

Will it be like this . . .



or like this?

Al Thomas

Ace forecaster says UNC campus is quiet

J. Carlyle Sitterson, entering his last semester as chancellor here, is undoubtedly sitting in his well-manicured office worrying over the latest predictions of this year's "campus mood."

What's probably worrying Sitterson is not that most national newspapers and magazines are predicting a tumultuous fall, but that they are predicting an even further reduction in tensions on the nation's campuses.

Sitterson read in most national publications that the 1969-70 school year would witness a lessening of agitation and political activity on campus.

That year, UNC suffered through a massive War Moratorium demonstration in October; a cafeteria workers' strike in November; and a general student strike following the Cambodian incursion in May.

The next year, forecasters jolted the increasingly worn-looking chancellor by saying the spring's activism would not only continue, but would likely increase in sporadic violence.

These forecasters were proved wrong in 1970-71, however, with only two patty raids and a Peoples' Peace Treaty demonstration grabbing any attention here.

Campus mood, particularly here at Carolina, has been unpredictable, with

any attempt to anticipate the mercurial reactions of students usually ending in failure. Although hundreds still claim to be expert student-watchers, there are very few who escaped being scarred during the past two years. Chapel Hill has at least one who did.

Campus Security Chief Arthur Beaumont warned of tensions in 1969-70, and then when others began issuing storm warnings for 1970-71, Beaumont filed a report that "the trouble is over."

For the first time in three years, Beaumont completely agrees with national predictions on student activism, obviously to the relief of one South Building resident who is looking forward to teaching again instead of administering.

"Students are smart," Beaumont said, leaning back confidently in his swivel chair. "They realized that demonstrations

and marches didn't work for them, but against them. I think most of the trouble is over now."

Beaumont said the demonstrations of two years ago were part of a cycle, with students now having "a whole different attitude."

"Young people have matured a lot during the past two years," he continued. "They are not going to be so easily fooled by radicals. Students have seen the writing on the wall."

One of the major reasons students lost interest in demonstrating and instead turned their attention to studies, Beaumont said, is economics.

"Recruiters quit coming around when people were demonstrating," Beaumont said slowly, shaking his head from side to side. "Big business cut off the money, and many of the activists found they had no jobs.

"People just got tired of it, and students realized the demonstrations were hurting the very causes they were supporting. With the 18-year-old vote, and other things, students are finding they work much more successfully in the system. They realized that getting the right people on the right committees was more important than demonstrating on campus."

Beaumont said students have matured politically over the last two years, finding that demonstrations only alienate the general public, and cause the legislature to cut back funds.

With the Vietnam war winding down and students receiving more

representation on governing committees, Beaumont said he doesn't see anything "right now" that could stir students to the 1969-70 level of activism.

"Students are a lot smarter than most grown people," Beaumont added. "They may experiment with a lot of things, but they aren't going to do anything to hurt themselves or what they believe in. Except for a few hard-core radicals, students realize that their power lies in the vote."

Beaumont and the national media concur that Sitterson's last semester as chancellor should be comparatively tranquil, but even with these assurances, Sitterson probably won't rest too comfortably until 1971 becomes history.

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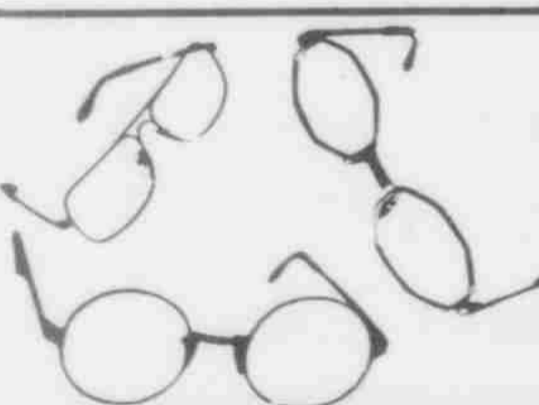
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