

opinions

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The Daily Collegian
Thursday, Dec. 11, 1986

editorial opinion

Follow a leader

In 1985, 26 University students were raped and 10 other rapes were reported in Centre County, according to Donna Hastings, counseling coordinator at the Women's Resource Center in State College. From January to June 1986, 17 Penn State students and eight Centre County residents reported being raped.

These statistics illustrate unnecessary tragedy and should persuade University officials and women to take every precautionary step possible to prevent such incidents. The Undergraduate Student Government's Department of Women's Concerns is one organization doing just that.

The department is expected to distribute a map next semester showing well-lit areas on campus to help students choose safer pathways when walking at night. While co-director of the department Jane Meyer said the map will not guarantee safety, it will highlight better-lit routes; which will improve the odds of avoiding any type of harassment.

Assuredly, a map is not going to solve the dilemma. But, combined with the escort service and continued educational planning, the map is a constructive way to increase awareness in the areas of rape prevention and sexual assault.

Assistant Director of University Safety

Thomas Harmon said, "We think we're doing everything that's reasonably possible to make women aware. Unfortunately, interest among female students doesn't occur until after (an incident)."

While University Police Services should consistently strive to address the problem of rape, Harmon's point is well-taken.

All students — not just women — need to be aware of the severity of the problem and more importantly they must be willing to take action before an incident occurs.

Harmon pointed out that a woman who is raped or assaulted should report the incident immediately to police services. Whether or not a woman chooses to press charges if the assailant is apprehended isn't the immediate concern, Harmon said. He said prosecution plays an integral role in alleviating the problem, but medical attention takes precedence.

No one can logically argue that medical attention shouldn't be a priority, but women should realize that women will not stand idly by and allow this crime of violence to continue, prosecution is necessary.

Everyone needs to follow the lead of the Department of Women's Concerns and continue taking a part in preventing rape, and the department's efforts in providing protection against this crime are a step in the right direction.



ARMS FOR IRAN

the Collegian

Thursday, Dec. 11, 1986
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Students' letters should include semester standing, major and campus of the writer. Letters from abroad should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Names may be withheld on request. The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject letters if they are libelous or do not conform to editorial taste. Because of the large number of letters received, the Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all the letters it receives. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters received become the property of Collegian Inc.

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About the Collegian: The Daily Collegian and The Weekly Collegian are published by Collegian Inc., an independent, non-profit corporation with a board of directors composed of students, faculty and professionals. Students of The Pennsylvania State University write and edit both papers and solicit advertising material for them.

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Wanted

So, you want to be famous? You could very well get your name and photograph in this newspaper on a regular basis if you apply for a Spring Semester columnist position.

Columnists will be expected to write interesting, well-written and researched columns for the editorial page concerning issues pertinent to the University community.

You missed the early application deadline, but you can still get a head start for Spring. Over the holidays, come up with two original columns (3-5 pages in length) and watch for the deadline in the Jan. 12 issue of the Collegian office in room 126 Carnegie Building for further details. Questions should be directed at Opinion Editor Terry Mutschler or Assistant Opinion Editor Jim Higgins in the Collegian office or by calling 865-1828.

Farewell:

The questioning columnist moves on, but many questions remain unanswered

Give me health and a day and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. — Emerson

There's no doubt in my mind that I'm the luckiest man in the world. Not only do I have good health, happiness and a girlfriend who makes each day like Christmas. Eve for a 6-year-old, I have a president who consistently gives me something to write about.

Joker D. Brodeur

Now, I realize that if you're a Reaganite, I've probably rubbed you conservatively cut for the wrong way at some point in the

last two years. Surprise! Guess what I'm about to do again.

But this time, please indulge me. Try to understand the sheer elation I'm feeling now that Ronzo has stepped in a pile of presidential poo-poo with this Iranian arms deal thing.

You see, the big guy did more than just damage the credibility of our foreign policy and taint his image as one of the "great" leaders in history. He proved me right!

For two years, I've been using *The Daily Collegian* to warn you that, sooner or later, Nancy's play is going to screw up in a large way, and that where we live? It wasn't enough to make you listen when he lied to us about U.S. involvement in Central America or his ignoring the gravity of South Africa's impending self-destruction. No, most of you wouldn't listen.

And even if you choose not to listen to me now, hear the words of Vice President George "I believe we can win a nuclear war." Bush concerning the arms deal with Iran: "Mistakes were made." Indeed,

for two years, I've been expressing my frustration and dissatisfaction with the man we elected to sit in the world's greatest country. Yes, believe it or not, I love this country; I don't necessarily love all the people in it, and our president happens to be one of the latter.

Let's face facts — Jimmy Carter may have been a weak president, but in 1980 we elected an idiot to replace him. But hey, everyone makes mistakes. It's time to pick up the pieces and move on.

So we screwed up. So what? We have to be optimistic. Eight years of idiocy in the White House ought to buy us a century of sensibility.

My time as a *Collegian* columnist will end with this column. So when it comes time to question the president in the future, you're on your own. This is, so to speak, my "last will" through the opinion page.

At times, it's been frustrating, especially when my pleas for prudent decision-making and the consideration of alternative points of view have fallen on deaf ears. But it's been worth every prank phone call, every death threat and every sneer from that short guy in the dining hall.

If I've helped even one person see that Ronald Reagan is more than just a robust, cute old man who likes horses and jelly beans and spending money to fill faceless people in other countries, I've succeeded in my attempts.

To me, Ronald Reagan symbolizes and reflects the lack of conscience that so many other Americans lack. He is the personification of the confusion of concepts that hurt us all. Witness the way people on this campus interchange and equate the words liberalism and communism, humanism and atheism, caring and weakness.

Reagan has not served his country as much as he has served to perpetuate the jingoistic belief that to question or disagree with your country's actions is tantamount to plotting against it. It is because I love this country that I question our leaders, who, by and large, are not very good ones.

As a writer, I feel an obligation to be true to myself, my conscience. As a columnist, I've tried to appeal to your sense of conscience, because it is one of the things that connects us as human beings.

That's part of the reason why being a columnist came easy for me. I took the easy way out by writing about that which we all have in common. Unfortunately, I ran head first into difficulty by writing for people, no more or less fallible than I, who often choose to ignore their conscience.

A lot has changed in two years — some of it good, some of it bad, and for me, one part of it great. My wish for you is to not only experience and grow with the changes to come, but to facilitate them. Questions breed answers, but silence breeds ignorance.

I have found peace and happiness. I wish the same for you.

Smile, it's almost Christmas Eve.

John Brodeur is a graduate student and a columnist for The Daily Collegian.

opinions

Scientists versus humanists

Just what you've been waiting for — it's time for the Scientists vs. the Humanists. They've been throwing beer bottles at, or better yet, killing each other for the past 350 years. In keeping with this illustrious tradition, I will let the two sides battle it out, here, in my very column.

It's hard to tell who's winning; that depends on who you ask. Who's losing? That's easy, we all are.

Is it possible that I have been hallucinating about the animosity here? It wouldn't be my first hallucination, but I find no other answer to why a particular group of engineering students, on finding out that there was a philosophy major on the same room, began to laugh and make derogatory comments about the discipline of Philosophy in general.

I've also met people who, on finding out that I would like to go to medical school, have launched an hour-long crusade designed to make me see the evil in my ways, and to renounce any form of scientific thought.

I find science fascinating (enough to make it out of my two majors). Like it or not, when you think about brain injuries, you realize how little control we have over our personalities. Small brain lesions (which can be produced by a hard hit on the head) in the right areas could prevent you from being able to read or write. Move the lesion over a bit and you could lose a large part of your memory. The amount of chemical reactions in our bodies is staggering. Throw one wrong chemical into the chain and *poof*, goodbye!

By looking at human beings from a scientific perspective, I have evoked the hostility of many humanists — I have no doubt about this. Of course there's more to us than that, but many humanists seem to want to deny the influence of our biology on our minds. Go for it — it will still be there.

I also share many aspects of the humanist position. In case you haven't noticed, I have very strong feelings toward free thought and the individual. The idea that society is more important than the individual is bull, as far as I'm concerned. Historically, science is responsible for that one, but science always did (and does) love to wallow in its own self-importance.

Hey, scientists, did you know that the revolution on which modern science is based — Copernican physics — did not derive all the proofs of its theories using the (beloved) scientific method?

Galileo, who supplied the proofs for Copernicus' ideas, believed so strongly in the correctness of the theory that he altered existing data and created some of his own "facts" in such areas as dynamics, "but shall not make up my data." The developer of the scientific method didn't use it; kind of like finding out the truth about Santa Claus, isn't it?

Humanists, you worry me. You are the ones who pride yourselves on your open-mindedness. Talking to you about open-mindedness in the area of science is like talking to a fundamentalist about religion or telling a beauty pageant winner about beauty tips — get the idea?

Some of you humanists probably feel we'd all be better off without science and that all scientists are unfeeling slime. Science has enabled nations to feed their populations, prolonged life and has allowed us to care for our sick. You



Abby Felgus is a graduating senior majoring in psychology and pre-medicine and a columnist for The Daily Collegian.

reader opinion

Connotations

Dear Mr. LaVerghetta,
This letter is in response to your "Man talk" letter which appeared in the Collegian on December 5. I would like to say that the world has always been dominated by women instead of men. You would now be called "our chairwoman Robert LaVerghetta," or "Congresswoman Robert LaVerghetta," or three years ago you would have been a freshman at college? Ridiculous, isn't it? Exactly. Yet women are still referred to as congressman, chairman, etc. You minimize its significance because you are not affected by it.

In your letter you say that the connotations associated with 'chairman,' 'congressman,' etc. exist solely in their (feminist) biased mind," and that feminists' objection to these words is extremely narrow-minded." But then you say that the word gunman "subtly suggests a man being involved, but so does 'chairman.'" The connotations of these words are not even the entire issue, but the fact that your disregarding one-half of the human race is.

You also say that "while feminists would label such words as 'chairman,' 'congressman' and 'spokesman' as sexist, 'doorman,' 'trashman' and 'gunman' are not objectionable." What studies do you base your evidence on? I believe that if we are to matter language (and we should), it needs to be done fully and completely, i.e. gunman/gunwoman, chairman/chairwoman.

I agree with you that eradicating gender-based terminology will not indicate true equality, but it is a step towards the consideration of women.

Michele Volansky
senior-foreign service

Self-sufficient

Within the past year, petroleum prices have dropped to their lowest in well over a decade. This has given rise to the illusion that the energy crisis is over. The U.S. is still in a vulnerable position with respect to energy.

Low prices and fossil fuels can't last forever. There is still a need for the development of alternate energy such as solar energy, to help put the U.S. in a position of energy self-sufficiency.

Josef Wicker
Freshman, engineering

Presents/grades

'Twas the night before finals
And all through the dorms
were desks covered with textbooks
and papers and forms.
All the students were tired
and very upset
because Christmas was coming
and they hadn't shopped yet.
The season was passing

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