

the daily collegian **opinions**

editorial opinion **Help wanted** Instead of ridiculing USG, try changing it

The Undergraduate Student Government election is sneaking up on everyone.

Wednesday is the deadline to submit nominating petitions for USG presidential, vice presidential and senatorial candidates.

But as of last night, Rob Fanning, USG elections commissioner, had received notification from only three legitimate presidential candidates and their running mates. For 35 senatorial positions University-wide, he had handed out only about 20 application forms.

Fanning was hopeful that many possible applicants are only procrastinating, and that there will be a stampede of publicly-minded students declaring candidacies and stating platforms over the next two days.

Fanning has placed newspaper ads to recruit candidates, and he is concerned that some races — especially those for senators representing town students — will go by almost unnoticed.

All in all, it doesn't look like many of the races will be very competitive. And when elections aren't

competitive, unqualified or incompetent candidates get elected.

Are students so delighted with the way student government performs that they feel comfortable letting others make decisions and plan activities for them?

No, probably the contrary: students seem disillusioned with the way USG operates and, especially after the failure of the Pennsylvania State University Student Association proposal, want no part of USG.

They'll continue to complain and joke about their student government, and laugh at the people willing to invest their time in it, but are they volunteering to improve it?

Well, for those of the student body who are willing to let actions speak louder than words, who are willing to do more than perch like hens and criticize, who are willing to prove in a positive way that USG is as good as its members:

Now's the time.

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

The RIDICULOUS rumor that I sleep with a HANDGUN in my bed for protection is FALSE!!!



reader opinion

Irish rights

I write this letter in response to a letter written by Suzanne Downs concerning Ireland. She seems to seek the truth about Irish-English history, so let us consider the undignified evidence.

There are literally millions of people of Irish descent in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and even England. Why are these people there and not in Ireland?

The only answer is that their parents, grandparents and earlier ancestors fled a rebellion, poverty, and famine-ridden Ireland called Ireland which was ruled by its mighty neighbor England. The cause of most of the hardship and strife lay in the fact that the Irish were denied the basic inalienable right to govern themselves.

Unfortunately, strife still exists in the part of Ireland controlled by England through her only partially successful settlers, the Orangemen. Now before anyone gets too upset over the so-called "Irish Republican Army outrages," consider the situation that exists.

Well documented cases of voting-district gerrymandering abound in the northeast of Ireland, robbing the nationalist population (Catholics) of any say in their government. What person of sound mind is going to deny another person disenfranchised in this manner the right to attempt to change a government by force of arms? Are not the so-called Afghanistans rebels justified in fighting for their rights? Or perhaps the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto should have made no gesture of defiance?

The havoc that bombs and bullets wreak on people is not pretty, to be sure, but the human tragedy that England fosters through its Orange-controlled government in the northeast of

Ireland is equal in magnitude.

Before peace can come in Ireland, the Orangemen and English must each come to a stark realization. The Orangemen must realize that Ireland is Ireland; it is not England. If they wish to retain their so-called English heritage, there is no place for them there. Correspondents will see that the English will sooner or later have to realize that the Irish will never forget how could they, when they have been scooped up and dashed to the four winds like so many ashes?

Terence J. Quinn, 12th-forest products
March 20

Hope

We are living in a time of moral decay and intellectual solipsism. We, as a nation, are concerned with economic blight and military progress. We, as individuals, are concerned with economic blight and self-gratification. Yet, the real problem that faces us is not racial, religious, economic or political, although aspects of the problem manifest itself in these areas.

Rather, our seething concern for pragmatism has led to pessimism and expedience. It is the adoption of the utilitarian ethic as our societal watchword that has led to our nation's downfall and eventual doom.

History illustrates the folly of limited practical and immediate thinking. The Shah of Iran committed atrocities and financial rape against an entire nation for personal gain. Using expedience to rally a nation, Hitler perpetuated a genocidal outrage.

The confederate states' underlying motive was more than the safety of students should be first and foremost in the minds of University administrators when dormitories are to be built or modified. Your letter, however, contains some misconceptions which you should understand before you decide when and where to direct your future criticism.

As a resident assistant in East Halls — your son's R.A., as a matter of fact; I can testify to the fact that a good deal of the problems you mentioned do not exist or stem from the students themselves, not the University or the residence hall staff.

You complain that there should be working elevators on weekends and that they are arbitrarily shut off by the University. R.A.s and coordinators have the keys to the elevators, and the only time we shut them off is when they have been too badly damaged by students to function, and during fire drills as would automatically happen during a real fire. This brings me to my next point, fire drills.

Fire drills are conducted every single month in every single building. This is state law and is adhered to. The problem arises when students who come downstairs and mumble, grumble and swear at the R.A.s conducting the drills for making them leave the building. Worse yet are those who simply lock their doors and stay in their rooms.

Although we check the buildings, there is no way to force all the residents to evacuate, regardless of how much training or authority we have. As for fire extinguishers, four extinguishers of two different types to deal with any possible type of fire are maintained on every floor of each building. There are fire alarms in two locations on each floor as well.

Lastly, you complain that "There are no rules whatsoever for students who don't wish them." This is far from the truth. The University's set of rules and regulations are enforced to the highest degree possible without infringing upon the rights of students to their privacy. There is an R.A. on duty in each building every night from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m., so at no time are the buildings left unattended at night.

This is not to say that improvement is impossible. This is far from the case: Smoke alarms and automatic sprinklers are good ideas and should be implemented as soon as it is feasible. But next time, before you decide to criticize, first get your facts straight and make suggestions for improvement. Only then can something be done to improve the safety and security of the students.

Jeffrey Weiss, 6th-biology
Resident Assistant, East Halls
March 20

False alarm

This is an open letter to Sonja Sampsel, whose letter, "Burned out," appeared in the March 20 issue of The Daily Collegian. I could not agree more that the safety of students should be first and foremost in the minds of University administrators when dormitories are to be built or modified. Your letter, however, contains some misconceptions which you should understand before you decide when and where to direct your future criticism.

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Of nitrogen, NASA, nukes and number-throwing

A culture's deepest feelings are often expressed in its everyday humor. One of our most commonly shared responses to our technological society is Murphy's Law — "if anything can go wrong, it will."

Everybody appreciates the profound grasp of our world which Murphy had; people have had to shrug their shoulders over their inability to control the gremlins that infest our machines.

Yeah, Murphy's Law is great — it discharges frustration and provides a sense of relief with everyday absurdities. It's funny in a useful, resigned manner which captures perfectly our ambivalent relation with technology.

It is funny, that is, until it kills someone.

Thousands of people are maimed and killed every year in those gruesome examples of Murphy's Law which are industrial and mining accidents. These are routinely ignored, unless they are sensational enough to attract media attention.

Because many of these accidents result from greedy neglect of worker safety, they cannot be counted as being classic Murphy's Law cases, whereas a classic Murphy's Law implies an instance where even our best efforts are still not enough to avoid foul-ups.

A classic, and macabre, example of Murphy's Law occurred last week when an erroneous all-clear signal was given and a NASA technician was killed after entering the nitrogen-filled engine compartment of the space shuttle

Columbia. "It was a goof-up," an official told the Associated Press.

This is NASA we are talking about, the "best and the brightest." NASA put the people on the moon, for God's sake — surely the most spectacular success of the problem-solving technological mind-set.

Yet all NASA's money and expertise could not prevent this latest death, as it could not prevent the deaths of Roger B. Chaffee, Virgil I. Grisson and Edward H. White II in 1967. Murphy's Law is right. The world just cannot be made "fail-safe."

The most glaring Murphyism of recent times, of course, was Three Mile Island. March 28 is the second anniversary of the mechanical breakdowns and human incompetence that brought Reactor Unit No. 2 so close to unprecedented slaughter.

Eco-Action will not let this anniversary pass unnoticed. Its "Nuclear Awareness Week" was developed to bring the many facets of nuclear technology before the public. There will be expert speakers at 7:15 every night in the HUB main lounge, and continuous films throughout the day in the HUB.

These presentations will represent a perspective different from the standard utility nuclear engineering-Nuclear Regulatory Commission cabal. The supposed "objectivity" of the industry's obscurantist number-throwing is of course no more "objective" for their analyses of nuclear power than is Exxon and the Energy Department's treatment of oil reserves.

The "objectivity" of these people amounts to nothing more than unexamined presuppositions, one of the most basic of which is their faith in the eventual repeal of Murphy's Law. The fact that more complex systems to avoid breakdowns lead merely to more complex breakdowns has not made an impression on them.

And so they go blithely on, ignoring the ultimate irreducibility of chance, trying ever harder in their pathetically unaware hubris to try to completely rationalize a world that must remain in some small part irrational.

Chauncey Kepford of the Environmental Coalition on Nuclear Power has examined his presuppositions, and the awesome threat of the end-products of nuclear power, those eerily-glowing pools of water where spent fuel is stored, is well-known, if often shrugged off. But the radioactivity produced by the mining and milling processes is not so well-known. Kepford's talk on these factors should be most illuminating.

Eco-Action's hard work and initiative have put together a program that allows you to have a chance to be educated, not merely trained, you should attend. If you wish to become aware of the kind of world you live in, and maybe ask some questions about it, instead of just accepting the official line, you should attend. If you wish to be worthy of the name "student," and not be just an end-product of an assembly line, then you should attend.

John Probst is a 14th-term philosophy major and columnist for The Daily Collegian.



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CATA wants less labor conflict

Continued from Page 1.

There will be issues we just can't agree on. But we should be able to work out about 80 percent of the things that come up — just by talking them out," he said.

Concerning CATA operations, Oversier's immediate plans are to resolve Bellefonte service cutbacks and to help determine CATA's budget that begins anew July 1. This summer, Oversier said he wants to analyze ridership data to perhaps streamline the system, i.e., cutback excessive service areas.

The Bellefonte service, the "X" route initiated in May 1980, faces service reduction unless local funding can be found. County commitments fall nearly \$5,000 short of the money necessary to maintain 17 daily round trips between State College and Bellefonte. Unless Spring or Benner townships or Bellefonte borough agrees to fund some, or all, of the deficit, the number of runs on the route could be reduced to 10 trips daily.

Oversier said two of the three municipalities have agreed to at least discuss the issue. He said a decision must be made soon because of budget deadlines. Ridership on the Bellefonte route has increased by 88 percent since August, he said.

"It's a shame to talk about cutting back service on a successful route," Oversier said.

Some routes face reductions because of a decrease in demand, he said, but Oversier doesn't think any radical service reductions are in store.

However, CATA may begin to be pressured to repay a \$100,000 loan to State College Municipality from the government. CATA still operates within the confines of its budget — short-term deficits arise because of grant-money delays.

The problem was temporarily resolved when the participating municipalities in CATA — State College borough and College, Ferguson, Patton and Harris townships — agreed to co-sign a \$80,000 loan to CATA.

State College borough had acted as CATA's "banker" but recently ended that role because the authority's short-term deficits grew larger and larger as the system expanded.

The upcoming 1981-82 budget will focus on running the system as efficiently as possible, rather than on expanding routes, Spychalski said.

"Our objective is to maintain essentially what we have and to improve it," he said. "Centre Line's level of service will remain essentially the same or possibly even reduced."

Reducing CATA's borrowing requirements is a top priority, Spychalski said.

Mike Trujillo, president of the York campus Student Government Association, asked Scannell why the semester calendar will depend on implementation in 1982 and then reversed the decision to 1983 (the original plan would only have affected current students in five-year programs; the 1983 plan will also affect freshmen).

"I really don't know," Scannell said. "All reports that reached the president were pretty much done and no one heard much about it until the president made his announcement — I'm sure those questions will be addressed."

Trujillo said if students at his campus had known the semester schedule would affect them, opinions and input received from those students could have been different.

"The change wasn't affecting anyone so no one really cared," Trujillo said. "I'm concerned that the freshmen weren't aware of it and that that information could have made a difference in their opinion. The University said one thing and gave us another."

Trujillo said if students at Union Board campus, said, "I wonder how much the branch campuses were taken into consideration when the

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"It's inevitable that there will be issues we just can't agree on. But we should be able to work out about 80 percent of the things that come up just by talking them out."

— Paul Oversier, CATA manager

Conversion council to use student input

By DINA DEFFABO
Daily Collegian Staff Writer

Revision of courses to be used under the semester calendar will depend on implementation in 1982 and then reversed the decision to 1983 (the original plan would only have affected current students in five-year programs; the 1983 plan will also affect freshmen).

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CATA may start Sunday service, Oversier says

Continued from Page 1.

I don't think there will be any radical reductions in service, but there may be a few changes in routes.

The other side of the coin is expansion. Right now, we're looking at a hold-the-line 1981-82 budget. There are no definite plans for expansion, although we are looking at the possibility of running one bus on Sunday on the evening shuttle route, which, from 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m., runs from campus up to Aaron Drive over to Park Forest and to Heritage Oaks.

It also runs from campus to Hille Plaza. It's a tremendously successful route.

I think a route similar to that on Sunday could do very well, because, let's face it, there is no service on Sunday.

What we're talking about is essentially a base level of service. But it would still give people a way of getting around on Sunday. You don't want to shut them out altogether.

But, overall, the emphasis will be on streamlining the service. Maybe some schedule revisions.

COLLEGHAN: What do you plan to do with the 12 new buses on order for next year?

OVERSIER: We have the oldest fleet on average in the state.

Our buses, on the average, are 14.7

years old. The state-wide average is 7 years old. We are running a lot of old buses, and it is reflected in our maintenance requirements.

But one of the things I've noticed since coming here is that CATA has not gotten much credit for the fact that we cover half the operating costs out of the fare box.

I suspect it is one of the highest ratios in the country — that of covering half the operating costs out of the fare box.

COLLEGHAN: Does CATA want to operate Centre Cab again? (State College Municipal Council recently decided to take over Centre Cab operations from CATA to help ease some, or all, of a \$27,000 deficit the year-old cab company had incurred.)

OVERSIER: The only thing that is certain is that the borough is going to be running it for a year. If they're interested in us running it again, we'll look into it.

COLLEGHAN: Was Centre Cab mismanaged by CATA?

OVERSIER: We weren't able to devote as much attention to it as we would have liked to.

Basically, it's a problem of staffing. You got a bus system that is carrying 6,000 people a day, and a cab system that is making 150 trips a day.

rely on summer jobs," he said. "Now, we get out two or three weeks later than everyone else and all the jobs are taken."

"For me, in arts and architecture, the new calendar will probably be more of a benefit," said Rick Legg, Dubois campus representative. "Shorter classes could provide more time to do plays and concerts."

Mont Alto campus representative Bob Long agreed that the semester system will be an advantage.

"I don't like having three finals," he said. "The semester's slower pace and longer breaks will also be nice."

In other business, COBSCG agreed to include University Park liaisons in their constitution.

COBSCG coordinator Vince Verbeke said the liaisons provide a link between University Park and the 19 branch campuses.

"The liaisons are former branch campus students now attending the University Park campus who correspond with their specific branch campus, provide information and take steps to insure that their campus is informed of University-wide matters," Verbeke said.

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