H276 is facing the House Education Committee of Vermont right now. H276 is a proposal that creates a nine-person commission to plan the consolidation of 280 plus districts in Vermont. 284 districts to 63 does seem a bit drastic at first, until you consider two things: first-the last time state officials modified the school system was in 1892, when they slashed the number of districts in Vermont from 2,500 or more to less than 300, and second that there are only about 95,000 public school students in the state. On average, that's 335 students per school. 335 students doesn't seem too terribly small, until we consider that there are schools with only eight students in the state. In fact, there are seven schools in Bennington and Rutland counties that are considered small (less than 90 students).

Currently, there are several arguments both for and against consolidation of school districts. Proponents state that while, yes, cutting school costs and taxes (in reality, property taxes) is a perk of consolidation, the main goal is to share resources better. Having so many districts can cause issues for transferring students because of different policies, can cause competition for teachers (both in obtaining them and retaining them) and often puts districts at a definite disadvantage in union negotiations. Often, it is difficult to find people with the expertise required to run a school district, especially onds. Such statistics, based on reports by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, are the result of the many broken promises by the world community and political leaders to the most vulnerable of populations. In the latter part of the twentieth century world hunger dropped significantly. From 1970-1997, the number of hungry people dropped from 959 million to 791 million—mainly the result of dramatic progress in reducing the number of undernourished humans on the Earth by the year 2015. If each of us gives his or her best I believe that we can meet and even exceed the target we have set for ourselves," said H.E. Romano Prodi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic and Chairman of the World Food Summit at the time. That was then. Since then progress is questionable. In March 2002 at the UN's Monterrey Conference, twenty-two of the world's wealthiest countries agreed to make "concrete efforts" towards battling hunger by generating the 195 billion dollars needed annually through

FROM OUR ALBUM: FROZEN WASTELAND

Photographed by Victor A.M. Nash

"Every day 25,000 people die of hunger. Today 25,000 people will die from hunger around the world, a child every five seconds. Such statistics, based on reports by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization, are the result of the many broken promises by the world community and political leaders to the most vulnerable of populations. In the latter part of the twentieth century world hunger dropped significantly. From 1970-1997, the number of hungry people dropped from 959 million to 791 million—mainly the result of dramatic progress in reducing the number of undernourished humans on the Earth by the year 2015... If each of us gives his or her best I believe that we can meet and even exceed the target we have set for ourselves," said H.E. Romano Prodi, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic and Chairman of the World Food Summit at the time. That was then. Since then progress is questionable. In March 2002 at the UN's Monterrey Conference, twenty-two of the world's wealthiest countries agreed to make "concrete efforts" towards battling hunger by generating the 195 billion dollars needed annually through..."

by Hector Najera
NOTE OF APOLOGY

Before The End and its staff are deeply apologetic for having printed student names in relation to sensitive and personal matters. We initially published in the name of free speech; but found that we did so without adequately weighing the effect it would have on those named, their friends, and the community. This sort of thing will not be permitted to slip through the cracks again.

~ Before The End

ANALYSIS OF A STEP DAD

by Chris Len

Late one night, my friend and I started thinking about how weird his step dad was. He worked at the Coast Guard, never said much, and sometimes would just do something really violent and then silently stare at an inanimate object with an expressionless face. We both thought this guy was really funny.

One day my friend's little sister was in her room on the computer. Her mom asked, "Sylphie, did you do your homework?"

"No," Sylphie replied, "I'll do it in a little while."

Casey, the step dad, walked into the room holding an orange juice. He stared at a bedpost, picked up a book and flew it on the floor forcefully, then continued staring at the bedpost. After a minute he walked from the room and mumbled, "Do your homework, Sylphie."

Other strange things I noticed about him: his weight scale was lying outside on the street, he asked me if I was going to join the navy really forcefully, I saw him pick up a heavy rock and put it in a river angrily, he always stands in front of the TV when it's on so that only he could see it, he loves cars, and he gave my friend a box of condoms once and walked away really quickly while blushing (I guess he was embarrassed or something).
Every issue Before the End has brought you a sampler of what happens at colleges across the nation in our section "National Campus." All of the following summaries were extracted from the cited student newspapers. So enjoy, and remember that The Bubble only extends so far.

CAFFEINE HARMFUL FOR THOSE WITH SLEEPING PROBLEMS

Caffeine-power ed late-night studying can have adverse lifelong effects for a person's body, according to Harvard Medical School sleep expert Dr. Atul Malhotra. Already the lack of the recommended eight to nine hours of sleep could impair a person's cognitive ability as much as an alcoholic drink, and that after 24 hours a person's cognitive ability can equate to being legally drunk. Those who get used to staying up late aren't adapting to less sleep, their bodies are simply picking up a bad habit by losing the ability to perceive how sleepy one is. Malhotra also said that making up for lost sleep during the week by sleeping in the weekend isn't always enough.

Malhotra advised not to get over-the-counter drugs to aid with sleep, and that people who have sleeping problems should avoid activities which hinder sleep, like late-night eating, exercising or consumption of caffeine.

--The Daily Free Press, Boston University

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SYSTEM RAISES STUDENT FEES

Last week the UC Board of Regents approved student fee increases, which has sparked a response from students across the state. The seven-percent increase comes almost three years after the Board and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a compact to allow fee increases of up to 10 percent to maintain academic quality and keep pace with inflation.

After the announcement Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi said he would work with the Governor and California's legislature to buy back the fee increase. "I think it is wrong, and the legislature and the governor have found a way to have the Regents tax students to raise the funds necessary to support the UC," he said.

In past years fee increases have been a big worry for students. Last year the California State University system approved a fee increase of its own, which the Governor bought back.

Chancellor Robert Birgeneau said the fee hike was necessary to boost funds for academic programs and diversity outreach. He added that although students are concerned that such fee increases could hurt diversity financial aid would cover the fee increases for many underrepresented minorities who are overwhelmingly concentrated in the low-income bracket.

Still many students are planning to visit the state legislature in Sacramento, Bill Shiebler, president of the University of California Students' Association, plans to mobilize UC and CSU students to continue lobbying legislators to gain support for buying out the fees. "Students have a lot of energy and momentum," he said. "Just because the regents decided not to put more pressure on the state legislature, we are going to take our fight to Sacramento." Shiebler also plans to work with Garamendi and other lawmakers to pressure key legislators.

--The Daily Californian, UC Berkeley

In our visually inclined soci- ety, a dark room full of people in stadium style seats brings to mind another detail: a glowing screen. Now, each Monday at 10 pm in Tishman, Bennington students have the chance to experience an environment where the screen is dark and what is heard is the point of focus. Michael Shinwrot,'08, the creator of this weekly music event, hopes that this evening of listening may be an opportunity for students to participate in a long-lost pastime.

With a focus on concert music and sound art written within the last 30 years, "The Tishman Listening Room" debuted on the 12th of March with a listening of Morton Feldman's "Rothko Chapel." The lights were off and those in attendance took the opportunity to stretch out on the padded benches as they prepared to listen. The crowd of 15 were quickly put into a trance by Feldman's haunting, ethereal landscape. Shinwrot commended that the piece was written to commemorate the death of Mark Rothko, the artist who designed the Rothko Chapel in Texas. Like the chapel, which was designed to be a meditative place, the music is, at points, placid and burning with energy. One could feel listeners' chests tighten in suspense and nearly explode as the ghoulish chorus of voices drifted in and out of the near silent sound palette, sometimes crescendo-ing to a nearly unbearable intensity.

Previously held by a viola, a soprano takes the solo line halfway through the piece with declarative, punching notes, no less haunting than the music before. The third and final portion of the piece brings to the forefront a lovely viola passage accompanied by a lush ostinato on a soothing mallet instrument.

Michaela Doane, '08, reflected on the event, saying, "Taking time out of my Monday night to immerse myself completely in a piece of music was a really refreshing experience. It's a great way to check in with the world of contemporary concert music - something I know next-to-nothing about--and also to just find some stillness within my own day. I think Michael's really on to something." Lydia Brassard, '08, added, "There were some scary parts [in the piece, but it was an excellent opportunity to be exposed to a new genre of music in a group environment."

The next listening will take place today, Monday, the 19th, at 10pm in Tishman, and will feature John Adams' "Shaker Loops."

MAYAN INDIAN REACHES FOR PRECEDENCY

by Jamaica Kelley

Since its independence from Spain in 1821, Guatemala has never had an indigenous president or a female candidate. But this year Nobel Peace laureate Rigoberta Menchú will run for the presidency in the upcoming September elections. Forty-two percent of Guatemala's population is Mayan and, of which Menchú is a part. She is the subject of a biographical memoir which launched her into the international spotlight, I, Rigoberta Menchú. David Stoll, an anthropologist at Middlebury College in Vermont published a book in which he claims Menchú changed stories about her life and used those of other people as her own. Menchú disputes his assertions. If she wins, Menchú has vowed to revise the Central American Free Trade Agreement, which Bush hailed as a means of creating jobs and bringing Guatemalans out of poverty. "Although the agreement may have been brilliant for specific groups (that negotiated it), the population wasn't consulted; we don't know about the agreement," said Menchú. There is also the fear that the Guatemalan cultivation of corn may be overtaken by the mechanized methods from the United States. Menchú expressed the need to protect the Guatemalan agriculture.

"The sacred maize is an ancestral food that has a dignified place in the homes of Guatemalans-I say Guatemalans, not only the indigenous population," Menchú said. Menchú trails behind three top candidates and winning will be difficult. However, if she succeeds she will become the third indigenous president in Latin America, after Bolivia's Evo Morales and Mexico's Benito Juárez.
Every now and then before the end will feature special sections as a treat to the campus. Our first special was disguised during our first issue in December as games and articles for the holidays.

We used this issue’s special section as an excuse to break our piggy banks and go around town for some delicious food. We tried to get a variety of places, so we visited Williamstown as well. In all places we had a camera to document any hairs we found swimming in our soup, but no such luck. But our notebook was filled with keen observations every time. We even reviewed the restroom facilities. So we bring it all to you: how it happened—raw, for your enjoyment:

Izabella’s Eatery

Found near Four Corners, Izabella’s Eatery is an established meeting and eating place for the Bennington community. Izabella’s was recently bought by Joe and Lucinda Heuschkel. The cafe does attempt to incorporate the Bennington community by inviting local artist to display their work on one of the walls, which stays up for up to three months. The owners also make an attempt to purchase locally grown ingredients.

The owner sites reasons such as health, the environment and economics as excellent reasons to buy locally. They’ve bought ingredients from places as close by as Pownal and Shaftsbury. "Why buy from California when ten miles away there are better products." Local ingredients mean the food is fresh and the owners believe that makes a difference in the way their food tastes. The Herrick Sandwich has been served since the restaurant’s opening. The Emily Grace Sandwich, a sophisticated PB&J sandwich, is named for the Heuschkel’s four-year-old niece. The Zachary Taylor Panini, a unique ham sandwich, is named for their nephew. The Nor’easter, a bacon spinach and tomato sandwich, is named for the legendary storms that visit the community. Just as Nor’easter season passes, so do many of their menu items with seasonal ingredients.

Although the chai at Izabella’s wasn’t my favorite, the Figgie was a delicious sandwich of goat cheese, onion relish, fig chutney and arugula. Izabella’s also has a wide variety of desserts, made fresh daily.

Whether I suggest Izabella’s or not you’ll probably find yourself in Bennington’s unique cafe. Izabella’s is located on Bennington’s Main Street and is open Monday-Friday 7:30-4 and on Saturday from 9-4. They are available for catering with advanced notification.

The Rattlesnake has bite

by Hector Vazquez

I was told that as a Mexican, it was only natural to visit a Mexican food restaurant in the area. At first I resisted, but after a few weeks out here and away from San Diego I could no longer stand it. I just wanted a carne asada burrito, which is a burrito that made with roasted beef, fresh guacamole, and oh-so-good stuff with fresh salsa. But there aren’t any burritos around here, like that so we went to the Rattlesnake Café.

The place was clean, which is always a plus when eating. We were promptly seated and the waitress was quick to take our orders. If you do go, you’ll notice bright walls under dim lighting and the skill of a bull, I think. Also there is some interesting art on the walls, some of it for sale. I noticed a painting by Simón Silvia, a painter from California, and some beer posters, but it was evident that the decorations didn’t always come from Mexico.

Ordering was easy and the waitress was very nice; she was good about letting me dwell over my top choices: enchiladas or burritos. One thing that struck me about the menu was the price. It wasn’t exorbitant, but I was surprised, especially since in San Diego burritos are $3.50. But I’m not in San Diego, so I got over it. Most of the things that sound appetizing are over ten dollars, so come prepared unless you feel like washing dishes.

One of our fellow reviewers, Andrew Lacasse, is vegetarian, so he paid attention to that aspect of the menu. “I would have liked more selection,” he said. In the midst of my dilemma between picking chicken or beef, and then having to choose how I wanted the beef cooked, I was not able to pay attention to those kinds of details, so I’m glad he did. Andrew does think that for a Mexican restaurant they had a decent vegetarian selection and I agree with him. When I got my food I understood the non-San Diego price; the plate was huge and it had two burritos with a side of beans and rice. Eating it all was a challenge in itself.

In short the selection was decent, since they do make an effort to offer a variety of Mexican food. They don’t have too many seafood dishes but the ones they had did sound appetizing. And they offer cheaper, light fare specials, which is good. I liked the place. It isn’t terribly spacious but it is comfortable. At one point a baby began crying next to me, I decided right then that I don’t like kids, so I have to rethink my teaching career—and especially where I get seated next time I come. For those who prefer a different attempt at authentic Mexican food to taco night, Rattlesnake Café is a great option. It has a good ambiance, vegetarian selections, great staff, and if you need it, the restroom is down the hall, the second door on the left.

Dehli Delight: Spice Root Restaurant

by Sabina Shrestha

Tired of having chicken wings just buffalo-style? Try the Koloni Kabob. Want to try spicier okra? Get the bhindi fajita? Chicken jalapeno is your for a different kind of chicken like American dining, Indians find it here.

Although it enjoys the monopoly of being the first and only Indian restaurant for the last 6 years in Williamstown, Bennington and North Adams area, the food quality seems uncompromised; the quantity however is a different story. For $7.95 the buffet was limited to rice, dal, two non-vegetarian entrees; two vegetarian entrees, naan and pudding. Tarun Narula, the owner, explains that the price was lowered from what it was originally and is reasonable, considering the expenses of the imported spices and limited number of people that are familiar with Indian food.

However, people who tasted it once usually return for more. The lunchboxes to-go are more reasonably priced as well as the special student priced dinner combos. "Unlike American dining, Indians share their entrees with everyone at the table so that everyone gets a taste of everything. The combo meal is an attempt to present that variety in an American way. It is already very popular with students at Williams," says Narula.

This restaurant is undoubtedly different than most Indians I’ve been to. The health conscious owners assure that all the food is cooked in canola oil. They even sell herbal iced teas and energy bars at the bar. The 16-6 bar is equally improvised. Their signature drinks, like Bombay, tamarind margarita, spice root fizz, and Kamu Sutra are all concocted by Simi Narula, the owner’s wife and are very popular. For the creative Narulas, Spice Root is more than just...
Quo Vadis Continues
America, and as such point out all the inconsistencies I could find. I happened upon an old ruined Wal-Mart, one of the hundreds I'd seen before. Usually I'd find abandoned homes to camp out in at night, which had led to some amusing anecdotes earlier in my trip for my readers. Besides the skunk colony in Missouri, and the black bear in Philadelphia, which I did not find amusing, the shelter I took at night had been relatively event-free. I was in the town of Bennington, which was fairly typical post-industrial East Coast, I was planning on heading North for more rustic lands, but due to the wretched weather and my weariness I decided to make tracks for Bennington College, which signs I'd overlooked on the way said was not far away. Sure enough, following the road I came to the gates. I was

Quo Vadis Continues Page 6
WE ALL WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD

by Eliza Slater

John Lennon once said, "You say you want to revolution, well you know we all want to change the world." The current world is wrought with inequality, injustice, unsustainable practices, and innumerable other issues that exploit and abuse the beauty and diversity of this earth—so yes, (at least I hope that) we do all want to change the world. And while this statement is exciting and encouraging, it is easier said than done. To allow these issues to become second priority to those aspects of our lives that demand immediate input and result in instant gratification is easy. In response to this reflexive complacency, we can mobilize and feed from each other's energy and inspiration to counter such impulses to ignore the rest of the world. To disallow our ignorance and self-centeredness, and to create an avenue through which we can channel our thoughts and actions to impending injustices. Students for Social Justice (SSJ) has been formed. SSJ is the convergence of students asking what we can possibly do to alter the gross imbalances and wrongs that litter our world. Currently in its formative stages, SSJ is examining its potential to impact certain avenues that the group has deemed significant and in need of attention. These include, but are not limited to 1) the war in Iraq, and the potentially pending U.S. conflict with Iran, 2) the genocide in Darfur, and the installation of a Bennington STAND (student anti-genocide coalition) chapter in response to this and other issues, 3) the civil war and use of children as soldiers in Uganda, and Bennington's involvement in campaigns set forth by the Invisible Children movement, 4) participation in Rebecca Tinsley's work in Rwanda and 5) on a more local level, the discouragement of military recruitment and the encouragement of other options in the town of Bennington.

SSJ will meet every Monday in the Student Center lounge at 12:45 PM to discuss ways in which to create a sustainable, effective organization, as well as ways in which this organization can be active and operative in working for the causes that it supports. As this group evolves, input from as many students as possible is essential. Thus regardless of your political preferences (or lack thereof), your skepticism regarding the ability of a small group of students in Vermont to change the world, or any other doubts that students may have, Students for Social Justice is creating an environment where student thoughts and concerns can be addressed.

This world is plagued by wars based on greed and religion; where 25,000 poverty-stricken men, women, and children die from hunger or from related causes every day, while obesity is becoming equally endemic; where rich women pay vast sums to for unnecessary cosmetic surgeries, while children in Guinea have three-foot-long worms burrowing through their flesh because they do not have clean water to drink. For those who hate these ridiculous and indefensible disproportions, and are interested in the preservation of human rights, and in curing some of the infinite maladies that plague this world, SSJ is attempting to provide one (but by no means the only) opportunity for your voice to be heard, and then amplified through social and political activism. If you have any interest in the coalition of individuals facilitating global change and a more just world, your presence at an SSJ meeting is welcomed.

Notes:
- Several Bennington Students attended the NYC protest against the Iraq War and a future conflict with Iran this past weekend
- You may want to check out Invisible Children's Displace Me on April 28th, a nationwide movement during which individuals will voluntarily enter a simulation of an internment camp to draw attention to and rally support and aid for the many displaced children around the world (see http://www.invisiblechildren.com/theMovement/displaceMe for more info).

PHILOSOPHICAL

FLUSH

Quotes from the College’s bathroom walls

Upacf
* The air is filled with the dreams of sleeping people.
* Reality rocks me to sleep.
* Life is about looking for mystery.

Game Room
* Be your own God.
* None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe that they are free.
* John Wolfgang Van Goethe
* I didn't know how alone I was until they brought in more chairs.

Dickinson
* "Are you on the bus?"
* "The short bits!" "Are you in high school?" "Are you high?"
* Reality is a staircase going neither up nor down - Octavio Paz
* Far enough away our sun is just another star.
* Tommy was a good boy.
* Now Tommy is no more.
* The cause why he thought was H2O

Barn
* post-modernism is the crack cocaine of the liberal intelligentsia - Eileen Scully
* Nice! Bennington seriously has the best bathroom wall discourse
* The truth is in short supply; we must conserve.
* - Mark Twain
* Autocracy Project
* A cynic is someone who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.
* - Oscar Wilde
* A cynic is a disappointed idealist.

VAPA
* A: If you treat irony ironically isn't it just sincerity again?
B: Yeah Totally.
* The truth is, I don't like you.

Commons
* Music comes first, lyrics are secondary.
* all communities need to learn the truth; political power comes out of the barrel of a gun - Mao
* I wonder if Post Cereal calls their office the Post Office
* All jokes aside, I'm excited for the future.
Some people wait the arrival of 2008 arrival with anticipation. And that's because of marriage.

In some cultures women can only propose marriage to men during a leap year, on February 29. The tradition is said to have begun in Ireland when St. Bridget had complained to St. Patrick that women could not do anything about getting married even if they were the age of marriage. St. Patrick then is said to have agreed that on February 29 women were free to look for men they wanted to marry and propose. In Scotland, this was made a law and a man who turned down the proposal was supposed to pay a fine. For the poorer men who could not pay the fine, this forced them to marry. To the Greeks, Leap Year is believed to be an unsuitable year for marriages. One in five engaged couples are believed to propose not to marry during Leap Year.

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Hunger Continues

the donation of 0.7 percent of their national income as aid. The Conference called for the setup of a schedule by which to meet the 7 percent donation by 2015, but not all countries have set up schedules yet. Among those who have produced a schedule are the United Kingdom, France, and Spain. Those who haven’t set up schedules yet include Japan, the United States, and Sweden. Among those who have already met the goal of donating 7 percent of their national income are Denmark, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. Among those who have already met the goal of donating 7 percent of their national income are Denmark, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.

In purely quantitative terms there is enough food to feed the 6.6 billion people in the world. However, natural disasters such as droughts and earthquakes, conflicts, lack of adequate agricultural infrastructure, and poverty have a severe effect on the acquisition of food. For many organizations the problem is the lack of funds. The UN’s World Food Programme said that in April it will begin to slash food rations for nearly 1.5 million displaced people and refugees by half because of lack of funding. The program was launched in 1963 to use food in order to meet “emergency needs” and to “support economic and social development,” which includes natural disasters, displaced people, and to help feed the hungry. Currently it is offering aid to places like Uganda. The conflict in Uganda between the government and the Lord’s Resistance Army has displaced over a million people, which has in turn left many without a reliable method of nourishment. The same is true for the Darfur region of Sudan. Regions that generally have good crops fall into hunger crises because of conflict. And although several organizations try to help, they cannot raise all the money needed on their own, which is why a sincere commitment from governments is necessary.

Hunger isn’t simply lacking enough to eat; it is lacking the right things to eat. Acute hunger is one often depicted by the media—where a person is so weak they can barely operate, but it only accounts for about eight percent of hunger victims. The less visible types of hunger are undernourishment and malnutrition. Undernourishment means that a person is living on significantly less than the 2,100 recommended calories. To compensate for this the body slows down its mental and physical ability, making it hard for children to concentrate and even play and for adults to work productively. There are people that go months without getting enough to eat.

Malnutrition is the product of an inadequate dietary intake; of people not consuming essential nutrients. The World Health Organization ranked iron deficiency and vitamin A deficiency among the top 10 leading causes of death through disease. Iron, for example, forms the molecules that carry oxygen in blood, and iron deficiency currently afflicts almost 2 billion people. Iodine is necessary for brain development, but 780 million people worldwide don’t get enough of it. A UN research found that about twenty million children are mentally impaired because their mothers didn’t get enough iodine. There is a long list of other vitamins that many people don’t get, as well as proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. The failure to nourish properly, then, has adverse effects for the economy of developing countries. For example, a report by the World Bank found that poor families spend seventy percent of their income and food (an average American family spends about 10 percent). The World Bank also found that more than one billion people currently live below the international poverty line, earning less than $1 a day. So when a poor family isn’t hungry, it is broke.

The vast majority of the hunger reside in developing countries. Over 300 million is South Asia, In sub-Saharan Africa one out of three people is hungry. The problem is intensified since the spread of HIV/AIDS in these regions impair people from cultivating their food, and the children of infected mothers are forced to look for the little they can find. There are also orphan children whose parents died from AIDS. Hunger stems from the prevalence of poverty. In developing countries the cycle of poverty is very difficult to break, and—as has been acknowledged by the wealthiest nations—the world must step in to prevent the spread of hunger. However, there is much talk by powerful nations on controlling hunger that isn’t always met with action. As Diniit stated in 1996 when world leaders met to combat hunger, “We have the possibility to do it. We have the knowledge. We have the resources.” With firm action there is still time to meet goals set forth by the World Food Summit by 2015. But not for 25,000 people. Not today.