

Complaint

The State College Area School Board approved their 1977-78 budget last Monday after squabbling for months over a four mill tax increase.

Compared to cities like Philadelphia, the school board members rationalized that poor State College does not get nearly its share of state funds, so they say the increase, though regrettable, is necessary.

Compared to impoverished Philadelphia, State College has no reason to complain.

True, the tax rate for real estate is lower in Philadelphia, but the assessment there is higher than for Centre County school districts.

This area, especially the borough, is relatively wealthy compared to Philadelphia with its stretches of slum areas inhabited by low salaried workers and others on welfare. They alone cannot support quality schools.

Some Philadelphia schools may have to curtail music and athletic programs.

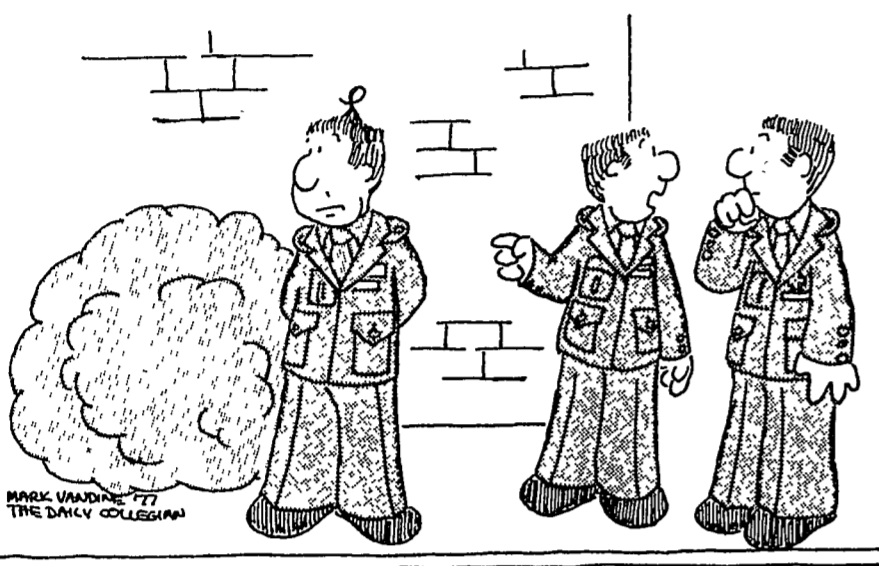
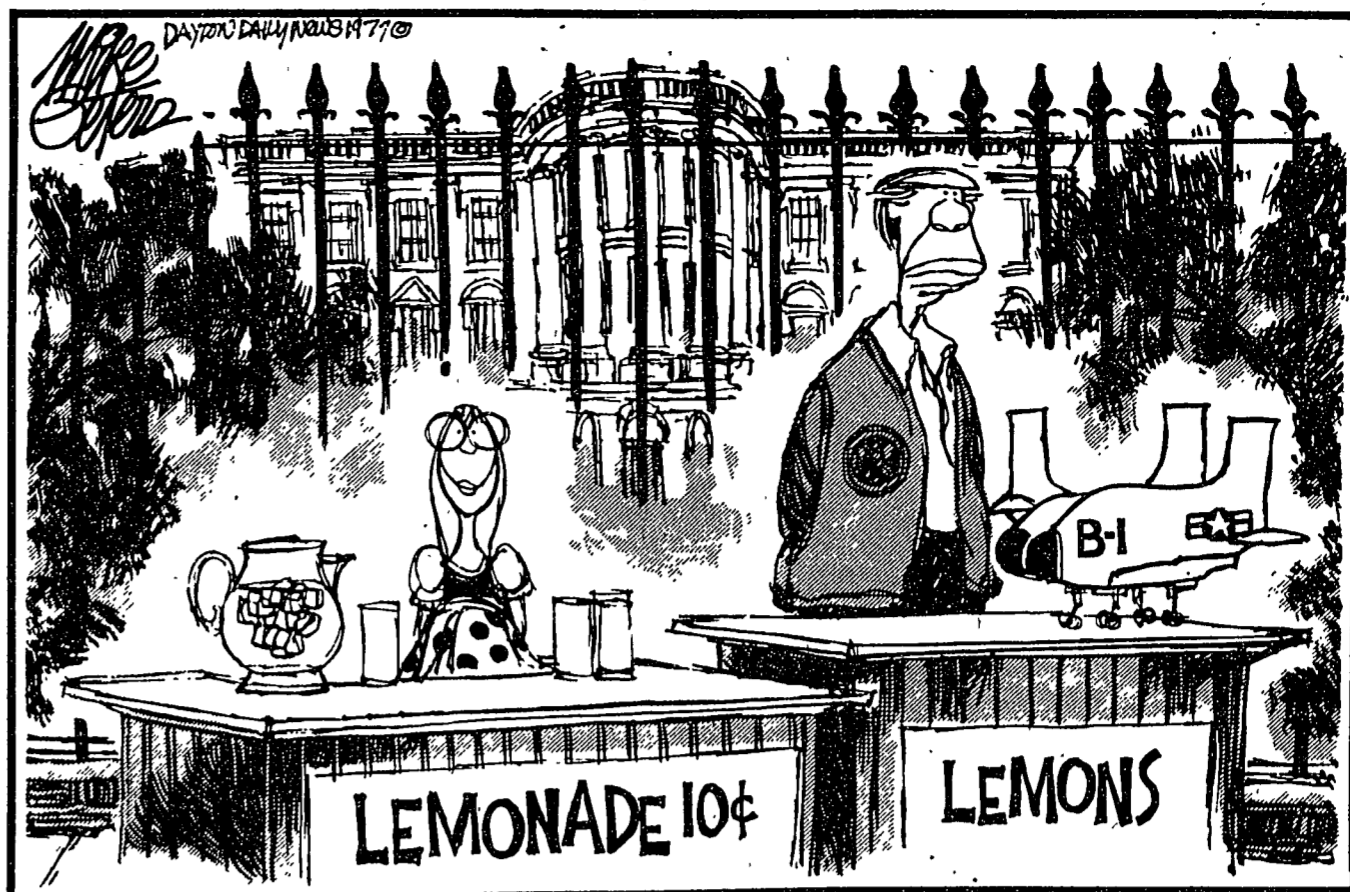
State College certainly has not been forced to take such money saving measures. This area has long been proud of its varsity and intramural sports programs encompassing almost any sport students desire to play.

The point is, every school

district in the state needs state support in order to maintain quality education. Philadelphia needs its fair share just as does State College and the other school districts west of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia is not to blame for insufficient state support of the State College district.

The culprits are state legislators who fail to recognize education as a high priority. Perhaps tax payers should begin demanding a revised state subsidy program for schools. The result would be lower property taxes and quality education throughout the state.



21-year-old drinking age a farce

I saw in the paper the other day that the state Senate passed another 19-year-old drinking age bill. I wasn't terribly excited. I doubt it will pass the House and I don't really care much anymore.

I don't care because the 21-year-old drinking age is, quite simply, a farce. From past experience I know that once a person gets to be about sixteen years old, the law becomes a minor inconvenience to many, a threat to some, but effective against a very, very few.

The first time I went to a bar and actually bought my own beer was Christmas night, 1971. I was 15-years-old.

Now, there's no way in the world that the bartender thought I was 21. I hadn't even started shaving yet. He just made too much money selling beer to minors to bother about the law.

The place was known around the neighborhood as one of the "safe" bars

you could go to for take-outs as long as things weren't too "hot." ("Not tonight guys," they would say. "Things are too hot.")

They always knew just when it was "hot," too.

John Martellaro

I was a senior in high school, all of 17-years-old, and my friends and I were sitting in one of our favorite establishments one night when the phone rang. The bartender answered it, finished his brief conversation, turned to us and said, "You guys gotta be out of here by 12." Like I said, a minor inconvenience.

Once a person turns 18, the temperature drops considerably. It rarely, if

ever, gets "hot."

At this point, it's no longer a question of whether you can drink, but where.

There are two or three places near my home that routinely card at the door for 18. They make more money serving people in the 18- to 20-year-old market than they pay out in occasional fines.

Serving an 18-pr-old "minor" is a relatively safe bet because the owner can only be hit with an underage penalty, and not the additional charge of contributing to the delinquency of a minor that routinely comes with serving the younger folks.

The inconvenience is not in getting drinks, which is no problem, but in getting into the places you might want to go to on a given night.

Even the "new alcohol policy" which produced such a hue and cry back in Fall Term was nothing more than an inconvenience.

Sure, to the people who were written up, fined, or whatever, it was a hell of a lot more than just an inconvenience, but by and large it did not stop dorm drinking, it only put it in the closet.

The 21-year-old drinking law does not keep people under 21 from drinking. Anyone who wants to drink will find a way to do so without too much trouble.

The law does penalize a small minority of the violators after the fact, but what is the point of that?

With all the alcohol on this campus of Gentle Thursday, fewer than 10 people were picked up by the campus patrol on alcohol-related offenses. Upholding the law, right? A deterrent, right?

Punishing a few randomly caught violators of a law largely ignored is grossly unfair, and for this reason the law should be changed. But as I said, I don't really care much anymore. I feel safe with the odds.

Letters to the Editor

Critical crass

As president of an organization that charges admission to its audiences, I know that any production is fair game for a critic. I know this from experience as well, having reviewed plays for a newspaper. But I do question some of the inferences and implications of Mr. Frick's review of "Annie Get Your Gun" at the Boal Barn Playhouse that appeared in Monday's (June 13) issue of the Collegian.

Mr. Frick seems to think that a missed line or a technical mishap does not happen in professional theater. If he wishes, I can cite technical mishaps and fluffed lines that have marked many a Broadway production I have seen.

He refers to the acting as campy but adds that campy acting is to be expected. Why? Is the acting in community theater productions campy because it is a community theater presentation? Is it that "Annie" requires campy acting? In any event the statement is meaningless as it now appears.

I wonder how many plays Mr. Frick has seen that have received standing ovations. There was no standing ovation at the performance of the original "Annie" that I saw in 1946.

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.

Indeed, in over 30 years of theater-going I have seen few plays receive this accolade. Only at the University does everything, regardless of quality, receive a standing ovation.

But the most disturbing thing about Frick's review is the implication that professionalism and small town are mutually exclusive. There is a very condescending attitude in the headline and in the body of the review. One would think that this kind of thinking would be absent from a critic writing in a college newspaper.

Richard B. Gidez
President-State College Community Theatre

Near hit

Look Ma, no training wheels! To the University student who knowingly almost caused my car to hit his bicycle at Waupelan Drive and Stratford Drive on the morning of June 20, I wish to extend my most sincere congratulations. We both passed! You proved that my brakes and good judgment are intact and at the same time you narrowly missed becoming a grease spot.

I hate to bring up the subject again, but bicycle safety is a serious business in State College. That goes for automobile drivers as well.

The bicyclist has as much right to a part of the road as I do. But every day I encounter some very ignorant bicycle riders. I respect the bicyclist and think it's only appropriate that I receive the same respect in return. However, when the bicyclist knowingly challenges an auto driver and causes that same driver to endanger his life, his passengers' lives, and also the life of the bicyclist, my respect for a bicycle begins to dwindle.

I won't forget your smile, young man. It meant to say, "I beat you!" I consider myself a safe driver and, although I had little time to react, nevertheless I had anticipated your actions

by that most determined look on your face before you shot in front of me. For the safety of everyone, I hope the next driver you challenge hasn't just recently removed his training wheels also.

Tim Hann
12th-general agriculture

Radical rebuttal

In last Friday's issue, Claudia McClellan wrote a very good and quite interesting letter entitled, "Radically broke." I really enjoyed its collection of fascinating facts and rhetoric concerning radical organizations and the motives for their extremist activities. However since Ms. McClellan mentioned my name at the beginning of the letter, I got the silly impression that she was writing a letter in rebuttal to an earlier one by myself entitled, "Radically wrong."

Claudia mentions that many large and powerful organizations have a great way of campaigning and-or lobbying for specific issues in the legislature: Money. She mentions that two of these organizations are the Catholic Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Occidental Petroleum. In the next sentence, she talks about black lobbyists and feminist lobbyists who apparently lack funds to conduct any type of successful campaign, making them resort to extremist measures.

What a revelation! Here I was thinking that N.O.W. and the N.A.A.C.P. were large and wealthy organizations with powerful lobbies in Washington and across the nation; I must've been wrong.

But then comes the real coup de grace. Claudia condemns the Symbionese Liberation Army as extremists, calls Barry Goldwater "a maniac," and then says that American politicians "owe what few ideas they have to the radical

fringe." By George, I wish I could use logic like that; it is indeed a rare talent.

But her letter could not have been a rebuttal because I never mentioned nor was I writing about any of these groups. I merely mentioned that students with little voting power or clout with the major political parties ought to try and improve their relations with them. The student body and subsequently the student rights cause, has even less cash or political clout than "poor" feminists like N.O.W., etc.

Who can afford trips to the capital any time we face a problem? When only an extremely small percentage of our students vote (compared to organizations like N.O.W., etc.), we have to obtain good relations with the people in power so that we're taken seriously. Although the system is slow and its results often obscure, it still does the best job. I hope that the "kooky notion" of cooperation becomes "tomorrow's orthodoxy."

Jeffrey M. Imtn
5th-political science

the Collegian

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Bookings hard for University Concert Committee

Some people are never satisfied. Just ask any member of the University Concert Committee (UCC) how much flak they hear when the subject of music comes up. They'll tell you what it feels like to be involved in one of the most scapegoated (and misunderstood) organizations on campus.

There are several facts which most UCC critics seem unaware of, or just aren't concerned with; and there are always new students coming around to ask the same old questions, like, "Why can't we get Led Zeppelin in Beaver Stadium?" or, "How come Bucknell always gets the good concerts?"

I've been confronted with these questions several times during the year that I've been on UCC's stage crew.

As far as stadium concerts go, William Fuller, coordinator of UCC, said they are out of the question because "We'd have to build a fence at least nine feet high. And to keep it from being knocked over, it would have to be as deep underneath the ground as it was tall." (Another wonderful University regulation for ya!)

Not only would the cost of such a fence be prohibitive, but the additional cost of insuring the promise that nothing would happen to "Joe Paterno's baby" makes the whole notion preposterous. The football turf alone is worth \$10 a square foot.

Weather is another factor for outdoor concerts. If a show is rained out, UCC must still pay the guaranteed fee to the performer. Since the booking of each concert depends on the success of the ones before it, UCC cannot afford the risk of paying for rained-out shows.

To clarify UCC's position (and lay to rest some of the complaints leveled against it) Rod Henry, acting UCC chairman, gave a step-by-step analysis of the concert-booking procedure.

The first element considered when searching for an act is the availability of a facility, as well as the group. UCC has little room for flexibility in this area because it is assigned specific dates for the use of Rec Hall, and Schwab and Eisenhower Auditoriums.

Rec Hall can't be used at all during the week because of classes, which are in session until 5 o'clock. But it takes at least seven hours for most concerts to be set up. Compounding the problem is the fact that athletic activities always pre-empt

concerts when scheduling is done (in March for the following year).

The auditoriums are somewhat more available, but their sizes limit their usefulness. The seating capacity for each one is too small to draw the really big names, and the fees charged by top artists are more than the profits would be, even at a sellout. And big-name stars often seem to cause big-money problems.

Bruce Springsteen threw his audience into such a frenzy two years ago that they caused \$600 worth of damages to Eisenhower Auditorium. Another \$300 was put out by UCC when fans buying tickets to his second performance left trails of litter scattered all over Pollock Road.

Lynne Margolis

Some artists of Springsteen's caliber won't even consider playing at colleges. When they can fill the large city arenas to capacity at \$7 to \$10 a ticket, they won't bother with little 6,000 seat places like Rec Hall.

Once the groups which are both available and affordable are found, the names must be submitted to the Policy Board for a vote. Board members represent several campus organizations, including the Undergraduate Student Government, the Interfraternity Council and UCC.

The Policy Board bases its decision on the popularity of the groups in question (i.e. — which band will sell the most tickets?). Quite often, individual preferences must be thrown by the wayside in favor of a sure sell-out band.

Once a choice is made, the bidding begins. UCC sends a mailgram to the performer's agent stating the details of the proposal, including figures on the potential gross from ticket sales. Most performers want a percentage of this. They usually take 60 per cent after expenses, but stars like Stevie Wonder will demand up to 80 per cent of the net gross on top of their guaranteed fee.

But the web becomes even more tangled. Once that band is contacted, UCC must freeze the promised amount from its

funds. So right off, they are committed to the offer. But the band is not, and many wait for a better one instead of answering right away. In the meantime, opportunities to bid on other available acts are lost because of frozen funds.

If the group decides to accept, a contract is drawn up and sent. Attached to it is a "rider" listing all the conditions and demands which must be met before the band will "sign the dotted line."

All food, drink and transportation arrangements are categorized in the rider as "employer's expenses." For UCC, or any production company, that usually means another \$1,500 to \$2,000. This includes providing anything from security and stage crew personnel (in specific numbers), to special effects items, such as 300 lbs. of dry ice (for Wild Cherry) or two dozen carnations (tossed to adoring fans by Wild Cherry and Gino Vannelli.)

But the bands have to pay for their own Heineken because beer purchases are one of those rider demands that UCC cannot comply with (University policy again!) Bill Fuller examines the contract and crosses off any requests the UCC can't honor, then signs the contract and sends it back to the agency.

If the band is unhappy with what's been crossed off, they are under no obligation to sign. If they do, choose to sign, they might return the contract anywhere from a month to only days before the concert.

It is this game of being strung along which often puts UCC in limbo. Not only do frozen funds prevent other negotiations, but publicity and ticket sales cannot get underway without those contract signatures.

Even with all the details agreed upon, there is still a chance that the concert might not happen. Included in every contract is a big, fat clause which gives the artist the right to cancel for any reason such as illness, accidents, riots or other "acts of God." This means that even if a performer just feels tired from too much touring, he can cancel the show.

The Average White Band, notorious for no-shows, cancelled here for the second time last September because of "the flu."

If a group is eager to play here (some actually are) an "act of God" can still halt the performance. The touring company of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" didn't make it because their truck, full of props and costumes, broke down in

Virginia. If that hadn't stopped them, the severe snows, probably would have.

Along with erratic weather, Penn State's isolated location is another stumbling block. Most bands tour on a very tight schedule, playing a different town almost every night. To many, the profit from a Penn State concert is too small to warrant the added road time, especially through those mountains. Since there's no commercial airport serving the area, the students frequently lose out.

Why Bucknell concert bookings are compared to Penn State's is beyond me. Bucknell charges every student a \$40 activities fee, something I doubt the University would get away with here. Besides, why should every student at Penn State have to pay for something only a percentage could afford?

At Bucknell, the whole student body can fit nicely into Davis Gym, which is available any day of the week. Their concert committee can even juggle dates with the athletic department to fit in available performers.

Bucknell's ticket prices are also higher, averaging \$5 to \$25 apiece.

If you're still not impressed by what UCC must go through, its biggest challenge is trying to please the large student population at Penn State. With so many different musical tastes involved, it's impossible to satisfy everyone and still make money. UCC aims for the majority's tastes, but recognizes the need for concerts by talented, though less publicized performers.

But the UCC can only venture as far as student interest will allow. In the past, student support has not been enthusiastic enough to warrant repeating the financial risk of booking less popular artists.

There is also discouraging evidence in the amount of tickets sold for bands expected to be sure sell-outs. The Marshall Tucker concert, for example, sold only 2,600 tickets out of a possible 5,500 — though its subsequent cancellation really was due to the drummer's case of food poisoning.

It's not so easy to put the UCC up against the wall, in light of all its problems. I'm not implying that one has to like every group UCC comes up with, but I do believe that understanding the rules before judging the entries is the only fair way to play the game.