

editorial opinion

Oswald's speech was nice, but...

What do President Ronald Reagan, Gov. Dick Thornburgh, Julius Erving, Meryl Streep, Sen. Edward Kennedy and University President John W. Oswald have in common?

They were all featured speakers at college and university commencements this spring.

Oswald, of course, spoke right here at Penn State. Instead of drawing from the wealth of prestigious scholars and political leaders in this nation, Penn State opted to invite its own president.

Seton Hall, a private, diocesan-affiliated university in South Orange, N.J., asked President Reagan to speak. And not only was the president of the United States there, but so, too, were entertainer Pearl Bailey and Gary Nardino, president of Paramount Television Productions. Reagan, Bailey and Nardino all received honorary degrees at the Seton Hall exercises.

But Oswald was the lone featured speaker at Penn State's largest commencement ever. He was all Penn State had to offer to the thousands of people who sat in the hot sun in Beaver Stadium for the two-hour long ceremony and to the 5,685 graduates.

Oswald certainly deserved a prominent slot on the commencement agenda. He has, after all, been the president of this University for 13 years and has conferred more than half of all the degrees held by living alumni of the University.

No one would have begrudged him the opportunity to bid farewell to the University he has served for more than a decade. And he is not the only University President to claim center stage on his way out the doors of Old Main. In 1970, when Eric A. Walker was preparing to leave the presidency, he also delivered the address at his final commencement.

Still, what some graduates objected to — and rightfully so — was the fact that Oswald's was the only major address they heard that day.

Many college and universities — like Seton Hall — offer honorary degrees to the people they invite to be commencement speakers. Honorary degrees make invita-

tions to speak more attractive. The University Board of Trustees at Penn State, however, has a long-standing policy of not conferring honorary degrees. The policy was established in 1886 and has been reaffirmed several times by the trustees.

Only in "rare and unusual circumstances" has the University considered conferring honorary degrees. The last such circumstance was in 1955 — during the University's centennial celebration — when President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the featuring speaker at the June 11 commencement exercise, was given an honorary doctor of laws degree.

For many graduates, college commencement is a "rare and unusual circumstance," one they have worked toward for many years. The University should spend the time and expense of inviting more prominent speakers to commencements, at least to May commencements, the most heavily attended.

And if the prominence of the speakers merits the conferral of honorary degrees, then the University should be open to that, too.

But honorary degrees aside, Penn State has had some prestigious people as commencement speakers. For example, Paul Berg, Penn State's only Nobel Prize winner, delivered the commencement address several years ago.

However, few other commencement speakers in the recent past have been as appealing. For while they may have attained some prominence in their selected fields, they certainly weren't as colorful or as recognizable as a Kennedy or a Reagan. And they certainly didn't reap as much national attention as Seton Hall did when it dared to invite the president of the United States to speak at its commencement.

After all, inviting VIPs to speak at graduations is good public relations for a university. And if this University is worried that it might be recognized nationally for something other than sports, it could have done what Temple University did this year — it could have invited Dr. J. to deliver the commencement address.

Council's stroll down decision lane

For a little piece of land, the portion of McAllister Alley between College Avenue and Calder Way has certainly generated a lot of noise.

For 19 months, members of the State College Municipal Council have discussed closing the area to vehicular traffic and turning it into a pedestrian mall. The possibility of legal action against the borough and other problems had slowed the process — to a stroll.

But this week council finally acted. Council voted Monday night to close the alley to vehicles and to begin plans to develop it. Unless major problems arise, work will begin on the pedestrian mall after Sept. 8 with \$45,000 from the 1983-84 Community Block Grant Development fund.

An offer by the owners of The Tavern Restaurant, 220 E. College Avenue, to develop the area themselves and include an outdoor cafe for the restaurant was refused when other businesses threatened to sue if the borough leased or vacated the alley. Some business people may still decide to sue the borough, contending that closing the alley to vehicles constitutes vacating the

alley and leaving it to the adjacent property owners.

Other potential problems mar the decision.

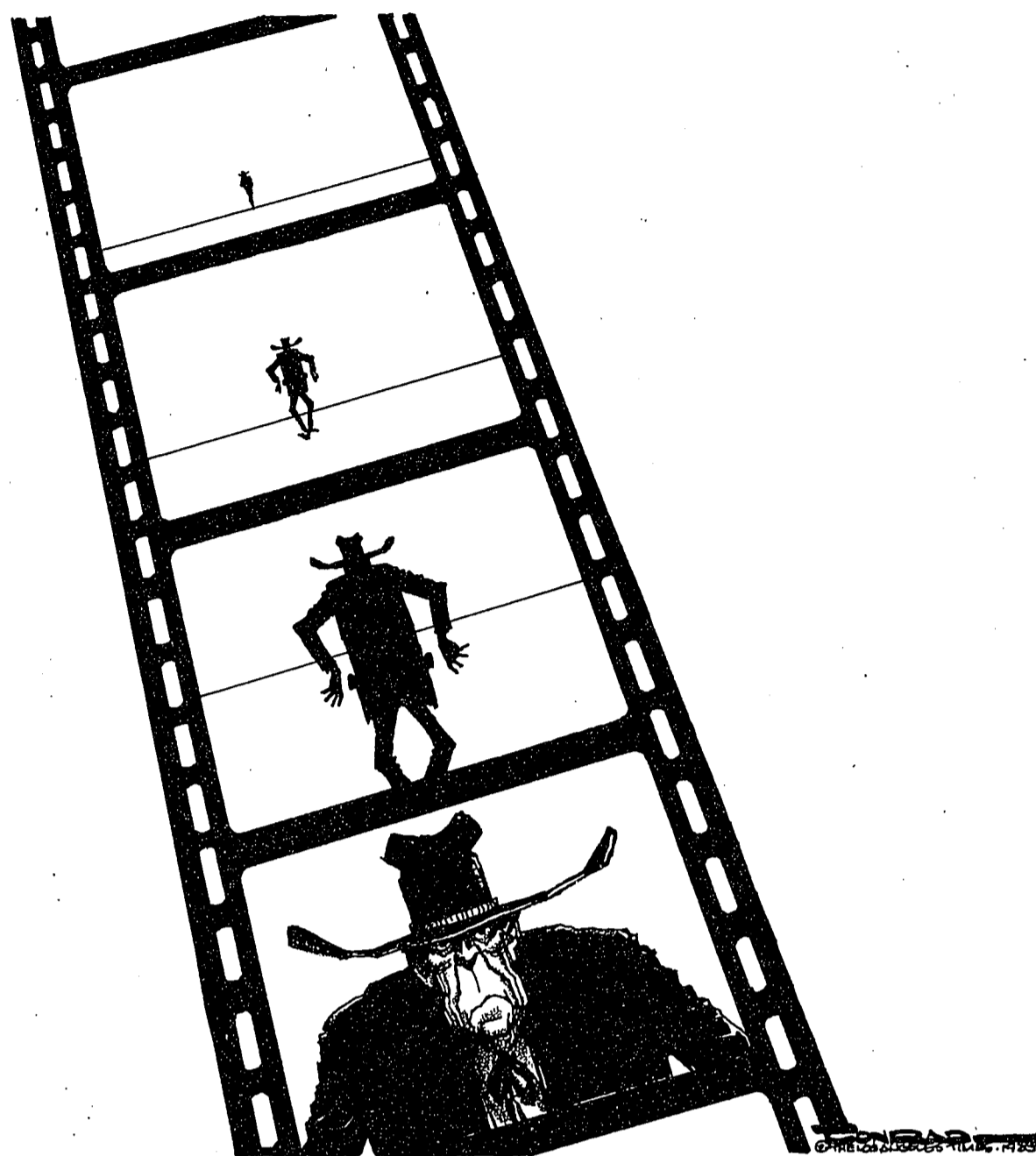
Some business owners believe delivery trucks will be unable to reach their businesses and that the off-season trial period will not accurately reflect the truck difficulty.

Critics have also insisted that the mall could set a precedent for limiting other State College streets to pedestrian traffic. But council has already refused a suggestion to limit traffic on Calder Way.

Despite these problems — which may never occur — the idea of a pedestrian mall in the alley is a good one. People will have a safe, pleasant area to walk and sit, and businesses near the mall will benefit from the increased pedestrian traffic.

Unfortunately, the council's tardiness in making a decision has already prevented the mall from being completed for this year's summer pedestrians.

For a small piece of land, the alley has taken too much of the council members' time and energy.



LARGER ROLE SEEN FOR U.S. IN LATIN AMERICA CONFLICTS—NEWS ITEM

reader opinion

Anniversary

On June 16, 1976, thousands of black South African high school students went into the streets of Soweto to peacefully demonstrate against a new racist law requiring that they be taught in Afrikaans, a Dutch-German dialect used only by the Boers of South Africa. On June 16, 1976, more than 600 black South African youths were massacred by white police and national guard units for peacefully demonstrating against the racist law. Is this the type of government we call an ally?

In South Africa you are denied citizenship, the right to live where you please, free speech, the right to work, the right to vote and many more basic rights just because of the color of your skin. What makes this even more disgusting is that whites have the gall to deny blacks rights in the land of their birth, Africa! Is this the type of government we do business with?

In racist South Africa people are

picked up by the police, tortured, held for years and even executed without ever being charged with a crime. If you are black, the police have the right to kick you, beat you, set dogs on you or kill you without any provocation on your part. If you are a prisoner of conscience there is a good chance you will die in detention. This is an unexplained phenomenon that occurs mainly in South African prisons. Is this type of government even to be tolerated by the United States? Nazi Germany wasn't.

In South Africa there is no free speech or free press. Newspapers are censored and books are banned by the government. Trade union membership can result in police harassment and arrest, that is, if the union member hasn't already been fired. Despite all this, many American universities, including Penn State, are perpetuating this criminal system by investing hundreds of millions of dollars in it. Is this the type of country Penn State should invest millions of dollars in?

Philip J. Vilardo, 6th-foreign service June 15

encourages comments on news coverage, editorial policy and University affairs. Letters should be typewritten, double-spaced, signed by no more than two people and not longer than 30 lines. Students' letters should include the term, major and campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. 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; 128 Carnegie Building.

the Collegian

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Suzanne M. Cassidy

Judith Smith

Editor Business Manager

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reader opinion

Respond

The anti-Semitic commies who viciously ripped down the banner from the main gate on College Avenue May 14 or 15 deserve attention.

The banner read: "Save Soviet Jewry — Let My People Go" and was sponsored by Yachad-Penn State Friends of Israel. My hopeful guess concerning the culprit would be just a drunk group of "college kids." My educated guess, however, is that the same people who leave leaflets around campus suggesting all Jews "take a free ride to Auschwitz" are the ignorant malicious ones who stole this banner.

This is the second banner (with the exact same content) which has been ripped down and stolen in the past month. Whoever you are... a different opinion is acceptable, but please respond through The Daily Collegian

so your dastardly deeds can be even more of a public display.

Ryna Tenzon, president Yachad-Penn State Friends of Israel May 16

Football fair game

Ron Gardner's report of an appearance by Doug Allen of the NFL Players Association contained a number of factual errors and misstatements, the bulk of which were not the fault of the reporter. Mr. Gardner's only apparent sin was not contacting the other side for rebuttal to Mr. Allen's spurious charges.

Mr. Allen and other NFLPA representatives routinely distort the economic picture of the National Football League and portray the players as mere chattel. I am sure this makes for a lively presentation

as Mr. Allen no doubt waves his arms and snarls incessantly. His charges, however, bear as much resemblance to fact as Joe Paterno does to Bo Derek.

Mr. Allen's primary complaint, according to the report, is that the plight of NFL players represents "the last vestige of slavery in this country." That is an interesting comment coming from an individual whose organization did not even address that question in the past contract negotiations and strike. The NFL Management Council, in every complete proposal it made to the union, suggested improvements in the free agency system. The union, however, made no proposals addressing the issue, choosing to remain out on its "percentage of the gross" limb.

Mr. Allen complains that "sport is the one place in society where we still own people... a player being bought or sold or traded." Sport is a unique business operation in which a system is mandatory to maintain competitive balance. Without the system, chaos would rule. And the NFL club owners have built this system into the most successful sports-entertainment industry in America — successful for the players, management and fans, all of whom make up the game. This system enables a young man to come out of college into a profession where the average salary in 1982 was \$105,000 (not the \$30,000 reported in the Allen story). How many Penn State students will be able to command that amount upon graduation? Critics say, "Sure, but it only lasts a few years." True, the career span of the average player lasts between four and seven years, but the benefits of an NFL career remain with the individual throughout his lifetime. The Players Association's arrogant

slogan "We Are the Game" is an affront to the fans who support the game. Commissioner Pete Rozelle and the club executives who have built it, the scouts who locate the players and the coaches who mold the teams and map game strategy. The players are certainly an integral part of the game, but the laughable "all-star" games the union tried to put on during the strike should debunk the union contention that all you need is players to put on a game.

Other statements attributed to Mr. Allen can easily be refuted. NFL clubs do not average \$6 to \$8 million in profits each year. The latest league audit from the Big Eight accounting firm of Arthur Andersen showed the average NFL club made a pre-tax profit of \$864,000 during the 1981 season. An audit of the strike-shortened 1982 season is not complete, but Commissioner Rozelle puts the league-

wide loss at \$200 million. With the new television contract in place (it is not \$3.6 billion over five years, as reported in the Allen story, but more accurately has been reported at closer to \$2 billion over five years), projections place average pre-tax profit in 1983 at around \$2 million per club. Gradually rising expenses — both player costs and other costs — will reduce that profit figure each year over the course of the television contract.

Finally, if Mr. Allen did charge, as the report indicates, that the NFL is planning to launch a pay television network in 1987, then he truly is swatting at wisps of smoke fueled by his union's smoldering paranoia.

Jim Miller, director of information NFL Management Council May 20

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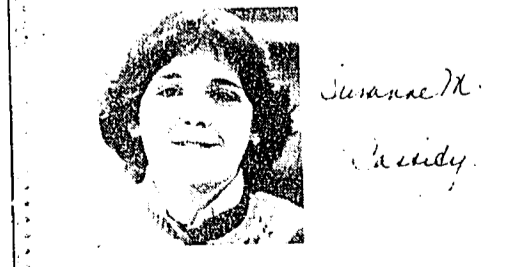
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Collegian link to 'real' world

Even in the summer when the pace is a little bit more relaxed, Penn State, with its maze of concrete buildings and mass of tanning humanity, can often be a pretty confusing place for freshmen and other University Park neophytes.



All year 'round in this college community, from Shields Building to Old Main to Rec Hall, and from East Halls to College Avenue, things are almost always happening. Confusing things. Exciting things. Not-so-exciting-but-nonetheless-impor-

tant things. And outside this collegiate cocoon many of us call home for four — or more — years, things are happening, too. Things we'd like to know about. Things we'd rather forget. Things that can't be ignored, no matter how much we'd like to.

These things in the outside world, like many of the things happening inside Happy Valley, are often hard to understand, hard to interpret. We need more information, we need to keep in touch with the things that are happening, just to make sure we don't lose our understanding of what's going on around us altogether.

For many students at the University, The Daily Collegian often serves as their sole link to the outside world. Here at the Collegian we try to gather as much information as possible about issues and events that we think our readers need to know about. When the information is confusing and vague, we try to interpret it as best

we can, either in editorial opinions — which are formulated by the Collegian's Board of Opinions — or in our news stories or analyses.

The Collegian is a member of the Associated Press, meaning that we receive stories and photographs around the clock over high-speed wires that is fed into our computerized word processing system. Printing AP wire stories and photos allows us to quickly relay information to our readers about what's happening in the state, nation and world.

Local and University-related stories are covered by our almost 200 student reporters and editors. During the fall and spring semesters, The Daily Collegian publishes Monday through Friday and our circulation is approximately 20,000. During the summer, our circulation is cut to about 9,000 and we print three days a week.

In summers past, we published papers Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This sum-

mer, however, we will be publishing Monday, Thursday and Friday because the majority of classes do not meet on Wednesdays — thanks to the shortened summer term — and therefore fewer students will be on campus Wednesday to pick up their Collegians. By next summer, we hope to be able to publish four days a week, depending on how the University schedules summer classes.

While it may be a little awkward for both us and our readers grappling with a two-day news gap between Monday and Thursday, we will try to keep you as informed as possible.

The Collegian is an independent corporation, but contracts with the University for office space and other entities. We are completely independent from the University in our editorial policy and content.

And that's why we probably don't look much or read much like your newspapers back home. We are free to cover the news and explore the issues as we deem fit. But we try never to forget that our independence must be used responsibly.

We sometimes step on some toes, we sometimes miss the proverbial boat. We try at all times, however, to do one thing above

all — and that is to make things that are happening at the University and outside the University community less confusing for our readers.

And, as I stated, sometimes we miss. It is at those times that we rely on our readers to demand more information, to write letters to the editor, to come into our office in 128 Carnegie and tell us what's on their minds.

The Collegian exists for its readers. But we know we can't please everyone. All we're asking is that you pick up a Collegian in the morning and read it. And read beyond the personals and the crossword puzzle.

Oblivion is an often popular state of being at this University. But it's one that gets awfully stifling fast. Issues, problems and concerns — University-related or otherwise — aren't going to disappear if ignored. They are only going to disappear if they are faced head on.

And in order to face them, we must first know about them.

Suzanne M. Cassidy is a 10th-term Journalism major and Editor of The Daily Collegian.