

People Soup

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LIFE AT BOSTON CITY HALL or, A MASSACHUSETTS HIPPIE IN KING KEVIN'S COURT

John G. Beebe Center III

It's hard to say exactly why I started working at City Hall. The physical reasons are simple; my school said "If you want to graduate you have to work at some place 'meaningful' for a month." So I was left to the defining of "meaningful". As I have always been interested in politics, I turned in that direction immediately. It wasn't until I got a strong matriarchal suggestion from the home front that I headed towards City Hall. In other words, I owe this all to my mother...

At any rate, I put on my suit and tie, pulled back my hair and went downtown to apply for a job as an intern in a city councilman's office. Said plainly, I was scared. I had been to City Hall many times before but it had always been with a picket sign in my hand and a battle cry on my lips. I was worried as I went under the closed circuit TV cameras, that I might be recognized. I moved unobtrusively to the special "councilor's elevator" and pushed the button. I began to feel better. I was half way there with only an elevator trip to go. The door opened and I stepped inside. There was only one person in the elevator, a small older woman with a fancy hairdo and glasses. I stopped dead in my tracks and started shaking. It was Louise Day Hicks standing in front of me. I could feel myself cringe. Would she recognize me from the year before, when I had been part of a small but loud pro-desegregation group that had front row seats at a public address she had given?! My right hand quickly scratched my nose. It took eight seconds to get to the council's floor and I sweated as many gallons, with Louise's eyes boring into me but with no light of recognition. I made a break for the elevator door and made it, thanking my suit and tie with every breath.

The interview went fairly well and two days later I was called and informed that I had the job. Two weeks later I went back to City Hall and was given a desk, a legal pad, a telephone, a little blue book, and three triplicate forms which stated "constituent complaint forms". That is in a nutshell, problems that citizens of Boston have had with some department of the city. One woman had a basement swimming pool that hadn't been there three days ago, courtesy of the Boston Water Department. Another woman was beaten up each day on her way to school. And finally a man who wanted back \$300 he had paid into a city retirement plan before he quit his job.

I asked my manager what to do. "What do you think you should do?" he replied. I soon learned that this man said little else. Which is unfortunate, however, it did give me a free license to handle the problems as I saw fit. Yet I still didn't know what to do. I took the first "constituent complaint", reread it and then looked in my BLUE BOOK. In it was a number for the water department. I decided to take a chance and give them a call. A male voice answered and identified itself as "the commissioner's secretary." I almost hung up but decided against it, and then explained who I was and why I was calling. He thanked me very much for my information, called me "Sir" and assured me that the problem would be taken care of immediately.

Feeling a little more self-assured I decided to take on the problem of the woman that was beaten. I called the transit authority and (figuring if something works once it might work again) explained who I was and why I was calling. The man who answered seemed very upset at what I told him and said that he would assign two subway police to that station. Great. Two down, one to go. I

called the City Retirement Board and asked if they could give this man back his money. They declared that they would and thanked me for calling the problem to their attention.

I leaned back in my chair, put my feet up on the desk and lit a cigarette. The next day I was to find all of the problems had been solved. All that was needed was for some fool like myself to say that I worked for some fool like my councilman to some fool like a member of the water department and something gets done for some fool like you...or me.

City Hall does good things for many people but not at the level of the mayor or councilman. Their legislative activities include tennis, handball, and cashing paychecks--unless you bump into a really good councilman, which I was lucky enough to do. Even so, the necessary functions of City Hall are done by the office managers and the people that work for them. What really surprised me was the ease with which a person could get something done at City Hall. As a long-term veteran of several groups that tried, I know you can't fight City Hall--but you can use it.

If you write, call in, or the best--walk into a councilman's office, they can't afford to refuse you any help they can possibly give. Remember to see yourself as the councilman will see you--as a vote! Dress up a little and try to look official. In City Hall, if you look official you can get anything you want and I mean just about anything. I now have a collection of original press releases which I procured merely by stating that I worked for a city councilor.

continued on page 3

TAR HOLLOW STATE PARK
BRING FRANCY CLOTHES
AUGUST 22-29, 1976
COST \$40 PRE-REGISTERED BEFORE AUG 17



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE: JENNY SKWIERTZ
6330 HONK STREET
OR PRE-REGISTRATION
PHIL., PA 15206
412-382-6184

OPK IS A CAMP IN THE HOLLOW STATE PARK, AUGUST 22-29, 1976. **OPK** STANDS FOR OHIO, PENNSYLVANIA, INDIANA AND KENTUCKY. **OPK** IS RUN BY A COMMITTEE OF 8 PEOPLE. **OPK** COMBINES THE FUN OF A CAMP WITH THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE OF A CONFERENCE. **OPK** IS A PLACE FOR YOU TO GROW AND LEARN AND REALLY JUST HAVE FUN... OUR THEME THIS YEAR IS: "BORN IS THE TOMORROW YOU DREAMT OF YESTERDAY" WE WILL TRY TO EXPLORE THIS IDEA BY USING EXAMPLES OF PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE TOMORROWS, IN WORKSHOPS AND ACTIVITIES. BESIDES WE WILL HAVE: SWIMMING, FISHING, FERRIS WHEELS, MOVIES, GAMES, HUNT, FUN, TRAILS.

MASSACHUSETTS HIPPIE CONT.

I am writing this as I sit in a council session, to say that City Hall is a worthwhile and necessary institution. You can effect changes that you desire through City Halls. I am suggesting that people take a look at their own city halls and familiarize yourself with how they work.

It is very easy to get a job at City Hall. If you are required to do a work study at some time in your life and want to see "how the other half does it", I highly recommend it. I think it will give you a good and realistic perspective on what, from time to time, you may be up against; for me, the grandeur is gone. I am no longer in awe of CITY HALL.

I wonder how I could be? They say that the mayor is crazy and crawls around on the rug of his office reliving his childhood. Louise Day Hicks may be up for contempt of court..

For anyone who wants it to be, the City Hall is a tool and an effective one. I urge that you make use of it.

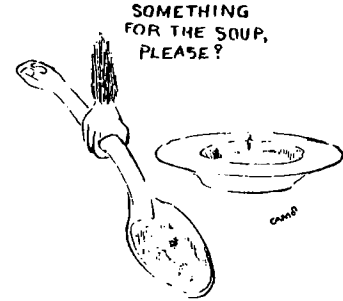
Ed. Note: The use of the word councilman in this article has not been edited yet we are not in agreement with its use. It might be of interest to know that it is used in Boston despite the number of women in this position.

United Nations Seminar

Interested in a conference to work on solutions to issues that affect the world? The Fourth Annual UN Youth Seminar will be January 14-17, 1977. This conference has dealt with themes such as "political prisoners," and "the international balance of power" in past years. A meeting to plan the Seminar's theme will be held by youth of the New York area in early fall. If you are too far away-- your input is still valuable and will be received by Bob Brown (address below).

The Seminar includes workshops, discussion, simulation games, movies with resource people from government departments, universities and volunteer agencies appropriate to the theme. It is held at the Church Center of the UN Plaza--so some awareness of the UN's activities is gained.

Arrangements will be made with one of the UU societies and your sleeping bag will be needed. Registration figures are unknown yet. But the price is rumored low and scholarships are available. For more information, or to share ideas (to request scholarship aid simply indicate why you have a need), write to: Bob Brown, c/o UU-UN Office, Rm. 7D, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017. The seminar is sure to be another high-energy and positive force created by those youth who participate.



SOMETHING FOR THE SOUP, PLEASE?

Many times an issue of *People Soup* will have a plea for articles, information, and graphics. The reason for these pleas is that *LYR's* newspaper needs input from its readership. The Executive Committee could be only a newspaper staff and spend all of its time on *People Soup* - but that isn't its purpose. *People Soup* isn't the Executive Committee's, it belongs to all *LYR's*. Because we wonder how many people truly feel that their input is valuable, because we wonder how many people just aren't sure what sort of input we want, because people ought to know the reasons why *LYR* has a newspaper -- we thought that we would let you know.

1) COMMUNICATION- A channel for relating experience with workshops, programs, problems and the solutions used that will be useful to others rather than just reading material.

2) ARTICLES BASED ON THE THEME OF THE PARTICULAR ISSUE-

3) ARTICLES TO INFORM- such as social issues like Senate Bill 1. These are more objective, hopefully, than what is classified in the Biofeedback pages.

4) ENTERTAINMENT- poetry, personals, and the artwork.

5) BIOFEEDBACK- interchange of opinions on certain issues that pertain to the world at large or more specifically, *LYR's*.

6) FED'S UPS AND DOWNS- announcements about federation or local activity, including conference information.

We hope that this helps to clarify a few minds and encourages some of you not so brave souls to try out your writing ability. (It is shocking to realize that from a readership numbering more than 5000 that so little trickles in to us to print. Interesting fact- we print almost everything we receive and yet there is never enough.) If you can do it for your classes then I'm sure you can do it for the Soup. Try us, we'll like it. If you have any questions or you'd like to try out some ideas on us before beginning-- just write to *LYR* 25 Beacon St. Boston, MA 02108.

-- just us typewriters,
Jennifer, Gary, Carlotta

WRITERS IN THE FIELD ARE NEEDED FOR NEXT YEAR -- INTERESTED?? The purpose of having writers is to guarantee input for the Soup from sources other than the Executive Committee. A contract is developed between the writer and the Executive Committee. It includes how much and what type of work shall be expected each month. In return for their contribution is a token salary of \$10 per month. An ideal experience for individuals wanting to explore their writing potential.

Note: These writers' work does not replace contributions from readers, it is a supplement.

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*hikes*dance*field day*mountain air*
other traditional Micon type things
cost will be approximately \$50.00
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for more information or if you are interested in doing a workshop or 2, WRITE TO:
Chuck Kearns 7519-N.72nd Ave. Apt. # 11
Arvada, Colo. 80003



Did you get this Soup? Or are you still wondering why your mailbox was empty when your friends' weren't? Could be that you haven't sent back your name, address, and birthyear. Also, if you have moved you must send us a note letting us know your new and old address. If you would like to receive the Soup and never have-just do like everyone else- send your name, address/zip code and birthyear. It's free!

It sure is delightful to be hearing from a few of you folks. We get a little disenchanted when so few people send contributions for your *People Soup*. We want it to be enjoyable to read - but we/you are dependent on you for the material that makes it Soup. Very few people seem to realize the need for readership input. And many must feel that they couldn't write anything that would be interesting. Quit fooling yourselves. Where do you think the articles in this issue came from? You folks. We are hoping that some others of you will want to take a turn too... Deadline for the last issue of this year is June 7 - probably past tense by the time most of you read this. But when the new year begins, you can be sure that the new executive committee will appreciate whatever collects during the summer. So...remember when you read your Soup that it is you folks that write it!



