

# Haunts, Hang Outs and Havens

By Daniel Murphy '97

*Daniel Murphy '97 is news editor of Rowan Magazine. He enjoys sitting on the Wall in hopes of reviving it as a cool hangout.*

Sometimes you were there to kill time between classes or to rendezvous with a study partner. But most of the time, it was to just relax and shoot the breeze with friends.

The favorite hangouts of Glassboro State-Rowan University students have changed dramatically over the years. Each new generation of students establishes its own hip and happening hot spot to hang on campus. Each hangout was a unique and natural gathering place reflecting that generation's personality, character and era.

Although campus hangouts have changed, one thing has remained the same: the reason for hanging out. Everyone needs a comfortable refuge from the rigors of academic life. Bomb a test? Lose the big game? Break up with your boyfriend? No problem—you knew just where to go to find a warm smile and a friendly face.

So, get out your yearbooks, varsity sweaters and freshman beanies as we take a tour of student haunts past and present.

## The Student Rec Center

With more and more students living a healthier lifestyle, the Student Recreation Center has become the latest hangout on campus. More than 3,000 students regularly use the facility each year. Tina Pinocci, director of the Student Recreation Center, thinks students like to hang out at the Rec Center because it exercises their minds as well as their bodies. "I like the fact that the Rec Center has become a social activity as well as a physical one," said Pinocci. "I see students come in for a 45-minute workout but stay for two hours because they've met up with friends who are working out, too."

Takashi Abiko '95, '98 has been active



at the Rec Center since it opened in 1993. He has seen the Rec Center evolve from a place that only attracted athletes to a place where a broad range of people can come to enjoy a workout. "Students and alums who work out at the Rec Center are not just athletes," said Abiko. "They're people interested in feeling better about themselves, leading healthier lifestyles and making new friends."

And it's not just students who are finding the Rec Center a great place to hang out. Many Glassboro State-Rowan alumni are realizing the physical and social benefits of the Rec Center. Rich Senior '75, a long-time member, sees more and more alums joining each day. "It's because the Rec Center is not just a place to sweat," Senior said. "There are no phones or television, so you can forget about the worries of the day, relieve some stress and concentrate on yourself." Plus, he added, "it's a great place to get reacquainted with your classmates."

## The Glassboro Train Station

For many students during the late twenties and thirties the only way to campus was by steam train. For these first commuter students, the Glassboro train station became a natural hangout and remained a campus favorite well into the fifties.

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After class, students would take a leisurely five-minute walk from the steps of Bunce Hall (then known as Old Main) to the train station for their ride home. Inside the station, large wooden benches offered students a place to sit with friends and pass the time while waiting for the train. They would discuss the news of the day, assignments, read a book or catch up on homework.

Students from the first few graduating classes even helped to beautify their de facto hangout with flowers and plants. Dorothy Albrecht '25 recalls planting flowers grown in the greenhouse with Mr. John Sangree, the biology teacher, and Dr. Jerohn J. Savitz, the school's first president. "My classmates and I planted pretty rose bushes on the side of the station," said Albrecht.

### The Co-op: Pinochle anyone?

During the mid-sixties and early seventies the Student Co-op was the heart of the campus, beating with non-stop activity. Even if it was to just pop your head in to say hi, or grab a quick snack,



the Co-op was the major hub of student traffic.

The ubiquitous colors of the sixties—orange, yellow and avocado—adorned the Co-op where students came to socialize with friends, catch up on assignments, read a book or play a game of cards. Coffee, soda, doughnuts and chips were the snacks du jour.

For Jack Bennett '71, the co-op was a daily ritual. "By 9 a.m.," Bennett said, "I was savoring my first cup of coffee and a cigarette." He would find some friends, relax and lose his jacket under a pile of coats, hats and scarves on the coat hooks between the tables.

For many students, a favorite past-time at the Co-op was a good game of pinochle. "Sometimes the card games would get out of hand," added Bennett. "We would end up in round-robin tournaments with other tables. The winner of one table would play the winner of another table, and so on—even to the point of skipping your next class. The losers, of course, had to go to class."

### The Wall: To see and be seen

From the fifties through the mid-seventies, the Wall was the social center of campus. Located between Memorial Hall, the Co-op and Bunce Hall, the 100-foot long white cinder block wall became a natural place to sit with classmates. Not a day went by that students didn't squeeze together from one end of the Wall to the other. You couldn't walk along the narrow sidewalk without seeing someone you knew.

During the early sixties, Freshman Week offered anxious first-year students an opportunity to get oriented to the school. Of course, back then, freshmen were instantly recognized by their mandatory blazers and beanies—no blending into the crowd for them.

For Yvonne Tanger Hitzelberger '62 and her friends, the Wall was the place to get acquainted. "As freshmen, we were required to introduce ourselves to the upperclassmen hanging out on the wall," said Hitzelberger. "We would ask

them to sign cardboard signs that we made and wore around our necks. It was scary at first, but the upperclassmen were very friendly, and in the end, you were glad you did it because you got to meet so many great people."

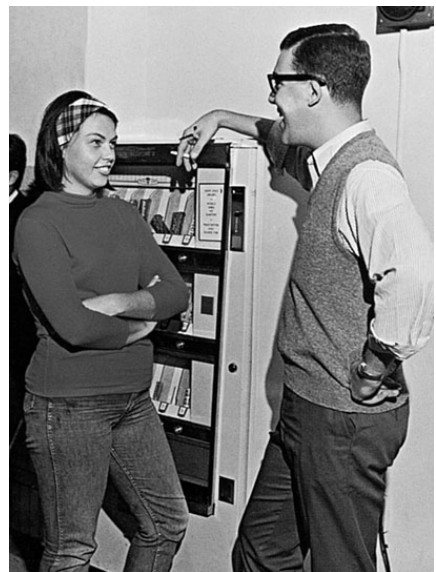
Some students found lasting friendship at the Wall and others found lasting love. Gail Foote Mossman met her husband Bob Mossman '64 at the Wall. "It was the first or second day of classes and a friend of mine introduced me to him," said Mossman. "I sat down next to him on the Wall and we've been together ever since."



### The KAR Commuter Lounge: Home away from home

Kappa Alpha Rho (KAR) was established in 1958 as the official organization for commuting students. Its purpose was to help commuter students with the perpetual parking space shortage and to give them a voice on campus. It sponsored various activities including dances, hayrides, road rallies, skating parties and a commuters' banquet.

Retired faculty member and football



coach Richard Wackar, one of the group's first advisers, recalls students traveling each day from as far away as Camden, Vineland and Cape May to school, but not having a place to go between classes. "KAR was a darn good idea," said Wackar. "Commuter students could come to campus and feel comfortable and connected to the college. KAR made it easier for them to stay for sporting events, join student clubs and attend evening activities."

The KAR lounge, located in a converted locker room in the basement of Bunce Hall, had all the essential amenities including a sofa for napping and a vending machine with candy bars for a dime and Life Savers for a nickel. But more importantly, it helped to establish unity and lasting friendships for students who didn't live on campus.

For Doris A. Payne '66, a former KAR president, becoming involved with KAR gave her a sense of school spirit that she might have missed by not living on campus. "KAR gave us a framework to enjoy the same social activities that students who lived on campus experienced," said Payne. "I was able to participate in all the major school functions including decorating the KAR Homecoming float with large dahlias from my mother's garden."

### **The Rathskeller: It wasn't Cheers, but everybody knew your name**

The year is 1977. It's a Thursday night and you're waiting in line with a couple hundred other students at the most popular hangout on campus—officially known as the Rathskeller, but you call it the Rat. Once inside the smell of thick smoke and alcohol surrounds you, the local band is pounding out your favorite rock tune, and your friends are waiting for you at a table with a three-dollar pitcher of beer and mugs all around.

The bartender's name wasn't Sam, but it was the school's watering hole for many years. It's where you came to meet your friends before heading out for the



night. While the Rat was best known for its nighttime festivities, it also offered a lunchtime haven for cafeteria and snack bar refugees.

On the last day the Rat served lunch, 150 faithful students and alums crowded in to eat. When Mark Wagener '87, '90, '95 announced "last call" like he always did at 1:30 p.m., the students erupted into a chorus of "one more hour, one more hour." Wagener gave in, but by 3:30 p.m., he had convinced the mob to leave their beloved bar. Wagener closed the doors at 4:00 p.m., and a lunchtime lair quietly faded into campus hangout history. ■