

editorial opinion

Who cares?

Students should — about fighting for financial aid in Washington

Undergraduate Student Government Bill Cluck and USG federal liaison Kim Hammond took a trip to Washington, D.C., last week.

Does anybody care? They went as representatives of Penn State students — and, in a way, of all students — to lobby against proposed cuts to federal financial aid.

Does that make any difference to you? While prowling the corridors and inner sanctums of government, they heard some interesting rumors. Rumors such as:

- Pell Grants (formerly known as Basic Educational Opportunity Grants) could be cut from more than \$2 billion to \$1 billion.
- Graduate students may be prevented from receiving Guaranteed Student Loans, a move that would cut the GSL budget by 30 percent.
- The U.S. Department of Education might be eliminated and its 1983 budget could be slashed by 50 percent.
- Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants, National Direct Student Loans and work study programs could be phased out and replaced with a single block grant, a move that would make one-step funding much easier.

Besides that, the Washington Post reported recently that the \$500 million block grant Congress approved this year for several federal education programs would

be cut by 40 percent in January. Does that interest you? Or is the cross-word puzzle more enticing? Cluck and Hammond didn't think so; the 150 people who made phone calls to their senators and congressmen last week, courtesy of USG, to protest financial aid cuts didn't think so; even The New York Times didn't think so, noting in a story last week that, "In some areas, Mr. Reagan's budget cuts are starting to hurt and to provoke resentment. Students at Pennsylvania State University are complaining to Mr. Clinger (U.S. Rep. William F. Clinger Jr., R-central Pa.) about reduced loans . . ."

For Cluck and Hammond, for the 150 concerned phone-callers, and for USG — which promoted and sponsored the phone calls and trip to Washington — a big fat "thank you" is in order. Perhaps the biggest and most important form of "thank you," however, would be some support — active support — from the thousands of Penn State students who depend on some form of financial aid to go to school. USG's crew has helped to unlock the door; now the burden is on everyone else to open it up and march through.

How? To have a truly legitimate voice, students must register to vote, then follow through by going to the polls in May and November. A vote equals power; power equals persuasion.

- Use the Christmas/Hanukkah vacation to write letters to your senators and representatives, or make a few pre-vacation phone calls, or maybe even take a trip to Washington yourself.
- Tell your parents, and your parents' friends, to do the same thing. More voices, more votes, more power. More persuasion.
- University staff, faculty and administrators: That goes for you, too.
- Do your best to discourage abuses of the financial aid system. Does your roommate, whose father makes \$100,000 a year, take out a GSI to spend on a vacation cruise to the Bahamas? Those are the kinds of stories that senators and representatives hear, and the stories that inspire them all the more to heave the axe on the aid budget.
- Don't ignore the tremendous power possible if all student, and non-student, groups pulled their constituencies together to attack this common problem. Forget the arguments that the Penn State International Dancers, for instance, or a sorority or the chess club isn't intended to deal with "political" issues. Financial aid is a human issue. A student issue.

And that's pretty good reason to care.

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



For all his hard-boiled cynicism, I don't think that Austin knows what he is talking about. Yes, Beatty's character John Reed is similar to his Leo Farnsworth character, but not because Beatty had not the imagination to think up a new character. Beatty's Reed is a greater, fuller development of the ideas Beatty had when he created Farnsworth. These characters neither apologize for what they are, nor attempt to charm movie audiences with superficial, humorous eccentricities. Reed is a much fuller development of these ideas than Farnsworth, because Reed is true. With his character, Reed, Beatty has abandoned the conventional Hollywood world of sentimental plots and characters like "Heaven Can Wait" and Leo Farnsworth. Beatty's portrayal of John Reed, historical figure, is part documentary, part biography, and even part autobiography, as both the character John Reed and the actor Warren Beatty sincerely grapple with problems that deeply concern them both, as well as the audience: whether to be an artist or a rebel, how to have both love and freedom, how to live in the community and yet still maintain one's individuality. It is an extraordinary performance.

=reader opinion

Unsettling review

In his review of Warren Beatty's film, "Reds," Stuart Austin seems oddly determined to find flaws in a great movie. Although Austin finds both Beatty's screenplay and direction "excellent," he implies that Beatty's character John Reed is simply a warmed-over version of the Leo Farnsworth character in Beatty's "Heaven Can Wait." And Austin calls both characters, and Beatty himself, "boyish," "cute," wanting "to make the world safe for consumers, . . . workers, . . . (and) cute guys with lots of fun ideas about how to make the world a better place."

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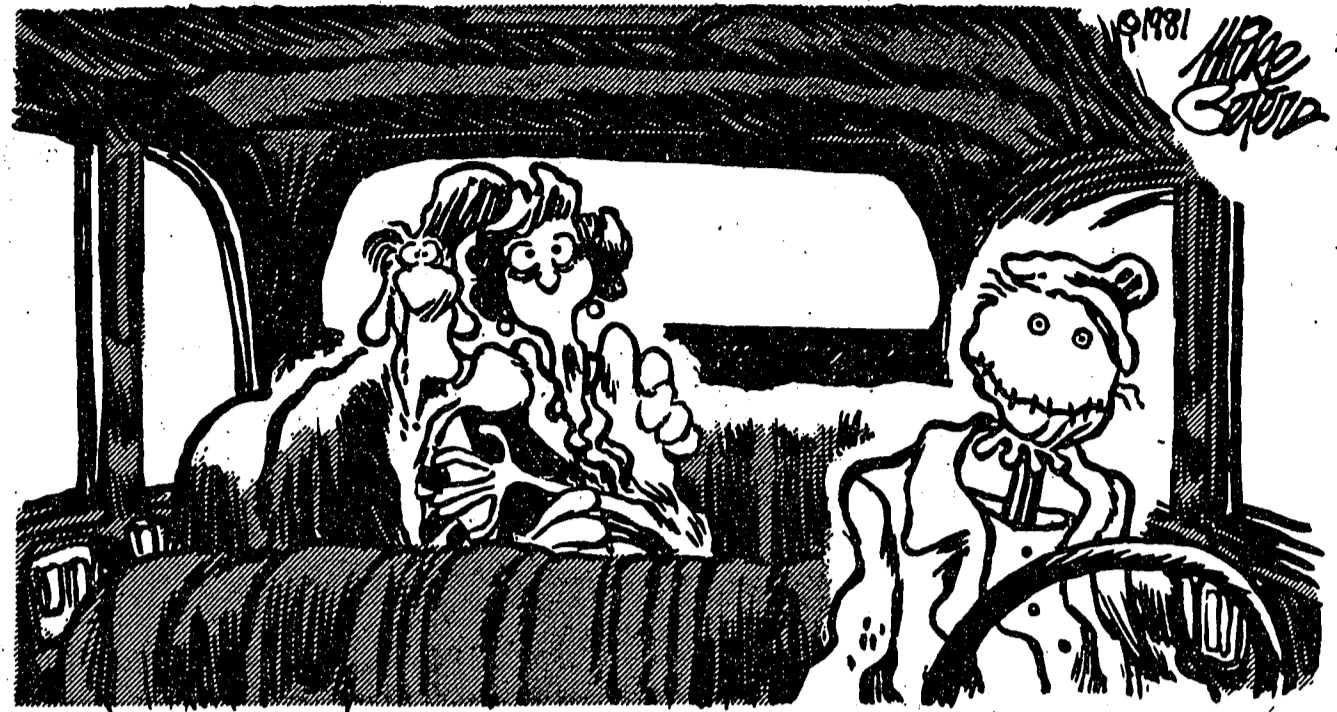
I also dislike Austin's sneers about Beatty's idealism: his wanting to "make the world safe for consumers, . . . workers, . . . (and) cute guys with lots of fun ideas about how to make the world a better place." Is Austin saying there is something wrong in wanting workers to be able to collectively bargain with their employers? With wanting the majority of Americans — "consumers" and workers — to participate in the decisions about economic production that greatly affect their

lives? What is wrong with trying to make the world a better place? Austin cannot fully appreciate "Reds," I think, because of his artificial greatness unsettles him. Beatty's film is "engaging and very entertaining," writes Austin. . . . "But how much can one person do?" Obviously not much, at least not enough to suit Stuart Austin, Daily Collegian Staff Writer. Not if he can help it.

Thomas Smith, 13th-English Literature
Dec. 16

Let the people decide

My, my, Jean Guertler (reader opinion, Dec. 14) would have it both ways, wouldn't she? When the abortionists went after the demand, why did they not "let the people decide?" Instead, they went by way of the courts, thereby circumventing even the representatives elected by the people. Now that the courts have ruled that the taxpayers aren't required to pay for those abortions, and the elected representatives of the people are acting in the people's behalf to further curtail abortions, suddenly the abortionists change their minds and decide in a last ditch stand to chance throwing the matter to public opinion. They evidently believe their own fairy tales of those totally misleading "polls" regarding abortion. Everyone knows polls can be manipulated to produce desired "results" just by cleverly wording the questions. And how is this life-or-death issue to be put into the tiny space allowed on voting machines? (Yes, Virginia, there are such things as voting machines, outside of Centre County, that is.) And how do we go about "educating" the public on the magnitude of such a life-or-death vote? Do we give them the full facts? The color photographs? The statistics proving thousands of unborn far past the first trimester are being aborted? Shall we tell them the details of the excruciating deaths the unborn suffer through the various methods of abortion? Well, don't look to the abortionists to trust the people with the full facts! They are the first to scream, "Don't bring in those bloody pictures!" Why do they feel "the people" can't deal rationally with the full facts? And what are the abortionists doing for "poor women" besides asking them to kill their



NONSENSE, NANCY. THE AIR CONTROLLERS DON'T RESENT TAKING OTHER GOVERNMENT JOBS. DO YOU, CHARLES? YOU DON'T RESENT TAKING THIS OTHER GOVERNMENT JOB. DO YOU? CHARLES? SLOW DOWN, CHARLES...

unborn? Let's start asking the abortionists why they think "poor women" can't be trusted to have children. Let's demand that the abortionists fully reveal to "the people" exactly what abortion does to the unborn. Let's give the people the same facts the legislators voting against abortion have — only then can they vote a fully informed vote.
Loretta J. Willis, 9th-philosophy
Dec. 14

=reader opinion

Heartbreak Hotel

Welcome to Hotel CBL, Happy Valley's only animal hotel, with single, double, and multiple cage-rooms available for rats, mice, and hamsters. The manager of Hotel CBL (Central Biological Laboratory) is Dr. Frederick C. Ferguson, who assures us that no effort or expense is spared to make its guests as comfortable as possible prior to the time they are shipped off to the vivisectors for the greater glory of science and salvation of mankind. If the guests at Hotel CBL are indeed treated as well as is suggested in the Collegian article "Animals live happily in University laboratory," the manager of Hotel CBL is to be congratulated. He is clearly not in the league of many of his colleagues such as Dr. Edward Taub of the Institute for Behavioral Research in Silver Spring, Maryland, recently convicted on six counts of animal cruelty, who kept the amputated paw of one of his research monkeys on his desk as a paperweight. I am not among those individuals, nor is Trans-Species Unlimited, among these organizations, which delight in the discovery of gross abuse of animals because it provides an opportunity for media exposure. I am glad that animals at CBL are at least spared pain and suffering prior to experimentation. The title of the article, however, is absurd, as is Mr. Ferguson's comparison of his facility as a hotel. This brand of compartmentalizing is unconscionable; it utilizes the limited humane treatment of animals as a cover for the perpetration of far worse cruelties. Were the author of this article a serious journalist in the 19th century, his headline might well have read: "Negroes live happily on Mississippi plantations." The truth is, there is no Hotel CBL; it doesn't exist, any more than Old MacDonald's farm. The elaborate facilities to which the "conscientious" factory farmer and the "humane" experimenter like to point to justify their shameless exploitation of animals are, in fact, only a

preparation for the knife. Humane treatment of animals prior to slaughtering or torturing them is not adequate compensation. This is something we are apt to forget in reading through the account of the technical sophistication of CBL's facilities. When the topic of the validity of experimentation is finally brought up in the last paragraph of the article, it is quickly dismissed with the experimenter's Big Lie No. 2: "experimentation on animals benefits humans, i.e., we'd all be dying of dread diseases if we didn't have it. In the case of a minute proportion of animal experiments this is possibly true, although there is a large number of reputable former experimenters, such as Donald Barnes and Richard Ryder, who staunchly deny it. What is unquestionably true, however, is that the overwhelming majority of experiments on animals either have no relevance whatsoever to the alleviation of human suffering, reproduce results already conclusively established, or are simply inapplicable to human beings. Of course, as the author of this article points out, the animals who suffer in such experiments are not complaining. Indeed, like the exploited powerlessness everywhere, they are mute.

Cut the garbage

In response to the survey on dorm contracts that was passed around over the weekend, I would like to submit my own plan. Keeping with the survey, I will call my plan, Plan D Option. Plan D Option would be stated as follows: if you are seeking reassignment (same room and building) then submit your contract request and advanced payment by mail by January 11. The University will then honor this request and temporarily assign you to the room you want. If you are seeking a new room, you must receive a form completed by the student confirming his original request. If the form of confirmation is submitted by the deadline, the student's housing for next year is reserved. If the confirmation is not received by the deadline, the student forfeits his temporary reserve and then must follow one of the other plans (A, B or C as voted upon). As previously stated, the confirmation request must be received two weeks prior to the March 14 date used in the other plans. This two week allowance enables housing to determine the number and location of available dorms, and also allows time to send letters to students confirming their requests, which would eliminate surprises for the students. There will always be spaces in each dorm area due to graduating seniors, transfers, people moving off campus, etc. so that no dorm area will ever be completely filled by Plan D Option students. Students who live on campus and want to stay in the same room would have the highest priority, those that want to change rooms next and so on (compare this to upperclassmen getting the best seats in the stadium for football games). Plan D Option would take care of only those students who want to change rooms next and so on. The other students would be taken care of by the plan implemented by the University, which should be the plan voted for by the majority of the students. To make Plan D Option voted for by the majority of the students, I would like to see the following changes:

for any length of time is crazy, but to make them stand in line days in advance because somebody else wants to change a room is even crazier especially when the Plan D Option students usually get reassigned to their old rooms. Exempting these students would shorten the line (or computer list) which would in turn speed up the processing time of the remaining students. Plan D Option has been in the planning stages for just a short time and I will be the first to admit that a lot more work needs to be done on the idea — but at least the idea has been expressed. As far as I can see, this plan would have the same results as A, B or C but with fewer inconveniences for all involved. Why can't a Plan D Option be drawn up by the committee that developed the other plans and offer it to the student body? Maybe it was too easy to think of or too convenient for the students. Gary F. Stead, 6th-electrical engineering
Dec. 15

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Paula Froke
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A plastic spastic version of Christmas replete with hula girls

Late last December I felt particularly moved by the Christmas spirit and took a detour on my walk home. The streets became increasingly unfamiliar with each turn and I soon came upon a street I never knew existed. A group of people crowded before a quaint, wood-frame cottage and buzzed among themselves in what seemed like a tone of great expectation. From the rear of the crowd I couldn't see what all the excitement was about, so I asked one short, plump, middle-aged lady. "Oh, it's Mr. Tannenbaum at it again. Every year he sets up the most wonderful Christmas display," she said. "Everything is so gay and bright and the lights are so brilliant you can barely see. He doesn't spare a thing." "Another plastic spastic," I muttered. "What was that, sonny?" "Fantastic, just fantastic."

I elbowed my way to the front of the crowd. Before me was a massive collection of every kind of Christmas decoration imaginable. Reindeer and shepherds and Santa Clauses of every shape, size and color. A thin, nervous man in a Woolrich coat scurried about the front lawn screwing in little light bulbs and pulling on plugs to make sure the connections were good. I assumed this man was the famous Tannenbaum, glorified by song, story and stroboscopic snowflake, and I approached him to better understand his odd obsession.

"Excuse me sir, I'm a newcomer to your winter wonderland and was curious as to the origin and purpose of this magnificent display."

Obviously taken in by my eloquent and quite sickening introduction, Tannenbaum was very happy to let me follow him around as he prepared for the flip of the switch which had become a neighborhood tradition. His tool belt jingled and jangled with its burden of wrenches, screwdrivers and pockets of nails and screws, making the man seem like a misplaced elf from Santa's workshop.

"Heck no. This is a tribute to Christmas in Utah and these folks represent the three best sopranos, altos, tenors and basses of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. When I push the button, they start singing the 'Hallelujah Chorus' and Brigham Young comes out from behind the house and reads 'The Night Before Christmas.'"

"What do you have in mind to commemorate Hawaii?" I asked in a tone of cynicism.

"Hula girls with jingle-bell leis singing

"Tiny Bubbles" to the tune of 'Silver Bells.'"

This was my first indication that I was dealing with a sick man.

Tannenbaum continued: "Over here is my modern nativity scene with real actors. It takes place at the front desk of a Holiday Inn. Mary and Joseph drive up in a 1987 Chevrolet Nova with mags, racing stripes and dual exhaust. The hotel is all booked up with Christmas vacationers, so Mary and Joseph have to go over to a vacant garage and have the kid. Instead of shepherds visiting we're going to have a couple of wins." "Well, who the heck is that being replaced by?" I asked, almost dreading the answer.

"The kid down the block with a portable Panasonic tape deck playing AC/DC's version of 'Do You See What I See.'"

"Hey, Mary really looks pregnant. Is that a pillow or a motorcycle helmet underneath her 'Smoke Columbian' T-shirt?"

"Hell, no. She's really pregnant and due soon. With any luck she'll give birth tonight in my garage."

"What realism! We moved on to the rear of the house where an old giant greeted my eyes. Deer with antlers tied to their heads and bells around their necks were being driven up a ramp to the roof of the house. Needless to say, this was being done with little agreement on the part of the deer."

"Santa's reindeer," Tannenbaum explained.

"Didn't anybody like the Humane Society or Trans-Species Unlimited protest

about this?"

"Yeah, but I told them to hit the road. Some people don't have any Christmas spirit."

Even the front yard statuette of the black jockey holding a lantern was dressed in red and white and his lantern was wrapped like a gift. "I'm an equal opportunity decorator," Tannenbaum explained.

The time had come to flip the switch and Tannenbaum climbed into a booth marked "Christmas Central." He raised his hands as if he were Eugene Ormandy about ready to conduct the Philadelphia Symphony and the crowd, which now spilled out onto the street, became suddenly quiet.

Tannenbaum let his left hand fall in a dramatic arch, then suddenly jerked it upward, flipping the steel lever and bringing his display to life. Singers sang, hula girls danced, reindeer pranced and every light sprang to brilliance. It was everything I had expected and more.

But then a spark flew, a light bulb blew out and the electric cards looked like fuses leading to the receptacles in the house. Before you could say "Up on the rooftop, click, click, click" the wooden cottage was a pile of ashes. Tannenbaum stood in his booth, his face a mirror of complete astonishment.

I felt tug on my coat and looked down to see the lady whom I had first encountered.

"See," she said. "I told you Mr. Tannenbaum goes all out for Christmas."

Judd Blouch is an 11th-term Journalism major and assistant arts editor of The Daily Collegian.

Mr. Tannenbaum's home

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