

Beanies, Babes, and a Pig Named Alice

By Gary Smaby

My first official act as student body president was to “personally cancel beanie wearing and kangaroo court . . . resolving [that] the freshman-sophomore extramural activities managed to surpass all previous standards of violence, irresponsibility, and disgust.” A good thing.

By 1969, the second wave of the women’s liberation movement was gaining national attention, and the issue of gender equality had become a ‘consciousness raising’ experience on campus. I still find it difficult to explain (let alone justify to the current generation) the existence of a troupe called *Smabe’s Babes*.

In truth, Bill Grimbol, the VP, deserves full credit for that stroke of genius. As SAC Chairman, Bill had responsibility of managing those meetings. In our effort to “overcome apathy and build community” (i.e. get student to attend the often routine and sometimes boring bod meetings), Bill declared that he had a great idea to fill the seats. All I had to do was show up.

Bill opened each meeting (in the *Women’s Gym*, no less) with the uniformed Babes, followed by the showcasing of aspiring campus talent. His choreography drew audiences that had never been seen before. My most vivid Babes memory is rushing in late just before the meeting was to begin and being greeted by Bill with a wheel barrow. The Babes immediately and unceremoniously proceeded to dump me on the stage.

To all that were there, it was obvious that the Babes troupe was formed with “tongue in cheek” and without sexist intent. But try explaining that to my Millennial daughters.

Alas, my post-feminist confessions don’t end there; which brings me to that pig named Alice. It was just before the ’69 homecoming. The homecoming queen candidates were formally introduced. Things were running in perfunctory tradition, until, without formal invitation, the Gamma Delta society paraded in their protest candidate, Alice B. Swineson.

I recall reluctantly turning over the floor to the GDs for their iconoclastic skit. The Mess reported that there were “some laughs and a few hisses . . . but for the most part the students were silent.”

And so ends my confession.