

tuesday

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Photo by John Harrington



At the risk of reviving the designation of "Moo U," I would like to call attention to a certain sacred cow that has been chewing its cud about these parts for some time. It is the vogue now for the various disciplines to search out their own particular sacred cows for re-evaluation. Perhaps, this cow has survived so long because of its interdisciplinary nature. At any rate, I think it is time to attack the idea that "professionals can be judged only by professionals."

The phrase "the competence of professionals can be rightly judged only by professionals" appears in the MSU Academic Freedom Report, even though its inclusion might seem out of place in a section purporting to deal with "Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students." Professor Charles C. Killingsworth, who served as a consultant to the committee which wrote the Freedom Report, has been repeating this phrase

(Continued on back page)

Professionalism as a sacred cow

By Howard Brody

Resident Assistants

No longer a sheriff

By Sharman Stewart

RESIDENT
ASSISTANT

Universities are giving up their parental image and allowing students to babysit with themselves. With the new freedom some traditional university positions and ideas are becoming obsolete and must be redefined.

MSU resident assistants (RAs) are a remnant of the regulated past under former MSU President John Hannah. The position was created to enforce University regulations and to give the troubled student away from a home a "parent" to turn to.

Today the RA is at a loss and is taking a long look at his function.

"Things consequenting social infractions no longer exist," Gary North, coordinator of residence hall programs, said recently.

Hours for women above first-term freshman status were eliminated winter term, 1969, and today hours are nonexistent. Visitation policies have been extended from the minimum of a few hours weekly in 1969 to 24 - hour open houses for males and females. The liquor taboo has been lifted and RAs are virtually hand - tied from even attempting to enforce the new liquor regulation.

"No one gets uptight over regulations anymore. I don't think there is an RA in the University who enforces the liquor policy," Bill Donahue, Shaw Hall head advisor, said.

Five years ago RAs could use master keys to enter a student's room, have a student removed from a floor and even have a student dismissed from the University with the head adviser's consent.

In the Brody complex three years ago, RA conduct reports were still in existence. Each RA submitted a report on the students on his floor to the head adviser.

With the emergence of the Academic Freedom Report, co-ed living and alternate living options such as apartment living for upperclassmen, the RA has evolved from a policeman to a friend.

"The position is still viable, but

the RA's role is now determined by who he is, not the role he is to assume," Donahue said.

The Academic Freedom Report gave the student recourse to challenge the RA and consequently caused the University to change the way it deals with student infractions, North said.

A student's well - being is his own responsibility today, not the RA's. The RA is in a facilitative and not authoritative position. He deals in persuading, mediating, influencing and advising.

An RA, however, can be a godsend to a naive freshman away from home for the first time. He is often the only one a newcomer can talk to when he first encounters a massive multiversity.

In Shaw Hall, upperclassmen make up 99 per cent of the population. There the RAs' experiences are totally different from RA experiences in freshman dorms. Students are already oriented to MSU. An RA there becomes more

aware of serious personal problems, such as suicide.

Realizing the ambiguity encompassing the RA's role, the University has developed a commission to review the position. The commission will eventually develop a description of the RA job.

The contemporary purpose of the position, its relationship to other roles, training, selection procedures and housing option implications are being considered, according to Ronald S. Stead, coordinator of staff selection.

"RAs are the only people on campus concerned with a student's total being and not in one of his specialities. If the position is to be redefined this should be developed more," North said.

For their services, resident assistants are paid room and board on a term basis. Their single rooms, including board, would cost a student \$411 each term. Their "salary" is not taxable, however.



Students used to know who the RAs were — they wore the armbands and baseball caps of their office and carried the keys to everyone's privacy.

Photo by Jim Klein

LEGION OF JUSTICE

A small band of armed vigilantes, using a guillotine as a trademark, have declared war on Weathermen and other left-wing groups in the United States.

By Bernard Gauzer

Associated Press

The clock alternately showed the time and temperature as it slowly turned on its standard above the smalltown bank entrance.

Precisely at 12:05, as instructed, two young men appeared for a secret rendezvous. As a countersign, one young man pulled a calling card from the breastpocket of his Army combat jacket.

The card said: LEGION OF JUSTICE.

This is an underground, paramilitary right-wing organization which claims to have already taken vigilante-type action and promises to take more. Kooks? Maybe. But nonetheless...

A warning that some Americans might seek to take the law into their own hands came Oct. 16 from Atty. Gen. John Mitchell during a news conference in Indianapolis. Commenting about terrorist bomb attacks — such as those claimed by Weathermen and other self-proclaimed revolutionaries — Mitchell said if the attacks continued "citizens outside of government might feel they would have to resort to vigilante tactics..."

The Legion of Justice is but one of the self-constituted, private citizen bands which emerge and disappear and reemerge in times that bewilder, torment or frustrate Americans.

Each has as its central rationale the conviction that the lawful constituted authority — be it the federal government or the local municipal council — somehow cannot cope with problems of public safety, racial discord, crime, drugs, protest and dissent. Some, like the Legion of Justice, operate underground.

They have a common ancestor: The Vigilance Committee. It was formed in San Francisco in 1851, at a time when adventurers, desperadoes, cheats, opportunists, flesh peddlers, gamblers and killers — drawn magically and magnetically by the Gold Rush — terrified and threatened the future of a sound community.

Any desperado then brought to court could arrange a packed jury or pay off a venal judge. In reaction, some 200 citizens formed the Vigilance Committee. Though it was without any legal status, it conducted "trials" and in one month executed four men by hanging.

The Ku Klux Klan and similar bands followed in the aftermath of the Civil War and America witnessed decades of lynchings and beatings of blacks, all theoretically committed in the name of law and order or decency.

Today, this possibility of private citizens — presumably lawabiding — sitting in judgment and fixing punishment is by no means remote.

Two young members of the Legion of Justice said that assassination of "traitors" is a prime goal of the group. One said he was a former member of the Minutemen, a right wing paramilitary group that has more or less fallen apart since the imprisonment of its principal founder.

The word "vigilante" has been used with increasing frequency in Cairo, Ill., where black and white citizens are deadlocked in confrontation that has produced gunplay and arson.

The United Front, a black group, charges that blacks are continually the prey of vigilantes. The

whites countercharge that black terrorists start fires and have fired point blank at the police station.

In Detroit, "Breakthrough" — which amounts to no more than a dozen persons — regularly derides peace demonstrations and protest groups. Its ostensible leader, Donald Lobsinger, described as a devout Roman Catholic, recently was fined \$225 for disrupting a service in a suburban Roman Catholic church because it followed the new, liberalized Mass.

Sometimes the police cooperate with such groups when they seek to operate openly and under police rules. Night patrols of this nature have operated on and off, in black as well as white neighborhoods, in many cities.

But an organization such as the Legion of Justice gets no such official or legally recognized nod. It represents a highly organized and presumably highly disciplined vigilante band.

One young man, "Don," said he had received 23 weeks of military intelligence training at Fort Holabird, Md., and now can "make a bomb, bug a room, crack a safe."

"Set the record straight about vigilantes' being ready to take action against left-wing terrorists," said another, named "John." "Atty. Gen. Mitchell was behind the times when he said that this might happen. We've been ready for five years."

"His statement hasn't been a signal to us that it would be safe to attack the Communists and the revolutionaries," said John. "We already have taken action against the left."

One such event, said Don, was "the visit to the SDS headquarters in Chicago, where we liberated a notebook, made copies of it and then put it back. The notebook which was mainly a very interesting address book, was in the handwriting of Kathy Wilkerson."

Miss Wilkerson is listed as a fugitive by the FBI. She was last seen March 6, fleeing from a Greenwich Village brownstone house demolished by an explosion. Authorities later said it was a bomb factory for the Weathermen.

On Feb. 5 explosions and fire wrecked 38 school buses in Denver. The Denver school district had been under court orders to bus children in order to integrate Negro and Spanish-speaking children into the system.

Two Legion of Justice members who are opposed to such busing said the Denver blasts were the handiwork of persons on the right wing who "might be described as among the remnants of the underground Minutemen."

"The one thing that is the outstanding political characteristic of our organization is that Legion members are tired of living in a country where the government can't clean its own house," said John.

"There is a subtle difference between being a patriot and a terrorist. History is what makes the difference. If we win or reverse the left, then I am a patriot. If the left wins, then I am a terrorist."

At present, Legion activity is limited to field maneuvers, gathering information, securing weapons and harassment.

Sometimes there is a direct action such as the June 27 "visit" to the Socialist Workers party election campaign headquarters in Chicago. The SWP claimed the office suffered \$2,000 damage and that files and equipment were stolen.

The legion's Don and John said material was "liberated."

Vigilantes?

"No," said John. "That goes for the amateurs. We're trained and we're professional."

These major points are stressed about the Legion of Justice:

- There are perhaps 200 members, nationally. "We intend to keep it small for security purposes and for effectiveness. That's all you really need in a highly-trained guerrilla band," one vigilante said.

- The members are formed into small units called networks. Each network has from eight to 15 members.

- There are networks in Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin and Indiana. Members in other areas, such as California and Colorado, are essentially "from the remnants of the underground Minutemen."

- Each network has an arms cache providing at least one M16 automatic rifle, 60 mm mortars, Mace and other chemicals, grenades, dynamite and other explosives, and hand weapons of all sorts. "We have machine guns, too," a member noted.

- There are two wings. The main one is strictly military in nature. The other is the political-propaganda wing, which checks out new members and concerns itself with security, intelligence and so on.

- Field exercises are conducted regularly. "We use live ammunition because that's what will be used against us. The last field exercise we had was in the Chicago region on Oct. 18."



Photo by Milton Horst

Road Song

*I carry traces of your touch
Like dust in my pocket
wherever I go.
What do I see alone?
Only reinterpretations
of the world you taught me to see.
I carry your bruise on my mouth
wherever I breathe.
Neither salt water
Nor mountain air can erase it.
I cover America
with your footstep
Since you gave me a why
to discover it.*

— Gita Maritzer

Sacred Cow

(Continued from front page)

almost ad nauseum in the year - old Academic Council debate over the Massey - McKee - Taylor Report. Dr. Killingsworth insists that this concept is a non - negotiable item, and it appears that the vast majority of the MSU faculty is prepared to back him.

It is characteristic of sacred cows that people come to repeat them over like a catechism without inquiring what they mean. Clearly this "professionalism" phrase can mean different things in different contexts. For example, about 20 years ago, it meant that if a surgeon took out your grandmother's kidney thinking it was her appendix, you couldn't sue him for malpractice, because only a doctor could testify in court as to the incompetence of another doctor, and any doctor who so testified was ostracized by the entire medical community of that day. I am sure Dr. Killingsworth would never sanction that sort of practice.

In a way, the phrase "professionals can be judged only by professionals" provides no information other than a definition of "professional" and "profession." That is, a profession is simply a sort of work, for which the approval of those already engaged in it is a necessary and sufficient condition for being allowed to do it. Of course, it is this very aspect

that contributes most to stultification and fossilization of a profession.

In the University community, the phrase is usually taken to mean "professors can be judged only by professors." The key problem here, as has been pointed out in the Academic Council, is that a professor is a sort of two - headed creature, engaged in the dual roles of teaching and research. No discussion can be valid if it does not separate these two roles.

As far as research goes, it seems clear that the concept is generally applicable. It seems to be the case that only professionals can judge the quality of the research of a colleague. This is more obvious in the sciences than in applied fields where the profession produces a commodity or a product whose qualities can be appreciated by the consumer. But even here it seems that the professional, if not the only judge, is far and away the best judge.

When it comes to teaching, the application is much more dubious. One argument presented in the Academic Council went as follows: I teach mainly in the classroom; my students are always present there, while my colleagues never are; therefore, if anyone is to judge my teaching, it should be my students and not my colleagues. I think that one can move beyond the pragmatic approach of evaluating teaching by its results, and question whether teaching is a profession at all.

There are certain criteria which we would like a discipline to meet before we are willing to honor it with the title "profession." We might insist that it have a basic theory and philosophy of how it goes about accomplishing its purpose; and that it have a clearly prescribed manner of how the professionals go about transmitting this theory and philosophy, along with the requisite techniques, to their students.

If this is to apply to teaching, it seems that at the very least the professional educator ought to be able to give an account of exactly how it comes about that a person "learns" something. This question seems to lie within the realm of psychology. Psychologists have made remarkable strides in elucidating how rats learn to press levers in Skinner boxes and how people learn to memorize lists of nonsense words. Now, however much the megaversity might resemble a Skinner Box, and however much some textbooks resemble lists of nonsense syllables, I contend that neither of these explanations comes very close to showing what goes on at an educational institution. It also follows that, if no one knows how people learn, no one can really teach anyone how to teach. At worst, all the education courses in the University are a waste of time; at best, they teach people how to set up a situation in which there is a reasonable likelihood that learning, whatever it is, will result. I question whether that last describes the sort of practice we would want to call a profession.

If the answer to that last question is "yes,"

then we can call the people who graduate with degrees in education "professionals." This would apply to elementary and secondary school teachers. But the vast majority of college professors never sat through a single education course and would not be considered qualified to receive a state teaching certificate. On what grounds are they to be called "professional" teachers? On the grounds that they are paid by the year instead of by the hour and that they wear suits and ties to work and carry attache cases? Astrology would not become a science just because gypsies took to wearing white lab coats.

Professors are "professional" teachers in the sense that that is how they make their livings. Are we to say that professional football players can rightly be judged only by professional football players? That would put most of the sports columnists out of business. And what if presidents of the United States could rightly be judged only by other presidents? I don't think Dr. Killingsworth has this sort of application for his doctrine in mind.

"Professionals can be judged only by professionals" applies to research and not to teaching. By enshrining this phrase as a sacred cow, we are putting forth the idea of the University as a place primarily for research, instead of a place where research and teaching supplement each other. Instead of debating whether this item is negotiable or not, we might more profitably try to arrive at some understanding of what this education thing is all about.

Editor's Note: Howard Brody, McHenry, Ill., senior, is the chairman of the Student - Faculty Judiciary. His article on professionalism originally appeared in the Honors College Bulletin and is reprinted with permission.



Charles C. Killingsworth



Photo by John Harrington