

Editorial opinion

Personnel happiness

To humanize the University, employees must feel welcome

At the end of each semester, students are given evaluation forms for their professors.

Recently, these faculty members, along with University staff, were given the chance to do some evaluating of their own. The results are disturbing.

According to a recent survey conducted by the University, more than a quarter of the University's faculty and a third of its staff said they would leave the University for another job offering equal pay, benefits and working conditions.

Fortunately, Spanier appears to have taken notice and vowed to take steps to "humanize" the University. What this means in the long run remains to be seen.

Talking is great, but Spanier would do better to respond to those who have shown they are unhappy at the University. Spanier should outline no fewer than 10 things about the University that will be changed or implemented to make the University a better place for "humans" to work.

Let's face it, Penn State is a big place — enormous by most measures.

Students regularly complain that they feel like they're little more than an ID number here.

It looks as though many of the University's employees feel the same way. Such sentiment is bound to find its way back to the students. A professor's attitude about the place he works will like-

ly affect the students in his class. Spanier would do well to take this into account as the University re-examines how to make working at Penn State as rewarding as attending it.

Staff members of Office of Housing and Food Services, the Office of Physical Plant and other University services may also feel unappreciated at a place so big that their hard work often goes unnoticed. University faculty may enjoy the spotlight here, but staff enables it to function so efficiently.

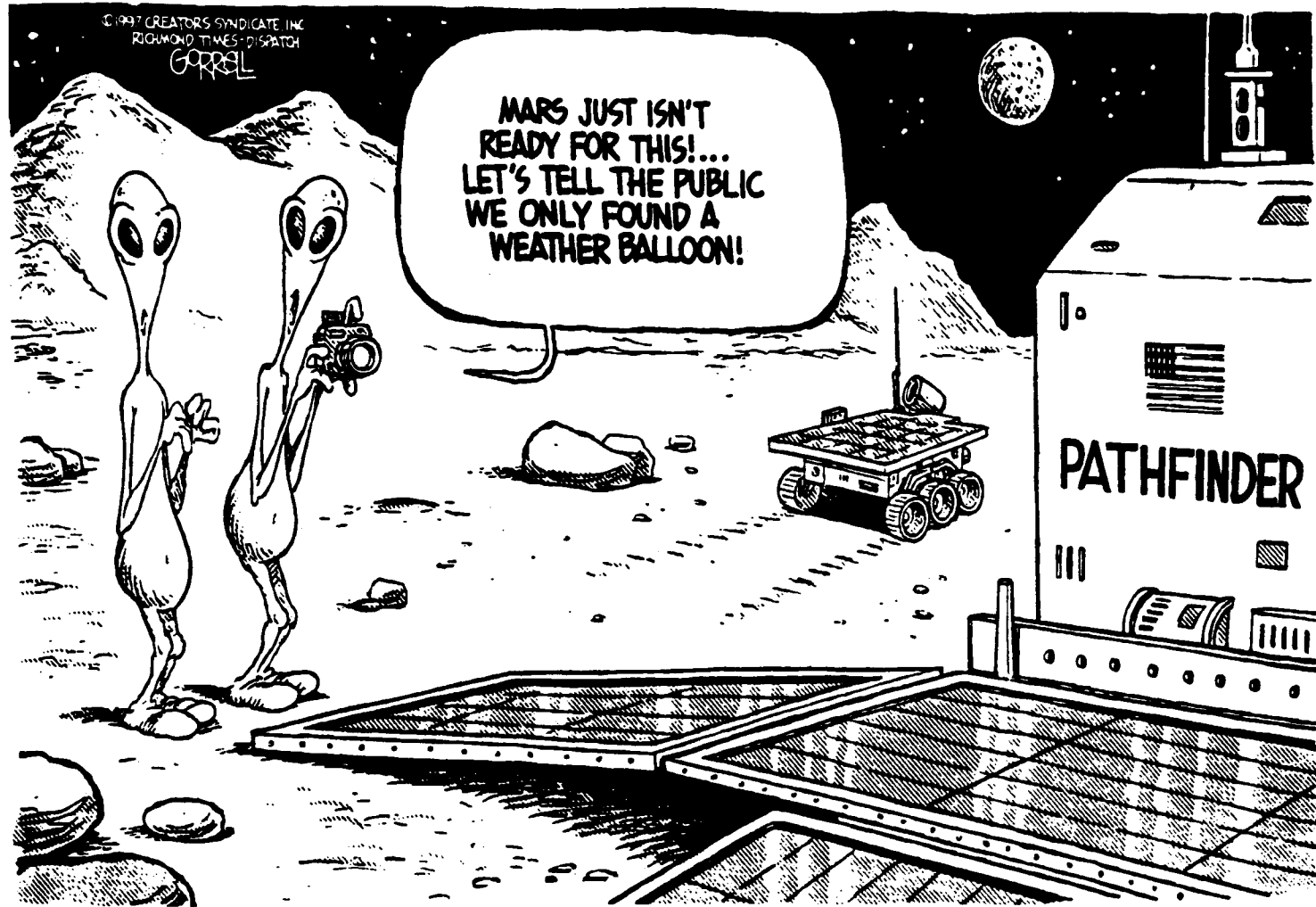
Without staff members, there would be no dining commons food and Old Main lawn would be little more than a pasture for University bovines. Imagine sun bathing in three-foot grass.

Families with young children who work at the University have come to depend upon a centralized day care center. It needs to remain so.

At the rate the University is expanding, "humanizing" is not going to become any easier. It may be impossible to make everyone happy, but Penn State has an obligation to make itself more welcoming to those who work so hard to make the University what it is.

Talking is great, but Spanier should respond to those who have shown they are unhappy at the University.

When the talking is over, hundreds of employees will be watching and waiting to see that he makes good on his promise.



Letters to the editor

North Korean communist leaders failed; citizens isolated, starving

I was once again reminded of the failure of communism when I read about the worsening food problem in North Korea.

It is absolutely intolerable that a government would force its own people to remain in isolation just to live out some communist fantasy and in the process starve its own children to the point that they look like little stick figures.

Acts such as these cannot be tolerated and I call upon the members of the United Nations to bring the leaders of North Korea to justice and charge them with crimes against humanity.

Unfortunately, the UN is inept, so I doubt anything positive will result from their actions.

More realistically, I hope that the North Korean people will realize that they have been grossly wronged by their leaders and peacefully overthrow them.

They should look toward their southern neighbor as a role model.

I remember speaking to two East German soldiers while in East Berlin in 1983 and stating that I truly believed that there would be a single Germany within my lifetime — especially after witnessing the stark contrasts between the two German nations.

Now there is a single German nation and East German communism is dead.

Korea will inevitably follow as the people realize that the communist system is a magnificent failure.

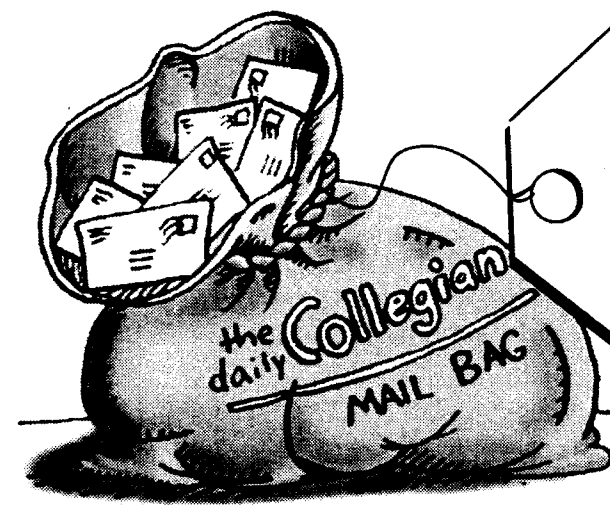
I can only hope that it will be as peaceful a transition.

Christopher Lee Frame
associate engineer

What is your opinion about the potential State College housing crunch? The Daily Collegian wants to know.

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR AND LET THE UNIVERSITY KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!!!

Hey Readers! The Daily Collegian needs to hear from you!



Letters to the editor can be sent to The Daily Collegian, James Building, 123 S. Burrowes St. University Park, PA 16801 or send E-mail at bdb140@psu.edu

the daily Collegian

Friday, July 25, 1997
©1997 Collegian Inc.

Editor in Chief
Rachel Hogan

Business Manager
Christopher A. Taylor

The Daily Collegian's editorial opinion is determined by its Board of Opinion, with the editor holding final responsibility. Opinions expressed on the editorial pages are not necessarily those of The Daily Collegian, Collegian Inc. or The Pennsylvania State University. Collegian Inc., publishers of The Daily Collegian and related publications, is a separate corporate institution from Penn State.

Board of Editors

Managing Editor
Amy Brosey
Opinion Editor
Bridgette Blair
On-line Editor
Molly K. Fellin
Campus Editor
Patricia K. Cole
Metro Editor
Erin Horan

News Editor
Todd Ritter
Copy/Wire Editors
Tim Hyland, Kerry Lee Nadeau, James Reid
Day Sports Editor
Nick Zulovich
Night Sports Editor
Krista Hawley
Arts Editor
T.R. Deckman
Photo Editor
Ilan Sherman
Graphic Editor
Walter Barrueto

Board of Managers

Advertising Manager
Maria E. Crespo
Sales Manager
Michael J. Zambotti
Accounting Manager
Laura Young
Office Manager
Megan A. Hennigan
Layout Manager
Seth Isaacs

Letters Policy: Letters must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than 500 words. Mail letters to: The Daily Collegian; 123 S. Burrowes St.; University Park, Pa. 16801-3882.

E-mail letters to: bdb140@psu.edu.

French student faces 'big' culture in the United States

When I first came to the United States, I was really shocked how people mixed food. I remember being struck by the sight of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I thought it was pretty disgusting.

In general, if I were to compare France with the United States, I would be more likely to end up writing a whole novel!

In short, when thinking of the United States, the first thing that comes to my mind is "The Simpsons."

Don't get me wrong. I'm not saying this is what America is all about.

But if you were a foreigner such as myself or an alien coming from some unknown planet, visiting Uncle Sam, it would certainly be useful watching it.

On the one hand, such a popular TV program shows a lot of American habits such as eating doughnuts, eating quickly and watching TV.

Guest column

On the other hand, it also hints at cultural references that you absolutely, positively have to know! Think about movies like "Throne," bands like "The Red Hot Chili Peppers..."

In comparison, France looks so small, not only in surface but also in terms of size. Most French people own small cars, have tiny refrigerators and can barely channel-surf six TV channels.

Even McDonald's hamburgers look far smaller in France. How come? You may be wondering. I wouldn't be able to give you a straight-forward answer. I guess French people don't necessarily view things that big.

Another answer could lie in the fact that, unlike Americans, they don't seem to have this urge for conquest.

So our different ways of living highlight our cultural differences. As far as college goes, French and American students don't always deal with the same issues.

When you go to college in France, you don't have as much choice for your major as you have here.

You really can't have two majors that are completely unrelated in France, whereas here you could basically major in nutrition and in racket-ball at the same time.

Besides, there is no such thing as fraternities or sororities — though sometimes, freshmen may go through hazing. It is now more and more unlikely to happen since such practice has been illegal.

Of course, French students like to hang out in cafes and bars any time of the day. Regarding alcohol, people are not supposed to drink before they are 16. So turning 21 is not as much of a big deal.

I also noticed that food is almost as important in France as it is here,

"Most French people own small cars, have tiny refrigerators and can barely channel-surf six TV channels."

although maybe French people like to sit down and enjoy their lunch a little more.

On the contrary, Americans seem to run out of time when it comes to eating. When I celebrate a birthday or something special with my whole family, we would share a big meal that could last for hours.

It is amazing how many fast-food places you may encounter across America. Back in my small country, you really have to look for one.

Apart from McDonald's there are basically no other fast-food restaurants except maybe for one called Quick, which turns out to be fast-food "a la francaise."

I could go on and tell you all

about my feelings about how different America is from France. But you would only get a slight idea of what it is like.

The best way to learn about French culture and your own is to go abroad.

Take one semester off and go to France. Experience another way of living by immersing yourself into another language, another environment.

While you're there, don't just hang out with Americans, but try to meet and converse with French people.

I know it will be a challenge. It is not easy, either, to adapt and take up new habits. I also know that it takes some money and time. But

the money and time you may spend is not always lost.

I think studying abroad is definitely worth it. All in all, you will get a better understanding of your own culture by learning about someone else's culture.

You may go through ups and downs and miss home sometimes. It is called "culture shock." But it is so little compared to the things you will learn.

It will make you more open minded. To some point, you'll become proud of your own country.

And there is one last thing that you shouldn't forget.

No matter where you go, people will remember you as the ambassador of your country. You could be the only American person they will ever meet.

Rozenn Trebossen (emouille@esem1.univ-orleans.fr) is a junior majoring in English and international business at Sorbonne-Nouvelle in Paris.