

G a l l e y

The recent reiteration of the laws banning liquor to minors in this and similar states makes one aware of (1) the idiocy of state police powers, and its significant effect on one's own activities; (2) the stupidity of legislated moral principles (So called moral principles, actually immoral because they violate the primacy of the individual); (3) the difficulties which a self-operative community, which believes in and tries judiciously in most cases to execute self-regulation, self-discipline, and a self-determined moral attitude, has when it exists within a community which uses the sanction of the law to limit modes of consciousness, or modes of pleasure; (4) the absurdity of 20th century man being subject to 18th century laws, i.e. in Massachusetts one cannot play the jukeboxes on Sunday, in Vermont one cannot order a drink on Sunday without ordering a dinner ad infinitum, or how many of us in this community believe that drinking, smoking, etc. major or minor, is immoral? And of course there is always the valid question: What right does the state have to legislate these absurd and ugly laws? Or, why the hell don't we change them (Perhaps this isn't the land of the free and home of the brave)

Many of us came to Bennington because it was a community in which we could exist without extra-imposed restriction. However, there is a tendency, a pronounced tendency, on the part of the administration to further structure the Bennington student community, thus to impose limits on it.

One of the reasons that there is so much opposition to the proposed cocoducation, and to the enlargement which will be executed, is that it appears to be part of a gradual levelling off process which in the end will make Bennington as academically sound, dull, and safe as Vassar, Radcliffe, et al. WE DID NOT WANT THAT TYPE OF EDUCATION. There must be places like Bennington which are not sufficiently in the mainstream (If NR will pardon me), and I am deeply afraid that with increased examinations in courses, increased emphasis on college boards, test scores, well-rounded high school programs and achievement, Bennington will become (is becoming?) another womb-like place in which the mediocre i.e. conventionally bright, can gather to warm each other for four years, take their B.A.'s and use them to decorate their mantel places.

Also, there has been a real effort on the part of the Student Personnel Office to extend the interest and the awareness of the administration into the private sectors of students' lives. It must go on record that most of us will resist this effort, and consider any formal structuring of the Bennington Community as dangerous, feel that the idea that rules will show the path to SAFE AND HAPPY living to be (1) not true; (2) a glorification of false values.

Intellectual and creative vigor can only exist in a community of free (or at least non-restricted) individuals who have the responsibilities of finding their own modes of consciousness, confronting experience on their own terms, etc. even if those modes and experiences be outside the pale of the outer community. There must be a willingness to be committed to something somewhere, it is singularly lacking in the places from which most of us come, we expect it and demand it of those, who in the process of living define the idea of this community.

I think that the above are assumptions of a great many people who live/think/work/study here but that there is a need to restate them at this time.