

Back burner blues

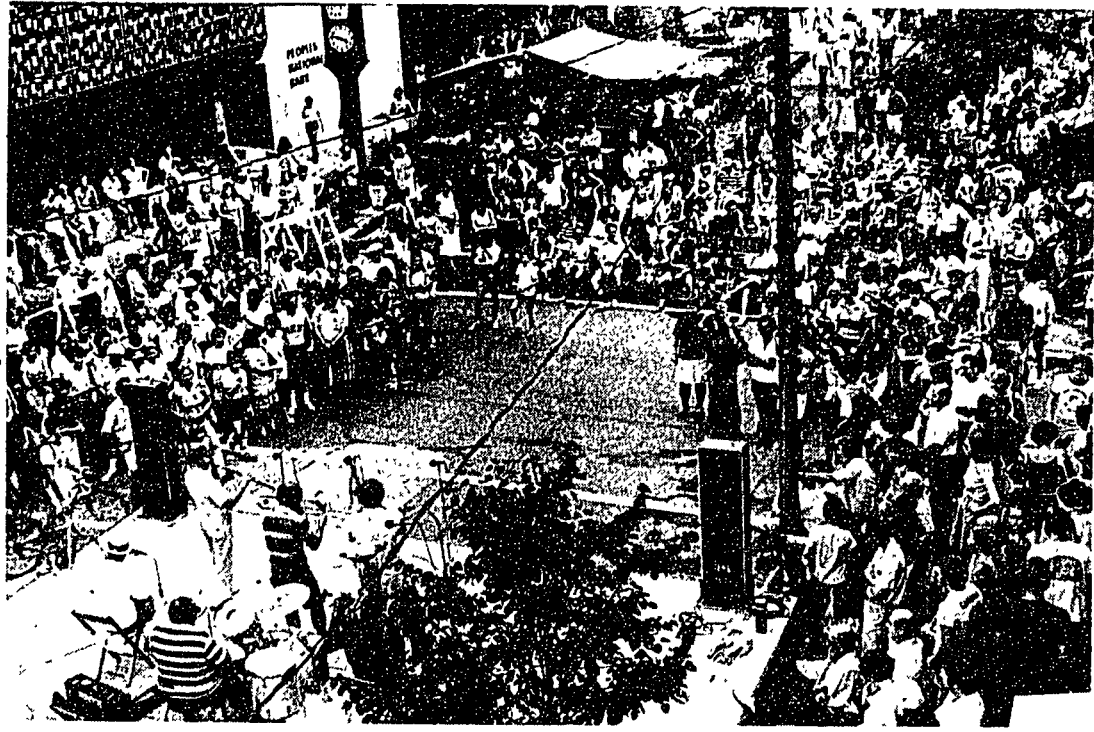


Photo by Patrick Little

Summer after summer the Arts Festival demonstrates the many positive aspects of an Allen Street mall.

A downtown mall modernizes the town square tradition. It becomes an attractive place to shop, relax or talk. It flowers as the hub of the borough: A convenient congregation point for all, a haven from the rush of traffic, a pedestrian paradise.

The mall, however, may pose a few problems. A few parking places, already sparse, will be sacrificed. Some S. Allen Street shops actually fear a drop of business. Others fear a mall may encourage loitering and increased vandalism.

Nevertheless, malls have proven successful in cities throughout the state. The problems they present do not appear unsolvable. And their advantages in the long run may far outnumber the disadvantages.

Perhaps a temporary mall could be constructed in order that possible flaws be worked out.

The Allen Street mall idea has been on the back burner for too long. Make it a campaign issue in the upcoming borough elections. Let's not have to wait until next July to savor the benefits a mall means.



Dark times arise for New York City merchants

There was one difference between Wednesday night's power outage in New York City and the blackout which occurred in 1965 — the looting. The darkness seemed to bring out the "animal instincts" in many of the more impoverished New Yorkers, and they took to the streets in droves.

Not only did the blackout teach Con Edison a thing or two (that another blackout was possible despite their emergency strategies), but the looting from the blackout taught the country a valuable lesson — that people in a desperate situation have the capability of being drawn into mass lawlessness when the opportunity arises.

The massive power outage was an inconvenience for the great city as the '65 blackout had been. But for the most part, the residents of New York took things calmly and turned the potentially terrible night into a holiday of sorts, taking every opportunity to join in the "spirit of cooperation." These first reports of how New Yorkers were helping each other through the crisis seemed to indicate that we could regain some sort of faith in humanity. And then the news came out about the looting.

Thousands of people were arrested for stripping stores of everything but their shelves — stealing televisions, liquor, stereos, and anything else left unprotected in the darkness. Many of the other effects of the blackout have already worn off and others will wear off soon, but the consequences of the looting are not in this category.

There are too many people waiting for trials in hopelessly packed jails. And there are too many businessmen who will either have to start over from scratch, fire several employees, or join the ranks of the unemployed. These unfortunate people have just received the dismal news that they cannot get financial aid from the federal government. Now New York is trying to take care of its own as much as possible by setting up

emergency funds and providing small amounts of city money for the struggling businessmen.

However, the city is just pulling itself out of a financial crisis and cannot afford to completely bail out all those affected by the looting.

One businessman interviewed on a television news program said he was going to receive \$2,500 to try to put his ransacked jewelry store back together. He remarked that \$2,500 would probably be enough to repair a few windows. Mayor Beame even dug deep into his wallet and wrote a personal check for \$100 toward the emergency fund. In other words, these businessmen are in trouble.

Mary Ellen Wright

If this had been a natural disaster like an earthquake or a flood, these people would have been helped by the government. I believe Mayor Beame had the right to declare his city a disaster area, for although the disaster was man-made, the devastation to the area was not unlike that caused by nature.

And I'm not so sure that, in the midst of the looting, when more and more people joined the mob in a snowball-type ef-

fect, looting didn't become a "natural" thing to them. As Andrew Young said in the aftermath of the blackout, when the lights go out, folks will steal.

I don't think we can confine our concern over this incident to struggling businessmen and looters caged like animals. I think we must take a lesson from the behavior exhibited by New Yorkers during the blackout for it seems to indicate that our society has three things to fear — metropolitan largeness, resulting poverty and man himself.

It is obvious that New York is an extremely large city — perhaps too large. It is inconceivable that State College could muster so many thousands of looters, but this number is only a drop in the bucket for New York. Basically, the city is too big, with too many people, to be able to protect every location from every person during a blackout.

Poverty tends to go hand-in-hand with these large cities. Too many people plus too few jobs plus an additional city-wide financial crisis equals sections of poverty (and a time-bomb-like situation which can easily "go off" during a prime opportunity such as a blackout).

But most of all, it seems we need to fear ourselves — mankind. Sociologists say that a person might not participate in certain activities until he is surrounded by a crowd of people. A person feels he's "protected" in a crowd — he feels a sense of anonymity, so he can easily be "persuaded" by crowd action to do almost anything — even loot.

A New York City police chief said that Wednesday was the "night of the animals" — a fitting title for a night when thousands of looters were driven into an animal-like frenzy by the crowd and by the thought of a taste of material wealth.

Many of the looters showed their faces to the television cameras as they were taken to jail. Others flaunted their stolen goods. But many hid their faces — seemingly in shame

for having been carried off in the massive looting movement. If those in New York could resort to riotous looting, what might the rest of us human animals resort to if we found ourselves in a similar desperate situation?

The thought that we must fear so many things — even ourselves — is a frightening lesson to be learned from one night of New York's misfortune. And yet, perhaps it is a lesson we were intended to learn. Perhaps the bolt of lightning that struck a power station, paralyzed New York in a blackout, and caused such large-scale animal-like looting was really what many called it — an Act of God.

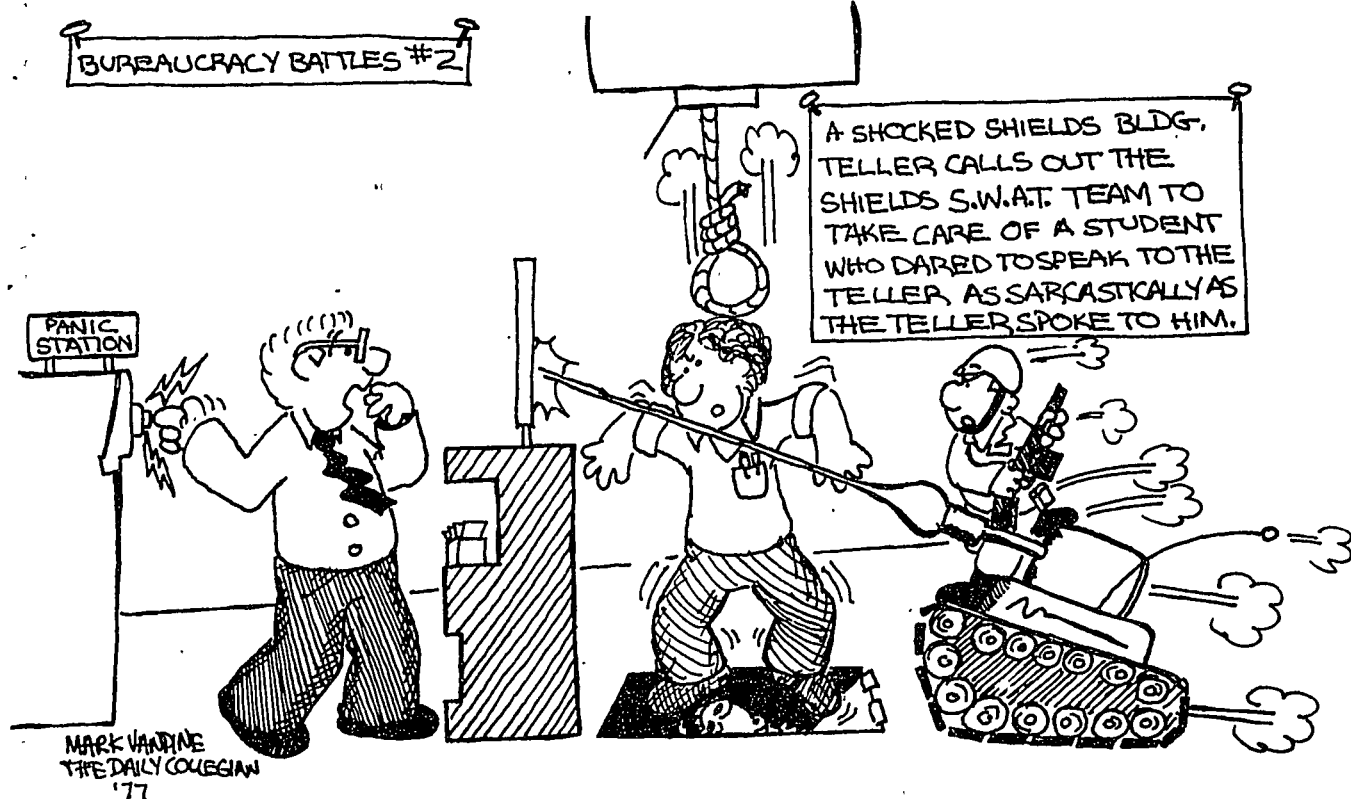
the Collegian

JEFFREY HAWKES EDITOR SCOTT R. SESLER BUSINESS MANAGER

Editorial policy is determined by the Editor. Opinions expressed by the editors and staff of The Daily Collegian are not necessarily those of the University administration, faculty or students.

Correction

The Daily Collegian incorrectly printed a headline on a column by B.K. Chandrasekhar last Monday. The headline should have read: "India: Once again a democracy after 20 months," instead of "20 years."



Liquor woes plague Harrisburg

By WILLIAM ECENBARGER Philadelphia Inquirer

HARRISBURG (AP) — Several years ago I was strolling through a suburban shopping center with a visitor from China, who appeared impressed by the gaudy manifestations of free enterprise.

We came upon a state liquor store, and when I explained that in Pennsylvania the sale and distribution of liquor by the bottle is handled by the government, he was surprised and interested.

"Is it working well?" he asked, somewhat hopefully.

"It's okay," I lied to avoid ideological combat.

The truth was that I believed that the Pennsylvania liquor system was the ultimate denial of Karl Marx and events of more recent vintage have reinforced that notion.

Despite the fact that it has exclusive distribution rights to an immensely popular commodity, the profits of the Pennsylvania Liquor

Control Board (PLCB) are slumping badly.

Last year the liquor monopoly turned over \$63 million in profits to the state treasury, including \$19 million in surplus funds that had accumulated over several years. This year's profits will add up to only about \$27 million, and next year they are projected to sag to \$20 million.

The short-range problem is that the costs of running the state store system have zoomed, and the major factor is salary increases for the newly unionized clerks. Liquor prices, to be sure, have increased simultaneously — but not nearly at the same rate.

The long-range problem is that the LCB is trying to whistle and yawn at the same time, with the predictable result that it does neither well.

The LCB was born on the grave of Prohibition and given a mission to "regulate and restrain" the sale and use of alcoholic beverages. Thus the board is engaged in merchandising

liquor while discouraging its use. (It's something like General Motors urging people to ride buses.)

Alcoholism is one of Pennsylvania's most serious public health problems, and there's nothing wrong with counseling restraint in its use. But the board doesn't do that half of its dual role very well, either.

Indeed, because of the legal requirement that all items be marked up 48 per cent, regardless of price, the only good buys in the state stores are one of the alcoholics' staples, the cheap wines. For any wine or liquor that costs \$5 and up, Pennsylvania prices are among the nation's highest.

Because the LCB, like most monopolies, is indifferent to its customers, state stores have the consumer appeal of a methadone clinic. They are closed many evenings and state holidays, which are prime sales periods for true commercial establishments.

Something screwy in TV land

The new television season will kick off in a couple of months, and this year, more than last, the competition will be extremely intense.

Last year the big winner was ABC, which knocked CBS, longtime leader in the ratings off the top of the mountain. But this year CBS has vowed a return to the top spot.

In an effort to keep that promise, CBS announced it will air a new show in September that is bound to knock the socks off the industry.

Now, none of this has happened yet; so far it is fiction. But this may be what is in store for fall TV viewers:

CBS president Robert Wussler, a longtime believer that television could be used as an aphrodisiac, announced an innovation he calls the sex-com. Basically, this new television form is a sit-com laced with sexual overtones to boil up the love juices.

The new show is titled "Creamy," and is about an attractive model who does shaving commercials by day, and by night, proves all too willing to take it off, all off, lathering up to some kinky encounters.

But more than that, Creamy is a very interesting woman, and of the liberated variety. In one episode, she not only burns her bra, but her panties and impotent boyfriend as well. But she can be gentle too, taking on the girl-next-door image from time to time. In short, she is half Girl Scout and half \$500 call girl, a combination CBS believes will boost

ratings, advertising sales and other things.

Many critics have voiced their disapproval of the new show, claiming it goes well beyond the risqué standards that have traditionally been accepted by the censors. Moreover, they charge that such a show will undoubtedly breed a new generation of sex maniacs.

"That's absurd," snapped a CBS spokesman. "If a new generation of sex maniacs does come into being it's the fault of groups like Johnny Rotten and the Sex Pistols, not CBS."

Bill DePaolo

Fred Silverman, ABC chief, said that his brainchild, "Charley's Angels," would never compromise the talents of the girls on the show in an effort to boost ratings. But should "Creamy" crack the top ten in the first half of the season, then viewers can expect more wet t-shirts and tighter body shots, according to Silverman.

"We're in a wait-and-see situation right now, so there's not much we can do until we see how 'Creamy' goes over."

Silverman did say that if "Creamy" should become a hit then audiences

could also expect some surprises from ABC's stable of studs, which includes the Fonz, the Bionic Man, and Starsky and Hutch. Silverman would not elaborate on what he meant by "surprises."

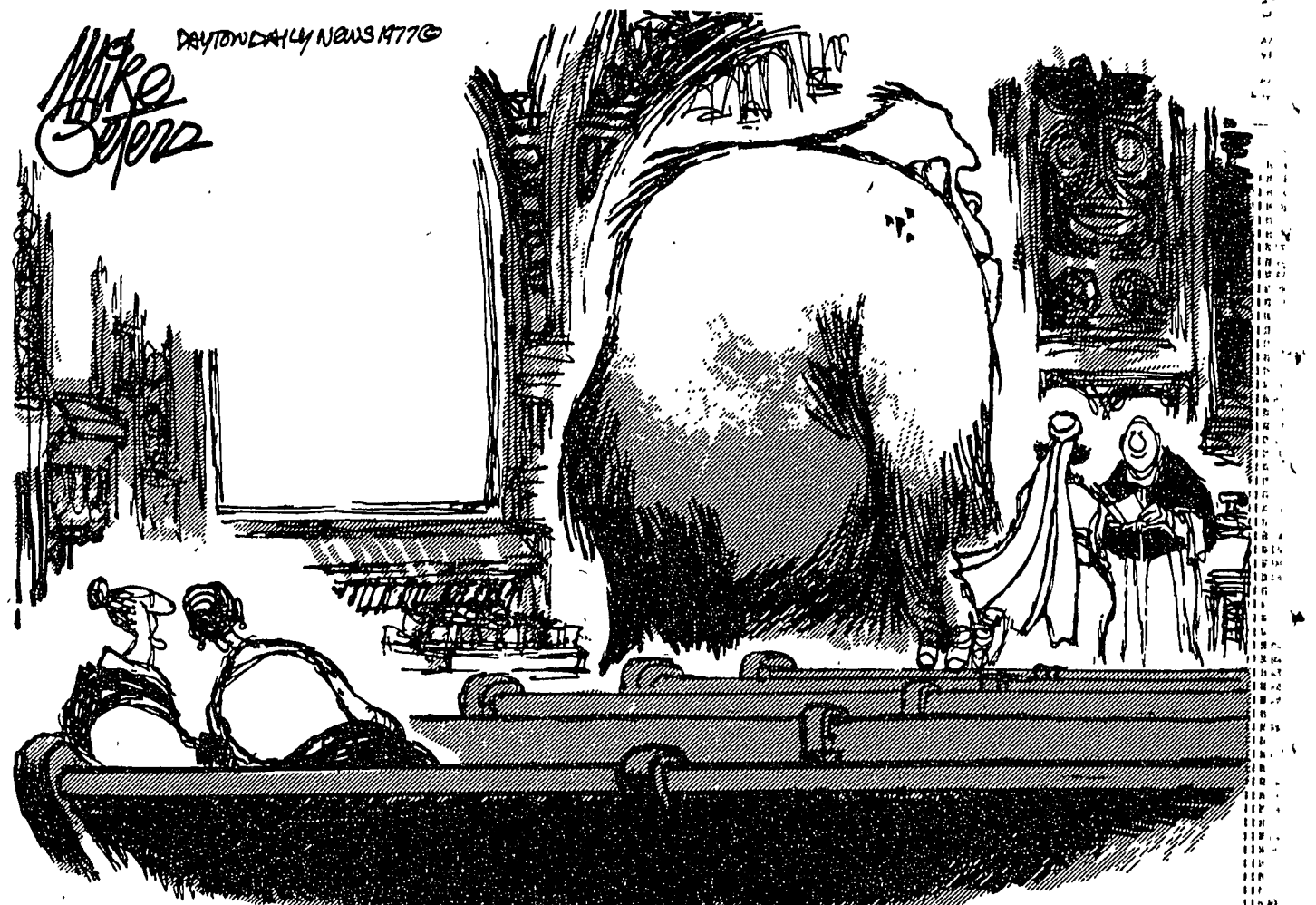
NBC has adamantly opposed sex programming over the years, preferring the cops and robbers, westerns and shows like "The Little House on the Prairie."

"We like to cater to the family audience," a programming executive said. "Our business has always been the family, and families have no need for sex."

CBS is well aware of what can happen if "Creamy" comes on too strong, too soon. As a precaution, the network has scheduled the milder episodes for the early part of the season, saving the more titillating shows for later in the season when audience reaction can be better measured and manipulated.

Wussler assured nervous stockholders at CBS's annual meeting last month that the show is well within the range of today's sexual permissiveness.

"I'm sure we have a winner here," Wussler told the clammy crowd. "And if my projection is right, think about all the spinoffs — Creamy's over-sexed sister, or a homosexual brother that lives next door to Anita Bryant; what if Creamy quit being a model and became a promiscuous belly dancer; no better yet, she goes to college, no, Washington, and becomes a lobbyist or secretary or something, or maybe..."



I HEAR THEY WERE TRAPPED ON A SKYSCRAPER DURING THE BLACKOUT