



APRIL 12, 1985

CRUNKLE STANDARD

Vol. 1, Issue 2



ABSOLUTELY FREE

BOB & SHIRLEY AT S.H.

The variety of house meetings has been the source of no small confusion recently. Senior House is supposed to function as an open oligarchy of the elected officers, but recently little effort has been made to inform the house of proceedings of meetings with the dean's office.

The intent of these meetings, begun in the middle of the fall term, was to discuss the problems the house was having in attracting residents, the bad name that it had on campus, and what was seen by some residents as a general decline. Many felt that the ODSA had a negative view and worked frequently against SH; it was hoped that Deans McBay and Sherwood might be swayed to take a more favorable view of the dorm.

In the first two meetings only a small group of house officers, tutors and housemasters were present. The group focused on "identifying" problem areas and Shirley McBay presented her view of the house's problems. No means for changing anything were discussed, but rather positive and negative features of the house were catalogued. The deans seemed impressed with the house's seriousness provided that some real steps were taken in the future. They were, naturally enough, primarily concerned with making SH a more appealing place for freshmen, so that the dorm was not always undersubscribed and parents did not threaten to pull their children out of MIT unless they were moved from the house. (One such incident during this last rush almost degenerated into an ugly scene during the President's reception, Sherwood reported.) McBay seemed particularly concerned with drug use in the dorm and was not put off by declarations from both students and housemasters that this was not a great problem.

At subsequent meetings a few preliminary efforts to improve the situation in the dormitory were discussed. No great effort was made to collect suggestions from house residents about possible programs and the group came up with only a limited number of initial ideas on its own. These included:

1. A House Handbook to educate residents of the function/structure of house government, the role of tutors and housemasters, provide some house history and a listing of facilities. There was the thought that some of this information might be used in a rush mailing to attract freshmen.

2. The drug policy issue would be resolved.

3. A Rush Committee would be formed to produce new ideas for how Rush would be organized, how freshmen would be convinced to visit the dormitory, and propose activities which would attract freshmen.

CONT. ON P. 4

XXX COMM PROPOSAL

Smutcomm, a committee created last spring to look into the showing of pornography at Steer Roast has decided on a course of action.

The committee, which met for the first time a few weeks ago originally decided to sample house opinion on this well-worn issue by leaving a box at the desk which residents could make their opinions known to the committee. Of the roughly 30 notes in the box, only about 10 percent expressed a negative opinion about the showing of porn at Steer Roast. Using this information and keeping in mind the overwhelming approval of the status quo in past house election on the subject, the committee decided that any significant change would be in appropriate.

One particular negative note, however, inspired the committee to make its decision. The note was from a person who had never seen pornography until the Steer Roast of her freshman year. She went into Smutcomm not knowing what to expect and was "grossed out" by what she saw. The committee decided, after reading this note, that it would be a good idea to put a sign on the door warning potential viewers of the explicit nature of Smutcomm material along with a schedule which listed the various types of films and what times they would be shown.

This proposal will be put to a vote at the next housecomm.

PILE VICTORIOUS

Ronnie's Pile, Senior House's premier house band, took first place in the Student Center Committee's annual Battle of the Bands March 16. The event was attended by many Senior House residents.

In order to get into the finals of the battle the bands competed in a first-round battle which was similar to an SCC Pub Night. The winners of these first-round battles then competed each other in the finals Saturday, March 16.

One key element in the Pile's victory was their popularity with the attending crowd as evidenced by dance activity. According to one account the number of people dancing to Ronnie's Pile was at least twice as high as that for any other band at the battle. They were helped in this category by great turnout of Senior House residents. One observer estimated that SH residents constituted 20% of the audience at the time the Pile was playing. This was enhanced by unusually enthusiastic way that Senior House residents tend to dance.

As its prize the band was offered a choice of \$500 or \$800 in recording studio time. They took the cash.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

News
Analysis

The results of a questionnaire on the housemasters which were distributed to house residents the week before Spring Vacation have been tabulated and posted in the glass case by the desk.

The questionnaire was the result of a housecomm which took place March 17. It was proposed as a means of sampling house opinion on the performance of the housemasters a group of students who have been making charges of improper conduct by the Keyzers for some time. It had been charged by some residents that these students represented the viewpoint of only a very small fraction of house residents.

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked whether or not they agreed with a number of statements listed on the form relating to the Keyzers performance and effect on the house. A space for comments was provided.

The housecomm which approved the questionnaire was considered to be the most productive in months by many of those who attended. There was very little of incessant "flaming" which has characterized many of the meetings which have dealt with the Keyser issue. There was great deal of agreement between people on both sides of the issue that the questionnaire was constructive step in the direction of resolving the issue at hand. The questionnaire was approved unanimously with only a few minor amendments, which were also approved unanimously.

Any attempt to analyze the results of the questionnaire is hampered by the fact that there is no great consensus as shown by answers to the its questions. The Keyzers scored quite well on some points, moderately badly on others and miserably on a few others. For example, given the statement, "In my opinion, my housemaster has made an effort to get to know me," 69.5 people agreed, while 30.5 disagreed and 13 had no opinion. On the other hand the statement "I feel comfortable asking my housemasters for academic help and advice" got only 22.5 agrees with 48 disagreeing and 37.5 having no opinion.

On the two questions which attempted to get the respondents' more generalized view of the impact the Keyzers have on the house, the Keyzers lost by small margins. Statement number 11, which said, "I think it would be in the best interests of the house if the current housemasters continued to be housemasters," received only 41 people who agreed with it, while fifty disagreed and 13 had no opinion. When the respondents were asked if they personally would like to see the Keyzers stay or leave, 44 replied "leave," 42 replied "stay," 13 didn't care and 10 had no opinion. The conclusion to be drawn from the disparity in the response to these two questions is that 6 people didn't dislike the Keyzers personally.

CONT. ON P. 4

Contributions and letters from our readers are welcome. If you wish to write to our paper you can tack your letters to the Runkle 5th corkboard or send them to:

Letters
c/o M. Siemers
Runkle 503

Chief Editor Mike Siemers
Associate Editor.....Col. J.S. Mosby
Slanted News & Silly Opinions.....Mark Adler
Dear Jenny.....Jenny Hyman
Film Reviews.....Jay Keyser
Fast Cars and Rock & Roll...Scott Braithwaite

ARTICLE WRONG

Dear Mike,

The article "Deans Meet with Senior House Over Keyser Issue" contains several points which I think are inaccurate.

Margaret denied that Mike Vargas had ever talked to her about student drug use while he was a tutor. I understood from her remarks that they had such a conversation after he had left.

"Margaret then asked the three tutors in the room, Dave Chen, Luc Chouinard and Arjun Mangaldas if they had ever been asked to narc." I think it is misleading that you failed to mention that Dave Chen answered that he had been asked to watch Eric Martin's room as a major focus of drug distribution in the house. Margaret claimed of course that this was because she was concerned with the student's health. I ask, is it reasonable to be concerned about the health of two sociable, academically successful upperclassmen?

"A number of specific allegations of misconduct by the Keyzers towards various students were raised. In each case either those accusing them were unable to produce necessary evidence or else they were proved(?) to be wrong by the deans." This is simply untrue. Jay and I found ourselves in substantial agreement about the facts of the Frank Fernandez case but of course we disagreed as to whether the Keyser's actions constituted misconduct.

In the case of asking if and how the deans had received negative information about Dan Griscom, the deans simply sidetracked the issue. They did not deny having such information, they did not deny getting such information from the Keyzers, (as had been alleged by Mike Rohan at the housecomm) they simply talked about the procedure of putting something on someone's record. Margaret also did not deny the allegation or explain why Dan had gotten an unfriendly letter. Perhaps this is just another failure of communication; however the deans didn't even answer a simple

please turn to page three

this quote: "contrary to the article, no one that I know was blaming the Keyser's..." Do you personally know everyone in the house? Or even in your own entry, Mr. Halle? Are you being open-minded, as you claim. I think not! Someone who is open minded should be willing to accept the opinions and observations of others, or at least consider them, even if they don't reinforce his/her preconceived notions. Also, just because you have chosen one side of an issue, that does not make the other side's views "propaganda." Anyway, that's all for now. Come on, kids, grow up!

EDITORIALS

RODGERS FOR M O F

S.H. IMPROVEMENTS

As Steer Roast time approaches all Senior House residents have an important decision to make. That is, of course, who they will vote for for Most Obnoxious Freshman. This is not a decision to be made lightly and, after much careful thought, The Runkle Standard Roar has decided to endorse Craig Rodgers. There are a number of reasons we chose him.

Of all the conceivable candidates, Craig is the most energetic in his obnoxiousness. He makes it a hobby to annoy certain people tirelessly. Craig devotes a great deal of his spare time bothering these people just as a running enthusiast might run bridge circuits until he collapsed from sheer exhaustion. So devoted is he that often climbs four flights of stairs in order to annoy people. One typifies this phenomenon. One morning a member of our staff happened to encounter Mr. Rodgers in front of his room as Craig was heading towards the bathroom to take his morning shower. This is a time of day when most people are too groggy to say anything, much less be obnoxious. Craig, however, accosted this person with his standard obnoxiousness in the form of a question: "Where's Charles Forsythe?" or something similar. He also harassed our staff non-stop for about an hour when we were laying out the first issue of The Runkle Standard Roar.

Craig's obnoxiousness is also the best known throughout the house. In his home entry of Runkle he annoys people on every floor as roams up and down, looking for trouble. In his ill-fated campaign for judcomm he also made himself known to every entry, something which cannot be said of any other MOF candidate.

Rodgers also has widespread support in the house. People on all sides of the recent controversy over the housemasters are united in their agreement on this issue. He candidacy also has the support of many house officers, past and present, including our president and three of our four vice-presidents.

We feel that the preceding argument is reason enough to vote for Craig Rodgers for MOF. We would also include the details of his relationship with a certain young woman from North Carolina, except that they are too indecent to print.

Shirley McBay may write for The Tech, but her boss writes for The Runkle Standard Roar

Senior House is about to undergo some changes this summer. These include removal of the ivy, repairs to plumbing, improved roof drainage and more. I would like to suggest some additional improvements:

1) Replace the ivy. Why? you may ask, they'll just take it down when it starts getting in the way again. Well, then, we'll just have to grow it INSIDE the house. Imagine opening your entry door and being greeted by lush vegetation climbing all over the walls. Plants could climb on the the stair railings, too. As long as there was something for the plants to wrap around, there would only be minor damage to the House. Your favorite mural or window could be framed in luxurious living beauty. And speaking of murals,

2) We need more murals. My favorite mural is the one on Runkle 6th (Predictable, aren't I?). If you haven't seen it yet, you must take a look. It's really a fantastic piece of art. It's a scene from Alice in Wonderland of a caterpillar with a hookah on a toadstool, and Alice, of course, looking on. This mural is just incredibly detailed. Other works of art include an airplane, a leaf, a reclining nude, Mickey Mouse, Coke Adds Life, Jimi Hendrix, eye-catching black and white designs and many more. Let's continue this great tradition! How about some more rock stars, maybe some landscapes, or a reproduction of a well-known work of art? If any artists out there are listening I encourage you to just go ahead and do anything at all. Your canvas is Senior House itself.

3) Vote for Craig Rodgers for MOF. Now that the housemaster "issue" has finally blown over, it's time to think about ways to bring Senior House back together. One way is to pick a really obnoxious person as a common enemy. Craig Rodgers is the only logical choice. Practically everyone in the house knows him or has met him. So many examples exist of his obnoxiousness, far more than any other freshman. Craig is simply the most bothersome person most of us have ever met. Check out his beady little eyes, set close together like a criminals. Can we trust this man as Judcomm? No! Then, how about MOF? Yes, replies Senior House, once divided over silly little quarrels but now united for this one major cause. Go Craig!

And now I've got a few bones to pick with a certain letter writer. Check out

KELLER CONT.

question much less prove anything.

Of course nothing that was said at the meeting put a dint in the confidence of Dean McBay. She started the meeting by saying that she did not consider the removal of the Keyzers an option. This is an important point and the main reason I call the Dean's office intransigent. As I pointed out towards the end of the meeting (yielding Shirley's second comment of this nature) stating your actions first instead of considering a situation openly first and deciding then what the appropriate action is is ridiculous. Since some students at the meeting had considered the situation carefully, at first hand, for years, to announce before hearing their arguments the unacceptability of resignation as an option shows an unwillingness to listen and a lack of respect for the students' judgment. You also fail to mention that she said she couldn't imagine the percent of students who have would want the Keyzers to resign that would cause her to consider this action.

I did not consider the meeting harassment. A foolish waste of time in which the deans showed their true colors but not harassment. I accused the Dean's office of harassing Senior House, not me or Caroline, in their actions towards the house during the fire, accusations of an anti-rush, etc.

I found it interesting that in the article "Whither Senior House?" no one mentioned that that this period of decline coincides with the Keyzers' period of residency in our house. Two years ago people certainly believed in the connection, stating "Senior House is dead." Whether or not you believe in this connection you should note that several "outgoing and active residents" are considering moving out at least partially because of the Keyzers, myself included.

Sincerely,

Pamela R. Keller

There have been a number of complaints about my article. I will be the first to admit that I am not a first-rate writer or journalist. I heartily thank you, Pam, for your input. If this paper is to be more than a one-sided flaming rag, we need our readers to tell us when we are wrong.

Throughout the discussion of the particular issue that was the subject of my article there has been a great deal of disagreement as to whether or not certain stories were facts or not. This was especially true at the meeting I wrote about. As a newspaperman and resident of Senior House I had to decide what I thought was and was not a fact. I certainly violated some principles of objective journalism when I said that something was "proved" at the meeting. For this I apologize. In this sense my mistakes were worse than Mark's whose article made no pretense of objectivity. It is also very possible that I made mistakes in my analysis of the meeting. Your letter offers our readers another point of view.

Mike Siemers

CONFUSED FRESHMAN SET STRAIGHT

An Open Letter Concerning The Runkle Standard Roar (excerpted)

One day this week I happened to find in my mailbox an interesting piece of paper product labeled The Runkle Standard Roar. As I walked to Holman, a person said something to the general gist of "Have you read the propaganda yet?" Tipped off to the fact that the document was a product of a pro-Keyser group, I hoped to read something that attempted to incorporate something conventional such as reason or truth. I was quickly disappointed. I feel justified in expressing my disdain towards something as plasticine and false as The Runkle Standard Roar.

Under the quaint heading "Our First Issue," the Roar states their goal of presenting issues as multi-sided while acknowledging the impossibility of achieving their goal. They apparently fail to comprehend that not attempting to achieve one's goals makes their realization pretty close to impossible. For example, immediately below this issue opener is a fine piece of objective journalism, Mark Adler's "Margaret Saves Shower Heads." No one that I know was blaming the Keyzers for taking away these highly precious bathroom accessories. And although I welcome the showerheads staying, to make Margaret Keyser into the patron saint of chrome for doing something that any house member with strong beliefs should feel compelled to do is, in my opinion, somewhat excessive. Let me quote this passage: "...She is well known and respected by other housemasters, housing office people and other important people. It's a good thing she acted while the rats were still whimpering among themselves. It's too bad some people don't appreciate how much she does for us." While perhaps the good things that the housemasters do go largely unnoticed I challenge all those people who feel over-appreciated to leave a note for me at the desk. But I guess "its too bad," that people don't think about others. Upon turning the page one finds Mark Adler's name listed under "Blatantly Slanted News." Exactly what the significance of that statement is, one won't get any disagreement from me.

At this point the totally propagandistic aspect of The Roar is taken out of the way. However, Mike Siemers' piece, "Deans Meet With House over Keyser Issue" is nonetheless slanted and misleading. I would like to point out my favorite passage: "Predictions that Margaret would not be able to hold up under pressure proved to be false. She defended herself skillfully." Such a statement rivals Dean McBay's highly significant comment, "I'm 100 percent behind the Keyser's; I think about it very carefully."

The rest of The Roar is not really fair game for a critic or a satirist. These things, though, belong in a newspaper; now the task is to create a newspaper where they can be placed. As for the slanted issues that The Roar addresses, propaganda, or reverse propaganda for that matter, will accomplish little. Now is the time not of The Roar but of reason, sensitivity, and common sense.

- Michael Halle

A note of dissent has come to our attention. Mr. M. Halle made a public condemnation of RSR shortly after the first number appeared. There he attacks the RSR primarily for the content of its leaders, which reflected he felt, too fawning an admiration for the current housemasters to be contained in a public

paper. His remarks, however, indicate an understandable misconstrual of the aims of this paper.

There is close to no news associated with SH. What little material is generated by house meetings, it is the secretary's job to present, via the traditional synopses. News and gossip spread like wildfire in the house already. The RSR was established, rather, with the intent of providing a public forum on any issues of the day, and a home for any features that might interest residents, if only because other house residents had written them.

A paper that attempted merely to report in the fashion of a journal would be both very brief and excurtatingly boring, both to read and assemble. We did not intend to present news as such, but rather, highly personal commentaries about anything of even the remotest interest to the house. Editorials are called such primarily because they reflect the views of the editorial board. The principle of presenting "more than one side of an issue," was not included in the statement of intentions vacuously however. The paper is open to all contributions of merit from residents of any persuasion.

We include in this issue a rebuttal to one of the original columns, and should any new aspects of this issue arise the positions proposed in the RSR will be solely those of the authors who cover these events. The editorial board, however, intends to reduce discussion of any single issue to a fruitful level so that the paper is not filled with countless restatements of well-established positions.

The RSR was established with two intentions; the first to provide amusement for the founding core of editors and writers, and then maybe to do the same for the rest of the house. There are enough truly bizarre ideas floating around this house to fill volumes of RSRs and it is these that will be presented.

Mr. Halle labours under the assumption that the RSR was intended solely as an exercise in bombastic defence of the housemasters, prepared by a "pro-Keyser group." This characterization is simply inaccurate. The editors do not intend the paper to be "totally propagandistic," though they recognized that some might take the first number that way. When RSR authors chose to be blatantly biased, which is the greatest aspiration of feature writer Mr. M. Adler, it is expected that SH residents will be insightful enough to simply smile and disagree. To anyone for whom this is too great an indignity or, like Mr. Halle, for whom the desire to see one's own words in print is strong, the RSR extends the invitation to appear in our own barely legible pages.

For the rest of the readership, some simple advice: lighten up and read a little tighter between the lines.

ZIPPY CANNED

Senior House and East Campus now have a new night watchman. Our former night watchman, Frank Perscipio, aka "Zippy," was fired a few weeks ago. This much despised man has been replaced by a guy named Jim.

Zippy was fired for violating a rule which prohibits firearms on campus. After being assaulted in Central Square, an area he had to walk through every night to get to his job at MIT, the Zip decided to protect himself by bringing a rifle to work. After being told a number of times that this was in violation of MIT rules, he continued to bring the weapon to MIT and was eventually fired.

DEANS CONT.

4. A committee to organize a faculty tea or wine/cheese event would be formed. Faculty rapport with residents would be improved, it was hoped.

No real plans were discussed for any function which would restore some of the 'lost vitality' to the house. To some observers the deans did not seem particularly interested in this issue.

Some progress has been made on all these fronts, but efforts are completed on none. Not only is it difficult to "plan" new vigor for a social institution but also too much activity drafted from above rubs strongly against the inherited Senior House political culture. It was intended that these measures would be discussed at a HouseComm. To this date they have not.

Recently this group, its constitution changed slightly by the elections, met for the first time this Spring to discuss rush plans. Much of the meeting was spent discussing peripheral issues, such as housing for residents during the summer and a review of how the measures proposed during the Fall had been implemented to date. However, the Vice-Presidents, when they presented their initial program for rush, clearly impressed the deans with their seriousness. Many proposals had previously been made (a summer rush mailing, a dispensation to rush early for the house) but others (a program of writing letters to freshmen who express interest in the house, efforts to actively track and recruit freshmen) had never been discussed publicly before.

In the meantime there had been talk in some quarters of asking the housemasters to leave, which had involved the deans, and this issue was clearly in the background. There was discussion of a meeting with the house and the deans to address "the role of the housemasters." Three-year residents with a bent towards house history remember a similar meeting held in the fall of 1982 as one of the most polarizing and fruitless in recent history. An incident at the beginning of the meeting, when the house secretary walked out as a result of the deans' refusal to consent to a taped record of the meeting being made, temporarily diverted attention from the issues at hand, back towards the "housemaster problem." McBay, once again, gave special attention to the drug issue, rebuffing President Lentz's obvious attempts to put it out of the way. (Sweep it under the carpet)

It is the job of the Vice-Presidents to organize rush and as they have taken a strong lead on this issue the future of the unelected rush committee seems uncertain. The handbook is largely completed but awaits some final work before it can be printed.

What the meeting made clear was this: if there are improvements occurring in the house at the moment it is largely because of the effort of individuals, such as the Vice-Presidents planning Rush, those planning the Women's Rush, and those organizing individual house events and not as a result of these planned activities.

What has been recognized repeatedly throughout these proceedings is that the house can go nowhere without the effort of dedicated and active residents. They seem to be making a difference right now.

Col. J.S. Mosby C.S.A.

RESULTS CONT.

but felt their continuance at the house would not be in the best interests of SH since so many others disapproved of their performance.

More meaningful analysis of the data above is not easy. While the Keyzers "lost" the "stay or leave" question 44 to 42, the fact remains that, out of 181 house residents only 86 gave an opinion one way or the other to that question and it cannot be said that 44 - 42 margin represents a consensus in house opinion.

Some of those most interested in these results feel that it is more meaningful to look at the comments section of the questionnaires which are available at the desk to anyone who would like to read them. One such person who has read many of these comments was asked her opinion. "There were some people who wrote ... I like the Keyzers," she noted. There was also, in her opinion, a small, but exceedingly obnoxious group of people who thought that these problems would be solved if residents simply obeyed the law and stopped using drugs. However, this person felt that a much larger fraction of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction in their comments about the Keyzers. Many wanted them to become less involved in house government. Others were very upset at the Keyzers' attitude towards drug use and drug users in Senior House. There was also a significant number of respondents who, while they did not wish the Keyzers to leave the house, expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction about their effect on the house. The conclusion to be reached from this information is that the results of the questionnaire are not a demand for the Keyzers to leave, but for a modification in policy, especially in the area of their dealings with residents who use drugs. This lends credence to the position taken by a number of students who say that there is a problem in that there is a perception that the Keyzers are hostile to drug users.

At this point it is unclear whether or not the information acquired through this questionnaire will have any effect on relations with the housemasters. When asked for his analysis of the results of the questionnaire one source close to a prominent house officer said, "They say nothing. You don't see any moving vans over there by Crafts, do you? You won't see any in the future either."

A desk worker who has read many of the comments came to only one conclusion: that Senior House residents are illiterate. Whether or not anything will change in the house remains to be seen.

RUNKLE STANDARD ROAR ADVERTISEMENTS

The Roar advertisement. A time proven method of getting the quick response you desire, and the buyer your product deserves, at a fraction of the cost of other means. Quit simply the slickest, quickest sell.

Lost & Found
Hardware and Cookery

Have you borrowed our WIRE WHISK or our NEEDLENOSE PLIERS? Please return, ASAP to Wayne and Louise, R-204.

Personals

ESWRM (Extraordinarily straight white Republican male) seeks ESWRF for pleasurable late nite hours doing 14.02 problem sets, praying to my special eraserhead, eating natural casing all-meat franks, and viewing B-grade movies. Send resume, transcript, blood test results, and photo to Box 23, Runkle Std. Roar.

SENIOR HOUSE RENAISSANCE?

News Analysis

Among analysts of the Senior House social and political scene there has lately been talk of a renaissance Senior House.

For quite some time now many analysts have been noting the decline of Senior House. They have cited the growing conservatism in our nation which has been reflected in a similar phenomenon in freshmen entering the house. Analysts who see a decline site this growing conservatism as contribution to a decline in the certain traditions in the house and the former trend for SH to be a haven for nonconformity and unusual activities. This was reflected a few weeks ago in a seemingly unimportant event. A former house resident who is prone to making animal noises passed a freshmen on the stairs in Runkle and greeted her with a bark. He thought he heard her respond in kind and later asked her if she did. "I'm a freshman," she replied, "I don't bark."

Also cited as evidence of a decline has been the increasing ineffectiveness of house government as a number of housecomms of this spring semester have degenerated into seemingly endless flame sessions. Many concerned citizens have even considered overthrowing the present government and replacing it with a so-called "efficient state."

Some of these analysts also fear that the effect of the present housemasters has been to drive out nonconformists and reduce the use of drugs, another house tradition.

As a result of this "decline" many juniors and seniors are predicting that within two years the house will be nothing like what it was when they first arrived. Many of these people are so upset that they plan to leave the house next term and finish their MIT education living off-campus.

However, a small, but growing, group of house analysts has noted some events in the past few weeks which point to the return of good times to Senior House. Commonly listed as good omens are the victory of Ronnie's Pile at the Battle of the Bands, the unusually productive housecomm which resulted in the issuance of the questionnaire on the housemasters, and the meeting with the deans where vice-president Stever Robbins proposed a number of well thought out solutions to the house's R/O problems.

One of these analysts, when asked why he thought the victory of Ronnie's Pile to be so significant, said, "I see it as more than just a victory for the band, but as a victory for the whole house. This should reaffirm to SH residents our musical and moral superiority over those West Campus houses. If you think Senior House is bad, imagine living at one of those other houses and going to their parties where they have one of those boring bands." This analyst also sees the improvement of our rush to be important. "With an effective rush next August we'll be able to attract enthusiastic people who really want to live here, not dullards who'd rather live in Burton."

Though the number of analysts who believe in this "renaissance" are small in number, they are very enthusiastic. One former house officer, who now writes for a major house newspaper, responded excitedly when asked "What do you think of this renaissance theory?" "It's clear, it's happening," he said, "it's all around you!" Whether this rebirth actually pans out remains to be seen.

Michael Siemers

WITNESS A SUCCESS!

The Australian film making industry has justly become famous and Australian director Peter Weir - who gave us Picnic at Hanging Rock, Gallipoli, and The Year of Living Dangerously - is in no small part responsible for that reputation. Weir's latest contribution, Witness, differs from the others. This is his first Hollywood film. And it is a film which he has neither produced nor written. The result is what you might expect of a good Hollywood production. It is well-made and slick in the best sense. There are no loose ends and the viewer, looking for a good escape, will not be dissatisfied. Nonetheless, in comparison with, say, The Year of Living Dangerously, Weir has made compromises. The film is nowhere near as moving or effective.

Witness stars Harrison Ford as a tough Philadelphia detective who becomes involved with an attractive Amish widow (played by Kelly McGillis) whose son, as bad luck would have it, witnesses a murder in the mensroom of a Philadelphia train station. The plot turns on the fact that the victim, an undercover cop, is murdered by a police lieutenant and the rot goes all the way to the top. Ford discovers the truth, and along the way and his mother, becomes the hunted instead of the hunter.

The tension in the film comes from two conflicts. One conflict is that between the killers and the family ironically created by the murder; namely, Ford as father and McGillis as Amish mother. This conflict is paralleled by the conflict between life among the Amish and life in the big city. In the city Ford is divorced, his family fragmented and split. When Ford returns to the city at the end, the fragmentation begins all over again. But in the interim we have seen something of the peace of the Amish and the frenzy of the English, as the Amish call those outside of their way.

The film is well acted and provides Ford with the opportunity to show that he is something more than just another pretty face and Kelly McGillis, as the Amish widow, with the opportunity to do the same.

There is a problem with the film and each of you will have to decide for him/herself. The Amish are outraged by the film, claiming that it distorts their way of life and presents them as a clan far more worldly than they are. It is not hard to see why they feel this way I would be too, if I were Amish. In one scene, Kelly McGillis, bare to the waist looks seductively at Ford and, simultaneously, at the camera. It is definitely the scene responsible for the film's R rating.

So, see it if you are looking for a good flick and feel Amish outrage is not worth a boycott. Personally, I should have opted for the boycott. Ah well, the flesh is weak.

by Jay Keyser

COLOSSAL WASTE

"A Colossal Waste of Time" will be shown as part of this year's Steer Roast activities. The play, whose rehearsals have just begun, is written and directed by former Senior House resident Mike Levine, who produced a play at last year's Steer Roast. As with last year's production, "A Cloudy Day?", the cast will be made up entirely of Senior House residents (past and present) and will be put on Saturday afternoon before the awards ceremony.

As opposed to "Cloudy Day" which was an existential fantasy, "Colossal Waste" is an attempt to depict a certain aspect of life in Senior House. Levine describes it as a "whimsical farce." "I'm tryin' to capture the essence of the Runkle 6th kitchen in its prime while pointing out the ridiculousness and stupidity of life," Levine said during a recent visit to the house.

As noted above, the cast will be made up entirely of SH residents. Though the actors all have very little experience, director Levine is very enthusiastic about the play's chances for success. "I'm pretty psyched about the John Dawley factor," he told this reporter recently. "I'm also very excited about the reappearance Don Raines to revive his old role as the policeman," he added, referring to the one point of continuity between "Colossal Waste" and last year's "Cloudy Day."

HIGH RISK, STRANGE VISIONS ON THE AUTOSTRADA

Americans are among the slowest and most incompetent drivers on earth. In few other countries do you find the vast majority of motorists complacently creeping along, swaying haphazardly from one lane to another, conceptually far removed from the irreproachably efficient travel which proper utilization of our country's well developed highway system would extract. Despite the tendency for similar ideas to be manifested through ramblings from maladjusted, fault-finding foreigners, the above is essentially truthful, a fact made more obvious when you also make the comparison firsthand.

I was fortunate enough to spend the last I.A.P. accompanying my grandmother on a tour of Southern Italy and Sicily, and was responsible for the three thousand and some-odd miles of driving necessary. Although I do not believe we should abdicate all our driving laws in favor of the anarchy flourishing in Italy (and most of Europe), I wish to contrast their super-efficient driving style with our legally-imposed sloppiness to show how different our philosophy of driving is from that of most other countries with a long history of automotive travel.

Our ultra-conservative driving laws are based on the theory that most decision making should not be left to the individual since nobody knows what they are doing, consequently providing an excuse for motorists here to live up to those expectations. In Italy, driving is viewed as an art, a virtuosity within reach of the common man whose practical rewards are reaped on every journey. The general philosophy which fosters this attitude and dominates all driving situations is "everything is up to you." There are no speed limits; correct judgment of the maximum safe speed is up to you. You are not forewarned of approaching turns (and never blatantly coerced to submit to a patently recommended speed); proper handling of

every change of direction is up to you. The number of lanes in a given street is determined by the width of the street and the width of the cars which happen to be using it at the time, not the silly number of strips of road specifically designated to be lanes of travel; the extent to which you maximize the available space is up to you. (The resourceful Neapolitans carry this one step further, even choosing not to designate a particular part of the road for travelling in a uniform direction (As long as you keep to the right of the people going the other way, you're OK), allowing the car-carrying capacity in each direction to expand and contract depending on need, and eliminating all wasted space. The imperialistic taxi-drivers there are especially good at expanding their direction's portion of the road, until they meet up with equally fearless opposite forces and scurry back to the right).

Since passing on two lane roads is such an individualized occurrence, involving unique complex predictions (and sometimes a bit of hoping and praying) on the part of the passer and cooperation by the passee (and being affected greatly by the willingness of the passing car), the Italians often dispense with median road markings and choose to leave the question of its feasibility to the two parties involved.

Some intersections within the cities of greatest population density do reluctantly succumb to the adamant traffic controlling scheme offered by the electric traffic light, but everywhere else the ubiquitous stop sign has the last word. The traffic circle is not found in Italy; the concept of needlessly connecting two points with an arc instead of a straight line would not go over well.

All superhighways (autostradas) have two lanes in each direction. The right lane is for cruising, and the left is only for passing. If you are considered to be unnecessarily occupying the left lane by a driver who would like to proceed at a somewhat faster rate, he will subtly express his disapproval by coming to rest a few inches from your back bumper and flashing his high beams (The frequency of his headlight flashing is roughly proportional to how pissed off he is). This very effectively insures proper lane utilization and optimum traffic flow.

This wonderful expression of driving enthusiasm is also encouraged by the challenging nature of Italian roads. Most of the roads in Italy are treacherous two-lane affairs forced to conform to the precipices of the mountainous landscape. They are continuously climbing or descending, connecting hairpin bends of varying sharpness, visibility, and uniformity of curvature, often with a deadly drop as the only shoulder. (There are no railings to decrease the agility with which your car would take to flight if you missed one of these turns and sailed off a ledge. If you were lucky enough to depart from a "corniche" road skirting the cliffs above the green Mediterranean, you would probably even get a fantastic panoramic view on the way down).

The autostradas, with their many well-engineered bridges and tunnels, reduce the amount of landscape conformity required, but not enough to take the fun out of high-speed driving. You also have to constantly judge how much slower cars ahead of you in the left lane are going so you know how far in advance to decelerate to gracefully arrive at the proper position for headlight-flashing. Being on guard against sloppies suddenly moving to the left to pass people going even more slowly is also important; giant speed differentials exist because most Italians are relatively poor and forced

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ALEX GOES TO COLUMBIA

Many people flame about the evils of racism in the world but one Senior House resident is actually doing something about it. Alex Rosen is at this moment participating at sit-in at New York's Columbia University.

After staying outside all night through a rainstorm while participating in a similar event at Harvard, Alex heard of the sit-in at Columbia where students have surrounded a building on campus and vow to stay until the university divests its holdings in companies which do business with South Africa.

The following is a letter Alex wrote to a friend who offered him moral support.

Eric,

Thank you for your support. It certainly is easier to sit out in the cold when you feel like more than one person. I believe that we are doing the right thing. I cannot sit idly by while people are killed because of the color of their skin. I will not let those who are fasting suffer for no purpose. We must win!

I think that I should call WMBR tomorrow from Columbia to let them know what is happening at that time. The pace of the events seems to be speeding up. Monday should be very interesting. I'll see you when it is over.

"We Shall Not Be Moved"

DEAR JENNY

Dear Jenny,

You are so beautiful, why do you have to look like a freak?

Your Grandmother

Dear Grandma,

Well, why do you wear those incredibly queer polyester shirts and those stupid bright and flowery golf skirts? At least I can walk straight, palsy! I bet you're so whimpy you won't even say the word "shit"! Well say it! Say it! Say the goddamned word! SAY IT! Come on prune-face, say it! Say it!

See?

Jenny

ITALY CONT.

to coax along tiny little sluggish Fiats. They merely serve as obstacles to those who can afford more entertaining transportation.

The obstacles hold their own, however, in the ancient villages which can only be transversed on very narrow cobblestone streets. None of these streets were designed to accommodate traffic since they preceded the automobile age by hundreds of years, so (if you are lucky) there is only room for one car going in one direction. The miniscule Fiats look so cute shooting in and out of the smaller alleys, like mice darting in and out of mouseholes. There are no rules regarding the usage of these streets; the only passages that are off limits to you are those through which your car is too big to fit. If you think you won't get stuck, you can give it a shot; it ain't up to you. In large cities these cobblestone streets have been supplemented by wide avenues to allow the population to shift around more easily; and the driving on such roads is similar to the driving in Manhattan, except much more hair-raising, since everyone drives much smaller, more-maneuverable cars.

All of this explains why a picture of a car, its top speed, and its price are the sole criteria one which most Italian automotive purchases are based; Italy is like one great racetrack. Their driving methodology (or lack thereof) may sound insane; but just the fact that such a system exists and works in Italy and most other European countries makes you understand why they find our slow, inefficient driving style to be insane. It is a question of how driving should really be approached. Although it is generally that the aggressive European drivers are much more skilled than their American counterparts, their fatality rate (average number of deaths per mile driven) is about twice that of ours, so it is not a situation to be strived for from a strictly safety-oriented point of view. However, driving must be viewed from positions other than the preservation of life at all costs; effects on the quality of the life being preserved must be emphasized also. The necessity of a compromise between the two is made obvious by examining the speed limit situation: fifty-five may save lives, but forty-five would save a lot more and yet no one proposes to lower the speed limit further. Comparing the ways of the typical American driver with the accepted driving styles in most of Europe shows that the compromise we have chosen is lopsided, not allowing people the freedom of satisfying or efficient modes of driving. by Scott Braithwaite

It sounded almost like one of those deliberate "leaks" designed to test the water. Why not turn the East Campus into a graduate residential center, with Walker Memorial as its focus, and turn Ashdown House over to the displaced undergraduates - some of whom would also be accommodated in "West House," the new building now under construction next to "New House"? The suggestion from Kenneth R. Weddigh, '43, dean of the Graduate School, was a response to an on-campus housing shortage of increasingly serious proportions, but as the photo shows, the idea was spurned on East Campus. Undergraduates threatened to express their indignation by picketing alumni affairs, telephoning prospective students, and cancelling the proposed senior class gift. Senior House residents protested that they live there because they like it: "I like it a hell of a lot," wrote Nora Hornung, '82, to The Tech. The brochure ended quickly; Dean Shirley McBay called for a study of long-range housing needs; Associate Dean Robert Sherwood urged the value of "the essence and lifestyles of the dormitories."



Residents will be allowed to return to their rooms as soon as rescue workers have removed the wall of flame sheets that collapsed on the night watchman. Until then students will not be allowed to post their opinions of who is to blame. Zippy is in stable condition at Mass. Gen.