

Editorial opinion

Nittany line

Shortened arrival period cuts in on orientation time and nerves

Welcome to Penn State, home of the lines. In past years, freshmen arrived two or three days before upperclassmen and had a chance to get acquainted with each other and the University before the University filled with returning upperclassmen.

This year, Sept. 2 was arrival day for all students. Orientation was shortened, leaving less time for freshmen to become acclimated to the University.

Thomas R. Harmon, manager of Police Services, said preregistration helped eliminate congestion, since registered students could return just before classes start.

Last Spring Term, however, the Records Office in Shields told students it had discontinued its usual practice of mailing pink slips to a student's summer address if the student provided a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For returning students, this caused uncertainty about when they had to be back on campus to register.

Harmon said traffic problems this year were not as bad as in the past when the University had separate arrival days for freshmen and

upperclassmen. Donald T. Arndt, director of housing services, said 25 percent more students checked in on arrival day this year, and check-in was running about 25 percent faster than yesterday. Arndt said he thought more students were returning earlier because of tomorrow's football game, which was moved up a week.

Burrows Road, Mifflin Road, and sections of Pollock and Shortridge Roads were made one way to alleviate traffic congestion, especially around the Pollock-Centre-South Halls area, which Harmon said is the most concentrated residence area.

The Centre Area Transportation Authority rerouted buses to stay off-campus and the Campus Loop buses did not run, Harmon said. But the shortened orientation period still means less time for freshmen to get settled at the University, faster rates of student arrival, more traffic and more frazzled nerves.

The University could probably save parents and students considerable anxiety by stretching arrival and orientation as in the past — over three or four days.



Students can increase education by going beyond prof's lecture

One of the great tragedies of this age is that people do not take time to reflect about what they learn. Even in an academic environment such as this, students do not really think about the implications of what they are being taught in the classroom. School too often becomes nothing but a battle for survival: reading tests, memorizing facts and passing tests. Know those facts and get them right!

This emphasis on only getting the facts right is deceptive. "Facts" do not exist in a moral vacuum, but are presented in the context of some sort of value system. They are not, then what makes them worth teaching?

The problem is that the value system, the world view, from which a professor teaches is not always defined clearly for his students. Often it lies implicitly beneath all that is taught.

Consequently, it is left to the student to link out all the implications of what he is being taught. That is no easy matter, especially with all the pressure to keep pace with studies. But this ought to be a high priority. Knowledge does not come by passively accepting what professors say. That is the memorization of facts. When students do only that, they can implicitly learn "facts" shaped by a world view that actually contradicts what they

really believe. Simultaneously, they can cheat themselves of the chance to be challenged and pushed, both intellectually and emotionally, as never before. That is why students must develop their ability to critically examine what they are being taught. They must go beyond asking "what?" to asking "why?"



Rick Jackson

In essence, students must listen to lectures and read textbooks "world-viewishly," as James Sire, editor of InterVarsity Press, said in his book "How to Read Slowly." Although Sire deals specifically with literature, what he says can be applied directly to the classroom. "A world view... is a map of reality; like any map it may fit what is really there or it may be grossly misleading. The map is not the world itself, of course, only an image of it, more or less accurate in some places,

distorted in others. "When writers write they do so from the perspective of their own world view. What they presuppose about themselves, God, the good life and the utility of human knowledge governs both what they say and how they say it."

"That is why reading with world views in mind (your own and that of the author) will help you understand not only what is written in the lines but what is written between the lines — that is, what is presupposed before a pen ever reaches the page."

With literature, Sire suggests that people ignore the speed reading courses and read more slowly, even re-reading at points, in order to think carefully about what's written. However, while students can do this with textbooks, it's not possible to tell professors to speak more slowly.

Examining course material world-viewishly is difficult at best. But it is far from impossible. In an essay on "The Varsity Press," Kenneth W. Herrmann of the Center for Christian Studies, Champaign, Ill., lists some questions one can ask about material presented in courses:

• First, "what is the professor's view of man? How is man's personality determined?" Is man just a more complex life-form or does his existence have added significance?

• Second, "What is the professor's view and explanation of evil in the world?"

• Third, "What relation does the professor see between man and creation?" Is man a ruler who manipulates the earth or a steward who cares for the land?

• Fourth, "Does the professor seek a solution to evil through sophisticated technology, manipulation of the elite, or grandiose socio-economic transformation?" Is he optimistic or pessimistic about the future of mankind?

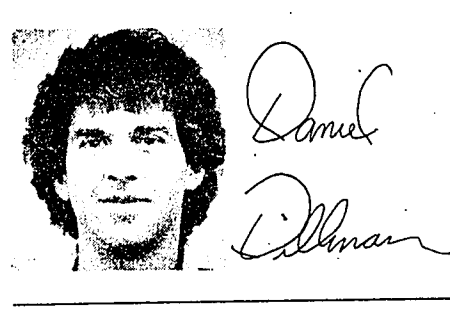
• Fifth, "How does the professor define his subject? What is its scope? Is it defined so narrowly that it deals only with trivial questions?"

These are just a few of the questions one can ask about professors and what they say. Nonetheless, these are crucial questions that each and every student should be asking. Many students could be in for quite a surprise if they bothered to ask them.

The tragedy comes when they do not. Rick Jackson is a graduate student in speech communications and columnist for The Daily Collegian.

Junk mail and mushrooms: life's truth or reality?

The reading of unsolicited letters (commonly referred to as junk mail) can often be an enlightening experience. No, the pressures of column writing have not softened my head nor have I been munching mystical, magical mushrooms.



I have been thinking about reality. It's not easy to think about reality (especially in the surreal surroundings of central Pennsylvania). But every so often — in order to maintain my sense of reality — I find it necessary to try to separate individual fact from social action; newsworthy media messages from planted public relations promises; manufactured truths from diluted half-truths.

For the trauma of waking up one dark morning (after having lived for x number of years in blissful ignorance) to find oneself confronted with the undeniable facts of reality is often too much of a threat for the mortal mind to manage. The end result of this rude awakening (which I have witnessed several times) has a name; it's called mental breakdown.

So there I was lying on the livingroom

floor grappling with the complexities of reality, trying to understand why we as a nation are so hell bent on self destruction, when lo and behold — the mail arrived.

Ordinarily this mundane event would have passed unheeded. But that day's portal offerings were unique. Besides the weekly issue of Science News, two pieces of the dreaded junk mail were deposited in my box. Together, this trilogy of third class printed matter succeeded in placing reality into its proper place.

Let me explain. According to that week's issue of Science News, "hallucinogenic plants have always been and still are sacred in primitive societies."

"Amen to that," I thought as I continued reading the article entitled, "Psychedelic Botany."

"Whether they (psychoactive plants) may be employed therapeutically or experimentally to help understand the complexities of function of the central nervous system, their value cannot be underestimated."

"Far out," I said, utilizing the lost language of a primitive, drug-crazed, '68-oriented, subversive sub-group of anti-establishment bohemians who were never accused of underestimating the therapeutic value of psychedelic sacraments.

The article's contributing authority (a Harvard botanist who acknowledged his affinity for peyote buttons) continued:

"The most interesting finding from the chemistry of (psychoactive plants) is the similarities between the principal plant hallucinogens and chemicals found in the human brain."

"My God," I thought, "that means that people like Ronald Reagan, Jimmy Carter, the Pope, the anti-paraphernalia crowd, etc. are naturally hallucinating — and they don't even know it!"

To be sure, such unreal thoughts are disturbing when one is contemplating the true meaning of reality. I mean, how is a person supposed to "get in touch with the real world" when popular magazines tell them that they have "acid on the brain?"

How can they seriously deal with the complexities of today's mobilized society when they know that Harvard professors are being paid to "get off" on psilocybic load stools?

How is one to cope with reality when it is so damn unreal?

Enter the first piece of junk mail. Direct from "The Institute for the Advancement of Human Behavior," the orange, white and blue brochure announced a weekend symposium on "Taking Charge of Your Own Life."

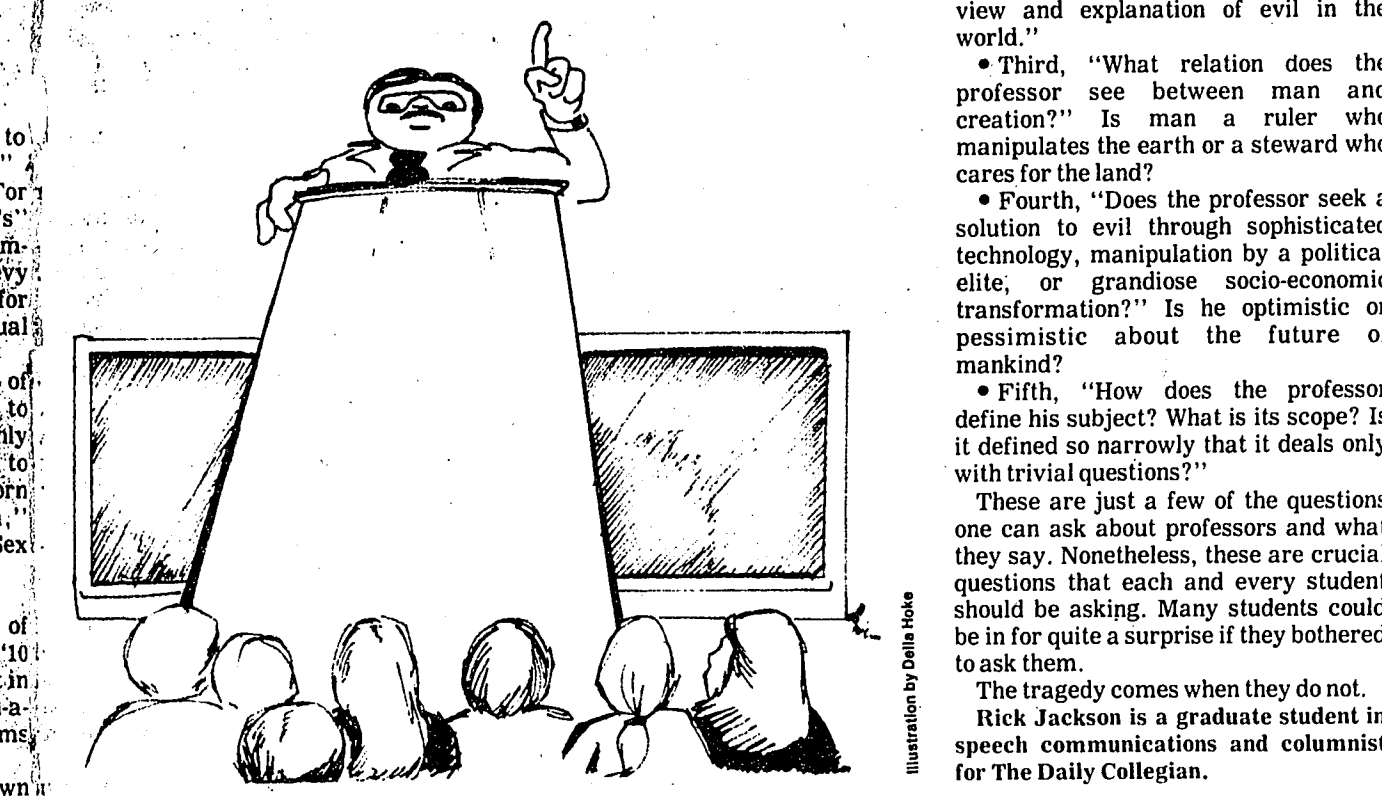
What timing. Here I thought I was doomed to a life of uncontrollable, unrealistic mind tripping and now I find I can learn about "some of the paradoxes and contradictions that lie on the

pathway from biological dependence to psychological and spiritual autonomy."

Too heavy — as in dead weight. For after reading the rest of the "institute brochure, I learned that the symposium's "faculty" was actually a bevy of overeducated behaviorists who (for a cool \$115) would "explore my sexual

gulls."

According to that particular piece of unsolicited mail, the opportunity to "regain control of my destiny" was only a check and a stamp away. All I had to do was to worship the authors of "Born to Win," "Precision Nirvana," "Existential Psychotherapy" and "Sex and the Single Man."



Letters to the Editor

Down the drain

"Who is the cost of room and board so outrageously high?" From my experience working in the kitchen lately, I see trays loaded with food not eaten. A typical tray might have two glasses of milk — one full and the second half empty, a piece of pie with one corner nibbled off and a second dessert of ice cream three-fourths finished.

In case you didn't know, all this food is fed to the garbage disposal. I know because I put it there. Luckily, this waste is only done by a small percentage of the students. If one student takes eight napkins and uses one, those seven unused napkins didn't have to be purchased, loaded into the napkin dispenser, dumped into the trash and removed to the dumpster.

The total waste costs much more than the few napkins that must be bought and employees that have to be additionally hired.

I take what I am sure to eat, then if I decide that I would like more, I would go back for seconds. This method of eating is less wasteful than taking one of everything and I also do not gain weight by overloading my plate.

The cost of room and board must really not be bothering me because if it was, I would confront

Bill of sale

It seems necessary to remind some people that when one deals with laws (as per the Hyde Amendment, the Fetal Life Amendment, etc.), the concept of moral choice does not apply. There is only what is legal; if one goes outside of what is legal, one will be punished by law, unless one can afford to buy American "justice."

I read the usual emotion-packed propaganda which uses only the mythology of unborn babies to depict abortion and eliminates any need for

Coercion free

I would like to comment on the letter written by Mark D. Van Ouse which appeared in the Daily Collegian on Wednesday, August 15. Van Ouse states that the unborn child... has been ostracized from the ranks of human beings... Killing, thus, has been legalized and marketed in the form of abortion.

Such a statement is based on the assumption that the fetus is a person. This is not a fact. It is an issue which depends upon a person's religious

Easy access

The Daily Collegian encourages comments on news coverage, editorial opinions, and on campus or off-campus affairs. Letters should be typed, written, double-spaced, and no longer than 30 lines.

Letters should include the author's name, term, major and date when letter is being submitted. They must be signed by no more than two persons.

In fact, abortion is mandated by Jewish law to protect the life and health of the mother up until the moment of birth. We cannot signale out the laws of one religious denomination and force them upon those who maintain different beliefs.

Although abortion has been legalized, it has not been marketed, as Van Ouse suggests. Women have not been coerced into having abortions, but have been provided the freedom of terminating an unwanted pregnancy.

Nancy Touchette, graduate-chemistry September 4

Encore

Draft registration has divided many people in this country and on this campus. With Supreme Court Justice William Brennan Jr.'s stay of a Philadelphia court decision ruling the sign-up process unconstitutional, many young people will be anxiously waiting for the Supreme Court's final ruling on the matter.

The constitutionality of forcing persons to reveal their social security numbers has been questioned. Moreover, any registration plan excluding women may be ruled as discriminatory against males.

Although The Daily Collegian has run op-ed pages in the past on women in the draft and on registration, the question still lingers of whether registration is right or wrong.

On Tuesday, Sept. 9, The Daily Collegian will focus its first op-ed page of Fall Term on the continuing controversy surrounding the new military draft sign-up. If you have any comments on registration, please submit them to the Editorial Editor, 126 Carnegie. All letters must be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 30 lines. Deadline is TODAY, 5 p.m.

the daily Collegian

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Getting the Phys Ed 5 fit

By MARY LEHMAN

I was one of the wimps in my high school gym class. You remember us, don't you?

Two fat girls and me standing in a cluster, who stared suspiciously at a rope. Some heavy gym teacher was about to insist we climb to the very top or we'd fail the course.

It would take me about 20 minutes or so to shimmy up that sucker. Then, once I got there, I'd look down at the miniature people standing on the blue plastic mats and immediately plan ways I could marry Mr. Right, pursue a rewarding career and maybe have children without having to leave the gym ceiling because there was no way I was going to get down.

By then the gym teacher yelled at me and everyone else had left for the showers. You have no idea what that does to a person's self esteem.

Well, all of this happened to me a while ago. I am part of that statistical boom of somewhat older, "returning" women students. There is an adjective that is usually applied to this group and I cannot think if it is exceptional, unusual or unnatural.

In any case, I am not 19, not in either engineering or business and I cannot remember the last time I was carded.

I am here to tell you the happy ending to my story. I have been born again; I owe it all to Phys Ed 5.

I was saved merrily peddling up Burrows Avenue with a racket sticking out of my backpack. I have a happy heart and a laundry bag full of soggy gray shirts.

How did this miracle occur? It all started in fitness and games. This course is not generally considered one of your top draws in Phys Ed 5. Compared with sailing, for instance, it is not a high demand course. For one thing, the title is a little ambiguous.

"What is this, do you know?" "I'm not sure, my roommate said you have to run a lot..." "It's usually the only thing you can pick up on the floor at registration, and it runs neck and neck with ballroom dancing

in attracting liberal arts majors and people who need one more gym credit to graduate.

The first day of class, our coach ran down the list of term standings and mentioned that some of us seemed to be ready for tenure.

As a class, we were definitely a mixed bag. Week after week we rattled around the main gym, flailing away at each other with oddly shaped sticks, the purpose of which was only dimly understood. The coach was just a tad sarcastic which more or less equalized us and prevented anyone from taking themselves very seriously.

Gradually, the chance of failing or looking like a fool ceased being much of an issue. We all looked like fools and an interesting thing began to happen to me — I started trying a little.

For years, my motto had been the best way to avoid failing was to avoid trying. It makes for a dull life but at least you have your pride. With the possibility of failing removed, I had nothing to lose by trying. And what happened?

C'mon, how many fairy tales have you read? You got it. I started succeeding a little. Nothing spectacular, but enough success to puzzle someone who had always thought of themselves as fairly inept. A whole new self-image began budding.

"Oh, excuse me, I was just sort of casually wondering, when are the next Olympics?"

Then one day in racquetball it happened — my conversion experience. I saw the light. I was lunging for a ball sailing past me. My brain was evaluating the distance between my racket and the ball, the speed of the ball, and last, but not least, my own competence. I gave up. I couldn't make it.

I started to pull back when I heard my own voice yelling "get it!" My body seemed to hang in the air for an instant, my arm grew a quarter of an inch longer, my wrist flicked and I'll be damned, I got it.

I overrode that little bugger who's been living in a three-room apartment in my brain for the past 10 years, telling me I couldn't do it. I ended up losing the point, but I do believe I've begun winning the war.

Now I stroll through Fisher Plaza with the obviously radiant glow, beautiful smile and soggy hair of a woman who's found it.

Now I stroll through Fisher Plaza with the obviously radiant glow, beautiful smile and soggy hair of a woman who's found it.

Just in passing, when are the next Olympics?

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