

LETTERS

Smoker

In the *Personals* section of E & S for October J. R. Allen '42 admitted he was "active in several southern California pipe smokers clubs, a v.p. in the International Association of Pipe Smokers Clubs" and said he'd be pleased to hear from anyone interested or curious about pipe club activity."

We don't know how many were interested but we got enough queries from curious readers to warrant our asking John Allen for a fuller explanation of life among the pipe clubs—which appears below:

Sirs:

Generally, a Pipe Club is a group of men bound together socially by a common interest in pipe smoking and/or (though not necessarily) the collecting of pipes of all sorts.

Aside from the social angle, many clubs have been of service in different channels . . . such as visiting

Veteran's Hospitals and distributing smoking materials, talking about and showing pipe collections, and teaching pipe carving.

What happens at a typical meeting? Do we sit around smoking pipes and contributing to the local smog menace? Well, yes, but that's not quite all.

The Two Man Pipe Club of Van Nuys, is just that—2 men. At a recent weekly meeting some visitors were "allowed in on" a heated discussion about how fast to puff on a pipe for best results. All visitors must smoke "Babies Bottom", a mild English mixture.

The largest local club is sponsored by Lockheed Aircraft Company. At their August dinner meeting, members viewed and discussed slides of various famous and rare pipes. An annual picnic for members and families is held in October.

A typical Long Beach Pipe Club meeting will be a Pot-Luck supper followed by a showing of porcelain pipes from member Ed Copeland's famous collection. If time permits, there will be a frenzied pipe-trading session.

The Drag-N-Puff Club met in my

den this September, listened to a talk on blending tobacco, then tried mixing up some of their own concoctions from basic tobaccos. The official pipe is the English clay "churchwarden."

Similar activities are followed by clubs in Los Angeles, Santa Ana, Whittier, Monterey Park, and Beverly Hills. Every three months the Southern California clubs hold a joint dinner meeting with the role of host rotating among the clubs.

This local picture is repeated elsewhere in the country, with most clubs being members of the IAPSC, which holds a yearly convention and acts as a clearing house for the exchange of ideas between clubs.

My own deep regard for pipes probably dates from the time I sat in Professor Martel's office, getting some help on a structures problem while one of his countless wastebasket fires blazed away, only casually noticed by him. My pipe has yet to fire up a wastebasket but that doesn't dampen my enthusiasm.

Thank you for this opportunity to sound off on my favorite subject.

John R. Allen '42

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