

# Python society offers 'getting hit on the head lessons' to Penguins

By DENISE LAFFAN  
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

When Jerry Skurla and Ron Frame decided to found a Monty Python Society here on campus, they were ready for something completely different.

Their story began last fall in their management class, a class they found rather boring. Being two out of 955 students, Skurla and Frame received little individual attention — which allowed them to talk about their favorite subject, Monty Python, and therefore alleviate their boredom.

One day, Skurla and Frame decided to form a society to "see if there were any other crazies," as Skurla said.

After placing a notice in the Collegian notes, they found there were 25 other crazies — and thus the Monty Python Society was born.

The membership has now grown to 50 people, with Skurla as president and Frame as secretary. On Jan. 17, Associated Student Activities approved the Monty Python constitution which officially made the society a provisional club. The organization will be evaluated near the end of Spring Term, and, if ASA feels the group shows enough advancement, it will become a full-fledged club.

Just what is this Monty Python that unites these "crazies" and makes it worthwhile to them to form a group?

Quite simply, Monty Python is a group of British comedians who use satire and farce to entertain.

Phil Klass, professor of science fiction and faculty advisor to the Monty Python club, said the humor used by Monty Python is third generation in the line of British humor.

Monty Python is descended from two lines of humor, Klass said. One line that influenced both Monty Python and the current craze film, "Rocky Horror Picture Show," is parodic, satiric, crazy humor.

"At the same time, Monty Python is descended from a rich tradition of utterly farcical and knock-about comedy," Klass said.

Python humor is famous for poking fun at all aspects of society. No one person or organization is safe from its satire. Klass said this is an essential element to satire.

"Good satirists try to take a swing at everyone, otherwise some group is going to feel they're being persecuted," he added. "Satirists should try to swing at the most powerful. If they take off after the weakest it's not satire, that's hounding."

Most students do not take Klass's intellectual approach to Monty Python. They usually find Python humor either wildly funny or incredibly strange. The Python society hopes to introduce more students to Python humor and is planning several programs aimed at "bringing humor to this dull and dreary campus," Skurla said.

One project involves a "Silly Things to do For the Day" column which the club would like to see printed in The Daily Collegian.

The club also wants to perform Monty Python skits at Gentle Thursday. The society seems to have a fair chance of getting a spot. "We're looking at anything right now and we will consider the Monty Python sketch," Pam Winterhalter, coordinator for Gentle Thursday, said.

Skurla said he believes the group's chances of being able to perform are "100 percent." If the group is allowed to perform, suggestions for skits are numerous.

Members are willing to do everything from selling albatrosses to dressing up like monks and bonking themselves on the head, imitating the scene from "The Search for the Holy Grail."

The most ambitious project planned is an actual quest for the Holy Grail. This would give the Python group not only a chance to be silly but some needed publicity as well.

"We'll parade through campus instead of Iranians for a change," Skurla said. "And we'll yell 'Bring out your dead' instead of 'Death to the Shah.'"

The Monty Python society has many smaller projects planned as well. They hope to bring in both movies and TV shows done by Monty Python.

What the student reaction will be to this onslaught of British humor is anyone's guess. Skurla admits Python humor is not for everyone, but he said he believes the zaniness will appeal to many college students.

Klass is a bit more unsure about Python's appeal. "It's not something that can be popular like the Marx Brothers. It's too intellectual and too British," Klass said.

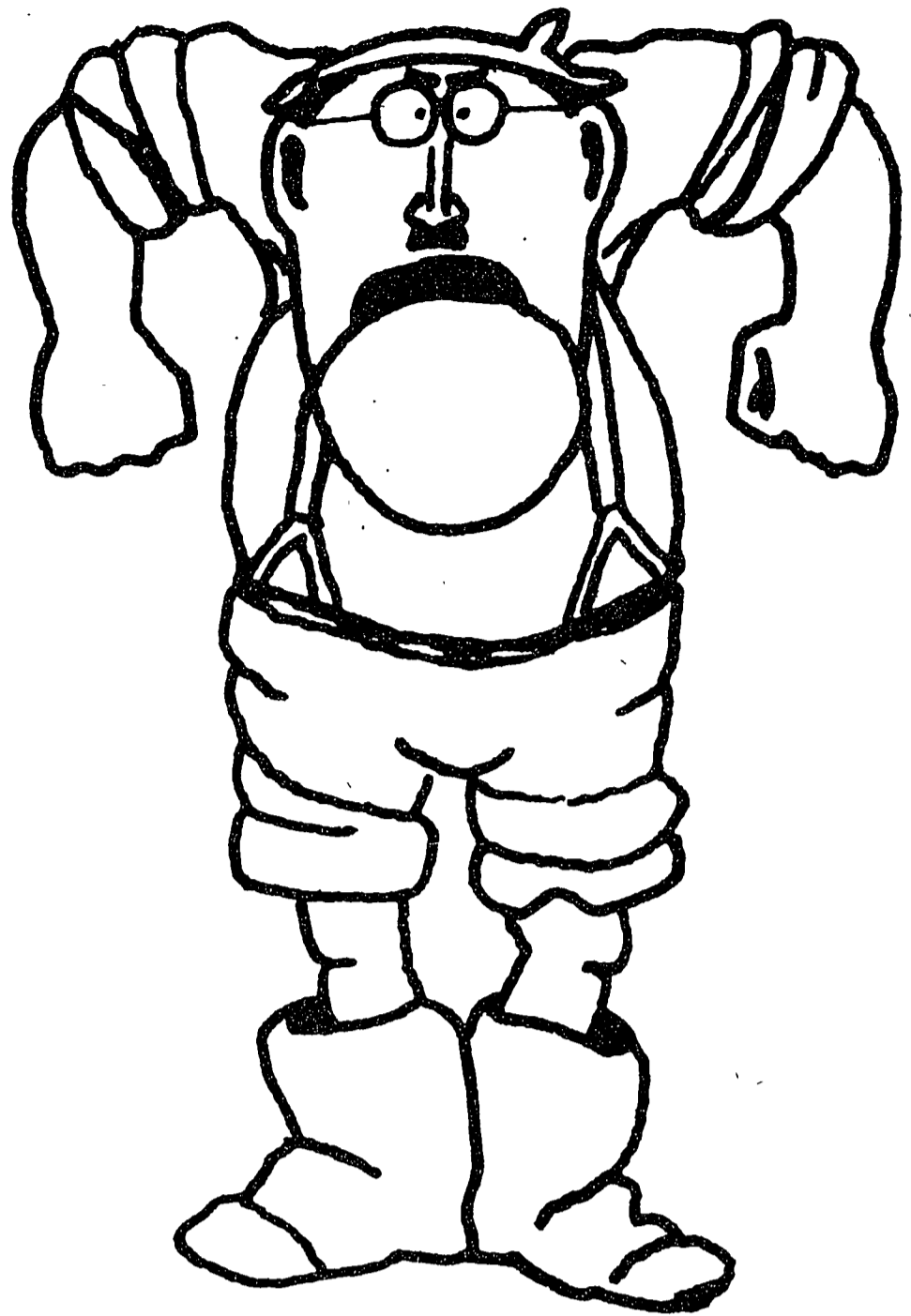
Klass qualified his statement, though, by saying many students will accept Monty Python because they "take whatever comes most easily and readily."

Klass himself is very enthusiastic about Monty Python humor and about the club. As a faculty advisor, Klass said his job is to "prevent something illegal from going on." Klass also said, "An adviser ought to provide extra depth and try to show what all of this comes from."

But the Python society seems most concerned with having fun. "The purpose of this organization is not to be serious," co-founder Frame said.

The next meeting for the Monty Python society will be Thursday, Feb. 15, 7 p.m. in 174 Willard.

Skurla encourages anyone who is interested to come because, in his opinion, "it's the most fun that you can have with your clothes on."



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**UNIVERSITY CALENDAR  
SPECIAL EVENTS  
Wednesday, Feb. 14**

Sigma Delta Epsilon luncheon meeting, noon, Room 101 A Kern. Katie Perry, graduate student, horticulture, on "Increasing the Effectiveness of Sprinkling for Frost Protection."

Valentine's Day Candlelight Dinner, 4:45-6:45 p.m., HUB Terrace Room.

5 O'Clock Playwrights' Theatre, Howard Motyl, Other People, 5:30 p.m., The Pavilion Theatre.

Shakespeare film, Rigg, Midsummer Night's Dream, 6:30 p.m., Room 101 Chambers. Free.

Commonplace Theatre, Fantastic Animation Festival, 7 and 9 p.m., Room 112 Kern.

Dept of French Black Studies Program, award winning film, Mandabi, written and filmed by Senegal's Ousmane Sembene, 7:30 p.m., Robeson Cultural Center, Walnut.

Artists Series film, Lars Magnus Lindgren, 1966, Dear John, 8 p.m., Schwab.

University Readers, Henry Miller, The Smile at the Foot of the Ladder, 8 p.m., Room 102 Kern.

University Theatre, H.M.S. Pinafore, 8 p.m., The Playhouse.

Sports: men's basketball, vs Pittsburgh, 8:10 p.m.

Phi Mu Alpha Percussion Ensemble, 8:30 p.m., Music Bldg. Recital Hall.

Meetings:  
Students for PennPIRG, 7 p.m., Room 316 Boucke.  
Ag. Mech. Club, 7:30 p.m., Room 124 Ag. Engineering Bldg.  
Alliance Christian Fellowship, 7:30 p.m., Room 304 HUB.  
Dairy Science Club, 7:30 p.m., Room 201 Borland.  
Episcopal Student Assn., 7:30 p.m., Room 317 Boucke.  
Froth, 7:30 p.m., Room 314 Boucke.  
Nittany Grötto, 7:30 p.m., Room 309 Willard.

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<i>Jane Louise Snowdon</i>	<i>Eileen Robin Pessel</i>

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