

Welcome!
to the
AVIAGEF
RESTAURANT

Vanguard

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The Newspaper of Bennington College

Bennington College

Bennington, Vermont 05201

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A special Student Council meeting last night resulted in a paper drafted of student concerns voiced at the meeting. The trustees will be on campus Thursday, and are scheduled for meetings through Sunday. Page 3.

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Topper Lilien writes about off campus life in the country in his regular column, "Top's Tips." Also in Vantage, Vanguard's editorial section, are editorials urging the trustees to appraise themselves and a proposal for a new grading system. Pages 4-5.

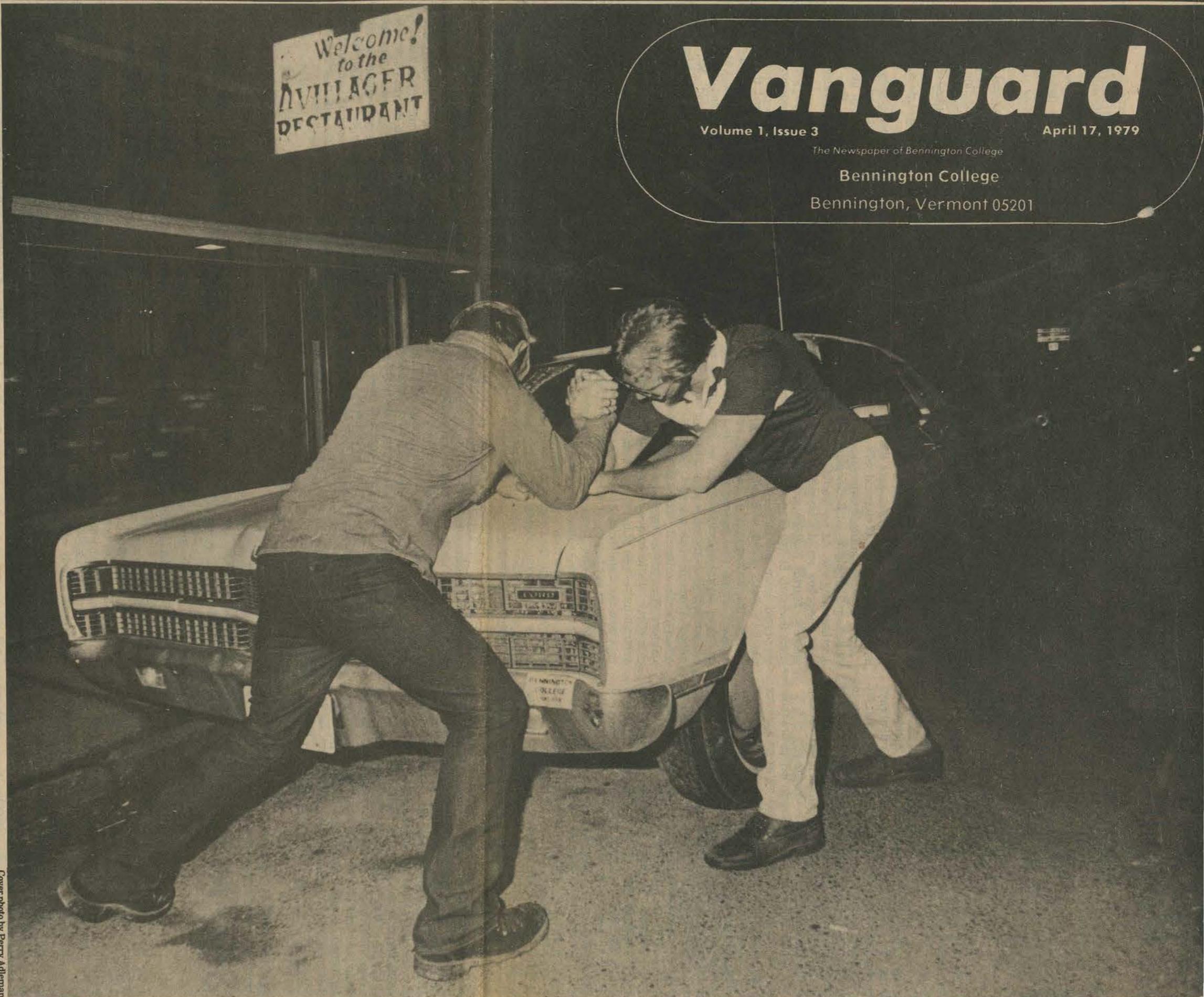
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Peter Beck's recent senior concert is reviewed on Vanguard's review page, along with a commentary on the state of rock music today Page 6.

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The softball team was forced to cancel its season-opening home-stand this weekend because of heavy rain and unplayable conditions. The squad is scheduled to open on Sunday. Page 8.

Cover photo by Perry Adelman



Nagrin performance inspires thoughts

By EVE SALZMAN

Although these thoughts have nagged at me for a while, they took the form of writing with the occasion of the workshop and performance of the visiting guest artist, Daniel Nagrin. Mr. Nagrin has always been a controversial figure in the dance world. I am not in a position to identify or understand the motives of those who might still question his validity. But I am a "product" of contemporary thought that has accepted for our daily fare, minimal dance and all that "falls" under the category of avant-garde; I therefore "criticize" from within these realms. Unquestionably Mr. Nagrin is a mature and formidable artist whose ability to evoke emotional extremes — whether or not favorable — bespeaks his effectiveness. Mr. Nagrin remarked on the "oversophistication" of the Bennington audience. I might carry this further into the realms of the elitist. We will always find (perhaps search for) flaws in creative works, and yet it sometimes seems that it might be more enlightening to advance beyond this point of dissecting method or theory in search of "holes." There exists a danger of missing the point altogether of going beyond the art of it and reaching a realm something akin to scientific analysis.

The depths into which Daniel Nagrin delves are those inside of himself but the talent that we as an audience recognize lies in his ability to have this inner part or spark converse with the theatre-tableau. His method, (as College Week described it) "in which visual design and impact of movement are created by Inner Action," seeks out and explores random action; but the clarity of image results from the transformation, then display, of these subtleties as an organized, readable and theatrical form. Daniel Nagrin has a special awareness not only of the actual movement of his body throughout the dance, but also of the surroundings in which it takes place. A number of people were bothered by the mixture of the literal and abstract in "Getting Well." One person questioned the "need" for the hospital bed. To this remark, I must answer with some sort of definition of the "abstract". If I cannot pin this down with any exactitude or precision, I can at least describe this "state" in which one or something is removed from something else. In entering into this unreal or visionary realm, one should have first been to the real or literal realm to know from what one is breaking away; there is no meaning to the word "torn," without "something" to tear.

Helen Tamiris believed that "we must not forget the age we live in." I ask myself sometimes if Bennington has difficulty forgetting the age we lived in. Certainly it is perfectly legitimate to dispense with theatricality if it is part of the piece's message. As a repetitive motif, used not necessarily because it is integral, it loses its meaning — and impact. Often "...the presentation is shuffled under the rug." Either people do not want to bother or worse, it is trendy and to so "shuffle" is thus imitative. Imitation in art is a crime to oneself as well as to others. I speak about imitation without awareness. This activity can happen when a particular teacher is particularly revered.

Originality "happens" in the "how" of a piece — how it is put together and how it is performed. Originality will not be "found" through being obscure, bizarre and/or "avant-garde." Nagrin commented on this plateau or point of stagnation that modern dance has reached.

The new popularity of this field has many of its artists "pandering to what the audience wants". I wonder if perhaps we "pander" to the "far-out" or avant-garde. We laugh at our own clichés about Bennington art. Why? What do we mean? Do we laugh because they no longer apply — or because they still do. We are so repulsed by the use of the word "entertainment" with respect to dance (or any art) that we have forgotten that, not only can one be sincere and original and entertain as a "by-product" but also that entertainment can just as well provoke thought and "make statements." The field of modern dance, with its sharp classifications, thus runs the risk of being as narrow-minded as that of classical ballet.

I find a peculiar attitude amongst some of the dance students in that history at Bennington apparently has a discriminating eye. As we learned to love Doris Humphrey, somehow we also learned to hate — or at least ignore — Martha Graham and others. One would half-smile tolerantly at this over-emphasized and apparently over-rated name and then discuss the unjustness with which the dance world doles out credit. Why? It is true that Martha Graham created a technique that is almost classical within the modern dance field. Is it then technique and/or classicism that we are ignoring or condemning? Either way we are condemning our mother without whom we would not exist. For whatever reasons — historically, culturally sociologically — modern dance was born after and was largely a break from ballet. In any case, Graham's technique is based on principles very different from those of ballet and it seems incredible to even consider dismissing or lightly shrugging off such a large part of our history. (Graham's style, incidentally, was initially disliked because of its "ugliness.") Any dancer with a little knowledge can easily name five major artists who began their own careers when they themselves broke from the Graham company. This is not to belittle the accomplishments of Doris Humphrey and others or ignore the fact that in the past she has not been given the credit due her.

As a dancer at Bennington, I have faced various problems, but I sense a common denominator. I am often understandably aggravated at the condescending manner with which individuals scoff and ridicule ballet or so-called virtuosic movement. As a "product" of classical training — ballet and modern — I am perhaps especially sensitive, but there is another more objective element of inequality as well. At the same time people are belittling me — my background — the hard work and training I have enjoyed since I was about 11 — I am what is being offered. And trying to learn from it — from teachers and peers — I certainly have a long way to go and would rather not believe that in the past I have "wasted my time."

Any sort of "balletic" or "leggy" combination in technique class is often described with mockery. If we must use a classical (dirty word) term to describe a motion, we must also use it derisively to show "we are not classical dancers... we are modern dancers." There prevails a curious reluctance and distaste with regard to more physically difficult and demanding exercises. We talk incessantly of banishing caution from our movement and yet sometimes an exercise is changed or "thrown away" because of the "excessive pain" and "suffering" of the artist. Perhaps we need to redefine this word "caution" to fit our needs. Perhaps we need to redefine "pain" and "suffering". No one yet has died of "prophetic and anticipated twinges." I am by no means advocating some sort of military drill in technique class, but part of the idea is to attain some degree of body freedom — mobility, flexibility and so on. Choreography sometimes replaced technique in technique class and certain tuning and practicing of the body are ignored in favor of an aesthetic different from that of the "beautiful" arabesque, but just as limiting in its value to overall capacity.

We talk ourselves blue about energy and yet often it is a contained intellectual energy that we explore — one that is never transformed into movement. As a dancer, one desires to train equally the mind and the body and ultimately synthesize them in performance and creation. It will do a dancer little good to be proficient at standing stock-still and thinking a dance. At the end of the long and intensive workshop that he conducted, Mr. Nagrin commented on how inhibited the group was. I found that more than slightly curious at a school like Bennington with its reputation for being innovative.

Dancers should not be intimidated into rejecting certain ways of movement with which they are familiar only "through the grapevine". Obviously the size of the Bennington Dance Division is such that it is most "profitable" to be meticulous in the small area it covers. Yet there is one position that is frequently changed. It is well to invite back College alumni as teachers, but it limits and perpetuates this aesthetic that is peculiar Bennington and leaves little or no room for the remaining dance world of which we are only a small segment. The excitement of having a guest artist such as Daniel Nagrin should not be a unique experience.

I cannot don the Bennington "blindness." My intellect and my body sometimes feel more constrained here than they ever felt freely participating in a ballet class. Martha Wittman, before she herself set out on her own, was a member of the Doris Humphrey Company. Just as we, I suppose, are members of the Martha Wittman ensemble. I only hope that we too will set out on our own equipped with not only the insight, knowledge and special qualities which Martha Wittman certainly has to offer, but also with a remembrance un presupposed and unbiased, of a past that formed us... and of course with that little extra something we each add to all of that.

Editor interviewed

Silo to be smaller, more ambitious this year

Ian Gonzalez is Editor-in-Chief of *Silo*, the College's literary magazine.

By LISA OZAG

L.O.: How would you classify *Silo*? Is it a literary magazine, a journal of the arts....?

I.G.: For whatever the classification is worth, a literary magazine.

L.O.: What are the goals of *Silo*?

I.G.: Simply good, honest, creative fiction and poetry; stimulating critical prose; and perhaps an interview. We want an attractive magazine obviously, something which will sell, which will be respected and which will justify to the administration and faculty the need to continue to publish the magazine. I think we'd like to see a greater cohesion in this magazine than we have seen in say, last year's *Silo* or last fall's *Early Harvest*. Since *Silo* '79 is to be a much smaller magazine than either of the later publications, it will mean the exercise of a greater selectivity. I personally would like to see the work of five poets printed instead of the 10 or 12 printed in *Early Harvest*. I'd like to see things in a series — obviously that's not going to be a tenable idea in terms of the creative prose we publish, but it can be done with photography and graphics or art (though much less of these will be published than in previous years) and to a lesser extent with critical prose. By a series I don't necessarily mean "like" subjects, i.e. a magazine with a "theme," which was suggested at an early *Silo* meeting,

but which I feel would be untenable as well as limiting. It could also mean 2-3 works, not necessarily thematically close, by one author.

L.O.: Many students have commented that they don't know the differences between *Silo* and *Early Harvest*? Are there any — if so, what differences?

I.G.: *Early Harvest* was conceived with the idea that it would print a body of student work which was more representative than selective; which might print work other than in last draft form and, which would fill the gap between the once yearly publication of *Silo*. The first *Early Harvest* published no art whatsoever, partly, I think, because it was felt that artists at Bennington had the means, through shows, of exhibiting their work. Other than creative writing classes and very occasional readings, writers had no such forum. This year's *Silo* is to be a much more ambitious project than any of the previous *Silo*'s. We have sent letters of solicitation to over 70 colleges and universities around the country. We hope not only to secure a large body of manuscripts, but also to stimulate interest in *Silo* and perhaps generate some subscription requests. We currently are subscribed to by a dozen or so university libraries in the west and midwest.

L.O.: Who decides what gets accepted into *Silo*?

I.G.: The individual editors and the staff make a cursory selection which is then brought before the entire editorial board and the faculty advisor, Octavio Armand,

and further reduced until it is felt to be a publishable body of work.

L.O.: Do you think there is a fair representation of the writers at Bennington in *Silo*?

I.G.: What is "fair"? The best writing will be published, the rest not. We will make mistakes, but I don't think any truly fine pieces of writing will pass by us unnoticed. I also think that we have too large a number of people involved with *Silo* this year, for it has become "cliqueish." Therefore, yes, it will be a representation of the important work being done, but no, it will not be a representation of all the writers and writing at Bennington.

L.O.: How long has *Silo* existed?

I.G.: In one form or another since Bennington was founded.

L.O.: Who funds *Silo*?

I.G.: At this point, the college provides the capitol necessary to publish the magazine and is repaid after copies have been sold (taking a loss of perhaps 200 to \$300). *Silo* also has a small budget of its own, ca. \$400.

L.O.: How much editing is actually done before the final publishing?

I.G.: Whatever is necessary on a small scale. If a manuscript is thought to be valuable but not yet "finished," changes may be suggested, or we may request a final reworking.

M.F.A. possible

By CINDY KRAVITZ

Reacting to increased numbers of college graduates, the Faculty Education Policy Committee is discussing the creation of a formal published Master of Arts degree. Subcommittee members Ron Cohen, Jack Glick, Leroy Logan and Steven Haynes have the responsibility for the compilation of this program.

An M.A. at Bennington is not new — there have always been individually designed programs for the unsolicited letters that reach different departments within the school, according to Dead of Studies Ricky Blake. These programs were designed by creating a focused program using the student's career interests.

"I think it's (the tentative M.F.A. formal program) is a vision of the field for someone who's ready," Blake said.

F.E.P.C. members cite three areas of concern in the creation of such an M.A. program:

+ whether such a program will add or detract from the teaching of undergraduates;

+ whether or not the program will enrich the intellectual environment of the school;

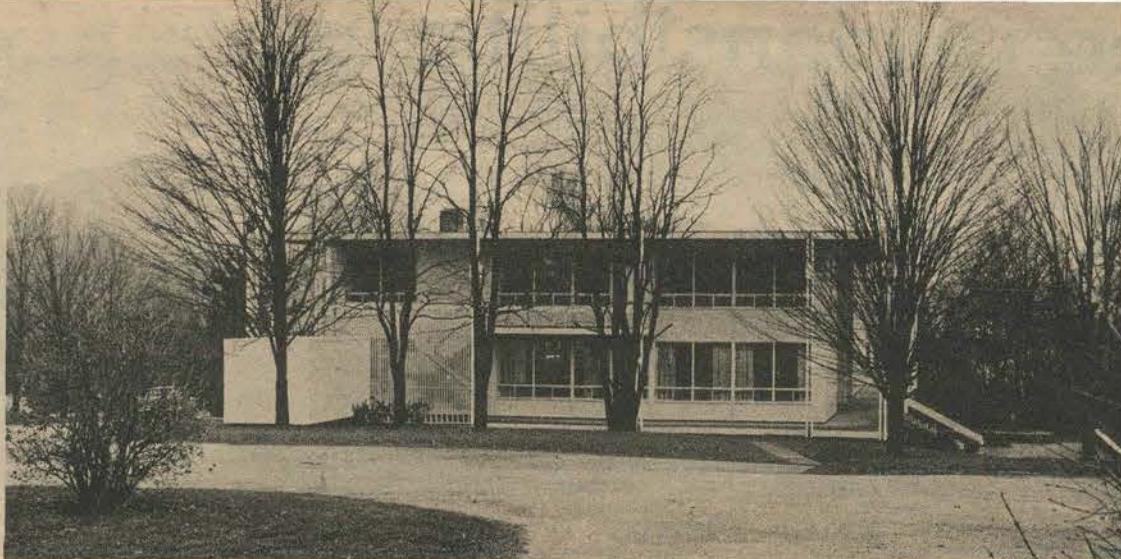
+ whether or not graduates of Bennington will be able to participate in the program.

Dean of Studies Blake is opposed to having graduates of the College participate in the graduate program for several reasons. He feels that students, at the end of four years, "have, or should have exhausted the facilities and need a change, a new exposition, a new experience and a new adventure."

At present, the fate of the M.A. is in the hands of the individual division. Drama, Art, and Literature already have programs; Black Music and Music are strongly in favor of such programs.

"We've wanted a master's program for some time," says Bill Dixon, Chairman of the Black Music Division.

"I think M.F.A.'s would revitalize the school — it would be both another teacher and another level for students to relate on."



Crossett Library

...one of the biggest student concerns...

Council airs student issues, drafts paper for trustees

A Student Council-sponsored student meeting last night resulted in a paper drafted of student concerns to be presented to the trustees this weekend. The trustees are scheduled to arrive on campus Thursday.

Student Council President Kevin Farley said that paper consists of various issues that concern students, among them the library, budget deliberations, VAPA, the administration and others. Each student will receive a copy of the draft, and it will be presented by a Student Council committee when the students meet with the trustees Saturday morning.

"Trustees are very important at Bennington," said Farley. "Every single body at the school has a parochial interest — the trustees are the only body without a vested interest. They are the one body who can be judicious, and their main purpose is to safeguard the prosperity and general health of the school."

Farley added that he thinks the trustees should look very closely at the draft of student concerns:

"Students are the main financiers and the main reason that there is a school, so these concerns had better be considered very carefully."

Friday is slated to be the fullest

day for the trustees, with meetings scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Committees to meet include academic affairs, admissions financial aid, alumni relations, budget and finance, buildings and grounds, development and the nominating committee.

Trustees meet four times a year: in October, April, and June at the College, and January in New York. At these meetings, the various committees and sub-committees which the trustees are gathered into — each trustee must be on at least two — convene and review the current state of the College.

The current executive committee includes: Mrs. T. Edward Hambleton, Chairman of the Board; Irvin J. Askow, Vice Chairman; Susan Paris Lewis,

Vice Chairman; Andrew Heiskell, Secretary; and Bernard Iser, Treasurer.

The trustees include: Mrs. Walter S. Bernheimer, Albert H. Bowker, Mrs. Hartley J. Chazen, Susan Crile, Mrs. Robert Davis, Mrs. Maurice A. Deane, Farleigh S. Dickinson Jr., Alvin C. Eurich, Helen Frankenthaler, Robert Gutman, Jon L. Hagler, Lucien M. Hanks, Dr. James M. Howell, Joseph S. Iserman, Lawrence E. Jacobs, Francis Keppel, Bevis Longstreth, Mrs. Joan D. Manley, Roberto Meinrath, Mrs. Albert Merck, Carolyn C. Merkel, Mrs. Stanley G. Mortimer, Mrs. John W. Niels, Lisa Nan Scheer, Mrs. Albert R. Schreck, Lavinia Hall Strasser, Mrs. Nathaniel H. Usdan, Mary Ellen Watkin and Mrs. Pamela Hill Wicker.



Program Director
Leroy Logan

London readies for student invasion in fall

The College will be sponsoring a program abroad in London next semester. College faculty members Leroy Logan, Phillip Minor and Graham Shane will teach part of the term, and students will also be working with teachers in London.

Logan, the director of the program, feels that the program is especially valuable because of the problem of limited experience inherent in the College's small size:

"The exposure to different types of theater will be extremely

valuable. For example, students participating in the program will be required to attend performances at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon."

One Bennington drama major feels that the program is a welcome relief:

"It will be a really good change from the Bennington style of theatrical training. I feel very strongly about the importance of having a classical background and this will make my training experience more intensive and

more thorough."

The program will only cover the fall term next year and will not extend into the Non-Resident Term. Enrollment will be limited to 20 students; admission will be based on seniority and the student's major. The program is only open to students currently at Bennington.

Housing will be the student's personal responsibility, though the College will provide hotel accommodations for the first three nights.

The program, which will not be

affiliated with any particular school in London, will be located wherever studio space permits.

Regular College tuition will cover airfare, the week to 10 days in Stratford, and the theatre tickets. Room and board after three days is the student's responsibility.

At the end of the term, evaluations will be done by one of the instructors present in London.

Students interested should contact Logan at his office in VAPA.

Kornick to speak to class

Feminist author Vivian Gornick will speak at this year's graduation, it was announced by Senior Francie Issenman. The invitation to Gornick followed a rejection from Lily Tomlin, the classes first choice.

The class had decided at a recent meeting on a list of people they thought would be appropriate as graduation speakers, following a questionnaire that was placed in the mailboxes of all seniors.

"We were in a funny position," Issenman said. "It's very late to be asking people to speak, and many people we were considering had already accepted elsewhere."

* * *

Albert B. Lord of Harvard University, the College's Stanley Edgar Hyman Memorial Lecturer, spoke last night on "Oral Traditional Narrative Song: Its Composition and Poetics." The lecture took place in Tishman.

Lord is an established authority in folk poetry at Harvard. He is a professor of Slavic Languages and Literature, curator of Harvard's folk poetry collection and was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1949-50.

Lord is co-author of "Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs," and "The Singer of Tales."

* * *

Philippine attorney and political refugee Charito Planas will speak Thursday at 8 p.m. in Barn 1. The lecture is entitled "Human Rights in the Philippines."

Planas, an outspoken critic of Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, was a Manila businesswoman and attorney before she ran last year as a candidate on an anti-Marcos slate for a new interim National Assembly. Although she received nearly one-third of the vote, the entire dissident ticket was defeated.

She was forced to hide in the outskirts of Manila for two months before she was able to escape to the United States.

On trustee responsibility

The College's Board of Trustees is scheduled to be on campus on Thursday of this week for their Spring meeting. We hope they use the occasion to take note of several important issues and start taking the proper steps to correct them.

* * *
The major issue is that of finances. The College's current financial woes should come as no surprise — it is a situation that has been getting progressively worse, with little having been done to alleviate matters. At this meeting, however, the

Spring is here — maybe

At last, it seems safe to say that Spring has arrived. Though we felt tempted to say the same thing last week — when Vermont weather lived up to its fickle reputation and dumped what seemed like feet of snow on the just-coloring grass — it now looks like Spring is finally here.

Spring in New England is more meaningful than in almost any other part of the country, for it signals an awakening of sorts, a reminder that all is not cold and dark and that there is still some hope, after all, that you won't always walk immersed in the clouds of your own breath.

On campus, Spring is a celebration: the frisbees and kegs, the softball games and the kegs, the music filtering from one of the houses all across the lawn, and the kegs, and the kegs... The College seems to explode in the Spring, and every day has that smell to it which triggers people's craziness.

There is still some comfort to be found in this changing of the season: it is a reminder that things go on and can only get better, that there is some order if we only wait long enough. Spring brings out a particular grace in us, and is something to celebrate when there is nothing else to celebrate.

Optional grade system proposed

As mid-term approaches, and we await the arrival of our mid-term comments, we are again reminded of the issue of grades. Virtually every semester, there is some form of debate as to whether there should be some form of optional system of grades to replace the comment system. We think a compromise can be reached by retaining the present system but offering students the choice of whether or not they want their comments changed to grades for transcript purposes.

The advantages of this are twofold: first, it offers students the same standard for admission to graduate school as students receiving conventional marks. Although the College has long claimed that comments are not detrimental to students applying to graduate school, and in fact may be helpful, we think the opposite is more likely. A number of admissions

trustees should take a long, hard look at the College's finances: the school in the precarious position of being close enough to rescue, but far enough away so that unless financial support comes quickly, we will soon be in an emergency state.

But while examining the College's finances, the trustees should guard against slashing the budget in an effort to over-compensate for the budget deficit. Granted, it may have to be trimmed for the next fiscal year, but we hope the Board of Trustees will carefully evaluate those areas so earmarked. The library is one example of an area that, if cut again, could well be dealt a lethal blow.

And there are other issues aside from financial ones, issues that directly effect the students. To get a full grasp on the students' view of the College's current state, we hope the trustees will carefully review — and keep in mind — the student concerns outlined in a paper drafted at last night's student meeting. Each trustee has been given a copy of these student recommendations, and we urge the Board to take them seriously.

* * *
Trustees have a certain responsibility to the college they represent; we think that it's time Bennington's Board of Trustees accepts this responsibility and starts actively making decisions and taking risks. In a school such as Bennington, trustees serve a doubly important function; on the one hand, they are the only group that can act as an unprejudiced arbiter in making decisions on behalf of the College; on the other, they ultimately have the final say in the College's decision-making process.

Whether trustee responsibility is an euphemism for financial support, we don't know; but we think the time has come for the College's trustees to take stock of their role. If Bennington is to flourish — indeed even survive — this appraisal and subsequent change will have to take place.

committee members we talked to off the record admitted they tended to either overlook those students with comments, or judge by a different — and usually harsher — set of criteria.

Such a disadvantage is totally unnecessary. For the second reason why the implementation of this optional system is beneficial is that it would only effect those students who wanted it to effect them. Those satisfied with the present system would merely have to indicate their preference.

We see no reason why this system cannot be adopted immediately. The amount of work necessary for the conversion from comment to grade — whether by the dean of studies, a special committee, or the individual teacher — seems balanced by the very important choice this system offers.

Vanguard

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Vantage

Vanguard's editorial section

April 17, 1979

—(Country) Top's Tips—

'I'm gonna m

Pardon me if I seem a bit sedated, but my reasons are sound. I spent my non-resident term as a resident in a plush rest-home in Westchester County, outside of New York City. I was also nursing a shattered radius in my right arm and numerous cuts and bruises, thanks to Don Ryan (no hard feelings, Don). My stay was both rewarding and relaxing — relaxing because I badly needed a rest and rewarding because I had a lot of time to think. I came out of the home a new man.

On my last day in the home, I was sitting in the cafeteria, eating bland starchy food, thinking about the new life which lay before me. I read the fortune on the back of the Salada teabag. "A wise man," it said, "is one that makes more opportunities than he receives." Good solid advice, a good omen.

That afternoon, I also had my last appointment with my counselor. Dr. Berkowitz sat behind his desk, neurotically kneading a yellow pencil. It was clear our little rendezvous was going nowhere. The good doctor sighed and cast me a searching, sympathetic look from behind his heavy black-framed glasses.

"One last bit of advice," he said. "I implore you to hear me out." He poured himself a glass of water and pushed his glasses up high onto the bridge of his nose. He then resumed his probing stare, something which by that point I realized he must have learned in med school. He cleared his throat.

"A wise man," he said, "is one that makes more opportunities than he receives." Oh, boy.

I left that afternoon full of undiluted optimism, a clinically diagnosed schizophrenic with an idiot's smile upon my face.

* * *

It occurred to me, after I left the home, that I should have asked the doctor what a wise-guy did. A wise man, as the record will surely show, I certainly am not — though I try my best. I came back to Bennington, though, as I have said, a new man. No more of this Friday night business. No more nights at the Villager. No sir — I had plans.

To the Editor

Some students feel that the recent community meeting with Joe Murphy was a grand success. While not quite "the total coup" is a step in the right direction: communication.

Communication is the key word to student involvement. Students can only influence policies and effectively politicize themselves if they know what those policies are about. Did any students know about the Iranian fiasco or the poor financial situation of the college before NRT? I doubt it, for if any students knew they sure kept it a secret, and is there any such animal at Bennington! The students have now shown that they want to and will become enlightened.

In the past student input didn't play an effective part in the policy-making process. When in agreement with faculty or administration policy it was always stated that a contributing factor to the decision was the will of the students. This tended to accomplish two things: first, it added further support to the policy and second it convinced students that their voice was being heard. But after a series of faculty and administration decisions (regarding the Judicial committee and S.E.P.C.) it was

"We didn't injure anybody, we didn't seriously contaminate anybody and we certainly didn't kill anybody."



"To learn that a man has said or done a foolish thing is nothing; a man must learn that he is nothing but a fool."
Michel de Montaigne

Cartoon by Carroll Cartright

By Topper Lilien

move up to the country and paint my mailbox blue'

My roommate, Ralph, had spent his non-resident term working in a mailroom in New York City — a mailroom full of, as he termed it "lowlifers and underworld types." I know him well — in his book, an "underworld type" is someone who never went to private school — but I let him carry on. I had learned, over the winter, to tolerate the whims of others. But now I was going to hit Ralph with my whim.

"Ralphie boy, I'm tired of this life. I'm tired of giggling girls and drunken guys. I'm tired of the noise and tension. I'm tired of the history of rock 'n roll being blared at me all at once every second of the day. Let's quit this miserable dorm scene and move out to the country."

Ralph eyed me suspiciously. I gave him the stare I had learned so well at the home and he submitted.

"Okay," he sighed. "You know best."

* * *

Through an ad in the Penny-Saver, we found a small place in Black Pond, New York. The ad said: "roomers wanted on large working farm." I saw the ad and the phrase "working farm" immediately caught my fancy.

"Ralph," I said, "this is it. This is what we've been waiting for."

He was somewhat reluctant. "Don't you think we should look at the place first?" he asked. I didn't listen.

"Are you kidding?" I said. "It's a farm."

* * *

Three days later, we had moved out. To get to the farm, we had to drive up a perilous two-mile dirt road. Our quarters were in a re-converted chicken coop. The outside of the old coop was, I must say, a bit dismal, but the inside was exactly what I had in mind — reasonably spacious, unfinished worn pine — the works. The view was extraordinary. Misty mountains loomed in the distance, patchwork fields abounded.

After we had settled, we lay in our beds and there was nothing but silence, a silence that was so lush it would make you cry.

"Ralphie boy," I said, "Ain't this the life." Ralph grunted. He was tired and fell asleep early. I sat up

late and took in the marvelous country night.

The farmer, Kyle Jukes Wade, was an ornery type. His wife was long dead, but he did have three children — Brant, Brett and Kyle Jr. Each of them had goiters the size of flour-filled sweat socks. When Ralph went to the market, I told him to make sure he bought iodized salt.

The weather was unusually warm for a northern March. The temperature reached into the high 60s. The farm was situated high on a hill. One night, on the radio, I picked up WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia. It was hootenany night and they were broadcasting live from The Grand Ole Opry — home of Country Music and Goo-Goos, the candy that'll make you "roar like a lion." I heard those old hillbillies, with their Hank Williams dobro voices wailing:

"I'm growing tired of the big city life
Tired of the glamour, tired of the sights
I'm always dreaming of roaming once more
Back to my home on that old river shore."

And it was then that I knew that we had made the right decision. The country life was just what the doctor had prescribed.

Days later, we sat in our mandatory overalls and smoked a joint with one of Kyle's sons (I could never tell them apart). Kyle's son, inspired by the pot, started talking "...so I got the sawed-off shotgun and hit that sucker three times in the neck. He looks at me and flies right off, by Christ..." There were wild turkeys in the barn.

* * *

I let my dog out one day and he walked towards Farmer Wade's house. I heard some awful sounds and then silence. Hours later, I found my dog, dead, on the porch outside the farmer's house.

"There's a bobcat under our house," one of Kyle's sons told me apologetically.

* * *

Ralph used to be a guitarist in the school's Black Music department. Once he'd moved out to the house, though, he decided to find a new instrument.

"I want to play banjo," he told me. Ah, the banjo — how apt — when the Spring leaves blossom and

bloom, to sit, chewing Male Pouch, on the porch, to the plucking of a banjo.

"Talk to Gunnar," I told him.

That afternoon, I saw his old Volkswagen driving up the dirt road which leads to the farm — and I must say, it looked a bit stupid with an eight foot banjo strapped to its roof.

I bought a car from Paulie Buxton in Bennington. An old Maverick. One day, Ralph and I were going up the road to the farm when the car started making ominous noises. It stopped suddenly and we both got out. I lifted the hood and peered into the engine cavity.

"No engine," said Ralph.

"Only cavity," says I.

* * *

With only one car between us, times were a bit rough. We worked out a car pool system. Most days, I got up at 8 to work in Seiler's. I dragged poor Ralph out of bed on those mornings and we drove the pot-holed, hilly Black Pond road back to campus.

The heat had died in our house — oddly enough, at the same time old Mother Nature decided to punish us with one last snowstorm. A snowstorm, in fact, is putting it lightly. A goddamn blizzard is more like it.

Ralph and I drove through the blind whiteness of the frigid morn together, snow and sleep fogging our vision. As we rounded a particularly lethal curve, Ralph, behind the wheel, turned to me and said, matter-of-factly:

"This car is out of control."

And so it was. I remember looking at the trees growing larger and larger as they approached our faces. The car crossed the road into the opposite lane. It spun into the woods with a high squeal. Then landed in a brook, wheezing like an old man, and flipped into a ditch. The motor farted feebly and died. I was wearing a seatbelt; Ralph wasn't.

The car landed on the driver's side and immediately filled with muddy water. I opened my door. I stood on the side of the over-turned car and helped Ralph out.

"Ralph — we're alive," I said. It was then I noticed that his collar bone was sticking out of his T-shirt. He looked at me, but his eyes were miles away. I began to panic. The cold stung my face. I began to cry as Ralph drifted farther and farther away.

"Goddammit, Ralph, we're alive."

The morning was silent and fresh all around us. Every sound had its place, time stood still. I gently guided Ralph to the opposite side of the road. I hugged him around his waist and chanted through my tears.

"We're okay, kid. We're alright."

* * *

The first car that approached was Farmer Wade's. He slowed and pulled to a slippery stop. He recognized us and climbed out of the cabin of his pickup.

"Looks like an accident, by Christ."

I nodded and he pulled down the tailgate. He pointed to the back of his truck.

"Climb in, boys," he said and got back into the cab.

I pulled Ralph onto the bed of the truck and then climbed in myself. In the back were two freshly slaughtered pigs, their throats cleanly cut. They stared at me and Ralph with blank, open eyes.

I started to laugh and soon Ralph began to laugh also. He's a pretty high-strung type, too.

I tried to humour him.

"Hey, Ralph," I said, through the laughter, "no softball this Spring, huh?"

Letters

clear that student input was being both ignored and used to fit the prearranged circumstances.

Now is the time to change this stance: students should supply new initiative and insight to a stagnant administration that has furthered Bennington's financial problems.

Student Council and S.E.P.C. should demand answers to questions such as, why is a disproportionate share of money going toward an expanding bureaucracy (Public Information, Special Projects, 50th Anniversary Committee, Alumni Committee, etc., all initiated or largely expanded during Murphy's two years here) and not towards bettering our educational standards, for this is where Bennington has built its reputation? Bureaucracies are known for their ability to waste money and their notoriously low productivity rates. This may be one of the major contributing factors to our financial woes.

The best time to gain a foothold in the decision-making process is when there is a grasping for new ideas; now is such a time. Let's hope that students can obtain this foothold in order to alter the errors of the future.

Timothy Littlefield

To the Editor:

Regarding your commentary on punk rock in your last issue: I think punk does not even deserve the publicity you are giving it, for by giving it any space at all you are conceding there is some worth to it. There is none at all.

Punk is absolute trash musically, foreshadows nothing but death for contemporary music (rather than, as punkers say, blazing a new direction), and is a silly, idiotic justification for short haircuts and other inane codes of behavior that defy convention for the sake of defiance, not out of any important message or revelation. It has nothing to say, and should be left undisturbed, to dig its own grave without the merit our attention confers on it.

Name withheld upon request

Editorials are the majority opinion of the Vanguard Editorial Board and do not in any way reflect the viewpoints of the Bennington College faculty, administration or Board of Trustees. Vanguard invites letters to the editor. All letters must be signed; however, names will be withheld upon request. Letters should be placed in the Vanguard box. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit for purposes of brevity and taste.

Concert assures Beck 'kudos of his peers'

By DAN CAMERON

Peter Beck's senior concert, presented on April 4th, was well-attended and well-received by a large segment of the community. This in itself is a good sign, considering the number of upcoming programs by seniors that are scheduled at less convenient times later this term, programs which promise to be every bit as interesting, if not as engaging.

Beck's musical ideas do not, for the most part, negotiate within the forms of music so much as venture just outside its perimeters. However, this isn't to say that he is an outsider looking in. But rather than trying to challenge or develop our notions of harmony, melody or counterpoint. Beck has done some serious thinking about how we acquire music and what we do with it once we have it in our ears. Musical context is therefore vital to him, and the results are a style of composition involved with quotation and renegotiation of what we are already used to.

Within the four original compositions showing the strongest programmatic tendencies — the opening quartet being an exception to the rule — I heard bits and snatches of much that I had heard before, and my criterion for deciding quality thus became closely tied up with my belief that an idiomatic, or collaged, style needs to somehow make the unfamiliar familiar (or vice versa) before it succeeds into going deeper into its listeners than strictly commercial or applied music does. Hence the success (though only partial) of Beck's closing number, "Little Things," which, in its first 60 seconds, managed to follow up a rendition of a Ramones line a' la the Lemon Pipers with a faintly discoish shuffle made up of Laura Goldfader's thumps on the guitar and Ed Bullard's off-beat monotone quarter notes on the double bass. These, when added to Beck's and John Bertles' half-chortles, half-riffs on reeds, produced a few moments of extremely catchy jamming followed by a humorous cliché — the fumbled chord change up a third — resulting in a nearly vaudevillian treatment of melody that persisted, sang a little of its whacky energy, through the piece.

The other humorous number — a mangled "On the

Road"-styled narrative perfectly suited to reader Topper Lilien's guttural aplomb and Bullard's meandering "jazz" lines — lacked something, though not due to either performer's efforts. Beck, who claims credit for the piece's "setting," seemed attracted enough to the text's earthy appeal (which was nice but not substantial), and perhaps to the irony of its presentation as a musical object *trouvé*, to not bother tampering with its innate form. This was, I think, a mistake, since Lilien and Bullard had a sensitive rhythmic interplay that conflicted with, rather than offset, the piece's campy humour.

The term "setting" might be better suited to Beck's other reader's piece, a treatment of Swinburne's "Faustine." Utilizing as much of Greenwall's rubbery acoustics as he could, he set three levels of action — reader, music and vocal sound effects — into motion at

with it. Instead, no risk occurred on either side, and the lack of variety and dynamics within the latter seemed finally to weigh Beck — who probably would've been more challenged were they not there — down. "Quartet" was also low-key, but in a better way, showing the composer's tendency toward order and control in a better light. Four flutes overlapped whole and half-notes within major keys, their tranquility broken only by occasional forays out of the huddle into the beginnings of melody. Though most mixtures of slow texture and sparse development never make themselves too interesting, "Quartet" had something utopian about it that I liked.

Of the two works by other composers, I have less to say. The piece by Jacques Ibert, a composer I've never heard before, seemed a Calypsoid throwaway. Hindemith's "Eight Pieces for Flute Solo" had moments when it

'Beck has a lot of talent and ideas that could take him far.'

once. The effect was cumulative and creepy, much the way the soundtrack opening to "The Exorcist" might've been had Bill Hagen's calmly insistent voice been there instead of a bad rock band. The motifs written for the five percussionists owed something to Philip Glass; but Beck, despite resorting to the out-worn device of halting the musical action for a split-section of pseudo-suspense, kept the musical layering independent and interesting enough to avoid a direct copy of Glass' esthetic.

Of the strictly musical works, "delta t" was the less successful.

Beck's solo, though not musically uninteresting, was a bit lifeless, a problem that can be explained by juxtaposition of it against his ensemble. The flute promised some daring improvisation, the group a turgid interaction

worked beautifully, these mostly the slower passages when Beck would hold, hesitate and then lift the note away with dexterity and feeling. Many of the faster runs became too percussive to be as clear as I would have preferred them, sounding a bit more like a run by the late Roland Kirk than by a staunch neo-classicist like Hindemith.

Peter Beck has a lot of talent and a handle on a great many solid ideas — especially those concerning performance idiom — that could take him far. Though the concert was musically spotty it was what would in the outside world be termed a commercial success; and with the kudos of his peers assured, Beck has earned the freedom to take those ideas even further.

Fleetwood Mac to rescue world, or why wimp-pop rules the airwaves

By JOHN WENDEL

Elvis Costello recently has begun the subject of a lot of abuse in the American pop press, revolving around his alleged contempt for his audiences (40 minute sets, etc.) and his "disrespectful" attitudes toward promoters — at his March 6 concert in St. Louis promoted by KSHE-FM. He treated them to a vicious slug-off for allegedly not playing his records enough. He closed the show with "Radio Radio", which he dedicated to the station:

I wanna bite the hand that feeds me. This is pretty incomprehensible to American pop audiences, who are accustomed to career oriented bands like Toto, whose new single is not about the fact that gas costs half again as much as it did in September. Most Americans find the idea that rock should say something somewhat odd — why should it? Well, why not?

Rock 'n roll in the 1950's was concerned with teen rebellion — sexual and social. Songs like "Summertime Blues" (Eddie Cochran).

I'd love to help ya son.

But you're too young to vote. We're explicit about it. But it was always there, from Elvis' pelvis to kids rotting in theaters that showed "Blackboard Jungle," the first rock mouse. Then after the first explosion, rock bogged down in the Pat Boone-Beach Boys wimp — pop rut for awhile, until the British Invasion — the Stones, and The Who, who returned rebellion to rock with songs like "Get Off My Cloud" and "My Generation." By the late 60s, rock had united with long hair and LSD to scare the shit out of everybody's parents.

With the early 70s, however, rock broke into two distinct groups — The American mellow blues based bands like the Allman Brothers, The Grateful Dead and Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; and the British bands like Bowie, Mott the Hoople and Roxy Music — arty, self-conscious stuff, which alienated a lot of hippies and was never very popular outside New York and LA.

With the late 70s, the "mellow" American sound had become what's known as AOR ("adult oriented rock" or, less formally, always on radio) — bland, overproduced

music, not about anything much except the sound of cash registers. Bands like Boston, Kansas, Kiss, Foreigner & Fleetwood Mac ruled the airwaves, with a sound remarkably like early 60s wimp-pop.

The other major form of music today is, of course, disco — castrated soul, with the bass turned way up. Intended primarily for dancing, it is uniquely annoying to listen to. Then we come to punk which is the true heir to the rockin' rebel music of the 50s and 60s. It was born out of many factors: boredom, an urge to smash the radio everytime the Bee Gees came on, and mostly the political situation in Britain, where school leaving age is 16.

Most kids quit and go on the dole (welfare) which gets you £8, 50 a week (less than 20 bucks). That means living at home, stealing to get anything expensive, with only a couple nights drinking a week.

These are kids who grew up on Bowie and Roxy, who assume a sophistication unknown to most American rock fans and who have a lot to be angry about.

The National Front, Britain's Nazi party, is a powerful force in youth culture. Bands like Column 88, named after their storm troops, sing songs like "Master Race." Sham 69, one of the most popular bands in England, recently retired from live performances after gangs of British Movement (Fascist) kids ruined gig after gig with wholesale beatings of Sham fans.

In response to this, Rock Against Racism was formed. RAR is an organization dedicated to making kids realize the evil of fascism. All this sounds pretty exotic in this, the land of bland, where buying a new car is more important to most kids than deciding which bands are explicitly anti-Fascist, anti-racist and anti-sexist.

Corporate rock currently dominates the U.S. Warner-Elektra-Asylum recently announced that they would not be signing any new acts who they did not think would sell into the platinum range of their first album (platinum means one million albums sold, gold \$1,000,000 in sales). This obviously means that anything risky is out. The Village People are the perfect corporate band — one singer, five cartoon-costumed dancers and instantly replaceable: nice safe faggots for mom and pop. And they sell like hot cakes — "Macho Man," "YMCA" and "In the Navy" — were all instant formula hits and just add money. They're blatantly gay, a new Librace and even my mother likes them. That's the key today — don't alienate anyone — sex has been defused of its threatening power, along with drugs: the only thing left is politics. The world is burning down around us, but don't worry — the new Fleetwood Mac album's due out soon.

'The Deer Hunter' an epic film

By BARRY WEINBAUM

To argue over the respective merits and flaws of "The Deer Hunter" seems in vogue among the more chic cliques at Bennington. Indeed, as resident movie critic Kenrick Fowler points out, "Never has a film provoked such a level of emotional response, or have people taken a film so personally, as "The Deer Hunter."

The main complaint, preferred by that spokesman for the poor, literary jock set, fifth-term senior Sheridan Perry Norris (originally responsible for writing this review), is that a film that attempts such a stark portrayal of reality such as "The Deer Hunter" must be consistent in such a portrayal. These critics point out that there are many flaws which cloud the film, among them: mountains lifted from a Washington landscape; the baffling appearance of a Green Beret at a wedding; the remote chance of three friends ending up in the same prison camp; and the inane way Michael (Robert De Niro) whimsically boards a flight and is back in Viet Nam, to name just a few.

Undeniably, these inaccuracies are present; yet to exaggerate them out of proportion is to miss the point of the movie. The power of "The Deer Hunter" is in its catharsis: numbing performances by De Niro,

Christopher Walken (voted an Oscar) and John Savage combine to create a level of intensity so devastating that at movie's end, the viewer (or me, anyway) thinks that he has been trapped in a minefield for three hours.

Despite its directorial brilliance (by Oscar recipient Michael Cimino), however, "The Deer Hunter" is an actor's movie. De Niro, Walken and Savage are outstanding, as is Merryll Streep as the splintered, lovesick hometown girl. But the movie is at its best when the focus is on a group, rather than an individual actor, as in the barroom scene, with the three friends displaying that particular comradeship of drinking companions, while dancing to the movies' ironic theme song, "Can't Take My Eyes off of You"; and also in the final scene in which Cimino manages to surprise once again with a startling assemblage of the survivors.

Yet for all its political overtones, "The Deer Hunter" seems curiously apolitical. In fact, to presume a political statement in the movie is as fallacious as excerpting a few (alright, Norris, a strain of) distortions or unrealisms and magnifying them until the movie becomes a shadow of its faults. "The Deer Hunter" transcends any such minor faults. As it stands, it is the definitive Viet Nam film and an epic study of men at war.



Paul Wheeler grins from ear to ear as he displays a trophy catch.

Fishing season opens

By EILEEN McMAHON

There are two things in my mind that officially signal the arrival of spring in Vermont: the buzz of itinerant dirt bikes and the sight of rivers gorged with fish and men. The latter phenomenon began again last Saturday, April 12th.

Resident fishing licenses can be purchased for \$3 at the town clerk's office and the various sporting good stores around town by students who have been enrolled in the college for at least four terms. This license entitled you to enjoy the best trout fishing in North America. The plentifully stocked Battenkill River is only 20 miles north, not to mention the many obscure little brooks and streams that boast of trophy winning brook, brown and rainbows.

The natives will always recommend fishing with worms with as short a rod as possible (so you can climb around trees), and a sturdy casting reel, all of which can be purchased cheaply, prices ranging from \$6 to \$40. This preference over fly fishing can be attributed to Yankee thrift and, given the availability of night crawlers, economy. Fishing with worms is also much less complicated, there being two basic casts: the overhead and side cast which can be mastered in a short afternoon. The real skill is in detecting where the fish like to habitat and then how to keep them from nabbing free lunches i.e. your worms.

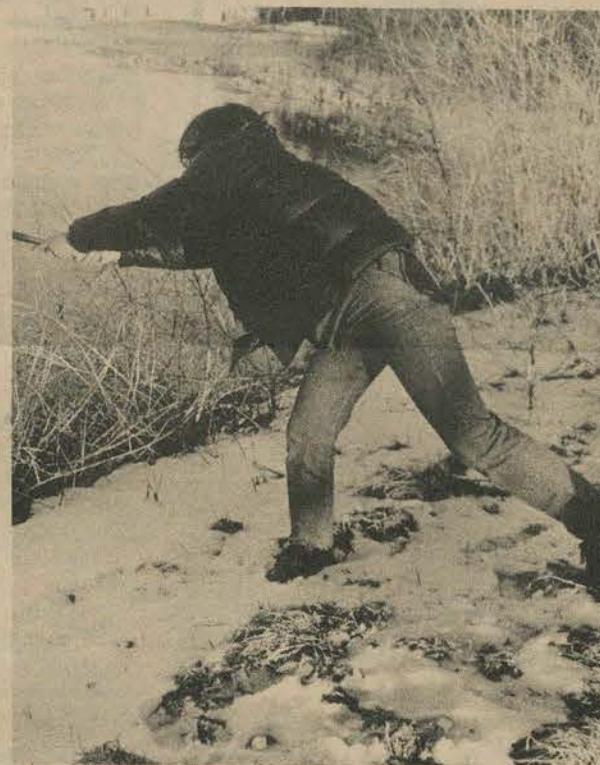
Mostly everyone you bump into knows a great fishing spot they would like to turn you onto. Usually they are quiet little brooks that border on farm lands. Mostly the farmers are very friendly and do not mind you stomping around their brooks, but it is the farm animals who constitute a hazard: they are more curious and persistent than dangerous, but if you don't mind a flock of geese or a bull or two as fishing companions, this is no problem either.

Beginners luck aside, it usually takes a few fishing expeditions before you catch your first fish, then, hopefully it will be over nine inches and therefore legally yours. Have patience though — there is nothing like the taste of fresh pan-fried trout. It is in fact a delicacy even in these parts, on account of a state law which prohibits the sale of trout for marketing or restaurant purposes. (The trout you find on the local menus are Canadian freshly frozen.)



photos by Cathy Hays

Eileen McMahon steps into the water to try her hand.



Here Wheeler starts to cast, hoping to land another big one.

Symposium slated to start Thursday

Handke works focused on this weekend

The works of Austrian dramatist Peter Handke will be the focus of a four-day symposium at the College Thursday and Friday. The symposium is being sponsored by the college's drama division in conjunction with the Goethe Institute in Boston.

Performances of Handke's "The Ride Across Lake Constance," as well as movies for which he prepared the scripts and other works, will be presented during the course of

the symposium.

Handke, a native Austrian, was born in 1942. After graduation from a Catholic Seminary he studied law for four years. He attracted public notice first for a 1966 attack on contemporary German writing, which was followed by his first novel, "The Hornets," and his first stage success, "Offending the Audience." He has since completed seven plays, five novels, two volumes of poetry, and a memoir. Most of his works have

been published in this country by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

"The Ride Across Lake Constance" will be presented Thursday through Sunday as a regular drama production of the College. Performances will be in the Lester Martin Theatre at 8 p.m. Thursday and Sunday, 9 p.m. Friday, and 7 p.m. Saturday.

"Peter Handke: Theatre & Ideas," a two-part video program in which Karl Weber discusses Handke's work and scenes from

several plays are seen, at 10 a.m., 12 noon and 2 p.m., Friday.

"The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick," a film written by Handke and directed by Wim Wenders, 2 and 6 p.m. Friday.

"Wrong Move," written by Handke and directed by Wenders, 4 and 10 p.m. Friday.

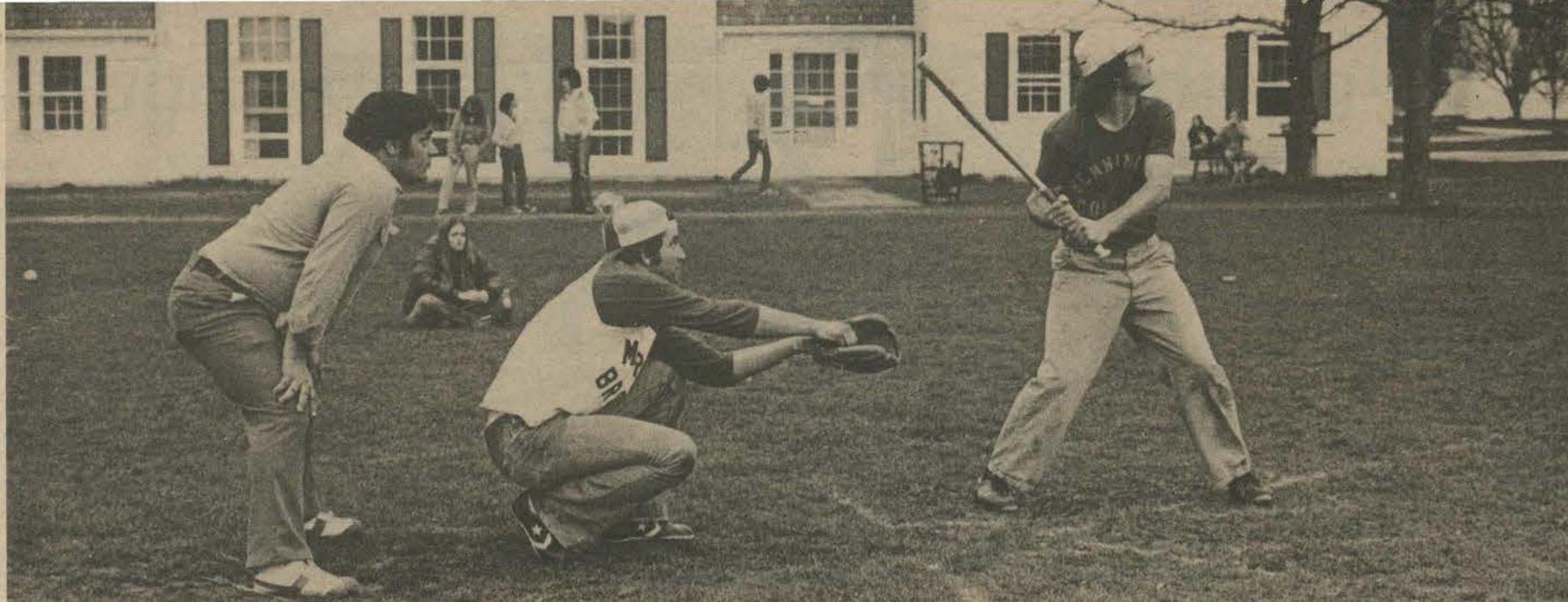
"Public Insult," a play by Handke presented by Nightshift, a group of writers actors, film-

makers, designers, theoreticians and directors working collectively, 7 p.m., Friday and 1:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. Saturday.

"Peter Handke's Poetry in Translation," a reading by Michael Roloff, Lindsay Smith, Roger Sorkin and Karl Weber, 3 p.m. Saturday.

All of the activities related to the symposium, with the exception of the movies, will be held in Vapa. Films will be presented in Tishman.

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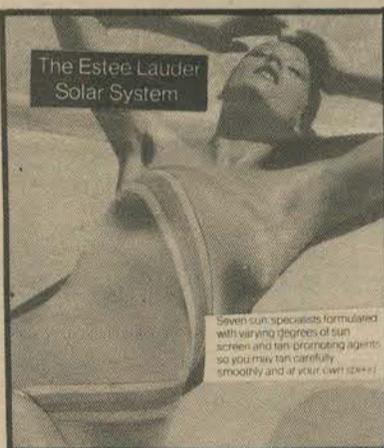


Player-Coach Perry Norris

photo by Perry Adleman

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Home opener set for Sunday

Week of rain delays season

By SYDNEY SLAYTER

Even Noah was getting a little worried. The new hat's brims bowed like sullen eyebrows, the turf turned to mud. The rain came: "haven't seen wain like dis for years," Noah confided, to humbler spirits. Tim Daly abandoned a Warner Bros. contract only to sit sipping bloody marys, dreaming of magnificent diving catches and talking better times with Mikey "Bare Knocks" Rogers.

Two weekend softball games, Saturday's against The V and Monday's against the Arlington American Legion had been washed out. "What the hell am I gonna fill the back page with?" Editor Barry Weinbaum lamented. "Ya mean I'm gonna have to write my minnow spawn paper," Fowler growled. The complaints, the loss of procrastination, were all to the same sad tune.

(George Guy, though, was in ecstasy.) Tim Littlefield worked on economics, Farley never got out of bed. Topper never sobered. Chris Clark asked "What game?" Pud wrote poetry. And still the rain came.

Maintenance couldn't help. When player-coach Perry Norris told 'em to bring out the tarps to cover the field, they just laughed. They'd been used years ago — along with Paul Renzi said, several gallons of Crisco — at a mad Bennington orgy.

"I wanted to cream those guys," Fowler muttered, pieces of dinner spraying from his mouth like confetti. Norris' anguish was similar: "What the hell do ya think I came back to ol' Benny U. for?" the senior explained to ace reporter me, Sydney Slayter.

One game earlier last week saw the Benny U. squad knock the shit out of an erratic Booth House improvisation, 28-4. Benny U. players who should be commended are: Tim Daly, Mike Rogers and believe it or not Chris Clark. Booth House player Mark Persing deserves special recognition 'cause he bought the keg. (Honk if you find all this boring, go read Topper's article.)

In other sports at the school, the soccer team practices. And practices. Rumors of a co-ed volleyball team (why not, we're liberal) hopefully will materialize.

Syd Slayter wanted to cover the Alice Miller poker games, complete with published novelists and poets, but was not allowed. "Ya got an agent?" a professor screamed. Sad Syd lost his bid. And then there was the Ali-Spinks, no... (Ah, shoot, I get all those smart guys confused). I think Rogers fight. But that was over quicker than Shavers topped Norton.

Vanguard

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