

editorial opinion

Praise for a departing politician

It is not very often that the press praises a politician for a job well done. However, when Joe Scoboria resigned his position as Undergraduate Student Government Senate president last week, USG lost a strong voice and a dedicated leader.

Scoboria has been an integral part of the student government, serving for two years as senate president and a total of three years on the senate. He has also represented the senate to the University Student Executive Council and is an active member of the College Democrats.

Scoboria led the student voter registration drive last fall and was also active in this year's registration effort. Scoboria, who has worked with two USG administrations — that of former USG President and Vice President Matt Baker and Sue Sturgis, and current executives Todd Sloan and Bonnie Miller — has had good relations with his fellow USG executives, who have

praised him for his performance. As senate president, Scoboria saw the institution of a liaison between the Lesbian and Gay Student Alliance and the senate — one of the first moves toward greater recognition of the needs of this minority group on campus.

In addition, Scoboria organized USEC's Governmental Relations Committee-Harrisburg that lobbies state legislators every year to advocate student interests relating to state budget matters. Scoboria also organized the Student Alliance for Education, a group that recruited students to deal directly with their legislators on these matters.

And he did all this while at the same time carrying out the responsibilities of a full-time student.

Scoboria gave his commitment to USG, and student leaders should follow his lead to work toward success for students and student government at Penn State.

Searching for the courage to go on

As most of us travel home this holiday weekend to join our families, enjoy our Thanksgiving day feast and recuperate for the last assault of tests at the end of the semester, we should remember that our world is much larger than State College and as the next college-educated generation, it will soon rest on our shoulders.

Where can we look to find the courage necessary to face issues when we return rested from our break? It is impossible to ignore the oppression of people in countries such as Haiti, where waves of violence continue to hinder the election process. A quick look at headlines tells the reader that the violence created during this terror campaign could allow the army to justify military intervention, preventing free elections.

The American and foreign military personnel stationed in the Persian Gulf and around the world should also be remembered during this time of family togetherness. Direct American involvement in the Gulf has been raging for over half a year, and stories about the violence are buried in the latter pages of the newspaper. Still, to those men stationed in the gulf, the news is as pressing as when the U.S.S. Stark was attacked last spring.

At the same time, events around the world indicate a potential for improvement of the human condition world-wide. The next few weeks will be a crucial and delicate time for issues on many fronts.

The groundwork for lasting peace in Central America has been established since the signing of President Sanchez's peace plan Aug. 7 by the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras. In compliance with a regional peace plan, the Nicaraguan government freed 985 political prisoners nationwide Monday. Still, we are far from peace in a war-torn area.

Secretary of State George P. Shultz and the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard A. Shevardnadze, discussed final preparations for the upcoming summit meeting. The two sides want to overcome the key remaining differences on the emerging treaty to ban medium-and shorter-range missiles.

In New York City, the system of shelters for the homeless has grown into a vast bureaucracy that city officials say is becoming increasingly competent in providing the bare necessities to those who need them. But work still needs to be done; we must treat causes, not symptoms.

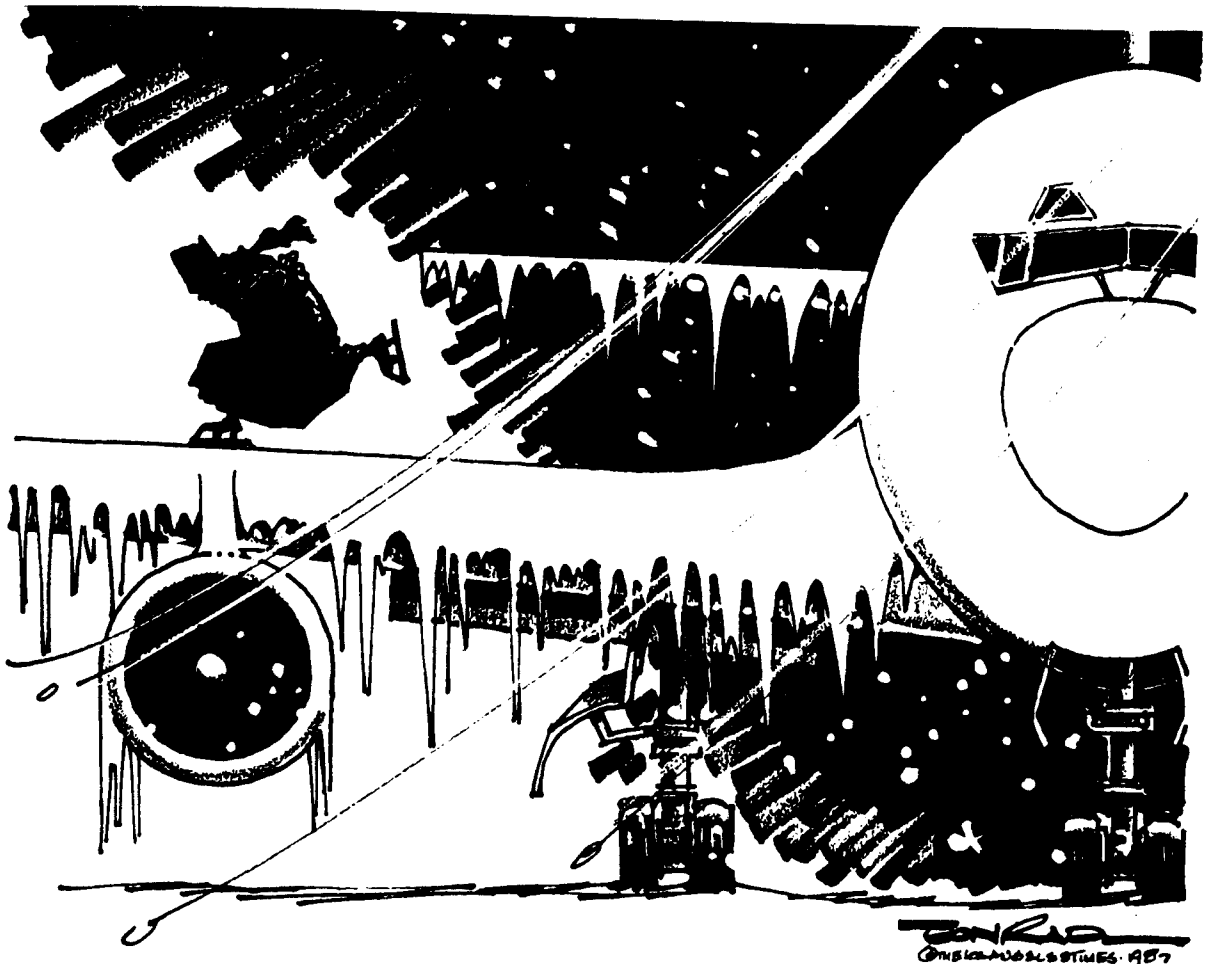
Faith in the human condition would be ideal, however current events seem to be roadblocks to optimism. But obstacles are meant to be overcome, and the challenges facing us are crucial. Over the long weekend, take time out and consider humankind's great potential — visit a museum, listen to a symphony, or talk to a good friend, relative, or total stranger — and restore faith in the goodness inside us.

the daily Collegian

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reader opinion

Never a peace

Austin Haebler's "Clowns of the Circus" (11/19) was perhaps the most irresponsible piece of journalism I have read this year. Haebler displays a close-mindedness on the politics of Central America.

One should wonder how or why with all the knowledge Austin claims to have, with all the bar patrons in Nicaragua he has talked to, how he can write a four column analysis of the Nicaraguan problem without once mentioning the Soviet Union.

Before taking off on a monologue that would make Raio Moscow proud, Haebler muses: "I wonder if Nicaragua will ever be at peace?" I can answer that question for him now and save him the trip. "NO!"

No, because Nicaragua was the first step of soviet style communism onto mainland America. No, because Nicaragua's purpose as a Soviet client state is to foment more revolution.

Daniel Ortega fully accepts revolutionary politics, Soviet style. In doing this he demonstrates that he doesn't give a damn about peace, only about spreading communism, and in order to do this he must quell (destroy) dissent and stay in power.

No, because the so called rights of the Nicaraguans, wounded under Somoza, were murdered when Ortega betrayed the revolution into the hands of the Soviet Union. Today, Nicaraguans have no rights. No, because peace plans to the Soviets and their client states are merely offen-

sive tactics to be used in peacetime. They draw the defender in, weaken him, and then attack when convenient.

If Sandinista power is solidified in Central America as it would with such a "peace" plan, I could only warn Oscar Arias that he will not be able to hide behind his Nobel Prize when communist rebels are running up his presidential palace screaming for his blood.

To Austin I can only suggest that looking for truth and enlightenment in the revolution and Marxism advocated by the Soviet Union is like searching for the proverbial snowball in hell.

Michael T. Ousey
junior-journalism



Write now!

The Collegian welcomes letters from students, faculty and staff. All letters should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than two pages. If you believe a topic merits more of an in-depth statement then you may submit a forum. Forums also should be typed, double-spaced, but may be up to three pages long.

Author or authors should include name, ID number, local address and telephone number on each letter. Writers should submit their letters in person to the Collegian office in 126 Carnegie Building during business

hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Due to a large volume of letters, we cannot guarantee that all will be printed. Opinion Editors Jim Higgins and Jeannette Gibson reserve the right to edit letters for length and also to hold letters or parts of letters that are judged libelous or in poor taste. Author or authors should include name, ID number, local address and telephone number on each letter. Writers should submit their letters in person to the Collegian office in 126 Carnegie Building.

Nittany Turkeys — students who don't really want to learn

For all of you Collegian readers who, like myself, have stayed around to attend classes today, I am pleased to announce that University President Bryce Jordan has devised a plan to acknowledge and reward the few faithful Penn State students that are still here.

A hidden camera has been installed in the obelisk, with the intent of recording every student who passes by while walking along the mall. To make sure that the students aren't just on their way to catch a ride a home, credit will only be given to those who carry books and not luggage.

Those of you who make it a point to avoid walking by the obelisk (in fear of causing it to crumble) can pass by without incident today. Thanks to Bryce Jordan's foresight on this problem, the workers who installed the camera last night also added some reinforcing struts to stabilize the structure.

The students who the University identifies today will reap many benefits. First, when they return on Monday, they will be given the most sought-after privilege on campus — the opportunity to schedule the gym class of their choice.

Second, some night during the next several weeks, the official University hypnotist will sneak into their bedrooms, leaving in their sleeping minds a post-hypnotic suggestion that will give them the answer to some obscure question on one of their final exams. As a final gesture of appreciation, they will all be invited to a feast presented by Bryce Jordan that will feature the succulent "Nittany Turkey" as the main course.

Personally, I will accept all of the rewards except the latter because thinking about the Nittany Turkey tends to make me a little nauseous.

What's that? You've never heard of the Nittany Turkey? Well, I've got the time and the space here, so let me tell you what I know.

The Nittany Turkey is a species of student that is not at all rare. Although my experience with it has been solely in my engineering classes, rumor says that it inhabits most other curriculums as well.

The turkey is characterized by greed, laziness and an incredibly overestimated sense of self-worth. It likes to think that it is very clever because it has found a way to "beat the system" and get by with minimal effort. What the turkey has discovered is that it really doesn't have to learn.

The turkey says to itself, "Hey, why should I have to learn this stuff now? I'll never have to use it in the real world. As long as I make the mean, I'll pass, graduate, get a job that pays good money and drive a nice car."

They can often be heard proudly boasting about recent successes in passing an exam without studying. In fact, it is common to find groups of these turkeys in the libraries where they gather, not to study, but to excitedly gobble with each other about their most recent exploits in mediocrity.



The curve is probably the turkey's best friend. As long as grades are curved, the turkey feels secure because it knows that there will always be lots of other turkeys lumped together and riding the mean as well. Faced with the prospect of failing the majority of the class, a professor will inevitably lower the grading scale so that the turkeys will be happy and content that they have passed.

The turkey likes partial credit exams too. All the turkey has to do is throw some equations around, spruce it up with a little bit of B.S. and snag enough credit to pass.

Once had a professor who didn't believe in partial credit exams. He said that he would not feel safe flying in a plane or crossing a bridge that was designed by an engineer who graduated on partial credit and never got a problem entirely correct. Needless to say, this professor was not very popular with the turkeys in class.

If an exam cannot be structured to include partial credit, the turkeys demand that it consist entirely of regurgitated material. The turkeys become very indignant when an exam requires them to actually think. Thinking is much too hard, and besides, to be able to think, the turkey would have to learn, and if the turkey is actually learning, it's not really beating the system.

Turkeys don't express opinions about too much that goes on in class, but when someone tries to make them think, the feathers really start to fly.

The turkeys aren't dumb. They know that if a big enough fuss is made, the professor will think again.

Since the turkeys avoid learning like the plague, they don't study. They merely cram for an hour or two before an exam. In fact, the turkeys tend to look down their beaks with disdain at students who do study and try to learn the material. To the turkeys, these students are merely "study geeks" who don't know how to have fun.

These "study geeks," the few students who do learn, find the turkeys to be an annoying burden that lower the quality of their education and severely limit the challenges that they can encounter.

Although some might think they could use the situation to their advantage as a means of setting themselves apart from the mediocre abilities of the turkeys, it is really no consolation. Being on top of a mountain of turkeys is not a personally satisfying accomplishment.

When they eventually graduate, the turkeys will discover that they have been misleading themselves all of these years. The turkey's job will be monotonous, and this time it will be the turkeys who don't know how to have fun. The money will never be enough, and the turkeys will find that making lots of money requires hard work and a great deal of effort.

Since this concept will be completely foreign to them, the turkeys will be lost and confused. Finally, they will end up accepting their repetitive existence, clucking on cue for their feed like the brainless pieces of poultry that they are.

Yes, that is the sad but inevitable plight of the Nittany Turkey. Is there hope that some of them might read this column and realize the unhappy path that they are following before it is too late? Of course not. Right now, they are all at home clucking to themselves about how they cleverly skipped classes and managed to extend their vacation by a day or two.

You, on the other hand, should enjoy the feast. In doing so, you will be perpetuating an old Penn State tradition because the University has been feasting on these turkeys for quite a long time.

Eric Bokelberg is a senior majoring in mechanical engineering and is a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Every other Wednesday, he sits down with a couple of turkey sandwiches and writes a column.