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### News Clipping - The Cleveland Times - Nov. 16, 1967

Alicia Bridges

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# First Baptist Youth Group Has Local 'Coffee House'

By: ALICIA BRIDGES

This is the year, 1967, the year of hippies, banana peelings, and trips. On the coast of California teens listen to the frantic sounds of the Greatful Dead; and they blow their minds.

Here in Shelby, and in Cleveland County we are moved far away from this maddening activity, but we are not free from hearing about such "goings on".

Perhaps they are the exception to the rule, these hippies and drug fiends. Wouldn't it be nice to know that the majority of our youth finds pleasure and entertainment elsewhere?

This is also the year of the Coffee House. "The coffee house? Man, you gotta be kiddin'. The coffee house went out with beatniks, bongos, and Greenwich Village."

No, surprisingly enough, it didn't. In fact, there is such an establishment here in Shelby, and it has thrived ever since its first opening night.

"What's it called?" The name of the coffee house is the King of Hearts, and the purpose is to reach young people with the Christian message in a manner that appeals to them and that is relevant. These words come from a data sheet drawn up by Mel Doughty and his teens at First Baptist Church.

"Oh, I see, it's not really a coffee house at all. It's just some church organization that gets you in there and then they read scriptures to you. Boy, that's not for me."

But you're wrong again. The program consists of folk singing, dramas, art interpretations, readings, skits, and stunts. Different singing groups from this part of the state sing. Usually the main message will come through a drama. At no time will there be any dancing.

"No dancing? Man, are you crazy? Whatta you mean no dancing? You can't say a thing like that to a crowd of teen-agers and expect them to show up."

"Want to bet we can't? This rule has applied ever since the coffee house was opened, and it has been packed every night. It will hold a capacity of eighty people. Never has a crowd been on the 'slack' side. One of the reasons for the no-dancing rule is (1) folk music certainly wouldn't do for dancing, and (2) this program is designed to challenge youth, to make them think. Now whose mind can stay in focus while doing the Watusi?"

"Maybe you've got something there, friend."

"You should really see the atmosphere this place has. Why there are modernistic paintings on the walls, red, blue and yellow spotlights, just the right setting. On top of that, there are refreshments for all."

"Yeah, well how much does it cost to make this swinging scene?"

"Nothing. Absolutely, nothing. You see, the King of Hearts Coffee House is a club. Any high or junior high school student is eligible to join. A membership card is given to those who fill out a membership application. Nothing else is required to get a card. Everyone must show his card when he enters. Any member may bring a guest. Guests come in and sign the guest book with nothing else being required."

It is said on the information sheet provided by the teens of First Baptist Church that:

"The operation, programming, and atmosphere of the King of Hearts will be such as to convey a "freedom of expression" so that all may engage in meaningful conversation, freedom of expression, etc. through folk singing.

"We want all who come to feel free to express themselves and not to feel they have to act in any certain way. We want no one to come and play a role who in reality is only putting up a front. We want everyone to be himself. We would warn that this is a Christian Coffee House and it

is run by Christian youth who must be honest too, and must not play a role. We are not going to ask you if you are going to hell but want to share what we have and hope that as two people meet, those who do not know our Savior will meet Him in truth. We do not allow drinking or any other means of hiding our true self. The freedom we want you to have is one that allows self to be discovered.

"We do not follow any given

ritual. There is no need to ask, 'how are you' unless you want to find out. Our goal is that you can find yourself and meet others as they really are. This is a place we can go and not have to play the game that the world makes you play. Questions will be raised and no set answer will be given except as you seek them."

"The program has flexibility and at any time you may share with the group. We may be square,

but at least we are honest, and are seeking the truth."

How many times have you heard it said, that our young people need a place to go, somewhere to express themselves. The King of Hearts, is just such an establishment run on Christian faith of the youth and counselors in this community. Anyone interested may contact Mel Doughty, Minister of Youth, First Baptist Church, Shelby.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1967

THE CLEVELAND TIMES

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*House'*

G.W. To Present 'The Smith'