

The Future times Three

by George L. Hiegel
The Collegian

With the farcical visit to Behrend by University Park's Future Committee in our near past, I feel it is appropriate to contemplate the future of this school, the future of this country's educational system, and my future.

Behrend, as I see it, is between a rock and a hard place when it comes to its relationship with main campus. If we stay as is our present condition, we will continue to be forced to live on crumbs they and the state throw at our feet. If we take a reactionary stance and break away from the Penn State system, then we forfeit the benefits and the prestige such a union brings.

Neither of these possible proposals is a good one. Yet it is the future I am discussing here. And while I am not a doomsayer by nature, I do have very particular concerns with regard to our quaint campus. My main worry lies with the Humanities Department.

I have completed five semesters at Behrend and with each passing semester, the classes to choose from within the Humanities Department

appears to be growing smaller and smaller. Tell me this is not true. Couple this shrinking class choice with increased tuitions every semester and I begin to wonder what it is exactly that I am getting for my money. And then a committee from University Park comes here and tells us we need to consider even more cuts. I just don't know.

Behrend, facing cuts and all, is definitely not alone in its educational predicament. Nationally, the news of cost and program reductions is no better. I'll throw some figures out for you to look at, and you can do whatever you what with them. Since 1982, college textbook prices have gone up 89%. In that same time span, tuition and fees at four-year public colleges and universities have increased 144%. There is more.

U.S. News and World Report, as it does every year, conducted a poll of college presidents, dean of academic affairs, and directors of admissions. The subject of this year's poll was the financial troubles facing institutions of higher learning. Even after all the recent cost measures of the past year, 42% of the college president respondents believe

there will continue to face deficits for quite some time.

Part of the problem facing colleges and universities is a 10% reduction of federal and state funding. The competition for scarce tax dollars is heated and higher education is getting squeezed in the crunch. Health



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care, for example, is higher up on the priority list and receives a larger share of the money. Thus, belt tightening and reforms are going to be a fact of life in the future of higher education. That is, if it wants to survive and keep its competitive edge.

My future, the third and final leg of my article, is as uncertain as the future of Behrend and the rest of higher education in this country. My major concern lies elsewhere to that of latter two. My major concern has to do with me and employment. While colleges and universities are asking such questions as: What can we do to cut costs and maintain our educational viability? What can we do to raise revenues?

I have other questions to ask. What does having a college degree in today's world really mean? Will I have to go to graduate school just to give myself a shot at a good job? Even then, what will my prospects be? It's funny, but not too many people I know have sure fire answers to these very important questions. The job market, at least the decent aspects of it, are shrinking in many areas while at the same time, more people are enrolling

in institutions of higher learning than ever before.

After adding these two thing together, I feel kin to a vulture circling about in the hopes of getting a shot at a tasty piece of carrion. Meanwhile, the rest of the students, the jackals, the lions, the hyenas, and such, are moving in on the same piece of meat. It's conflict for survival people and the only law that applies is the law of the jungle. Do you think I'm kidding? Well, if you're feeling brave one day soon, come real close and see if I bite. You might not like what you find out. Then again, maybe you will.

Editors Note: Do you agree with our columnist? If not, we'd like to hear from you. If so, great..let us know!

George Hiegel's column appears in *The Collegian* every third week. George is a third semester english major. Please feel free to write your opinion of this column down and drop it off at *The Collegian* office.

DECEASED ANIMALS IN THE NEWS

by Dave Barry
Syndicated Columnist

It's time for our popular feature, Deceased Animals in the News. Our big story this week, as you have no doubt guessed, concerns the federal government's program to give away frozen oil-soaked semidecomposed animal carcasses.

But fist we need to issue the following Safety Advisory: Do NOT go outside.

We base this advisory on a news item spotted by alert reader Katherine Keane in a newspaper called (really) the Tillamook, Ore., Headlight-Herald. The item is headlined: EXPLANATION OFFERED FOR FISH FOUND ON LAWN. It states that a woman in Lincoln City, Ore., went outside one morning and found "a number" of deceased fish on her lawn. So she went back inside and drank a quart of whiskey.

No, that's what WE would do. What she did was notify state wildlife officials, who determined that the fish were Pacific sand lances. An official said that what probably happened was a cormorant, gull or pelican swooped down onto the Pacific Ocean and scooped up more fish than it could digest, so as it flew over the woman's lawn, it did what we

always do when we snork down too many Pacific sand lances at a wedding or bar mitzvah, namely, ralph them up.

This item alone is not cause for alarm. According to the surgeon general, the odds are that fewer than 17,000 Americans will be killed during this fiscal year by barfed fish falling at 120 mph, and most of these will be people with very large, easy-to-hit heads, such as George Steinbrenner. We can live with that.

But what DOES alarm us is another news item, clipped by alert reader June Rimmey from the Centre Daily Times of State College, PA. The item, headlined COW PARTS ON ROOF, states: "Parts of a cow were found Tuesday morning on the roof of the Arts Building on the Penn State Campus, according to Penn State police. The parts were arranged in a pattern. Police have no suspects."

Without suggesting that the fine men and women of the Penn State police have guacamole dip for brains, we wish to point out that what happened is obvious to anyone who has been following national events. Clearly a cormorant, gull or pelican--and by the way, "Cormorant, Gull & Pelican" would be an excellent name for a law firm--strayed approximately 2,500 miles from the Pacific Ocean,

flew over a Pennsylvania dairy farm, mistook a cow for a Pacific sand lance (the two are virtually indistinguishable from the air), swooped down and scooped up the cow (a cormorant, being a member of the ant family, can lift 850 times its own weight), soared to approximately 2,000 feet,



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realized it had bitten off more than it could chew and woofed on the Penn State Arts

Building.

We don't yet know who arranged the cow parts into a pattern. Our guess would be art students. But the point is that the size of the deceased animals falling from American skies is definitely trending upward, and it could be months before the federal government can do anything about it. The government is busy right now with the frozen oil-soaked semidecomposed animal carcass giveaway program.

We found out about this program thanks to alert reader Jeremy Kniffin, who sent us the Aug. 11, 1992 issue of the Federal Register, which states that the government is making available to the public, for a limited time, the carcasses of thousands of birds and mammals that became deceased in 1989 when the Exxon oil tanker Valdez failed to observe a "YIELD TO REEF" sign. The carcasses were used as evidence in the Exxon litigation. The government plans to burn them, but is first making them available to "qualified applicants" who might want them for "scientific, educational or public display purposes."

Conditionwise, these are not your top-of-the-line carcasses. The Federal Register says they've been stored in large freezers, which have failed several times, so the carcasses have tended to rot and clump

together in a frozen, oily mass.

We called Anchorage, Alaska, and spoke to the person in charge of the carcasses, Karen Oakley, of the Fish and Wildlife Service. You know how sometimes you stick a leftover tuna casserole in the back of your refrigerator and forget about it for two or three years, and then you finally take it out, and it looks like a young version of the thing that's always trying to eat Sigourney Weaver in the "Alien" movies? Multiply that by a billion and you have the situation Ms. Oakley is dealing with. The Leftovers From Hell.

"It's pretty gross," she told us.

She said she has received three formal applications for carcasses. We asked her who on eath would want these things, and she said it was basically the scientific community. We should have suspected this. The scientific community is always engaging in bizarre activities involving frozen carcasses, subatomic particles, etc., instead of concentrating on practical goals that would benefit mankind, such as training cormorants to distinguish between Pacific sand lances and cows. Somebody should do something about this. But not us. It's time for our lunch.