

Doing Your Own Thing, Or Crusoe In The Melting Pot

By SAM BAYS

Good ideas apparently have a way of getting lost in the shuffle. At one time or another, most all of us dream of getting away to some sparsely inhabited stretch of land where we could live without the frustrating impositions of society.

Though we have experienced only the comfortable, artificial world of urban suburbia, we imagine that being close to nature would more than adequately compensate for all the clever Pax Americana conveniences we would leave behind. We dream of complete individual freedom, of really doing our own thing.

In moderation, such pipe-dreams are necessary and healthy—they help us keep our heads

straight. Yet until we actually cut the umbilical cord of the community and go primitive on a permanent basis, as long as we remain enmeshed in the social web, we must be ever mindful that our individual freedom and rights are tempered by social responsibilities and values. And while these societal norms vary widely with time and circumstances, they do exist and cannot be realistically ignored.

The idea of individual freedom can easily become a distorted rationalization for those who would seek to enjoy the benefits of social life without bearing the burden of the social contract upon which those benefits rest.

How often do we say that we only want "to do our own thing"

when we really mean that we only want "to do as we damn well please and to hell with everybody else?" To what extent do we ignore the feelings and sensitivities of other folks simply because we don't make the effort to care? And when we are called to task for walking roughshod over the rights of someone else, how loudly do we howl that our freedoms are being abridged, ignored, or oppressed?

So long as we think about the extent and limitations of our individual freedom only in abstract terms, we can keep the issue at an impersonal, comfortable distance. But consider a couple of real everyday situations.

Do those of us who own western hats rightly have the freedom to wear them in class and in the dining halls and violate social convention simply because we want to create a certain image? Or do those of us who participate in intramural sports have the freedom to impose the sweat and dirt of the athletic field upon others in crowded public places just because the shower is not convenient?

How we deal with seemingly unimportant situations, how wisely we exercise our rights and acknowledge our responsibilities on a day to day basis provides an indication of how well we understand what "doing our own thing" is all about.

ISA Touches 67 Countries Wants International Aggies

By DEBBIE HOLZEM

"ISA has seen, touched and felt the sights and sounds of 67 different countries. There is hardly a city in the world that ISA hasn't seen and visited. There is no major language ISA does not speak; no major custom ISA does not know."

With these words, Friedrich Mack, chairman of the local International Student Association from Munich, Germany, summed up the national organization of ISA.

The group will hold its first meeting Thursday night at 8 o'clock in the Assembly Room of the Memorial Student Center. According to Mack, the number of international students on campus reaches 690. Both foreign and American students are encouraged to attend, he said.

"The purpose of ISA," said Mack, "is to encourage, foster and organize international living on campus. This involves a wide range of activities, including concern and involvement in the problems of the international student in his situations on campus to the organization of fun and games."

Currently, ISA is involved in a housing issue, an effort to house international students in dorms other than Hotard and Schumacher Halls.

"It's good to live with other foreign students, but this doesn't give international students a chance to mix and live with Americans," said Mack.

ISA is also trying to establish an international meeting room in the MSC or any other building. "We don't have a central meeting place yet," said Mack.

Besides helping the international student adjust to American campus life, ISA also organizes sporting events and intramural games. The group, in its second year on campus, also holds social and cultural activities, ranging from parties and dances to films, lectures and debates.

"One of our main projects," said Mack, "is the International Festival in the Spring."

The International Student Association is organized similar to the organization of the United Nations. The main body is the General Assembly. "Each country represented on campus, including the United States, elects one delegate to the General Assembly," said Mack. "The assembly then elects the Executive Committee, the official head of the international student body."

Other officers of the group include Luis Juarez, Vice-chairman from Cuba; Carlos Candia, vice-chairman of programs from Bolivia; Heike Rode, treasurer, Austria; and Shayed Hasan, secretary, Bangladesh.

Interested students with questions can contact Mack at 846-8538.



THANKS TO MR. "X"

"But There's Only Three Streets!"

Listen Up—

RV's Present Answer To Provoking Taps Letter

Editor:

The Ross Volunteers would like to present their views on Silver Taps. These can best be illustrated by the following letter, extracted from a newspaper article a few short years ago:

COLLEGE STATION, Tex. (Special)—In late October (some years ago) a freshman cadet from Corpus Christi, Don Coward, attended Silver Taps. The ceremony was held for John B. Tower, a pre-med student who died of a brain hemorrhage while playing water polo.

Young Coward was deeply moved, and in his next letter to his parents, he wrote of his feelings.

"Dear Mom and Dad, Right now it's 11 a. m. and Call to Quarters is over. I should be in bed, but there's something I have to tell you both first. I'm sitting here at my desk with tears in my eyes and thinking more about life itself than I ever have before."

"I'm not crying because of what I'm going through—but rather because I've experienced tonight what A&M is all about. Mother and Dad, we're one big family here and now I know what it means to be an Aggie. Tonight was Silver Taps."

"In case you don't know what that is, I'm going to tell you and you've got to listen. Any time a student here loses his life—no matter how—on an assigned date

soon afterwards we have what is called Silver Taps. Everyone gathers in front of the Academic Building, in front of which is a flag pole on which Silver Taps notice is posted.

"No one says a word from the time we leave the dorms until next morning. All is quiet and all the lights on campus are turned off. Even lights on the coke machines in the dorms are covered.

"At 10:30, when everyone is in place in front of the Academic Building, a firing team fires a 21 gun salute in honor of those who died. Then buglers play Silver Taps and its over."

"Tonight I experienced one of the most solemn feelings I've ever had and feel so good inside. Mom, Dad, it was just like God, Himself was there with us I guess you're wishing I would grow up and quit carrying on like this over Silver Taps—but it was so, I can't ever tell you how it was—there's nothing else like it."

"Be careful and I love you both."

'D. C.'

Three weeks later, Silver Taps again rolled into the chill darkness from the dome of the Academic Building. This time it was for three A&M students killed in a car-truck accident near Roanoke in Denton County, November 9.

One of them was Don Coward. The Ross Volunteer Company '73

The Battalion

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