

## A BANQUET in the MAIN (DOE) LIBRARY?

Sometimes an event, undocumented at the time, takes on mythic proportions. Here are a few broad truths, followed by remembrances from others. I've been unable to locate any newspaper accounts. --KHL, July 18, 2014

In the early 1960s, perhaps on or near Charter Day [March 23], the Doe Library Loan Hall was set up to look like a banquet had happened the previous evening, complete with plates, silverware, napkins, remains of food and drinks. A written speech was left, supposedly given by former UC President Wheeler, in part criticizing UC educational policies [ROTC? Kerr Directives\*?] at the time of the caper. It was planned in Room C Eshelman, and carried out by 40 or more people, mostly members of the UCHC. Among those participating were: Anne Dacey, John Faust, Mike Loughman, Ray Lucas, Bill Noble, Phil Pennington, Julie Verran, and Lorie Voigt Scott.

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**5/19/14 from Bill Noble:** "Did I participate in creating the banquet? Or did I just sit around in the basement of Eshelman for a couple of years hearing and trading stories about it? In all honesty, I don't know. I absolutely don't know. It's very real in memory (I have what feels like a visual memory of smearing dorm food -- or cat food (?) -- on the plates and silverware to lend authenticity). But did I actually do it myself, or have I captured somebody's storytelling?"

The issue that triggered it? My first level memory says it was about banning ROTC, an issue Tim Taylor, Dick Scheible (I think those two, while Dick worked for Chevron) and I did some wacky provocations around. But maybe not."

**5/19/14 from Keturah Pennington:** "This event occurred before I arrived at Berkeley [Fall 1961] so I have only Phil's memories of it. It was weeks in the planning, and not everyone in the UCHC knew about it, for security reasons. Part of the prep was getting the table settings for some 100 places. They came from the Student Union cafeteria. Someone in UCHC worked there and had, or could get, a key. For a month before the event, and for a week afterward, someone with a van parked, starting at varying hours, overnight at the loading dock behind the cafeteria where food deliveries were made so the campus police stopped paying attention to the van, and didn't connect its eventual absence with either the banquet or the UCHC. On N-Night the van backed up to the loading dock opposite the door and an efficient crew quickly loaded the required china, glass ware, silver and napkins into it.

I don't know how everyone got into the library but the tables in the central reading room were rearranged, places were set, with a copy of a speech opposing ROTC put at each place. Food, including salad on salad plates, was smeared on the china. Glasses were partially filled. Napkins were creased and laid beside or on the plates, some with small smears of food on them. Chairs were left pushed back a little from the tables, at a slight angle. It all took until nearly 5:00.

Shortly before the library staff was due to arrive, someone phoned the newspaper saying that if reporters were present at the library they would get a story. That turned out

to be not quite true. When the speech was read the Powers That Be refused to talk to the press or to open the library doors. By the time the library opened, several hours late, things were back to normal. I suppose someone could check the newspaper archives for the next few days to find out how much of the story eventually got out. "

**6/04/14 From Mike Loughman:** *"This recounts events that took place 50 years ago on the U. C. Berkeley campus. About 40 students, undergraduates and graduates, took part in the 'library caper'. They were members of the U. C. Hiking Club and their friends. I knew most of them, but honestly I cannot reliably remember who participated and who did not."* [ML believes it occurred in 1964]

"The caper was an early response to the 'Kerr Directives'\* which set off the 'Free Speech Movement'. It was elaborately planned over a period of several weeks.

First, scouts observed the nighttime patrols of campus security. Other students collected the names of prominent former faculty members, now-deceased. Others composed a speech to be delivered at a banquet in the Main Library Loan Hall by Benjamin Ide Wheeler [UCB President 1899-1919].

When the appointed night came, after midnight, couples were stationed at key points outside the library and the cafeteria to warn of any approaching patrol by lighting up cigarettes.

A grad student provided a VW bus, and rock climbers scrambled onto the cafeteria roof and easily gained entrance. The bus was quickly filled with eating utensils and flatware and driven around to the front entrance of the library.

Others entered the steam generating plant and walked through the tunnels to the Library. In no time long Loan Hall tables were set for dinner with a card at each place bearing the name of a faculty ghost. There was even a bucket of dinner remains to dirty the plates and silver. I can't remember if there was any cheap wine to dirty the glasses. The place did smell pretty bad.

Of course, Benjamin Ide Wheeler left behind at the head place his speech denouncing the Kerr Directives. We all, ghosts (I presume) and students, quickly vanished. Remarkably, no cigarettes were lighted.

Reports of the banquet were composed and delivered to San Francisco and Oakland newspapers early that morning. When students entered the Loan Hall later in the morning the dishes had been stacked, shunted into a corner and concealed by screens, but the smell was all too evident. The papers never printed a word about it. Presumably the university denied it had ever taken place."

\*Clark Kerr, UC President, 1958-1967. **Kerr Directives** (excerpted from  
<[http://texts.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt687004sg&chunk.id=d0e1180&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire\\_text.](http://texts.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt687004sg&chunk.id=d0e1180&brand=calisphere&doc.view=entire_text.)>, p. 69-70)

On October 22, 1959 —President Kerr issued rules governing political activity by students, aimed directly at SLATE and stressing that the ASUC was only to discuss and vote on campus issues, and that the chief campus officer (himself) was to decide what was a campus issue and what was not:

1. The preamble of the student government on each campus shall be changed to make it clear that the student governments are directly responsible to the appropriate chancellor's office.
2. Student governments are forbidden to speak on off-campus issues.
3. Amendments to student government constitutions are subject to the prior approval of campus officials.
4. To be recognized, student organizations must have an active adviser who is a faculty member or a senior staff member; such groups must declare their purposes to be compatible with the educational objectives of the University; they must not be affiliated with any partisan political or religious group; and they must not have as one of their purposes the advocacy of positions on off-campus issues.

**5/20/14 from John Fiske:** "Ann Rumble Bradley said she thinks the Banquet event happened before she arrived at Cal, which (I think) was in Fall, 1959." [KHL note: ARB arrived at Cal in Fall, 1958.]

**6/29/10 from John Fiske:** "Heard about the banquet in the library ... that was also around 1960/61. I think John Faust was one of the instigators. Access through the steam tunnels. The idea was a banquet frequented by ghosts of past faculty and administrators. I heard that someone prepared a speech, supposedly given by former president Wheeler to that gathering of ghosts, and left behind with all the banquet clutter."

**6/29/10 from Anne Dacey Lucas:** "As I recall the library banquet - I was there, and Lorie [Voight/Scott], I think Ray also (I'll have to check with him about who else). Mike Loughman might have written the speech".

**5/19/14 from John Fiske:** "One memorable caper (which neither Kay nor I, nor anybody from that era I've had recent contact with, with the exception of Mike Loughman) was a banquet dinner in the Doe Library. We think the food was nicked from a dorm, and maybe moved to into the Library through the steam tunnels after dark. I have a vague recollection that a written speech was left, supposedly given by former UC President Wheeler, in part criticizing UC educational policies at the time of the caper.

We know that Mike Loughman was involved ... maybe as a/the ringleader. I've written to Mike requesting a written account for the alumni website, and he's agreed, but in a short 5/13/2014 note to me Mike said, "Will take some time. It was elaborately organized, close to 40 people involved 50 years ago. I can't remember who was (involved)."

What can you tell us about this caper? When did it occur (year)? Who was involved? (Statue of limitations of whatever laws/regulations have long since run out.) How many "place settings"? Food source(s)? How was the food moved into the Library? Which Library room? Any other information of note that we can use to supplement whatever Mike Loughman might provide?"

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