18 June 1983

To: David and Karen
Cam and Jan
Rusty and
John and Jane
Rod and Martha
Jane and Ray (Get on the phone and persuade them to come)

From: Vinnie and Priscilla and Nate

Re: Recent missives imploring for agendas

Dear Good People:

It has become increasingly obvious that the problem of "what-do-we-do-when-we-invade-CampHealyBopp" has generated an existential crisis within the DA!S. The causes of this malaise run deep, and it might be profitable simply to examine them before a solution is offered. Generally speaking, the cadre has been going through what is usually termed a mid-life crisis, characterized by an extreme ambivalence toward what it regards as its raison d'etre, i.e., alternatives.

For a good part of the cadre's history, the issue has been clear: its purpose has been to supply viable and meaningful alternatives for the vast majority of sterile, boring, and lifeless individuals who seem to plague God's green earth. And it should be confessed that the cadre has done a superlative job throughout most of its existence. One only has to remember those sparkling dinner parties, the itellectual discussions, and the sublime elegance of the environment at 9 Sargent Place and 9 East South Street in order to mentally re-experience the meaning ot the word alternative.

But now, eleven years have exhausted the capital the cadre so carefully nurtured. Each of us has undoubtedly felt the guilt of eating Wonder Bread, the shame of polyester, or the emptiness of Real People. And we wonder, in those secret moments when we furtively look to see if our farts have been heard, whether we have lost that spark, that insight, that flaming brilliance which caused the gods to look down upon us and suffer awe.

To be sure, the cadre waged a ceaseless struggle against the warriors of mediocrity. But it was a doomed, albeit valiant, struggle: the mind-numbing realities of nuclear war, dioxin, gypsy moths, swine flu, the comet Kohotek, the famine in the Sahel, the Mayaguez, and the break-up of Ma Bell have proven only that Gresham was right, that the bad does drive out the good. It is now time to redefine the struggle, to extricate ourselves from the punitively insoluble crises of the modern world system: in short, we must find an alternative to alternatives.

The task is conceptually quite difficult but not physically arduous. Nevertheless, no matter how much truth there is in the old alternatives, no matter how little we should like to miss the exaltation and consolation old and new philosophies offer us, still it must be insisted that we remain aware of the responsibility we have in regard to humanity. For the sake of time we must not sacrifice eternity; in order to alleviate our need, we have no right to bequeath to our posterity need upon need as an eventually ineradicable evil.

Thus we propose the following alternative alternatives, and offer them as a basis for further discussion in our upcoming annual meeting:

1. A discussion of what it all does not mean
2. A non-discussion of what it all does mean
3. A screening of 37 episodes of Love Boat
4. A group imitation of the relationship between Mary Saboski, Bozo, and Ben-Gay
5. A psychic imitation of Hinman Cabin
6. A Mazola party without the Mazola or the party
7. A Dramatic reading of the Stong, ME telephone directory
8. A Velveeta construction of Peter Bien

These are only suggestions, but they do indicate a certain direction of thought. We look forward to your ideas, and we remain

your comrades in alternatives

Vinnie