

the daily collegian opinions

editorial opinion

Fallow fields

Austerity in education tough choice for Reagan backers

Mr. and Mrs. White Middle-Class elected Mr. Conservative on Nov. 4 without suspecting that their vote would end up costing them a lot of money for their child's college education.

They banked on a promise by Ronald Reagan to make the economy blossom and bear jobs by cutting taxes and seducing big business with subsidies.

But those white middle-class families are now seeing their votes turn against them as the fiscal 1982 budget takes shape. They and their kids in college will feel the effects of Reagan's slashing and burning almost immediately.

Reagan wants to chop \$4.5 billion from the Department of Education's proposed \$17 billion budget. That 25 percent cut contains the educational futures of many middle-class students.

As a result, higher education will become a lot less affordable for the middle class, while still remaining an option for the rich or the poor.

This year about \$5 billion in federally guaranteed loans is available to students regardless of family income. After Reagan's proposed cuts, however, such loans will only be available to students who can prove financial need.

Financial need.

It's a vague term, highly subjective and almost impossible to determine without using a mathematical formula. Such formulas usually knock middle-class families off the eligibility list.

Even realizing this, middle-class families demand that the federal government shear its budget drastically.

But where should the shearing be done? Reagan's budget for education seems to project the notion that education is a luxury, affordable only when times are prosperous and international enemies are slain.

Should the country sacrifice the long-term goal of an educated population — able to cope with ominous problems decades from now — for fast improvements in the leading economic indicators?

Should the country bargain away its human potential for the short-run sense of security from "international terrorism" that comes with \$180 billion defense budgets?

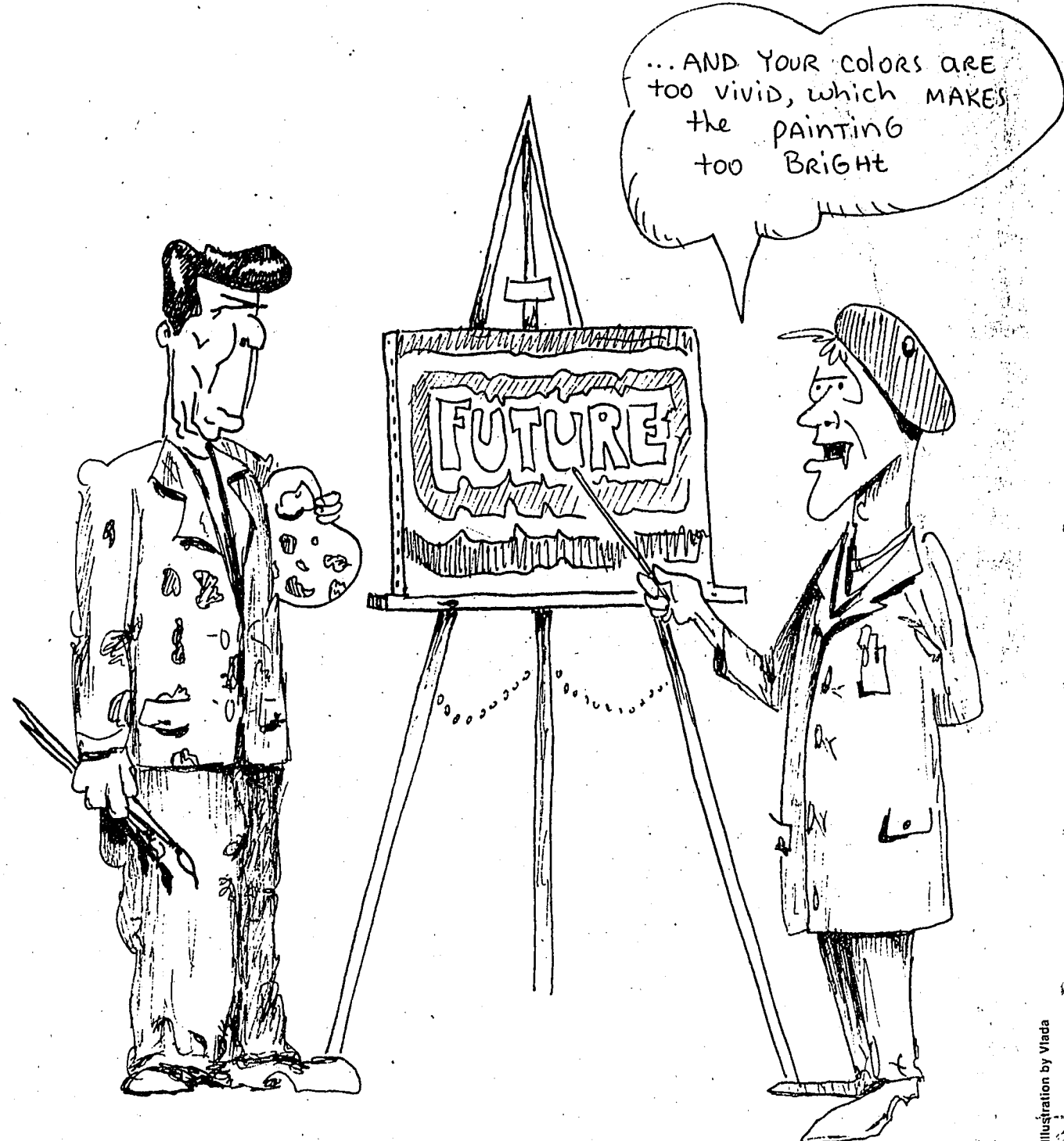
These are tough questions for Mr. and Mrs. Middle-Class.

The Reagan administration will be around for eight years at most, and Reagan's financial advice comes from the bankers of Wall Street, where "long term" means nine months.

But educational institutions are as long-run an investment as can be found. Plowing dollars into higher education takes the faith of a farmer who plants in March to harvest in July.

Should the country expect feast or famine in the next century?

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its 17-member Board of Opinion, with the editor-in-chief holding final responsibility.



=reader opinion=

Innuendos

Congratulations, Diane! (Sighs) You, your column "Comparing male strippers to female strippers," I enjoy innovative babbles that is full of innuendos and personal conjecture.

Of course, you include one direct quote by a male stripper taken from a highly respected, unbiased source — Ms. magazine. You offer your article as fact, but it appears to be misleading, confusing and weakly supported.

I was taught in English 10 that the first sentence of a paragraph should outline what will be contained within. You don't carry this out in many of your paragraphs.

For example, in your fourth paragraph, you fail to explain why men strip. Now I'll never know. In your fifth paragraph, you explain that "in general, male strippers make more money than female strippers." (Did you get that info on fourth floor Boucke?) However, one sentence later you write that male strippers at Mr. C's "emphasized the fun of it all." Maybe I'm missing the connection here.

Overall, I'm amazed at the "clairvoyant powers" you draw upon to obtain your information. Your article appears to have no direction. It seems to have been thrown together to meet a deadline and to spread your continuing fight against the "female exploitation" you seem to believe is lurking behind every dark corner. I'm sure if we all blindly looked at campus and

non-campus activities the way you do, we could easily imagine societal injustices.

Robert Witschger, 12th-business logistics March 10

Burned out?

Dear Dr. Oswald:

My inquiry regards the degree of safety University park students can rely on in their residence halls. On Saturday evening, Feb. 21, a spontaneous fire erupted in a dormitory room on center campus. The dorm room was locked and empty since both boys were out at the time.

A few alert students on the floor smelled smoke. One, who was trained in firefighting, was unable to unlock the door and extinguish the blaze. It was determined that the fire was caused by faulty or worn wiring. No automatic alarm was activated.

The loss of research papers, notes, books, clothes and an expensive stereo set, although difficult to replace, is not the main concern here. My questions are for the safety of the students themselves. Do you have automatic sprinklers to put out unexpected fires? Are there adequate exits and working elevators, especially in the East Hall towers?

The instructional part of life at the University Park campus is excellent. However, from the beginning I have had many doubts about the cavalier manner in which students are housed.

Smells smoke

The fire in Bigler's fourth floor study lounge is an incident of the past, but it's not going to be quickly forgotten by many residents.

Students are asking what caused the fire, wondering if it was arson or electrical problems. Rumors are running rampant. These questions can't be answered yet, since the case is still under investigation. However, one disturbing question should be answered now: "Why aren't there any smoke detectors?"

When one coordinator was asked this question, he replied, "The cost would be enormous." This answer doesn't satisfy many residents. The exact costs and statistics of installing smoke detectors could be obtained and students could decide if it was worthwhile to them.

Costs are deducted from the general deposit for all sorts of damages and vandalism. Why not use a portion of the deposit as a preventative measure? How much is a human life worth? The fire drills we perform routinely each month aren't going to serve their purpose if no one detects the fire and pulls the alarm.

The fire in Bigler was discovered at 5:30 Saturday morning by two girls getting ready to wait in the dorm contract lines. They first saw a thin wisp of smoke which developed into a thick haze within minutes. It was fortunate that the fire occurred the weekend it did. Who is usually up at 5:30 a.m. on a Saturday? How long would it have

been before the fire was discovered and the alarm pulled?

Smoke detectors would alert residents immediately and ensure that the fire alarm would be pulled. They would also tell the students the vicinity of the fire, allowing students to follow the safest escape route. Smoke detectors would be a valuable asset to the dorms if they weren't abused.

Unfortunately, someone might enjoy setting off the detectors unnecessarily or stealing them. The best way to determine the effectiveness of smoke detectors would be to install them in one or two of the dormitory buildings on a trial basis.

Mary Anne Janco, 6th-journalism March 18

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Progress in education happens at federal level

Ronald Reagan advocates the abolition of the federal Department of Education, a position that may prove to be quite an obstacle in the progress of public education.

Along with the elimination of the department, Reagan has made it explicit that he favors giving almost all of the responsibility and funding for education to state and local authorities who, he believes, are rightfully qualified to handle it.

I share the fears of many concerned people, particularly some educators, who believe that placing the power of education policy almost solely in the hands of state and local authorities may prove to be disastrous.

If state governments and local school boards assume more

power in education, the already unequal systems and standards in school districts around the country may become more pronounced.

But will the states and local school districts get near-total control? At least several possibilities exist.

Reagan's Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell, said recently that the administration may propose legislation to Congress that would convert the department into an independent agency — somewhat like the structure of NASA — or a semi-governmental foundation.

If Congress passes such a bill, Reagan will claim a victory for his campaign promise to rid the nation of the department. But a shift to a NASA-type agency may simply indicate a name change and not much of a change in authority and funding.

Bell has said, however, that the possible shift from department to agency will be accompanied by a strong de-emphasis of the federal role in education programs and an increased dependence on state and local school district responsibility.

Therefore, a federal education agency may be formed by Congress that has little more than symbolic stature.

In his recent budget cut proposals, Reagan outlined his plan for the 57 federal elementary and secondary education programs to be reduced into two block grants — one for states and one for local school districts.

Under Reagan's plan, the money for the two grants would be 20 percent less than the amount that otherwise would have been spent for the federal programs.

The block grants would be given to the states and school districts, who, in keeping with Reagan's philosophy, would be able to do with the money whatever they damn well wanted.

If the states and school districts become the only authorities on what will be done with education dollars, politically popular

and/or conservative programs may be imposed that would send the galleons all that is progressive and promising in education through modern teaching philosophies and methods.

Important programs such as those for the learning disabled, gifted, disadvantaged and mentally and physically handicapped could be eliminated by those school boards and states that have the same program butchering ideals as Reagan.

Reagan's proposals already call for easing regulations requiring funding for handicapped children, desegregation programs and bilingual education.

With the money and authority in local rather than federal hands, a back-to-the-basics movement could result in areas where people with conservative education philosophies dominate the local governments.

The education conservatives favor "traditional education" a generic term that applies to such things as the three Rs method (reading, "riting" and "rithmetic") or morality- and value-oriented teaching.

Some of the education conservatives are members of fundamentalist political groups such as Moral Majority and Christian Voice. These and other fundamentalist groups wield considerable political power and could be instrumental in destroying much of what shows promise of improvement in education.

The education conservatives know that as long as children have traditional educations they will be taught to be passive and less likely to question, challenge and possibly reject the inadequacies of government, society or fundamentalist ideals.

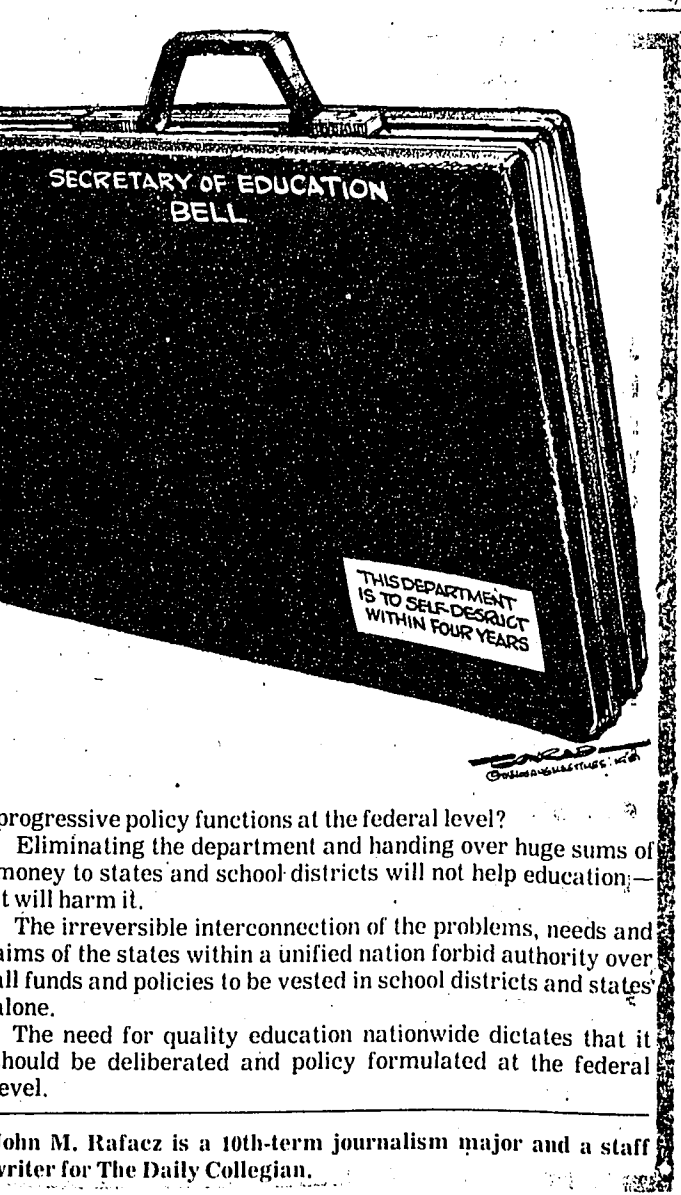
What about Reagan?

Since his inauguration, Reagan has directed most of his energy to righting the inherent wrongs in the economy. That is because he is more interested in the economy than education.

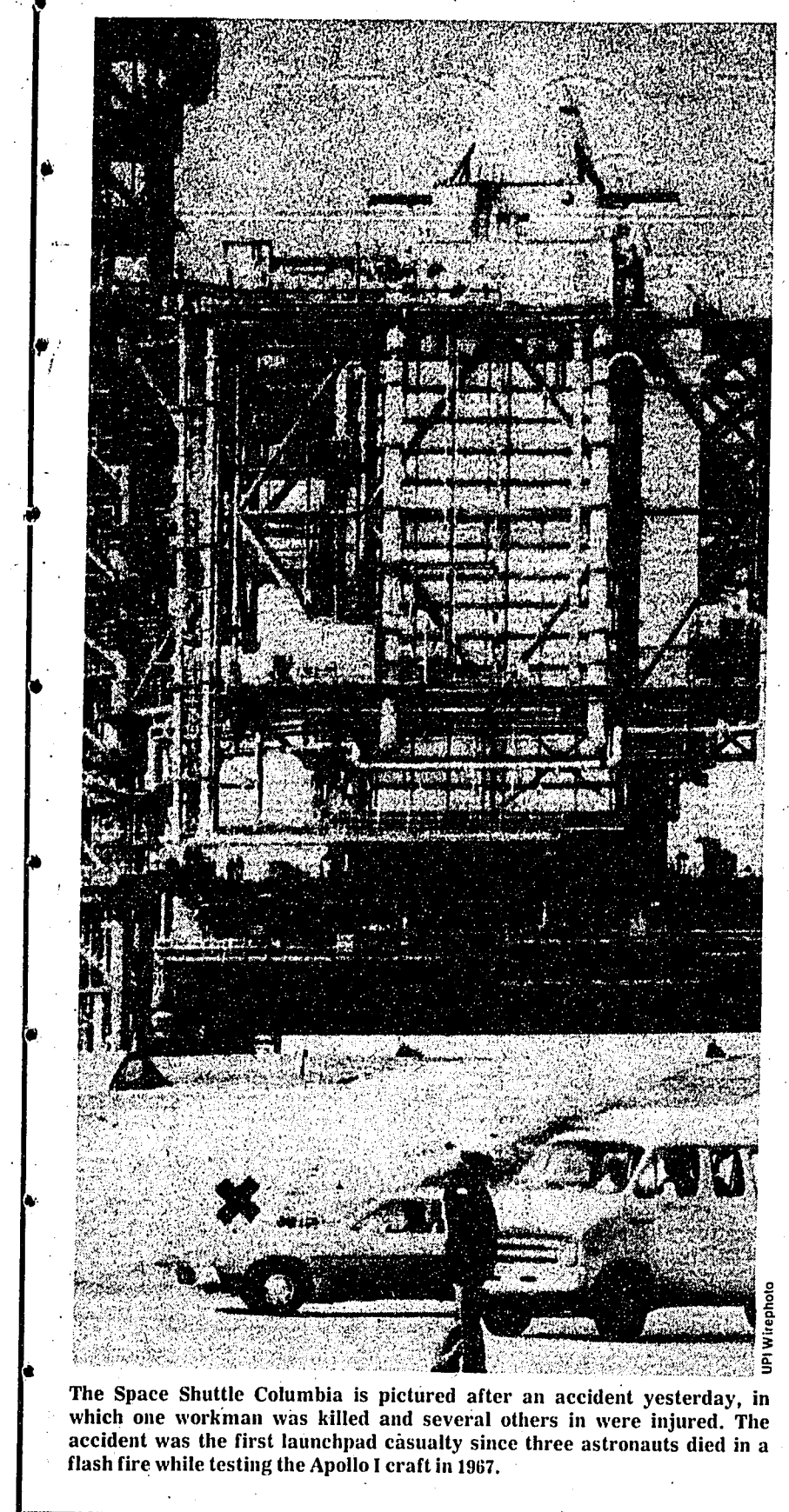
It is a question of the quantity of things to be gotten in life versus the quality of life.

Reagan's administration considers education to be much less than a national priority, which is what it ought to be. And if something is a national priority, it should continue to be governed by a Cabinet-level department with sufficient freedom and funding to enable it to perform its huge task.

Of course the Department of Education has problems, but it is not in our best interests to be enterprising and discover better means by which the department can carry out its



BACK TO BAGGIES



The Space Shuttle Columbia is pictured after an accident yesterday, in which one workman was killed and several others were injured. The accident was the first launchpad casualty since three astronauts died in a flash fire while testing the Apollo I craft in 1967.

Space shuttle casualty first in 14 years

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Yesterday's death of a space shuttle worker was the eighth launch pad fatality at the Kennedy Space Center, and the first since three astronauts perished in a flash fire during a pre-launch test of the Apollo 1 spacecraft in 1967.

It was the first such tragedy since Jan. 27, 1967, when astronauts Virgil I. Grisson, Edward H. White II and Roger B. Chaffee climbed into Apollo 1 for a pre-launch test.

A flash fire swept through the pure oxygen atmosphere, killing the three astronauts instantly.

Columbia commander John W. Young, who was in the shuttle cockpit yesterday morning, will follow astronaut Robert Crippen, had flown with Grisson in the first manned Gemini flight in 1965.

The Apollo I tragedy set back the U.S. space program by months. After a 10-week investigation, a board of review said it couldn't pinpoint the accident's cause, but listed the most likely source as defective electrical wiring.

Officials of NASA and North American Aviation Inc., the spacecraft's prime contractor, undertook a \$75-million program to redesign the spacecraft to make it safer.

A 21-month hiatus in manned space launches followed.

On June 14, 1966, a Martin Corp. employee working on a Titan I missile was killed and nine people were injured when a package of flares exploded on the launch pad.

Three technicians were killed April 11, 1964, when the third stage of a Delta rocket ignited, spewing flaming fuel throughout the interior of a checkout building. The accident was blamed on static electricity.

Two of the dead technicians were employees of Ball Brothers Research Corp., and the third was a NASA employee.

'Cherry Orchard' has some pits

By MICHAEL KULP
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Perhaps the most insistent and endless argument in the Theatre storms over the interpretation of Anton Chekhov's brilliant masterpiece "The Cherry Orchard." There are those who interpret the play as comedy, and those who interpret it as tragedy.

The University Resident Theatre Company's production arguably fuses those two very different interpretations into a well produced, yet somewhat incomplete version.

Director James W. Assad gamely attempts to capture both the elements of the comedy and tragedy of Chekhov's work, and in doing so presents an equally amusing and melancholy evening.

Unfortunately, in striving to grant equal justice to both views of the play, the director concedes much of its inherent power and feeling. This is not to say that the production fails, it does not; but, it does fail to fully capture all the play has to offer.

The play deals with the impending upheaval in Russian society at the turn of this century, and the effect this upheaval has on the play's characters. As Chekhov foresaw, the eventual revolution would force large-scale, and ultimately devastating changes. Thus, the play's tragedy.

Its comedy lies in the characters' total obliviousness to the change. Their total, uncompromising blindness to the truth, which Chekhov turns into uproarious humor.

The play opens at Madame Ranevskaya's estate, with the return of Ranevskaya from Paris, and the rest of her family



James Caldwell addresses Charles Boyd in the University Resident Theatre Company's production of Anton Chekhov's "The Cherry Orchard."

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