

# opinions

The Daily Collegian  
Wednesday, Nov. 6, 1985

## editorial opinion

### An image to protect

University administrators, under the auspices of University President Bryce Jordan, have made great strides toward improving the Penn State image within the last few years. And they have done this within the constraints of two difficult tasks: increasing the number of black students attending Penn State and convincing the state legislature to appropriate more funding to the University.

The new Penn State image is putting the University — not just Beaver Stadium — on the map as a reputable institution of higher learning.

And Penn State is just that, or at least it appears to be.

Sadly though, a clear picture of the University image is unavailable because the image makers have chosen to keep the most important variables out of the picture. The figures for minority recruitment efforts and this year's state appropriations request are under wraps until the University Board of Trustees convenes in mid-November. This, of course, is a matter of protocol — the trustees shouldn't read in a newspaper first what will be reported to them at a meeting later.

But the entire University community — including students, parents and alumni — deserves to have access to these figures as soon as they are compiled.

Black students should have enrollment figures when considering Penn State. By withholding this knowledge, it could be said that an unrealistic picture of the University is being presented.

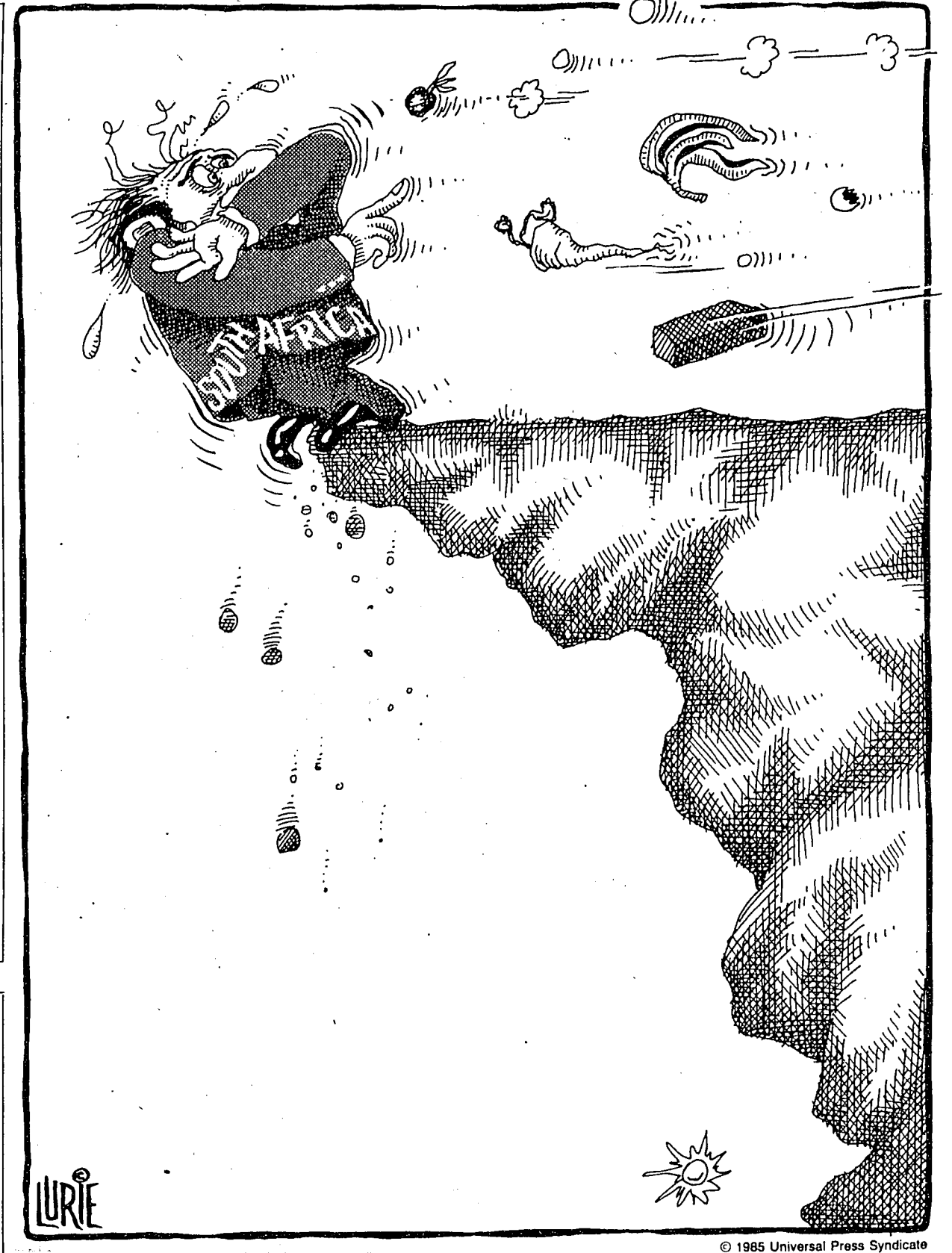
The University's financial priorities, which are spelled out in the state appropriations request, are also vital to students. That information has direct implications concerning tuition increases and the use of surcharges for next year.

The progress the University has made in both recruiting black students and garnering state appropriations is measured through facts and figures.

And up to now, Penn State has made marked improvement in both areas as is evidenced by increased state funding last year and by a 41 percent increase in the number of black students enrolled between 1983 and 1984.

But what about this year's figures? At a time when the University's public image is vital to its future, the administration is stalling attempts to monitor it.

As the University moves toward the "top ten," a positive Penn State image has clearly been an asset. And the best way to protect that image is not to withhold information from those who have a vested interest in it, but rather to promote open and honest dialogue that will, in the long run, benefit the entire University community.



"I warn you, World, — you're pushing me to the right!"

## the Collegian

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Gail L. Johnson Editor  
Karen Jarst Business Manager

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## reader opinion

### Open up

Kudos on your editorial regarding the closed USEC meetings. Student leaders are supposed to be representative, responsive, and responsible to their constituents. This latest policy removes "responsible to" from that list. Once the meetings closed we, as students, lost all reports on how our leadership is representing our concerns. We no longer have a check on whether our leadership is being responsive or representative.

Is it not USEC's purpose to represent student concerns to the University administration? I wonder what student concerns are so sensitive that the students can't know about them. What are they trying to hide from us?

Of course, we can not put all of the blame on the council members. On several occasions, Dr. Jordan has approached the council saying he would only talk to them during a closed session. Since USEC can only function if it is in contact with key administrators, the council must give in to Dr. Jordan's request or continue to talk to a wall. It is time for Dr. Jordan to open direct dialogue with USEC and the public and put an end to this dancing.

None of this relieves the USEC membership of its responsibility to open up its meetings. There is no reason to close USEC meetings. The council has only opened up a network by which they can do what the administration has so often been guilty of: announcing decisions to the students after they've been made.

Greg Martin, senior-computer science

### Unrest

There has been a good deal of unrest at Penn State —

unrest about our educational system. It has been identified by many sources, two of them being the Graduate Student Association and the Undergraduate Student Government's Academic Assembly. Concerned about teaching assistants training, GSA and Academic Assembly are in the process of developing a "standard, well-constructed program," according to Collegian staff writer W. T. Holland.

Yet, with all this unrest, where is the corresponding concern about the third essential part of instruction? We talk about learning. We talk about teaching. We rarely talk about "studenting."

"Studenting" is a concept parallel to teaching. Whereas many who adopt the active-versus-passive view of education would say, "a teacher teaches and a student 'learns,'" I am advocating a more balanced relationship—one in which there is an active-versus-active view. In general, "a teacher teaches and a student 'students.'"

"Studenting" is asking questions — even in the vastness of the Forum. It is sharing relevant experiences — even in the ego-threatening, intimately small classrooms. It is familiarizing yourself with your notes — even if it takes an extra fifteen minutes each night. It is studying for exams before the review session — even if it means staying in an extra night.

"Studenting" is learning plus responsibility. It is taking an active role in education.

Can you see the parallels? Can you see the challenge? Can you honestly say that there is any less of a need for students to learn better "studenting" than there is for teachers to learn better teaching?

Lisa Firing, junior-speech communication

## Op/ed: Executions at Rockview near

As Nov. 19 draws near, the State Correctional Institution at Rockview will become the focus of a great deal of controversy.

For the first time in 22 years, two sentenced criminals — John Lesko, 26, of Pittsburgh and Michael Travaglia, 26, of Washington Township — are scheduled to die in the electric chair on that day.

And since Gov. Dick Thornburgh authorized these executions in August, the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania have rekindled the debate surrounding the death penalty.

Opinion Editor Doug Popovich wants to know what you think about the use of the death penalty. On Wednesday, Nov. 13, The Daily Collegian will publish an op/ed page with your views on this topic.

If you have an opinion you'd like to share, present it in the form of a letter-to-the-editor (one typed page, double spaced) or forum (no more than three typed pages, double spaced) by Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 1 p.m. in the Collegian office, 126 Carnegie Building. Letters and forums must be presented by the author in person with some form of identification and must include semester standing and major.

## My sister's kid:

Comparing notes on nearsightedness, gray hair and our two different worlds

I often get the feeling that everything that happens to me in this world has already been experienced by someone else. In one way that's a comfort, because it proves that just about everything is survivable. It also means that since so many people have already had your experience, what is exciting and new to you is old hat to someone else.

How very egotistical you're probably thinking. Yes, I don't deny that it has certain "I am the World" overtones. I defend myself by saying that all I want is to be more than a name signed on a birthday card and a voice over the telephone at Christmas.

I'm not going to try and influence this kid one way or another, or try to mold him or her into some sort of second me. I'm not sure my family could stand another clueless Penn State English major, not to mention the fact that to most Nebraskans, encouraging a child to think kind thoughts about Penn State is akin to encouraging a child to grow up to be a Nazi.

I'd like to picture this kid and me in a relationship that has the closeness explained by blood relation and the give and take found in friendship. I think we have the potential to be close both ways.

Since we'll be so closely related we'll have in common all the cruel tricks nature and our family's gene pool have played on us. We will be able to compare notes about the inevitable nearsightedness, the tendency of

the toes to curl under and the gray hair that comes so early in life.

The two of us will share the experience of growing up under the ever watchful eye of my older sister. I can see myself giving the kid advice on when to push my sister, and when to know you just have to give in. It makes me feel good that my twenty-one years of experience will do someone other than myself some good.

I hope this child and I will be close on another level besides the simple fact of our blood relationship. Granted, we won't have a lot in common as far as environment goes, considering he or she will no doubt grow up in a small Nebraska town very different from the suburbs where I grew up. But with a little luck we'll achieve the give and take I think is necessary for friendship.

I get excited thinking about seeing Nebraska again through the eyes of a native, which is really the best way to look at any part of this country or at the world. And I like to think about showing someone from such different surroundings what my world is like. If I'm lucky, I'll get to the kid before



Which is why when I tell you my sister is pregnant a good many of you will stop right now and move on to Donesbury if you haven't read it already. But don't worry, I'm not going to get into the gory details about her twenty-four hour "morning" sick-

## reader opinion

### Unfair

The football spirits of all Penn Staters are riding high this year with the spectacular success of the Nittany Lions. I, too, am happy and proud and hope to see the Lions in a big bowl game at the end of the year. However, a recent incident concerning a decision made about the eligibility of a player has left me with a tarnished image of Coach Paterno and the athletic department.

For many understandable reasons, the football team has a policy of not allowing walk-ons to be students of senior grade standing. Because of a communication mix-up between a current senior and assistant coaches, this policy was overlooked and the senior was a position on the team as a walk-on. For six weeks he practiced with the team. As a walk-on, he was designated as foreign team member, or in other words, the guys who get beat up by the first team in order to make them better. Without a doubt, they are a very important, if not the most important part of a winning squad.

A few days ago, it came to the attention of Coach Paterno that there was a senior walk-on on the team. Joe quickly saw it fit at this point to let the player, no names asked. In my opinion, such a move was not only wrong and uncompassionate, but demonstrated absolutely no class on the part of Coach Paterno. Even though this player played an integral part in the first six victories of the season, it is unlikely that he will see a bowl game of which he was a part in attaining.

There is no excuse for such an action as this for a program with as much class as Penn State football is supposed to have. This letter will not give the player back his job, even though he is probably willing to forgive and forget despite his treatment, but I hope that it hits home to those responsible. Maybe they will remem-

### Aggravation

A few certain individuals' right to free speech aggravates me to the point that I'm writing this letter in defense of several things. Various institutions such as education and religion are deemed wicked daily by these preachers. As a Catholic and a student of PSU, I resent the generalization that education here and religion everywhere are in dire need of repentance.

Being an insufficient point of reference for me, these men are displaying much gall in their daily assumptions and condemnations. A certain young man had the gall to include these quoted utterances in his spiel lately: "Catholicism garbage — the papacy and Catholicism have nothing to do with God." This is beyond my cognition. To render such judgments makes me indignant. As a Christian, I would never say I was ever taught to judge others or condemn masses of people as wicked, etc.

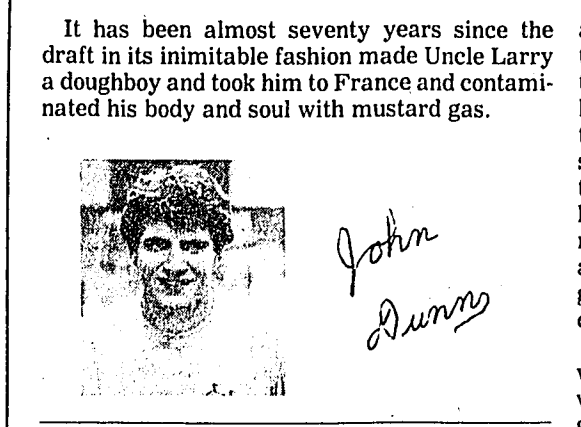
Where do they get off? I thought this group was rather pathetic until I realized just what they say daily. The continual slanders, accusations, and other bias, ungrounded remarks are a joke. How dare they attempt to find my beliefs, or anyone else's a total fallacy. I don't disregard the Bible, but stop placing it on a garbage can to begin your ranting. I don't find it a suitable podium, even for your interpretations.

Somehow I don't think they'll change, maybe that's OK. They'll probably always deem education as worthless and that's one place I can gain my strength, but don't religiously rape me or attempt to deter me from my right to practice and uphold the beliefs I choose.

Elizabeth Heaton, junior

## Armistice Day:

Years later, it's just another day to one of the survivors



It has been almost seventy years since the draft in its inimitable fashion made Uncle Larry a doughboy and took him to France and contaminated his body and soul with mustard gas.

He couldn't pass the physical exam required to return to work in Altoona's giant railroad yards. He had recently escaped a bout with peritonitis he had sustained at work and his wound had stopped dripping just days before. The Army needed men badly and Lawrence E. Fink was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"How tough can they make it if they need a million men for cannon fodder at the front," he says in a medium-low voice that comes across a bit gritty. "We were loaded on a train after getting over to France. We didn't know where the hell we was going. Here this outfit was going to the front. Well, anyhow, I was dumb enough to stay on the damn thing."

Legs crossed, worn shoes propped on a stool and arms folded on his stomach, 89-year-old Uncle Larry leans back in his reclining chair watching the Steeler game. He takes each break in the game to tell a bit about the war. A thick wad of Mail Pouch between his cheek, gum and teeth holds his mouth open slightly. As he spits, the sagging veins in his neck harden and stand out.

"I was dead tired by the time we got to the front. It just looked like hell, them shooting flares over them, and the bangin'. They picked me and two other guys for outpost. We crawled out through no man's land to get to this little hole. After a while I leaned up against this sandbag

and I was just ready to go to sleep, and one of these guys who had been in the regular Army tapped me on the shoulder and said: 'Look buddy, don't go to sleep, Christ, we're out here trying to protect everyone, and if a commissioned officer finds us sleeping he would shoot the whole business of us.' I said I didn't know how I could take it, being so run down. He gave me a chew of tobacco, and I was chewin' there, and first thing you know I swallowed some and got so damn sick I couldn't go to sleep. I've been chewin' ever since.

The next day they took us back in the woods where we could sleep, and somebody asked them what we were doing, and the sergeant said we're going out tonight to cut the barbed wire. We're making a drive tomorrow.

Now sometimes we were so close to the Germans we could hear them talking, and it must not have been far from Christmas, since some of them were singing O Holy Night. We was cutting, like I said Johnny, and somebody hit a wire with a cow bell on it. Those bastards put a barrage on us. My God, did they ever have the guns. And then they started shooting these gas shells in.

First damn thing you know, you begin to vomit. Hell, you go to vomit and it just comes out in green strings, and you can pull it out like mucus. I vomited in my mask, and then when I cleaned the mask out I took in more gas.

We laid in there for seven hours. And then came the blow off. By that time my eyes were all swelled shut and I couldn't see, and then they took me to a French hospital.

"Ah, don't ramble on like that," Grandma Herdman says interrupting Uncle Larry's story. "Johnny wants to write something about the Armistice since Armistice Day's coming up soon."

Grandma Herdman was only seven when her two older brothers, Les and Larry, went off to war. She usually doesn't get too upset when Uncle Larry rambles on about the war, except when he starts to talk about the French women. "They didn't talk about the war at all when they came back," she says as she shakes her

head. "He sure is making up for it now though."

I got in there, and near as I can figure they took my eyes out of my head — took them out, washed them off with some kind of stuff, and put something in the sockets. When I was lying there on my back with my eyes hanging out I could see things clean over on the other side of the room. They was all out of focus.

Finally, I got transferred to an American hospital in Calais. I got up there and seen some of them guys, and my God, some of them were just cooked.

In November they came in and said the Armistice was signed. Out on these trains they had these big casks of wine — I don't know what kind they had. They knocked a hole in the bottom of them and this main street was flowing with wine, and the nurses and everybody was drinking."

Here they come in the next morning and tell us it was a false alarm. And this old general came in and threatened to send all the men in the hospital back to the front.

The next week we had the real Armistice on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

Grandma Herdman brings in the Western Union Telegram dated Dec. 8, 1918 saying Lawrence Fink had been wounded. His official documents were lost earlier in the war, and he didn't get paid for being in the Army for over a year. He was supposed to have \$10 sent home a month and he was to receive \$5 a month.

I know next Monday I'll remember Uncle Larry's sacrifice, and I asked him what he would be doing.

"Same as any other day," he says. "I was never in a parade of anything else since I got out. The ones deserving the credit are the ones lying over there."

John Dunn is a senior majoring in English and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. His column appears every other Wednesday.

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