

CHAPTER 10 - All of the Law School Is Divided Into Five Committees...

At the end of the first semester, the law school community, even the faculty at this point, was curious to see how well the program had performed. And having the talents of a notable (or was it notorious?) group psychologist at hand, it was given to Jim McIntyre to perform an evaluation of the program and myriad of other events of the first semester. Much was made of this evaluation in mid-February, and considerable time was set aside for the filling out of many forms, profiles, evaluations, racing sheets, food stamp applications, etc. Surely they would serve some useful purpose. As the story goes, most of the forms disappeared into McIntyre's office for a considerable amount of time, or, if his version is to be believed, "they were sent to be computerized." Oh the evils that poor machine gets blamed for. Other evaluations had been gathered by the Dean, and while students never became privy to their contents, we were assured that "your comments will be used in evaluating teachers and programs." How much they would be used was never made clear, and still isn't. Meanwhile, somewhere between McIntyre's office and the computer center, the bulk of the evaluations, representing maybe a few hundred student-hours of thought, disappeared into the twilight zone. But never mind, the Law School would continue to press forward with innovation, not checking very carefully where it had been. Not very scientific, eh Ben?

Meanwhile, the "free form" hour that had been student projects during the first semester would be replaced with the faculty-originated idea of forming student-faculty committees, wherein students would be free to join curriculum, admissions, faculty hiring, student employment, or governance committees under the direction of a faculty member. Admissions proved to be popular; curriculum, under Ben's direction, attracted five students. Soon the school was awash with a blizzard of paper as the committee members took their jobs seriously and published questionnaires, memos, counter-memos, results, etc. The actual use that would be made of product of these committees was never quite clear. The faculty was still firmly in control of all decisions at the law school and meetings were closed, no programs or minutes were published. But even at this point, there was a high degree of trust and confidence among the students in faculty decisions; they seemed to be very rational and thoughtful, so surely they would produce exemplary decisions. We were still a community and they were our wise leaders; by our silence we gave assent to their decisions. So the result of the committee would nominally be a "memo" and "the faculty always welcomes well-reasoned written input into their decision-making process."

The curriculum committee cracked first. Operating with the assurance that the faculty had already mapped out the second year and possibly even the third-year program (from Ben), it proceeded to discuss peripheral issues such as counseling, work load, remedial assistance, etc. This produced a counter-blast from Lindsay and Jerry which said, in effect, that Ben was all wet, the third-year was wide open and the faculty was interested in areas that Ben claimed it wasn't. Could this mean there was a split on the faculty? It could, there was, but they all stick together until the end of Act II.