

opinions

The Daily Collegian
Monday, April 13, 1987

editorial opinion

A three-tier blame

Somewhere along the road the Academic Assembly of the Undergraduate Student Government ran into trouble.

Instead of dealing with issues such as academic advising and the switch from baccalaureate degree requirements to general education requirements, assembly members got caught in the web of petty politics this past year.

It would be easy to solely point the finger of blame for the assembly's failures at assembly members and former president Debbie Roberts, but it would also be unjust. Three parties should accept the blame: USG executives, *The Daily Collegian* and the assembly itself.

Former USG President Matt Baker and Vice President Sue Sturgis are faulted for not making their misgivings known to the assembly and failing to keep the lines of communication open.

Baker told the *Collegian* he attended only one meeting of the assembly in his 12-month term. He criticized it for not being an activist organization and added he didn't think he could work with Roberts. He also cited overlapping meetings of the Committee Regarding Excellence in Education at Penn State as a reason for his absence.

"I should have gone to academic assembly meetings," he later admitted. "It might have kept the morale up."

He's right. Baker and Sturgis should have kept closer ties with the assembly to try and help solve problems within it instead of circumventing it by forming CREEPS.

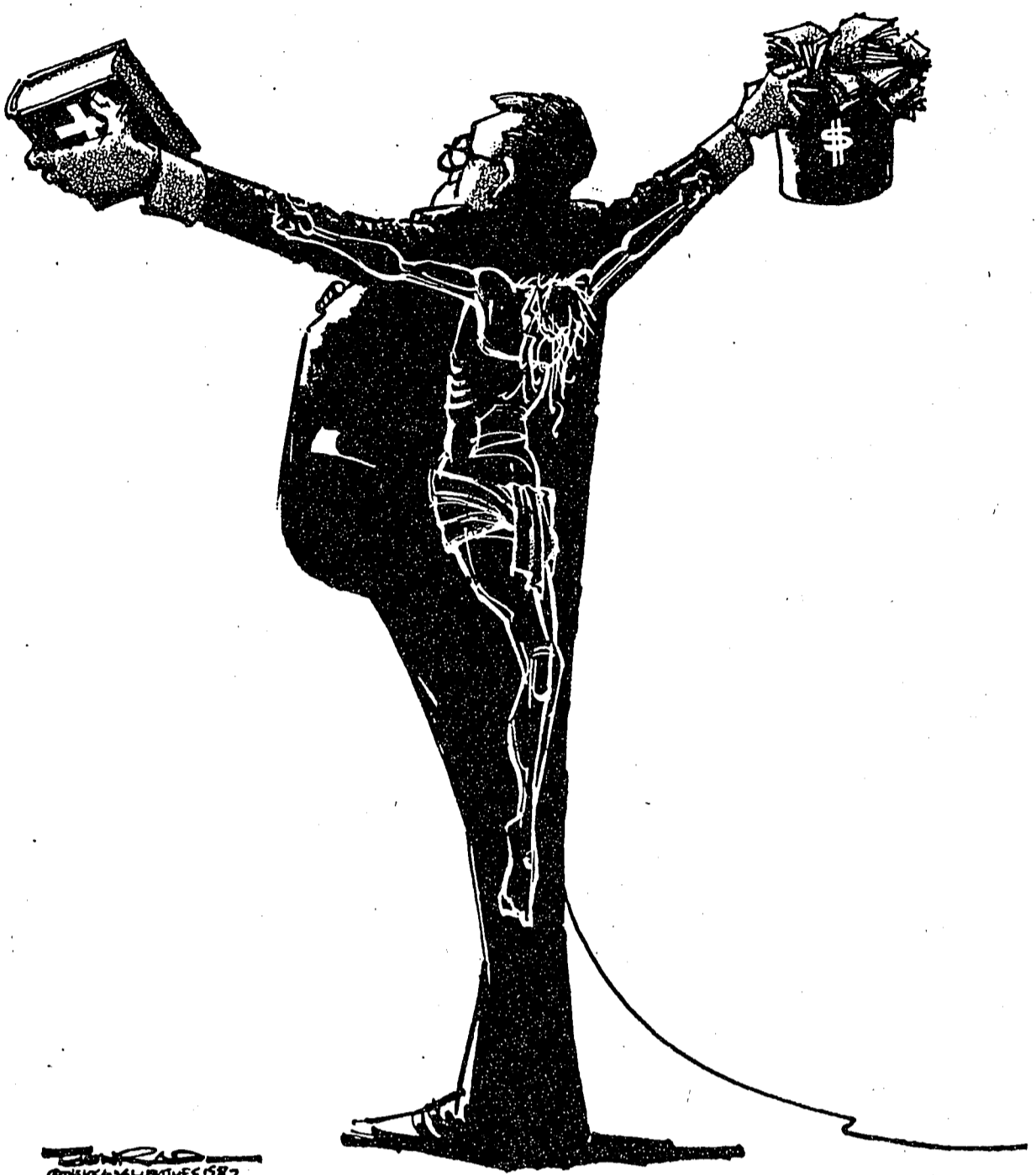
The Daily Collegian can't wash its hands of the issue either.

As a watchdog of the student leadership on campus, our coverage was less than stellar, to say the least. For the most part, the *Collegian* chose to ignore the assembly for the majority of the year because nothing was going on — nothing that was newsworthy. That in itself was a story.

As newsgatherers for the student body, *Collegian* reporters should have reported that those entrusted with representing that body were not doing their job.

Then, there's the assembly itself. It's on-again off-again election for executives was a most fitting end to a fruitless year for Penn State students. But, assembly members did accomplish one thing: they successfully silenced a necessary student voice to faculty and administration.

USG executives, the *Collegian* and Academic Assembly are presumably here to serve students and keep them informed. If they are at all concerned with upholding that responsibility, they will all learn from the assembly's past year of stagnation.



reader opinion

Created by One

I am a male Jew. Some say that I am "white," some just say that I am a Jew. Most agree that I am not black. This is not who I am, just how I am perceived.

When I first came to Penn State, I decided to get involved in black-Jewish dialogue. I believe that getting together is not only important to our own communities, but to our society.

Recently, I participated in "speak-out" on racism. Together with participating in Ebony and Ivory, and a program on the minister Louis Farrakhan, as well, I've begun to piece together a few themes. Some of them disturb me. Some of them only to doubt the issues, some to transform them, some to lend a hostile tone to the discussion. I'd like to address a few of my concerns:

Is Louis Farrakhan an anti-Semite? First off, to avoid a useless semantic debate, let's call it "Jew-hatred."

So, we ask, is Farrakhan a Jew-hater. Only Jews can answer this question. Just as blacks are best qualified to detect racism, Jews are best qualified to address Jew-hatred.

In fact, Black Caucus President Seth Williams hit the nail right on the head when he expressed suspicion of whites who claimed to "understand" racism, it's impossible to understand fully another's experiences. It is also true that just as all whites are at best recovering racists, all non-Jews are at best recovering Jew-haters. Let's not be naive, let us not set a dangerous double standard. Blacks should not ignore Jewish concerns about Farrakhan.

Is the color of Jesus, Moses, and other Biblical Jews not relevant to a discussion of Racism? Within the black community the discussion of their being black could be quite relevant in fostering pride and identity. And in this sense can a potent weapon in defending against racism.

To the white Christian community, it is also a vital issue to explore as they receive their racial and cultural biases. But as a Jew, I have difficulty relating to such a discussion. Jews, except for a stray minority, have never even recognized racial distinctions. It's a European concept that is alien to Judaism. Today, there are Jews of the white race, of the black race, and of the Oriental race; there are Indians and Arabs, Hispanics, and Native Americans.

And we all have more in common with each other, than with non-Jews of the same race. One need only go to try

Israel and see the ease with which this colorful collection forms a cohesive society.

So it is very difficult for us to understand this stress placed on skin color. We have very little insight to offer on this topic. We can relate to minority discrimination, but the issue of Abraham's skin color shall forever (and fortunately) remain irrelevant to us and to any black-Jewish dialogue.

Do Jews in reality oppress blacks? This is sort of like asking if blacks are lazy. It is a crude accusation that serves only to dehumanize others. It is all too true that the black community has to be suspicious of anyone coming to "help" them, they've already received too much "help."

But people should not be judged collectively as a group (needless to say). They should be judged rather as individuals on the merit of their conviction and sincerity. And so through my hours and hours of discussion with Black Caucus members, I've been accused of a thousand crimes and they still don't get my name right.

But I go on, and we go on, and those interested in fighting racism will be going on for a while. But there is a lot to look forward to, around the country and right here at Penn State.

Racism is an issue that concerns everyone, it cannot be solved by the black community working alone, nor can it be solved if we believe the problem exists only in the white community.

We still have much to learn from each other. White is not beautiful, nor is black beautiful. Individual people are beautiful for their views and ideas. Their views and ideas are beautiful. We have not all one Father? Has not one God created us?

Yoram Egonis
freshman-economist

you what you asked. I have participated and engaged with blacks and black organizations. To me, you are at the very least a person with whom I can share the world. To you, I am at most a "recovering racist."

Similar to written history, your article was aimed at the masses. I am the minority you overlooked. I'm the minority behind your cause one 100 percent. I'm the minority who wants to help. I know of the racist horrors of past and present. I don't "wholeheartedly understand" the African American's plight, but I do try. I am at most a "recovering racist."

You said that being black in America means constant oppression and forced struggle. Although I do not know you, I am sure that you are also rightfully proud to be an African American. You also said that being black in America is to be constantly told by white people how you should feel about being black in America. You say society taught blacks how whites think. You can never know how one person thinks until she truly shares. Are you willing to share? I am. I am at most a "recovering racist."

Your charted "journey of a million miles starts with the first step." Some of us have already taken two or three. We have not asked blacks to change for our acceptance, yet we have changed for yours. Some of us are trying and want to help. I feel for the pain history of the African American. I want to move on. I want to overcome. The most I can be is a "recovering racist."

Allow me to recover.

Kimberly Beane
senior-elementary education

Why am I here? Why should I trust God? Is it worth it? When that person does decide to accept Jesus into his life, it is because he knows that He is the answer to all of his questions. It is a process that is far from blind.

Andrew also refers to the fact that "faith makes us vulnerable to betrayal." Faith in God, however, does not. It is a truly wonderful feeling the first time you leave something fully in God's hands. He pulls through — every time! He will never let you down. In fact, I have found that He can handle situations much better than I ever could! It makes me wonder why I ever trust myself.

As for robbing us of our individuality — again I must disagree. By trusting the Lord and following His Way, you are freed to become the person you are meant to be. What are you freed from: the many addictive temptations of the world. I do not need to preach to you about harmful effects of many of our society's practices such as excessive drinking, sex, and drugs.

We are all aware of them — and so is God. He wants to protect us from them. I propose that addition to such practices is what really robs us of our individuality. How can we be "ourselves" when we are dependent on such things to get us through the week, have a good time, or enjoy a personally fulfilling relationship? As a Christian, God helps you to resist such temptations.

Many of us have been discouraged by disappointing experiences in which we put our faith in someone, just to have them let us down. If this has ever happened to you, I would like to offer you some hope. There is Someone who will never let you down or disappoint you! There is Someone who rewards your faith by being with you every moment of every day! The Lord loves you and wants you to trust Him. As He says in His own words, "I will never fail you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

Kim Casner
sophomore-individual and family studies

Not forsaken

It saddened me to read Andrew Phillips' recent column on absolute faith. He repeatedly referred to blind faith and the negative consequences that can result from it. I agree with him. Christianity, however, is not blind faith.

the Collegian

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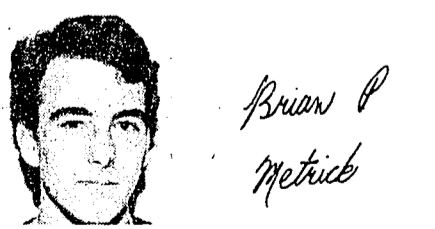
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Another brick in the wall

An interview with a graduating senior who is a reflection of us all

I'd like to take the opportunity to announce that I'll have a book coming out in your local bookstore this fall. It'll list for \$15.95, but I'll give you a break on the price if you go and broabreat your local bookstore owner into stocking the book. I haven't settled on a title yet, but I'm considering *Success? The Easy Way or Joseph Alcott: Another Brick in the Wall.*



Brian P. Metrick

This book isn't based on personal experience, far from it. Rather, I based my book on a series of interviews conducted over the past month with Joseph "Corndog" Alcott, a hopefully graduating senior here at Penn State. Now I've known Joe for some time up

here, and I'd have to say that he is an example to all of us. The following are excerpts from the interviews.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your background, Joe.

A: My old man is a lawyer for a firm in Philly. Mom works in some office downtown. Got a younger brother and sister. We all live outside the city, typical suburban bit you know.

Q: You had a pretty easy childhood then; family, car, and everything else?

A: No, it pretty much blew. Pretty boring, you know.

Q: Then you would say your experiences really weren't that diverse?

A: Diverse! Hell yes they were diverse! My friends and I went to the Gallery in Philly at least once a month. We used to hit a lot of shopping malls. I even saw a few black people on television a couple of times.

Q: I take it then your high school wasn't too racially integrated?

A: Racially integrated? No, I wouldn't say that.

Q: How'd you do in high school?

A: Well for one thing, high school blew. I

did enough of the busy work to get the grade so I could go to college you know. That's how the game's played, right?

Q: Why did you decide to go to college if you didn't like school?

A: (Laughs) Are you a smack or what? How do you expect to get a well-paying job without a college diploma? Besides, my old man would have been pretty upset if I'd have told him I wasn't going to school.

Q: What do you think of the statement that education's purpose is to help you find out who you are?

A: Don't throw that philosophy psycho-babble at me. Education, especially a college education, is for learning skills so you can go out and earn a living. Get real.

Q: Why did you choose Penn State, Joe?

A: Hell, it's cheap and you got Paterno and the Nittany Lions. (Laughs) Besides, it's got a good business school.

Q: What was your first year at main campus like?

A: Oh, it was awesome! I lived out in East. We didn't do any work and massively partied on the weekend. Threw up every weekend for five weeks straight.

Q: You joined a frat, but got kicked out. Why?

A: Not enough sex and beer.

Q: What are you majoring in?

A: Finance. Except for goddamn English 15 and Speech Com 100 I haven't had any major contact with my profs or taken anything but multiple choice tests. (Sorry, you'll have to buy the book to find out how Joe did this.) English and Speech Com weren't that hard though. I used some of my friend's papers and speeches. Still I think that education's purpose is to help you find out who you are.

Q: You can't use anything you learn in them in real life. Anyway I got a job in investment banking lined up after graduation.

Q: Sounds nice.

A: Hey, what the hell is your major?

Q: Take a look at the bottom of the column.

A: History?! (Laughs) Why didn't you go to some faggot liberal arts school for that? What the hell can you do with a degree in history?

Q: Well when I graduate I'm gonna buy a motorcycle, a stars and stripes helmet, and a leather jacket with the flag on the back.

I'm gonna head out west and do the Easy Rider thing. (Laughs) Let's get off the subject of myself and get your opinions on some issues. What do you think about divestment?

A: Gotta beer?

Q: How about Ron and ol' Iranscum?

A: Ron's doin' a good job. If people would only leave him alone. Do I have to get this beer myself?

Q: Hmmm. What kind of music do you like?

A: Oh, anything with a synthesized, repetitive drum track. Most definitely.

Q: By the way, who's gonna win the World Series this year?

A: Now you're talkin' some sense. I'm sorry but my Mets are gonna romp again. To hell with your Phillies.

Q: We'll see. We'll see.

A Hundred Years of Excellence. I'm Penn State proud. Buy my book this fall and make me rich.

Brian Metrick is a senior majoring in history and is a columnist for *The Daily Collegian*.

opinions

Acknowledging the absolute proof of God in all of us

In response to Todd Christopher's column "Talking to the Big Guy" (March 11) and to the "Vague concept" letter (March 23), I would contend that, as the Bible teaches (Romans 1:18-32), there is absolute proof for God displayed in His creation and built into our very selves.

Forum

We often ignore the fact that all reasoning is ultimately circular. The only alternative to reasoning in a circle is reasoning in a vicious circle. It has been said, EVERY argument or assertion begins with an unproven principle, or presupposition. If it could be proven then it would no longer be a principle but rather another statement derived ultimately from some other principle.

Everyone has a faith commitment to some god, whether it be something in creation (e.g. an ideal, a physical object, an event) or to the creator Himself. As would be expected under my assumption of man as a finite being created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), our reasoning must begin with a faith commitment because man cannot have exhaustive knowledge — he is finite and is created by God; he is not God Himself.

My faith is in the God who has revealed Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ, and who has given humanity a written, propositional revelation in the words of the Bible — this is my ultimate presupposition.

For the Christian, the Bible is the ultimate authority if the Christ of the Bible is truly his or her God (John 14:15) because the Bible is His

authoritative word (He authorized the Old Testament (John 10:35) and preauthorized the New (John 15:20, 16:12-15)). It provides the presuppositions upon which all consistently Christian thought is built. However, the non-Christian's infallible authority is his/her own mind, using experience as the basis for truth.

I mentioned above that the only alternative to circular reasoning (Christian thought) is viciously circular reasoning (non-Christian thought). Non-Christian thought, in assuming (1) that man was not created by the biblical God but is rather the ultimate and final reference point in explaining all things, (2) that all things are "created" and "controlled" by sheer random chance, and (3) that the power of logic within the human mind is the means of determining what is and is not possible within the universe of chance, leads to the "vicious circle."

Man starts out trying to interpret the universe apart from recognizing the Creator and, if consistent, ends up destroying the possibility of possessing any knowledge. For if God does not have the ultimate control over His creation (Colossians 1:15-17, Exodus 15:18) and random chance does, there is no possibility for knowledge. Every thought of ours is then a self-contradiction; one would merely be trying to rationalize that which is ultimately irrational. There is no probability or use of evidence possible — the notion of probability is based on reason, and to know any evidence requires the truthfulness of sensory perception. But if chance is ultimate, then my logic system may not be your logic system, and my senses may just be giving me random, inaccurate stimuli about an unknowable universe. Thus, non-Christian thought "steals" from Christian thought. In objecting to the Christian view of life, one must presuppose

its truth. "Proving" the existence of God is a moot point — He is the ground of proof itself.

The only reason we know anything is because we were created in God's image. Because of His mercy, our Creator has given each of us a limited amount of knowledge, reason and understanding (cf. John 1:9), to make life possible. Because God is rational, so are we, because He made us in His image. We can know facts about the universe because we were created to be, in certain finite ways, like the one who created the universe.

However, if we consistently believe that chance and not God is in "control," there can be no hope for authentic knowledge of anything. A consistent non-Christian outlook on life leads either to logical fallacy or complete nihilism.

The inconsistency in non-Christian thought is a reflection of the reason every human being (including myself) is deserving of damnation in the sight of a just and perfect God. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." — Romans 1:20. In other words, all of humanity knows that this God truly exists and that we are responsible for our actions before Him. We say there is never enough "evidence" to "prove" God's existence because we don't want there to be enough. Despite our hypocrisy, God in His love has provided us with a means of salvation from our sin — it is by trusting Christ's death and resurrection on our behalf to save us from what we deserve for our rebellion against Him. We must start living the way God created us to live — for the Creator and not for creatures.

Jeffrey Smith is a sophomore majoring in economics.

reader opinion

Absurd idea

The Baby M ordeal is breaking down America's norms and values. I have no problem with the legalities of the case, since if Mrs. Whitehead did not give up the child, it would have been a clear case of breach of contract. I find fault with the idea behind the surrogate mother.

Are there not numerous orphans and abandoned children in the United States in need of a good home with caring parents? I can understand the frustration two people must feel when they learn they cannot have children of their own but, the thought of paying someone to bear a child is absurd. It goes against the value held by most Americans that children should be brought into this world by a husband and wife, not some stranger. If the couple is unable to have children only option should be to adopt and give less fortunate children a chance to live in a better future.

The surrogate mother herself may not realize the burden this child will present. Initially, perhaps the only concern is the exchange of money, but after carrying the child for nine months and making sure she takes proper care of her own body so the child develops correctly, some type of bonds must form making giving up the child difficult at any price.

This case will leave emotional scars on Baby M, who will almost certainly read about herself in future history books since the judgment of her case is a milestone for our judicial system. This could have been avoided if her parents would have followed normal procedures rather than finding a "mother for hire."

Todd R. Swanson

Added pressures

In response to "Working on equality" and related reader opinions: I agree, affirmative action must take place in our society. Also, institutionalized discrimination must gradually be done away with because it's immoral and unconstitutional. But, I don't feel it's right for white males of the late 1980s to suffer for the discrimination of the past.

Sex role stratification will always be present unless our society can have an egalitarian outlook. This means members of our society treat one another as equals. With the Equal Rights Amendment and women taking specialized jobs outside the home, this could be accomplished. In better future.

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Todd R. Swanson

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Read all about it.

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May 7, 1970: About 4,000 students marched through town and campus in a funeral procession. They carried four coffins to symbolize the students who were killed at Kent State. It was another spring of unrest at Penn State. Read all about it.

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