

Credibility

Especially in college, we are barraged, almost inundated, with a ceaseless flow of information. All of it can't be true — some is colored by prejudice, some only half true, some hasn't an iota of truth in it.

Who should you believe? Your professors? Your textbooks? Your girlfriend or boyfriend? G. B. Trudeau? Walter Cronkite? The Daily Collegian? Would you believe, say, a man called "The father of the hydrogen bomb?" A man described as a world-renowned researcher in thermonuclear reactions with 16 honorary doctoral degrees

and countless other awards? Would you believe this man, Dr. Edward Teller, if he told you "The free world as we know it is not going to survive?" Teller told a lecture audience at the University last week that because of a lack of technical development with respect to improving energy sources, and a lack of conservation, the world cannot expect to maintain its current standard of living.

Jimmy Carter believes him. Carter has been promoting a comprehensive national energy plan since his inauguration, and until recently, with only marginal

success. The attitude of the Congress and of certain nations has been to hem and haw — to stand around digging their toes in the dirt — while great scientists and statesmen act as harbingers of doom, warning of an energy disaster before the end of the century. Their attitude, in fact, has been to not believe the (educated) handwriting on the wall.

At this crucial time for the future of the world's energy resources, we are simply asking our readers to ask themselves: Who are you going to believe?



Letters to the Editor

Enlightened

I would like to thank The Daily Collegian for their enlightening interview with Director of University Safety, David E. Stormer in Friday, Oct. 20's edition. Unfortunately, this enlightenment came not by way of understanding Mr. Stormer's stand on the issue of arming University police officers with guns, but rather by illustrating how well currently important questions could be entirely evaded.

The questions asked were well worded and to the point and I started the article naively expecting to read some equally informative answers. This however, was not the case.

The responses given were some of the finest examples of "bureaucratic double-talk" I have read in quite some time. I realize it is not always politically wise to voice strong opinions, either pro or con, in the press. However, I think that as concerned students, many of us would like to know the views of the prime movers in this debate and continually evading the subject comes far from achieving this.

Lisa Thorsten
4th-division of undergraduate studies
Oct. 23

TV guilty of shielding the facts

Ex-con 'Kaz' is disturbing fiction

One of the more disturbing pieces of fiction to emerge from the new television season is the show "Kaz." It's the story of a street-wise, cynical and sassy ex-con who, through Horatio Alger determination becomes a lawyer.

Unfortunately, this show's underlying premise is a ruse and sham — in almost every state in the union it's legally impossible for an ex-con to become a lawyer (or, for that matter, almost anything else).

Worklife, the magazine of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Administration (CETA), reports that offenders "are virtually shut out from practicing as lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists, veterinarians, physical therapists, real estate salespersons, insurance agents or brokers, funeral directors or engineers. Forty or more states restrict the licensing of offenders for each of these professions."

Of course, ex-cons normally can't obtain these upper strata jobs due to other restrictions — education, poverty, lack of good contacts. However, these are not the only positions ex-cons are structurally prohibited from getting. An American Bar Association study found that all 50 states have nearly 2,000 licensing laws restricting offenders from over 300 occupations. A quick sample proves how outrageous these laws are.

Offenders can't be licensed to practice as: registered nurses in 49 states, practical nurses in 48 states, barbers in 46 states, beauticians-cosmetologists in 47 states, plumbers in 10 states, government jobs in 4 states while 12

other states permit arbitrary rejection or firing based on an offense record and 21 other states place special conditions on ex-cons in government employment. Ten states restrict offender employment in any business dealing in the manufacture, distribution or sale of alcoholic beverages. Thus, even working as a dishwasher in a tavern or a file clerk in a brewery often is illegal.

Mark Harmon

Offender laws not only cover a large number of jobs, they also affect a great many workers. Department of Labor figures show that 32 million labor force participants, one worker in three, have arrest or conviction records. CETA regulations deem these people offenders. CETA estimates 30 percent of their clientele are offenders, though only 5 percent admit so. Additionally, 13 million people — still incarcerated or too young to be in the labor force — are offenders.

Mistrust of all ex-cons, based on false stereotypes and hard-core felons, has spread to many trades and has been incorporated into law. Our state legislatures foster irrational fears that giving ex-cons a chance means murderers will be wielding knives during your hernia operation.

Certain facts about crime are ignored in this hysteria. Over 45 percent of

No respect

International amateur competition is one of life's greatest experiences, both for the participant and the aficionado. The volleyball match Friday night in Rec Hall between the national women's teams of the United States and Japan was certainly a rewarding experience for everyone there.

All the unique dimensions of Olympic competition were present: the patriotism in the stands, the extraordinary talent of the players, the audience's unanimous recognition of exactly what was going on.

Many Americans would be surprised to know that in terms of number of participants world-wide, volleyball ranks second only to the collective varieties of football. It is frustrating to be a member of a world-class team and not receive recognition and support from your fellow countrymen. I am sure that our U.S. volleyball team was gratified and uplifted by their reception at Penn State, and that many of us who saw the two teams play will follow their progress with interest as the 1980 Olympic games approach.

Bob Strong
graduate-finance
Oct. 22

Checks, balances

On Oct. 20th I was refused the privilege of purchasing approximately \$6 worth (sic) of cheese with a personal check at the Creamery because I am a student. If I were a member of the faculty or staff, my check would have been accepted. The reason for this policy is, of course, because students are a "bad risk."

In spite of the fact that students do tend, for whatever reasons, to have a high incidence of bank overdrafts, I find it rather appalling that this most blatant case of anti-student discrimination is practiced within the confines of our very own university. In any store in State College, a student can pay for a purchase with a local, personal check, provided he or she has proper identification. At our Creamery, the only proper identification is a staff or faculty identification card.

I was informed at the Creamery that this check policy was put in effect due to a high incidence of bad checks during a time when the Creamery would not only accept checks for purchases but would also simply cash checks. It was also related to me that in all probability the majority of the bad checks were those simply cashed, and not those accepted for merchandise. Why, then, I wonder, the over-reactionary measure of simply refusing to accept all student checks?

I was highly indignant at having my check refused. The reaction my indignance caused from the floor manager was one that clearly stated this gentleman had no time for students. The management of the Creamery, the College of Agriculture, and perhaps the administration in general, appear to overlook the fact that the University exists for and because of the student population. This is obviously a hard pill for many people to swallow, people who earn their comfortable wages simply because we exist, but that is simply the fact, folks.

I feel the present arbitrary policy practiced at the Creamery should be immediately halted. I further recommend that my fellow students avoid doing business there until redress is made.

David Ross Adams
graduate-sociology
Oct. 23

Deprived

I count myself among the several hundred students, faculty and staff who have been unnecessarily inconvenienced and deprived by the recent decision to close the main gym in Rec Hall from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The purpose of the closure is supposedly to insure "secret" practice for our varsity basketball team. The fact that those practices are hardly secret can be ascertained by anyone who wants to walk the corners of the main gym — in a matter of only a few minutes I found half a dozen places where I could "spy" to my heart's content. Meanwhile, the track — which probably services anywhere between 200 and 500 persons per week during these hours — remains unused.

To the recent closing of the track can be added the thousands of dollars spent on partitioning a part of the weight room, purchasing special Nautilus equipment, and then hiring personnel to ensure that this equipment is used only by varsity team members.

As a sport psychologist and health educator, I am hardly an opponent of varsity athletics or the financial costs of developing top quality varsity teams. There is, however, a difference between the single-minded pursuit of athletic excellence and the encouragement of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (which is, after all, the name of the College).

These recent moves to strengthen varsity athletics at the

expense of the health and recreation of the larger University community are, in my opinion, contrary to the nationally recognized and commendable spirit of Penn State athletics (voiced most often by Coach Joe Paterno) — that sports excellence should not overshadow the personal satisfaction derived from participation and the physical enjoyment of the activity.

Michael J. Mahoney
professor of psychology
Oct. 18

Cross-culture

It would be bias to claim that the campus is lacking in inter-cultural openness by simply counting the empty seats in Rec Hall at the past United States vs. Japanese women's volleyball game. A good athletic event like that obviously wasn't viewed as an inter-cultural enrichment by many folks.

One of the things that won't be delivered to your door is this "elite" knowledge of cross-cultural understanding.

Here at our "little unreal world," international students have had few chances to meet with others on a non-official basis. The degree of inter-cultural openness, to me, will mount up if individuals just make a little effort to show their intelligence and sympathy on this matter. Recent Indian test tube baby cartoon controversy could be looked at as a good lesson for beginners. I advocate inter-cultural communication, not in the superior-inferior basis, but in a newness of human understanding of people who know where they fit in the sphere among other diversities of Adams and Eves.

Don't simply count on the Pope to do the job for you, but take the initiative step if you care.

Thang Nguyen
10th-broadcasting
Oct. 23

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Journalistic means to what end?

Play by the rules or make them

When Bob Woodward came to town many people, especially journalism students, started thinking about the kind of investigative reporting that eventually removed Richard M. Nixon from the White House. Sometimes thinking in a slightly romantic way.

After Woodward and his Washington Post colleague Carl Bernstein published a series of articles exposing the Watergate affair, enrollment in journalism schools skyrocketed. Many young people strived to expose "that big story" with their own Deep Throat.

At a recent informal gathering of investigative reporters, some of them described their own experiences uncovering the news. Much of their investigative work seemed tedious and unexciting, quite unlike any images conjured up in my mind by the names Watergate and Woodward.

They would attempt to examine "public" documents and if they could not obtain access to these, they would merely go elsewhere for the information they were after.

One maverick reporter disagreed with their approach, however.

His approach was more aggressive. If public records containing information he deemed necessary for his research were denied to him, his solution was slightly dishonest and many reporters there resented it.

"I'd put on a three-piece suit, cut my hair real short, and go into the office and act like a lawyer," he said.

Mark Techner

Sometimes, the reporter boasted, "I'll even have a secretary there Xerox some of the documents I need."

In fact, this young reporter said he thought nothing of breaking several laws in the process of proving that someone else was doing something illegal.

"This is guerrilla journalism," he said, "and if someone is doing something wrong, I'm going to get him."

He went on to say that he felt that the

ends, in this case, justified the means.

Later, I learned that this reporter had participated in anti-war and civil rights demonstrations during the 1960s, as well as the actual fighting in the Vietnam War.

He also expressed the belief that in order to correct injustices today in his profession it is necessary to do some shady things in his role as an investigative reporter.

At first, his attitude seemed adventurous and admirable to the college students present at the investigative reporting seminar. This guy is out to get "the bad guys" and that's great.

But the elder journalists present disagreed, because they didn't see the difference between a reporter committing crimes in order to get a story and the possible wrong-doings of the subject of the story. Both persons are wrong, they said.

These reporters are not being totally honest and straight-forward in their work either though.

They believed that saying "I'm from the Times," and leaving it go at that,

allowing the person to construe that the reporter meant The New York Times to loosen a subject's tongue, was okay.

Likewise saying "I'm calling from the police station," while standing in the actual police house was all right, too. Never mind that the obvious interpretation would lead the other person on the line to believe the caller was a police officer.

Somehow the difference between the ethics of the younger reporter and his older cohorts doesn't come through clearly.

Maybe what Bob Woodward said here the other night about the press overstepping its bounds is true.

What scares me just a little more is the realization that episodes in our nation's history such as Watergate, the Pentagon Papers and the CIA's heavy handed activities were uncovered by just such tactics.

Just think what we would never know about if all reporters played by the "rules of the game."

Mark Techner is a 7th-term journalism major.