

The Old and New At WSU

Karen Tintori

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As WSU enters her centennial year, the big word is “changes.” The time for a change has been reflected in two areas, the student newspaper, and the Student-Faculty Council. The first editorial in the *South End*, formerly the *Daily Collegian*, paralleled the changes with the Beatles. The cover of the most recent Beatles album, shows the group declaring themselves to be ‘Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band’—standing over their own casket, with the name ‘Beatles’ arranged in flowers over the casket. They are announcing their conversion from a mechanical fixation trivia (I want to Hold your Hand) to a vital concern with real—even if unpopular or taboo—issues. The Beatles, so to speak, are ‘turned on’ to the issues of our generation. This newspaper, so to speak, is ‘turned on.’

Art Johnston, editor of the *South End*, said that to be relevant, the medium that is the student newspaper “must first of all perceive the issues which burn in the veins of our generation; the recurrent problems of young people as well as the moral, psychological and social issues generated by our rapidly transforming society.

“The ‘student’ does not exist as an abstraction; he is a child of his society. To communicate with each student; to create an implicit dialogue rather than an explicit monologue—the medium must view events and changes from the perspective of the crucial—‘extracurricular’ if you will—issues which concern and affect our generation, and ultimately, American society.”

According to a poll taken shortly after the *South End* began publishing, students favored the change. They felt the *Collegian* was dead, and hoped that the editorial policy expressed in the first issue of the *South End* would be reflected throughout the entire paper all year.

The *Collegian* was considered a period piece in name, format and content by many. The editorial policy was to limit the paper’s coverage to “University events, narrowly conceived. This policy both reflected, rationalized, and reinforced the attitude of the average commuter student at Wayne, who viewed the University as an ivory tower in an ebony sea.

Reaction to the new format by the “Establishment” has been derogatory. The *Detroit News* is quoted as saying that the student newspaper was taken over by a group of activists who fill its pages with criticism of University policy and the administration. When a television station interviewed Johnston, and filmed the offices of the *South End* for a newscast, they zoomed in on the cycle helmet and riding gloves of one of the editors and insinuated, by visual effect and reporting, that the paper was geared toward the hippies.

Toward the end of the editorial previously mentioned, the editors commented; “In the hundredth year of the University, we have made a radical departure from tradition, from old symbols, and have begun a search for a new identity, for a meaningful and contemporary method of conveying ideas. We hope our endeavor will help create a mood which is receptive to change and innovation in the University at large.”

Changes in policy were also discussed by Charles Larson, Chairman of the Student-Faculty Council. “There has been a fantastic change pretty much reflected all over the country,” he said. “People became more interested in the intrinsic role of students about three years ago after the Berkeley, (Calif.) revolt.”

Larson compared the S-FC of two years ago, under Charles Nida, with the present Council, through his own terms of “co-operation model” and “conflict model.”

Larson said he found out painfully, after three or four specific incidents the “co-op model” doesn’t work when one party is powerless, when the administration has all the power.

He continued, “When there is no mutual trust you can never operate. So instead you take the ‘conflict’ approach—assuming you have power. The administration may pose a confrontation, but first you must assume you can accomplish the ends you want, knowing you’re powerless yet still trying. You have the legitimate right to do action straightforwardly,” he said.

“Previously, powerless students accepted the administration’s decisions in order to get other goals. Nida was never told no, but he never did anything substantive either. He figured the administration was the guy in charge and knew best,” he said.

Larson feels that this year’s Council reflects and crystallizes the ‘conflict’ model since at least one third of the members are student power advocates. “Last year,” he said, “very few members had sympathy for what it means to be powerless. That’s what one of the major problems is. So many student government leaders don’t realize they are powerless. They think complete co-operation with the administration is the correct thing.”

The S-FC has recently come under fire for its support of the October 21st anti — war Mobilization in Washington. The body voted not only to endorse the action, but to raise money to send students to the march.

This has incurred the wrath of Counterthrust, the campus Breakthrough contingent, and the student head of Mackenzie Union. Larson defends the decision of the S-FC saying, “The S-FC is responsible to become involved in issues directly affecting students. The war is one that does.”

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