

# Opinion

## Letters to the editor

### Police & Safety responds to dissatisfied students' letter

**Editor's Note:** Following a letter in last week's paper which was critical of the manner in which campus police responded to an off-campus accident, The Collegian has offered Police and Safety Manager Randy Hoffman an opportunity to respond. His letter follows.

Dear editor,

In the course of my lifetime I have responded to accident scenes while on duty; happened upon accident scenes while off duty and had the experience of being struck by a driving under the influence suspect. I also worked at The Allegheny County's Office where I witnessed, first hand, the tragic carnage that occurs on our highways. From these experiences I can appreciate the emotions and concerns expressed by the students whose letter to the editor was printed in the October 18 edition of *The Collegian*.

On October 20, I met with three of the students who signed the letter and discussed the matter with them. From our meeting I believe we reached several areas of agreement and understanding and I would like to share some of that information with the community.

In making a sound assessment of a situation it is important to gather as much pertinent information as possible. To gain a better appreciation of the course of events I have obtained and submit for consideration the following time recorded incidents:

0231 (2:31 am) Alert Communications (answering service for our department) is notified of the accident by one of our students, and Millcreek Fire Control is notified by a different passerby.

0234 Police & Safety notified by Alert Communications.

0236 Police & Safety have arrived, assessed the scene, and requested Alert Communications to contact The Pennsylvania State Police since the accident is not in our jurisdiction.

0238 Alert has contacted the State Police.

0239 Medic Unit 92 reports arrival on the scene.

0240 Brookside Ambulance reports arrival on the scene.

When reviewing the time records it is apparent the Police & Safety was the first emergency vehicle on the scene. From the

information I have been able to gather it seems an EMT did arrive before our personnel; however, I have not been able to identify that person to determine if he heard the page for the ambulance or just happened upon the scene.

As for the matter of "incompetence", after discussing what actions led the authors to make that indication, I believe it was more a misunderstanding as to what an officer needs to do at the accident scene. An officer responding to an accident scene becomes very focused on stabilizing the situation, treating the injured and preventing additional injuries or hazards.

As for the issue of being able to contact a dispatcher or officer in a timely fashion, I share some of the same concerns as the authors as do a large number of people that live in Eastern Erie County.

As for a dispatch coverage, while we have not been able to staff our office 24 hours (we currently cover about 75% of the week) we offer more hours off coverage than the Wesleyville or Lawrence Park Police Departments. For those times when a dispatcher is not available the emergency line (#6231) is forwarded to Alert Communications.

The authors are to be commended for caring enough to stop, to seek help and then to question why the system does not work better. Too often people will drive past an accident scene and rationalize that someone else probably reported this so there is no need for them to get involved.

In closing, I appreciate hearing about problems or perceived problems. As I have often said, "If no one tells me about it I can't fix it" or perhaps explain why certain actions occur in a certain manner. If you have a question about the law or police procedures, do not hesitate to contact me.

**Randy S. Hoffman**  
Manager, Police & Safety

#### First on the Scene?

Hoffman's advice for persons who arrive first at an accident scene

- contact emergency personnel; check nearby houses or flag down a car to make emergency call if you are unable to do so.
- Learn first aid and CPR
- Don't try to move victims unless danger is immediate
- Stay calm; often the best first aid you can administer is psychological

# LOVE ROB

## Fun with taxes

by Rob Prindle

And I thought that my financial situation sucked. I'm years in debt and I'm being followed by so many collection agency guys I'm starting to look like a very popular guy, but things could be worse.

I've got financial problems, but I'm in great shape compared to the country. The last few months have been really tough on the federal budget.

I've noticed a few parallels between the federal problems and my own. For instance in the beginning of the summer, when our elected officials were trying to figure out how to find the hundreds of billions of dollars to bail out the savings and loan industry, I was trying to figure out how to pay for my next semester here at Behrend. And when the government decided to just relax and take out more loans, I decided to do much the same thing.

Then early this semester Hugo went rumbling into South Carolina, causing a few billion dollars in damage and it was about that time that my car's brakes decided that they would disassociate themselves from my rotors. That only set me back about \$500 and most of my sanity.

So, while President Bush ignored the cost of cleaning up after hurricane Hugo, at the garage with my disabled car, I pulled out a small used piece of plastic that the Boron Corporation was nice enough to send me a few years back. So you see with easy monthly installments I figure that I can put off this little repair until my retirement checks start coming in.

And, because good things always seem to come in threes, now the federal government has to deal with the Bay Area earthquake. A few more billion. What the heck? No one in the Capitol is very upset about a few more billion on top of everything else that has been happening. And why should they be?

Yeah, me and the feds have a lot in common. We're both pretty mellow when it comes to being a few decades in the red. But I will tell you one thing, If I were a senator or a certain President with a name that reminds one of shrubbery, I think I would take advantage of my powerful position and find a way of paying off the debt. I mean, it's one thing to forget about your financial trouble if you haven't got a prayer of ever getting out of it, but...and stop me if I'm wrong...doesn't our government have the right to raise taxes?

Yeah, I know Bush made a lot of read-his-lips promises about no new taxes, but let's get real, okay? We are in serious trouble here. What sense does it make to keep paying interest on loans?

You know taxes are about the only thing you can talk about that angers both suburban-dwelling Republicans and \$3.35 per hour Burger King workers.

And everybody has a right to complain. Yuppies (I promise that I will never use that word again, ever) have a real complaint about graduated taxes. Obviously if you have to pay more depending on your ability to pay then there are bound to be a lot of junior vice presidents, lawyers, and major movers who are not going to be happy.

And less affluent people have a real complaint when it comes to raising or creating new flat taxes like sales tax or federal gasoline tax. For people who have little or no disposable income, it hardly seems fair to make them pay the same amount on a gallon of gasoline as Donnie Trump.

The tax on each and every gallon of gas is about 25 cents. That is a substantial part of the price. If it weren't for the tax we would be buying gas for about \$.65 a gallon and with cheaper gas I think that we all would have been spared the tragedy of the Yugo and the Festiva.

Of course I think graduated taxation is the way to go. What I can't understand is why most people are against the idea of raising graduated taxes like income tax. Most people are not upper middle class or upper upper middle class or blatantly wealthy. Most people work for a 40 hour pay check that runs out about Tuesday. I agree that if the graduated levels are poorly constructed then a certain economic level can be



Rob Prindle

squeezed, but as I see it now there aren't many corporate leaders driving '77 AMC Pacers around in the middle of June with snow tires and baby moon hubcaps. Not many at all.

It seems that all of our country's financial problems could be taken care of without hurting anyone who makes less than 500K a year. All the feds need to do is create a new graduation. I think it should be called the "this guy is really making a lot more money then he can actually spend productively" level. As income tax stands now, a person making a million bucks per year only pays a little over \$300,000. Under my plan for eliminating gross national debt and gross national greed at the same time this millionaire stud would pay just a little more...say \$500,000.

The guy is still going to make more every year then I will in my entire life, but with my plan the struggling middle class doesn't have to shoulder any more and the dying lower class doesn't have to worry about any increases in flat taxes.

By the way, if you see any repo guys trying to get into my Monte, tell them that the check is in the mail. If that doesn't work, you might consider telling them that I'm rather notorious for playfully planting plastic explosives hooked up to both doors and the ignition. If none of that deters them, bite their legs. Thanks.