

opinions

10
The Daily Collegian
Friday, Dec. 17

editorial opinion

The best Christmas gift of all

For some folks, Christmas in State College is symbolized by the towering 25-foot tree that graces the Train Station Restaurant. With its softly glowing lights, numerous ornaments and fragrant bows, the tree helps provide a pleasant, warm atmosphere for the restaurant's patrons.

But this picturesque scene could turn into a disaster if a spark from a careless smoker's cigarette set the tree on fire. Creating a chimney effect, the fire could roar upward, drawing all the air out of the room and baking the people in it.

Clearly, situations like that should be prevented. But just how they should be prevented has been the question between downtown businessmen and the Centre Region Code Enforcement Office.

James D. Quigley, Centre Region code administrator, recently issued warnings to State College businesses that did not comply with Centre Region fire codes. After a 10-day waiting period, violators who have not yet complied with regulations would be fined between \$100 to \$300 a day.

And what an uproar ensued. Businessmen stormed the State College Municipal Council's chambers, asking the council to issue an ordinance allowing them to keep their Christmas trees.

The businessmen's indignation is understandable. After all, they had put the time, money and effort into decorating their establishments for the holiday season. Although the code enforcement office hadn't issued warnings for the past five years, it

suddenly decided to do so, without informing businessmen of the change in policy. The businessmen were not prepared to deal with the sudden enforcement; Quigley's office should have given them a prior written notice as to what guidelines they would be expected to follow.

But, as most members of the council saw, the answer was not to exempt the Christmas trees from the fire code. With more combustible, brittle decoration around than at any other time of year, the code should be stringently enforced to protect citizens' welfare.

However, enforcing the code doesn't necessarily mean that all the Christmas trees have to be taken down. Instead, it means that the trees must not be fire hazards.

For the Train Station, that means spraying a fire retardant on the tree. For other businesses, that means making sure the trees do not block exits, entrances or aisles and that they are not decorated with flammable items. Other factors, including how much total floor space the tree covers and whether it protrudes from one floor to another, also need to be considered.

Poor James Quigley. He didn't mean to be the grinch who stole State College's Christmas. He was merely doing his job. And in doing so, he found lots of lumps of coal in area businesses' stockings. If the ensuing hue and outcry enhanced patrons' safety, Quigley should be thanked for giving one of the nicest Christmas gifts of all.

Partial payments

Some students have a hard time coming up with the cash to cover one term. And when the University switches to a semester calendar next year, the amount students pay at one time will nearly double.

Although some students may be able to make the payments, others might have problems meeting the estimated \$1,200 for Fall Semester 1983.

Because of the short summer, many students might not have their grants, loans and/or scholarships ready by August. Also, an eight-week summer severely limits the amount of money that can be earned.

With a short summer and a new calendar possibly leaving some families unprepared, the University needs some kind of deferred payment process for at least the first year of semesters.

But deferred payments are not without problems. They might cause some financial problems for the University. Along with an increased uncollectible rate, the University could face other expenses with a deferral plan.

George Lovette, associate senior vice president for finance and operations, said a reduced cash flow would force the University to borrow money and thus pay interest.

Students who do not use the plan might have to pay for the increased administrative costs, he said, but this could be avoided if students pay a fee for the privilege.

The University could offset the costs of processing deferred payments with a partial payment, simple interest on the balance and a late fee.

Undergraduate Student Government Vice President Lee Facetti mentioned an example of a system that works at last week's Student Advisory Board meeting. He outlined the University of Pittsburgh's system where students may pay one-third of the semester's tuition provided they pay the balance with 1 percent interest and a \$20 fee within two months.

The University should be able to adopt a similar plan without any major problems.

University President John W. Oswald said at the SAB meeting that he hopes the University will be able to offer a deferred payment plan by March or April.

Oswald's staff should heed what Facetti said at the SAB meeting. He aptly reminded Oswald that some students might not be able to afford the tuition payments without a deferral plan, and this might prevent them from coming to the University. Semesters aren't worth that.



reader opinion

O Christmas tree

To the merchants of downtown State College and anyone else involved with the recent Christmas tree dilemma, an idea — one that will almost entirely eliminate fire hazards, will allow store owners to put their trees up early if they wish, will later help to beautify the State College area and will keep with the tradition of giving at Christmas.

The idea is a simple one. Cut trees tend to dry out quickly, thus losing their beauty and creating a fire hazard. Therefore, instead of purchasing a cut tree, the store owners should purchase a live tree.

In this way, the fear of creating a fire hazard is greatly reduced. Also a merchant may set the tree up as early as he wishes and enjoy the same great beauty he purchased well after Christmas 1982 as a memory.

After the holidays there arises the question of what to do with the tree. Here, the age-old tradition of giving comes into play. After the holidays, each merchant will donate the tree to some place where its beauty will be admired and appreciated long after its man-made ornamentation has been removed (i.e., parks, schools, hospitals, county homes for the aged).

Surely this is much better for a tree which symbolizes life and beauty than the idea of throwing its dying remains into the scrap heap.

The newspaper could carry an article stating where each tree was donated and by whom. A merchant, if he

wishes, may have a plaque, carrying the name of his establishment, placed with the tree.

Publicity is a must in this world of free enterprise, but think how much cheerier it will be and how much more impact it will have when it has been obtained by doing something good for State College.

I hope you will give my proposal some consideration.

Bradley E. Lehn, 5th-Russian
Dec. 15

The MX debate

Where do you fit in the MX missile debate? Do you think we should spend more on a weapon we don't need, or do you think we need to catch up to the Soviet Union militarily? Or should we work at eliminating war altogether?

Let us hear your opinions on one of the most crucial issues of our decade. On Tuesday, Dec. 21, The Daily Collegian will devote its Op-ed page to the MX missile question. Submit letters (two-pages typed) and forums (three- or four-pages typed) to the editorial editors, 126 Carnegie, no later than Dec. 17.

the daily Collegian

Friday, Dec. 17, 1982
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Paul Rudy
Editor

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The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length, and to reject letters if they are libelous or do not conform to standards of good taste. Because of the numbers of letters received, the Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all the letters it receives.

Mail letters to: The Daily Collegian, 126 Carnegie Building, University Park, Pa. 16802. Names may be withheld on request. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian.

How will we cope without 'Doonesbury'?

Garry B. Trudeau starts his own vacation Jan. 3

Garry B. Trudeau's "Doonesbury" is good, every day. Usually, it is excellent. And quite often, it is incredible.

Most people know this, but now is the time to reiterate it. "Doonesbury" will not be with us come Jan. 3, 1983. Trudeau, 34, plans to take a sabbatical from the strip, which he has been creating since 1970 for daily syndication — and does not plan to return until the fall of 1984. "I need a breather," Trudeau said in a press release. "Investigative cartooning is a young man's game."

"For almost 15 years, the main characters have been trapped in a time warp, and so find themselves carrying the colors and scars of two separate generations," he said. "It was unfair to stretch their formative years to embrace both Vietnam and preppy. My characters are understandably confused and out of sorts. It's time to give them some 20 haircuts, graduate them and move them out into the larger world of grown-up

concerns. The trip from draft beer and mixers to cocaine and herpes is a long one, and it's time they got a start on it. "This is simply a lull in the action," Trudeau said, and reminiscent of the cryptic remarks found in the strip's last panels, added, "It is not, repeat, not a mid-life crisis."

His need for a break is understandable. Being good every single day can be exhausting. He deserves a rest. But how are we going to deal with it?

Has the fact set in yet? Do you realize that when you come back from holiday break, pick up the Collegian, glance at the front page, and turn to the comics page to do the crossword puzzle and read "Doonesbury," that "Doonesbury" will not be there?

We will not be able to open the paper hoping to find a cartoon this good:

(Scene: the kitchen of Walden commune; Michael: Good choice. Hand guns should be cheap and plentiful.

Michael Doonesbury and Mark Slackmeyer sitting at table, B.D. standing.)

B.D.: I feel good today. Know why I feel good today?

Michael: I bet we're going to find out.

John Mitchell: Mr. President, Mr. Duc Tho is on the phone for you, sir.

Nixon: Hello, Le? ... What can I do for you? ... Yes, I'm sorry about the aid, but Congress has to act on that. ... No, we haven't gone back on our pledge. ... Yes, I know about your schools and hospitals. ... But ... but ...

LOOK, DUC THO, I NEVER PROMISED YOU A ROSE GARDEN! — Hee, hee, hee!

Mitchell: Ha, ha, ha! Very good, sir!

major vehicles to keep us informed as to what is going on in Washington: the electronic media, the print media and "Doonesbury," and not necessarily in that order."

(Scene: a front view of the White House.)

President Nixon: What is it, John?

Mr. Slackmeyer: (Face in paper) Son? What son? ... I have no son.

Mr. Slackmeyer: (Face in paper) Son? Me? No, ... no, I have no son.

Trudeau has created an indelible mural of our times, and his sabbatical will leave a gap. Without his daily work, life will tend toward the bleak. It will be like having a girlfriend or boyfriend leave for a year and a half.

It's going to be lousy.

John Allison is a 13th-term journalism and English major and a columnist for The Daily Collegian.

reader opinion

Repulsive force

While I can let the "Ms. Fracassa" pass, I can't let Douglas Klamp's article pass without comment.

If the arms race were using up so much of the earth's resources, defense would crowd out the private sector, and the defense budget would take a much bigger chunk of the Gross National Product than it does today. This appears to be the case now only because a severe recession is blocking the private markets from supplying hurling non-defense industries. I also don't accept this neo-Malthusian view that the earth is running out of resources or will in the foreseeable future.

The more we explore this planet, the more mineral and energy sources we find (deep within the earth's crust, oceanic mining, tar sands, geo-pressured gas, etc.). We have no problems supplying food, the population rate is cresting, and pollution is lower now than it was 20 years ago. Continued advances in technology make for better outlooks in all these areas.

Klamp states that perpetuating a system revolving around selfishness breeds hatred, naivete, and distrust with no hope of long-

term peace. I agree, because he describes the Soviet system, a system that deceives, bullies, and represses its people and satellite nations; they are used as a means of policy and not ends. This is the system I accused of inhumanity. If the Soviet leadership uses its own people as a means, it shouldn't be a surprise that they use other nations as a means as well.

On the other hand, we frequently yield to our allies' requests and criticisms, and at least try to aid Third World countries in developing their untapped human and natural resources to our mutual advantage. The Soviets and proxies always use force to gain access to these resources and always leave these countries in worse condition than before. They are the ones who turn north-south problems into east-west conflicts, not us.

Klamp also states that we are as "tough and unyielding as ever." When was "never"? They buckled their economy building arms while our defense budget went the other way; we saw their rape of the Third World as "forces of change," and offers to scrap major weapons like the B-1 bomber were met with "we are not pacifists, nor are we philanthropists." His statement simply doesn't wash

with the past decade.

As a free people, force or its use repulses us. The Soviet system couldn't survive without force; it accomplishes its ends at home and abroad. We know they are impressed by force and became adventurous when a lack of force exists. We also know our deterrent force has kept Europe at peace for the longest time stretch since the fall of Rome. The freeze is short sighted in that it doesn't "freeze" this sufficient deterrent capability, but allows it to erode in the future.

The only way we will make the Soviets realize any mutual advantages is to show them that every attempt at force outside their sphere will be futile. In this, unfortunately, we have no choice.

K. Michael Fracassa, graduate-business administration
Dec. 16

Judgmental

Jean S. Guertler, I am offended, as you are, at the "Christian" men's imposition of values on anyone (like me) except themselves. You, however, are as judgmental as they in your condemnation of a fellow group of human

beings: male heterosexuals.

Why do you judge us before you even know us? We, all human beings, deserve a "fair shake," and I resent being lumped together into a male stereotype as much as you resent being lumped into your respective stereotype.

I am not offended at your clear attempt (in your Dec. 15 letter to The Daily Collegian) to tell us that our social constructs "doom" the race to heterosexualism and reproduction ad infinitum. Heterosexuality is not as bad as you would have it, though it seems I would be hard pressed to convince you of that. Consider it an alternative lifestyle if you will.

I admit that it would be difficult for me to see life from your point of view, as it would for you to see life from mine; but please do not condemn me and all other male heterosexuals for something we cannot help — being male, and our own choice of sexual lifestyle.

Timothy J. Kelly, 5th-computer science
Dec. 15

Disappointed

I have just attended the Jack Anderson speech. Reflecting back upon the evening, I

must say that I'm disappointed.

This reason is centered on what he was saying — which was nothing. When I left for the speech, my expectations were high — they were almost low when I returned. I felt entertained, not informed. Some of my feelings come from the way the speech was given.

He performed, held and exaggerated every pose for the newspaper photographers. In fact, he was posing for them. He nimbly recited jokes (that were quite good) and then waited for the obligatory applause. I realize that this is the way of politicians, but I was always under the impression that Jack Anderson was a political columnist. For someone who has the reputation of getting to the bottom-line truth, he was sure slinging the lard.

Maybe I expected too much from his speech. Maybe a personification of his column, a streamlined expose on the ins and outs of Washington, D.C.

I realize his facade is polished and "Washington style," but from the speech I heard, he must as well be a government handout.

Felicia Rosen, 6th-journalism
Dec. 15

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