

Cramped

The Undergraduate Student Government intern program in Harrisburg is in many ways a breech birth. When first examined, it's all backwards and not going anywhere, but with a push in the proper direction, it's a baby full of promise.

That baby promises better communication between our state representatives and our campus representatives. It also promises an invaluable learning experience for anyone qualified to hold the position. These benefits are well worth a few labor pains.

Organization can help ease these pains. The intern idea has run into problems since the USG Senate denied \$288 requested by the would-be intern, Mark Robbins, for transportation to and from Harrisburg. But at the senate's Feb. 12 meeting, Robbins, professing disgust over the attitudes shown toward the idea by some senators and their delayed response in setting up a program, told the senate he didn't want the

internship.

The USG could use the time it has before it can find another qualified intern to clear up some of the ambiguities in the program and prevent the same problems from reappearing for the next intern. Better organization and clarification of goals and methods will reduce the problems left for the next time around.

For instance, Robbins was supposed to find information about apartments for future interns in Harrisburg. During his own stint in Harrisburg, however, Robbins was to have commuted from State College.

In the stall until USG and the Political Science Department can get the program on its feet and running, these matters can be taken care of, preventing another funding fiasco just before the program is about to start.

A lot of sweat has gone into the intern idea so far. It would be a shame to let it die just because of a few cramps.



Letters to the Editor

In a daze

When it comes to abortion-arguing, I frequently find myself (after the smoke has cleared) a little dazed. For one thing, there is this one little missing logical link that confuses the heck out of me.

Mark Jackson and several other "pro-lifers" seem to lean towards, or state outright that 1) abortion is murder of a human being, and 2) abortion is okay if the fetus was conceived as the result of a rape.

Hold it! I don't understand. Do the conditions under which the biological rendezvous occur constitute the humanity of the fetus? Is it murder to abort a fetus conceived non-forcibly, but not to the one from a rape? Even when trying to look from the pro-life point of view, I fail to see this. I think this completely shatters their whole argument.

Audrey Allison
2nd-liberal arts
Feb. 13

Nothing special

I would like to comment on Mark Jackson's article on abortion in The Daily Collegian Feb. 12.

The fact that Mark Jackson was put up for adoption does not give him special insight into the abortion issue. These circumstances do not give him "an unusual view." Although he can look back with thanks that his parents decided to bear him, how many of us will ever know if our parents struggled to decide whether or not to go through with a pregnancy?

Jackson speaks of the views of the pro-lifers, and then states: "On the other side are those in favor of abortion." No one "favors" abortion. The word favor implies approval. Individuals who support a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy accept abortion; they don't condone it. Actually, in all "pro-abortion" groups, abortion is not considered a method of birth control at all, but an option a woman must have when an accident occurs.

Jackson also states: "There are no circumstances, with the possible exception of rape, which justify this decision (to take away another's life)." Abortion after rape is a main inconsistency in the pro-life stand. Would not the child of a rape-induced pregnancy be an innocent human being, also? Or do the unfortunate cir-

cumstances behind his conception negate his rights?

Obviously, this is not the case. Under this type of thinking, we are speaking of degrees of guilt. A woman who is raped and becomes pregnant is less guilty than the woman who becomes pregnant because her contraceptive fails. The "innocent" raped woman is allowed an abortion while the other is "sentenced" to go through with an unwanted pregnancy. Obviously the unborn child's rights are not an issue here. Under this type of thinking, what society feels is right is more important.

One more point. Jackson, in the beginning of his article, states: "Both sides are now lining up for the showdown that will decide the fate of this (abortion) issue." Not true. Abortions will continue, illegally and dangerously, even if the Supreme Court reverses its 1973 decision.

Patricia A. Allison
5th-horticulture
Feb. 12

Scenario

This letter is in reference to Mark Jackson's editorial concerning abortion. Indeed I agree that his story is unique, and there is no doubt as to the gratitude that he feels for his biological mother concerning his life or death. Yet he fails to recognize the position that his mother might have been confronted with, if she had decided to take the alternate route.

Mark, picture yourself as a 19-year-old, ambitious, career-minded, college female working towards a creative, successful future. Suddenly one day you are told that you are pregnant, and are no longer concerned with only one life; yet, now your responsibilities have been drastically doubled. A new life has been created and you must decide its existence or destruction.

You are now faced with a difficult dilemma involving the destruction of a life — either your own or that of your unborn child. Should you choose to preserve the life of your unborn baby, then your future, filled with shining hopes and desires may perish in return.

Think of what's more important to you, Mark — your life or the life of something created accidentally. A child should be the product of mutual love and want, not just an unfortunate mistake on the part of a careless teenager.

Ruth Stoolman
2nd-liberal arts
Feb. 13

No whales here

There are no whales in State College. No baby seals or nuclear power plants either. Yet there does exist a severe environmental problem within our backyards which deserves our attention. Spring Creek is its name — pollution is its current fame.

Years ago, cold springs beneath Tussey Mountain created a fertile artery of water that meandered 24 miles northward to Bald Eagle Creek, providing a home for thousands of native brook trout. Recently, treated sewage effluent, cannery wastes, silt, and the toxic chemicals called Kepone and Mirex have leaked into Spring Creek, creating an embarrassment to a county that prides itself on its clean environment.

But efforts are underway to revert the plight of what was one of the nation's leading trout streams. The sewage effluent will soon be spray irrigated onto agricultural land. Trout Unlimited, with the help of Glenn Hawbaker, Inc., diverted a tributary to Spring Creek so that storm drainage no longer enters the creek. The cannery has been closed. Strict laws prohibit silt erosion from nearby farms.

However, a problem not yet solved is the Kepone-Mirex pollution. While these chemicals are no longer produced, they continue to leak into the groundwaters from lagoons used for their disposal. Nease Chemical Co., the firm apparently responsible for this rape of nature, has yet to provide any abatement plan to end this pollution.

Although the Department of Environmental Resources says it plans to prosecute Nease, the Environmental Hearing Board may prevent this by granting Nease Co. another extension. Meanwhile, DER refuses to release current testing results regarding Kepone contamination of nearby drinking water wells, which was discovered over a year ago.

We must generate public support for a quick solution to this problem. The DER must be encouraged to use any legal means within their power to force Nease into action. If Nease Co. and the Commonwealth continue to stall, as has been the case for the past few years, the citizens of this area should consider filing a class-action suit.

Eco-Action and the Undergraduate Student Government Senate will be sponsoring lectures and workshops concerning Spring Creek during the next two months. I hope any person concerned with the future of this important waterway will find the time to become involved. As the Pennsylvania Dutch say, "Late it is already."

Jim Neely
chairman, USG Spring Creek Committee
Feb. 13

Fire and rain

After hearing a lot about how good Alpha Fire Co. has been in the past, I think the record should be set straight. The basic motto of a fire company is "Service to the community," but after an incident on Jan. 23, their motto is anything but that. Instead, it must be "Service to our members and screw the community."

On the day in question, my basement apartment was flooded with about an inch of water. I called the Alpha Fire Co. and talked to their chief and asked if I could use a piece of machinery they have in their department. This is their Water-Vac machine and it is used to clean up excess water after there has been a fire. The chief of their company stated that this piece of machinery was being used by the members of his company and that there was not anything he could do for me.

I was stunned to hear such a remark from an official of their company and the community. The fire company I belong to in West Chester believes in the motto "Service to the community." There have been several nights during heavy rains where volunteer members of our fire department would spend the entire night cleaning up basements. The only thing a person had to do was to call the fire company and request help. They would then be assigned a time when they would be by.

In the first edition of The Lantern I read a disturbing statement about the Pinchot elevator fire which the people who live in the dorms should be aware of and should take some action to resolve this matter.

I quote "Alarms for the fire had to be turned in verbally by the RA because the fire department does not respond until they have confirmation of a fire," said Peterson.

The delay of valuable time of perhaps five to 10 minutes in the confusion of the fire could cause the death of a student and could cause more fire destruction than if the fire department had an

immediate response. In the West Chester Fire Department, an automatic fire alarm from a hospital, nursing home, school, industrial buildings and college dormitory at the West Chester State College automatically becomes a general alarm in which all three fire companies respond immediately. Also neighboring fire companies are alerted in the event that more equipment is needed. Quick action is required in these types of situations to get the job done with minimum destruction and no lives lost.

I feel that the Alpha Fire Co. should review their Standard Organizational Procedures and set their priorities according to the needs of the community.

Gary Rostron
6th-architecture
Feb. 6

Like kids

Having neither read Pam Winterhalter's letter nor yet experienced Gentle Thursday, I am perhaps unqualified to comment on her suggestions to add balloons and games to the festival. Still, I am surprised to see the reaction against such ideas in Friday's issue of The Daily Collegian; and especially the reasons given for it. I remember college life in the early '70s, where Gentle Thursday originated, and at the University of Virginia in 1971. Yes, we did such radical things as camping out on the lawn to oppose university expansion. We also had the first Happy Day, and, strangely enough, people enjoyed free balloons and chicken fights and trampolines and water balloon fights and watermelon-eating contests — and, yes, the free concerts, too. The competition was about as serious as our annual cardboard boat race.

I am sorry to hear such fun was out of step with the times and was a result of our desire for rigidity and success. I am embarrassed that it "sounds more like a boy scout jamboree than a college festival." Would you believe that we enjoyed it so much we didn't care? Perhaps you can understand that in between marches on Washington and bouts of worry about our draft status, we didn't mind remembering for a day that we were kids.

Can it be that in today's atmosphere of competition and self-concern we've totally forgotten? We all have a lot of years ahead of us as adults, when we can sit and listen to music, but our days as kids are numbered.

The music is great — sharing blankets and togetherness is half of the college experience. At U. Va. our student activity fees sponsored several free outdoor concerts a year and that would be great to see here. But how can it hurt Gentle Thursday to share a little childish fun besides and forget for a day that we have to act like college students?

Mike Kardauskas
8th-engineering science
Feb. 10

Ice crunch

The economic crunch has hit the University. One of Penn State's solutions is to quit heating the stairways in the towers. Now instead of two doors being exposed to the subfreezing temperatures of the far East, 20 are.

Perhaps the University believes the cold and snow in the stairways will prevent fires from running rampant. More likely someone will slip on the stuff and only after a subsequent suit, rather than concern for human safety will the heat be turned on.

I would refrain this complaint, had my contract read: heated rooms weather permitting. When will the University start delivering what the students think they are paying for? You'd think that with so much dorm damage the University would come to the conclusion that students are dissatisfied.

Ted Metrose
8th-petroleum and natural gas engineering
Feb. 12

To your health

A friend of mine recently had an accident late one night in which she hurt her ankle. She was in a lot of pain and there was a possibility that the bone was broken, so we took her to Ritenour Health Center.

Arriving there, we found the emergency entrance locked. Once we managed to get my friend into the building, we found that not much could be done for her because there was no doctor available. The only things she received were a pair of crutches and instructions to return the next morning before 11 a.m. Being a freshman in East Halls, my friend

found that getting to Ritenour before 11 a.m. with an injured ankle posed quite a problem. This was only one among many that she was to face in the next week.

Another major problem was obtaining a meal. We were sent to three different offices before we realized that getting a sick tray from the cafeteria was more hassle than it was worth.

Even though my friend had to face the pain of the injury, transportation problems, hassles with meals, and the impossibility of getting to classes because of the icy conditions (not to mention living on the 10th floor of a building with frequently broken elevators), she is currently recovering from what turned out to be a very severe sprain. It was our first encounter with the bureaucracy of Penn State, and we are dreading the thought of dealing with the next one.

What I wonder about now are the people who are handicapped or permanently disabled. When I notice the numerous public buildings with endless steps, and the classrooms with no ramps, it seems to me that discrimination of the handicapped exists in this country. In the first half of this decade the U.S. spent 34 percent of its budget on national defense and only 7 percent on health. Maybe the values and priorities of our government's spending need to be reconsidered.

Lynn Caruso
2nd-rehabilitation education
Feb. 13

Never at noon

Jeanne Peterson expressed a concern in The Daily Collegian on Feb. 7 about the nighttime service at Ritenour Health Center, which has probably puzzled many students. She suggested staggered lunch hours for the physicians, which certainly seems to have merit.

Unfortunately, the solution is not as simple as it sounds. Many of the supportive areas, e.g., physical therapy, laboratory, X-ray, pharmacy, dentistry, etc. are staffed by one person so are closed for an hour. We tried staggering hours for physicians and nurses but found it to be very frustrating for a patient to be seen and then have to wait an hour for another service. We also had students returning to see a particular physician only to find that he or she was out to lunch.

After several months' trial, we found it too frustrating for the patient and returned to the present schedule of curtailing activities for an hour. There is a skeleton staff, including a physician, available for emergencies over the noon hour, but it is not feasible to try to offer complete services.

Dr. John A. Hargleroad II
University Health Services Director
Feb. 8

Ball and chain

As a resident and taxpayer of State College, I am absolutely outraged by the expensive, vindictive games being played by our local magistrate, Mr. Clifford Yorks. Case in point: Two weeks ago, a Penn State student spent his second three-day stint in the Centre County Jail sentenced there by Mr. Yorks. His offense? Riding his bicycle at night without a light (which, in fact, had just shorted out)! Does the magistrate really feel the sentence was commensurate with the crime? How does Mr. Yorks get away with squandering the taxpayers' money, throwing the student into a jail intended for actual wrongdoers? Why not reduce the fine if the defendant can't pay, or at least reduce the sentence to one day in jail? Can Mr. Yorks actually believe that a three-day sentence is a better deterrent to the crime of having one's \$16 generator light short out in the rain? (Look out, bicyclists — it looks like you should be carrying an extra generator-light assembly with you on the streets!)

If Mr. Yorks has an axe to grind with the student population, let him find another way to grind it, outside of the courtroom (and hopefully outside of State College). His responsibility to the citizens who put him there and pay his wages is to administer justice. Sometimes, it is necessary to spend the community's money to incarcerate a criminal — but not to support the unjust whims and games of the local magistrate.

Karl Wagener
State College resident
Feb. 10

the Collegian

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