Hugo Survives Great Inquisition; King Sneaks ‘93’ Through Senate

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The campus has been saturated within the last week with ubiquitous posters bearing the cryptic number “Ninety-Three.” Steve King, Baker ’65, who admits to posting all the signs, explains that the number refers to “Ninety-Three,” by Victor Hugo, a novel set in the France of 1793.

The signs suggest that “Ninety-Three” is the Book of the Semester, and the book is available in the Rice Campus Store as such. However, Bill Timme, Student Association President, said “This is not the official Book of the Semester as sanctioned by the Student Senate.”

Late Recognition

At its meeting Wednesday, the SA belatedly recognized King’s effort, appointing him chairman.

The Book of the Semester is normally chosen by a Book of the Semester Committee appointed by the Student Senate, this choice is approved by the Senate, and the books are ordered.

Students who read the book then meet regularly to discuss the work, being led by a different faculty member each meeting. Last semester, however, the meetings were attended mainly by the faculty, with only two or three students participating in most of the meetings.

Due to the lack of student enthusiasm, no official Book of the Semester had been chosen.

Free Enterprise

There being no official book of the semester, Mr. King, a "staunch believer" in the American free enterprise system, selected his own book of the semester, the heavily advertised "Ninety-Three," persuaded English professor Dr. Gerald O’Grady to act as faculty advisor, and somehow got the bookstore to order a hundred of the books. Forty have been bought at last count by those who have seen all those little signs. The first discussion has been scheduled for November 10 in the Fondren Lecture Lounge.

The Student Senate had neither sanctioned nor discouraged the book as Book of the Semester. But SA or no, Steve King will be leading the first discussion Tuesday afternoon, and if “Ninety-Three” is not the book of the semester, it is a book which will get a lot of discussion this semester, both inside and outside Mr. King’s meetings.