaker meant "pass the grok" or, if that seemed inappropriate, "my name is grok."

At least "dig it" was easy to understand and use. It, too, could be plugged into most any situation. Syntax didn't have anything to do with its effectiveness: "I just saw, dig it, Tiny Tim on Laugh-In." "Dig it, I just saw Tiny Tim on Laugh-In." "I

just saw Tiny Tim on Laugh-In, dig it?" It was a pretty handy term, like "oh wow," which was really just an expanded-consciousness version of "gosh" and a soul-mate of far out.

Some of the words and expressions were ultra-functional gems of simplicity. "Do your own thing" became the rationale for all kinds of aberrant behavior. "Trashing" a car, just as one would expect, meant reducing a car to trash. To "torch" a building involved no more than setting it afire (usually in the name of a worthwhile protest).

But others were baffling. The revolutionary cry "off the pigs" which, I eventually discovered, meant "destroy the police" had a lot of people confused. Many thought it was the command for competitors at a pig rodeo to dismount. And "grotty" is one that I'm still not sure of.

It was, so they say, a period of consciousness-raising, whether through drugs, liaisons with the local guru or communing with nature. Feeding your head could be a mind-bending experience, if not a stone bummer. Back then, nearly every gathering gave off "vibes" of some sort, and most people picked them up with no trouble at all. It could really be a heavy, cosmic trip. But now all the vibes seem to have dissipated and no one picks them up anymore, although Lionel Hampton still plays them pretty well.

Campus unrest and general dissatisfaction with the way things were going spawned a few more choice bits. Much was blamed on the "generation gap." It probably still exists, but no one can really tell for sure. Supreme devotion to the Movement was required of everyone — anything less was a cop-out to the Establishment.

The whole world of drugs, which in 1970 was still the new world of drugs, gave us a number of picturesque words and phrases. "Copping a lid of Gold" became a popular sport. "Snorting snow" was for the rich and the "Pertussin Buzz" for the poor. Good Owsley or sunshine could blow your mind (a pretty nasty term, but fairly accurate). Now, the novelty and, much of the ritual has worn off and big business has taken over. So it goes.

Most of the old jargon is gone, as is much of the culture it identified. It's fun to remember it, though, and it's good to hear it on the street now and then. A lot of us took it pretty seriously but the all-out, hell-bent activism of the period has largely been replaced by a combination of apathy and constructive, goal-oriented action. The Haight has been replaced by the Watergate and Fillmore West by Don Kirshner's Rock Concert. Time marches on.

Requiescat in pace, dig it?

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 will be withheld on request. If letters are received by mail, the Collegian will contact the signer for verification before publication. Letters cannot be returned.

Letters to the Editor

Different drummer

TO THE EDITOR: I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for Cathi McDaniel and Sue Quenzler on their letter in Friday's Collegian. I have also expressed in letters to the Collegian that the artistic atmosphere in State College is of such limited scope as to make the residents who live here much too ignorant of the different musical varieties and personalities that exist in the "outside" world. I would bet my whole record collection of 100 albums that at least 75 per cent of the University's population have never been properly exposed (by that I mean have heard enough to at least remember their names) of people such as Patti Smith, The Modern Lovers, Graham Parker and so many others who have much musical praise from many critics in the rock genre.

Hell, Mr. C's has only been open for about six months and the disco sound had already been losing popularity at least six months before that. Much of the musical stimulation still comes from promoters of "soft" rock! I do not want to deny "soft" rock listeners of their music, but I do think that no style of music should dominate in an area of people, such as it does at Penn State, as to almost exclude any other form of music from adequate exposure and therefore not giving people even a chance between a choice of disliking it or liking it.

Jeffrey Slott
11th-general arts and sciences

Science as scapegoat

TO THE EDITOR: Is science going to solve our social and personal problems? This question was asked in a recent letter to the editor. I won't attempt a complete answer to this question because this is only a letter, not a book. However, certain things should be clarified. First, science and fascism are not synonymous. Science itself is nonpartisan. How it is employed by people is political. There is nothing political about the fact that a certain atom splits into two other atoms and releases so much energy. If someone uses this fact to make an atomic bomb and threaten worldwide destruction, then that is politics, not science.

Will science ease the pain of living? What pain are you referring to? Cancer is painful and science is trying to cure it.

The fact that billions of dollars is spent to put a man on the moon while people are starving in Appalachia and the inner cities is painful, but scientists don't appreciate the money, politicians do. It is painful to watch wildlife die from pollution, but scientists and engineers are working to clean up the environment and keep it clean. What of social scientists? Aren't they working to ease the pains of society?

Nor does science put everything in its place more than religion does. Saying that this particular reaction is subordinate to these specific initial conditions is no more restrictive than saying you are subordinate to God. In many cases science is no where near that concrete about things. Science does try to put a natural order on the world, but certainly religion does also.

To say science is blameless is ludicrous but to say religion will cure everything is equally unreasonable. What is necessary is an awareness and attempt by people of all backgrounds, education, and philosophies to understand the problems and to work collectively toward the solutions. Unfortunately people don't often make this attempt. They usually look around for a scapegoat and science and technology appear pretty well suited to many people.

John Wesley Dudley II
11th-physics

Not all the same

TO THE EDITOR: I would like to comment on a letter appearing in the Friday paper entitled "Fathers and Sons" which dealt with a father's misgivings about allowing his son to pledge a fraternity. Being a pledge myself, I feel well qualified in my observations.

The major problem in this father's letter is in referring to his son as pledging a "fairly representative" fraternity. Most likely this father has little knowledge of fraternities and has unfortunately associated his son's with all others. The fraternity in question obviously has a distorted view of the pledge program which is meant to be a learning process, a time to become acquainted with the house itself and the brotherhood. Pledge duties are a necessity as they develop respect for the house, but it appears as though this fraternity has turned pledging into a period of servitude.

Evidently this student did not rush fraternities long enough to discover contrasts and comparisons and is consequently

involved in something he doesn't like. However, the policies of this backward fraternity should not be generalized to encompass the majority of the other fraternities which offer excellent opportunities in academics, service activities, athletics, social affairs and personal growth for its brotherhood and pledges.

Kent Hollinger
2nd-industrial engineering

Counter to culture

TO THE EDITOR: I am responding to those persons who chose the performance of the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra, Feb. 5, as the site for venting their objections to the treatment of Jews by the Soviet government. My purpose is not to challenge the question of Soviet policy towards Jews. Rather, I address the decision to use this cultural event as a stage to gain recognition and sympathy for the demonstrators' cause.

I found the distribution of literature, use of a bullhorn (quite unlike those played inside University Auditorium on that evening) and verbal repetitions of the protestors' position to be misplaced as well as lacking in empathy for the feelings of the orchestra members attempting to present a concert. Furthermore, the actions of the demonstrators could do additional harm by tending to clog the avenues of exchange that have opened between the United States and the Soviet Union, and effectively work against themselves in trying to have a measure of influence on Soviet domestic policy.

I find it difficult to imagine that there is not a more appropriate and operative forum for this issue than the occasion of this visit by guests of the United States and the University.

Aimee Daily
8th-biophysics

Facing reality

TO THE EDITOR: I would like to respond to Tom Maguire's accusation of blacks alienating "obesant" white allies. To begin with, I haven't seen many "obesant" white allies to alienate. But hidden behind Maguire's prolific verbalizations was the basic racist paranoia of many so-called "white liberals." The fear of an independently organized black movement. Since these "allies" know that they can't play

"Captain America" with these organizations, they immediately shout "reverse racism." These patronizing idiots believe that they can rid themselves of guilt-ridden consciences by economic, political and theoretical domination of the black movement.

They fail to see the role they can play by going into predominantly white communities and organizing action against racism with educational programs and group support. Instead these "liberals" want to go into Watts, Harlem or any other black community to try to tell black people about black people. Blacks recognize the fact that whites can be oppressed. But whites should also recognize the fact that Blacks, Indians, Puerto Ricans and other groups are the main targets of oppression. That's why we need movements headed by Blacks, Indians, Puerto Ricans and other groups. Finally I believe that these "liberals" would be better off to just stop crying "black racism" and start facing reality. The reality is that with the silent majority's aid, racism and poverty still exist for multitudes of blacks today.

Harrison Woods
president, Student Coalition Against Racism

the Collegian

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"Roots" blossoms in television wasteland

The seeds for a new age of television programming sprouted and broke ground in the wake of the phenomenal success cultivated by the recent mini-series "Roots."

One hundred-thirty million Americans planted themselves in front of their TV sets to watch all or part of the 12 hour saga of Kunte Kinte and his progeny. When the official Nielsen figures were released last week, the all-time top 10 was dominated by six episodes of "Roots," joined only by "Gone With The Wind" and Super Bowls X and XI. The concluding episode lured 80 million viewers to become the most popular show in the history of the medium.

The series received normal advance publicity and mixed reviews from critics who called it melodramatic, prejudice against whites and an injustice to the novel it was based on. But the show accumulated larger audiences with each consecutive showing, as impressed viewers made it a topic of coffee break and classroom conversation across the nation.

"Roots" is based on 12 years of research by author Alex Haley who traced his family lineage via British and U.S. records. The story mirrors the

conditions of slavery in America as experienced by four generations of Haley's ancestors. One reviewer wrote that white people have been making movies about slaves from "Birth of a Nation" to "Gone With The Wind," but surely so many of us never had such a stunning comprehension of what slavery must have felt like until we saw "Roots."

Patrick Jardel

The initial impact of the program triggered shock, anger, tears and disbelief in both black and white circles. It cultivated an interest in early American and black history. Inspired viewers began digging into history books and attic trunks, hoping to exhume their own family roots. Commentary ranged from the angry third grader who "hates the white man for what he did," to the relieved adult who was glad the show wasn't broadcast during the hot summer because, "You can bet there would have been some wild riots." Perhaps the best

illustration of the general consensus — blacks are saying, "thank you for presenting our history," while whites are replying, "thank you, we didn't know." Most important, the public is saying thank you.

Special thanks go to the producers who took their chances creating "Roots." The idea of presenting a 12 hour show, for prime time viewing, on eight consecutive nights, with a predominantly black cast, acting out a controversial theme would have been considered comical five years ago. However, the success of "Roots" proves that the newfangled can be the new fashion.

When one show can rivet the attention of two-thirds of the nation, producers will obviously take a serious interest in its effects on future TV trends. The mentality of boob tube addicts and the writers and producers who cater to them must be changed. Television is outgrowing its adolescence. Complex world problems like the treatment of blacks as portrayed in "Roots" are by far more intellectually stimulating than Sonny and Cher's superficial spats. The success of the mini-series suggests that audiences are giving more thought to

what is being fed to them by the networks. They are willing to sacrifice a diet of cops and robbers in order to digest serious programs.

Television producers are ready to cash in on the success of "Roots." Don't be surprised if a spinoff entitled "Branches" is quickly created — nobody expects overnight miracles. But, the fact remains that by paying so much attention to "Roots," Americans have demonstrated an urge for serious programming. Producers now know that large audiences will take the time to watch an in-depth series that offers intelligent themes. The public can become involved with controversial problems that are treated tastefully by television. Television can be both educational and entertaining and still make a buck. It can stimulate emotions and serve as a forum for national discussion.

The format germinated by "Roots" hopefully will encourage similar programs to expound on themes of crime, war, women, prisons, poverty and politics. Nobody expects "Gone With The Wind" or the Super Bowl to be taken off the air, but it is time to weed out the poorer programs so more shows like "Roots" will have room to blossom.

