

## The Bull Session

By Pete Clark

My favorite thing is a good, no holds barred, Bull Session, where all of the world's problems can be solved in a couple of hours during a quiet evening at home or in a raucous gin mill, using alcoholic accelerants. The minimum number of people needed for ranging discussions is two. For the maximum number of participants, refer to the Malthusian Law of Diminishing Returns and go from there. A bull session carried out during time owed to no one can be interesting, educational and entertaining. I regret the demise of the *We agree to disagree Bull Session*.

For a while, during my time in Laramie, Wyoming, I lived in the large corner room in the basement of the Acacia Fraternity House at 812 East University Avenue. My roommate at the time was an active member of the Wyoming Civil Air Patrol, so we papered the walls with FLIP Charts which are maps with information on navigation aids and restricted areas. My roomy logged a lot of time flying in the C.A.P.'s Cessna L-19, but, unfortunately, lost his life when the plane was caught in a blizzard on a flight to Rawlins and bored into the ground. The world lost a very bright young mind.

That basement room in the Acacia House was witness to much late evening cussing and discussing of then current affairs, whether national or international, local or state. Liquor was not allowed in the house and to the best of my knowledge none of us did drugs, so our various positions and arguments were not generated through impaired mental faculties. Our subjects ranged from why the University of Wyoming could spend so much money on athletics but couldn't afford to keep the library open later than 10 pm, to the Cuban Missile Crisis and a profusion of other topics. Conversations sometimes became hot, but generally stayed sanguine and we always accomplished one thing. We learned from each other.

A good Bull Session can happen almost anywhere. I have had some dandy discussions at the now defunct Tumble Inn in Powder River, Wyoming, forty miles west of Casper, in the midst of nothing. While building a power line from Waltman to Casper, we closed the Tumble Inn every weekday night. And yes, booze drove the babble, but we always believed we were making sense.

For a number of years I was a member of a coffee klatch that congregated at a restaurant attached to a drug store at East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Peoria Street in Aurora, Colorado. Most of the coffee drinking philosophers were retired, but a couple of us were still working. Mostly we talked about politics and the Broncos, the latter subject causing my eyes to glaze over. The majority of the group was Republicans and I was a Red Neck Liberal, but we could still exchange ideas and take occasional shots at each other.

Sadly the days of unimpeded exchange of ideas and good Bull Sessions are gone. If our way of life is to survive, we desperately need the return of freewheeling discussion. Talk may be cheap, but it is necessary.