

HCC in the Mid-1990's

There are a few surviving records from the 1992-1993 academic year chronicling the events of HCC, such as this letter written by HCC President Marc W. Brown to Hinman College residents:

Spirit...Enthusiasm...Togetherness...what do these three things have in common?...They are facets of Hinman College that SET us high above the rest. I am sure that if you have been to a co-rec game, seen a Hinman Production Company (H.P.C.) play, played basketball or tennis on the Hinman courts, or have just hung out around the quad, you would agree with me that Hinman College is a special place to live. This year, the Hinman College Council's (H.C.C.) goal is to bring out these three facets in Hinman residents, and make Hinman a fun and meaningful place to live.

This years [sic] events began with our opening weekend activities. The Council sponsored a welcome back dance that many new and old residents turned out for, a Sunday morning cartoon brunch that was enjoyed in the Hinman Dining Hall, and the "Fresh Start" program which involved Hinman Fellows (faculty members) answering questions, and discussing what academics are like at Binghamton University. This informational program was organized by Hinman's Academic Vice-President Eileen Biondi and Faculty Master Nick Sterling.

When September arrives and the last days of Summer in Binghamton pass by, the co-rec Football Season begins in Hinman College. This sport, which began here in the early seventies, holds a long-standing tradition of sportsmanship, fun, and "interesting" team names. Co-Rec Football is headed by co-commissioners Lance Smith and Alan Stein, and assistants Rob Borrelli and Scott Jaffee for the fall 1992 season. Good luck to all floors in their pursuit to win the co-rec super bowl.

At the same time that the co-rec season began, there was a new addition to the basketball court behind Roosevelt and Smith Halls. The H.C.C. arranged to have new backboards and rims put up to replace the ones that were torn down from last year. The new rims and backboards are durable and should last assuming that no one hangs on them and/or damages them. If anyone happens to see somebody trying to damage the rims or backboards, please ask them to stop for the sake of the people who enjoy using them.

In late September and early October there was a plethora of community involvement in and about Hinman College. September 23 marked the first blood drive in Hinman College since December 1989. This blood drive was one of the most successful drives ever in Hinman and on campus. Ninety-one people donated and eighty-one one pints of blood were accepted. That makes four-hundred and five lives saved. This blood drive could not have been so successful without the help of RA's, RD's, building coordinators, and residents who took timeout of their busy schedules to donate blood.

From Friday night to late Saturday afternoon, October 2-3, an annual tradition in Hinman College took place: Dorm Wars. This year's festivities were organized by Hinman's Social Affairs Vice-President Matt Levy and assistant coordinator Marie Driscoll. There were many new residents who had a great time participating in their first Dorm Wars and many older residents felt that this was one of the best dorm wars [sic] in recent history. I would like to thank all the captains and hall government councils who got their halls psyched up for the events and I would like to congratulate Lehman Hall for winning Dorm Wars.

Another event that took place during the early part of October was the Sprint phonecard, H.C.C.'s first fundraiser for the 1992-93 school year. This successful fundraiser, coordinated by the Financial Vice-President Frank Vellucci, raised \$830. This money was put in the account for building a new volleyball court in Hinman College. This fundraiser could not have taken place if it was not for all those elected officers and various residents of Hinman College who took the time to sit at our booth in the University Union.

During the mild weeks of October, H.P.C.'s production of You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown was performed five times in the Hinman Commons. The attendance for each performance was superb because of a great production and H.P.C.'s long-standing history of excellence. Congratulations to all of those who participated in the production and the cast of this fine performance.

Most of these events could not have been as successful if it wasn't for all of the publicity that went along with them. I would like to thank Hinman's Public Affairs Vice-President Mike Van Nort for all of his ingenious and artistic signs for Hinman events.

As you can see there are many ways to get involved in your collegiate area and make a positive impact on your community. You can work on the yearbook, ref a co-rec game, be involved in a play, work on this newspaper, sit on various committees, and much much more. If you would like to be involved in the Hinman College Council feel free to attend any of our meetings on Tuesday nights at 10PM in rotating halls, or your own hall government meetings during the week. Look for signs posted.

From this letter I hope you can see that there are many ways that make Hinman SET high above the rest.¹

As evidenced by this letter, HCC was already off to a great start and anticipations ran high for a good year.

Soon however, student apathy began to rear its ugly head again. An anonymous letter was published in the *Hinman Halitosis* chronicling the writer's lament for the sorry state of Hinman College.

As I walk through Hinman, I wonder if Hinman will ever wake up and start coming out of their rooms. Standing in front of Smith Hall, I can hear College in the Woods playing Co-Rec football by the residents screaming and having fun. The only thing I hear from Hinman (the founder of Co-Rec Football) are Smith 1A's Josey and the Pussycats, and their touchdown chant, and Roos 2B's Butt Dance. Other than that Hinman has been quiet. One of the RA's had a free Toga Party with free food which he put a lot of effort to put on. You would think that people would come to see what it was like. WRONG!!! Only 40 residents out of 1000 came for even 5 minutes. Ask a resident why they don't come out of their rooms. Their response is "I have too much work to do." That is bologna. I do not see how anyone can study 24 hours a day and not take a 5 minute break to see what is going on around them. Part of living on campus is to also get some sense of community living. I have been here for a couple of years and have never seen something so terrible, and pathetic. If people could see a change. Dorm Wars was a great way to get people out of their rooms, but that was only one event out of many. Lehman won Dorm Wars but what happened when they wanted to have a celebration party, no one showed up for their own hall party. Cleveland has great spirit at hall meetings and are always involved in everything. I applaud them. But that is one hall. So next time I am standing on top of the hill I would like to hear noise. And to everyone who has too much work to do all of the time (go back to high school) this is college and the 1990's. Let us show CIW that there are residents who do live in Hinman College, the once most talked about community.²

Social Vice President Matt Levy shot back with his own letter which read:

Anyone who says that Hinman is lacking spirit obviously did not attend Dorm Wars 1992 on October 2-3. The excitement leading up to the weekend was insurmountable. Friday nights [sic] festivities began with a beautiful rendition of The Star Spangled Banner by The Binghamton Crosbies. Banners were flying high and cheers were blaring on the eve of Dorm Wars, as the opening ceremonies began. At least 400 Hinman residents marched around the walkway of the quad. Finally, the five torches representing the five halls were lit and Dorm Wars was officially under way. For the next 45 minutes Hinman College was mesmerized by the music and choreography of the Crosbies as they performed such hits as "Lean On Me" and "How do I say Goodbye to Yesterday".

Saturday arrived and so did the start of the events that would determine the victors of Dorm Wars '92. Congratulations to Lehman Hall on their successful triumph. Personally, I want to also congratulate every hall for a couple of reasons. First, I was moved at the sight of everyone shaking hands at the end of the events. This is what I believe Dorm Wars is all about, residents of each hall uniting to form a bond. Finally, I want to reiterate my opening point. Hinman College has proved that we are hot, we are spirited, and we are where it's at...³

Mike Van Nort, HCC's Public Affairs Vice President, also had a stern rebuke for the author.

I am writing in response to last issues letter entitled "Hinman Wake Up", written by a concerned resident. I was extremely disappointed at its content and began to wonder if

there was a problem in Hinman or if the problem was with the author and their lack of participation in Hinman. Since then I have decided that the problem is not with Hinman but with those individuals like “a concerned resident” that choose not to get involved.

You stated in your letter concerning Hinman that you have been here for a couple of years and have never seen “something so terrible and pathetic.” Well, I too have lived here for a couple of years and all I have seen is Hinman spirit increase. You also stated that, “The only thing I hear are Smith 1A’s Josey and the Pussycats, and their touchdown dance, and Roos 2b’s Butt Dance.” Apparently you have not attended many games or at least have not been listening because there are several teams with a lot of spirit this year. Maybe you should watch Lehman 1B, WAOOA, Cleveland 3A Wet Dream Team, 2A Castraiders, 2B We Do It In All Positions, Hughes Pittsburgh Feelers or Hughes 1A Semonoles.

You also mentioned that “Cleveland has great spirit, but that is one hall.” I lived in Cleveland for two years and yes we did and still do have great spirit. Now I live in Hughes Hall and have seen no difference in spirit. We also have great hall meetings and are always involved. Maybe you heard us the Wednesday before Dorm Wars chanting, “H-U-G-H-E-S, Hughes Hall is the best”.

Hinman College is full of spirit and continually increasing. Just because one Toga Dance Party is not a huge success does not mean that Hinman is “terrible and pathetic”. Events and committees such as Dorm Wars, The Blind Date Party, the Hinman Yearbook, Hall Volleyball Tournaments, Hinman College Council, Co-Rec Football, the Semi-Formal, the Slide Show, Hinman Hysteria, H.P.C., and the Hinman Halitosis are only a few examples of what Hinman College and Hinman spirit are all about.

So the next time you are standing at the top of the hill and would like to hear noise from Hinman, create your own by getting you and your friends involved rather than complaining that everyone is studying.⁴

Although apathy was certainly a problem in Hinman at the time, the spirit that was possessed by many Hinman residents shone through in the way members of the HCC E-Board adamantly defended the honor of the community that they loved so much. That year saw many successful Hinman events including the ever popular Hinman Semi-Formal which had approximately three hundred and twenty-five people attend. HCC President Marc Brown said it best when he stated, “I feel that this event would not have been such a success if it were not for those dedicated Hinman residents who helped with ticket sales, decorations, song lists, and setting up of the

dance. Because of their involvement and Matt's [Levy] leadership the Semi-Formal was a big hit."⁵

The year ended on a positive note. Hysteria, like Dorm Wars, was highly successful as were many other programs and events sponsored by HCC. At the end of the year, in the tradition of many other HCC presidents, Marc Brown wrote a farewell address to the residents of Hinman College. His message read in part:

It's hard to believe that this is the first week in May, and that Hinman College Council had it's [sic] final meeting of the year this past week. When the final report was given and the final adjournment was said, I reflected back upon this year and felt that the Hinman College Council was a tremendous success.

The Council took a different approach this year by focusing on making Hinman a more social place to live and learn. Through the organizational work of Hinman's Social Affairs Vice-President Matt Levy, Academic Vice-President Eileen Biondi, Financial Vice-President Frank Vellucci, Public Affairs Vice-President Mike Van Nort, and myself, many events took place that made Hinman residents want to partake in new and exciting programs as well as proven traditional ones. In late August, the traditional opening weekend ceremonies took place with a welcome back dance, a cartoon brunch, and the Fresh Start Program which placed the Hinman Fellows in the halls. The goal was to help new students become acquainted with academic life at Binghamton University. In early September, the aerobics program was started and was held twice a week throughout the year. In mid-September, Hinman's first Blood Drive in almost two years took place, and it was a tremendous success. In early October Dorm Wars arrived, and along with it came the new and spectacular opening ceremonies where the halls marched around the quad, the tiki torches burned and the Crosby's sang...

...I would also like to acknowledge the work and programming of the five Hall Government executive boards and their respective Resident Directors serving as their advisors. These people took on a large responsibility when they were elected, and they took their work seriously and did a fine job of representing their halls either at the Hinman College Council meetings and/or their own hall government meetings. I salute them for all their patience and hard work.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the valuable input of the three and three members over the course of the year who showed great interest in the council by either serving as a committee chair, being a committee member, and/or giving input at our weekly meetings.

Through all of the successful programming that the Council planned this past year, and the resolutions that were passed which worked for the betterment of life in residence hall, I feel that the Council was a tremendous success...⁶

The 1992-1993 academic year ended on a positive note for the members of HCC. They had accomplished much and had certainly left Hinman in a better place than they had found it. Their hope for the future was that the new E-Board would continue this tradition of success and excellence in their stead.

This tradition of excellence continued in an assortment of ways. One way featured the development of a unique position in HCC, an unelected position called the Hall Council Representative created by the influential Hinmanite, Brent Landau. Brent Landau had been active in HCC since his freshman year in 1994. During that time, there was a position called the Residential Assistant Representative, though in the HCC vernacular it was more commonly known as the “Three and Three” position. It got this name because in order to become a “Three and Three” you had to attend three hall government meetings and three HCC meetings before you could join HCC. It was not an elected position like the other hall council positions and anyone could join. It was developed as a way for RA’s (who were barred from running for student government office) to stay involved in HCC. When the HCC Constitution was revised in 1995, Brent suggested that the name be changed to Hall Council Representative (HCR) and the name has stuck ever since.⁷

The development of the HCR position is an interesting matter in and of itself. In 1995, the voting rights of HCR’s were expanded. At this time every HCR in a building shared one vote for all financial matters and had their own vote on all non-financial matters. Although Brent advocated allowing HCR’s to have their own vote for both financial and non-financial matters, by the time the constitution was revised again in 1998, Brent had decided that the

original approach was the best. His reasoning involved the process that HCC followed to give student groups money. When a group came to request money from HCC, the issue typically went back to the individual halls for discussion and vote on what amount to give the group. Then the five hall financial vice presidents met and took the average of the amounts that the individual halls agreed upon. This amount was then proposed at the following week's HCC meeting, when the final decision would be made. The fear was that if one building had a lot of HCR's they could potentially tip the scales and vote so that the amount of money given to a group would be more or less than what the financial vice presidents recommended. This could result in giving groups amounts of money that did not reflect what the majority of the community wanted.⁸ The 1998 amendment to the HCC Constitution allowed HCR's to share one vote for all financial matters and have their own votes for all non-financial matters. The constitution was amended again in 1999 and 2000. However, it remains essentially the same as the 1998 amendment.

HCC remained a powerful and active force in Hinman for the next few years. Unfortunately, only oral histories are available, and details on what happened in those years are few and far between. One thing is for certain, however, and that is that HCC continued to be an influential organization which made profound impacts upon not only its members but also the average Hinmanite.

¹ Marc. W. Brown, Fellow residents of Hinman College, *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 25, No. 1, October 23, 1992.

² A Concerned Resident, "Hinman Wake Up," *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 24, No. 2, November 6, 1992.

³ Matt Levy, letter to the editor, *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 24, No. 2, November 6, 1992.

⁴ Mike Van Nort, letter to the editor, *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 24, No. 3, November 20, 1992.

⁵ Marc Brown, "HCC News," *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 24, No. 7, March 1993.

⁶ "Marc Brown, "HCC News," *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 24, No. 10, May 9, 1993.

⁷ Brent Landau, telephone conversation with author, May 4, 2007.

⁸ Ibid.