

## Editorial Opinion

### State of change

#### Students can make University a better place to live and learn

Another summer has come and gone, and old Penn State remains the same. Or does it?

As usual, the end of August brings huge lines at the bookstores, busy signals on the telephone registration system, students moving boxes up and down the stairs, and incoming students with perplexed looks on their faces.

But this year doesn't have to be the same. Freshmen and transfer students, along with the multitude of returning Penn Staters, can make this year better, with a little help from the University and each other.

University students have been accused of apathy from far and wide, and perhaps the reputation has been earned, but this can be changed. Students can avoid the apathy label by learning what is out there for them.

Student groups thrive here. By joining an organization, every student can make his or her mark. Investigate opportunities to work with other students, administrators, faculty members and borough residents. Don't be afraid to show you're true colors. Chances are, someone else here shares them.

Utilize the diversity that cannot be ignored at such a large university. Perhaps overwhelming at first, size soon becomes an advantage when it comes to developing interests. Don't be afraid to explore and try something new. With everything from vegetarian cooking to a baseball card trading club, every student should find his or her niche.

Joab Thomas, a former University of Alabama president who is said to be accessible to students, takes over Sept. 1. First impressions are important, and Thomas is sure to help students if he sees they are willing to stand up and be counted. Outgoing President Bryce Jordan's tenure was marked by a general indifference toward the student body, and if students prove worthy of Thomas' time, he will surely give it.

Last but not least, it is important not to lose sight of the real reason for attending the University. A solid, well-rounded education will be enhanced by extracurricular activities, but will amount to nothing without classroom hours and studies.

And you'll see that Penn State can change after all.

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## Reader Opinion

### Back, not to the future

In an era of greater understanding of the obstacles that disabled individuals must overcome to function in our society, the University has taken a giant leap back into the dark ages. The University had a program called the University Program for College Students with Learning Disabilities until Aug. 17. It was at that time that the program's funding was eliminated after an about seven years of operation.

The program provided vital assistance and education to students who had the ability and talent to be enrolled at the University Park Campus, but were prevented from demonstrating them in their course work due to their specific disabilities. For some students, the program provided services offered in high school. However, other individuals who had struggled through their whole life not understanding why they could not do what their friend could do were provided services that unlocked the mystery of their disability as well as provided the means to exceed in spite of it.

One of the reasons I am taking the time to write this letter is caused by my personal experiences with the program. I was first diagnosed with having a learning disability when I was in first grade. The 12 years of my life that I spent in public school were filled with many academic failures and frustrations. When I decided on college, I believed that I would have to settle for a school that was not well-

### A chance to sound off

The Daily Collegian needs columnists and letters to the editor, and that means you have a chance to express your views on the issues that affect Penn State every day.

Letters must be typed, double-spaced and no more than two pages long. Deliver submissions to the Collegian business desk, 123 S. Burrowes St., between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Writers must present picture ID with the letter and provide a phone number for verification. The Collegian retains the right to condense or reject letters,

and publication is not guaranteed.

Columnist applications are available at the business desk on the ground floor of 123 S. Burrowes St. The completed form and accompanying writing samples are due Wednesday, Aug. 29. No late submissions will be accepted.

Forward questions and comments to opinion editors Colin Barr and Kimi Eisele, 123 S. Burrowes St., University Park, Pa. 16801. Phone: (814) 865-1828.

## the Collegian

Wednesday, Aug. 22, 1990  
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**Letters Policy:** The Daily Collegian encourages comments on news coverage, editorial policy and University affairs. Letters must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than one and one-half pages. Forums must also be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than three pages.

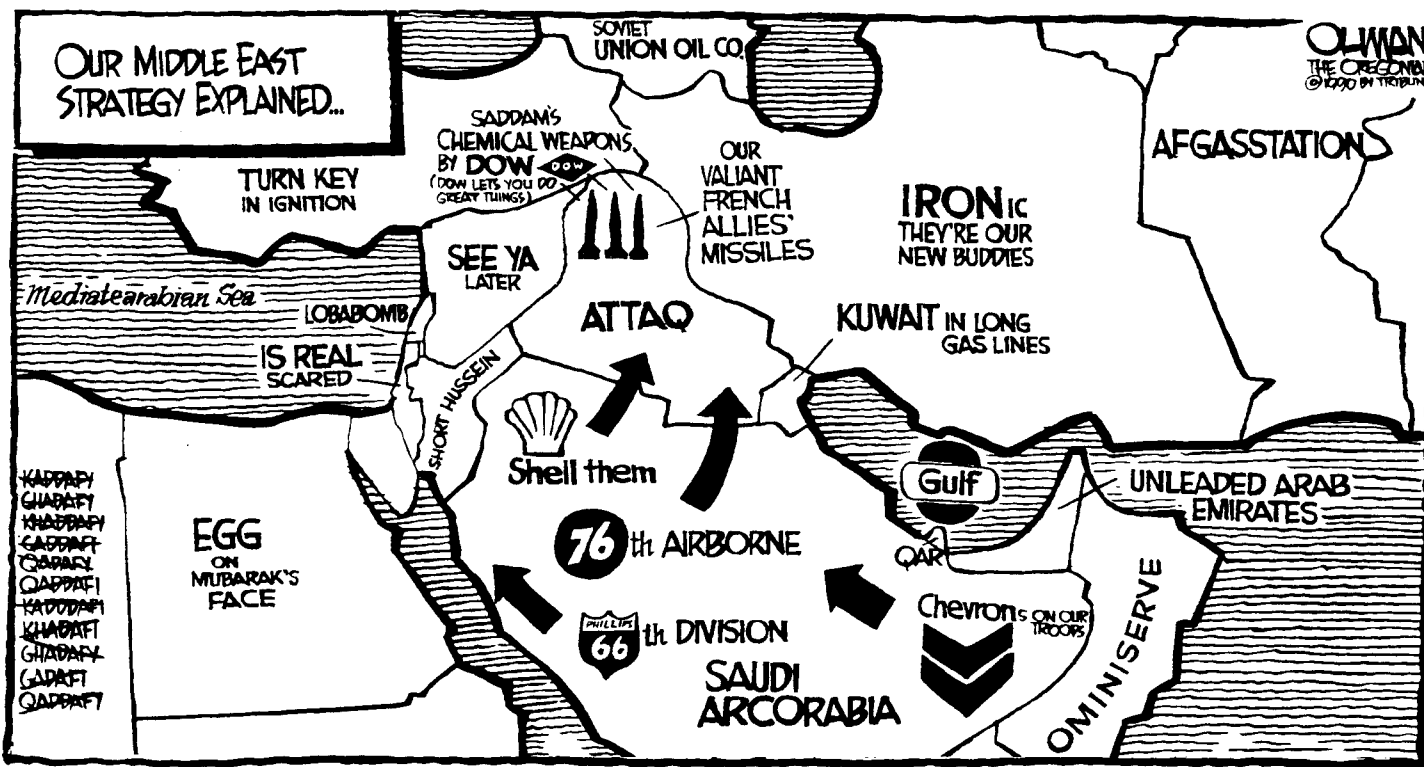
Students' letters should include semester standing, major and campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two 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 standards of good taste. Because of the 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.

Letters and forums from University Park and State College: Please deliver any submissions in person at the office of The Daily Collegian, 123 S. Burrowes St. All authors must present with picture identification — either University ID or photo driver's license — when presenting the letter or forum.

Mail other letters to: The Daily Collegian, 123 S. Burrowes St., University Park, Pa. 16801-3882.

**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.



## Learning about life from a man who's lived through the worst

Ross Lehman met me at the door with an outstretched hand. I shook it, offered the baked goods I had brought him and followed him into the living room.

### Editor's Note

Ted Sickler



Setting into a seat behind a card table in the middle of the room, he quickly explained the limp in his stride.

His sentences were no more than key phrases of a story told over and over again.

War injury.  
German prison camp.  
Artificial leg.

I knew the story. Actually it had already become part of *The Daily Collegian's* history.

Ross was editor in 1941. Today, many remember him as one of the early forces behind *Collegian's* move to daily publication. Yesterday, I asked him to recall those days.

The similarities between yesterday and today seemed profound and almost unexpected. We touched on the changes that occurred on campus, in the pages of our newspaper and the attitudes and tension associated with World War II.

Markedly, "in the old days" was not in his vocabulary. For him, yesterday seems as vivid as today.

Penn State was different then, he began. Singing was more popular than drinking. Only 7,500 students filled the halls. And *Collegianaires* put together their eight-page newspaper in Old Main offices.

In the pages of *The Collegian*, ads promoted the soda fountains and welcomed the Class of 1944 to the area. Texts were sold at an athletic goods store. *The Dai-*

*ly Collegian's* subscription price was only \$2 a semester.

Ross remembers trying to sell subscriptions to the paper on the corner of Allen Street and College Avenue. Reporters and editors had to sell a certain number of copies before they would be allowed on staff.

He remembers late nights at the paper, waiting for the next edition until the early morning hours to roll off the press. He used to sit on the rolls of newspaper and sing with his friends to pass the early hours.

Local news filled the pages of the paper. There was no Associated Press copy. No photos. And the late news bulletin was written after listening to the breaking news on the radio.

On the editorial page, Ross wrote *The Collegian's* opinion on a regular basis. Although some days, he would let go of his editorial control and allow another member of staff to write that day's opinion.

In those days, a sandwich shop filled the lower level of Old Main. There, faculty and students gathered daily to con-

tinue their lessons over coffee. Sometimes a professor would invite students to his or her home for dinner and conversation.

Ross calls it intimacy. I call it a lost commodity.

But 1941 was a tough time too, he reminds me.

Only 5 percent of all high school graduates attended college that year. Education was not considered a right but a privilege. Simply, the nation couldn't bear the financial burden to allow everyone to go to school, he said.

People wanted a degree more than they wanted a job, he said indicating a contrast with today. A degree was viewed as a door that opened another door for those who attained one.

But society worked against some of those who spend their early years pursuing an education.

War loomed.

During World War II, members of military groups on campus dressing in uniforms and saluting each other.

Ross' war years would come soon, but

for now *The Collegian* was the focal point. He quit Glee Club as he got older and joined the ranks of upperclassmen, concentrating on the added responsibility at the paper. About 85 people worked on the paper then — half the number of students who do now.

War times brought changes in Ross' writing as well.

He said in the beginning of his term, he was editorially reserved about the war. Later, however, events of the world would give him cause to write more often. His work comments on the loss of some fellow students as they went off to war.

While Ross reflected about the 1940s, compared today's paper to his. I look forward to meeting Ross again. I hope more members of staff can speak with him the next time. I think they'd learn a lot.

I left his pink stucco house with a lot of my own lessons in my head.

The most immediate thought was war. While the word is still not attached to the conflict in the Middle East, everyday looks a little bleaker. Just like those

days, 50 years ago, when a war loomed just around the corner.

Everyday he walks on his artificial leg it's with him. My memories of this growing conflict may not be as immediate. But I too may watch others go off to war.

One chapter has already started. Later this week, our photographer plans to clean out his locker.

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Ted Sickler is a senior majoring in journalism and history. He is editor of *The Daily Collegian*.

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