

THE DO NOTHING CLUB

It was the Los Angeles Harbor College Interclub Council's recruitment day and all of the available tables in the college cafeteria's dining room had been removed and aligned, outdoors, around the periphery of the campus quad. Each table had been ornamented with various hand drawn advertisements, and was inhabited by enthusiastic recruiters hawking the benefits of joining their respective club. However, a single unoccupied table and two chairs stood in the center of quad, away from the peripheral crowds; and, as I worked my way through the serving line and out of the barren dining room, needing a comfortable place to set my lunch tray, I opted for the unoccupied table which everyone else seemed to shun.

Setting my clipboard of blank notebook paper beside my tray, I had seated myself at the table and had begun to consume my lunch when a woman approached the table. She stared at the clipboard for a moment then asked, "Is this a club table?"

Absorbed with my meal, I simply shook my head and straightforwardly replied, "No, this is a non-club table."

The woman furrowed her brow and, nudging my shoulder, asked, "What is a non-club?"

Restraining a smile at the obviously absurd question, I cordially replied, "It's a nonexistent organization which has no members or bylaws and holds no meetings. That is why there is no posters or literature on this table."

The furrow on the woman's brow deepened. "That doesn't seem very organized. I don't think I'd want to join."

Deciding to press the illogical conversation a bit further, I slid my clipboard toward her and said, "Well, if you don't want to join, you'll have to sign this roster."

"Why?" she asked.

Pausing only momentarily, I replied, "Because everyone who does not wish to join is automatically a non-member, not required to attend the meetings which are not held. Therefore, you'll have to sign the roster to insure that your name will not appear on the non-existent membership list. I'll personally see to it that your name is immediately deleted."

Still appearing confused, the woman nodded and wrote her name on the first line of the top sheet of paper on my clipboard as several other students wandered over to the table.

"We'll have to have your address in order to be certain we won't mail you any of the literature which we do not publish," I persisted.

Again, she nodded and added her address to the line.

"And," I continued, "because our non-meetings are never held and no one is ever notified of their non-occurrence, we'll have to have your phone number, in

order to insure that you will never be so advised. That is, provided you do not wish to have your name not appear in our non-existent directory of non-club members."

The totally befuddled woman complied and added her telephone number to the line and wandered off, retaining her puzzled frown.

A young man, who had been standing behind her, took her place next to the table and picked up her forgotten pen, his forehead creased with the same confused frown. "I don't want to join either," he muttered.

With a feigned sigh of regret, I plaintively smiled, "Then, sign up and resign your non-club status and I'll be sure your name will immediately be deleted from this list." Whereupon, he complied, providing the complete non-required information, before handing the purloined pen to another member of the gathering throng.

Fascinated by the absurdity of the proceedings, I abandoned my intent to study and spent the remainder of my lunch hour non-recruiting and evolving an extensive non-sales pitch of utter nonsense which, to my dismay, began to sound strangely convincing even to me after the twentieth or so repetition. However, my dissolved view of the proceedings must have been shared by an unhealthy segment of the college's student body for, I am sad to report, I secured thirty seven names, addresses and telephone numbers before I finally had to return to class --- a record for club (or non-club) recruitment for the single day event! And, incredible as it may seem, only one individual signed the roster merely to play along with the gag. However, a second individual signed as a protest against the "organized college establishment" and pursued me for several days, requesting the date, time and place of our first non-meeting. In desperation, I ultimately informed the misguided rebel to "go to the meeting rooms in the cafeteria at noon tomorrow and pick out an empty one and, if nobody shows up, that's where the non-meeting will be". He departed, quite content, and I never again heard from the man.

One week later, I decided to consummate the nonsense and submitted the traditional application for on-campus club status to the college's Interclub Council's sanctioning body. 1. Inserting, under ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, a request that the application be denied in order to designate our "non-existent organization" as an "official unauthorized non-club" on campus; and, 2. Notifying the Council that we did not require a room for our non-meetings as "everyone who was a member had resigned as required by our non-existent bylaws" and, therefore, would not be in attendance "at the non-meetings which, logically, are never held". To my dismay, the application was APPROVED! Thus, I believe, establishing the first officially sanctioned unauthorized non-existent campus non-organization in the state.

Los Angeles Harbor College, Wilmington, California, Spring Semester, 1968, as reported in my editorial, "The Do Nothing Club", in the campus newspaper, The Harbor Hawk