

EDITORIAL OPINION

Marching on against birth defects

The March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation is now celebrating its 50th year and for its golden anniversary will conduct several fundraising programs to help combat infant mortality and low birthweight. Locally, there are several interesting or innovative ways to take part in this worthy cause.

During halftime at last Saturday's football game against Syracuse, the Penn State chapter of Alpha Kappa Lambda fraternity held a drawing of \$1 raffle tickets to benefit the March of Dimes. Last year, they raised \$8,000 with this event, currently in its thirteenth year.

A special campaign for schoolchildren to donate dimes in an old-style March of Dimes campaign is being sponsored by Hershey Foods company. For every \$88 of dimes collected, a school will have a chance to win free computer software. In 1988, the original March of Dimes successfully collected two and a half million dimes to help fight birth defects.

Another new fundraiser involves dona-

tion-oriented parties directed at adults, in which guests use clues to guess the identity of a mystery person. The hosts of these "Solve the Mystery" parties ask players of the game to make contributions to the March of Dimes to sponsor the fun.

These events and others have proven helpful because fundraising is highly competitive, said Dwayne Peters, March of Dimes chapter director for Central and Southern Pennsylvania. This chapter, which includes the State College area has already raised \$695,000 of their \$751,000 goal for 1988.

The University is directly affected because its Department of Nutrition is a large beneficiary of March of Dimes research grants and the Hershey Medical Center also receives some funding, Peters said.

Interesting and innovative fundraisers are effective ways to encourage potential contributors to support the March of Dimes and similar charity groups' fight against birth defects. Can you spare a dime?

Setting back the open budget goal

When the Undergraduate Student Government Academic Assembly turned down the proposal of the USG Executive and Senate to open the University's budget two weeks ago, they set back an important student issue that could have a major impact on education at Penn State.

Their decision demonstrates a lack of communication between branches of student government and also highlights some of the assembly members' limited view of what constitutes an educational issue.

Reasons the assembly listed for voting against the open budget proposal include:

- Certain inaccuracies in the text of the rationale for the proposal, including an inaccurate number of classrooms in the Biotechnology Building.

- Questions about the reliability of sources for the information contained in the proposal.

- Concerns that revealing statistics about salaries within departments would be tantamount to revealing individual professors' salaries in small departments.

These concerns, even if valid, are not the only aspects of the campaign for an open budget. But if the senate and executive branch informed their colleagues in the assembly ahead of time, these types of mistakes and misconceptions could also be dealt with before the matter came to a vote. By working together, USG could create better proposals backed by a stronger, more unified voice.

USG should make sure that its members are educated on the issues and understand their full implications before forcing a vote on a proposal. The assembly was first

pressed by USG Executive Assistant Travis Parchman to vote on the issue immediately. If questions and misconceptions about the proposal existed at the time, the demand was inappropriate.

However, in turning down the proposal, the assembly demonstrated no understanding of the importance of the open budget to undergraduate education. Wayne Hudders, one of the members of the assembly's temporary committee to examine the open budget proposal and also a faculty senator, said the open budget is not directly related to an academic view point. Because of this, he said, it is not within the assembly's interest to draft a new proposal or work on the original.

This lack of understanding about the open budget and what it could accomplish at the University is incomprehensible. USG's stated primary reason for wanting an open budget — to halt increasing tuition so the University can continue to provide affordable, quality education — is certainly an academic issue.

The assembly's recent creation of a standing Open Budget Committee to examine the proposal comes very late. However, such a committee should strive to understand the importance of an open budget to undergraduate students.

To operate effectively, USG needs all of its branches to cooperate. By not taking this route, both sides failed the student body and created a new obstacle on the path to achieving an open University budget.

A unified voice of support and experience is necessary to effectively confront the University Board of Trustees on this issue.

Students remain under cat's paw

When the Undergraduate Student Government Senate voted last Tuesday not to remove Lion's Paw — a secret society that includes University student leaders — from its "Lair" in 419 Old Main, they condoned unfairness to students, who are denied knowledge of the actions of the leaders who are supposed to represent them.

Student secret societies — including Lion's Paw, Parmi Nous, and Skull and Bones — do not contribute to the well-being of the student body as a whole. In fact, they do just the opposite. The societies are elitist institutions which contradict the mission of student government to represent the student body. Instead of representing students, they provide a place where student leaders may decide issues away from the students' eyes. The "Lair" is the only room in Old Main

not used for official University business. USG Senate Vice President Kendall Houk, the sponsor of the legislation, said students' tuition should not go to support the housing of a private group. However, this proposal was defeated, Houk said, because most senators feel USG should not be concerned with the societies.

This attitude is hypocritical, as leaders in USG have often been involved in secret societies; former USG Presidents Todd Sloan and Matt Baker have been members of Lion's Paw, for instance.

Despite their protests, it is the senators' responsibility to respond to the needs of the students they represent, and the students at the University do not benefit from the Lion's Paw office in Old Main.

Write! a letter about education

We want to know what you think about education.

The Daily Collegian opinion page will have an "Election '88" Op-Ed page dealing with the presidential candidates' stances on education on Monday, Oct. 24. This is your opportunity to present your views on how the candidates are dealing with the education issues of this year's campaign.

Letters and forums will be printed according to the ratio in which they are received supporting either George Bush or Michael Dukakis.

So, if you strongly support either clown, write and tell everybody.

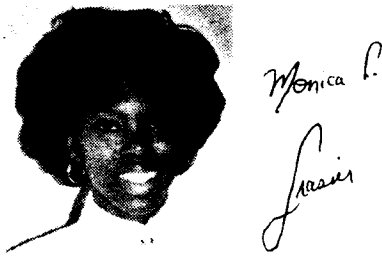
The opinion editors reserve the right to edit letters for material which is libelous, or for space on the page.

Letters may be no longer than two pages in length, typed and double-spaced, and forums three pages typed and double-spaced.



Respect for the blue-collar

As I was preparing material for what would hopefully be my first internship, I recalled all of the jobs that I had had. Since I was fifteen I had always had a job, not because I had to, but because I wanted to have my own spending money aside from an allowance from my parents, and also because I wanted independence and to prove to my family and myself that I was not a spoiled middle class kid.



At fifteen I had a typical teenager's job with no possibility of advancement, little responsibility, and minimum wage. My job was at the local public library.

During my senior year of high school I got a far less than glamorous job as a cashier and customer service clerk for the (imagine this) F.W. Woolworth's Co. I quickly realized that the job would not be nearly as fun as I had hoped, and I did not love the place, but I did not dislike it enough to quit.

I went to college in the fall, and at Christmas break I returned to the store in order to pay the debts that I had incurred when buying Christmas presents.

Being at Penn State for about a year, I had come in contact with many upperclassmen who were looking forward to returning to their summer jobs where they "made big money for doing little work." Many talked about how they were able to make long distance calls for free, write letters or play on their company's computer, while getting paid.

I was determined to go home and find me one of those "do nothing and get paid for it jobs." However, I could not find one of those jobs and ended

up working in the main video packing warehouse for Rite-Aid Corporation. The hours were factory hours — 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. — and the warehouse was 45 minutes away from my house, which meant that I had to get up by 5:30 at the latest. (What a summer vacation!)

As if that were not enough, the factory was not air conditioned. In July, by lunch time the temperature inside had well exceeded 100 degrees, due to the outside temperature and the heat given off from the tow lifts and power jacks.

In addition to all of those elements which I had to adjust to, I still had to get used to wearing jeans every day, being dirty, sweltering, and listening to at least one four-letter word after every "dictionary word." Eventually I adjusted to my environment and the people adjusted to me. We basically accepted each other, and the summer was not as long as I thought it was going to be back in June.

Again, this past summer I had planned to work in an office, until my plans were once again foiled. My parents relocated to a new state in the middle of my spring semester. I ended up going to a place that I did not consider home since I did not know anyone and did not know how to get around in the city. I ended up working in a grocery store delicatessen which was about a two-minute drive from my house. At least I couldn't get lost.

The story is basically the same as all the rest. I worked hard for less than desirable wages and an abnormal working schedule, and I got my first experience with having to participate in a union, pay weekly dues, and an initiation fee, and also hating management — which my father had always been a part of at his job.

I would never have imagined myself holding down any of these jobs, but I did, and I refused to quit. I am actually glad that I did. I had always been the child of two white-collar workers, lived in the suburbs, and experienced life with much ease. However, through these less-than-glamorous jobs I have seen what

another side of life is like, and for that I am grateful. While on that side of the fence, I learned that there are people who work hard every day.

There are people who take coffee breaks, but well-deserved ones. There are people who deserve hour-long lunches and are given only a half an hour, and there are people who are forced to work overtime one week without knowing whether there will be enough work for them for the next two weeks I have had the experience of punching a time clock for wages, meaning that if you are late to work, your pay check will show it. You are not given a grace period.

Through my jobs, I have learned a little more about how America is run than I have in any government, economics or history course. It is people that work hard every day that virtually keep America on its feet. America is the farmer, the custodian, the factory worker, the store clerk. America is not only the hi-tech engineer, or physicist, or the rich doctor — a.k.a. semi-professional golfer — but America is also the blue-collar worker. At times that may be the high-school educated person without the college degree.

The knowledge that I have gained has not even tempted me to become a college drop-out, because I think my white-collar parents would have a major fit, but my increased knowledge as a whole has taught me to have the utmost respect for the blue-collar workers. From them I have also learned to work hard at anything I do as if my task depended on it, as their jobs usually do.

I wish every college student about to embark on the real world could have the same experiences as I have because I neither regret them, nor am I ashamed of them. This is not to say that I will not be glad to get an internship, but I will be grateful and definitely not take that pencil-pushing job for granted.

Monica Frasier is junior majoring in communications and a columnist for The Daily Collegian. Her column appears every other Wednesday.

READER OPINION

Strange

I find it strange that Mike Pietrucha's essay on the U.S.S. Liberty — Friday, Oct. 14 — incident found its way to the editorial pages. Pietrucha's essay is strangely absent of any purposeful opinion.

I can only guess that his object is to bass-ackwardly convince his readers to withdraw or reduce their agreement with the United States' support of Israel's right to exist.

This presents a problem, however, because if you hold what happened to the USS Liberty against Israel, then you have to hold what happened to the South Korean 747 and more recently the Iraqi Airbus against the United States.

As it turns out, the United States is largely responsible for the nearly 400 people who were killed when the Soviets shot down KAL 007. One of our spy planes placed that flight at high risk by using it as a decoy and was the main cause of the Soviet misidentification by flying reconnaissance directly below it. As far as the downing of the Iraqi Airbus, the U.S.S. Vincennes is directly responsible for that, as our own follow-up report showed there was no outside cause for that tragic error.

If Mr. Pietrucha is implying that I should denounce my country for its past errors, I take offense. I love my country too much to lose my affections over mistakes, no matter how much sadness they can cause. And I refuse to be a hypocrite and denounce Israel for the same reasons. I will hope, however, that Mr. Pietrucha will make his intentions clear in the future to avoid such contradictions.

Phillip Staub senior-English

Rape

On Monday night I went to see *The Accused*, a movie which recounts the story of Sarah Tobias, a woman who was brutally gang-raped in a honky-tonk bar.

I was confused by the responses of many in the audience. During the movie, many people talked and laughed. The fact that people talk during movies might be attributed to lax parents or the confusion of some who falsely believed that they were in their own living room. But laughed?

Sarah's case was a difficult one for her lawyer: Sarah smoked pot and drank and wore provocative clothing before she was raped; she lived with a low-life, drug-dealing boyfriend;

Sarah's girlfriend was afraid to testify for her; the bar owner didn't "sing" because he was afraid to lose business; and Sarah herself was "uneducated." If it wasn't for her smart lawyer who tracked down a witness (Kenneth Joyce, a college student who witnessed his fraternity brother participate), Sarah would have lost

I don't know what perplexed me more about many in the audience, their ignorance or their insensitivity. Many found something to chatter or laugh about up through the beginning of the rape. It wasn't until Sarah's assaulters were actually penetrating her that everyone was silent. Must an actual violent act be graphically shown before some can begin to respond? Would it help the audience if Sarah Tobias was a Penn State woman raped by a Penn State fraternity man and two locals? Or even closer to home, would it be easier to comprehend if Sarah was your own mother, sister, girlfriend, friend or neighbor?

The movie concluded with two grim statistics: a rape is committed every six minutes and one out of four rapes has two or more rapists. After witnessing the response of many viewers, I now understand why.

Mark Kirby senior-English

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