The Hinman Halitosis

By far, the most successful newspaper ever to grace the scene of Hinman College, and undoubtedly the most active and informative residential college newsletter campus-wide, was the Hinman Halitosis. Like Co-Rec Football, all of the credit for the creation of Hinman Halitosis goes to Bob Giomi. In many ways it was almost inevitable that Bob would create this, the most important and influential of all the Hinman newsletters.

The story of how Bob created the Hinman Halitosis is almost inextricably linked with how he came to Hinman. As an undergraduate at Ohio State University, Bob had majored in Journalism. For the next nine months after graduation he looked unsuccessfully for a job. Then he came across an unexpected opportunity. The wife of one of his fraternity brothers had gotten a job at SUNY Binghamton as a Head Resident (later to be called Resident Director). She informed Bob that Binghamton was desperately in need of people to fill those positions on campus and would take just about anyone. Bob knew that he would be the most unqualified person ever to hold that position. The Head Resident/Resident Director position requires one to not only supervise a staff of resident assistants but also to handle any problems that may arise in the building and to perform day-to-day administrative functions necessary to keep the residence hall in tip top shape. Bob himself had never lived in a dormitory before and had only a vague knowledge of the challenges that were to await him. His parents wanted him to stay at home in New Jersey to be closer to them, but Bob wanted to experience a challenge. He applied and got the job and was placed in Roosevelt Hall where he would live from 1970 until 1972. The 1973-1974 academic year Roosevelt Hall was actually closed because there were not enough students to fill it, a far cry from later years when housing crunches tripled students and put them up in study lounges. At first it was Cleveland Hall, not Roosevelt that was supposed to be closed, but
students voted to close Roosevelt instead. As a result, many of the students who had been living in Roosevelt moved to Lehman (which at the time, for reasons unknown, attracted a large proportion of upperclassmen) and Bob was moved there as well. He would remain in Lehman Hall until he finally left Binghamton in the summer of 1978. Besides being a Head Resident he was also Hinman’s Academic Advisor and Director of Social Programming.1

In 1970, with both *The West Harpur Other* and *Soliloquy* off the scene, the demand for a new newsletter for Hinmanites grew. Bob was placed in charge of developing this newsletter. He was excited about this task. For the first time since he had graduated from college he would actually have the opportunity to put his major to work for him. One of the first problems associated with the newspaper was what to call it. Newing College had a successful newspaper called the *Lake Lieberman Gazette*, named after the man-made lake which is situated adjacent to Newing College. Unfortunately, Hinman had no such natural wonders to provide a name, and for a long while no one could come up with a good name. They wanted to have the word “Hinman” somewhere in the title, but what was to come after that was difficult to decide. One day, all of the professional staff members were sitting around the office in Hinman when Gabe Yankowitz, a Hinman RA who would later go on to be Head Resident of Cleveland Hall, came in and overhead Bob and the others debating about what they should call the newspaper. Gabe jokingly suggested that they call it the *Hinman Halitosis*.1 The humor of the title was lost on no one in that room and though it was meant as a joke, the title quickly caught on and the *Hinman Halitosis* was born.2

For the first few years of its existence, Bob Giomi essentially wrote the entire newspaper himself with a little help from Hinman’s secretary, Helen Rogers. He would work late into the evenings to make sure that all the columns were aligned and that all the articles advertising

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1 Halitosis is defined as the condition of having offensive or foul-smelling breath.
Hinman programming and campus events were clear. They articles would have to be typed onto the paper using a good old-fashioned typewriter and then copies were made using a mimeograph machine. Although its distribution was wide, it was still a fairly simple operation. The newsletter was typically only about three to five pages in length and was on colored paper to give it some pizzazz. Bob would perform this difficult and laborious task every Wednesday night so that the newsletter would be available on Thursday by dinner time. Bob would do all of this work himself until he realized that there was a great opportunity for students interested in journalism to get involved and gain experience in journalism and newspaper publishing. Bob would soon recruit Pete Lorenzi, who would rise to the position of Editor-in-Chief of the Hinman Halitosis, though Bob himself would continue to hold the title of Publisher and Managing Editor.

With the introduction of Pete Lorenzi as the Editor-in-Chief of the paper and of other student contributors, the Hinman Halitosis quickly grew in size. During his time in Hinman, Pete Lorenzi was very involved in Hinman life. However, he had gotten the reputation of being something of a “bad boy” and as a result he did not get accepted as an RA. By the time he was a junior in 1972, Pete wanted a job doing something for Hinman. The Coordinator of Hinman at the time was a man named Ed O’Connor who would later go on to become the head of all of Residential Life at Binghamton. Ed offered Pete the job of administrative assistant in the Hinman Office on the condition that he pass a typing test, which was very important for stenographers back in those days before word processors. Pete was a very diligent typist and passed the test and became Hinman’s new administrative assistant. One of his tasks as administrative assistant was to help out with publishing the Hinman Halitosis.³

One of Pete’s tasks as part of the editorial staff was to draw the Halitosis masthead for every issue. Unlike the rest of the paper which was typed, the masthead was hand drawn by Pete
himself. He also drew the lips and tongue that appear on many of the early issues of the *Hinman Halitosis*. Pete decided to add in the lips and tongue for a number of reasons. The first reason was that it fit with the name *Halitosis*, and the second reason was that the band, The Rolling Stones, were very popular at the time and their symbol was exactly like that. Pete and the rest of the editorial staff (which included two other work-study students) typed *Halitosis* on Wednesday nights on an IBM electric typewriter. It usually took between two and three hours to type and mimeograph the five hundred copies of the paper that were printed. There were typically fourteen issues a semester. Pete remembers there being almost no supervision for the students. Once Bob showed them all how to put the paper together, he left them to their own devices, forcing them to sink or swim. Even with this apparent lack of supervision, the dedicated students who worked on the newsletter continually put it out week after week, keeping the students of Hinman informed about what was going on in their community.4

The beauty of *Halitosis*, Pete remembers, was that any student could submit an article for publication. It could have been a review of an HLT play, the highlights of an HCC meeting, coverage of a Co-Rec game, personals, opinion pieces, short stories, anything would be accepted and printed for the rest of the community to see. It was a very informal process and there was usually nothing too political printed in the paper. The purpose of the *Hinman Halitosis* was not to create controversy; it was to keep Hinmanites informed of what was happening in their community. But more than that, the *Hinman Halitosis* was all about having fun. It was about entertaining and informing the reader and, for those who worked on the paper, it was one of the best experiences of their college careers. Pete really enjoyed his college experience, and especially his time working on the *Hinman Halitosis*. He would even stay a fifth year mostly because he just loved being in Hinman so much.5
In the first issue of the *Hinman Halitosis* for the 1973-1974 academic year, Pete, as editor-in-chief wrote this about the purpose behind *Halitosis*:

…Of all the many unexpected things you’ll find each week in Hinman, after this first issue, the *Hinman Halitosis* will be a regular sight in the dining hall on Thursday nights. No matter what happens, we always seem to manage to put out some new *Halitosis* each week.

The *Halitosis* is the local newsletter (though despite its form I prefer to call it a ‘paper,’ if not a newspaper [emphasis in original]) put out by students in Hinman College. Started by our present publisher, Robert F. Giomi, in November of 1970, the *Halitosis* has grown from very austere beginnings, when it was two simple pages, when it was written and edited by Bob himself and Helen Rogers, to a student-run operation usually running six to eight pages in length. With all the news we can muster for the benefit of Hinman students without getting too high schoolish (like our Newing counterpart), we try our best each week to let you know what has happened, what will happen and what he hope will happen in Hinman, along with a collection of editorials and semi-regular columns. Above all, we encourage all students to participate in writing and adding opinions to our paper. We gladly accept poems, opinions, letters to the editor, etc., and we are always happy to add to our regular staff.

Each week we also publish our personals section, containing just that: personal items, including messages, lost and found, ride requests and so on. It’s the want ads of Hinman. And to help you plan your weekend, we publish a capsule edition of popular events both on and off campus for the coming weekend. You’ll find this section extremely useful for getting involved with the social aspects of Hinman, SUNY-Binghamton and the local community.

Anything you want printed in the *Halitosis* (within reason, of course) can be easily left in the Hinman College Office (which your counselor [RA] will point out to you if you can’t locate it yet) and if you’re interested in staff work, see Bob Giomi in the same office or contact me. The office is open 3:30 a.m. [sic] to 5:00 p.m. and the *Halitosis* deadline is Wednesday at NOON [emphasis in original] although we will accept very special articles any time before we go to print that night.

*Halitosis* is your paper and it will be as good or as useful as you make it. I invite your participation and comments—at any time. And good luck in the coming year (even if you don’t read us).6

The *Hinman Halitosis* was a paper with a mission, and the dedicated staff who worked tirelessly on it intended to fulfill that mission.
Following Bob Giomi, Pete Lorenzi was perhaps the most influential of the editorial staff in the history of the *Hinman Halitosis*. Under his guidance, the readership of *Halitosis* grew, and it became known as the paper that everyone who lived in Hinman had to read. Although Pete had been a Hinman mainstay for many years, even he too had to graduate and move on. Pete Lorenzi, the “bad boy” of Hinman College, eventually went to get his PhD from Penn State and currently teaches business at Loyola College in Maryland.

The responsibility of managing the day-to-day operations of the *Hinman Halitosis* following the departure of Pete Lorenzi fell onto the shoulders of Barbara Shrager, who became the new editor-in-chief. Barbara continued in the tradition of Pete Lorenzi, organizing the paper and laying it out every Wednesday night and spending hours breathing in the sweet fumes of the mimeograph machine every week. Under her leadership, contributions to the paper increased, as did the size of the regular staff. Barbara, a Political Science major, had been interested in journalism ever since she had taken a class in it while at Binghamton. She went on to do two internships with the *Sun Bulletin* (the forerunner to the *Press and Sun Bulletin*). That, and the fact that she lived in Hinman, made it only natural for her to join up with the staff of the *Hinman Halitosis*. For the next few years Barbara would manage the *Halitosis* and watch it grow and mature into the quality newspaper that it was. Her work on the *Hinman Halitosis* not only inspired her to pursue a career in journalism but also gave her valuable experience into what it takes to manage a newspaper. In June of 1977, Barbara took a job with *The Saratogian*, a newspaper that serves the city of Saratoga Springs, NY and the surrounding communities. She has been with that paper ever since and has been its managing editor for twenty years.⁷

*Halitosis* under the guidance of Pete Lorenzi and Barbara Shrager helped to lay the foundation for the newspaper that *Halitosis* was to become. For the next few years, *Halitosis*
grew by leaps and bounds, eventually running eight pages or more. Besides the regular announcements about upcoming programming, Co-Rec coverage, and HCC minutes, there were also special interest pieces and works of original fiction. Tony Toluba was instrumental in starting this trend. Tony wrote serialized short stories that were humorous in nature and appeared weekly in the *Hinman Halitosis*. One of these stories was called “Escape from SUNY B” which was a parody of the John Carpenter movie *Escape From New York*. Another story entitled “The 4.0 Murder” and was a humorous story whose main premise was the campus urban legend that if your roommate died you would automatically get a 4.0 GPA for the semester. Perhaps Tony’s most popular serialized story was a piece called “Star Trek: The Satire.” At the time (circa 1980) the syndicated television program *Star Trek* was shown every weekday in the late afternoon. Having your own television at the time was a rarity and many students clustered in the building lounges to watch TV. *Star Trek* just happened to be one of the more popular shows that residents would tune into. Tony was a resident of Roosevelt Hall at the time and remembers watching the show with many of the building’s residents, who often identified with specific characters of the show. The show was so popular with the residents of Roosevelt Hall that Tony was inspired to write a satirical piece where the crew of the USS Enterprise would travel back in time and visit SUNY Binghamton. One of Tony’s most clever pieces of writing had the crew of the starship Enterprise scan SUNY Binghamton for signs of intelligent life. There were four residential colleges at the time and the crew found that one college was hidden away in the woods as if their residents were ashamed to be there (CIW). One had life but no intelligence (Newing). And the other had intelligence but no life (Dickinson—which at this time was graduate student housing). Hinman was the only residential college that seemed to have everything (community pride, life, and intelligence), and the crew of the Enterprise chose this
place to visit. Tony’s last foray into serialized fiction writing was a takeoff of the cult television show *Get Smart*. However, he was censured by the professional staff that oversaw the publication of *Halitosis*, and Tony decided to quit writing if his work was going to be censured. His work was never published, though a rough draft can be found in the Editor’s notebook of *The Hinman Halitosis* located in the HCC Office. Censorship of articles by professional staff members in Hinman would be a divisive issue that would come to a head in the coming years.

While Tony’s serials were popular, perhaps the most popular serial ever to run in the *Hinman Halitosis* was “The Adventures of Cat Masterson” by Steven “Pudge” Meyer. In 1978-1979, spanning two academic years, the *Hinman Halitosis* ran serialized stories chronicling the adventures of Cat Masterson, a detective/security night guard at SUNY Binghamton, and his quest to take down his arch nemesis, the diabolical Nicki Moto and his gang. Throughout its run, Cat Masterson would be aided by a host of secondary characters who were not so cleverly disguised anagrams or composite characters of real life Binghamton and Hinman personalities. One of Cat Masterson’s most important informants was a mysterious man named Ell Aller (almost certainly after Hinman Coordinator Al Eller). Another popular character was President Clark Click (a reference to then SUNY Binghamton President Clifford Clark). Along the way many popular Hinman personalities made guest appearances in the serial and got caught up in Cat’s adventures. Although it did not last beyond 1979, “The Adventures of Cat Masterson” was a popular and entertaining serial that would forever be imbedded in the minds of those who read the serial. In fact, besides Herm the Wurmm, Cat Masterson can be considered the most popular and important mascot that *Halitosis* and Hinman College has ever had.

Herm the Wurmm (also known as Herm the Worm) was a popular cartoon character who appeared regularly in issues of *Halitosis* throughout the early 1980’s. The creation of Herm the
Worm is an interesting story in and of itself. In December of 1981, Jim Bachman, an ex-editor, winner of the 1981 Den of Distinction, and a recent alum who had graduated just that past May, returned to Binghamton to pay a visit. One of the places that he made sure to visit was the old Hinman Halitosis office, a place where he had spent so much time as an editor. While he was waiting in the office he took out a piece of scrap paper and began doodling. The doodles were of a worm-like figure that he dubbed Herm the Wurmm. From these drawings, Herm the Wurmm quickly became the new mascot for the Hinman Halitosis and for years graced its masthead and appeared in comic strips drawn by various Halitosis staffers. Herm was the perennial hero of Halitosis and as an extension, Hinman College. For years, Hinman College had no real mascot. Newing College had the Lake Lieberman Monster, a creature in the same vein as the Loch Ness Monster. Early in the history of Hinman College, an effort was made to make Hinman’s mascot a mutant tuna fish as a sort of foil to Newing’s Lake Lieberman Monster. A series of spoof articles written between Faculty Master Pete Gruber and his counterpart in Newing College helped to make the Hinman tuna popular for a short while, but the idea never really caught on. For the next ten years, Hinman had no discernible mascot. That all changed with the introduction of Herm the Wurmm. Herm the Wurmm quickly grew a fan base in Hinman, and for a time became Hinman’s most popular celebrity, better known than his real-life counterparts. Sadly, though, Herm the Wurmm’s popularity would not last out the decade and he slowly faded from sight. This can be seen as one of the many signs of the decline of the Hinman Halitosis. In the late 1990’s, HCC President Josh Kittenplan, upon shuffling through the old Halitosis archives rediscovered Herm and brought him back to life. For a brief period of time, Herm the Wurmm once again graced the cover of Halitosis and became Hinman’s unofficial mascot.

2 The original drawings of Herm the Wurmm by Jim Bachman can still be found in the binder called “Editor’s Handbook” located in the Halitosis Archives in the HCC Office.
mascot. However, Herm’s comeback was short-lived and once again he quickly faded from sight. Still, like Cat Masterson, Herm’s memory lives on and perhaps someday he will return to his rightful place as the mascot of Hinman College.

Following the foundation-laying efforts of Bob Giomi, Pete Lorenzi, and Barbara Shrager, the Halitosis continued to grow and became the newspaper to read in Hinman. However, things began to turn south in the late 1970’s. By the Fall semester of 1978, the Hinman Halitosis was struggling. For reasons unclear there was just not a whole lot of student support. That summer, Bob Giomi left Binghamton. He had been the Managing and Publishing editor and the professional staff member who oversaw the production of this important student newspaper. As with other areas of Hinman life, Bob had been the driving force behind them, and his absence left a vacuum that was difficult for any one individual to fill. The new Managing and Publishing editor was Tom Truesdell, the Resident Director of Smith Hall. Although the written record does not seem to indicate this, apparently it was a struggle to get students to contribute to Halitosis, and it was becoming ever more difficult to put out an issue each week. Finally, late in the Autumn of 1978, Al Eller and Vito Sinisi approached sophomore Hinmanite Steven “Pudge” Meyer and basically told him that for all intents and purposes the Hinman Halitosis was going to shut down and cease to exist as a student newspaper unless he took over as Editor-in-Chief of the paper. Even though he was still relatively young, this sophomore student would go on to prove himself and become one the most popular and influential of Hinmanites during that era. Before he graduated in 1981, Pudge Meyer would serve on the Hinman College Council Executive Board as Secretary, would act in the HPC production of Hot L Baltimore, serve as the Editor-in-Chief of the Hinman Halitosis, and have one of the most popular and well-known nicknames in Hinman College history. For all his efforts, Pudge Meyer
would have the honor or winning a Den of Distinction Award for his contributions and enthusiasm for Hinman College. That, however, would be a few years away. For now the task laid before sophomore Hinmanite Pudge Meyer was to save *Hinman Halitosis*.

Pudge would have complete editorial freedom. No on the professional staff interfered with his work or suggested that he print or not print something. During that time there were still a few regular features but mostly *Halitosis* became a vehicle for Pudge’s personal style of humor. Pudge would have minimal faculty guidance on the paper, and except for the help of Al Hecht, who drew the artwork, and Carol Bardenhagen, who helped with some of the typing, Pudge was basically on his own. Like Bob Giomi in those early years of *Halitosis* history, Pudge would stay up until the wee hours of the morning on Wednesday typing, copying and stapling, getting the paper ready for distribution at dinner time on Thursday. Sometimes if he needed extra help he would bribe his friends in the cooking dorm to help him make copies and staple in exchange for him cooking them dinner or buying them food. Although the entire process was time consuming and a Herculean effort for one individual, one aspect of putting out the paper remains seared in Pudge’s mind.

You have to understand—the machine that we used was old even then. Before that, I had seen it growing up, but didn't even know it had a name: Gestetner Machine. Ever hear of that? They used it in my elementary school. First, you type or write on the perforated, double layered paper (you can't fix mistakes, because it goes through). Then you tear off the top sheet. Go to the machine, raise a lever and stick the top of the paper in a slot; close the lever. Make sure that the paper is now lying completely flat over the cylinder. The thing then turns round and round. I think the ink was inside the cylinder, splashing through onto the copy paper.

Pudge would continue to put out the paper week after week for the remainder of the year, ensuring that Hinmanites got the news from their community that they deserved to hear. In the Spring of 1979, tragedy struck when Pudge broke his hand on a toboggan run at a resort in the Catskill Mountains where he worked when he was off from school in the summer and the winter.
That semester he had to get a lot of people to help out especially with typing, stapling and making copies.\textsuperscript{12} Still, undaunted by the broken hand, Pudge continued to put out the \textit{Halitosis} and it continued to be read and was probably the most anticipated thing that every Hinmanite waited for during Thursday dinners.

Finally, in late March of 1979, Pudge had had enough. Despite minimal support and despite having a broken hand, Pudge had, quite literally, single-handedly run the Hinman College student newspaper. By this point in time, he decided that enough was enough, that it was time for someone else to take on the responsibility of running the \textit{Halitosis}. In his final issue as Editor-in-Chief, Pudge wrote this farewell address to the reading public of Hinman College.

Yes, I admit it; all those lies are true—This is my last issue of the Halitosis. If that pleases you, your time has come; I’m sorry I made you wait this long to rejoice. If you are grieving heavily, let us wallow in the memories of Nicki Moto, Story Consultants, and the truth—I speak the truth at all times. If you do not read the Halitosis and don’t care either way that this is my last issue, you won’t be reading this now, so I’m glad I brought it up in the first place.

I have had one helluva [sic] time writing this paper for the last bunch of weeks, even if I didn’t have much help. Hopefully you enjoyed it half as much as I did. If you didn’t, shame on you for not speaking up, helping out or making a suggestion. Naturally there were no research articles or reporting, because there was nobody to do it. I take no blame. Nor am I leaving the Halitosis in anger; I calmly and quietly just do not have the time. If someone out there is ready to take my place, you have any of my support and writing help that you care to enlist. If you want to change the format of this paper and give it a new image, or was just generally unhappy with the issues that you have been reading, blame not me but yourself for not pointing it out; we could have made the change. But if I don’t know what you want, I can merely do what I want, and that was to try and put out a paper that was half-way entertaining. I’m sorry if I did not meet your standards.

So as of today there will be no Halitosis next week. And that bothers me for a couple of reasons. The first is number one, the second is number two; that’s what it means to be a number. The Halitosis has been around for all five years that Brendan Sullivan has gone to school here, and even before then…\textsuperscript{13}
Though the article is supposed to continue on the next page, it is cut short here. Whether the rest of the farewell address was never printed or if it is simply missing from this part of the archives is unclear. What is clear is that, as Pudge Meyer predicted, the next issue of *Halitosis* did not come out until almost a month later, on April 18, 1979. There in that edition, the new editors of the paper, Jakki Williams, Mike Salort, and Chase Ferguson wrote an opening article on the importance of the *Hinman Halitosis* and the unsung efforts of Pudge Meyer.

A few weeks ago, Pudge Meyer, the previous dedicated editor of this paper, turned in this typewriter so that he could pursue his career as a tennis pro. He wrote his farewell issue declaring that he had done his bit for the paper and if it was to continue, it would have to continue without him. You may say, “Couldn’t the staff of the paper appoint a new editor and simply keep the presses rolling?” Well, no. For the most part, Pudge was the staff. The paper, this term, has been written mainly by Pudge and a few intermittent writers. To keep the paper going would require a new editor and staff; the staff Pudge never had.

Many of you probably didn’t even notice that the *Halitosis* didn’t come out last week. For those of you who did notice, we would like to say “tough.” No one felt strongly enough to do something about it. So again, the *Halitosis* will be written, typed, collated, stapled, and distributed by a few dedicated agents of the media. If you would like to see a Hinman newspaper appearing with any regularity, it is going to take some input…no, we don’t mean any more personals. In fact, if we had more articles, there might be fewer personals. For those of you who are ardent fans of our personal column, fear not. We really don’t anticipate such an incredible influx of articles that we will remove personals from the paper. Personals, too, have a purpose. Where else can you brag about your sexual prowess, your iron liver, or your latest disease to a readership of 1000 for free?

The New *Halitosis* would like your help. Artists, writers, typists, and people who are adept with a stapler are all invited to help out.

Many of you are probably more than willing to see this paper disappear. Hopefully there are some people out there who would like to see a Hinman newspaper in spite of its shortcomings. Even if you want a paper for your gerbil’s sake we are going to need some help. The Hinman paper is necessary. Believe if or not, this paper is useful; it keeps you informed of Hinman happenings such as Co-Rec, Hinman Little Theatre, library hours, etc. The paper also has the potential to be enjoyable and interesting if only the burden were distributed among a few more people.

As of today, the Halitosis is alive and we are not quite ready to turn in the typewriter.
The problems surfacing within the Hinman Halitosis at this time were only one of the many symptoms of trouble within Hinman College. At this time, Co-Rec football was beginning to become hyper-competitive, bordering on violent, and the once mighty Hinman Little Theater was sick and would eventually die. However, all hope was not lost yet for any of these great Hinman institutions. In the Spring of 1980, Pudge Meyer studied abroad in Spain, but when he returned he continued to submit articles, and even resumed “The Adventures of Cat Masterson” for a time. Hinman Halitosis limped along and continued to be published weekly, though it lacked much of the freshness and vigor of previous years.

Although to the outside observer, it may have seemed as though Halitosis was on its last legs, this could not have been further from the truth. Halitosis would survive well into the late 1980’s and continue to be a presence in Hinman College for years after that. However, as much trouble as Halitosis was suffering at this juncture, it was about to face its greatest challenge.

As mentioned earlier, since the very beginning of the paper’s existence, Halitosis was an almost completely student run newspaper. There was professional staff guidance, minimal to be sure, but it was still there. The guidance that the professional staff gave to the students was mostly a matter of censorship—that is to say, they did not want Halitosis to become profane, pornographic, or libelous. For the most part, this system worked relatively well up until the late 1970’s. At this time, the professional staff began to censor more and more stories and articles in the paper and began to crack down on what the students were writing. This can be seen as early as 1978, with the censoring of Tony Toluba’s short fiction works in Halitosis.

At this time a movement began where the students running the paper decided to make an appeal to remove professional staff oversight from the paper and make it a completely
independent student-run newspaper. In the Spring of 1980, this issue came to a head when the staff of the Hinman Halitosis came before the Hinman College Council and asked that the professional staff member, known as the Managing and Publishing Editor (MAPE), be completely removed from the paper and that students be allowed to handle all editorial issues associated with the paper. In a forty-five minute discussion, proponents of having the MAPE stated that this system has worked for years and that removing it would hurt student and non-student professional staff relations. The staff of the Halitosis argued that they believed it would not hurt relations and that other papers on campus, such as the Lake Lieberman Gazette, had no professional staff guidance and they did just fine. In the end HCC voted 10 to 4 with 7 abstentions to keep the present system.16

The issue became large and heated with coverage in other residential college newspapers and even the campus-wide newspaper Pipe Dream. Jane Warren, the Assistant Coordinator of Hinman and the Halitosis MAPE, defended herself by saying that she felt that she did nothing to limit their freedom of the press and that she acted mostly in an advisement role, using her power to censor only when she absolutely needed to. The student Editor-in-Chief of the paper, Jim Bachman, stated while he agreed with Warren and did not harbor any ill will toward her, he felt that soon if not at the present moment, Halitosis should be allowed to be completely free of all professional staff supervision. Furthermore, Bachman stated that many of the staff who worked on the paper threatened to quit when they heard that HCC had ruled against them, but had decided to stay on, believing that the greater evil would not be to publish the paper.17

By the beginning of the next semester, senior Editor-in-Chief Jim Bachman again made an appeal to make the paper fully independent of professional staff supervision. In an article that
he wrote for publication in the *Lake Lieberman Gazette*\(^3\), Bachman had this to say about the subject.

The issue of student versus non-student administrative control of a college newspaper as in the case of the Hinman Halitosis as reported in the April 15\(^{th}\) edition of Pipe Dram, is most assuredly a complex one. Granted, as Master of Hinman College Vito Sinisi said in that same article, the story behind the issue is long. However, although Sinisi thinks the story should be put off for consideration on some later, indefinite date, the meaning behind the outcome of the vote to retain administrative control cannot be ignored.

Students comprise a voting majority on the Hinman Council to which such matters as changing the charter under which the Halitosis operates, must be brought. As members of the Council, these students serve as representatives of the Hinman community as a whole. In the vote in favor of maintaining the status quo in respect to the paper, i.e., denying the Halitosis staff’s requests for a change in the charter, it was the vote of those students with positions to which they were elected, who proved to be the deciding factor in the issue. Without a doubt, this is how it should have been, in this, as well as any other decision concerning students. However, before continuing with an interpretation of their vote, one thing should be pointed out: only one person on the newspaper staff could vote in this matter and that person was not the student Editor-in-Chief but a person who had been elected to the Council as a Hinman representative to ACE and who had only this semester elected to write a weekly article for the Halitosis as well. Incidentally, this ACE rep was one of those voting in favor of the change.

The outcome of the vote itself might be interpreted in one of three ways. In the first, the decision to maintain administrative control over the paper can be seen as a gear of changing from an old system which seems to have been understood to a new one which might not. However, this is unlikely since the position of the staff members and their proposals for the creation of a new system were presented clearly enough. The second interpretation is that the voting outcome was the result of petty, internal quarrels which manifested themselves in the decision against the proposal to change. As seen in the discussion before the call to vote, that antagonisms did exist cannot be refuted and thus, that the voting was affected accordingly seems likely. However, because those on the Council are supposed to be representing the interests of Hinman College as a whole, such suspicions would be difficult to verify. Thus we are left with the last interpretation as being the only one that we can rightfully make; the decision of the students on the Hinman Council before the Spring Break reflected the fears of the Hinman students population to give themselves i.e., students, absolute control of the paper and to accept responsibility for what goes in and for dealing with any problems which might arise over printed matter themselves. I stated in Pipe Dream that perhaps the Halitosis is in a state of growth. If this is true, then Hinman College, which was ironically in the past considered as a residential community for more mature, upperclassmen, must be considered as not fully developed or ready to accept the responsibilities which come from

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\(^3\) The article never made it to publication. The only surviving copy is a rough draft located in the “Editor’s Handbook” binder in the *Halitosis* archives.
reaching maturity. Although unacceptable to me, it is this conclusion which I am forced to make concerning the decision.¹⁸

Although never reaching print, this article is *Hinman Halitosis* Editor-in-Chief Jim Bachman’s impassioned plea for Hinmanites to realize that they are mature enough to accept complete editorial responsibility for themselves and that they no longer need oversight from a higher residential life authority looking over their shoulder. Although there is little documentation showing the exact sequence of events, early in the Fall of 1980, another vote was taken at HCC and this time it was found in favor of eliminating professional staff oversight of the paper. At this time, Patti Koval, who was the MAPE of *Halitosis*, ceased to hold that position, and Jim Bachman, then Editor-in-Chief and the highest ranking student on the paper, claimed the title of MAPE for himself. The dream of Bachman and the rest of the *Halitosis* staff had finally come true. Complete editorial responsibility was now in their domain.

This was a great victory not only for the entire staff of the *Hinman Halitosis* but for its dedicated Editor-in-Chief and first student MAPE, Jim Bachman. Jim would continue to serve as Editor-in-Chief and MAPE until December of 1980. In that year he would relinquish control of the paper that he had dedicated so much of his life to Bruce Kearnan. Before he left in December of 1980, he organized an “Editor’s Handbook” describing the essentials of how to operate the paper. Though much of the advice he gives seems dated to a modern audience (in today’s world of desktop publishing, no one worries about typewriter ribbons, mimeograph machines, or shadowing of the text too much) it still served as a valuable resource to many future editors of *Halitosis*.¹⁹

From January of 1981 to May of 1982, Bruce Kearnan was the MAPE of the *Hinman Halitosis*. In early February of 1982, the campus-wide newspaper wrote an article on the residential college newspapers, *Woodsworld* (College-in-the-Woods), *Poor Dick* (Dickinson),
The Lake Lieberman Gazette (Newing) and of course the Hinman Halitosis. In the article, *Pipe Dream* reporters interviewed Bruce Kearnan and asked him why anyone in their right mind would want to go to so much effort to put out a weekly newspaper covering only their residential college. Bruce replied that it was important for Hinman to have its own newspaper and that if he and his small, dedicated staff did not put it out, then no one else would. He then summed up in what would become the motto of the *Hinman Halitosis*: “Bad breath is better than no breath at all.”

Bruce went on to say that if *Pipe Dream* could cover Hinman events as well as *Halitosis* did then there would be no need for *Halitosis* to exist. The fact that *Halitosis* did exist showed that *Pipe Dream* was not measuring up to its claim of being the one-stop source for any news that occurred on campus.

Around that same time, the staff of the *Hinman Halitosis* put out a joke issue of *Pipe Dream* called *Pub Dreams*. Almost every April Fool’s day, *Pipe Dream* put out a joke issue called *Pipe Bomb* that lampooned events on campus and poked fun at large campus personalities (the SA President and the President of the University have been perennially popular targets for ridicule in *Pipe Bomb*). However, no one had ever published a joke issue of *Pipe Dream* for the sake of making fun of the paper. Although many in the greater campus community and almost everyone in Hinman though that *Halitosis’s Pub Dreams* was hysterically funny, there were some on the staff of *Pipe Dream* that did no find the joke issue so funny. *Pipe Dream* Associate News Editor Cathy Bowman wrote an angry letter to the staff of the *Hinman Halitosis* decrying their joke issue and what she considered their tabloid reporting.

Dear Halitosis Staff:

Your joke issue was most amusing. But as you can see by the enclosure, we scooped you once again. However, attempts at humor are always appreciated here. Please feel free to continue corresponding with us. We will be glad to accept application from your
staff if they ever get tired of working on a glorified gossip sheet and want to work for a real newspaper.

P.S. When are you guys going to change your name?²¹

This did not bode well for the staff of the Hinman Halitosis. From the sound of Bowman’s letter it appeared as though Pipe Dream, the largest student newspaper on campus, had declared war on the Hinman Halitosis. As dedicated as the staff of the Halitosis was, there would be no way for them to survive an all out war against Pipe Dream. Luckily, the situation quickly diffused when the Editor-in-Chief of Pipe Dream, Joanne Fuchs, sent this letter to the staff of the Hinman Halitosis.

Dear Hinman Halitosis staff:

The staff here at Pipe Dream greatly enjoyed your spoof, Pub Dreams. We like to make fun of ourselves, and enjoy it even more when other groups on campus notice us enough to make fun of us.

Please take Cathy Bowman’s letter with a grain of salt. It was not meant to insult you, just as I am sure you did not mean to insult us. If, as I had mentioned to your editor, any of you are interested in working for Pipe Dream, please do get involved. Just like you, we need all the help we can get.

I wish you all the luck with your newspaper.²²

The situation with Pipe Dream was diffused, for the moment, but undoubtedly lingering feelings were left within members of both parties. Still, Halitosis had weathered this storm and continued printing just as it had before, being the one and only source of information for predominantly Hinman news.

In May of 1982, Bruce Kearnan stepped down as MAPE of the Hinman Halitosis. Just as his friend and former MAPE Jim Bachman had done the previous year, Kearnan wrote an Editor’s note to help future editor’s of Halitosis along. Like Bachman’s note, Kearnan’s probably seems a little bit dated to a modern audience (mimeograph machines are now
considered obsolete) though for any paper, then as now, it is important to order your paper early and often, so as to not run out. Also, he made it clear once and for all, that both staplers in the office used regular staples and not heavy duty staples.

In his last issue of the *Hinman Halitosis* that he would ever edit, Kearnan wrote this as his farewell address:

This will be my last issue as Editor of the Halitosis. If you have ever read the staff box carefully, you’ll will [sic] recognize the name of my successor, Terri Daly. Terri was chosen by the Hinman Council two weeks ago and will be fully in charge when school resumes in the fall.

I have worked on the Halitosis for over three years now and I take pride in both the paper and the work that has been done in the last few years. I could talk about how quality has improved and about building a reputation and a whole bunch of other stuff, but some people would disagree with me and those things are really secondary. The most important thing the Halitosis should do is provide a service and do it on a regular basis. This was Bob Giomi’s original intention 12 years ago, it is still the fundamental principle of the Halitosis today…

…There are four people who form the core of the paper, without them, this paper simply does not print. They are Liz DiBlazio, Mike Ditkowsky (see I spelled it correct), Carol Swallow and Lisa Zavlick. All of them plan to return and work again next year. At times, like last night at 2 am, you have to wonder why they’d want to do that! I just know that the Halitosis is being left in good hands.

Finally I must mention Terri Daly again. There have been several occasions when Terri ran the paper in my absence. Her hardwork [sic], dedication and support have been priceless at all times. Thanks, TD.

And now I must finish this paper and study for my final finals.23

For years Bruce Kearnan has taken the *Halitosis* and made it into the quality journalistic source that it was. Now he would join the ranks of previous editors like Pete Lorenzi, Barbara Shrager, and Jim Bachman. Bruce’s time writing for the *Halitosis* was over and the hope for the future was that the remaining staff would continue in their same vein of quality Hinman journalism.
For the 1982-1983 academic year, Terri Daly lived up to Bruce Kearnan’s expectations. The Hinman Halitosis continued to grow and provided the latest in news and quality journalism for the readers of Hinman College. It seemed as though all the concerns about turning all the editorial responsibilities over to students had been for nothing. Ever since the Halitosis became completely student run, it had reached new heights of achievement and prosperity. By the end of the year, in the same vein as her predecessors, Terri Daly wrote an emotional farewell to the readers of the Hinman Halitosis.

…I don’t know what will happen to the paper next year: I know there are a lot of areas it can improve in though. Hopefully the new electrostencil machine will bring art back to the pages, and maybe things will start to get funny again. (It will have to with the faces of the new editorial staff around for everybody to look at! Only kidding).

I urge everybody to get involved in this paper next year, in one way or another. It can only survive with your interest & participation. And hell, you meet some of the Gumbiest [sic] people down here in this closet.

I hope the paper will continue to grow, and never become the Gazette or Pipe Dream (that’s not it’s purpose!) but I hope we can get some of the mental weirdness of Poor Dick’s back.

Again, I want to thank Mike, Lisa & especially Liz (for putting up with me 4 yrs [sic]). And wish everyone good luck on finals, a warm dry summer and a happy life before I go off into the blue yonder. I leave you with this final thought:

“Life is a banquet and most poor sons-of-bitches are starving to death.”

-Auntie Mame

It doesn’t have to be that way.

Good luck & Good Life & Goodbye,

Terri Daly, ex-editor.

Daly’s emotional plea would be answered the following academic year with a new staff and the start of a Halitosis editorial dynasty. Taking over the helm as editor of the Hinman Halitosis would be Robin Shrager, the younger sister of Barbara Shrager. Like her sister before,
Robin Shrager took it upon herself to continue the *Hinman Halitosis* and make it the best of all the residential college newspapers. Besides the usual job of formatting, typing, copying and editing, Robin took it upon herself to regularly write columns in the *Halitosis* covering a wide variety of subject matter, though usually they focused on the ever problematic issue of student apathy. Robin’s columns became a regular feature in *Halitosis*, just as much as Co-Rec football news, HCC minutes, floor news, and the every popular personals section. On particular column shows just how much Robin loved the Hinman newspaper that had been such a large part of her life.

I know, I know,—you didn’t know that there was going to be a Halitosis this week, so not many floors put news in and there aren’t too many personals. Yes, I know, you thought there would be one before vacation, but there wasn’t, and we canned all old news.

To tell you the truth, I didn’t think there would be an issue this week either. See, I wasn’t sure if I was even coming back to school after Spring Break. It’s like this…[sic]

I was there on the beach in the BAHAMA [emphasis in original], soaking in the sun, sipping a pina colada, watching the wind breeze through the palm trees…and I thought to myself as I pulled my new straw hat down over my eyes, “Gee, this is an awfully nice place—wouldn’t it be great to live here year round.”

I pondered over the idea for a while, running my toes through the powdery white sand, looking out to the ocean with its clear blue water. I thought only a short while before realizing that Paradise Island would make an excellent home—the beach, sailing, fishing by day, and the casinos, fine restaurants, and discos by night.

I was all set to wire home for my belongings and some extra cash, when I remembered THE HALITOSIS. What would become of the Hinman Halitosis should I not return? Who would make sure the paper was put out? What would happen to the paper I ordered from Central Stores? What would my staff say if I deserted them?

No, I could not abandon my responsibility to put out the paper. I made the commitment last Spring, and I could not go back on my word. I would not let the paper die just to satisfy my own personal desires.

And so, I returned to Binghamton with my suitemates. I returned to cold, rainy, cloudy, dreary, palm-treeless Binghamton just to serve my readers. That’s dedication for you.
That’s right—my tan may fade, but the Halitosis remains forever.\(^{25}\)

Although this particular article was written somewhat tongue-in-cheek, the fact remained that Robin Shrager and the rest of the Halitosis staff viewed the Hinman Halitosis as something unique and special and that it needed to be kept going. In the view of Robin and others, the Halitosis was just a small part of larger Hinman College community and it was important that it be preserved for future generations. Another column written in the spring of 1985 has Robin take on the pervasive issue of student involvement (or lack thereof) and apathy.

Living is more than accomplishing the basic bodily functions. Sure, most of us can breathe and our heart’s [sic] are beating, but are we really living?

Living is doing, seeing, creating, learning, taking risks,…[sic] getting involved!

Don’t just sit around and complain things aren’t right…[sic] Do something! Make yourself a part of the decision makers in Hinman College.

There are many ways to get your point heard and/or become involved in Hinman life. One way is to become a leader, and your opportunity to do this is open now, for elections are coming up for the Hinman College Council. You don’t have to be an expert in politics to run for a position on Council. You just need to be enthusiastic, have a sense of desire to meet people and have a sense of dedication for the job.

Another way of getting involved and getting your messages heard is through this very newspaper. And what better a way to make sure your things are printed than to become EDITOR [emphasis in original]. If you’re interested in being Editor of the Hinman Halitosis then submit a letter of intent for this position, also due Sunday the 21\(^{st}\).

Even if you don’t want to take one of these positions, at least vote when the Council elections come out. It could make a difference between an active Hinman College, a united Hinman College, and an informed Hinman College—or one that is filled with waste products.

Make sure that Hinman is filled with ACTIVE people. Remember, college is what YOU put into it…[sic] So, put something in…[sic] and get a lot out of your college life.\(^{26}\)

In this way, probably unbeknownst to Robin, she was writing in the same vein as previous editors of the Hinman Halitosis who railed against student apathy. This particular article also parallels an article with a similar theme written in The West Harpur Other by Sandy
Lazar back in 1969. Sixteen years later, Hinman College was still suffering from some of the same problems that it had been afflicting it since its infancy. Unfortunately, no one person or even one newspaper (even one as influential as the *Hinman Halitosis*) could prevent the horrible disease of student apathy and disinterest. As time would soon tell, the *Hinman Halitosis*, and some might argue the rest of Hinman College, entered into a period of decline across the board in many areas that had once been shown to have large amounts of involvement.

However, as great a year as the 1984-1985 academic year had been for Robin Shrager and the *Hinman Halitosis*, that too had to come to an end. Like previous editors before her, Robin wrote this as her farewell address in the last issue of the *Hinman Halitosis* for the year.

My first love, hobby, and favorite means of sorting out my feelings is writing. I have written essays, stories, songs, letters, lists-of-things-to-do, and poems for as long as I can remember. One of my great masterpieces is still hanging on the refrigerator—a poem entitled Poekets [sic], which I wrote way back when I was able to figure out rhymes, but not logic.

In any event, it only seemed natural that after being Features Editor of my high school paper, Editor of my youth group paper, and aspiring to be the next Erma Bombeck, I should come to college and assume the role of *Hinman Halitosis* editor…[sic]

My year as Editor has been a most memorable experience. I have had my share of crazy moments…[sic] when my hand got caught in the machine, when the mimeograph machine ate every other piece of paper. When my academic and personal life occasionally interfered with the paper’s time schedule. And I also have had moments of pride—when people eagerly reached for their copy as I strolled through the dorms delivering issues, and when people told me they enjoyed reading the paper. The combination of these hectic and happy times made it all worthwhile.

Yet I was not the only one working to put out the *Halitosis* week after week. In the beginning it was just me and a few old friends and a few new friends churning out the first paper and only ending up with 6 per floor. Later complete strangers volunteered their time to put out bigger and better issues. The staff grew and grew, until one day it was so large that it stopped growing. Not only that, but it started getting smaller. Smaller, but never non-existent, for there always remained a core of loyal staff members, for all their help…
…this thank you is for YOU, the readers, the dorm news writers, and the people who send personals. You are the reason WE put out a paper each week. That’s right—without You there would have been no “Bad Breath.”

It was fun, neato, tiring, educational, and I had the greatest time being Editor. Have the best summer…[sic] and ace those finals!27

The Hinman Halitosis would continue after Robin Shrager, but it most assuredly would not be the same. The following academic year saw the beginning of what can only be called a slow decline leading to the ultimate death of the newspaper that had entertained and informed thousands of Hinmanites. The available records make it clear that fewer and fewer articles began appearing in Halitosis. Coverage of Co-Rec games and HCC meeting minutes all but disappeared, as did reviews of HPC plays. Weekly articles and announcements of upcoming events and programming also became less and less as the 1980’s decade wore on. By the late 1980’s the Hinman Halitosis was really nothing more than a few sheets of colored paper with personals and the occasional dorm news feature.

Halitosis experienced a brief revival during the 1992-1993 academic year when George Kinzel and Linda DiLonardo became editors of the paper. During this time Kinzel and DiLonardo published the paper less frequently than it had been in the past (only a few issues came out each semester) but they made it up with longer papers with much more in-depth articles covering numerous topics including a feature where they interviewed a number of popular Hinman RA’s. Unfortunately, this brief renaissance for the Halitosis would not last. After the 1992-1993 academic year, no more physical copies remain in the Halitosis archives. It is unknown whether the Hinman Halitosis died after this academic year or if it continued to be printed in some form. What is known is that at some point in the mid to late 1990’s, the Hinman Halitosis ceased to exist as a paper and was no longer published regularly as it once had. Halitosis fell into the hands of HCC where a committee was formed to try and publish it on a
fairly regular basis. So far this has failed to be accomplished. Every year a few issues of
*Halitosis* are published in order to save face, but it is no longer the newspaper that it once was.

Why exactly the *Hinman Halitosis* failed as a newspaper after fifteen years of blinding
success is unclear. Perhaps the first reason why the paper died was simply student apathy. If no
one was interested in working on the paper than it certainly would not be published. *Halitosis*
was not the only residential college paper to fail. *Woodsworld, Poor Dick, and The Lake*
*Lieberman Gazette* all ultimately failed as newspapers. One theory is that the better funded and
more visible campus-wide newspaper *Pipe Dream* attracted most of the talented writers and
aspiring journalists from the residential colleges. This can only be part of the reason though.
Another theory is that the decline of the *Hinman Halitosis* and the rest of the residential college
newspapers came at a time where centralization made individual residential college identity less
important. Students used to view themselves as belonging to Hinman College or whatever
residential college they lived in. Now they view themselves as students of larger institution—
Binghamton University. Technological change and progress also undoubtedly had something to
do with the decline in the *Hinman Halitosis*. *Halitosis*, like many other staples of Hinman
College life, were started to alleviate boredom among Hinman residents. Cable TV, the rise of
the personal computer, and the Internet all were new sources of news and entertainment that
were easily accessible and something that you did not have to work at. Why pick up a copy of
*Halitosis* to read “The Adventures of Cat Masterson” when you could flick on the TV set in your
room and watch repeats of *Friends*? Why read an issue of *Halitosis* when you had CNN and
other 24-hour news networks first broadcast on television, then online? *Halitosis* was also a
form of communication by students in Hinman College. The personals section, a staple of the
*Hinman Halitosis* from its very beginnings all the way up to its very end, were a form of sly
clever communication between people in the community. Steve Fialkoff compared the printed personals of his generation to the Instant Messages of the present generation of Hinmanite. In many ways that is an apt comparison. People read Halitosis because it was one of the only means of communicating with fellow Hinmanites. Now with the rise of e-mail, cell phones, Facebook, MySpace and instant messaging, students no longer need Halitosis to fulfill that need.

Although the Hinman Halitosis may no longer exist as an institution in Hinman College, its memory still lingers on. With luck, at some point in the future, a dedicated Hinmanite and aspiring journalist may make the effort and start the paper again. They won’t be using typewriters and mimeographs this time, but the same dedication and responsibility will have to be there. In the meantime, however, Hinman has continued with some other publications that keep residents informed of what is going on in Hinman.

2 Gabe Yankowitz, e-mail message to author, January 25, 2007.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
7 Barbara [Shrager] Lombardo, e-mail message to author, April 20, 2007.
8 Tony Toluba, e-mail message to author, March 10, 2007.
9 Joshua Kittenplan, e-mail message to author, February 8, 2007.
10 Steven Meyer, e-mail message to author, February 13, 2007.
11 Steven Meyer, e-mail message to author, March 18, 2007.
12 Ibid.
15 Steven Meyer, e-mail message to author, February 13, 2007.
18 Jim Bachman, “Perspective,” unprinted article written for the Lake Lieberman Gazette, located in the “Editor’s Handbook” or the Hinman Halitosis archives.
19 James Bachman, “Editor Notes,” Editor’s Handbook located in the Hinman Halitosis archives.
21 Cathy Bowman, letter to the staff of the Hinman Halitosis, February 9, 1982, located in the “Editor’s Handbook.”
22 Joanne Fuchs, letter to the staff of the Hinman Halitosis, February 16, 1982, located in the “Editor’s Handbook.”