

APPENDIX C

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SALEM COMMUNITY

October 23, 1969

The readers of the Salem Evening News may welcome a factual account of the current status of the Salem State College newspaper, The Log.

It was unfortunate that the Log staff in its decision to print an obscene article saw fit to violate its own procedure for the printing of "doubtful material". The Log Policy Statement reads: "It is the duty of the editors and advisors to keep the student publication at a level that brings credit to the college community. The Editorial Staff shall subscribe to the "Canons of Journalism". The Editorial Board shall implement the "Canons of Journalism". The Editor-in-Chief shall consult closely with the Editorial Board and the two advisors. A decision of the Editorial Board will be binding upon the Editor-in-Chief. Whenever any doubt remains with respect to suitability for publication, the Editorial Board shall present the doubtful matter to the College Publications Board. The decision of the College Publications Board shall be binding upon the Editorial Staff."

Under both Section 3 of the Constitution of the Salem State College Student Association and Chapter 73 of the General Laws of Massachusetts, the President had no choice but to withhold State funds from the publication of the scatological material which, once distributed on campus, would become available to minors.

Section 28, Chapter 272 of the Massachusetts General Laws, expressly states that whoever sells or distributes to a person under eighteen years of age anything which is obscene, indecent or impure or manifestly tends to corrupt the morals of youth, or introduces it into a family, school or place of education, is guilty of violating this statute and is punishable under it. This statute further states that in order to obtain a conviction under this section it is not necessary to prove that the printed paper or article has been adjudged to be obscene by a prior court.

It was unfortunate that The Log staff decided to print the offensive article with other funds in an underground issue using another printer. This defiant act was both an abrogation of The Log Policy Statement and an infraction of state law. The College Administration has not in the past censored the student press nor will it in the future. The issue is not one of censorship. The issue is the responsible use of State funds and the upholding of the laws of the Commonwealth. The Office of the President of the College is deeply sensible of the responsibility to the proper education of the pupils of the Horace Mann School. This education includes the inculcation of moral and spiritual values.

In order to have the student press renew operation using State funds, this office suggests that The Log staff present any doubtful material to the College Publications Board as provided in its regulations. The Board, composed of eight faculty, two administrators, and seven students, is responsible for decisions binding upon the Editor-in-Chief. The action whereby The Log staff published an underground issue and sold it on campus where it was available to minors is still to be resolved.

The various segments of the college faculty, students, and administration need a student press which follows the canons of journalism and honors its own stated policy.

Let The Log begin again observing its policy statement and the laws of the Commonwealth which support it.

Sincerely yours,

FREDERICK A. MOJER
President

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