

Conclusion

Hinman College has had a long tradition of entertaining events throughout its history. From classical music to modern-day rock concerts, from large and elaborate songs and skits to talent shows, Oktoberfests to delis, Hinman has tried to provide its residents not only with entertainment but outlets for their musical and artistic creativity. While many residential colleges may have borrowed these ideas, it is Hinman College who first pioneered them and set the example which all others would follow.

The question that does arise through all of this is: “If these events were so popular, why do they no longer exist?” For some, like Oktoberfest, the answer is easy. The drinking age changed. But for others the answer is not so clear cut. Each of these events came about because they were needed in the community. Whether to satisfy some urge or desire, to experiment with a new and novel concept, or simply to alleviate boredom, during the time they were here in Hinman, they were needed. These events died off for a variety of reasons.

Technological change certainly contributed to their demise. In 1980 few people had radios in their rooms let alone TVs, and personal computers did not become essential to college life until the mid to late 1990’s. The DVD and MP3 player, iPods, video games and the Internet all contributed to the downfall of these Hinman programs. Why leave your room when all the entertainment you could ask for is right at your very fingertips? The increase in technology is partly at fault for dwindling student involvement and the exponential rise in student apathy.

But technology can not be completely to blame for the disintegration of these programs. The loss of many of these Hinman events coincided with a centralization of entertainment on campus. Late Night Binghamton came into being around this time. Late Night Binghamton provides various activities including bowling, billiards and other events on Thursday, Friday and

Saturday nights. Late Night also has a café in the underground portion of the Student Union where free food is provided and different musical guests are invited to perform. This event takes away much of what Bus Stop, Rockefeller Room and Bandemonium had to offer. The Student Association at Binghamton now sponsors Spring Fling, an annual event usually held toward the end of the Spring Semester. Spring Fling typically features carnival rides, games, free food and popular musical guests which are sometimes nationally known. The bands Brand New and Reel Big Fish are two examples of the type of musical guests that perform at Spring Fling.

Homecoming at Binghamton has also grown in size. Before, the only parade that Binghamton had was held on the Hinman Quad during Co-Rec weekend. Now the “Brain Train” parade, complete with floats, circles the roadway known as the Brain and provides entertainment to students and returning alumni. The late 1990’s saw the centralization of entertainment on campus, much like residential life and collegiate structure had been centralized in earlier years,. There really was no way for these comparatively smaller Hinman events to compete against the large university sponsored events.

However, competition from other areas is not the only reason why these Hinman events failed. As was mentioned earlier, these programs filled a need that the community had, and part of the reason behind their disappearance was that the need that they filled was no longer there. The reason why Hinman Follies, Bandemonium, and all the other events were so successful was because the community supported them. They went away when people no longer felt the desire to participate or continue with them. In short, the community no longer needed the service that they offered. For these and many more reasons, the great arts and leisure events of Hinman’s past rose and eventually fell.

In the end it doesn't really matter whether or not any or all of these events still exist as annual programs in Hinman. What matters is that they exist in memory and that their legacy continues to this day, albeit in a somewhat more subdued and subconscious form. Maybe someday an enterprising young Hinmanite may want to bring back Bandemonium, Rockefeller Room or Bus Stop. They may find that not only is there a desire, but that there's a need for Hinman Follies. It may be discovered that Hinmanites can not live without chamber music serenading the Hinman Commons. All it takes is a little bit of drive, no small amount of passion, and the support of just a few similarly dedicated individuals in the community, and all of these events can reclaim their role in Hinman. Even if that day never comes, the lingering presence of all of these events speaks to a greater truth, and that truth can only be found in the Spirit of Hinman.

The author would like to thank Janet Krulick, Joel Horowitz, Rene Coderre, and Joshua Kittenplan for their contributions to this and other chapters and for their efforts in preserving the arts and other creative endeavors of Hinman College.