My life on a bus (or, Where’s Smith?)

I remember when it all started. The ticketline. I had to get up at a ridiculous hour of the morning in order to be sure of getting a ticket to the Smith party, since our press passes were cancelled. We all stood in line, half asleep, watching the passers-by. Someone asked, “What is this?” “A gathering of the horniest guys at MIT,” a tall guy answers.

I should have realized then that it was going to be a losing situation and gone back to bed. Instead, I bought my ticket and joined the other 425 guys and 25 women outside McCormick Saturday evening as we boarded six buses, bound for “an evening at Smith College.”

Everyone seemed in good spirit on the bus. A party autocrat came aboard and warned us to be back at the bus stations at Smith. I should have realized then that it was going to be a losing situation and gone back to bed. Instead, I bought my ticket and joined the other 425 guys and 25 women outside McCormick Saturday evening as we boarded six buses, bound for “an evening at Smith College.”

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Finally, the “rescue” bus appeared, after we had spent three and a half hours at the roadside. We cheered, only to learn that we had to continue on to Smith, as all of the other bus drivers had come back to see the broken bus and the drivers had to return to their own buses, at Smith.

A half-hour on the road had passed, and most of us had given up all hope of getting to the party. “We got screwed,” someone muttered sleepily, across the aisle. “I didn’t,” someone else replied.

“Now we can all say we got screwed when we get back,” another person cracks, as he begins laughing convulsively. I wondered how much worse the situation could become.

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A half-hour on the road had passed, and most of us were asleep again. Suddenly, the bus lurched, and shook, and the driver pulled it over to the side of the road again, moving slowly up to a streetlight near an exit ramp. A belt in the steering system had come off, disabling the power steering. We couldn’t believe it. “Does this happen a lot?”

“T’ll bet a donkey in front.”

After a half-hour of work, the belt was fixed, and we finally drove on to Northampton, arriving there exactly five minutes before all of the parties closed at one o’clock.

I rushed over to the gym, in time to hear the end of the last song. I began frantically questioning Smith women, hoping to be able to salvage some kind of a story in the twenty minutes I had remaining at Smith. Most of the women seemed neither disappointed nor excited about the party, but most thought it was worthwhile.

3:30am. at about 2:45 the convoy pulled over to shoulder, for the third time. This time, another bus was the victim, but at three in the morning we didn’t care anymore.

After another half-hour wait, we continued on. We arrived in Boston at 4:30.