

Revolting

In the last few years, even in the wake of Watergate, news of corruption in Pennsylvania state politics has more leaked than gushed to the press.

There were the big scandals, like with former Sen. Henry Cianfrani, but nothing to really justify the rumors of widespread abuses of power in Harrisburg. That is, until now.

In yesterday's Philadelphia Inquirer, the first of a series of stories verifying, detailing and uncovering abuses from misallocation of senatorial scholarships to payroll crimes to tainted ethical practices was published.

Many legislators drive Cadillacs at state expense,

spend thousands of dollars a month in state money on food and bar bills, use tax money to repair property they own, and collect expense money for being in two places at the same time, the article says.

Perhaps the most impressive and incriminating figure so far is the amount taxpayers in Pennsylvania pay to support their "public servants": Per capita, it's more than any other state in the union.

In Pennsylvania, it seems clear, it's time for a taxpayers' revolt.

Unfortunately, cleaning up our state legislature is not as easy as taking a referendum vote, like California's proposition 13.

Nor can existing institu-

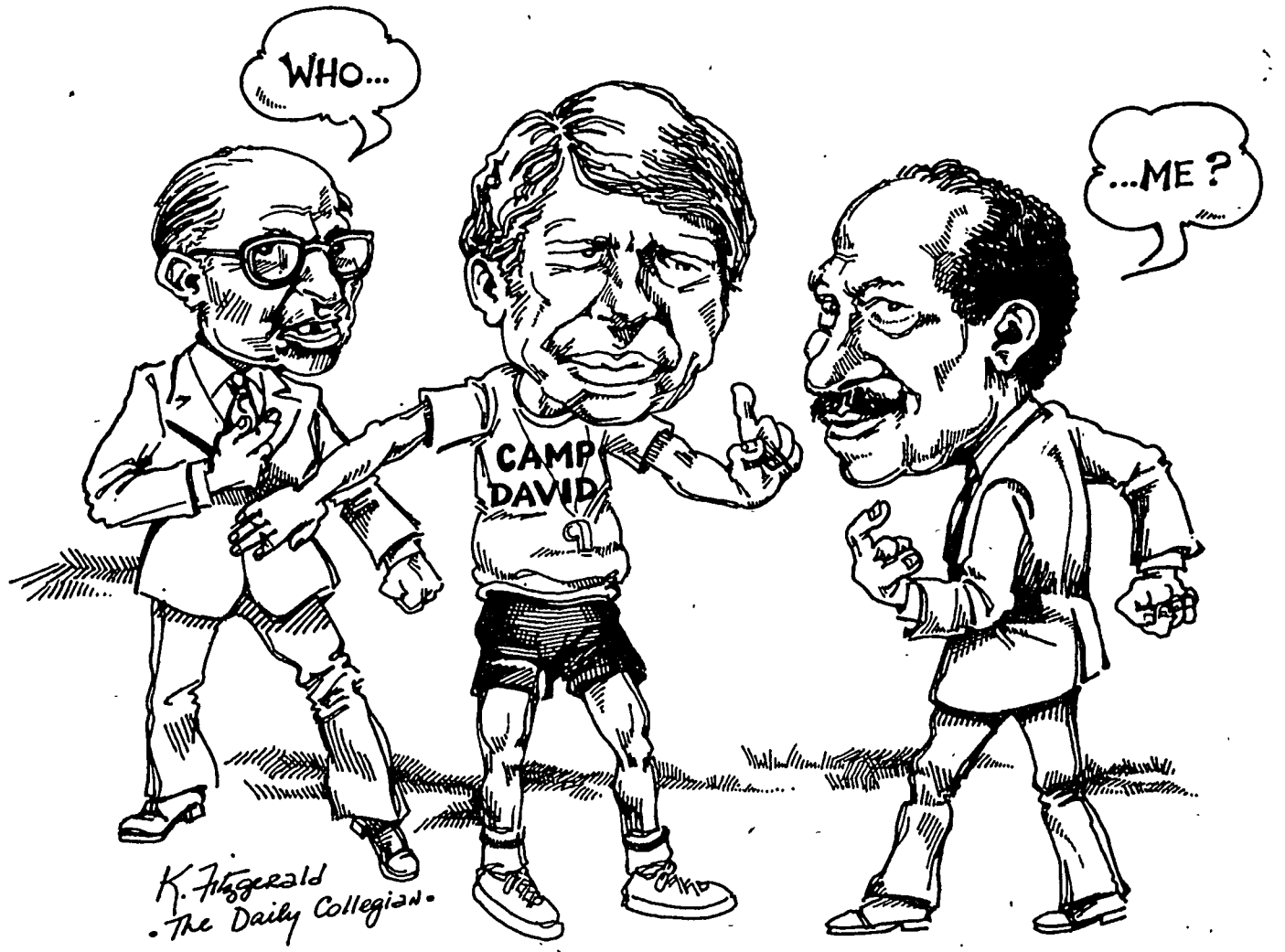
tions in state government be trusted to enforce the rules and regulations supposed to monitor representatives' and senators' spending and ethical activities.

The party that must ultimately clean up Harrisburg, of course, is the voters.

Pressure your legislature to disclose campaign finances, and support the bills designed to make lobbying groups and politicians more accountable.

And, especially for students at Penn State, write to Old Main and demand the release of a list of the students receiving senatorial scholarships — sometimes used as political gifts.

Remember, divestiture begins at home.



Letters to the Editor

Pro PIRG

Having arrived on campus this fall for the first time, I was surprised to note the controversy over establishing PennPIRG (Pennsylvania Public Interest Research Group). Most states in the East and in the Midwest have well-established organizations. As a native of Michigan, I am acquainted with PIRGIM (Public Interest Research Group in Michigan) and its activities.

In this time of corporate power and lack of accountability on the part of various branches of government, it is of the utmost importance that citizens have some type of mechanism working on their behalf to voice their needs. PIRGIM has been involved and achieved important results for the public and the five campuses that fund the organization. It has been the author of much legislation concerned with tenants' rights, energy, the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, consumers' rights, environmental topics and has even worked on studies that it presented at hearings in Washington, D.C., concerned with the effects of investing in defense programs instead of other public or private enterprises.

Besides these statewide projects, local projects are conducted by students. In East Lansing, the local board has worked with other groups to challenge the construction of a huge shopping mall on prime agriculture lands. Filing suit several times, the group has managed to put the rezoning issues on the ballot in November. The citizens will have the final say on what should be done.

Recently, PIRGIM received a federal grant to continue its energy work. This work has included intervening on behalf of the consumers of Michigan in electricity rate increase

hearings before the Michigan Public Service Commission. It was also a key educational, organizing and lobbying force when the federal government tried to locate a nuclear waste dump in northern Michigan.

The best evidence of PIRGIM's success is represented by the facts that surfaced through discovery procedures that the utilities in Michigan had organized a secret group to undermine the funding procedures of the activist organization. It has been proven that the utilities used consumers' money to attempt to discredit and agitate administrative and student personnel against PIRGIM at the University of Michigan.

As a volunteer, member of the Michigan State University local board, and interim state board representative, I know my activities with PIRGIM helped teach me the skills I needed to get the research assistantship I have secured here at Penn State. My involvement was one of the most important learning experiences I have ever had. I worked with the statewide coalition that helped get the "bottle bill" passed in Michigan, participated in lobbying activities, fund raising, decision-making, personnel problems and media work.

PennPIRG will give not only students at Penn State and other campuses a voice in state and local decision making, but also provide a needed voice for all the citizens of Pennsylvania.

Support PennPIRG; it can only be to our benefit. Nationwide, those who have tried to stop PIRGs from being organized or prospering have always been some type of organization or persons that benefit greatly from an uninformed, unrepresented public.

Ed Smith
Sept. 8

Now

On Aug. 15, 1978, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to extend the time limit for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. In a few weeks the U.S. Senate will have an opportunity to decide on this important piece of legislation.

Unfortunately, very few people are aware of these events. ERA is a very important human and civil rights issue which has not received adequate public attention. Many people assume that because of recent social advances made for women that there is no urgent need for the ERA.

However, the testimony of Commissioner Frankie Freeman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights before a congressional subcommittee refutes that contention. She maintains that there is an even greater need for the ERA today than there was seven years ago when it was passed by Congress.

She states: "Indeed, precisely because some progress has been made by women in the past few years of the equal rights struggle, the present need for the ERA is great, for now the hopes, dreams and plans of millions and millions of women and girls throughout this country have been influenced by today's progress and tomorrow's promise of full equality in a way so strong that it would be cruel if the ERA — the ultimate vehicle for progress — was denied them."

As students, we are unfortunately cushioned in an academic setting which is often isolated from the realities which are faced by many Americans. We are in a critical situation where effective action cannot be delayed.

Harriet Glass
11th-community development
Sept. 9

Left out

I am pleased the University is taking positive steps to help the handicapped persons on campus. The ramps at curbs and in buildings have been a great improvement. The use of special doors and elevators are also helpful to those needing them.

But a major handicap not yet resolved by the University is the plight of the left-handed student. Most or all desks in a classroom are for right-handed students. That leaves approximately 15 to 20 percent of the student body with inadequate facilities for note taking. This arrangement can slow note taking and, thus, cause a student to miss important information.

The University should consider installing left-handed desks according to the percentage of left-handed students enrolled.

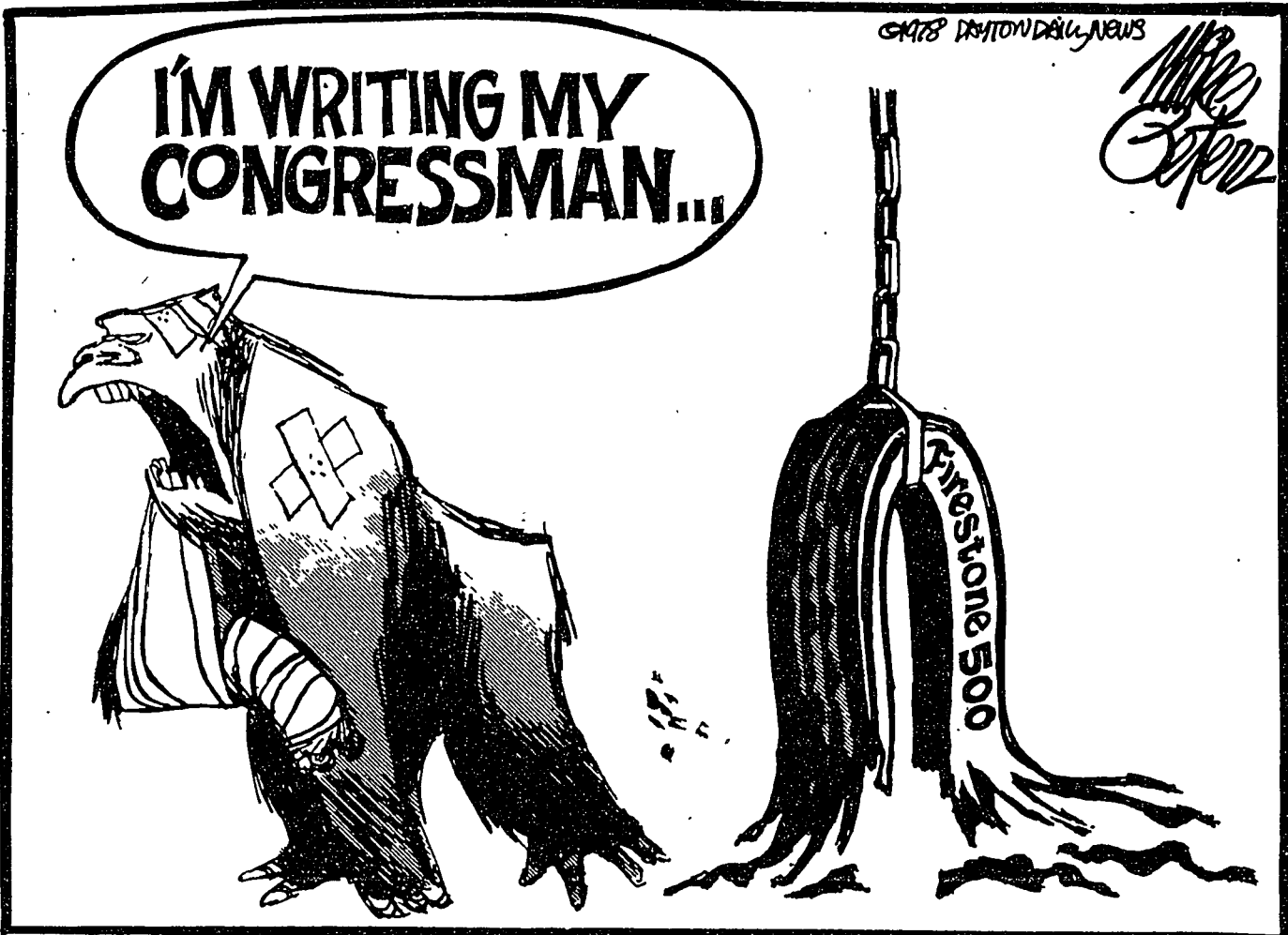
James R. Schomer
University Employee
Sept. 1

the daily Collegian

Dave Skidmore
Editor

Judy Stimson
Judi Rodrick
Business Managers

Formal grievances may be sent to Gerry Hamilton, Collegian, Inc., executive secretary, 126 Carnegie Building, University Park, Pa. 16802.



Shame is the name of the game

Pennsylvania's Public Utility Commission recently disposed of the hated fuel adjustment charge, but replaced it with a net energy charge. While many view this as an isolated public relations gimmick, I have it on good authority it is actually the first step in a massive renaming of state government.

My source for this revelation is a disgruntled state employee who had read "All the President's Men" and instructed me to call him by the last movie he saw. I met Jungle Book in a Harrisburg parking garage. The only light was the faint glow of his cigarette, which he nervously flicked about as he explained the plan to me.

"Consumers are griping," he whispered, "because their bills are skyrocketing while consumption is down. To combat this, the PUC plans to itemize a conservation compensation charge."

"Ingenious," I exclaimed.

"You've got to admit it sounds better than an excess profits charge or an executive pay raise stipend. Turnpike fares will be called road safety contributions, a big improvement over bidding kickback cost. You're not going to believe this," Jungle Book warned, "but court cases involving Pennsylvania

legislators now will be called judicial service reviews."

"I believe it," I whispered while hurriedly scribbling notes.

He continued, noting that as an integral part of the renaming, state legislators will be known by the serial numbers on their mug shots. The handful without criminal records will use their Social Security numbers.

"We have a similar system at Penn State," I declared.

Mark Harmon

"Harrisburg has gone crazy renaming things," he mourned. "They're classifying their payroll-mistresses under Sexual Response Research."

"You're kidding," I stammered.

"Not at all, just yesterday they got a grant from Masters and Johnson."

I pressed him for more data.

"Well," Jungle Book pondered, "pollution now will be industrial expansion residue. Potholes will be called old tread homes. Johnstown floods will be called inter-urban lakes. Requiring auto insurance will be called no-fault ensured coverage, it sounds better than

broker windfall. Bribes will be financial franchisement, since calling them campaign contributions isn't working."

As the smoke from Jungle Book's cigarette floated past, I noticed he wasn't smoking tobacco.

"You realize," I warned, "that joint-you're smoking changes your credibility."

"Please," he implored, "don't call it a joint. We call it personalized controlled substance research... Are you saying I'll be dropped from an unimpeachable to a high placed authority?"

"Very high," I suggested.

"Oh well, I kept my part of the deal, now where's your part?"

"The Collegian made a mistake," I quivered.

"C'mon, I need the coke. I've got an interview to be White House Drug-Counselor tomorrow and I want to go to Washington prepared."

Slowly I pulled a six-pack of soda pop from my trenchcoat. Jungle Book stormed off to a Washington party never to be seen again. Sadly I watched our last hope of deciphering Harrisburg fade into the smoky darkness.

Mark Harmon is an 11th-term political science major.

Return to fraternity fun yields altered attitudes

This past weekend I went to a frat party. It had been a long time since I had been to one and I hope it is an even longer time before I attend another.

This column is not about "Animal House." The frat I went to was nothing like Animal House. In fact, it made the rival frat in that movie look exciting. In fact, it made funerals I've been to look exciting. It could even make reading a copy of the Collegian look exciting.

I won't offend the members of that frat by naming names, suffice it to say that it was the frat furnished in wall-to-wall nerds, cluttered with rushees and decorated with giggling freshmen girls a description which limits it to any of 30 or 40 frats in the area Saturday night.

At frat parties all the stereotypes crawl out of the woodwork, including the stereotypical person who from the moment he arrives begins looking for a way out.

There are the frat rats who cruise the place, beer in hand, searching for that certain someone

who will be good for a few dances and a roll in the hay, never to be seen or heard from again (hopefully).

There are the rushees — freshmen new to college and new to frat parties — who cling to the walls waiting for a girl to pass by or to make eye contact, so they can attack her with:

Walt Meyer

"Hi, my name's Milton. I'm a first term Ag Eng major from Allentown. What's your name?"

These types are disillusioned to learn the majority of girls on this campus are named "Good-bye" or "Creep."

There is always one guy and a few girls who are attending their first frat party and learn, to their embarrassment, that no one wears a suit

coat and tie or a fancy dress to a fraternity party.

There's the engineering student who just took a moment out from studying (as evidenced by the calculator on the belt) for one beer and a couple beers later has become an obstacle on the floor for people to trip over until some kind person drags him to a corner out of the way of traffic. And the traffic at these parties is tremendous — picture all the drivers at rush hour on the Schuylkill Expressway drunk.

And then there is the jock, who in spite of the fact the temperature is 78 degrees outside and 93 in the party, he is wearing a high school letter jacket that says "Always High Golden Trojans" on the back. On the front is a letter covered with gold pins representing every sport from football and track to basketweaving and hog-calling.

The conversations that are shouted above the band at that these parties all sound the same because neither participant can hear what the other one is saying.

"Where are you from?"

"Business."

"What do you mean, 'None of my business?'"

"Your major is business, too?"

"Altoona."

"Oh, Engineering."

The music at the party is like hitting yourself in the head with a beer bottle — it feels so good when you leave.

At frat parties you also run into the earth-child type. Like the girl whose first question to everyone is "What's your sign?" They're the part-time vegetarians who give up their ideals for a steak and are not above slipping out late at night for a clandestine rendezvous with a Big Mac.

A close relative of the earth-child type is the 60's reject. These are the people, upset they were born too late to be children of those trying times, and so they have no excuse for their many neuroses. They secretly hope for a war to come along so they can protest against it.

Their answer to everything is: "That's cool. I can deal with that. I mean, I can relate to that. I can dig the vibes you're sending me and can see where you're coming from, but, like, you know, sometimes I just get so down from all of the negative waves society is sending me."

Somewhere at the party is the frat's resident jester, the man who figures himself to be the John Belushi of Gamma Yoyo Rho. He is in a corner surrounded by girls who are just dying to hear his impersonation of Steve Martin, Martin Mull, a water buffalo in heat, or a mad scientist, whatever may be his forte.

Also floating around — not unlike Tinkerbell — are the sorority girls, who spend their evening dedicated to the preservation of a not-so-endangered species — the stereotypical sorority bitch.

Frat parties may be fun for those who frequent them, but if you're sober on a Saturday night, a frat party is no place to be.

Walt Meyer is a last term advertising major.