

Animal House: A Selection of Funny Stories and Pranks Throughout Hinman History

Doug Neidermeyer (Mark Metcalf): And most recently of all, a "Roman Toga Party" was held from which we have received more than two dozen reports of individual acts of perversion SO profound and disgusting that decorum prohibits listing them here.

-Scene from the film National Lampoon's Animal House (1978)

Prologue

College and university campuses are full of young people who often find themselves with too much free time on their hands. College students have always been notorious for their pranks and hijinks. Though definitely not having the same reputation as the other residential colleges at Binghamton for fraternity pranks and general student mischief, Hinman residents have been known to pull off some rather humorous jokes and pranks. The following stories are but a small example of some of the more interesting and humorous stories that have come to light in Hinman history. Doubtless, there are many, many more stories of Hinmanites run amok, but these are the stories that were available at the time of publication. Also, every Hinmanite has had at least one practical joke played on them at some point in time, and others have been the instigators of these jokes. Some have been big, others have been small, some have been at the expense of others, some have just been for the fun of it, some were intentional and others still were purely by happenstance. Whatever the reasons for these zany activities they have left an indelible imprint in the minds of those who were involved and have contributed to one of the more lighthearted and fun chapters in Hinman College history.

Co-Rec and Kegs: A Memory of Helene Johnson

Reprinted from the original in *Stories of Hinman College*

Co-Rec in Hinman is definitely more intense than it is anywhere else on campus. I got hurt while playing co-rec in Hinman. I mean I had a guy hit me and I went flying eighteen feet and hit back; and co-rec is supposed to be two-hand touch...I was living in Hughes potts [sic] at the time. This big huge guy came up to me and said, "We need a girl. You're playing." I said like "Okay, I don't know how to play." So they gave me some girl with a logo on her back and said, "You see her? Hit her." And on my co-rec team, I became known as Sic 'Em because I didn't know the rules but they told me who to cover. That's forever been my nickname. Now I think I have a little bit more of a clue, but not much more.

I have to say that the most memorable event that I saw was the year of the campus-wide keg parties. I think that it was the year that they did the lockdown and in order to protest the lockdown and something else, Rene Coderre was still coordinator over there [Hinman], and they just rolled out these kegs on the quad. Nobody expected it. Crews of people started getting outside. It was insane. And then they did something highly illegal. Enough people weren't outside, so they went around and pulled the fire alarms on all the buildings within five seconds of one another. So everybody had to be outside. It was illegal not to be outside. And everybody came outside and saw kegs on the quad and because there were kegs on the quad, everybody stayed outside. They couldn't go back in the buildings because the fire alarms were going off. Because public safety was dealing with the kegs, it took them a while to turn off the alarms. I've never seen such a turnout at a Hinman event in my life. Rene went out to the kegs to get the people tapping them in trouble and they dumped beer all over him. And then, from what I heard, that became the standard thing, if somebody saw Rene coming they would dump beer down his back.¹

The Great Smith Hall Keg Caper: A Memory of Michael “Kipp” Lombardi, RD Smith Hall

Reprinted from the original in *Stories of Hinman College*

One Saturday night the snow started piling. The boys on Smith Hall 2B decided, they have gotten a keg almost every night that semester, and nobody caught them because they were able to sneak it in. They had snuck kegs in T.V. boxes, hockey equipment bags, snuck them in windows, rolled up a sleeping bag, and they had Public Safety chasing them with a keg between them, and they had to come up with a way to get a keg because the RA was going to be on the floor the entire night. So, because of the snowstorm, there was no keg to be bought because everything was closed. Even Wegmans was closed. However, someone on their floor told them that Portobello delivered it, but no they came up with a more creative way because their goal was to get that keg and bring it into the building.

They took a toboggan, went overland, through the Grad Community, down the hill, to Bunn Hill Road, until they landed at Portobello where they discovered that they were fifteen dollars short. So they had to walk all the way back up the hill to Smith Hall to get the other fifteen dollars. And then they went back down to Portobello, purchased two kegs, put them on the toboggan, and started to pull the toboggan up the hill. All of a sudden a white plow that belonged to Binghamton University was cleaning the roads and discovered that they had two kegs. The maintenance person called Public Safety and told them that there was a keg. So, what they did was dig a hole in the snow and they put the keg there. When Public Safety came around, they were innocently playing on the sled and said, “...but officer, we were just playing on the sled. We have no idea why someone thought that we have kegs.” The officer looked around and didn’t see any kegs. So he went away. So they unburied the kegs, and put them back on the sled and brought them back up to Smith Hall. They were unaware, however, that their RA

was on duty in her room. They snuck them into the building. Their RA was in her room with the door open but by coincidence, her boyfriend who was studying abroad in Brazil called her and kept her on the phone for over two hours. And while she was on the phone, they took their hockey equipment bag and went down three flights of stairs put one keg in the hockey bag and carried it up one flight of stairs and put it in their room. They did this twice. And there they consumed the entire quantity of beer. I could never prove it at the time but found out the next semester. I like telling this story because it is funny that people would go to such great lengths for beer, and because of the creativity in their ability not to get caught. The fact that I was not able to stop them and didn't find out the story until the next year was frustrating but I was able to laugh at it. With the different stereotypes about the communities, Hinman is not known for its wild keg stories.²

Adventures in RD-ing: Memories of Adam Brown, RD Roosevelt Hall

One year while Adam was an RD in Roosevelt, Ira Dym was one of his RA's. He had a suite of guys who constantly partied and consistently caused problems. No matter what he did, they still broke policy and were all around complete jerks. Nothing they could do to them would stick, so in a sort of vigilante justice RA-style, Adam and Ira took matters into their own hands. During one of the breaks when the building closed down and all the students had to leave, Adam and Ira went into their room to check for closing policy violations (something that is done in every room in the building). They then proceeded to open up the refrigerators in that suite and found all of the hidden vodka that had been stockpiled. Adam and Ira then dumped all of the vodka out and refilled the bottles with water. There was no way that the residents of that suite

would report that their vodka had been tampered with because they were all underage. Revenge is a dish best served cold, though sometimes it is a drink best served non-alcoholic.³

Another time at Halloween, Adam and two of his RA's, Ira Dym and John Winter, were dressed up for the holiday as characters from the comic strip "Peanuts." Adam was dressed as Snoopy, Ira was Charlie Brown, and John was Schroeder. They happened to notice a bunch of kids vandalizing property by throwing eggs. The three of them then, in full costume, chased this group of kids through Hinman and into Smith Hall where they finally cornered them. The scoundrels were brought to justice.⁴

While he was an RD, Adam drove a four-speed 1980 Datsun. The ignition was finicky and the clutch had been acting up. Needless to say, it was something of a jalopy. Late one night, Adam was walking back to his apartment and passed by his designated RD parking space. There he saw two guys trying to take off his license plate. Later on he found out that one of the fraternities, as part of their pledging/hazing ritual, had ordered their pledges to steal license plates off of cars. Adam approached the two men and identified himself as a police officer. Remember, this was late at night and it was very dark and Adam had no idea who either of these two men were. The pledges were very frightened because they thought they were going to get arrested. Adam, however, was even more scared than they were. After questioning them for a few minutes "Officer Brown" let them off with a warning.⁵

Adam, who attended Binghamton for seven years (four as an undergraduate and three as a graduate student) and lived in Hinman for all seven of those years, really became attached to his residential college. His last year as an RD (and his last year in Hinman) he decided that he wanted to go out with a bang. On the Vestal Parkway at the time there was a popular steakhouse called simply The Vestal Steakhouse and on the roof of this building there was this huge steer.

For years Adam had passed by this restaurant and had thought “wouldn’t it be funny if someone put a big tie around the neck of that steer.” Nothing ever became of it until his final year at Hinman. That year he organized a group of residents from his hall and together they snuck onto Vestal Steakhouse property, climbed onto the roof, and hung a huge polka dotted necktie around the neck of the steer. The next morning, steakhouse employees and commuters passing by stopped and marveled at this gaudy, yet hysterical, prank.⁶

The World’s Longest Shower: The Story of Lisa D’Amato

From 5:20 p.m. on Thursday, November 5 until 6:21 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10, 1981, the *Guinness Book of World Records* record for the longest continuous shower was set in Smith Hall in suite 226. It was set by Lisa D’Amato, a resident of Smith Hall who also happened to be the daughter of then Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-NY). Before she could do that, though, she had to secure the permission of her father, the university and alert judges from *Guinness Book*. She also had to have a complete physical and medical check-up to make sure she was fit to perform this feat. While one of her goals was to simply set a world record, she also got sponsorship for her efforts and would donate all the proceeds to the American Cancer Society (talk about Relay for Life!). The biggest concern for her safety was that many feared after a few hours she would begin to suffer from hypothermia. Also, after a few hours in the water, the body becomes permeable and water can penetrate right through it which could pose a potential health hazard. Other fears included exhaustion and, somewhat surprisingly, dehydration. Undaunted by these challenges, Lisa entered into her shower on November 5, 1981 and with Harpur’s Ferry and judges from the *Guinness Book of World Records* standing by, she began the ordeal that would make her go down in not only Hinman history, but world record

history as well. The judges' shifts lasted two to four hours, though some had six-hour shifts during the night. During the nights she would have to be woken every few hours so that she could turn over and have the water hit other areas of her body. She was allowed to come out of the shower for five minutes of every hour to eat and use the bathroom. On November 10, 1981, she tied the old record and stayed in for an extra hour. All told she was in the shower for one hundred twenty-one hours and one minute. When she finally came out not only was she now officially a world record holder but she also had raised over \$2,000 for the American Cancer Society. When asked what her plans were to celebrate she said, "I'm going to dry my hair for the first time in five days. Then I'm going to bundle up, jump into a dry bed for three or four hours, wake up and do a little studying and jump right back into bed again. Terrific way to celebrate, right?" Not only did she do that but she even went to track practice the next day.⁷

D'Amato would not only forever put Smith Hall on the map as the site of a record in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, but she also was source of pride for all of Hinman College. Unfortunately, it is very unlikely that something like this will happen ever again. Insurance premiums and liability, being what they are nowadays, would probably prevent it from happening. Nick Sterling, the Faculty Master at the time, was instrumental in convincing the university to allow it. Without him and his assurance, it probably never would have happened. Still, it was an interesting event that showed just what Hinman residents could do if they put their minds to it.⁸

Adventures in Coordinating: Memories from Rene Coderre

During his tenure as Coordinator of Hinman College, Rene Coderre received a reputation for being a stickler for the rules and a harsh disciplinarian. His nickname was "Darth Reneader,"

which changed only when he moved to be Coordinator of CIW, where he became known as “The Dean of Mean.” Upon meeting with Rene you’d never know this, since he’s such a personable and friendly gentleman, and an NHL fan to boot. However, during his years in Hinman a number of interesting stories have centered around him. One year during the Co-Rec championship game, the first floor of Cleveland Hall, which was supposed to play in the game, was banned because of discipline problems. After some careful consideration, Rene, even though he didn’t have to, allowed the team to play in the Co-Rec game. During this time a popular NFL quarterback wore headbands during his games. During the championship Co-Rec game, the Cleveland Hall team, showing their appreciation for what Rene did for them, wore head bands and wrote nasty comments about Rene on them. Three or four years later, Rene was sitting in his office and a New York State Trooper walks in. Rene recognized him as the captain of the Cleveland Hall Co-Rec team who had given him the most problems. The trooper sat down with Rene and the two caught up, as the trooper told Rene that he never finished school and that he was currently finishing his degree and working at the same time. He had stopped in after all that time to apologize to Rene and to thank him for letting his team play in the championship game.⁹

Rene’s reputation was not limited to Hinman. Darth Reneader had a presence all across campus—such a large and infamous presence that one year in the *Pipe Bomb* (the April Fool’s Day edition of *Pipe Dream*) a full page article was written by a student in Hinman going through the judicial process who stated that Rene had written up his own wife (who is fifteen years his junior) for violating alcohol policy.¹⁰

Students were not the only ones whom Rene had difficulties with. Even some of his own RD’s gave him mischievous trouble. Adam Brown, who was the RD of Roosevelt Hall was also

the driving force in the Hinman Production Company (HPC) during most of Rene's tenure. Adam was not afraid of running illegal wiring and drilling holes in the Hinman Commons to make the HPC plays work, even though Rene and he were constantly at odds over this and other issues. However, Rene took a page out of Adam's book when one day he decided to move a clunky and loud old dot matrix printer into the closet so it wouldn't bother the secretaries working in the office. He drilled holes in the ceiling and ran wires through the holes. Over twenty years later when asked about the hypocritical aspect of this action and whether it was fair to castigate Adam for doing just that, Rene would reply with a grin, "Where do you think I got the idea from?" As much as the two butted heads at times, both Rene and Adam were close and continue to stay in touch.¹¹

This image of the by-the-book attitude is actually an unfair representation of the man who was such a force in Hinman College at the time and who did so much for the students of Hinman. It was Rene who made sure that the tennis and basketball courts were repaved and even helped start a roller hockey league in Hinman. He even made the Hinman Office what it is today, building the shelves, cabinets, and even the mailboxes that are there today. More than a tough administrator, he also knew how to have fun. In 1989, the mother of the RD in Hughes Hall got cancer and eventually succumbed to the disease. The RD requested time off and it was granted, which left an opening for an RD in Hughes Hall for the second half of the semester. Instead of making the other RD's pick up the slack or hiring a new RD so close to the end of the year, Rene himself (who had once been an RD in SUNY Potsdam) moved into Hughes and became their RD for the rest of the semester. During this time Rene would hang out in the RA office with his RAs and play what for many years was a popular pastime for RAs across campus: RA poker. The way RA poker works is that different types of people are worth a certain number of points. For

instance, a regular resident of the building would be worth one point, a student council member would be worth five points, an RA, ten points, an RD, 20 points, Assistant Coordinator, 30 points, a full Coordinator, 40 points, an Assistant Director of Residential Life, 75 points and the Director of Residential Life 100 points. The actual number of points varied, as did the positions (which included Faculty Masters, professors and almost every other type of position on campus). To get points, a person actually had to be in the RA office at the time. For example, the only way you could get points for having an RD is if an RD were actually in the RA office with you. What RAs would do is when a person would walk into the RA Office they would call other RAs on duty in other buildings and say, "RA poker, what'cha got?" or something to that effect. Scores would be tallied on papers in each office. The game obviously relied on the buddy system and was never really all that serious, but it helped to eliminate some of the tedium that many RAs then and now feel sitting duty in the RA office. Rene, an RD and a Coordinator, racked up numerous points for Hughes during his time there. Rene was also a friend to the RA's. He was instrumental in reducing the amount of hours an RA had to sit on duty at night by one hour. Before his time as Coordinator, RAs were on duty from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. Rene changed the hours to end at midnight.¹²

Hinman has had a reputation for having the best Faculty Masters of all of Binghamton's residential colleges. However, many of the unsung heroes of residential life and collegiate structure at Binghamton have been the Area Coordinators (now called Assistant Directors). Many of them have been just as active in the realm of student life for Hinman College residents as the Faculty Masters have been. Rene Coderre is just one example of the many, many exemplarily Coordinators/Assistant Directors in the long history of Hinman College.

Streaking—The Right Way: A Memory of Pete Lorenzi

Throughout the 1960's and into the 1970's, the act of streaking swept the nation, and nowhere was it more prevalent than on college campuses. SUNY Binghamton and Hinman College were no exception to this fad. Pete Lorenzi, perhaps best known as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Hinman Halitosis*, remembers one of his experiences with streaking. It was a warm spring day in 1973 when he and his friend and fellow Hinmanite Steve Fialkoff decided to go to the pub. They did this around 4:00 p.m. with the intention of having a few drinks, going to the dining hall to get dinner, then to go back out again. Steve lived in Roosevelt Hall at the time and on their way back to the building their conversation turned to streaking. Both Pete and Steve agreed that people didn't streak right. Streaking occurred often on campus, but it would usually be late at night and rarely was it ever fully in public. Both Steve and Pete came to the agreement that if you were going to go streaking you had to do it right—that is, in broad daylight in front of a large group of people. It was then and there, on the doorstep of Roosevelt Hall that Pete and Steve decided that they were going to go streaking and that they were going to do it right. Both Pete and Steve stripped down so that they were wearing nothing but tennis shoes and took off into Hinman College. They ran down the hill into the Hinman Dining Hall at peak dinner hours through all three sections and then back up the hill into Roosevelt Hall. When they got back to Roosevelt they put their clothes back on and then proceeded to return to the dining hall to get dinner. As soon as they walked into the dining hall people stood up and clapped for them, many offering them high fives. Of the many memories of his time in Hinman, Pete Lorenzi (the so-called “bad boy” of Hinman) recalls this as his favorite.¹³

Over the River and Through the Woods: A Memory of Steve Fialkoff

During his time in Hinman in the mid-1970's, Steve Fialkoff, a resident of Roosevelt Hall, remembers a sleigh ride that is forever burned into his consciousness. Roosevelt Hall and the other buildings in Hinman had a toboggan that it would lend out to students to use for recreational purposes. One night it snowed heavily and on top of the snow was an inch and a half of ice. That night, Steve and his friend Alan decided to borrow the toboggan to use it for sleigh riding. The two decided to be adventurous and took it up to the Nature Preserve right behind Hinman. They hiked deep into the Nature Preserve, all the way to the top of steep hill. It was a moonlit night and only 20 degrees Fahrenheit. When Steve and Alan reached the top of the hill Alan made the comment that there were a lot of trees in their way and it could be treacherous riding down. Steve told him that if they banked the sled at just the right angles they would avoid the trees. He even went so far as to say that they would make it back out to the road. Alan said that it couldn't be done and that it would be suicidal to try. With a little coaxing, Steve convinced Alan to give it a try. The two men got onto the toboggan, pushed off, and down the hill they went. Steve doesn't remember exactly how long the ride took, but it seemed like it took an eternity. They rushed down the hill, the thick top layer of ice preventing them from braking. They narrowly averted trees and other hazards. Both men clung to the toboggan for dear life. As astounding as it sounds, not only did they miss every single obstacle in their path, but they made it all the way back to the road, just as Steve said they would. Wanting to relive the thrill, both men trudged back up the hill to do it again. Unfortunately, they were never able to replicate exactly how they had done it before; they either got stuck or tangled up in some obstacle in their path. Although they were only able to do it once, that memory of nearly averted death still sticks with Steve Fialkoff and is his favorite of all his Hinman memories.¹⁴

Up In Smoke: Memories of Stan Goldberg

Stan Goldberg, the founder of the Hinman Little Theater and an RA in Smith Hall, remembers his days in Hinman as some of the best years of his life. Stan first became interested in SUNY Binghamton because one of his father's friend's daughters went there and she raved about the school and the quality of the education. For Stan it was very important that he attend college because he would be the first one in his family who would graduate with a college degree. In 1970, when Stan went to visit Binghamton, the school was very much into the drug/hippie counter culture that was in vogue at the time. In March of 1970, Stan and a friend visited the school. As luck would have it a friend of theirs happened to live in Smith Hall of Hinman College. When they had known this friend in high school, he had been the patriotic all-American boy. He was tall and clean-cut, with a closely cropped haircut, and an Eagle Scout to boot. When they arrived in Hinman they were astounded to discover that this same person that they had known in high school had done a complete 180 degree turn. He had grown his hair long, didn't bother with grooming all the much, and completely embraced the philosophy and lifestyle of the hippie. He also made a living buying and selling drugs. He let Stan and his friend stay in his suite that night and it soon became apparent that their friend was not the only one dealing drugs. Even the RA on their floor was a drug dealer. They slept in the common area of their friend's suite. This was nearly impossible because all throughout the night someone would knock on the door trying to buy drugs. That morning the RA walked into their suite with a brick of hash in each hand and asked if they wanted to go to breakfast. Not knowing what else to do, they agreed and had breakfast with him in the Student Union. While some may have been turned off by this experience, Stan knew right then and there that this was the place for him. Not because of its drug culture, but because it so outrageous with so many different things going on

that he knew he had to experience it. This inspired him to apply to SUNY Binghamton and to ask to be placed in Hinman College.

This was not the only outrageous thing Stan ever did. One night Stan led a group of people on a streak. He announced at a Hinman sponsored dance that he would be leading a streak and that everyone interested should meet by his room. Approximately ten people met Stan and at the stroke of midnight on a cold and rainy evening, Stan Goldberg led one of many streaks through Hinman College.

Stan also had the experience of having practical jokes played on him. When he became an RA in Smith Hall, he came back to his room one evening after dinner to see all his residents, many of them members of the “Rowdy Townies” Co-Rec team, sitting out in the floor lounge with big smiles on their faces. Suspecting that they were up to no good, Stan asked them what they were up to. No one would tell him so Stan returned to his room. As he opened the door he realized that his residents had been in his room and had stripped his room clean. All of his belongings had been removed from his room. He eventually got all of his furniture and the rest of his property back, but the joke stays with him to this very day.¹⁵

Interior Lawn Darts: A Memory of Eric Rubin

From 1978-1980, Eric Rubin lived in Smith Hall. While he was there he created a game that would become a sort of national pastime for his floor. The game was fairly simple. It involved two players with each player getting three darts. Each player would throw one of their darts anywhere that they wanted. Once you threw your first dart, you had to remain standing in the same place without moving. Then you had to use your remaining two darts to get as close to

your opponent's first dart as possible. The player whose darts landed closest to their opponent's first dart won.

The game was simple and fun to play, and most likely against the rules. Eric and his friends would play it in their floor lounge and the darts would leave holes wherever they stuck. By the end of the year the entire floor lounge was covered in little holes where the darts had stuck. Luckily for Eric, his RA never caught on that it was him who was creating the little holes all over the floor lounge.

Eric and his friends would play this game for countless hours, but one game in particular sticks out in his mind. During this game, Eric's first dart landed right between his opponent's legs. The opposing player, not to be outdone, then tried to mimic this move and threw his dart. Instead of landing between Eric's legs, it instead became stuck in Eric's thigh. Most people at this point would have stopped the game, but neither of these two young men was willing to concede defeat. Now they were stuck in a sticky situation. Eric's opponent had to carefully throw his darts so as to not lodge them in his groin. Eric basically had to stab himself. After the game was over both men agreed never to throw their darts at one another again. Who could have known that a game of darts could be so dangerous?¹⁶

The Roosevelt Hall Indoor Golf Tournament: A Memory of Tony Toluba

During his tenure as President of Roosevelt Hall, Tony Toluba, and his co-President Bob Sanscrainte, and decided to try a fun and interesting program. Their idea was to have an indoor golf tournament with all of Roosevelt Hall being the links. There were 18 holes with 9 holes on each wing. The "fairways" went into elevators and down stairwells, which meant that you had to be extra careful to see how far your ball went. They used real golf clubs and plastic whiffle

balls. There was a \$3 entrance fee and all the beer you could drink (a possibility in the days when the drinking age was 18). There were also prizes that were handed out. They gave a trophy to the winning low score and a prize (a horse's rear) to the losing high score. The indoor golf tournament was very popular and people from all over Hinman came to Roosevelt Hall to compete in the event. The winner of the tournament was a guy from Cleveland Hall who brought his own golf clubs and the loser of the tournament was Roosevelt Hall resident Mark Riffle who would later be one of Tony's off campus housemates. Although being a rather cheesy idea for a program, the Roosevelt Hall indoor golf was a surprisingly popular and successful event and ranks as one of Tony's fondest memories of his time in Hinman.¹⁷

Greasy Buns: A Memory of Valerie Potopsingh

Valerie Potopsingh (Class of 2004) had been involved in Hinman since her sophomore year, when she was elected Public Affairs Vice President of HCC. During her time in HCC she became involved in the Dining Hall Committee. The task of the Dining Hall Committee was to meet with the management of the dining hall to address student concerns pertaining to dining on campus. One of the major complaints concerning the dining hall at this time was that the hamburger buns were usually prepared with a heavy grease which many students found distasteful. At first it was a weekly joke in HCC about the dining hall's "greasy buns," but soon it became clear that a large number of students didn't want the greasy buns anymore. Valerie quickly spearheaded an effort to eliminate the "greasy buns" from the dining hall. After much effort, the dining hall management relented and stopped serving the greasy buns. Forever afterward, Valerie was famous for "greasy buns."¹⁸

The Ginsu Wall and Columbo-Binghamton Style: Memories of John and Heidi Kowalchyk

In the late late 1970's both John and Heidi Kowalchyk were Head Residents of Roosevelt Hall. As any Head Resident or Resident Director can tell you, when you live around college students long enough, funny things are bound to occur.

During this time, Roosevelt Hall had a talent night in their Main Lounge, similar to what would become Bus Stop. While most students sang and danced, one student who was relatively quiet came up and said that he was going to demonstrate the Ginsu wall (a parody of the popular Ginsu knives of late-night television infomercial fame). The student laid down a sheet and produced a tomato which, unbeknownst to John or anyone else, the student had pre-cut. The student then threw the tomato against the wall and it exploded into a billion pieces. Where most Head Residents/Resident Directors would be infuriated at this huge mess, John thought it was the funniest thing he had ever seen and broke down laughing hysterically. Seeing this the student then produced a cabbage, also pre-cut, and did the same thing with equal results. The student continued with a number of fruits and vegetables and had the entire lounge doubling over in laughter. After it was all over, the student stayed extra late to clean up the mess, and John and others helped with too. It was one of the funniest memories of his time in Hinman.

Gabe Yankowitz, Head Resident of Cleveland Hall at the time, remembers one ULED officer in particular. This officer was very friendly and nice, but looked exactly like Columbo, the homicide detective from the popular television series. He dressed like Columbo, his build and body looked like him, he even sounded like the fictional detective. Years later, Gabe happened to be in the Syracuse Airport when he stumbled upon a familiar looking man working security there. It turned out to be this very same individual. The two sat down and caught up and joked about the old days at Binghamton.¹⁹

Cannabis sativa or Solanum lycopersicum? A Memory of Vito Sinisi

One day in the early 1970's, near the beginning to Vito Sinisi's tenure as Faculty Master of Hinman College, a professional staff member rushed into the Hinman office completely out of breath and in shock. He alerted Vito and everyone else in the room that he had passed by Smith Hall, had looked up in the window, and has seen a marijuana plant sitting right there on the window sill in plain sight. Knowing the implications, Vito quickly sprung into action. In those days, the university liked to discourage the use of outside law enforcement on campus as much as possible and tried to solve all violations of law internally if possible. The less police presence on campus in those days of radical student activism, the better. Vito then called all of the Head Residents and told them to alert their RA's and that they had to remove the marijuana plant as quickly as possible before more people saw it and alerted the police. The Head Residents and their army of RA's rushed into Smith Hall ready to confiscate the plant. A short while later the Head Residents and a number of the RA's returned to Vito's office holding their sides trying to contain their laughter. It turned out that the plant was in fact nothing more than a simple tomato plant. Vito Sinisi, ever the proud Italian, turned as bright as a tomato when he heard the somewhat embarrassing news that he and the rest of his staff had confused tomatoes with marijuana.

Water, Water Everywhere: A Memory of Brent Gotsch

This is a personal story of my one (and only) experience with pulling off a good practical joke. It was the spring of 2005, and the second semester of my sophomore year. I was living in suite 126 of Roosevelt Hall. I lived in this same suite, in the same room, with pretty much the same arrangement, for three out of my four years in Hinman. The suite that year was pretty

close. Myself and my roommate, Hu Huang, were good friends, and we remain close to this day. We lived in the “A” room of the suite. Our friend and fellow suitemate Brian Forster lived in the “B” room (Brian was a junior, one year older than the rest of the suite), and in the “C” room lived our equally good friends Kevin Clark and Eric Mazurkewitz. Although we were all good friends, it quite obvious who the “cool” kids, of the suite were and who the “nerds” were. Kevin and Eric were definitely the “cool” kids and Hu, Brian, and myself were the “nerds.” Eric and Kevin would always give us some good natured-ribbing and good-natured jokes and insults were thrown at each other all year long. One day (probably a Friday or a Saturday night, typical for nerd plotting) Hu, Brian and myself were just sitting around our suite’s common area and one of us said, “Hey, wouldn’t it be great to pull off an April Fool’s Day joke on those guys.” We started talking about it and then I remembered a practical joke had been played on one of my friends from high school at his college. Eric was a member of the acapella group The Binghamtonics and their semester show was going to be performed right around April Fool’s Day. This was the scheme we hatched. While Eric and Kevin were at the show, we would quickly gather up a large number of cups, tape them together into large pallets, then fill them to the brim with water. When the two returned to their room, there would be no easy way to get the water out of the room.

In preceding weeks, Hu, Brian and myself gathered bags upon bags of large plastic cups and dozens of scotch tape dispensers, and we set about making the pallets. We worked late into the evenings, and whenever we had free time. We stored the partially completed pallets under our beds. We even enlisted the help of Lauren Losapio, the RA on our floor, who made a special trip to Wal-Mart for us and bought us desperately needed cups. We wound up buying way too many cups and to this day, programs in Roosevelt Hall that require cups still use the same

packages that we bought over two years ago. We almost got found out when Michelle Grossman, one of the RAs in the building who also happened to be a tour guide, brought a tour through our room. She brought tours by our room because we were usually neat and clean in comparison to the other rooms. On the night of the concert, everyone left early except for Hu, Brian and myself. We quickly brought out the pallets and brought them into Kevin and Eric's room, which they usually left unlocked. It soon became apparent that it would take a lot longer to put this together than we originally expected, so after a while Hu volunteered to stay behind and fill up all the taped-together cups with water. By the time it was over, their entire floor was covered with cups taped together and filled with water. Brian and I went to the Binghamtonics show and saw Eric perform. He was and still is an excellent performer and would eventually go on to become the group's Music Director. After the show, we immediately called Hu and the three of us bolted out of the building to avoid the inevitable fallout. Before we left, however, we taped a sign to their room door and closed it. The sign read, "For all the times you made us laugh, cry and everything in between, this drink's on us." On the floor directly below the sign was a single plastic cup of water. The three of us then met up with a mutual friend, Don Barnes, a former Hinmanite who had taken a job as an RA in Delaware Hall of Newing College. When we met up with Don we joked that we never thought we'd see the day when we said that we'd feel safe as long as we got to Newing. After a while Kevin called us in laughter saying that this was the greatest practical joke that he had ever seen. The one mistake we made that night was that we didn't return quickly to help them cleanup, which led to a little bit of animosity between us before it blew over quickly. The four of us returned to Roosevelt Hall as heroes and reveled in our fifteen minutes of residence hall fame. Of the many memories of my time in Hinman and in Roosevelt Hall, this is for one of my most cherished memories.

Conclusion

Pranks and practical jokes have been a part of every college experience. While the jokes that have been played in Hinman College by Hinmanites mostly on Hinmanites may not have been groundbreaking or original as some other ones have been, they still resonate with those who performed the jokes and those who suffered them. With all the studying, ever-increasing workloads, and stress inherent in modern college life, it is important to sometimes take a step back and laugh at the little humorous moments that bring a chuckle to our lips and perhaps tears of joy to our eyes. While practical jokes may not be scholastic or constructive in the traditional sense, those who did them form bonds with each other that no one else can come close to realizing. These lighthearted and mischievous moments form bonds of friendship that no other type of activity can duplicate. Having a sense of humor is vital to the overall well-being of an individual and it is the glue that binds everyone together in a common moment of laughter. Laughter is what gives joy to life and makes it worth living. Laughter is also an important element in the humorous, often witty and always comical moments that give us an impression of the Spirit of Hinman.

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¹ Helene Johnson, "Co-Rec and Kegs," *Stories of Hinman College*, May 6, 2000.

² Michael "Kipp" Lombardi, *Stories of Hinman College*, May 6, 2000.

³ Adam Brown, telephone conversation with author, November 21, 2006.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Brian J. Garney, "D'Amato's daughter set a record for showering," *Press and Sun Bulletin*, November 9, 2004 and Mike Ditkowsky, "D'Amato's All Wet," *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. XIII, No. 11, November 11, 1981.

⁸ Nick Sterling, "The Longest Shower," *Stories of Hinman College*, May 6, 2000.

⁹ Rene Coderre, interview with author, October 10, 2006.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Peter Lorenzi, telephone conversation with author, January 19, 2007.

¹⁴ Steve Fialkoff, telephone conversation with author, February 12, 2007.

¹⁵ Stan Goldberg, telephone conversation with author, March 25, 2007.

¹⁶ Eric Rubin, telephone conversation with author, January 25, 2007.

¹⁷ Tony Toluba, e-mail message to author, May 1, 2007.

¹⁸ Valerie Potopsingh, telephone conversation with author, January 25, 2007.

¹⁹ Gabe Yankowitz, "Hinman in the 1970's," Group discussion recorded on April 23, 2003.