

opinions

The Daily Collegian
Friday, April 17, 1987

editorial opinion

The real thing

The problem behind the W-4 is that Congress is demanding this more exact estimate as drastic revisions of the tax code take effect. . . . That makes about as much sense as, well, serving a soft drink in a plate.

They should do what Coca-Cola did when the public rebelled against its "new Coke" a couple of years ago. They should ditch the new W-4 entirely, reinstitute the 80 percent withholding estimate and restore something as close as possible to the "classic" two-page withholding form that served the public well enough for so many years.

Overboard

No. 8 in the American Bill of Rights is a provision against holding a prisoner under "excessive bail." Even discounting the dollar's diminished value over 200 years, all of our founding fathers would agree that a \$5.5 million bond would be excessive.

four tons of cocaine, jumped \$5.5 million bond. . . . Law is properly rooted in tradition and precedent. But it must stay current with reality. When dealing with criminals to whom a few million dollars is a laugh, maybe it should think of billion-dollar bail.

Overstepping bounds

U.S. District Judge W. Brevard Hand has far, far overstepped the bounds of judicial authority in banning 45 textbooks from general use in the public schools of Alabama.

The textbooks were questioned, in part, for the valid reason that they made little or no mention of the role of religion, or several religions, in the formation and continuity of this nation.

Hand's ruling defines as religion a set of non-religious practices and beliefs that are poorly defined, even by avowed practitioners, as secular humanism.

But that is a matter for the people and their public school establishments at the state and local level to take up. It is not a place for a judge to interject his own beliefs or assert that the irreligious practices of others constitute a religion.

Being blunt

Let's be blunt about this. The decision by U.S. District Judge W. Brevard Hand to purge Alabama public schools of textbooks alleged to promote "secular humanism" is bizarre, yet unsurprising.

turned, it could wreak havoc for educators everywhere in the meantime. . . . He has offered temporary encouragement to litigious book-banners from coast to coast. Their cases ultimately will fail. But until they do, the shadow of legal action will harass and intimidate countless schools.



"WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN."

reader opinion

Saving lives

A million thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who worked to make the American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days such a success. This delightful event will net approximately \$20,000 toward American Cancer Society programs of research, education and patient services.

Affirmative Action was originally brought about to abolish discrimination, yet the discrimination now occurs against white males of society. This is not right.

Mish mush

Re: John Orr's Column of 4/16/87
Kreem vs West, the Divinity of Mush, has commanded me, his oracle, to commend you, John Orr, on your recent column. You have fulfilled Kreem's Commandments:

1. Thou Shall Beg the Question!
2. Thou Shalt Oversimplify What Thou Refusest to Understand!
3. Thou Shalt Hyperbolically Rely on Hyperbole!
4. Thou Shalt Belabor the Dead Horse!

The end?

Affirmative Action has been a recent topic of debate, as well it should be. It is my belief that the courts are getting carried away with the implementation of Affirmative Action in the work force.

In a recent decision, the court declared public agencies could promote a qualified woman over a more qualified man even if the agency had not previously engaged in sex discrimination.

the Collegian

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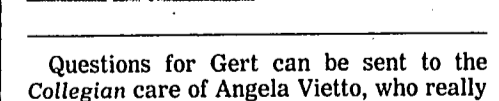
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True Gert

Armchair advice for all of those mystified readers and even the anonymous believers

The Daily Collegian presents "Dear Gert," the woman with all the answers. Well, almost all the answers. She still doesn't know how people cannot like jazz, how Reagan and Nixon got elected, since no one will admit to voting for them, or how to spell "onomatopoeia." So now you know what not to ask her.



Dear Mystified,
Good question. I suppose we shouldn't be too hard on them, since their hands are basically tied in those same ropes that tie them to the University, but I do find it amusing that everyone worries so much about who's elected, since I can't think of any significant way any of them could affect my life. Maybe a philosophy course is in order. Sorry, I don't really know all the mysteries of the universe.

Dear Gert,
I have a nasty problem, and I thought maybe you could help me with it. I know God exists, and I want to tell everyone about it. I keep writing these letters to "The Collegian," but they don't seem to be changing anybody's mind. What should I do next?
Believer in Brumbaugh

can never know what another person really is. But I don't think I could convince someone of that who believes that the meaning of life is using chemicals to make the light brighter and the colors more colored, or waiting up next to a different person every morning in search of that perfect half-minute, or five BMWs and a build-it-yourself log cabin with easy access to a mall. So I don't try.
And I think your case is about as hopeless. I don't really know what to tell you, either. If you really think religion can be harmful to your health, maybe you should take your findings to the surgeon general. I suppose you could make it a street preaching. Or just read about all the lonely atheists and agnostics of history. This could probably make you feel very dignified and intellectual, and possibly convince you to be satisfied with just believing in your own beliefs.

I've got a problem, I don't know if you can help or not, but I thought it couldn't hurt to try. I've been really depressed lately, and sometimes I start to think how easy it would be if I just didn't have to wake up tomorrow. My problems aren't exactly trivial, I don't think — it's not like I'm failing a class or my boyfriend left me or anything. It's so much more than anything like that. And it's not

PSU astronauts say their dream is still alive

By BRAD GIBSON
Collegian Staff Writer

For some, the dream of exploring space with complete safety disappeared in a fireball 74 seconds into the space shuttle Challenger's first mission. But two University alumni, both shuttle astronauts, still believe in that dream.

Paul Joseph Weitz Jr., deputy director of the Johnson Space Center and a member of the crew that spent 28 days in Skylab in 1973, and Col. Guion Stewart "Guy" Bluford Jr., a mission specialist for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, believe the U.S. space program has infinite bounds.

Neither man could describe his desire to fly in the shuttle. But the desire is there, and it is shared by many of the astronauts in the program.

"We could have found 10 crews to fly a week after the accident," said Weitz, a 1954 graduate with a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering.

The future

Before the Challenger exploded, NASA had planned to increase U.S. space technology. One such program was a permanent, multipurpose space station.

Program planners hoped to stimulate new technologies, enhance space-based operational capabilities and help maintain the United States' leadership in space during the 1990s.

space station for astronomy and biological experiments.

Since the accident, NASA has not done a lot, Weitz said, adding that NASA is "marking time."

Though NASA has suffered significant setbacks, both alumni are still optimistic about NASA's future, which, Bluford said, has two main priorities.

NASA had to endure the Rogers Commission and a congressional investigation. NASA also needed to find a focus and make decisions that could not be made overnight, he said.

The main goal is to get the shuttle flying again, said the 1964 aerospace engineering graduate. The second part is to develop a space station.

However, Weitz said, NASA has "changed its way of doing things" and is instituting a functional safety process for both the space vehicles and ground crews.

The shuttle will also continue to provide support for the Defense Department, though the department is moving away from relying on NASA, Bluford said.

"NASA had gotten complacent. We had relaxed in that area of safety," Weitz said, predicting that the mechanism for identifying the risks will be better next time.

In a recent Congressional report, the Defense Department — concerned about relying on the shuttle as the primary means of placing satellites in orbit — cited other means of achieving orbit, such as using expendable rockets and Titan II missiles.

Risk assessment, the process of analyzing danger, is always being studied, but all the information necessary might not be available, he said. The assessment is part of the flying game, Weitz said.



Guion Bluford

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