

opinions

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The Daily Collegian
Monday, Aug. 29, 1983

editorial opinion

Commitment to quality?

In his first two months as University president, Bryce Jordan has done a commendable job of meeting people in the University community while aptly dealing with what must be a phenomenal workload.

But last Wednesday and Thursday he missed an excellent opportunity to get acquainted or further acquainted with some of the students, faculty members and administrators working for the University.

Jordan was at Encampment '83 at the Stone Valley Recreation Area for less than two hours. He left to attend Ag Progress Days after delivering the keynote address to the Encampment participants.

Ag Progress Days is surely an important event. Penn State's College of Agriculture is respected nationwide and its Ag Progress Days certainly deserved some priority in Jordan's datebook last week.

But Encampment also deserved to be given priority in Jordan's admittedly hectic schedule. It is one of the few times in the year when students, faculty members and administrators are able to sit in an informal atmosphere and tackle the greater issues of the University together.

Begun in 1951 by University President Milton Eisenhower, Encampment has served past University presidents well as a medium through which to gage the issues and concerns of the University.

This year, Encampment lasted for about 30 hours. Most of the participants either stayed until late Wednesday evening or overnight at Stone Valley. Forums were held throughout the day, but there was plenty of free time for the participants to get to know one another.

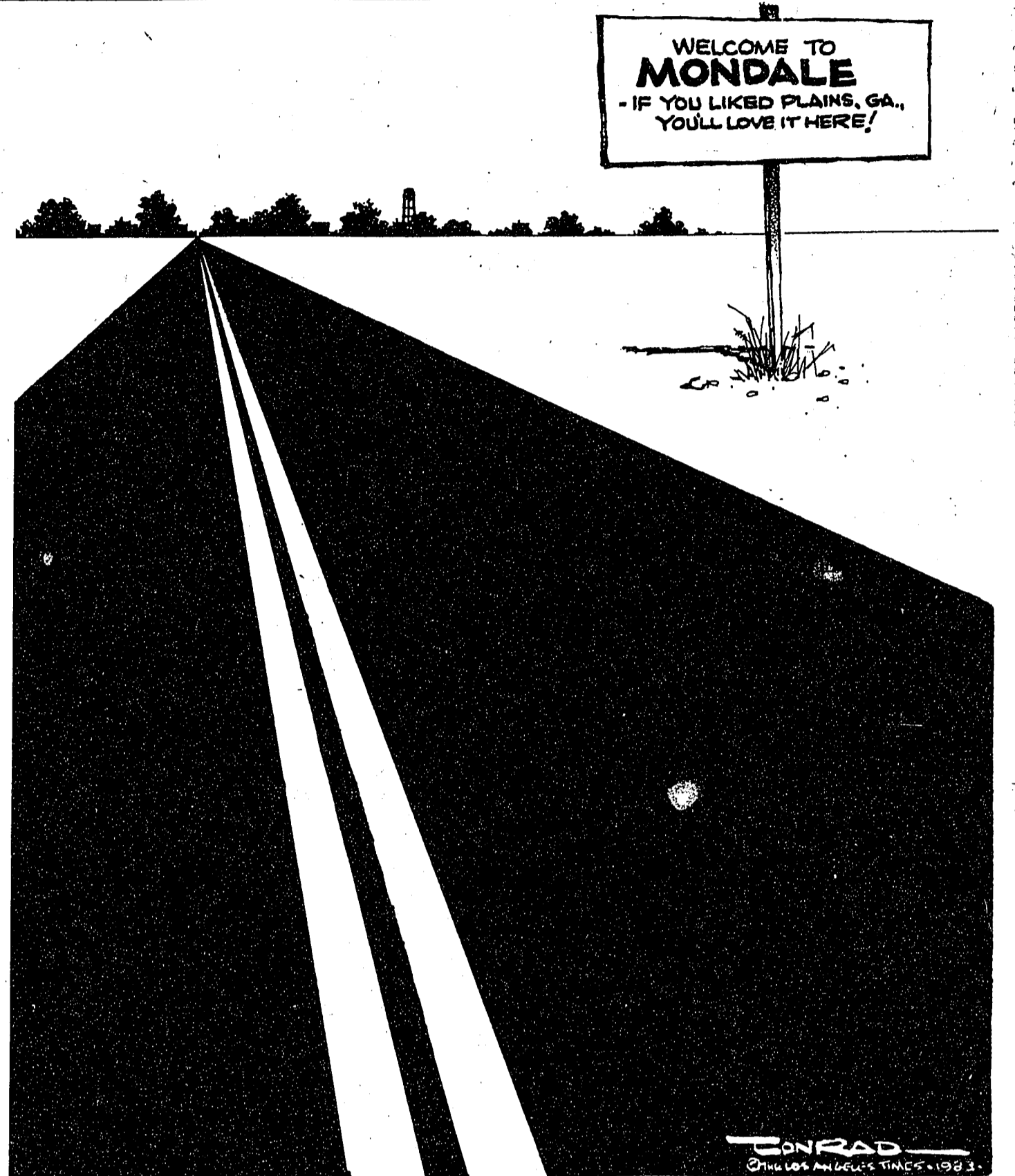
Jordan could have learned a great deal about the people working for the University had he returned for even an hour or two to Encampment to talk to them informally. It was a prime opportunity for Jordan and the approximate 150 other representatives of the University community to share concerns and swap ideas.

For an administrator who has made himself so wonderfully accessible thus far, Jordan's absence at Encampment was not only glaring, but disappointing.

It was obvious that Encampment '83 had been planned with the new University president in mind — many people talked about it in terms of it being "Bryce Jordan's first Encampment." And special efforts were made to make Encampment a more intimate and well-organized event.

But the actual event transpired without Bryce Jordan leaving much of an impression on it.

It was a nice gesture on Jordan's part to wear the Encampment T-shirt while he was delivering the keynote address. It would have been nicer had he returned to Encampment, to, as the back of his T-shirt read, share in the "commitment to quality."



Share your opinions with readers

We hear the grumbles on the street and the cheers in the halls.

Some say switching to the semester system was the best move at Penn State since Curt Warner skirted through a brutal backfield.

Others insist it's confusing, disheartening and unnecessary.

Does the new system lighten your workload or burden your brain with yet more courses to cram for?

Does dorm food depress you or does your landlord drive you crazy?

Does the threat of nuclear war make you shudder?

Do Reagan's economic policies irk you or please you?

The Daily Collegian wants to know what you think and what other members of the community need to know.

We've got a new schedule, a new president, and even a new football team. Penn State — and the world with it — is changing before our eyes. And all of us — at the University and in the community — are changing with it.

Let your voice be heard in the crowd.

Write a letter to the editor. Letters should be one page typed double spaced. You should include your name, phone number and title or school year and major. Letters should be brought or sent to the Collegian office in 126 Carnegie, University Park, Pa. 16802.

Make suggestions. Make a difference.

the daily Collegian

Monday, August 29, 1983 ©1983 Collegian Inc.

Suzanne M. Cassidy, Judith Smith
Business Manager

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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.



Taking federal judges to court

Before October 1, 1981, the only mechanism for reviewing federal judicial conduct was impeachment. Impeachment proceedings in Congress are cumbersome and have been successful only eight times in U.S. history.

But now, the Judicial Councils Reform and Judicial Conduct Disability Act of 1980 provides another means of disciplining federal judges.

Federal judges are tenured for life, which means that once they are appointed, they generally stay on the bench for the rest of their lives. Unfortunately, life tenure does not exempt federal judges from human failings of character and nature such as alcoholism, abuse of power, and senility.

Recent research, conducted just prior to this new law, indicates that as many as 10 percent of the nearly 850 federal judges were unfit for office. The reason most of these judges remained on the bench prior to the passage of this new legislation was no procedure for disciplining a federal judge short of impeachment.

But in March, uniform rules for filing complaints under the act were issued. Any person who alleges that a federal judge is unfit for office or has abused the powers of his office may file a written complaint with the clerk of the circuit court of appeals in which the judge presides.

After the chief judge of the circuit reviews the complaint, he has three options: dismiss the complaint, take informal corrective action, or appoint an investigative committee (composed of himself and an equal number of district and circuit court judges) to further review the complaint.

The accused judge is notified of the proceedings and may choose to appear and contest the charges. The complainant may receive a copy of the judge's response and reply to it.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the chief judge's decision, he may petition the circuit's judicial council, which oversees the administration of the courts, to review the decision. If the judge is dissatisfied with the chief judge's decision, he may also petition the judicial council to review the decision.

The judicial conference — the policy-making body of the federal judiciary — has the authority to affirm or reverse the actions taken by the judicial council. Disciplinary measures are warranted if "conduct prejudicial to the efficient and expeditious administration of the business of the Court" or if the judge is unable "to discharge all the duties of office by reason of mental or physical disability."

The disciplinary measures permitted under the act are limited to certifying medical disability, requesting that the judge retire voluntarily, stripping the judge of his caseload on a temporary basis, or censuring the judge either privately or publicly.

But the legislation expressly precludes removal from office as a form of discipline. Impeachment by Congress is still required to remove an unfit federal judge from his post.

Clearly, creating a mechanism for increasing the accountability of federal judges is long overdue. As with any new system, a few minor problems will have to be ironed out. For example, how much time should be permitted to pass before a disciplinary proceeding must be completed? The act sets no specific limits. Instead it frequently uses the words "expeditious and prompt" when referring to the chief judge's handling of a complaint. If the way many bar associations have handled lawyer disciplinary complaints is any indication of how "expeditious and prompt" will be interpreted, specific time limits must be set.

Despite such problems, the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act is a major step forward in effectively exerting some control over the conduct of our federal judges.

Ronald Sabadish is a graduate student in community systems, planning and development and a columnist for The Daily Collegian.

reader opinion

In court

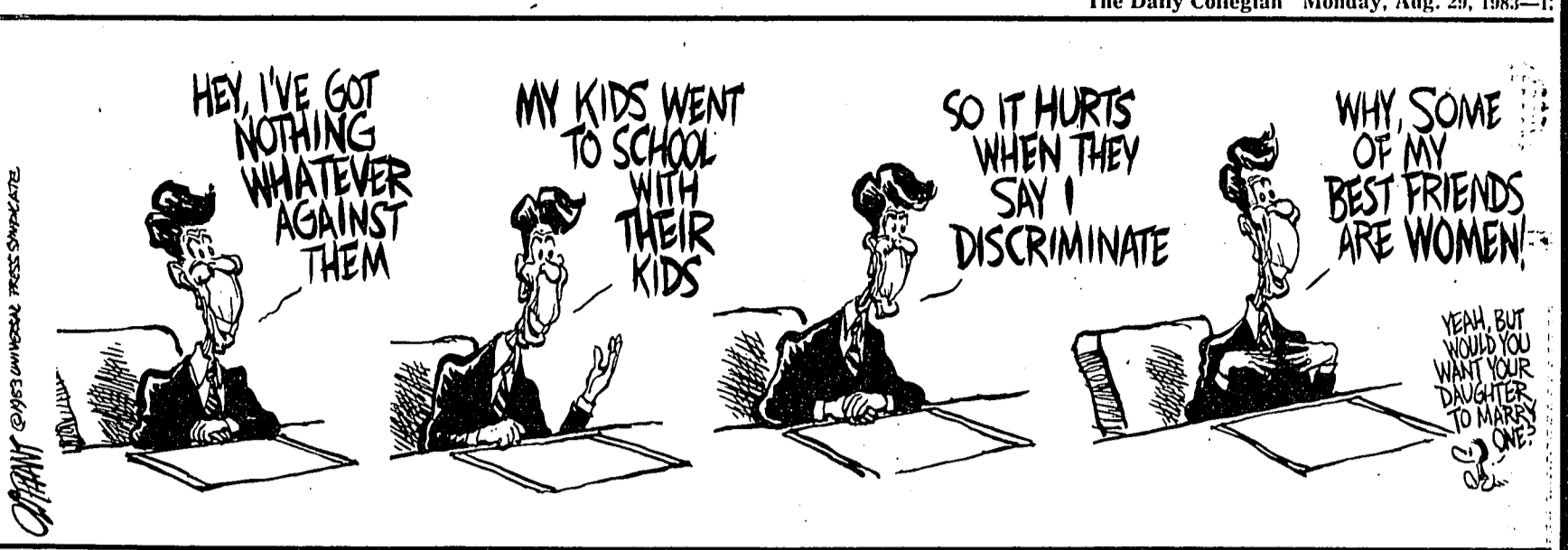
A funny thing happened to us the other day on Pollock Tennis Courts. Immediately after starting our game we were treated to a parade. What was the occasion? There wasn't one — it was just the usual freshman mass exodus from East Halls to downtown State College — right through the courts.

Trekking through the courts during play is as dangerous as walking through Parking Lot 30 during an ice storm and as annoying as being awakened by Blue Band practice at 6:30 a.m. Get the picture?

Being former East Halls residents, we can appreciate the inconvenience of your distance from campus and the need for shortcuts. However, our patience will only last so long — and soon we will have to resort to acts of extreme violence, such as human target practice (Oops, missed THAT shot!).

If circumventing the courts proves to be too much trouble, take the Loop! It's safer!

Sarah Starkey, junior-marketing
Allison Carpenter, junior-computer science
Cathy Suleski, junior-pre law (Ball Girl)
Aug. 27



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