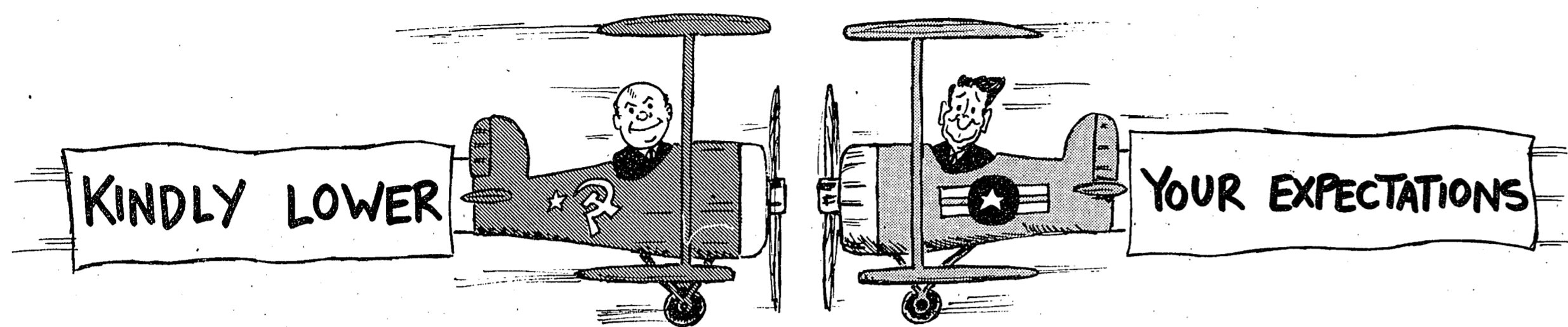


opinions

The Daily Collegian
Monday, Nov. 11, 1985



editorial opinion

A watchful eye, a concerted effort

"The community, the student population, everybody should realize this is our community."

This statement, concerning the problem of vandalism, was made by from David Caster, the community relations specialist for the State College Bureau of Police Services.

While State College does not face the dilemma larger cities do with vandalism, the situation does cost hundreds and in some cases thousands of dollars a year in damages.

Simply, what Caster has said — that the problem of vandalism does affect everyone in the State College community — is a point well taken.

On campus, broken windows, overturned garbage cans and paint sprayed on buildings disgusts most everyone who sees them, and costs students who attend Penn State.

This same kind of destruction to the downtown and the residential sections of State College is just as unsightly to students and other residents, and costs them money, too.

But there are a few surprises found in examining the vandalism problem here.

Mary Frantz, property manager for Benchmark Realty, said about half the vandalism in Benchmark-managed apartment buildings is done by the tenants living in those buildings. In fact, Frantz attributes this as a possible factor for higher rents in State College. While it is unlikely the cost of occupancy increases dramatically because

of vandalism, when lights are broken and fire extinguishers are stolen someone has to foot the bill.

Also, Larry Augerman, maintenance coordinator for the Apartment Store, said apartment buildings with undergraduate tenants, have more incidents of vandalism than buildings with graduate student tenants.

An added surprise concerning vandalism in State College is that cases of vandalism do not rise significantly during weekends of home football games.

Augerman said Homecoming weekend showed very little damage from vandalism to the apartment buildings managed by the Apartment Store.

This means that most cases of vandalism are probably not caused by out-of-towners, but by people living in the community.

Something that may not be a surprise, though, is that Augerman attributed some of the problem to guests of renters. He said renters should be more responsible for their guests.

Students of Penn State are not solely responsible for vandalism in State College. But as residents of State College, students need to realize how important the fight against vandalism is.

October was Crime Prevention Month in Pennsylvania, but State College residents — both permanent and transient — must realize it will take a watchful eye and concerted effort to prevent vandalism in "our community."

Op/ed: Executions at Rockview near

As Nov. 19 draws near, the State Correctional Institution at Rockview — just five miles from State College — will become the focus of a great deal of controversy.

For the first time in 23 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.

What does Penn State think about these executions?

reader opinion

Plus/Minus

Hail the letter grades! The new plus/minus grading system (effective Fall Semester 1987) has been "fine tuned", according to an article in the Penn State Intercom.

We have added A plus, C minus, D plus, and D minus.

But alas, the wily F+ has no companion. How will you or I know if we are failing well or failing poorly?

Perhaps my contempt for letter grades is beginning to show. How could we become educated without them? Letter grades are so objective, I am told. The personal biases and likes and dislikes of the instructor carry no weight. The student who worked her tail off and actually learned something deserved the B. The fellow who already knew most of the material

and slacked off deserved the A. Hard work always pays off!

Most of us, including myself, often forget why we are in school. One reason, often cited, is to "get a good job." I guess all the men and women who have jobs outside their field at minimum wages keep that gem of wisdom close to their heart.

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accept, how we treat one another (don't help a classmate he might do better than you) and how much (suffering) we put up with. Grades affect how we study. We "cram" for tests, memorizing specific facts, which we store for a brief period like water behind a dam. At test time we open the flood gates, pouring out all that we have stored. After the exam what is left?

There are alternatives to letter grades. One alternative is choice, such as pass/fail or satisfactory/unsatisfactory instead of letter grades. Another alternative is narrative transcripts, which include descriptions of topics studied and what the student gained from the class. What does an A plus or D minus really represent?

Taj Withall, non-degree student
Oct. 20

opinions

After Tuesday's test:

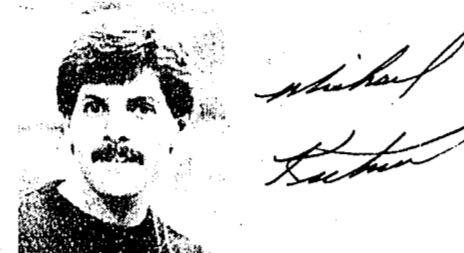
The important things in life — matters of consequence that don't change when problems arise

Some things always change. The weather, our luck, the days of the week. We have no control over them.

And some things never change. The rising sun, wasted time, and the public's ignorance as to what the CIA really does.

But in between these boundaries lie matters of consequence.

Real matters of consequence.



But that is naive thinking. As Huck Finn might say, when it comes down to it, they ain't nothin'.

Grades, inflation, psychological job exams; semi-important issues that some people see as justification for waking up in the morning.

The question is: are there any real matters of consequence?

Are there any universal concerns that are unprejudiced to age, profession, ideology, even culture?

The answer is yes. But you can't skip to the end of the column to find them out. Read on.

I spent the weekend at a friend's house in a suburb of Philadelphia. It was late Friday night and he was telling me the things he considered important in his life. It had been a long time since we heard about each other's lives.

We sat in his kitchen sipping kahlua and I enjoyed the contrast that his warm, comfortable home offered over my cold, damp apartment here in Happy Valley.

The first few years of his marriage were like most other new marriages. A horizon cluttered with worries about money and family.

For a while I believed that taxes and grades seemed like reasonable concerns. After all, I'm a finance major. Deficits and interest rates are as big a part of my vocabulary as my name.

And as my search for the all-encompassing, universally-satisfying job continues, high grades seem to at least keep open a road.

He taught science to the teaching profession for a more financially rewarding one. I sensed that he resents how our system treats teachers; especially grade school and secondary school teachers.

I couldn't disagree.

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They don't change when a new problem arises. The real ones always remain.

Some people consider taxes to be most important. Others think grades demand the greatest priority. Still another portion resolve their lives around the bar with the best hourly specials.

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couldn't have imagined even living in. To him, these are matters of consequence.

Who could disagree with him? How do taxes and grades and most everything else that takes up our time compare to family and health?

If you found out that you were dying, or if you learned that someone close to you was dying, most of what you had considered as matters of consequence would fly out the window. Your priorities would change. Everything you valued would be obsolete.

Sometimes we struggle when deciding what are the really important things in our life. Usually we become aware of them only during extraordinary times.

If we were confronted with a life or death situation, such as a missile heading for State College, how would we react?

The first thing we would do is try to get the hell out of here. But if that wasn't possible, then what?

Let's also assume that there is no time to go downtown and grab a last beer.

I think that most of us would reach for the person physically closest to us. Some other person who shares the confusion and morbid ecstasy of the moment.

And it would be in grasping that person that we would realize what matters of consequence are.

As my friend and I finished our kahlua, I realized just how misplaced priorities can become.

I have had to re-evaluate what kind of a job

I am really looking for. How important is a salary versus enjoying something that you'll spend a third of your life doing?

We all know someone who can't leave the frustrations of work at the office. And his family suffers. I don't need that shit.

How important is the length of your title versus what kind of person your boss is? How many of us are annoyed at the business people that cheat or steal to further their own interests? Would you feel any remorse over accepting a job with someone like that?

Would you recommend this employer to a friend, or even an acquaintance? I try to shy away from recommendations. Whether it is a job, an employer, a restaurant, a movie or a record, I keep my distance when someone asks me how I liked something.

But I'm about to make an exception.

There is a book, a very short and inexpensive book, called *The Little Prince*. It was written forty years ago by Antoine de Saint Exupery and it is the most amusing, eye-opening and thought provoking piece I have read.

In this book he tells a tale about matters of consequence.

Life, death, health, friends.

Tied up within the worries about the paper due on Wednesday and the job interview on Friday are the really important things in our life. Matters of consequence.

Michael Kutner is a senior majoring in finance and a columnist for *The Daily Collegian*. His column appears every Monday.

Omnicron Nu, a national honor society for Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Management, Individual and Family Studies, and Nutrition majors, proudly announces its newest initiates:

- Catherine Barbieri
- Christine Barbour
- Margaret Behrman
- Patricia Charlton
- Barry Cope
- Danielle D'Alisandro
- Patti Deebel
- Tracy DeWald
- Michael Gildea
- Barbara Greer
- Shelly Hall
- Michael Henning
- Ardyth Holder
- Marion Hryhorcuff
- Amy Killinger
- Carol Macdonald
- Amy Mazer
- Sana Jo Mendo
- Adrienne Micuda
- Marci Mongeall
- Irene Muth
- Denise Moser
- Wendy Nielsen
- Dori Rothschild
- Joanne Ryczak
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the daily Collegian

Monday, Nov. 11, 1985
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Gall L. Johnson Karen Jaret
Editor Business Manager

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- Runs indefinitely
- Keeps patients alive
- Well designed
- Runs until 1991
- Keeps incumbent Congressmen alive
- Designed by a committee

Foot in the door:

Sometimes, when the hurt floods in too fast, I slam the door and just go cold.

She's asleep now. I can just make out her face in profile. Her eyes are moving behind her eyelids, seeing dreams. A world all her own. We could be close, I think. We could be.

I reach out and touch her, tracing lines across her skin. She stirs a little; I pull back. I want to let her sleep.

I roll on my back, staring up at the ceiling, an arm's length away. My watch tells me it's four in the morning. I'm really tired, but I can't sleep. God, I want to sleep. I think I'd like to live with her.

I look back at the watch and count out time against my heartbeat. Adrenaline

drives my heart like a piston. I'm so afraid. She's so pretty, lying there. I want to make love to her. I don't think she'd object to me waking her, but I don't want to cry. I think my head and heart would gladly send me in two different directions if they could. Now, they're saying run and stay at the same time; there's little middle ground on which to walk.

I remember all the advice I used to give my friends.

"Do what your heart says. Do what makes you feel good."

They'd shake their heads and answer, "You don't understand — it's not that easy."

They were right.

I was kind of naive back then. Used to believe that every story has a happy ending. That everything works out for the best.

But they knew — just like she and I now know — that very little works out to accommodate our dreams. You've got to try to make things work. The older you get, the more hurt you accumulate, the harder it is to be open and caring.

Thing is, I never thought it would happen

to me. I catch myself avoiding situations that require commitment, and I look around and see a lot of people — including the ones I care deeply about — avoiding pain by avoiding life.

And here I lie in bed, staring at a woman that I want to love, trying to decide whether I can love. I think of how closed she is. How she can cry against me, but not say why; how afraid she is to let herself bleed. I wonder, suppose I open up but she remains closed — how much will that hurt?

I shiver a little.

Then I wonder if she thinks the same about me.

Dammit, why do people take their pain out on all of us? Why don't they cry instead of becoming angry and hateful? Why do they screw us up so bad that we can't even carry on with our own lives?

Good question.

Now substitute 'we' for 'people' above. We take out our hurt on others by closing ourselves off from the world. It's pretty evident, in every aspect of our lives, that we're isolationists at heart; yet, at the same time, as Harlan Ellison puts it: "It isn't

death that bothers me, it's dying alone."

It seems to me that we ensure our loneliness by shutting off the world. As a writer of sorts, it causes me a great deal of problems. How am I supposed to portray the aspects of a world that I can't become involved in?

I can't. I put my foot in the door; I try to keep it open even just a crack. Sometimes, when the hurt floods in too fast, I slam the door and just go cold.

I suppose that's why so many of us drink and party. We can't take the aloneness we impose on ourselves, and we don't know any other way to drop our defenses. And sometimes when we drink too much, those walls we build come crashing down, and suddenly we find ourselves naked.

I put my hand on her shoulder and squeeze gently. I love you, I think. Why can't I commit myself? Why can't I try to be happy?

Is the fear that strong?

I'm sure most of us remember that phrase from childhood. Big boys don't cry. God, how I remember that sentence. I must've heard it a million times.

Society doesn't want you to cry. Because then people might have to lend you a hand; someone would have to listen to your problems — someone would have to feel. Funny thing is, we're society. You and me and our friends. Instead of letting each other heal, we tell each other to internalize the pain, to bury it deep where at will eat at you for the rest of your life.

The problem of pain. We're never taught how to deal with it. The only answers I can offer are to feel what hurts, to talk about it, to cry. Can't you cry before your closest friends? Or in front of your lover? Can't the walls come down even a little?

We live a damn short time. Who wants to live it by burying one's most intense feelings deep inside? Who wants to live a lie? Who wants to die alone and unloved?

Me. I want to try and heal, I think. I want to love and be loved, I think. And as I stare at her, I wonder what she thinks.

John Orr is a sophomore majoring in English and a columnist for *The Daily Collegian*. Beginning next week, his column will appear every other Tuesday.

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