

opinions

The Daily Collegian
Monday, June 30, 1986

editorial opinion

Exposing a silent fear

With the pressures of making the grade academically, fitting in socially, and preparing for a life in the dreaded "Real World," college existence already has more than its share of psychological torment. Why then would we create our own special brand of physical and mental abuse to add to this already intimidating list, and in typical college fashion, pass it off as good clean fun?

We do, believe it or not. It's called hazing and it can indeed be considered physical and mental abuse. Sometimes more.

In 1978, Chuck Stenzel, a student at Alfred University in New York, died while trying to drink alcohol in 9-degree weather as part of a fraternity's hazing practices.

This incident confirmed that fraternity pranks and rituals, previously considered harmless or perhaps ridiculous, are becoming increasingly dangerous.

The state House of Representatives passed a bill earlier this month that would make hazing — harsh initiation rituals during which pledges prove their loyalty and endurance — a third-degree misdemeanor punishable by a \$2,500 fine and one year in prison.

Currently, hazing isn't covered by any specific law. This proposal, which is now under the state Senate's consideration, would require colleges to adopt a written anti-hazing policy and a method for enforcing it.

In the 1985-86 Policies and Rules for Students, Penn State outlined its hazing policy, stating that registered student organizations may not engage in any activity on

or off campus that might interfere with academics and cause mental or physical discomfort or injury.

Along with the University, Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council and 67 of the 71 Penn State fraternities and sororities associated with national chapters also already have their own anti-hazing statements.

Enforcement is where the problems lie. Disciplinary action cannot be taken until someone complains of wrongdoing. IFC, for example, cannot act unless a report alleging hazing violations is filed with its Board of Control. Considering the secrecy with which fraternities guard their initiation rituals, chances are most violations will go unreported.

But if the letter of the law is not easily enforced, its spirit is hard to avoid. The main purpose of the legislation is to deter hazing.

The fact that pledges have some leverage to fight back against severe hazing practices ought to be enough to keep the worst potential offenders in line. Given the fears of liability currently hitting so many organizations, greets ought to realize that they are responsible for the safety of their members. And the new law would make it easier for individuals to hold the University and its organizations accountable in court.

Taking into account the secrecy surrounding hazing and the nature of its intangible mental damage, proving criminal mistreatment might be an imposing challenge. But at its best, the law will make greets rethink their rituals.

Here we are in the heat of the summer in Happy Valley. If you think there are HOT issues out there that need to come to the attention of your fellow students, then write a letter to the editor. The Daily Collegian's opinion editor welcomes letters from students, faculty, staff and area residents concerning issues and topics of interest to the Collegian's readership.

Authors must present letters to the editor (no more than 1 1/2 pages, double-spaced) or forums (up to three typed pages, double-spaced) to the Collegian in 126 Carnegie.

Students' letters should include the term and major of each writer. Letters from alumni should include the author's major and year of graduation. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter.



reader opinion

Contra Aid

As a voter, a member of the student government, and an American serviceman, I am disappointed and angry at Congressman William Clinger's vote to renew U.S. assistance to the Nicaraguan Contra rebels. Although he claims that such aid will help keep the United States from becoming directly involved in the conflict, it will actually assist in further entrenching us in the affair.

I find it particularly discouraging to observe that, while representatives of our government assert that we are attempting to establish a democratic, human-rights oriented government in Nicaragua, we continue to support the economic interests of South Africa, which systematically denies such rights to its 25,000,000 blacks.

Clinger must reconsider his position on this vital issue, and begin to realize that the United States cannot afford to continue contradicting itself on foreign policy matters which directly affect millions of human lives.

Bob Bender
Executive Assistant
Undergraduate Student Government

Soccer Squabble Part II

America has the right to feel proud. Sportswise, the country has been able

to succeed in almost every competition there is. There's almost nothing that America can't prove to be the best at. Almost nothing. Did anybody mention soccer? Nah. Soccer is a dumb sport, anyway. Isn't it? I'd rather watch pro golf, or "The Brady Bunch" re-runs, instead of a soccer match. Who the heck cares about soccer?

NBC mentioned that three billion people are expected to watch the World Cup final. Three billion. Two, according to our Sports Editor, but what's the big difference between two and three. Zeros, old pal, like the ones you would expect to get if you won any tournament in America. Of course, you'd get them after some commas, in checks. Doesn't it sound eddy tried, to no avail, to like the world's kids wouldn't give a darn. How come reaching in America the magnitude it enjoys everywhere else in the world. That attitude makes America the winner in almost every competition, but not in soccer. It could never be profitable to recall that winning is merely an excuse for playing the game.

Maybe it would be better if you ignored the subject, as America has done till now, instead of presenting it in a wrong way. What might seem facts to you is really an attitude which has prevented soccer from reaching in America the magnitude it enjoys everywhere else in the world. That attitude makes America the winner in almost every competition, but not in soccer. It could never be profitable to recall that winning is merely an excuse for playing the game.

Carlos A. Leon y Leon D.
graduate-chemical engineering

the Collegian

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Editor

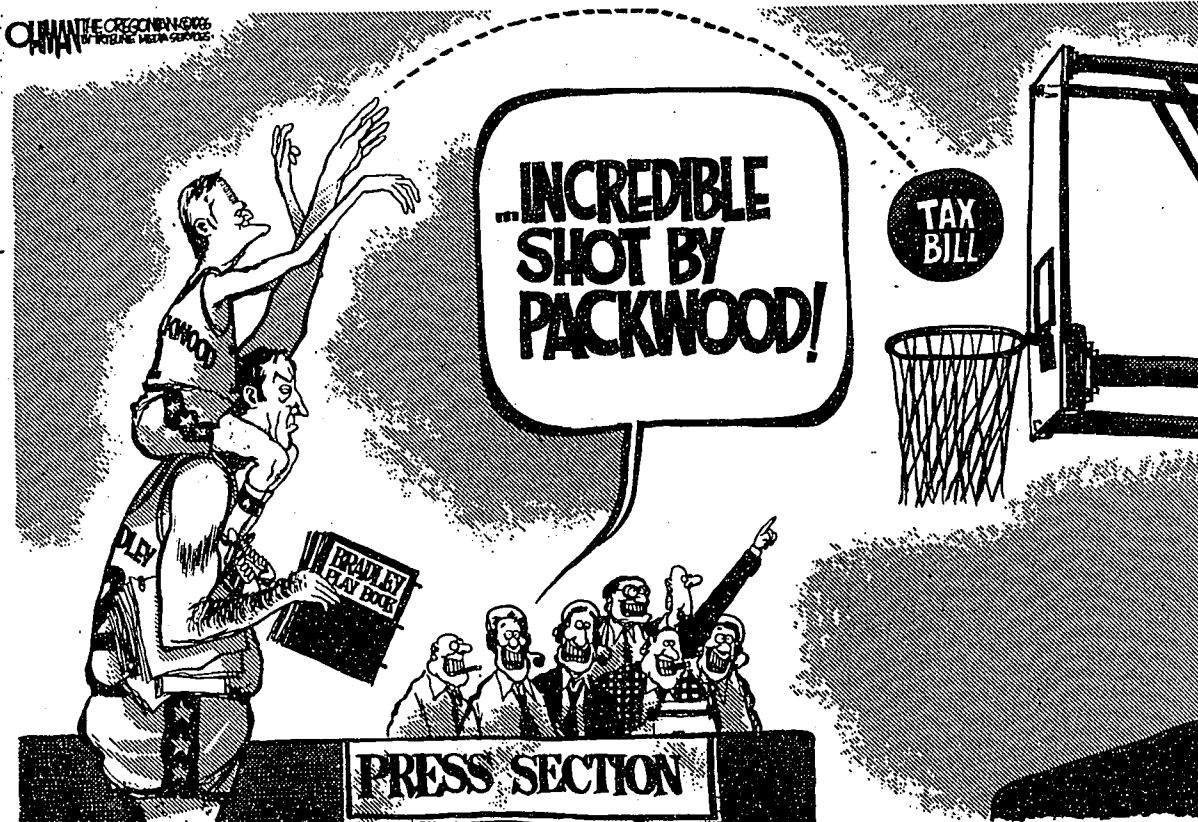
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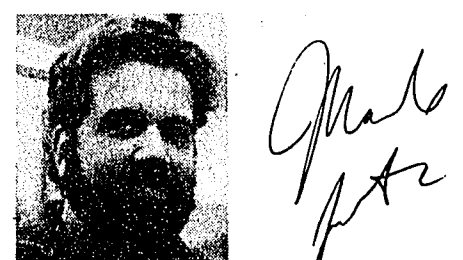


Redundant regulation:

Which political snafu or cure to society's maladies will win the Legislative Turkey Award?

"The more control, the more that requires control." — Unknown

It seems as though every day brings news of another piece of legislation being introduced, voted upon, passed or amended, the purpose of which is to fix a problem, control an excess, channel funds, or initiate action. The sponsoring politician holds it up as the answer to society's maladies. Recently, many laws have been passed in the name of the public good; the new anti-crashing law in the vocal minority, not necessarily desired by the majority, but accomplished in the name of all. There has also been a trend to throw legislation at a problem without considering the ramifications of the "solution."



We'll start locally. The most recent example has to be the new anti-crashing law in the State College Borough. Enough opinions on the virtues and idiocies of this law have been printed over the last few days, so I won't go into a dissertation on this one. Suffice it to say that I feel it is a useless piece of drivel which may end up producing more problems than it solves.

Another local snafu is the open container law that was enacted a couple of years ago. The idea behind that one was to eliminate the "practice" of public urination during the Phi-Psi 500 and the Arts Festival. Tougher enforcement of disorderly conduct and public drunkenness laws would have been much more effective toward achieving this end. (How interesting that the wording

of the law allows one to possess an open container in one's car.)

As we move on to the state level, let us stop to consider the Liquor Control Board. The Thornburgh Administration has repeatedly tried, to no avail, to disband the LCB and open liquor sales to the private sector. The LCB is an overly bureaucratic agency that has held the monopoly on the liquor industry since Prohibition. I feel that locally-owned and operated stores would be much more willing to pass down distributor's discounts to customers than an agency that has a 20 percent off sale once a year.

The state government came up with a real dilly with my next example. Legislation was proposed that would require the suspension of a driver's license until the age of 21 for any person under that age who was caught in possession of any amount of an alcoholic beverage. (Note: Not drinking and driving, just casual possession.) The purpose of this was to keep our kids from driving while intoxicated.

Anyone who frequents the downtown night scene has surely noticed the changes in "Happy Hours." Limits have been placed not only on the number of different drinks that can be "discounted" but on the amount of time that any special can run. There have

been many mixed feelings on this one, but I believe that this type of regulation restricts the free enterprise system of the tavern industry.

As we move out of our home state, we encounter the winner of the Legislative Turkey award. The New York State Seat Belt Law. Yes, seat belts save lives — I wear mine when I travel. However, by regulating their use, we allow insurance companies yet another way of shirking payment. Clauses are written into some life insurance policies which void payment in the event that the insured is killed while perpetrating a crime — that is, the breaking of a law. Hence, if you are killed without your seat belt on, your family receives nothing. In this case, the people that the law is designed to protect, become the victims of the law.

Now let's hit the national level. The Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Balanced Budget Act. Need I say more? While it is necessary, in the light of the ever increasing deficit, the letter of the law was grossly overlooked. The individual agencies were given no guidelines on where the cuts in their own programs were to occur. As such they were forced (or allowed) to "rob Peter to pay Paul." Had the wording of the law mandated a straight across the board reduction in all agency programs to include

salaries and/or manpower, we'd have seen administrators tripping over themselves to cut out the real fat.

There is an adage referring to machinery maintenance that our leaders would do well to remember: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" I am not a Libertarian, a Liberal, a Conservative, a Populist, a Socialist, or any other type of -ist, -al, -an, -er, or -ic. I just feel that if our elected officials would spend more time rewriting the existing laws to close the loopholes that allow murderers, rapists, child abusers, and other felons to become repeat offenders, the rest of the world would be able to take care of itself.

And I doubt very much that the human race faces extinction if I don't wear my seat belt while circling the block on my way to the 2-for-1 drink special at the corner bar.

"That government is best which governs the least, because it's people discipline themselves." — Thomas Jefferson

Mark Johnston is a senior majoring in mechanical engineering and minoring in English. His column appears on alternate Mondays.

Vets' health care funds declining, Edgar says



Bob Edgar

By KARL HOKE
Collegian Staff Writer

Veterans health care benefits will be reduced by \$234 million in the next year if the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit reduction guidelines are followed, said U.S. Senate candidate Bob Edgar.

Edgar, six-term congressman, D-Delaware, told Pennsylvania members of the Disabled American Veterans Friday that \$5,000 veterans seeking health care in this country, including 1,700 from Pennsylvania, are already turned away every month.

"Every major health facility is turning veterans away," Edgar said. "There has been a net decrease in health care expenditures while the number of veterans seeking health care has increased," he added.

Edgar, a member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, is seeking to unseat incumbent Senator Arlen Specter, R-Philadelphia, in November. Specter spoke to the veterans Thursday.

Edgar said that while medical care expenditures for veterans have increased from \$3.5 billion in 1975 to \$9.6 billion in 1985, those expenditures, if adjusted for inflation, have actually declined during the period.

"The adjustment for inflation is equivalent to \$3.2 billion. Therefore there has been a net decrease in real

dollars spent for health care," he said.

In a brief news conference afterwards, Edgar responded to Specter's optimistic outlook Thursday on veterans' healthcare programs.

"Obviously (Specter) hasn't spent as much time at veterans' facilities as I have," Edgar said.

Edgar also criticized Specter, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, for refusing to take a stand on two controversial Reagan Administration judicial nominees, Jefferson Sessions and Daniel Manion.

"(Specter) voted against them in committee, but then voted to report the nominations to the Senate floor," Edgar said. "He says his excuse is the full Senate has the right to confirm. But then why have a committee? . . . If Manion's credentials were so poor he should have been rejected outright."

On Thursday, Edgar challenged Specter to a series of televised debates. The location and number of debates would be determined at a later date if Specter agrees to the televised meetings, he said.

"I believe we should go to all six major media markets with the debates," Edgar said, adding that he would prefer 12 debates.

Specter had no immediate response to the challenge, but Edgar said he expects his opponent to agree to the debates.

Professor shows it's logical to make life simple

By MARC LOGAN
Collegian Science Writer

Logical thinking can save souls from hell. At least, that is what Professor Raymond Smullyan of Indiana University at Bloomington said last week during a lecture in Kern Building.

Smullyan used amusing puzzles and stories to translate the complex mathematical logic of symbols into the more easily understood logic of semantics. He discussed concepts such as conjunction, disjunction, and the infinite number of possible sets.

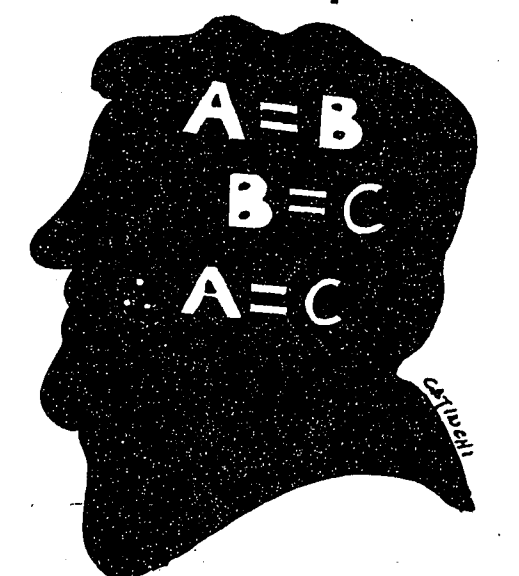
Smullyan explained the concept of the infinite number of possible sets through a story titled "Satan, Cantor and Infinity." The story was about a fiendish devil, who would only let people out of hell if they guessed the set of numbers he was thinking of — "the set of all numbers n such that n does not belong to the set named on day n."

Smullyan is a leading figure in the fields of logic, semantics and philosophy.

Helen Warren, assistant director of the University's Summer Session, said, "Many consider him the best creator of problems and puzzles of our time. He has been called a modern day Lewis Carroll."

In another example, Smullyan explained conjunction and disjunction. He discussed his favorite place in the universe — the Island of Knights and Knaves. On this island, what a knight says is true but what a knave says is false. To decide who was a knight and who was a knave, a census taker had to analyze responses such as "both of us are knaves," or "at least one of us is a knave."

Today, logic has many more applications than just telling stories, said Steven Krantz, a University professor of mathematics. Logic can be used to design electrical circuits, analyze communication codes, decipher a politician's speech or win an argument with a spouse, Krantz said.



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