

opinions

The Daily Collegian
Tuesday, Sept. 17, 1985

editorial opinion

Do something

Life was much easier when Star Wars meant Luke Skywalker vs. Darth Vader. Today, however, Star Wars is the Strategic Defense Initiative program and President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev are fighting for the force.

With the superpower summit between Reagan and Gorbachev coming in November, the Defense Department and Reagan are hailing Star Wars research as our only hope for peace. And while the SDI program may have University researchers scrambling for dollars, they don't want to be sold to the government lock, stock and test tube.

Selling Star Wars to the American public has become a big business. And it seems the scientists doing research associated with the program are a big part of the advertising budget. The most recent advertisement — an innuendo made by the Defense Department — places academia at the top of the list of those supporting Star Wars.

The ad insinuated that researchers working on projects associated with the Star Wars plan automatically support it. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Case in point: Just because the University has investments in companies doing business in South Africa doesn't mean students support apartheid.

Petitions calling for a boycott of the proposed Star Wars plan are circulating at 37 campuses throughout the nation that believe that the Defense Department has falsely advertised. These universities do not want to sell out to the government.

With noise being made at colleges nationwide, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Cornell and Carnegie-Mel-

lon universities, Star Wars research here at Penn State has also become a topic of serious debate.

L.R. Hetteche, director of the University's Applied Research Lab, said he would not back such a petition and Charles Hosler, vice president for research and dean of the Graduate School, agreed.

"Most of the academic world doesn't support Star Wars," says Rustum Roy, director of the University's Materials Research Laboratory.

What about Penn State?

Penn State has not taken a stand one way or the other. "I have not initiated anything yet," Roy said.

Roy said because many faculty members are unwilling to do classified research, they will not involve themselves in much of the SDI projects and research. He said others think "Star Wars research is a dumb idea and won't do anything with that label."

It seems University faculty members can't decide which stand to take. But by remaining wishy-washy, University faculty members are not accomplishing anything.

Hetteche said the public has been confused by the rhetoric surrounding the issue and added that if a petition were circulated and signed, no one knows how much federal funding the University would lose.

Obviously, the possible consequences — whether good or bad — will remain hidden until some action is taken.

Star Wars research is gaining international attention. University researchers must realize this and do something... anything — either lead, follow or get out of the way.



reader opinion

No new skirt

In response to Pete Baratta's article (Sept. 9) denouncing the convictions of Penn State students and labelling them "guilty" without understanding why we take and do not take action toward divesture, I would like to express an opinion of yet another group of young adults. Although there is some substance to his statement regarding "fashionable" protest demonstrations, the fact remains that students are more educated in terms of the apartheid issue now more than ever as a result of media coverage alone, even without the awareness program.

If University officials had decided upon a total divestment in order to supposedly aid the Blacks in South Africa while, at the same time, raising tuition costs to compensate for losses of commissions and probable lawsuits, that same group of students, I must feel, would have been on the steps of Old Main demanding the University take care of its own before those thousands of miles away in a foreign country.

Nevertheless, the lack of involvement this fall does not necessarily constitute a dying interest or growing rate of indifference.

Divestment is so far from being a cut and dry issue that the more one knows, the more neutral one seems to become. We are all well aware of the violence that is going on and the injustices that are taking place. I have had death and bloodshed showed upon my throat for about six months now. My sympathetic inclinations are becoming numb due to overstimulation. This does not make me a cold individual, contrary to liberal belief.

Penn State's divestment at this point, in South Africa alone, without even mentioning the negative effects here at home, could do more harm than good. South African Blacks who are fortunate enough to have jobs with American corporations would lose those jobs if those corporations were forced to close and/or pull out. These

are the same corporations that are sticking their necks out and putting themselves on the line by breaking South African segregation laws and treating all of their employees with the equality they deserve. I shudder to think of the few and degrading jobs that would remain for the Blacks of South Africa if all American companies were to cease to exist in that country.

I regret that I am not as informed as I should be; however, I am proud to be one of the open-minded individuals who does not make rash and selfish decisions along with empty and unfounded accusations. I will continue to expand my knowledge of the apartheid issue; but until I have what I consider to be all the facts, I refuse to attempt to sway the opinions of my peers. If I do decide to take a firm stand on one side or the other, Old Main will never see me protesting on its steps even if I do have a "new pleated skirt" to show off.

Kimberly J. Ackerson, sophomore
division of undergraduate studies

Clarifying policy

Because of the recent article in the Sept. 12 Daily Collegian concerning the issues surrounding the use of alcohol in the community, I feel it important to clarify a number of concerns about the policy on Drugs, Inc. One concern is NOT against student drinking, we do believe in providing unbiased information and skills allowing people to make responsible decisions. On Drugs is NOT involved in making University policy.

As a registered Penn State organization, it does provide a 24-hour hotline and drop-in service, crisis intervention, unbiased information, referral assistance, and support groups, all available free and confidential to Penn State students.

Lori Strayer, freshman-individual and family studies

"THERE HE GOES AGAIN."

the Collegian
the daily

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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 number 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.

Dorm life:

Pre-breakfast experiences and futile attempts at studying

Isn't dorm life great? You know, being out on your own, coming and going as you please, and being able to ask girls up to "your place."

long to pick up? Alright, I don't like to bad mouth rock-n-roll, life just wouldn't be the same without it. So I guess I could tolerate his guitar playing — in moderation.

But then there's this neurotic animal bi-sci major next door who keeps barging in to sport the latest steps that he's learned in aerobics class. And he carries on with this sort of nervous humming and finger tapping. He amuses Joe... he worries me. This kid could be my inspiration to lock my door at night.

And I would lock my door if I didn't have to keep opening it to beg the cast of *Revenge of the Nerds* to keep down to a low roar, the sound effects of their hallway wargames.

And despite all of this, I still have to find time to get some work done. But on the few occasions that I do get a chance to enjoy a few chapters of Hemingway (not that I enjoy Hemingway, but I am invariably interrupted by resounding screams of "Eat me" emanating from the window of some sexually deprived loner residing somewhere in the woodwork of East Halls. These nightly calls only affirm my belief that I am surrounded by potential murderers.

Not just for the fun of it, let's say that I happened upon an evening when I was able to procure some solid study time followed by a peaceful night's sleep. In this purely hypothetical case, I would no doubt awake with the feeling

that I could take on the world. Unfortunately, my euphoria would be dashed at he sight of the shower line accompanied by the bathroom's 8:30 rock.

And so the vicious circle continues; aggravating pre-breakfast experiences, followed by dining hall food, an entity which does not warrant description, set the stage for a lousy day. And it goes without saying that the day's destiny lies in yet another unbearable evening. The logical reasons for my getting up in the morning become less and less apparent.

So in a few weeks while my mother may be sitting at home in Long Island, pondering how diligently I must be studying, I'll probably be lying on my bed amid the blaring was-was of Joe's guitar. And with the pillow shielding my ears, I'll begin to contemplate whether I should wait until Joe and the psycho next door fall asleep to kill them both, or conjure up ideas for my own demise.

But I trust that my better judgement, as well as my will to live will put an end to such thoughts and I'll return to my desk for yet another futile attempt at studying. And there I'll sit, as diligent looking as ever. So don't worry mom, just send money.

Brian O'Leary is a freshman majoring in English and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. His column appears every other Tuesday.

reader opinion

Open markets

But no more — remember what I said, I've got my eye on you.

I think Rich Douma is wrong in his Sept. 13 column on free trade when he says that the U.S. government's number one priority should be finding a way to open foreign markets to U.S. imports. The number one priority should be reducing the deficit because massive government deficits cause interest rates to rise. High interest rates cause the demand for dollars to rise which makes the dollar cost more in turn causes U.S. goods to be more expensive for foreigners to buy.

The Libertarian answer to this problem is to let people exercise their right to engage in free trade with whomver they want and reduce government spending to the bare minimum.

Doug Litchfield,
Junior-business logistics

On the new rules

"How 'bout a beer?" my daddy asked in the stadium parking lot.

"Sure I said, 'Don't mind if I do... It's getting kind of hot."

Then my momma said, "Now only one. Or if you're good, then maybe two.

I withdrew from school — my friends did, too.

Penn State's just not the same.

Karl A. Kline, Junior-English

opinions

Bulimia:

A disease that can be very scary and very real, but also very curable

Once upon a time there lived a lovely teenage girl. Her high school years were filled with good grades, boyfriends, pep rallies and football games. She took the necessary placement tests and was admitted to the college of her choice.

She ate well to begin with. Being an ideal weight she tended to keep a good, healthy diet. Now she tended to eat sparingly, yet why did she feel so guilty when she ate so little? The guilt was overwhelming sometimes. After dinner she lay on her bed and could feel the fat accumulating on her hips, thighs, stomach or buttocks; or so she thought. She decided that she wanted to lose weight. She had to. The need was overwhelming. She thought "If only I could lose 10 pounds everything would be great, my clothes would hang as I wanted them to when I bought them, I will feel better about myself and my looks, maybe guys will find me more attractive if I am thinner..." and the ritual continued.

At first her roommate did not seem to notice the early excursions from dinner, or the mysterious disappearances from the room after a midnight Domino's pizza frenzy. The

ritual became an obsession. Will power was abandoned for an easier solution found around the corner and down the hall. Her diet was quickly becoming an unhealthy way of life. Her world revolved around her obsessive love for food, and her hatred of the flabby consequences. She had found what she thought to be an easy way to "Have your cake and eat it too." Little did she think of the consequences she would bring upon her own body, or the emotional scars left on her self-esteem and pride when others realized the situation.

Secrecy became the primary concern. Friends were now beginning to question her post dinner-time absence and her mysterious behaviour after the nightly "pig-out" that seems to be a tradition at college. Ten pounds had dropped rapidly because of her behaviour and people had questioned the sudden loss. She wasn't as happy as she thought she would be after the 10 pound loss. She thought, "Maybe just 10 more..." and the ritual became a habit.

Now the lies began. Lies that seemed to excuse her curious behaviour. Lies that permitted her not to eat in public. "Oh, I'm not hungry just now, I'll stop on the way to class and get a bite somewhere." After all she was supposed to be on a diet. Lies to her friends, to her best friends who cared the most about her, and would have tried to help her if they had known the severity of the situation. Lies that would slap her in the face when the truth became known. Sooner than later her secret would be revealed. The beaten path from her door, around the corner, and down the hall would soon become known.

Once upon a time there lived an unhappy college girl. It was midnight and, as tradition goes, the Domino's man had just made an extra cheese with mushroom and sausage delivery. Again, as the ritual had manifested before, she found herself making her way around the familiar corner and down the hall to the bathroom. Tonight was different however: Her friends followed her and what came to pass was one of the most humiliating

and heartbreaking experiences of her life. It was also the best thing her friends could have done. She was one of the few that got help.

It is estimated that 1 out of every 4 college women suffer from a socio-psychological disease called Bulimia. Included in this estimate is it's sister disease Anorexia. These diseases manifest themselves differently depending on the person that they affect. The fictitious "she" in this column could become anyone with an overwhelming desire to lose weight coupled with a low self-esteem. One out of 4 women is quite a scary estimate. If you have a friend whom you think exhibits these qualities, please talk to them. Showing concern is the best possible way to motivate that person to get help, if not for herself, for her friends.

Megan Cuthane is a sophomore majoring in journalism and is a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Her column appears every Tuesday.

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The Twenty-First Century Overture

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