

Old story

Will students ever be represented in local government?

The lone student candidate in this year's elections for seats on the State College Borough Council isn't even in the area to campaign.

Illness forced John Tobin (6th-community development) to temporarily set aside an attempt to land one of the four council seats open in November's elections, and head home — his "real" home.

His departure is a definite handicap to some students' wish for one of their own ranks to represent them once more on a governing body that is now composed only of State College residents and University faculty members.

But it also underlines what is by now an old sad story: a lack of a student voice in local government — specifically, the governing body that limits how many of us may live together in certain residential buildings, raises the garbage collection fees that indirectly raise our rents, tells us where we may park our automobiles, etc.

The student who wishes to get involved with State College's major governing body faces all sorts of obstacles (not the least of which is his fellow students' ignorance of the importance of them of Council).

Unless he runs as a freshman, he must stick around past graduation until his term runs out,

and few students, it seems, are willing to do this. And yet it's a rare freshman who is familiar enough with State College government to feel confident enough, or be qualified enough, to have his name put on the ballot.

We think this needs to be changed.

Council President Ingrid P. Holtzman says a worthy and truly committed Council candidate would not object to staying in the area past graduation.

But in the world we live in, graduating students, who, perhaps a bit naively, see the choices they make at 22 as make-or-break decisions, are reluctant to sign up for a four-year Council hitch when, during their fourth or fifth terms, they consider running. And each year, those students they leave behind are a little the worse for their departures.

It may seem capricious to suggest a change in the length of councilmen's terms from four years as defined in the Home Rule Charter, to two or three years, but the idea is worth considering.

The long involved process required to make such a change would at least focus on the problem of a lack of a student voice on Council. During that time, a better way may be found.

PLUMBER



PLUMBER'S HELPER

Mark Harmon

Rushin' in where the sane among us should fear to tread

If there's one thing I can't stand, it's people who can't deal with future shock.

You know the kind I mean. When the great, hairy egret is endangered by pesticides, they fly to some God-forsaken tropical hellhole with banners and petitions. Or, when the 24th bolt in the chassis of a new model car is found to be missing a thread, they picket Detroit and bring in Ralph Nader.

Found in all walks of life, from the angry young man to the aging armchair liberal, these bleeding hearts can usually be recognized by the sunflower seeds they carry around in little, biodegradable paper bags and by their subscriptions to Consumer Reports.



The Three Mile Island incident brought them out of the woodwork. Just because they can't understand nuclear power and its benefits they must cry bloody murder when a few valves malfunction. Why aren't they bitching about coal and all the people's lungs that have been eaten away from inhaling its fumes?

The answer is simple. They just can't deal with technology — technology and its by-products just don't fit in with their Thoreau-Euell Gibbons-Goody Two Shoes World. They're frightened that the pasteurized, processed, freeze-dried, artificially colored and flavored food they pull from their freezers (leaking poisoned gas), will give them a technology-induced cancer.

They're frightened to go into a bathroom with its hairdryers spewing hot asbestos, its fluorocarbons rushing from pressurized cans (or bombs if they get too close to the radiator) and the hair dyes that cause brain tumors.

They're frightened to go on their honeymoons because Niagara Falls might open up, dropping them into a chemical dumping ground. They're paranoid that the government might be

clandestinely exposing them to radiation and/or mind-altering drugs and/or microwaves to see what would happen.

These people, primarily '60s holdovers, should learn a lesson from the '70s. They should learn how to deal with their problems, become laid back, treat it as a game. They should play Rushin' Roulette.

Rushin' Roulette is a game much like Russian Roulette. You know, a revolver with at least one blank chamber and . . . well . . . see "The Deer Hunter" if you're still confused. Great game. Nobody really wins, but the losers don't shed any tears either.

In a way, life in modern America is like Russian Roulette. We rush headlong from invention to invention, constantly researching, producing, marketing, buying and using with only Ralph Nader between us and oblivion. The government is so eager to gain information it risks the public's lives in pursuit of knowledge or it just can't imagine what could go wrong until it does.

Part of it is our scientific arrogance. We think we know everything there is to know about chemicals or nuclear physics until the next generation discovers new theories and properties. But from reading the papers and the quotes from the men and corporations behind modern blunders and tragedies, you get the impression they just didn't know what was going on at the time.

But no matter who or what is responsible, the result is the same: Rushin' Roulette. Industry, government and individuals have done things and are continuing to do things that will explode in our faces, today, tomorrow or in our children's futures.

But don't fight it, go ahead and play. Get excited. Spin the chamber, pull the trigger and hop into a Ford Pinto with Firestone radials. Spin the chamber, pull the trigger and eat a maraschino cherry in that whiskey sour.

Rushin' Roulette isn't a lot of fun, but I wish the bleeding hearts would quit crying — it is, after all, the only game in town.

Bob Frick is a 13th-term journalism major.

A week for all

Spring Week is a very old and beneficial part of Spring Term activities. But as an independent, I find myself becoming more and more uninvolved with Spring Week because of its Greek nature. I may not be the most responsible human being, but I failed to read any notification that indeed Spring Week is open to independents. Granted, even if a dorm or independent team entered, the chances of that team winning would be small.

When Spring Week goes all Greek next spring, as planned by the IFC, the planners will be defeating their own cause. Spring Week's roots go back to a period of time when Froth magazine, an independent organization, ran a Froth Week, and my mother, a PSU graduate, remembers those. Sure, "apathy runs high in the spring," but look at how many independents turn out for the Regatta, the Phi Psi and Gentle Thursday. And they've entered not to win but to have fun. If the IFC "tried a hell of a lot to get independents involved," where were the signs stating so, at the dorms?

Also, more than a fair share of independents, dedicated independents, enter the dance marathon, and the Homecoming Parade is open to any group, not just Greeks. Yes, closing the door to independents during Spring Week may be good for the IFC. But maybe someday you, being independent or Greek, can tell your child about Spring Week, because that is what Spring Week was created for . . . everybody.

Richard Miller
6th-mechanical engineering
May 4

Full of bull

"This reverse discrimination is full of bull. . . I mean we didn't put them there. Besides, minorities have just as good a chance of making it as I do."

This is a segment of a statement I overheard from a white student as he was talking to his friends. His statement implies two things: (1) that minorities have the same opportunities as whites, and (2) that the present white generation is not at fault and should not be victimized by affirmative action.

First of all, any open-minded person would agree that minorities do not have the same opportunities as whites. A prominent example would be education. If black students were accepted to colleges based upon the same criteria as whites, a black student's chances of attending a respectable school would be much more absurd than they are now. The reason is not that whites are more intelligent, but that the qualifications for acceptance are set by the white man for the white man.

As for the second implication, if he would just try to understand affirmative action he would realize the

invalidity of his statement. If discrimination were only a matter of individual prejudice, there would be no need for affirmative action. But minorities have been excluded from economic, education and social opportunities for years by laws and social norms. Affirmative action is a means to overcome this type of discrimination.

Putting it very bluntly, the white man is the reason that minorities are where they are. It seems that until something better occurs, affirmative action is the minorities' only way out.

Willie McClaren Jr.
6th-pre-medicine
May 7

The uninformed

I do not agree with Rev. Gomulka's statement "that dissemination of contraceptives and contraceptive information among teenagers will motivate them to precocious sexual activity, but by no means the practice of contraception."

I would like to ask one question. What type of information is being taught? People who are taught the correct information concerning their sexuality would not abandon what they have just learned. They would become more aware of the importance of practicing contraception and the use of contraceptives. Problems arise from people who are not accurately informed and do not practice the correct methods of birth control. It is what people don't know that can hurt them.

Dave Coveney
3rd-engineering
May 6

Money, the sickness

I strongly disagree with Brian Golden's stance that health care costs should be left up to hospitals to control (Monday's Collegian).

The BAD (Buck-a-day) Program currently being used by 25 Pennsylvania hospitals is only a minor cut in the giant tree of health care costs.

I am happy with the voluntary action of the hospitals to comply with President Carter's anti-inflation program. But what good is slowing the rate of something that is already too expensive in the first place?

Sure, we're disappointed with the rising hospital costs, but our main concern has been the overall high costs hospitals and doctors have socked us with for years and years.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield, which can only be afforded by middle-class-and-above families, doesn't nearly cover the full cost of any serious or long-term

illness. Any middle-class family, despite its insurance coverage, is in grave danger of losing all its savings.

What about people who are too poor to afford insurance, yet make too much to qualify for welfare? That is the position I am in. I can't even afford a dentist, let alone a friendly visit to the hospital.

Health care and doctor costs have not been a government problem, but one that has affected the common person. And it is the duty of our government to abolish that problem, even if it takes all of us to write letters to congressmen, hold protests or vote for Ted Kennedy. Health care is one thing that none of us should be deprived of, and leaving the responsibility to control costs up to hospitals and doctors is a joke.

They've had the responsibility up till now, and still many families are in the dark. What makes Brian Golden think the future will bring anything different?

Now is the time for a National Health Program to cover every one of us. Even if the government fails us in all other areas, it must not fail us here. Hospitals have already shown they cannot handle it. Money is a sickness they'll never be cured of.

Robert Montgomery
8th-journalism
May 7

the Collegian

Tuesday, May 8, 1979 — Page 2

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Jerry and Linda, on the road to Kenya

Art Buchwald admitted during his recent visit that reality is funnier than anything anyone can invent. Persuaded that he is correct, I have been following the strangest story in recent weeks — the African safari of singer Linda Ronstadt and California Governor Jerry Brown.

As best as I can piece together the story from anonymous sources, the safari went something like this:

Brown and Ronstadt, after hacking their way through a dense Congo forest, sat down in a clearing to catch their breath.

"Okay, Jerry," said Ronstadt, "we're in Africa now. Not a reporter in sight. I want to clear up our relationship."

"Baby, you've been on my mind. You know I go crazy on you," pleaded Brown. "I can't help it if I'm still in love with you."

"It doesn't matter anymore. You're no good, not if we can't go public," sobbed Ronstadt.

"Don't cry now. I can almost see it," declared Brown. "I'll be elected and you'll tour as the singing first lady."

"Jerry, I've been cheated, been mistreated, when will I be loved? Go public now. Love has no pride."

"I bet no one ever hurt this bad," said Brown, "but please be patient." They got up and continued their arduous journey.

After a few miles they stumbled upon a great city. The residents were tanned dwarves and their bronze bodies shone as they bodysurfed on a blue bayou. Some listened to Beach Boys and Randy Newman songs. Others paid homage to their gods, huge stone ponies.

The wealth of the city was evident everywhere; several residents lolled on the beach sewing with silver threads and golden needles. Ronstadt was hesitant but Brown marched defiantly into the city. Immediately he called a press conference.



One native asked, "Would you favor a cut in the mango tax?"

"No," said Brown, "the mango management problems would be too great."

The native retorted, "But 70 percent of the natives want it."

"Then," explained Brown, "I'm glad I was here when this movement started and will continue to fight for it."

Another native asked, "My brother unjustly rots in a South African jail. What can be done?"

"I believe we need a flexible policy for these dynamic policies," chimed Brown.

"The desert," mourned a visitor, "has moved onto my land and my family is dying. Can we get aid?"

"In this era of austerity and humanity, a balance must be struck," noted Brown.

"Say, where's a good place to stay around here? I haven't seen a Holiday Inn, Taco Bell or hot tub for miles. My Guccis are killing me."

The natives slowly pulled knives and converged on the couple. Inches from death, the native chief yelled, "Wait, do you not recognize Linda Ronstadt from the posters? Let her and her boyfriend go."

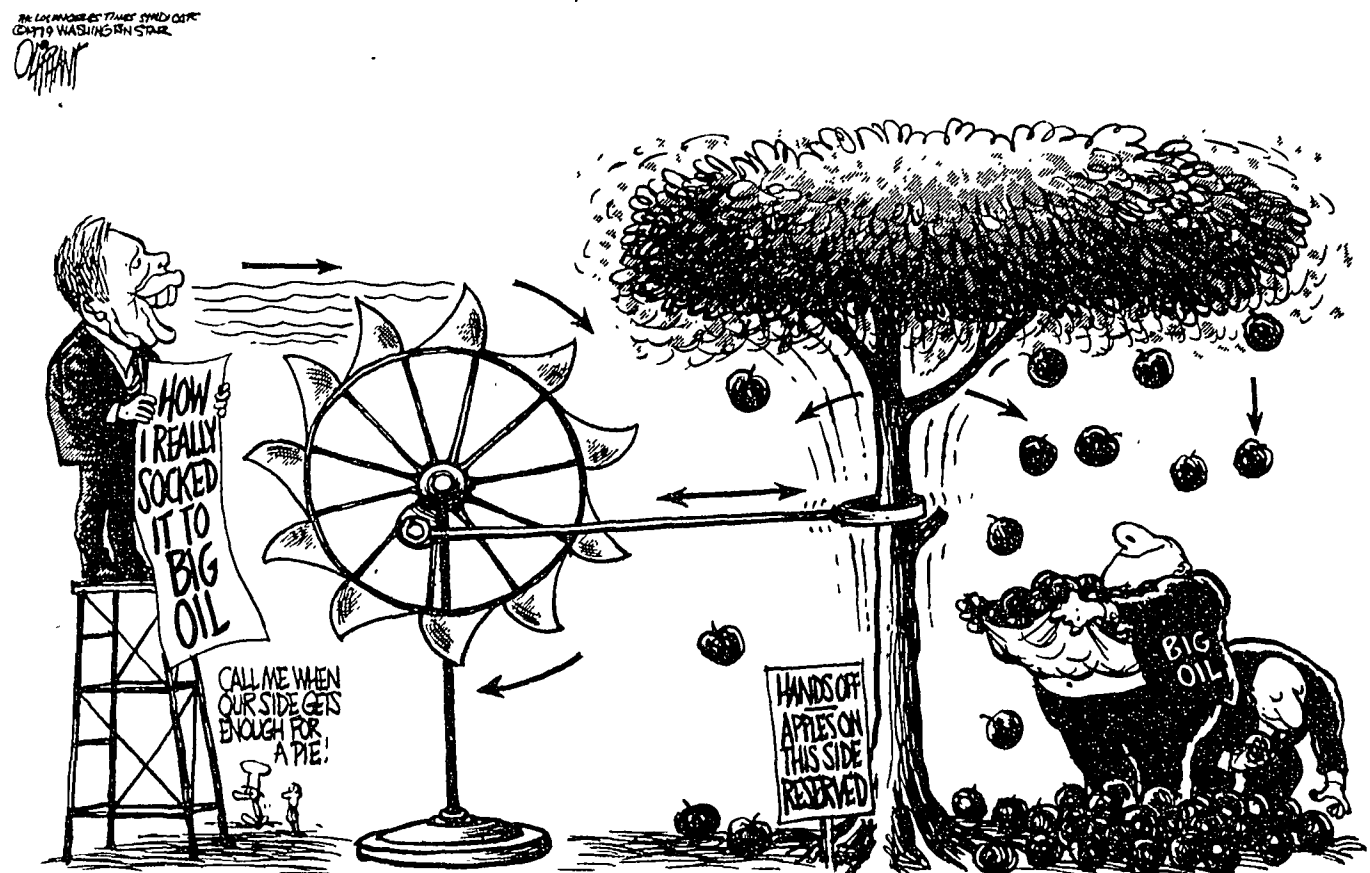
They scampered into the forest and soon were joined by a huge African guide in drag who called himself Idi. They asked him to lead them to safety and he was amenable to the idea. "Who are you?" he inquired.

"I'm Jerry Brown and this is Linda Ronstadt."

"Right," he said, "and I'm emperor for life, conqueror of the British Empire."

"Well," whispered Ronstadt, "he looks like Margaret Thatcher."

Mark Harmon is a 12th-term broadcast journalism major.



THE WINDFALL MACHINE (Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.)