

Editorial opinion

Shame on you

USG shouldn't have held a meeting without adequate notice

At 8 p.m. yesterday, did you know where your student government representatives were? More importantly, do you know what they were doing?

For most students, The Daily Collegian Board of Opinion knows the answer to that question is no.

Another even more important question is, did you know that your senate president resigned last night?

If the answers to these questions elude you, the Board of Opinion can help you out.

The Undergraduate Student Government, which represents every undergraduate student, held a special meeting last night in the HUB. USG President Caroline Casagrande requested this meeting yesterday, and it was held yesterday — allowing students very little time to find out about the meeting.

The representatives gathered to discuss charges against former USG Senate President Jason Covener. Covener was charged with three counts of unlawful use of a computer, three counts of interception of electronic or oral communications and one count of criminal conspiracy on Friday. The alleged events occurred in the USG office, 203 HUB.

Whether or not student government representatives met about the charges against the former senate president is not a problem — it is an issue that needed to be dealt with. However, holding a

special meeting without giving the general student population adequate notice is not good.

However, is it really necessary to hold a special meeting the night before USG's regular senate meeting? We think not. This discussion could have occurred on the regular meeting night, in the regular meeting place. Then, students could have attended and could have voiced their opinions.

At the meeting, Casagrande said she called the representatives together to get the issue out of the way so USG could get back to representing students at the meeting today. She's right, but the person leading the senate and his actions are, and should rightly be, a concern of the students.

Although we are disappointed with the "emergency senate meeting," we are pleased with Covener's decision to resign. His decision was based on that while he is facing a criminal hearing he cannot effectively lead the senate. He put the students first, too bad the entire senate didn't do the same.

Don't stand for this type of behavior from your student government. Go to the USG Senate meeting at 7 p.m. today in 307 HUB. Tell them you don't want decisions made without an opportunity for all students to be heard.

USG took away your voice and took control without you even knowing — here's your chance to get it back.

About the Board of Opinion:

Editorials are written by The Daily Collegian Board of Opinion. The members of the Board of Opinion for Fall Semester are: Bridgette Blair, Patricia K. Cole, Stacey Confer, Carrie DeLeon, Aimée Harris, Krista Hawley, Daryl Lang, Khyber Oser, Emily Rehling, Brooke Sample, Cory Shindel and Tim Swift.

the daily Collegian

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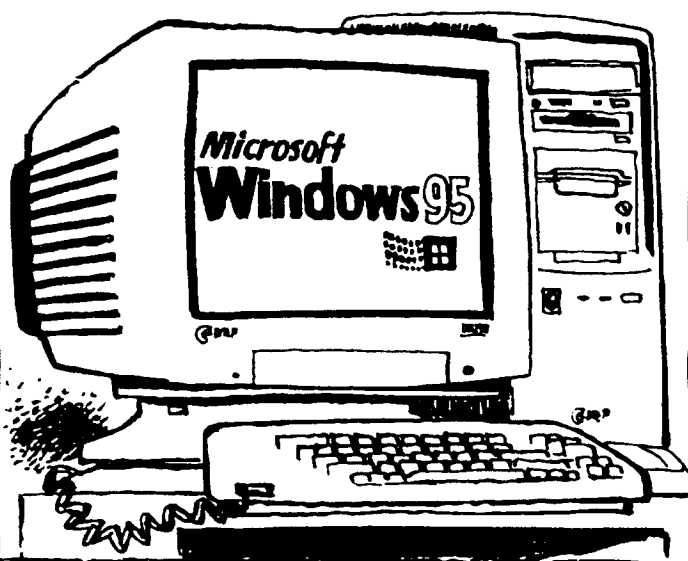
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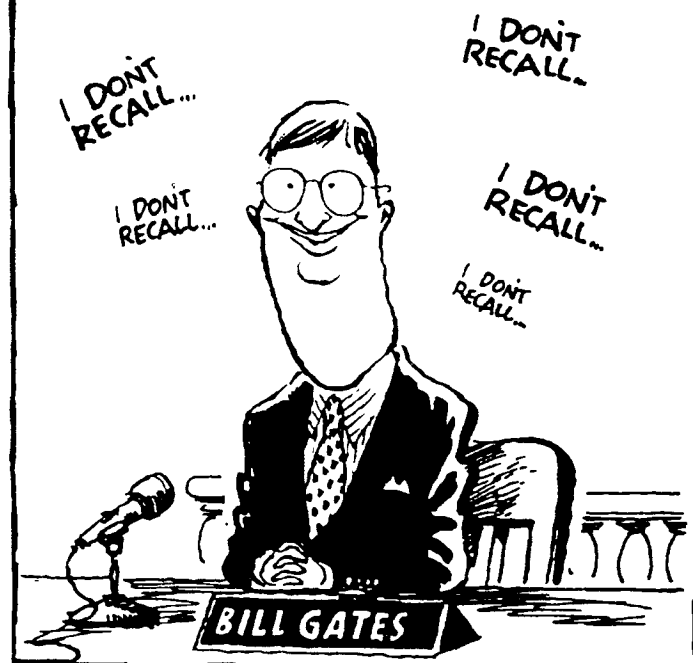
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LOTS OF MEMORY USED



NO MEMORY USED



Letters to the editor

Senior disappointed with ESACT availability

I am graduating in May 1999 with the exception that I take an ESACT course. I have been told to keep trying to get into a section by phone and if I am still not registered by the first day, I will be "placed" into a course. I do not agree with this method of "placing" students into ESACT courses. I cannot simply be "placed" into just any course. And I would like a more definite answer/solution than that.

I have physical restrictions (bad knees and ankles) that prevent me from partaking in activities such as tennis, aerobics and running. To place me in any of these courses would be detrimental to my physical well-being as well as my GPA as I would not be able to participate in class.

I was eligible to register on Sept. 17, and all of the courses that I am physically capable of participating in and available for were already full.

In addition to being limited by my handicaps, I am also limited to the times I can take classes as I have a work schedule to maintain. All of this time here at Penn State my advisers kept telling me not to worry about the ESACT courses because I would be first to register and I'd have my pick of classes. Now I face having to wait until August to graduate simply because of my physical restrictions and work schedule. On top of all that, ALL ESACT courses are now full.

So, my question to you in the Registrar's Office is: What are you going to do to help me? I did not pay thousands of dollars each

semester to be "placed" into a course that does not suit my needs and/or interests. And to all you freshmen and sophomores reading this, my advice to you is schedule them now if you can because you WON'T be able to get what you want as seniors. And DON'T rely on what an adviser tells you unless you get it in writing.

Tara J. Allsopp
senior-administration of justice

High enrollment leads to education problems

I am writing in response to comments made in the article "Enrollment tops 80,000" — specifically, those comments made by Director of the Department of Information Bill Mahon and Penn State President Graham Spanier. I feel that it is time for these two and other "important figures" at Penn State to come down from their dreamworld and float back to earth.

First, Mahon says that more students than ever are applying to Penn State. News flash: this doesn't mean that more students have to be accepted and enrolled. He also states that "adjustments will be made in the future so enrollment does not exceed a level that would be unhealthy for Penn State." Apparently Mahon doesn't live in State College. He acknowledges that "we are really reaching the upper limit of the number of students that is appropriate for this community and this university to sustain its quality of life," but he adds that "we don't want to grow just for growth's sake." Then I have to ask, what quality of

life he is referring to? Surely he can't mean that living in a study lounge/makeshift room is quality living?

And Spanier says that "it takes a lot of work to balance the ever-increasing numbers of people who want to attend Penn State with our commitment to maintaining a high-quality education for every Penn State student." Maybe President Spanier should attend a few classes and see how "high-quality" this education claims to be. Make sure to visit classes in the Forum and Willard buildings while you're at it. Education requires more than having students read a textbook and then have professors paraphrase the information so that students can take notes on the subject. Education requires interaction between teachers and students. You can look at your statistics that say the student faculty ratio is 19:1 or 18:1, but every student that attends classes here knows that there is no way this number is accurate. Where are all these teachers? There is obviously some kind of number manipulation going on with this statistic. Maybe I am misinformed because no one at the Admissions Office, Registrar's Office or at the Department of Public Information was able to tell me the actual ratio.

Spanier and Mahon should stop assuming what is reality, and actually find out what is reality and do something about it. Sports and drinking are already the two largest foci at this school. Sounds kind of funny doesn't it? A school that doesn't focus on education.

Andrew Siegfried
sophomore-international business and finance

Letters to the Editor

1. Must be less than 400 words.
2. Must include name, semester standing, major or title, address and phone number for verification.
3. Can be sent via e-mail to crd126@psu.edu.

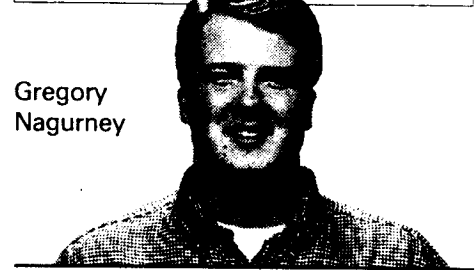
Conservatives, big houses, cars leading to environmental crisis

I don't remember the '70s. I was all tied up with toilet training. But unbeknownst to me, something quite significant was happening in our society. Thanks to a gas crisis that made people wonder where their next 50-gallon tank of dirt-cheap unleaded was coming from, Americans finally began to examine and trim their characteristically gluttonous use of energy. We actually made significant progress. People drove smaller cars. Everyone was into conservation, even Nixon; he created the EPA.

Then came the '80s, which unfortunately, I do remember. Things somehow went horribly awry. President Reagan — humanity's reciprocal — repealed legislation intended to make cars more fuel efficient and cut back programs to develop renewable energy. In the '80s we derided America became selfish and material, more so.

The '90s came and gave us the rapper Vanilla Ice. But along with the good came the bad. For the first time ever, people started hearing about this theory called "global warming."

My opinion



Gregory Nagurney

ple were to blame. As a result, destructive changes in Earth's climate were predicted.

Most destructive to environmental causes during the '90s was the wave of neo-conservatism. Suddenly, every mean fat guy with his own radio show was telling the American people that environmentalism equated to a miserable life in a mud hut, and that "environmental wackos" were out to kill you and everyone you care about.

The idea of environmentalism was tainted with an element of ridicule that still

"Driving is an addiction that is slowly killing the environment. Drive a sensible car, not one that gets 12 miles to a gallon. Better yet, carpool, ride a bike or walk."

pervades in the nation's collective unconscious. The word "conservation" is considered so damnable in our society that environmental groups have quietly initiated the term "efficiency" to take its place.

Eight years later we still can't agree about global warming. Some purely Platonic individuals with no vested interest in the subject whatsoever — including our Congressman John Peterson, industrial lobbyists and conservative think tanks — ignore a preponderance of evidence that increases daily and say that global warming is a fabrication. (It exists.) To be totally and painfully objective, there is not total scientific consensus. But be reasonable. If something with such dire consequences has even a remote chance of happening, we can't be cautious enough.

Global warming is different from other

problems America faces because something can be done by the average person to alleviate the situation. This is especially true for college students since they will be the ones who, in the near future, will be buying and using the products that contribute to global warming.

Leading the way on this list of environmentally destructive products are those two most American of all things, big houses and big cars. Everyone needs a house to live in, but since the energy conservation trend of the '70s, houses have gotten much larger. They are loaded with energy-wasting features and appliances that are now considered commonplace. Electricity is cheap and there is no financial incentive to promote conservation. The average American uses twice as much energy as their Japanese or European

counterpart. Lifestyle is the culprit.

Cars are just as bad. They get bigger and bigger while Americans keep driving more. In fact, driving on average accounts for more than half of the pollution and greenhouse gasses produced by an individual. Where have all the Datsuns gone? Driving is an addiction that is slowly killing the environment. Drive a sensible car, not one that gets 12 miles to a gallon. Better yet, carpool, ride a bike or walk.

Statistically speaking, America is dangerously close to reversing any positive gains we may have made during the '70s. This may go down in history not as the decade where we began to take steps to save our planet and ourselves, but as the era that gave us "CHiPs" and Watergate.

If we let these achievements be reversed by our greedy desire to be nation of Ford Expeditions and five bedroom houses for families of three, then our environmental progress to this point will have been all for naught.

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