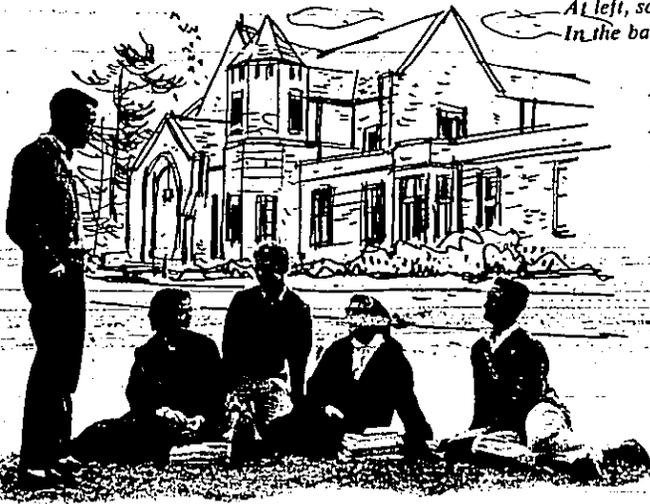


At left, some of the teen-agers who worked on the social code. In the background, the Rye High School.



# Teen-Agers to the RESCUE!



IS IT reasonable to insist that a fourteen-year-old be home by 10:30 on Saturday night? Should a girl have to worry about schedules if she is going out with a boy who is in training? Is there anything so bad about bringing a few cans of beer to a friend's party? If the holder of a junior license happens to be an excellent driver, and has no way to get to the party unless he can take the car, can't you make an exception to the law that says he must not drive after

Wherever there are parents and teen-agers, these painful questions are bound to come up, and it would take Solomon to answer them. Be lenient, and it will be against your better judgment. Be strict, and you will seem unjust compared to other parents, and worse still, you may be forcing your teen-ager to be "different." You can't win.

Last year in Rye, New York, the strict parents and the lenient ones put the problem squarely to their teen-agers. Would they consult, and draw up their own code of behavior, one set of rules for everyone to follow?

"We felt the time had come," says Mrs. Charles Rice, president of the Mothers Guild of the Rye High School. "We knew that parents were not consistent about discipline, hours for dates, types of parties and so on. After we had studied existing codes, including two from the neighboring towns of Brinkville and Rye Neck, we came to the conclusion that if our young people could write their own set of behavior rules, they would certainly be more acceptable, and probably easier to keep."

The teen-agers agreed. A committee of forty-six was formed, drawn from class presidents and vice-presidents and heads of sororities, and average students, and from every high school in Rye. Everyone was invited. The interested parents contributed a room where they could meet, provided them with such code material as they had been able to collect, made plans to have the teen-agers' code printed and circulated when it was drawn up, advised them to keep it simple and to the point, and left them to themselves. After weeks of discussion and earnest thought the forty-six turned out the following code which they described as "a simple set of rules to guide our social activities." Here are their rules, as they stand today in the handbook of the Rye High School:

*We the teen-agers of Rye subscribe to the following code:*

## PARTIES

1. We feel it is discourteous for anyone to attend a party, not personally invited by the host or hostess, unless the party has been designated an "Open House."
2. Crashers should be politely but firmly ousted.
3. There are two types of "Open House": those "open to everyone," and those "open" to a specific group. The former often gets out of hand. We feel the latter is more desirable.
4. At least one parent or responsible adult **MUST** be present whenever teen-agers entertain. While allowing the young people a sensible measure of privacy, they should be informed as to transportation at all times.
5. The type of dress worn at parties should be suitable for the type of party given, and the

final decision is left up to the family at whose house the party is to be held.

6. Having definite hours for a party to start and finish is socially correct. The specific time set for any party is left up to the discretion of the host family and should be made known to the parents of the guests.

7. Parents should know at all times where their teen-agers are and should be informed as to transportation. Teen-agers should know at all times where their parents can be reached.

## HOURS

1. The following is a general guide for week-end social activities by grades—7th, 10 p.m., 8th, 10:30 p.m., 9th, 11 p.m., 10th, 12 p.m., and 11th, 12:30 a.m.
2. Circumstances may arise that will necessitate exceptions to the above hours. Generally, all dates should be talked over with parents, and a definite time agreed on for each date.
3. A reasonable time for getting home from functions such as school proms, special out-of-town dates, etc., should be arranged in advance by both parents and teen-agers.
4. We feel that at all times the girl should tell her date the time set for her return. He should follow her wishes.
5. A girl should also respect her date's time limit, when car, training schedules, etc., are involved.

## DRIVING

At all times, be a considerate and courteous driver. We feel that parents should insist that their children obey all driving laws. For example:

1. No driving when drinking.
2. No "hot rodding."
3. Laws pertaining to junior licenses.

## DRINKING

1. We feel that alcoholic drinks should not be available to anyone under age at any party.

2. No adult should take the liberty of offering alcoholic beverages to a teen-age guest.

3. Bringing drinks to a house where one is a guest is bad form and inadmissible.

The Rye Code is believed to be the first such document ever written and voted into existence by teen-agers only. When it was completed, it was shown to the parents for their acceptance—not for their approval or ratification. The committee, for instance, vetoed an adult suggestion that the section on Open House be omitted.

"Open House," they said firmly, "is definitely a teen-age custom, and if we omit it from the code everyone would know that we had not written it."

The parents retreated, accepted the rules as written, and then did their part in the follow-up, arranging for printing, distribution and useful publicity. The code has become incorporated in the high school handbook and circulated to the families of every teen-ager in Rye, and inquiries have poured in from all sides.

The teen-agers have fulfilled the hopes of their parents. Their code works. The coders are not resting on their laurels, however. Some of the original forty-six have now graduated, and others have been elected to their place, to re-evaluate and re-edit as necessary, to keep their own basic rules of behavior up to date and functioning.

Young People Pool Ideas,

Work Out Social Code For Their Own—

And Their Parents'—Guidance

