

Censorship and Dean Runk, 1963-67

By Richard W. Dyas, Commerce, 1967

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I was active on the CD from the fall of 1963 to the spring of 1967. I started on the sports desk, became sports editor in 1965-66, and then stepped in as managing editor in 1966-67 after the elected managing editor resigned to become president of student council.

The offices were on the top floor of Newcomb Hall. They were cramped. Most of the equipment was of hand-me-down quality. Typewriters were vintage, ribbon fed. We had a picture scanning machine which we thought was state of art, but seems prehistoric today. Editors were responsible for layout of pages, which were drawn on large sheets of paper. Headlines were written in the office and had to fit type counts exactly or be rewritten at press. Everyone smoked cigarettes back then, so the office was constantly filled with smoke and cigarette butts. There were no women on the staff, so there was a sort of pool hall environment. Editors were in charge of content, proofing and editorial writing, which resulted in a lot of errors and poorly edited stories because of poor time management. The paper appeared four times per week, Tuesday through Friday.

In those years the CD was initially printed at the University Press, near Scott Stadium, using lead type. The typesetters were not particularly skilled or diligent, so there were a lot of typos in each edition. Editors and staff were required to read copy before clearing for printing. Experienced staff could read the type directly, though the letters were set upside down and backwards. Page layout was initially very uninspired. Single headlines and single column stories were arranged vertically on small tabloid-sized sheets of four columns. There were very few photos. Ads totalled almost a full page of the newspaper. In my third year, we changed to full sheet size news pages (five columns), and added special Saturday issues for Homecomings and Easters weekends. We also added a single center sheet that year, mainly for football weekends, although I remember it carried mostly ads. We began using more creative layout that year, with more use of banner headlines and drop heads, and larger photos. Nevertheless, the paper was a far cry from today's--even though the sports page won some kind of collegiate contest award that year, as I recall.

In my fourth year, 1966- 67, we had a major crisis with the University administration in the person of Dean B.F.D. Runk. Editorials were becoming more pointed about what were believed to be over-bearing rules and regulations about the social conduct of students. Driving restrictions were a problem, and so were the hours for closing of parties. The term *in loco parentis* was used constantly—and derisively—in our editorials. Dean Runk had the manager of the University Press secretly proof read copy before the press run, and call him at home. We would receive late night phone calls from Dean Runk demanding changes in content (which we always ignored). Dean Runk appointed an Editorial Consulting Board, consisting of various brown-nosed students of his choosing, that resulted in a rousing round of lead stories in the paper.

For the Openings Weekend edition that year, we selected a front-page photo of a painted mural in Memorial Gym, showing a nude reclining. It did not appear in the Friday edition—there was only a blank spot with a meaningless cutline. The manager of the University Press had removed it without advising us. The editorials the next week were withering, and Dean Runk advised us on Friday that the University Press would no longer print the Cavalier Daily. After several calls to former staffers, we learned of a newspaper in Culpeper, the Star-Exponent that might be amenable to printing us. The editorial board traveled to Culpeper, met with the Editor, who was an alumnus, and told him of our plight. He was incensed by Dean Runk's action and agreed to print our paper and drop it in Charlottesville each day, at a price that was one half what we had been paying the University Press. While this was quite satisfactory, it led to late hours for the staff members who had to travel to Culpeper each night.

The Culpeper press was using the new offset printing technology, which consisted of photocopying the laid out pages. This greatly reduced the time for set up of the paper. And eventually we purchased our own offset copier, so we could lay out the page in the office. It was with this final separation from the University's administrative arm that the paper began to really improve. For the remainder of the year, we had no more confrontations with Dean Runk. And, it appears that this environment was the right one for the CD staffs of the turbulent 70's.

The managing board in my term consisted of an editor, managing editor, and business editor, all elected by the staff in March or April. I do not recall any fraternity influence back then in the elections. There were some unsuccessful attempts by Richmonders to corner the key jobs. There was a news editor and a sports editor, appointed by the managing board. That was it. I note that there are now editors for everything: movies, food, etc. But this vertical integration resulted in over-worked editors who did not sufficiently delegate responsibility, and the sloppiness of the product was constantly evident. The quality of the current paper is far superior to that of my period. But, we tried, and we did provide some voice to the growing dissent in the student body. When I left the University, the CD was becoming a true student voice, rather than the daily bulletin board it was when I first arrived.

Of the staff I worked with, I know of only one who stayed in the journalistic profession: John Marshall, now a columnist in Seattle. It seems nearly everyone else became lawyers, the career of choice back then. Of course, now we are all unfulfilled barristers who wish we had remained with journalism—definitely not the career of choice then. We are all proud of what the CD has become.

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