

Time out

With its 174-24 decision to stall implementation of the controversial ethics bill, Act 170, for six months, the state House has taken a mature, and hopeful step toward making the act easier to live with.

Even those who fully support Act 170 agree that the delay cannot really hurt its effectiveness. The extra time will give legislators a chance to iron out the kinks and flaws in the hastily written wording of the act, just as it will give the ethics commission that is to administer the act's provisions time to get itself set up and working.

The delay also sets the stage for what will probably be a somewhat heated battle. Ever since its passage in late September, the act has divided local and state governmental forces.

Many of the more than 40,000 state and local government officials in Pennsylvania seem to resent the provisions in the act that are designed to guard against conflicts of interest, such as the section requiring disclosure of sources of income. Others say they'll gladly

submit to the provisions, and don't understand why their colleagues object to them.

Now, the opposing forces will meet to try to protect or force changes in parts of the bill. We hope the act survives attempts by its opponents to seriously weaken it.

A public official — elected, appointed, or otherwise — who considers possible areas of conflict to be none of the public's business throws serious doubts on his own ability to serve.

Public office is not free from certain responsibilities; it is not a free ride, but a privilege. We are, perhaps, well rid of an official who sees himself so far removed from those he serves that he considers their legitimate questions to be invasions of his privacy.

We hope the folks in Harrisburg — and those who will head there to join in the fight — will remember that any official works for the people, not above them.



Letters to the Editor

At last!

After weeks of letters on how to pay for the Pinchot elevator fire damage, one student (Cathy Binder, Feb. 12) has finally grasped and communicated to us the solution. Nobody makes restitution, but everybody pays indirectly, through higher fees and housing costs.

However, it would be naive to see in it a "method" for the University to get even with its students. Isn't it really cost sharing by all of us for tolerating — and often even encouraging — waste and vandalism?

Every damaged book in the library, every broken window, every bit of deliberate destruction I see around me day after day has been, is being and will be paid for by all of us. Even the piece of paper thoughtlessly discarded on the sidewalk requires pennies out of your and my pockets to be picked up again. The Pinchot Hall fire was probably merely one such act — only bigger.

There will always be spiteful, stupid, vindictive, belligerent and criminally inclined people among us. Let's face it, we are their keepers, but wouldn't it be nice to keep "them" and their actions to a minimum?

Manfred Kroger
professor of food science
Feb. 12

Ignorance

At the State College Municipal Council meeting on Monday, council member Mary Ann Haas cited "biology" as the reason she voted against the human rights resolution which, among other things, would urge protection for gays from discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations. The conviction that homosexuality is unnatural seems to be based on a common gross extraction of Darwin's theory of evolution, which runs like this: The biological reason for life is to reproduce. This idea seems to me to be based more on ignorance than fact.

Homosexual behavior has been noted in a whole variety of animals, from dolphins to birds to chimps, along with a variety of different sexual expressions, including necrophilia and bestiality. The question of whether these animals are exclusively homosexual has not been studied adequately. Recently, a colony of exclusively homosexual seagulls has been discovered on an island off California.

It would be ridiculous, when talking about behavior, to equate birds with people. The one thing we do know about people is that homosexuality has existed since recorded time, through great amounts of persecution including the last 2,000 years of Christianity.

Darwin was one of the greatest biologists that ever lived. Before he wrote "Origin of the Species," he collected 40 volumes of data. He understood that you shape theories to fit facts, not facts to fit the theory.

Joshua Cady Rubinstein
president, Homophiles of Penn State
Feb. 14

Cults begin

I felt compelled to write a response to Patrick Kiger's article comparing Josh McDowell to Sid Vicious. To view an in-

dividual as an "answer" is where our cults begin and faith in God ends. In so doing, we form opinions of people on the basis of society's standards and not that of God's, that is, stating that because someone has a well-fed look that he could not be sincere about his concern for starving millions. Josh never declared that he himself was the answer, but Jesus Christ.

You ask what is really the difference between Josh's sex, sex, sex, and Sid Vicious's "blowing his cookies in concert." It seems as though you either did not attend any of Josh's lectures, or if you did they were viewed as cynically as your view of life through Mr. or Mr. Average J. Mediocrity, scoffing at any institution such as marriage bringing any joy. However, you are only a product of a cynical society that laughs at moral standards, is cynical of most institutions and much theology. Too few people can express the love that Josh McDowell experiences in his marriage (our divorce rate is proof of that), but all too many people can relate to the "blowing his cookies" type of sex that leaves one unfulfilled.

No, I do not feel that one who believes in the Word of God could "ride the lightning, without waiting for the thunder," or suicide as it is realistically called. To believe that Sid Vicious was performing another of his infallible feats by committing suicide is a fairy tale that brings no glory. Actually, the man was being brought up on charges of murder, a crime in which there is no heroism. I believe that Sid Vicious was at the edge of despair and ultimately took the easy way out. Which brings about the real difference between the two: Josh has maximum life, but Sid has maximum death.

Vicky Kyler
State College resident
Feb. 14

Plea of guilty

If political illiteracy is to want to provide decent jobs, national health insurance, and decent education for the poor, the worker and the minority population, then I plead guilty to being illiterate. Furthermore, if the price for literacy is to see the "economic sense" of Proposition 13 type welfare schemes to alleviate the oppressive burdens and hardships of the cruelly exploited middle and wealthy classes, then I want to wander forever in the desert of illiteracy.

Let's face it, Mr. Golden. There is only one literate way to interpret your learned and compassionate economic and political treatise in the Jan. 25 edition of the Collegian. That, my friend, is to call it a discourse of bleeding heart apologetics for the rich.

Robert Rutchik
graduate-political science
Jan. 25

How right?

To the anti-shah movement:

You are to be praised for your courageous stand against oppression and deceit. This world needs people who recognize injustice and commit themselves to healing its hurt. Yes, a free Iran is a worthy and just goal to work for. But how do you accomplish this goal? I ask this question because of the recent beating of a pro-shah Iranian student.

If it is wrong for those in power to use violence to maintain their position, how right can it be for those who seek a new order to use violent means to establish themselves? The obvious is that your violence is righteous because of your end

goal, a free Iran. I cannot accept that. The goal never justifies the means. Rather, the unjust means taint the goal and put it out of reach.

If you desire a free Iran, how can you justify the beating of someone who does not agree with you? The only way is to qualify your concepts of truth and freedom. Truth becomes subjective. It is defined by the group with the most guns. It is used to hide reality and keep the masses complacent. No longer does it enlighten the hearts of men and fan the fire of justice. Freedom is no longer a right, but a privilege conferred upon those who side with the established structure. It is the privilege to ignore the needs of others and cares only for its self-satisfaction.

Behold! With these qualifications, truth has turned into deceit and freedom into oppression. The very ideals you have committed yourself to end have sneaked up on you in the name of righteous violence. I serve you warning that by using violence, you become the shahs of tomorrow. You, also, will be replaced by another wave of righteous violence. The circle will go on and on. There will never be peace in your country until those in power acknowledge each person's right to truth and freedom, no matter what the consequences personally and politically. Do you love Iran enough to pay this price?

Al Taglieri
11th-computer science
Feb. 14

Good thoughts

There seems to be a growing concern about the format of Gentle Thursday 1979. It has been called "a sugar-coated little carnival" that has departed from the original theme. To those few who share these views, I feel I must justify Gentle Thursday's present format.

Most of our Happy Valley community isn't aware of the fact that Gentle Thursday did not start here at Penn State. Actually, its roots are found in the West and date back as far as the mid '60s.

Gentle Thursday's birthplace was the Berkeley campus of the University of California and its theme was sharing. On May 1, 1967, Northwestern University held a Gentle Thursday in the form of a "protest music festival." This was during the '60s revolution and the student body was trying to oust the on-campus ROTC. When Gentle Thursday was brought to Penn State in the '70s, its original concept was to incorporate its theme of sharing with Penn State's continuous problem of communicating to the student through the "eyes" of a big, impersonal university.

Recently, the original concept of Gentle Thursday has faded with the social consciousness of the '60s. Since 1970, Gentle Thursday's theme has been "A Day of Sharing": a day of community interaction to create positive feelings to be shared by all. Now, we are getting complaints that the day is turning into "a circus" and a "boy scout jamboree."

I feel very sorry for these few people because they are missing the whole point of the day. They are more concerned with such "radical changes" as painted faces, balloons, volleyball, etc. interfering with their annual rock concert. Sure, there is nothing wrong with rock 'n roll and partying. In fact, I rather enjoy it myself. However, there is more to the tradition of Gentle Thursday than that. Actually, these "radical changes" were with Gentle Thursday from the start. There still will be rock 'n roll, but there will also be some folk, jazz and bluegrass. Sharing balloons and frisbees is just

as important as sharing blankets and pipes. As for the concern about the "competition" in the various games throughout the day, you don't have to play them if you're that highly competitive. As for myself, I just enjoy the interaction with others in a throw-together, unorganized ball game.

The beauty of Gentle Thursday is generated by the people who share their good thoughts and feelings with friends. The uniqueness of the day comes not only from the tradition but from the annual effort of the people to make the day as rewarding and as memorable as possible. Without this effort, Gentle Thursday will be a thing of the past.

David Gubernik
Gentle Thursday '79, Coordinator
Feb. 12

Up with the shah

We are a number of middle-class Iranian students who have remained silent so far, despite our disagreement with the biased articles written in The Daily Collegian and protests seen on campus. But reading Mr. Ray Boyle's letter to the editor and the Collegian's article about Iranian students on Jan. 30 made us write this letter to, at least, prove our existence!

As Ray had mentioned in his letter, "All people of this country should realize the conditions in Iran!" However, to realize the conditions, they should try to see both sides of the argument. When we talk about Iran and Iranians facing a lot of problems during Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's ruling period, let's be fair and at least mention the numerous progressions of the country during that time, also.

It is not difficult to sit in Paris and make fantastic promises and talk about "what is going to be done"; however, it is difficult to be the leader of a poor, backward nation with 90 percent illiteracy — as it was 37 years ago — and do what the Shah has done. If Ayatollah Khomeini does what the Shah has done for Iran's educational, social, and economical improvement, then we will be loyal to him as we are to the Shah now. Because the main goal is not Shah or Khomeini; it is Iran.

We have read a lot about the brutality of Iranian troops and the thousands of people killed in the past months. But isn't it Ayatollah Khomeini that by acting so illogical and by calling any government but his own "illegal," and by not accepting even to negotiate with Premier Bakhtiar in order to find a solution for Iran's problems indirectly causes all these deaths? Is this "sign of God" thinking of our nation or of himself?

We meant to sign our names, but we are sorry to admit that our opposing Iranian students would react toward us, more or less, in the same manner that their depicted Savak agents would!

name withheld upon request
Feb. 5

the Collegian

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Clone encounters of the last kind

The phone was quite busy Monday night and, amazingly enough, two of the calls were for me. The first was an insurance agent, whom I fended off easily. These guys aren't as persistent as they used to be. The second call was the one I really had been waiting for — and now I'll be employed five days before graduation in March.

A celebration was in order, so I hoofed over to the local bottleshop for a cold six. My first inclination was to get Molson, but I ended up going hog wild on some Heineken dark — even though my future reporter's salary should have forced me to get the Rolling Rock special.

With the future looking slightly more secure, a beer in my hand and a wave of contemplation coming on, I wondered what it would be that I'll remember most about my college career. I narrowed the choices down to two — either opportunity cost or my clone.

The thing I remember most about my one econ course — except which line is supply and which is demand on the graph — is the concept of opportunity cost: the value of the things you could have done. At a place like Penn State, opportunity cost is an important factor. All of those interesting sounding courses were still beckoning when I filled out my

last preregistration form in the fall. And I guess I never will get to check into "Principles of Weed Control" or "Aerodynamics of Incompressible, Inviscid Fluids."

Matt Benson

I always got hung up trying to decide between the courses that seemed difficult but worthwhile and the easy ones. I won't say the latter prevailed, but I spent a lot of time in classrooms wondering why I was wasting my time with a math course that was easier than anything I'd taken in junior high. It boils down to a choice between the possibility that I might learn something and plotting the simplest course to a diploma.

Opportunity cost also applies to other aspects of life in Happy Valley. There are a multitude of places where you can waste your money, and always a variety of parties on a weekend to waste your senses. State College has always bogged the managing of my time, making the road not chosen an interesting factor.

Having a clone is another aspect of University life that has been memorable. My clone's name is Bruce Engholm, "Mister Bruce." For the past couple years people have hailed me with "Hey, Bruce." Generally I ignore the person or smile and shake my head no. This seems to happen once or twice every week.

Then one night last term another Daily Collegian staffer told me he called Mr. Bruce by my name. A week or so later he visited the office — at last, the meeting of the clones. People were amazed at the likeness, although I thought I was much more handsome. Anyway, Mr. Bruce says he also is constantly being called Matt by strangers. With nearly 30,000 people of roughly the same age group in such a small area, there are bound to be a few who look alike.

My best clone encounter came in the bookstore the day after our initial meeting. As I stood in the checkout line a guy approached me.

"Hey Bruce, howzit goin'?"

"You know... I'm not Bruce, but I did meet him last night for the first time."

He paused to look at me for a moment.

"Man, you guys ought to wear nametags."

Another time I walked past the Cattle

Car late at night, when two girls inside began beating on the window and waving wildly. I'm not sure whether it was my amazing animal magnetism or my resemblance to Mr. Bruce that prompted the mysterious outburst. My friends tell me I'm a fool for not going inside to find out.

In my Heineken musings I also thought I probably would remember how many people had come and gone during my four years here. So many of my fellow students graduated or drifted out of my social circle; so many just seemed to cease to exist. It reminded me of one of my favorite Little Feat songs that fits Penn State perfectly:

It's so easy to slip
it's so easy to fall
and let your memory drift
and do nothing at all
all the love that you missed
all the people that you can't recall
do they really exist at all

Temporary friendships, clones, opportunity cost and a taste for expensive beers — you'd think I would come away with something more valuable than that after four years at an institution of Higher Learning.

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