

opinions

The Daily Collegian
Monday, Dec. 20

editorial opinion

Future shock

Instead of herd-like registration lines through the Intramural Building, imagine long lines coming out of the offices of each academic college. And when you finally get to the front of the line, one person sits at a lone computer terminal trying to register for classes.

This scene might become the norm if the University's planned switch to an administrative computer system goes into effect. The system, expected by the spring of 1984, would revise registration procedures as well as handle billing and record keeping.

According to the University's plan, the system would make students' and administrators' lives much easier. Primarily, it will store students' academic records and conduct registration. For example, if a pink slip needs to be changed, the computer will print a revised one on the spot.

The University, however, has not specified how many terminals will be available to each college or department. And therein lies the problem.

John J. Romano, associate dean for Undergraduate studies in the College of The Liberal Arts, has said the registration plan

would not be feasible if each college has only one terminal.

However, Robert Dunham, chairman of the University student system committee, says he is not sure how many new terminals will be purchased, but hopes each department will have at least one.

Even though each department does not have a computer terminal now, the system will have the capacity to support additional terminals. But the University plans to purchase just enough hardware to get the system going. And that probably would not include one for each department.

The University has suggested that both colleges and departments should direct any extra funds they have to purchasing new terminals.

Departments, however, should not be expected to buy their own terminals to meet this end — especially with ongoing cutbacks in University funds.

Computer registration is an idea the University must accept. But computerization should not be done if it can only be done halfway.

Who needs State Stores?

Pennsylvania's state-owned liquor and wine stores are often criticized for their poor hours, high prices and general mismanagement.

With sluggish sales and low profits for the last financial quarter, the Liquor Control Board is considering closing less profitable stores, cutting business hours and hiking prices on less expensive liquors and wines.

These problems are partly the cause of the current round of partisan infighting among LCB members. LCB member Mario Mele, a Republican, recently blamed the Democrats on the board for allowing profits between June 30 and Oct. 19 to fall to \$1.1 million, down from \$8 million for the same period last year.

And while Mele denied that his charges were politically based, Democratic board member Ralph Barnett attacked what he called "Mele's preoccupation to garner personal publicity against the organization."

No matter what Mele's motives were, his point is well taken. The State Stores are mismanaged.

However, the solution is not to improve the LCB's management, because the state-operated monopoly has too many inherent problems to ever be much good.

For example, there is no competition. Government has proven itself to be a rather poor manager of other people's money. For another, there is too much politicking for

the LCB to be able to run an efficient business. Lastly, there is no reason to have such a monopoly — it is not as if liquor and wine are somehow a natural monopoly like utilities.

The obvious solution is to scrap the State Store system and allow private business to move in.

It must be taken into account, however, that the state would lose a source of revenue. LCB profits are deposited in the state's general fund and are part of revenues needed to balance the budget. And it must be remembered that the University receives an state appropriation — this year's is \$143 million.

But compared with a \$7 billion state budget, LCB profits look rather meager — especially when the LCB pulled only a \$1.1 million profit between June 30 and Oct. 19. The LCB set a year-end target of \$35 million profit, but Chairman Daniel Pennick said that if Christmas sales don't pick up, the profit slack, profits will drop to \$28 million by June.

With the LCB struggling with such problems, it is time once again to call for the obvious solution.

As Penn State Football Coach Joe Paterno asked Gov. Dick Thornburgh last year when the governor called to congratulate Paterno on his Fiesta Bowl win: When are you going to get rid of the State Stores?



reader opinion

Economic decency

There has been more controversy lately about the proposed regulations regarding "adult" book shops. I would say that those attacking, as yet, nonexistent businesses are overlooking a similar problem already present in State College.

Upon entering a store which I formerly patronized (and probably several others with which I am not so familiar), one is greeted with several digest size magazines, unwrapped and readily accessible. Printed on the covers of these publications for anyone entering the store (including children) to see are pornographic pictures and lurid titles, "Bisexual Lust" being one of the milder examples.

I believe that persons desiring such material should, in our pluralistic society, be able to obtain it, but if blatant pornography is to be printed directly on magazine covers, they should be wrapped, otherwise concealed or confined to the "adult" shops.

I presented my case to the manager of this business last Saturday, and he politely tried to convince me that it was not economical for him to change the display, expressing regret at the loss of my patronage. Perhaps if others who feel as I do will take similar action, he (and the managers of other offending stores) will discover that decency, in the long run, is indeed economical.

Brian P. Griffin, 5th-physics
Dec. 14

MX Op-ed

Because of space limitations, The Daily Collegian will devote its Op-ed page on the MX missile in the Jan. 6 issue, instead of the Dec. 21 issue.

the Collegian

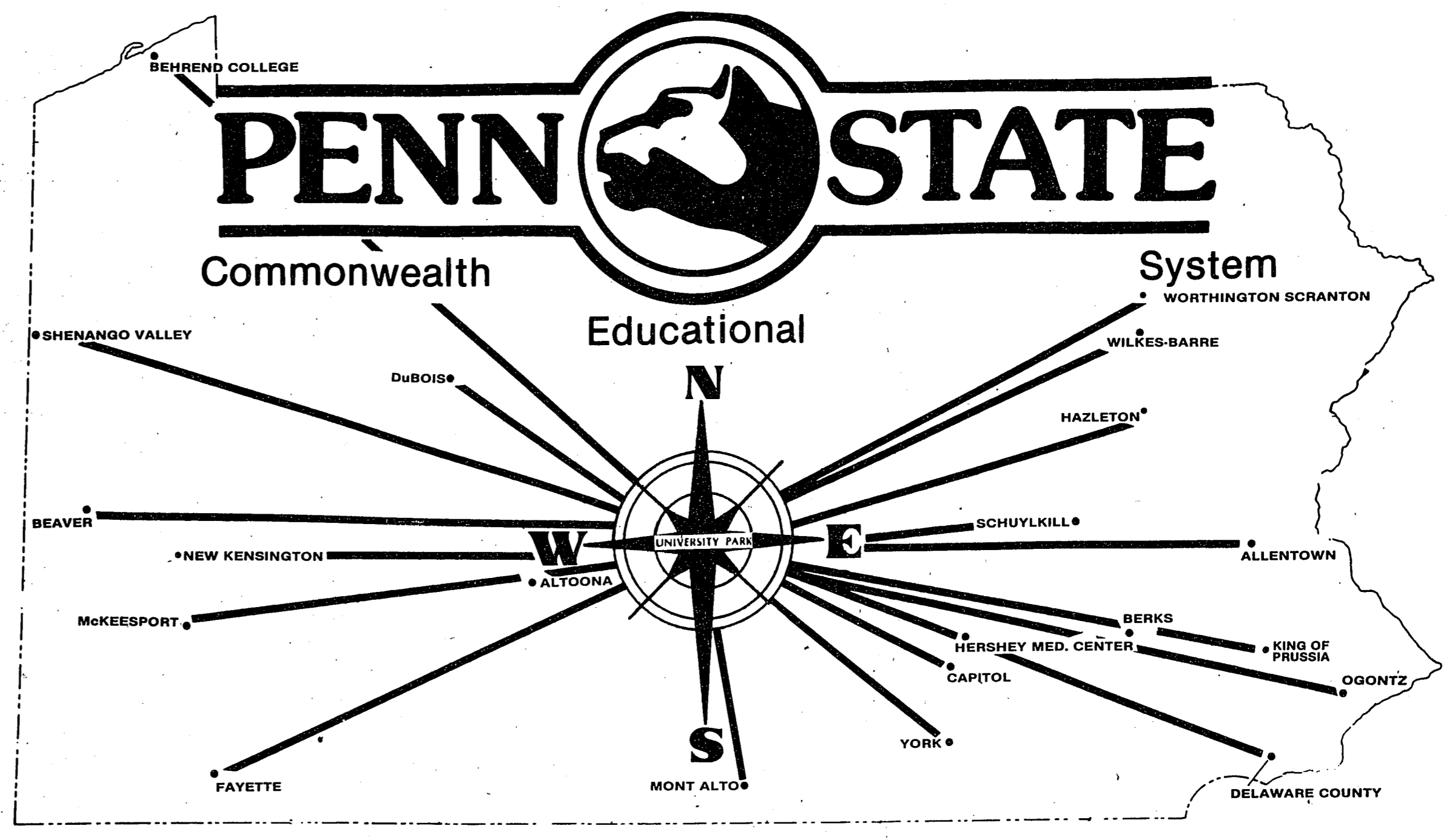
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1982 Collegian Inc.
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Have a Class Summer at home — work and play, but continue your studies at a Penn State campus nearby.

Class schedules for all locations will be available in February.

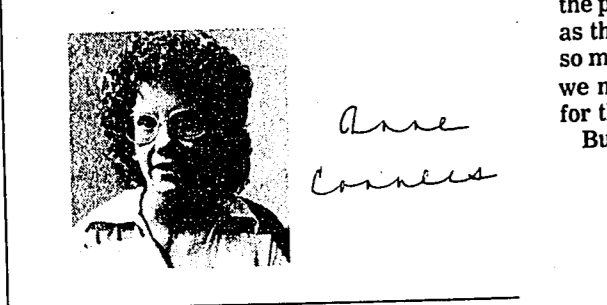
Watch for announcements in the Collegian

Christmas should be like real yellow roses

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

from *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams



Hunched down on the gray pavement, the big plastic toy in front of a downtown florist shop puffs, wheezes and finally balloons into a lilsized snow man complete with a black hat, corn cob pipe and button nose. Soon the mechanical gear that keeps him going clicks again and he shrinks down to the sidewalk — only to puff and wheeze the next time a large gear moves.

I suppose that the whole setup is an attempt to celebrate Christmas. But somehow the dingy snow man seems rather sad. He looks as if he'd been kicked about, his hat has a few dents in it, and somehow, his smile seems rather forced.

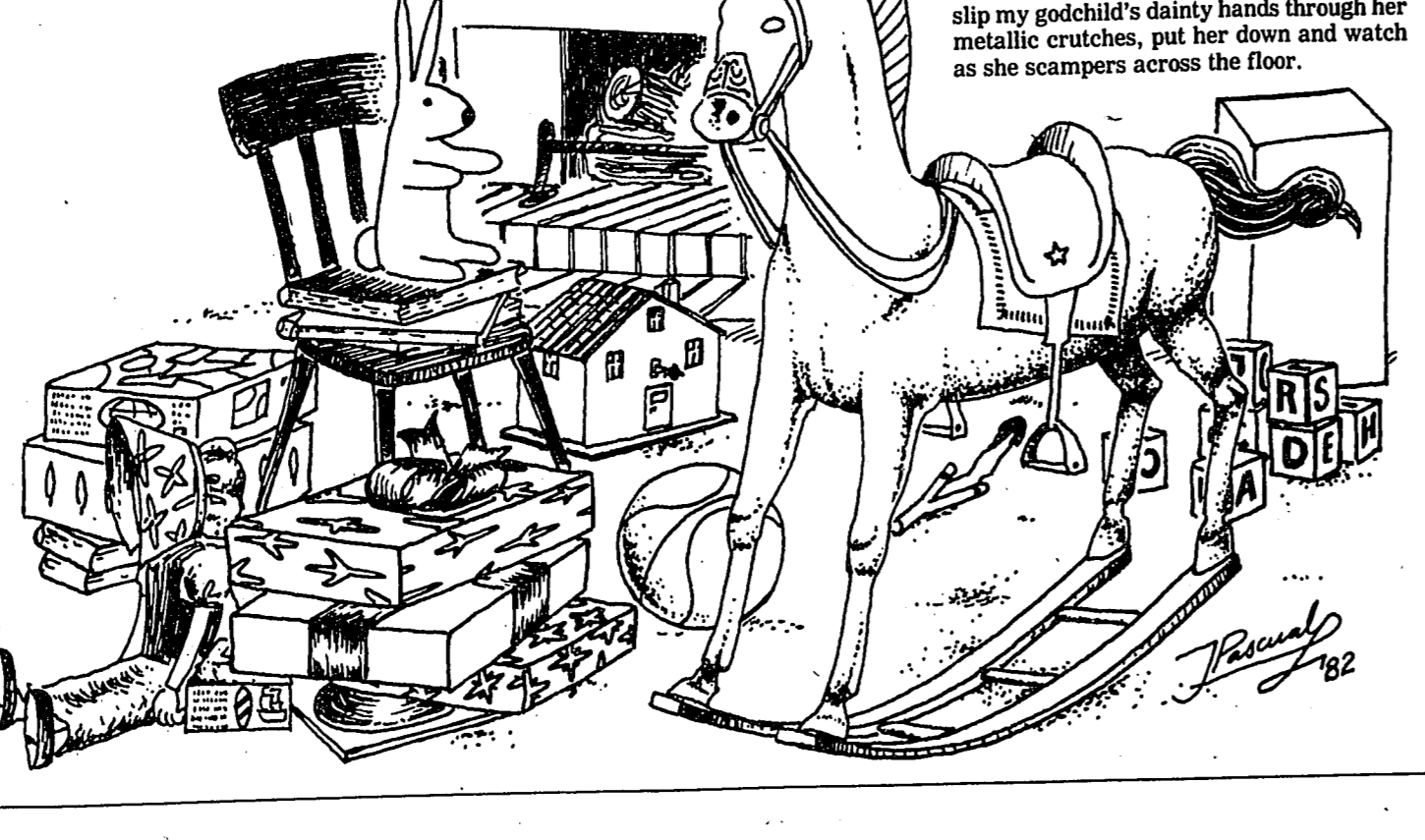
Maybe he understands the harried shoppers who bustle by him, too tired and too busy to stop and see him. Maybe he doesn't expect them to really look at him. Maybe he is too familiar with the Christmas spirit.

Not the real Christmas spirit. But the Christmas spirit that generally pervades this time of year. Everyone knows the

syndrome: the we-can't-stop-and-talk-because-we-don't-have-time-to-get-everything-done attitude. And the oh-no-what-I-am-going-to-buy-her-anyway trap.

In the midst of shopping, baking, meeting, partying and churcing, sometimes, just sometimes, being real people is the least important item on our agenda. It's not so much what we say in the Christmas card, just the fact that we get them mailed by Dec. 15. It's not so much what we feel about the person we're giving a gift to, just as long as their name is crossed off our list. It's not so much that we mean the Merry Christmas we mouth as much as it is the thing to say for the last couple weeks of the year.

But being real is what Christmas is all



about. Whatever we believe, the event we are all celebrating has something to do with the birth of a baby boy. A vulnerable baby who really needed other people.

The baby boy knew all about what the Skin Horse told the Velveteen Rabbit: that being real doesn't happen to people who break easily or who have rough edges. The baby knew that he would have to live with people, to laugh with people and to suffer with people. And he knew that being real wouldn't happen overnight, he knew that it would take a long time; he knew that it would become.

A dusky-skinned Amanda clasped her small hands around my neck and gleefully laughs. Her laughter peals through the nearly empty church meeting hall, echoing off the walls and filling the room with joy. I slip my godchild's dainty hands through her metallic crutches, put her down and watch as she scampers across the floor.

Yet so many of us never give it time to become. Or if we see the realism in something, we hide. Or we blind ourselves with lots of partying and drinking, hoping that our facades won't come crashing down.

But sometimes they do. And then we too are vulnerable; we too are like the baby boy. We too are real, we too are Christmas.

And, if we try hard enough, we can appreciate the real things in our lives. Sometimes they're not very far away.

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A frail old man scurries out to the kitchen, fixing me a cup of hot chocolate with lots of marshmallows floating at the top. We settle down in the Lazy Boy rockers and start to chat.

"Yes, dolly, that sounds just fine. I know that you won't have any problem." He always told me that I could do it. He never forgot my birthday, and he always made sure that we celebrated with a big steak dinner from Ricardos. He was proud of me. He trusted me. He had faith in the "realness" of me.

Somehow I never thanked him. And now I can't.

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A yellow rose sits in the middle of the kitchen table. It blossoms more and more each day and soon the petals are falling on the varnished table top. I sit down and begin writing. "Dear Mark, I just wanted to thank you..."

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Christmas should be like real yellow roses. It should be the time of year when we relearn what the Skin Horse meant when he said to the Velveteen Rabbit, "Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

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