

Pence to confront administration today

by Jeff Holman

David Pence, who presented a radical mini-course last Friday, may not be permitted to speak at Ramsey today.

But he plans to come anyway. "The big question is what type of language we will allow in the school building," according to Dale Schneiderhan, administrative intern.

He explained that Principal Curtis Johnson had met with the other administrators after the presentation to "come up with a good answer" to complaints by parents and some teachers and students about the Pence mini-course.

Johnson said Wednesday that a final decision had not been reached.

"I personally found his language offensive, though I don't think many students did," continued Schneiderhan.

"Abilene, my Abilene"

Exchange program started

by Walter Hard

Linda Kampff and Tim Heil are currently attending Abilene High School in Abilene, Kansas. No, they didn't move. It's part of a national student exchange program that Ramsey has just joined.

Earlier this year, the Student Council began sending representatives to various suburban schools in the Twin Cities. They stayed for a day and reported back to the Council on what they found.

Several months ago, the Council got involved in an exchange program the Abilene had had for several years. The idea was opposed by students who felt that closer schools were just as interesting. Last month, the Council voted not to send anyone. But the idea didn't die. Principal Curtis Johnson felt it was a good idea and decided to use school money to send someone. The trip costs about \$40 per person.

Explains Johnson, "If we can exchange with a foreign country, we can do it with Abilene. If we spend \$900 to bring an AFS

student from overseas, then shouldn't we spend \$40 for this?"

"People ask what they have that we don't have. I don't know. This year we have foreign students from South Africa and Japan. What do they have in Africa and Japan that we don't have? I don't know. That is what we're going to find out."

During the two weeks in Abilene, Linda and Tim are going to the same classes and belong to the same activities as at Ramsey. They will attend a lyceum and, according to Linda, speak to the student body at Abilene. They will also sit on the Abilene Student Council.

When they return, Johnson hopes they will have new ideas and observations.

"They have an obligation to make this information available to the whole student body," says Johnson. Just what they will do when they return has not been established.

Sometime in April, Abilene will send two of their students to Ramsey for the same type of visit. Like the Ramsey representatives, they will stay at local homes.

"We, the undersigned students of Alexander Ramsey High School, feeling that education demands an open forum for expression of ideas, without fear of repression, respectfully ask that David Pence be allowed to return to Ramsey High School and lectures. We have chosen the method of petition because we feel it is a basic part of education in a democracy and not detrimental to it."

Bob Meek, who wrote the petition, said the cancellation of Pence could represent "a really serious question." He had spoken with the principal for over an hour about the future of the Pence mini-course.

Bob said that cancellation of Pence would mean "that a few members of the community can threaten and intimidate the administration so much that they are willing to go back on a previous commitment that we had."

"This is repression. It represents a question of how schools are going to teach. It represents the first attack on the mini-course program."

The faculty council considered Pence Tuesday night, and Associate Principal Richard St. Germain said that faculty opinion was divided on matter.

"I have a feeling that if Dave has a desire to get his point of view across, he'll have to try and communicate it in a different way," said social studies teacher Ted Johnson, who attended the Pence mini-course.

"But he represents a point of view that students should be aware of. I think some of my students would be very disappointed if Pence were not allowed to return."

David Pence feels that the reasons for administrative concern go beyond his language. "A person with a socialist position is systematically kept out of school," said Pence in an interview. "That's the reason I'm not allowed. That position threatens the principal of the school."

Pence emphasized that the class was not mandatory, and that he would not teach a mandatory class.

"Anybody who doesn't like the language can go out in the halls and hear it four times worse," said Pence.

Pence said his purpose in giving the course was "to present a different point of view, one that is not often expressed in high schools."

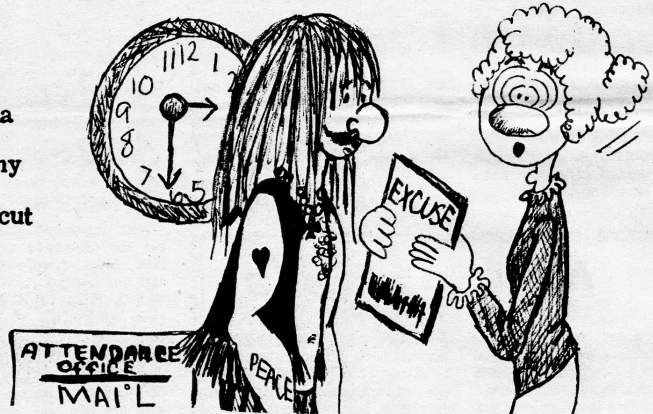
"The decision not to allow me back not only violates the rights of those who agree, but of those who came to disagree," he said.

The administration was not informed Pence that his course has been cancelled, and Pence plans to hold his regular session 5th hour today in room 239.

"I know that there are teachers who talked to me who want me to come back, and students who want it. If they want me to come, I will come."



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Excuses, Excuses, Excuses

by Debbie Bell

"Please excuse Fred from not being in school yesterday, but he was deathly ill and you are lucky he is here today."

This excuse is not typical, but one of a select group which has brought a chuckle to the daily routine of attendance officers Mrs. Small and Mrs. Kapaun. "I couldn't begin to tell you all the work we do in here," said Mrs. Small.

Absence and tardy slips begin their day. Attendance reports are typed up and dittoed, with absences averaging about 120 per day.

The rest of their day is spent calling homes, writing letters to parents, and delivering messages for students' and teachers.

These messages average about 25 per day. Some of them are very insignificant. Many are from girlfriends to boyfriends, who say they are aunts or uncles "when you know darn well who they really are," comments Mrs. Kapaun.

She describes the "classic emergency message" as the time when a woman called up to relay a message to her son saying it was an emergency. As it turned out, she wanted her son to bring home some chow mein noodles.

Anywhere from 20 to 50 students come in late each day. "My biggest gripe is the kid who comes in late and doesn't check in," Mrs. Kapaun states disgustedly. "It triples my work."

If a student is tardy four times from any class he is sent to the Attendance Office for a conference, and a referral letter is sent to his parents.

A second referral may suspend a student from class until a conference is held with the parents at school. Any more tardies, and the student can be removed from class, which would mean a loss of credit.

But all is not grim in the attendance office. There are always those excuses which provide the laughs, such as those that follow.

Here's a note I've often wrote X'cept Jim's not late He's got a date Early dismissal... you please, At 2:30--we'd like to leave. An extra day we mite stay And so Jim may be absent on Monday.

Please excuse our darling daughters' tardiness from school. They were innocent victims of a sneaky schoolboy trick when he suggested to a new busdriver that Street and Road was not a "stop." It became necessary for them to walk through the April Showers!

Please excuse my darling Kathy. She didn't want to be absent, but I forced her to. She went to the doctors and he looked in her little mouth and said she had a virus infection. She is on medication so be good to her. Thank you for being so kind to her.

Love,

Please excuse Lauri Wednesday, May 8, to go to Hastings State Hospital with a group of kids from Ramsey. I understand that the school is not responsible if she is lost, spindled, mutilated, torn, or if they decide to commit her.



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