

SEP 03 1986
cc: Police Chief

30 August 1986

Board of Selectmen
Provincetown Town Hall
Provincetown, Mass.

Dear Selectmen:

Information from *The Advocate* of 28 August is unusually enlightening in view of controversy surrounding the recent police action at Spiritus Pizza. To learn that one of the summer policemen (who I assume was hired by Chief Meads) was caught verbally assaulting gays was an interesting insight into the character of the individuals hired to enforce peace and order in this town. I wonder how many times and in how many ways and by how many other summer police this prejudice had been expressed prior to this incident.

Another article in the same issue of our local paper describes how two summer policemen drove their vehicle into a parked car at 3:30 in the morning on August 20th. Although the car they hit was apparently totaled and according to witnesses they tried to flee the scene of this accident, no charges were filed, no breathalyzer test given. It's impossible to believe that if an ordinary citizen had been driving that car that he would have escaped, at the very least, a test to determine if he was intoxicated.

Finally, Selectman Elizabeth Steele, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, admits in yet another article that the selectmen and Police Chief "did not communicate" and that "the public was not well-informed about the decision to increase the number of police officers in front of Spiritus." Selectman Mary Jo Avellar goes on to admit "the police action was a case of over-zealous law enforcement." I imagine the reported contradiction between Town Manager Jeffer's view of this incident and Chief of Police Meads' explanation will be explained away in further clarifications.

All of this information and much more that we're aware of (and probably much we're not aware of) makes it very, very difficult to understand the Board's defiant stand that those arrested in the events at Spiritus must answer to those charges. When the police break the law, or engage in misconduct, there is no retribution (being fired at the end of the season is not what I would consider punishment nor is escaping all charges on what

seems to most people to have been drunken driving) while ordinary citizens who are the brunt of police "over-zealousness" must answer to the law! Is that the message you are trying to convey?

Further, as in any hierarchy, particularly a uniformed one such as the police, a commander is responsible for the actions of his subordinates. Chief of Police Meads has a lot to answer for in this regards. In addition, he must also answer for a demonstrated insensitivity to not only a specific situation that required sensitivity such as the Spiritus incident, but to the more generalized environment of this town as a whole. This summer that demonstration began with those he hired for summer police --- or accepted if he wasn't the one to do the hiring --- and has continued right up to the present problem.

Your attempt to let everyone blow-off steam and let this thing die-down while washing your hands of those most directly victimized by the police actions in question is unbecoming, unkind and unacceptable. There is responsibility to be doled-out here and you cannot sweep your duty to do so under the rug. Incompetency, or worse, has been demonstrated here and, like any cancer, ignoring it will not make it go away. If you believe it will you have seriously underestimated the depth of feeling on this subject and will find your position increasingly untenable. Better that you deal with this now and put it behind you so the rest of us don't have to keep it in front of you until justice is done. I promise you, there are many people who fully intend to do just that.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Schildt
225 Commercial Street
Provincetown, Mass. 02657

cc: Provincetown Business Guild
Provincetown Town Manager's Office
Provincetown Chamber of Commerce
Congressman Gary Studds