

REMINISCENCES AND PROGNOSTICATIONS

When Cletis Shouse called me to participate in this conference he used all the devices short of blackmail to make me say, yes.

In a later phone conversation after he had forced me to consent, he asked for a title. When I suggested the one printed in the program he said, "You can't spell those words and neither can I." I think his secretary spelled them correctly on the program.

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I was honored when Richard Armstrong called last week and asked me to speak to you.

I have spent most of the day with him and can now understand more fully why the University of Nebraska has a smooth running housing operation. He should be the one to speak to you this evening.

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who complained about noise said that if a guy coughed in the north end of the building you could hear him all the way to the south end, two hundred feet away. The buildings had an official name of Moro Courts, but to all the veteran students, who nicknamed almost everything it was "Splinterville". That name stayed with the project until it was removed from the campus.

Three of the barracks were remodeled into a kitchen and dining facility for the 300 single men who lived there. Mrs. Bessie B. West was head of our department of Institutional Management and was placed in charge of this food operation. Again the nicknaming came about, and this facility was call "Bessie's Beanery". So, when I first came to K-State, our single male students who lived on the campus slept and studied in "Splinterville" and ate in "Bessie's Beanery".

The only permanent residence hall in 1946 was used for single women students. At that time most of the single women at K-State lived in sororities and the minority who were not pledged were "sort-of" left over and lived in the residence hall. There was also a nickname for this one hall - "Goon Castle".

In 1946 there was actually a University policy which stated, "Residences occupied or to be occupied by an organization of students of the opposite sex shall be separated by a street, another dwelling or by a distance of eighty feet or more." This was a long, long way from a coeducational hall!

For married students in 1946 we divided the 100 feet by 20 feet barracks into four apartments. I can remember one of my earliest recommendations was completely ignored and I was very unhappy. This

happens now-a-days, too, but it doesn't make me so unhappy any more. The government insisted on placing these old barrack buildings on oak posts for foundation over my recommendation of concrete. We are in an area when termite damage is prevalent, and I had some experience in entomology and knew the termite's appetite for oak posts. In a very short time the buildings settled unevenly, because the posts were in varying degrees of termite destruction. I can recall that one day a student's wife called to say that she had just stepped through the kitchen floor! We were charging \$20.00 per month for an apartment and about 4 months rent was consumed to make the repair. We were forced to use these for many years and our maintenance men spent many hours replacing the oak posts with concrete. The job was much more difficult and necessitated crawling around under the building. It would have been quite simple in the first place.

The next intermediate step before we built permanent residence halls was an improvised dormitory under our athletic stadium. These accommodations were built in under the stadium shell after the stadium was completed. The lower part of the back structure was of limestone with huge gothic arched windows. The second floor was placed just above these arches. This made the rooms on the first floor with an eighteen foot ceiling and a high eighteen foot window in each one. A series of five foot square windows ran across the stone face above the gothic windows and became the outside light source for the second floor rooms. Without the tremendous expense of moving the windows, the rooms were built in leaving the windows in the original position. So on the second floor the lower edge of the window was more than six feet from

the floor. A student standing in the rooms and looking out the window could see a patch of the sky. It was no wonder that the students were not happy with these makeshift accommodations.

Our first permanent residence hall for single students was constructed in 1951 for 225 students. Our first large permanent residence hall was constructed in 1961 for 600 single students. Our last permanent complex for single students was completed in 1967 and houses 2100 single students.

Our first permanent apartments for married students were completed in 1957, and the last ones, making 576 apartments in 1963.

All barracks were removed from the campus by 1960, and the stadium housing was vacated in 1967.

Now, all students who live on campus are in reasonably modern permanent facilities and cannot believe you when you tell the tales of inconvenient temporary structures of our early days. We have now abolished all regulations concerning hours. We have coed - dining throughout our residence hall system. Our halls and dining halls are air conditioned. We have a tremendous program of educational, social, and recreational activities. As is surely the case on your campuses, as on our campus these tremendous changes have all happened in the space of about 25 years. On our campus most of the large projects are less than 15 years old.

The life of a Director of Housing has changed also with the times. When I began at K-State for the first eight years, I had time to teach a class, as the department had few employees and limited scope. Now we have 300 permanent employees, and 600 part time student employees. We house approximately 5,000 students on the campus, and this is the

smallest operation in the Big Eight Conference.

I mentioned last week that one of my recommendations on retirement was to be that the new Director be given at least an hour each day to plan and to dream. Usually a day for me now goes something like this:

My project for this day was to revise the nine month residence hall contract to clarify some questionable wordings and incorporate some staff suggestions which I had accumulated over the year's use of the present contract. I arrived at 8:00 a.m. sharp, I always try to be at work at 8:00 a.m. I have always felt that the director should not take any privilege which he does not allow the least employee!

I spread before me the file of suggestions, copies of the old contracts, and my pad of ruled paper. I wrote the title at the top of the page. The phone rang! The secretary said, "Mr. Kerr is out" (Mr. Kerr is in charge of our project of apartments for married students) She continued, "There is an unexpected check out, could you take it?" Many years ago we established a policy that every family should be finally checked out by a member of our administrative staff after the regular checking by our host in the area. I cursed the policy under my breath, but still believing it was a good one, I set out for Jardine Terrace. The party checking out was a foreign graduate student and his wife. The apartment was in good condition and the cleaning under the supervision of the host had been done well, but, the range! We have Dryer compact kitchens with full white enameled range and cabinet tops all in one piece. The host tackfully said, "I think you are going to have to make a charge for damages to the range". I looked up the charges in the charge book. We recommend

a charge book. No damage deposit is required at K-State and every effort is made to keep the facilities up to a high maintenance level and charge the student for damages beyond normal wear and tear. We have a belief that those institutions with damage deposits must spend a great amount of time and money collecting and accounting for the deposits and in over 90% of the cases, giving them back when no damage is done. It has proved more economical for us to charge for damages actually done, and thus not have to process any papers for the vast majority who do not damage the property.

The charge book listed the costs of replacing the complete range and cabinet top at \$60.00. The top looked like it had been beaten with a ball-peen hammer. It was black with grease and had many pitted moons where the enamel was removed to the black iron beneath it. I said, "The charge for replacing this is \$60.00." He immediately responded with, "Would you take \$40.00.?" I realized that his training in business procedures was always to haggle, so I took great pains to explain that the cost was determined by what we were required to pay for the replacement part and the labor to install it and that it was not subject to bargaining but was an established cost equally applicable to all students. He said "Oh I see; would you take \$50.00?" I patiently explained the whole procedure again to which he responded, "I don't have \$60.00." I then explained that we could clear him to leave, but that under University regulations it was necessary that we attach his academic records, and that this meant that he could, not be graduated, re-enroll, or receive a transcript until the charge is paid. His quick response was, "Would you wait until I get my diploma?"

I had fears of causing an international confrontation, but I stayed by my guns and again explained and explained. After all his bluffing he quietly went to the cashier and paid the \$60.00.

I returned to the office and began to revise the first line of the nine-month contract. My secretary buzzed to say that Mrs. Gee at West Hall was having a scholarship award dinner this evening and would I please sign the one hundred fifty certificates which were on my desk, and do it as quickly as I had time, for she would like to have them back before lunch. I began frantically signing them with a ball point pen. The certificates had a lot of gold decorations on them, and after about 10 signatures the pen ceased to function. I called for type cleaner and cleaned the pen. After about each ten the cleaning had to be repeated. I had about reached the 148th when the morning mail was placed in my basket. I finished and then began my sorting and referring of the daily incoming paper work. The gem this morning was a letter from a lawyer in southern Kansas, threatening me because we had notified the son of one of his long time clients that we were about to turn his two year delinquent bill over to the collection agency employed by the University to collect bad debts. His letter stated that he had been informed that this young man and his roommate had each paid a \$20.00 damage deposit which would more than cover the \$38.40 which we were charging and that the University should not charge students extra for normal wear and tear on residence halls. He demanded an answer by return mail. In all the years I've been at K-State we have never charged a damage deposit as I mentioned a few minutes ago. I called the hall where the young man had stayed and found that luckily after two years the staff person who had checked him out was

still there and recalled the condition of the room. The man had a small dart board which he missed more times than he hit, and he had mutilated his walls. They required filling before painting and our charges appeared very reasonable.

By the time I had dictated a letter to the lawyer explaining that K-State's procedures were developed by our own lawyer and that he had been grossly misinformed by his client, lunch time had arrived. One sentence of the revised nine month contract had been written.

We operate 8 kitchens; the largest one provides three meals each day for 2100 students, while the smallest one serves only 42. I try to eat lunch at one of the dining rooms and eat with students. My reasoning is that students who are personally acquainted with the director and who do not think of him as only a figure head in the Housing Office will feel favor to discuss problems and present in a friendly way suggestions for improvement of services. From time to time they really do tell us!

On this particular day I met an organic food addict. He asserted that he was sure that we were gradually poisoning him by serving foods which had been protected from insects by toxic chemicals and fertilized by artificial fertilizers. I assured him that at K-State we were most fortunate in that we have one of the outstanding colleges of Home Economics and Departments of Institutional Management in the nation. All of our dietitians hold dual appointments in the College of Home Economics, and in the Housing and Food Service Department, and while their salaries are paid by Housing, they participate in the research and teaching in Home Economics. Thus they are aware of the latest

thought in food and food management and we as a result have one of the most advanced and efficient food services in University housing. I advised him to discuss organic foods with our head dietitian. She informed him of the latest research in the field which indicated that the so-called organic foods do not have any more nutritive value or any better nutritive value than other foods. He also complained to her about the use of too much sugar, but she had statistics at hand comparing our per capita amounts of sugar with the national average and use were far below. The old adage that "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still" may be applicable here so I'm not sure how effective our education of this student was; perhaps time will tell.

In the attempt to solve this problem I was late returning to the office after lunch. I rushed in to get back to my task of contract revision when my secretary advised me that the President's office had called and wanted to see me at once. I learned long ago not to get too excited about an apparent emergency call. So before rushing blindly across campus to the President's office, I called to see what the meeting was about. An emergency had developed at one of our scholarship houses. The Scholarship houses at K-State are owned by our Endowment Association and are rented and operated by the University Housing Office. The one with the problem this day was made possible with money from the milling industry, and since we have the only school of milling in the world, Endowment was particularly sensitive that no problems develop in this house. The scholarship house idea is an excellent one. Through a subsidy, housing is provided for students of

high scholarship and a degree of need at a reduced cost. They also live in a smaller group than those in a large resident hall and can develop a greater esprit de corps. Our rates are about two-thirds of the residence hall rate and in addition each recipient contracts to work one hour each day. We usually have a waiting list of students who want in. The problem on this particular day was that the bathroom above the living room had sprung a leak and the water had descended behind the portrait of one of the principal donors who was visiting the campus the next day and Endowment felt that he might make an additional contribution and he probably would ask to visit the house. Of course we rushed emergency repairs and the visitor was entertained in a dry living room.

One of the reasons that we can function fast in case of an emergency is because we have our own housing maintenance shop and do not have to wait on the general campus maintenance to give us our turn in their busy schedule. We have operated our own housing maintenance shop the twenty-eight years I've been at K-State and we are convinced that it has been a substantial saving in time and money, I highly recommend that to have an efficient operation a maintenance shop completely under control of the Housing Department is a must.

By the time I returned to the office mid-afternoon had arrived, so I grasped my pencil and began the second line of the revised residence hall contract. The buzzer sounded and my secretary announced, "a young man to see you!" We have an office policy that we see a student in person any time one appears - a real open door policy. Of course I responded - "Send him in" and curiously awaited to see what new

challenge would appear. The student was neat in appearance and was polite and spoke in good English. He asked for us to cancel his residence hall contract and let him move off-campus to an apartment. There is a great fad now days to live in an apartment. I asked if he would tell me why he wanted to leave our residence halls. He had a friend who had planned to live in an apartment for two with another student. The other student had gotten married and had left his friend with a contract for an expensive apartment and no one to help pay for it. He had always wanted to live in an apartment and he was sure that he could save money if he could cancel his residence hall contract and move.

We believe that one of the factors in keeping residence hall rates at a reasonable level is to require a 9-month contract and cancel it only under very rare circumstances. We also feel that the responsibility for refusing a request to cancel a residence hall contract should rest with a committee and not be the responsibility of one administrator. We have a Contract Review Committee composed of two faculty members, two students and a chairperson who does not vote except in case of a tie. Without the committee knowing, I kept a score for the first 50 cases which they heard last fall and they refused 25 and cancelled 25.

On this case, I referred the young man to the Contract Review Committee.

The committee usually requires considerable proof that the student can actually live less expensively in an apartment than in the residence hall before granting a cancellation.

Again I started to write the second sentence in the revised nine-month residence hall contract, although the time was late afternoon. The phone buzzer sounded and it was the elderly maiden director of one of our older residence halls for women. "Have you seen the new draperies in our living room?" she asked with a threatening tone. I admitted that I had approved them. "I didn't think you could do such a thing to us. Our house council and I have decided that they must come down and the old ones be put back up before the faculty tea Sunday!" she positively asserted.

Usually we employ a decorator from our Department of Interior Design to assist us in planning and choosing carpets, drapes, furniture, upholstering fabrics, and the wall colors. After this decorator has studied the problem and has developed a color scheme and plan we ask him to present his plan to the house council and the director in the hall concerned and obtain approval or rejection. If rejected he must come up with another plan.

But in this particular case our plan did not operate and I was in trouble. When plans for drapery changes were formulated in the spring these particular drapes appeared OK, but when they were cleaned they disintegrated. So they had to be replaced. Our director, students and decorator, a graduate student, were off-campus for summer. We employed a commercial decorator and he and I chose the material.

In our College of Architecture and Design we had a world famous artist and designer who was a personal friend of mine. He was very generous with his time and had assisted me many times with color problems. I asked him to help me. I picked him up, took him to the

hall, purposely not telling him a word about my problem. We walked into the lounge in question unannounced. He looked around and said, "Um - new drapes, very, very nice." My spirits rose. I told him of the request from the hall director, and suggested that if these were completely wrong artistically or of inferior workmanship we could refuse them and return them to the vendor. His reply was classic. "Whether one likes draperies or not is purely a matter of opinion, and my statement that they are artistically and harmoniously correct will not in all probability change the opinions of the director and the students, but the decorator has chosen a fabric correct and appropriate in design in perfect color harmony with the walls and carpet. To refuse to accept the goods would be futile." Armed with his expert opinion, I called the director and the student officers to a conference with Professor Helm. He tactfully approached the problem as he would teach a class, and presented a most convincing argument, to me, but perhaps not to them, although their responses were courteous. The draperies were accepted and are still in use in the hall.

After returning the good professor to his office, the day was almost over and the revision of the nine-month contract remained with only a title and two sentences.

The phone buzzed again and it was the foreman of our Housing Maintenance Shop. He was quite disturbed and announced, "Do you know that one of our student trouble shooters who lives in our maintenance shop apartment was arrested last night for window peeping in the Jardine Terrace Apartment area?"

I made an appointment for the next morning as the 5:00 p.m. bell sounded!

Now for the prognosis ----

In order to remain sane each director of housing should have as I said before at least one hour each day when he can be alone and not be interrupted by phone or secretaries so he can plan and dream a little.

To look into the future and make predictions is a very risky, and many have said a very foolish thing to do. ~~Yet Jerry and Cletus~~
~~asked me to~~ *I will* try to use my experience and to try to give you some possible insights which might assist you in your planning. What I can foresee may not be as pleasant as we would like, but I have confidence that you can cope with the problems. In his book "Future Shock" - Toffler quotes an old Chinese proverb, "To prophesy is extremely difficult - especially with respect to the future."

Enrollments will probably decline, at least, they cannot in the immediate future continue to increase at the rate of the past ten years. This implies that it will probably be more difficult to keep occupancy at a high level which in turn means income problems and all the difficulties which accrue.

Probably very few new residence halls will be built. We probably should not refrain from continuing to plan. We should use student input, new architectural inputs and the best thinking of all housing and food service personnel to continuously plan what would be the very best residence hall to build and be ready, if the opportunity arrives.

I'd like to outline briefly a plan which we have in reserve. There are no plans to use it in the near future and it probably would be revised many times before it would become a reality. The basic design is a wheel shaped cluster. The hub or center building would be planned to contain all the services. More specifically, all activities which are more or less noisy - kitchen, dining room, front office, post office, recreation rooms, lounges, music rooms, hobby rooms, class rooms would all be located in this center hub. We would plan to place it on a mound or elevated area and have corridors radiating out from this raised area to 4, 6, or 8 wings on a lower level. These corridors would enter 5 story towers on the third floor level. This would eliminate elevators. Students can easily walk up two floors and down two floors. The towers would be exclusively used for study and sleeping. Each tower could offer a different living arrangement. One could be single rooms, but in a social grouping about a common living room. One could be traditional doubles, as some might still prefer what most of us now have. I have noticed that student desires and appetites go through cycles and I'm sure that a greater variety of accommodations will make for higher occupancy, and that some will want in the future, the same types of living that have pleased some of our students in the past. One wing could be apartments. We suggested that in a five story wing the first two floors could be two floor apartments with a small spiral staircase in each from first to second floor. This could be repeated on the upper two floors with variations. The third floor in between could be one level apartments. One wing could have various combinations of doubles even triples, and singles.

The possibilities for variety in this type of complex are very great.

The dreaming in regard to the apartments ranged from furnished to unfurnished in varying degrees, but in most cases cooking facilities were intended.

The plan was to have the total capacity of the complex high enough to make an economically feasible food service available with several contract options and a wide range of prices. A student could elect to live in the complex and prepare all meals himself. He could contract to eat lunch and dinner in the food service and prepare his own breakfast or not eat breakfast. He could elect to prepare two meals and eat one meal in the cafeteria. If enough volume were possible we could have continuous food service and not require board contracts at all.

Undoubtedly, we are all aware that a greater variety of service means higher cost. We are convinced that the standard nine month contract for full board and room, with no refunds for meals missed is the most economical plan, and that variations of any sort immediately increase the costs.

However we have many students who say that they are willing to pay more for a greater variety of services.

In predicting, it seems that if our economy does not slump, and affluence continues, we will be faced with requests for higher priced services and should be geared to fill the requests.

One fact seems quite certain - the seventies are going to be different from the sixties. Universities will be faced with more fast changes than they can anticipate. This means of course that

residence operations will be faced with more and more and faster and faster changes that can be anticipated. I.B.M. - concept -

I wish to compliment you as housing and food service administrators, because you have chosen a profession which can be tremendously rewarding to you, and a great force to make our universities more effective places for learning in the future.

Because of your ability to cope with a vast variety of situations each day, you are uniquely equipped and experienced to cope the great changes which must come in the future. I know you are going to be tried to the limit, but I'm confident that you can meet the challenge of change in the future, and continue to serve, stimulate, and inspire young people who live in university residences.

Thank you