

The Horowitz Administration

Following up as President of HCC was be Joel Horowitz. Joel had entered Hinman as a freshman and quickly became involved in all activities related to Hinman. During his freshmen year he was a Dorm Representative for Roosevelt Hall. His sophomore year he moved to Hughes Hall and became the Social Vice President of Hinman. During the next election he successfully won the presidency of HCC. As noted earlier, the terms of office at this time ran from January until December and in a late February issue of *Halitosis* this is what Joel wrote concerning the overall state of Hinman College:

To Hinman College Residents,

Well, it's 3 weeks into the semester and Hinman Council started the semester off right with a good performance by Tim Malchak. Last Friday was Hinman's Valentines Day Party, held in Smith Hall. Dr. Battin's discussion on cancer research was well attended, as well as being informative. And what about housing? Well after approximately 400 students showed up to complain about losing the floor lounges, a committee was set-up to meet with Vice-President Woodard and Ed O'Connor, head of housing. Right now we are waiting for their response to a proposed rec-room conversion. How about rectangular tables in the dining hall? They may be a reality when we come back after the Spring break.

So why am I writing this in the Halitosis? Because there are a lot of events being planned and we need your help! Without you there will not be a semi-formal or follies or non-credit courses. Without you to participate and get involved there is no reason to have these committees at all. So get involved! If we all work together, we can make Hinman a mirror image of our wants and needs!¹

Although coverage may have been lacking in this and in other areas of Hinman life at the time, one area that was a source of much contention was the university's proposal to convert the building's rec rooms (which today are better known as the study lounges) and all the floor lounges into additional housing. The university was planning on increasing enrollment and before additional housing could be constructed the university was planning on tripling students and converting the rec rooms and floor lounges into interim bedrooms. HCC believed that this

would be detrimental to the lives of most residents residing in Hinman and decided to voice their anger and frustrations at the university. An editorial published in the *Hinman Halitosis* made the issues at stake clear to everyone. The article stated that the seven people who would be housed in the converted lounges would most likely be detached from the overall social life of the building, and in addition it would be uncomfortable to live in.²

The university administration was unwilling to compromise. HCC along with the rest of the residents of Hinman viewed the administration as doing whatever they pleased and not taking student's input into consideration. With talks between HCC and administration officials going nowhere fast, the largest and most provocative demonstration in Hinman College history was about to occur. Afterwards the Hinman Housing Steering Committee drafted a number of proposals that HCC could vote on. One proposal would create a single room in each floor lounge (for the floor's RA) thereby opening up the RA's room for two students. Another proposal called for tripling 90 upperclassmen and over half of the incoming freshmen. All five buildings of Hinman overwhelmingly voted down both proposals. With the administration pushing forward with the ideas anyway, many regular Hinmanites saw no other option than to protest. On Friday, March 21, 1980, over 250 Hinmanites stormed the Hinman Dining Hall and performed a sit-in to protest the housing issue on campus. This demonstration shocked not only the administration, but the entire campus community as well. The sit-in was organized by a few Lehman Hall residents and supported by HCC.³ That day was picked because only the Hinman and Newing Dining Halls were open at that hour and therefore the sit-in would seriously disrupt meal service for that day. The sit-in organizers hoped this would give them publicity for their cause. Almost immediately the university administration came in to discuss matters with the protestors. Vice President for Finance and Management Edward J. Demske and Vice President

for Student Services Doug Woodard came to answer questions and to negotiate with the students. For four hours the student protestors debated the university's position and made it clear their distaste for the state of affairs in student housing at SUNY Binghamton. In the end, the matter ended peacefully with the administrators agreeing to reconsider some of their previous positions and to take into account the views of the students. Duane Wanty, one of the sit-in organizers, summed up the feelings of most of the protestors when he said, "It'll be their decision, not ours. This was an exercise in our right to protest...just to show for the record, if nothing else, that Hinman was dead-set against it and yet the administration did not listen to us."⁴

While Coordinator Al Eller and Faculty Master Vito Sinisi publicly took a neutral position, behind-the-scenes they were secretly supporting the student protestors. Diane Castiglione (maiden name Fischer) remembers this event and the role that Vito Sinisi played in it. "Vito was all for it [the sit-in]. He was all about confronting the administration. Vito had gone to grad school in Berkley so he was brought up in that environment of student action and protest. He always told us to speak up and present our views and to always challenge authority."⁵ Vito's position and feelings on the issue could also have been held over from his days of crusading against the administration to preserve collegiate structure. Vito Sinisi was a man unafraid to challenge authority and to rattle the cages of the SUNY Binghamton administration. Vito secretly was proud of the Hinmanites who participated in the sit-in. Following the sit-in Vito penned a final recommendation regarding housing in Hinman. He recommended that as a temporary solution, a bedroom should be constructed on the floor lounge of the first floor of each building, but that the second and third floors should remain as they were. He also recommended that the rec room of each building should be refitted to house students.

He also proposed that the Hinman staff would be consulted before these recommendations were put into effect and that tripling on the first floors would be kept to a minimum.⁶

The results of the sit-in were mixed. The administration went ahead and converted the floor lounges into extra bedrooms. They had promised that this would only be a temporary solution until a more permanent one could be found. The reality was that for years and years afterwards, the floor lounges retained this extra room.⁷ Housing problems would be an issue that would continually resurface in Hinman and the rest of the SUNY Binghamton campus. Tripling would be a problem well into the new millennium. Even with the construction of Mountainview College in 2003, the ugly specter of a housing crunch continues to loom as more halls are designated as break housing. The proposal to completely demolish and rebuild Dickinson and Newing will undoubtedly continue to fuel the housing troubles. In the fall of 2007, Binghamton University Residential Life announced that tripling on campus would occur again. Thankfully, tripling will not occur in Hinman.

Another contentious issue that arose during this time resulted in the changes in the management of the *Hinman Halitosis* newsletter. Since 1971, when Bob Giomi started the newsletter as a way to advertise programs, social happenings, and events in Hinman, the *Hinman Halitosis* had been managed by Hinman staffer. The first managing and publishing editor of the paper was of course its creator, Bob Giomi. By 1980 this responsibility had passed to Jane Warren, Hinman's Student Services Coordinator. This person would largely be in charge of the content that went into the paper. Many students who worked on the paper saw this position as unnecessary, that the students themselves could run the paper independently. They also cited that *Halitosis* was the only student-run paper on campus with staff oversight. The staff of the

paper went before HCC and for over forty-five minutes debated the merits of eliminating staff oversight. In the end the council voted ten to four to retain the current set-up of the paper.¹⁸

So ended another year full of trials and tribulations for HCC. However, the year would end on a relatively positive note. At the end of the year, Joel Horowitz thought that it would be a good idea to recognize in some way graduating seniors who had showed outstanding commitment and excellence in Hinman life. Joel, along with others, came up with an idea to create a sort of wall of fame in the Hinman Library. They would call it the Den of Distinction Award. The name comes from the fact that there is a small anteroom or den for the Hinman Library, and that where they envisioned exhibiting the names the award winners. Later they decided to create another award, this one called the Harvey D. Hinman Award. The Den of Distinction Award would be awarded to a number of individuals who displayed enthusiasm and dedication in any one area of Hinman life, and the Harvey D. Hinman Award would be presented to the individual who would show enthusiasm and dedication in multiple areas of Hinman life. That year Keith Martin Balter, Susan L. Cohen, Steve Klein, and Heidi A. Stern would be the first recipients of the Den of Distinction Award. The winner of the first annual Harvey D. Hinman award would be Joel Horowitz (he was not on the selection committee for the award) for all the years of hard work and dedication he had put into bettering Hinman life.⁹

HCC had come a long way that semester. It had seen issues stemming from student apathy to major student protest to the potential restructuring of Hinman's sole newsletter. It also saw the creation of the Den of Distinction and Harvey D. Hinman Awards, the Oscars of the Hinman world, which would be given out to deserving graduating seniors every year thereafter.

¹ Joel Horowitz, "letter to Hinman College Residents," *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. XI, No. 15, February 21, 1980.

¹ For more information on this issue see the chapter on Hinman Publications.

² “Think About It,” *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. XI, No. 17, March 6, 1980.

³ Alan N. Queen, “Hinman sits in against dorm lounge proposal,” *Pipe Dream* Vol. XX, No. 16, March 25, 1980.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Diane Castiglione, telephone conversation with author, February 2, 2007.

⁶ Vito Sinisi, “The Final Word on Housing,” *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. XI, No. 20, March 27, 1980.

⁷ Diane Castiglione, telephone conversation with author, February 2, 2007.

⁸ “The Hinman Halitosis,” *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. XI, No. 20, March 27, 1980 and Robert Abner, “Hinman paper retains administration control,” *Pipe Dream* Vol. XX, No. 18, April 15, 1980.

⁹ Joel Horowitz, email message to author, January 22, 1980 and “Hinman Commencement Facts,” *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. XI, No. 25, May 9, 1980.