

# New tenure system causes campus stir

By J.W. Smith

In November, 1977, several changes were made which substantially altered the tenure system at Bennington College. These changes had remained unexplored until July, 1978, when the Faculty Personnel Committee met and reviewed 13 faculty members who sought contract renewal and/or presumptive tenure. Many of the professors now feel that the new system denies them "adequate consideration" in the review process. Anger and confusion surround the entire system, and students have returned to find canceled classes and chaos within several divisions.

Dean of Faculty Don Brown, reports that the following individuals sought five-year contracts but received instead a third three-year contract: Phebe Shih Chao and Reinhard Mayer, from the Literature and Languages Division; and Milford Graves, from the Black Music Division.

Grahame Shane (Art), Stephen Horenstein (Black Music), and Kenneth Cavender (Drama), were all granted extended contracts. Those individuals who will not be returning to Bennington next year include: Martin Horwitz, (Literature and Languages); Kenneth Kensinger, (Social Sciences); Richard Frisch, (Music); Kenneth Mayers, (Social Science); and Sylvie Weil-Sayre, (Literature and Languages).

Of the 13 professors reviewed, only two were given the five-year contract which, at Bennington, constitutes presumptive tenure. They are Michael Rock and Ronald Cohen, both of the Social Science division.

The purpose of the presumptive tenure program at Bennington is to allow the College an opportunity to periodically evaluate and rearrange the faculty body. A reviewing process occurs every five years, after which the individuals contract is either canceled or renewed.

Legally, this renew allows the College to keep the staff from "stagnating," although this pattern of "presumed" tenure has never been broken. The FPC consists of four elected members from the faculty at large, and Don Brown, Chairman and ex officio member. This past semester the members were: Phebe Shih Chao, (Literature and Languages); Alvin Feinman (Literature and Languages); Richard Blake, (Social Science); and Reinhold H. van der Linde,

(Science and Mathematics).

The Faculty Personnel Committee judges each individual in the following areas: professional competence, professional activity and teaching effectiveness. Information is gathered from both the Student Educational Policy Committee and the Faculty Educational Policy Committee in the form of student and faculty evaluations. Various opinions are organized and presented to the Faculty Personnel Committee for a final

decision. Usually, there is a period of two weeks in which the individual being reviewed is allowed to meet with the committee to discuss "areas of substantial concern before a decision is reached," according to Don Brown. Additional testimony can be given during this period by the individual and any other faculty member or student that wishes to make a statement before the committee reaches the point of final

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## Vanguard

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Bennington College

Bennington, Vermont 05201

## Trustees on campus; first meeting tonight

The Board of Trustees of Bennington College is scheduled to arrive on campus this afternoon to begin their quarterly meeting. Twenty-nine of the College's 33 trustees will be present for the first of many meetings, slated for this evening.

Among the subjects to be discussed is that of the planning and funding for Bennington's 50th anniversary.

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

Committees include: academic affairs, admissions and financial aid, alumni relations, budget and finance, building and grants, development, nomination and an executive committee, on which the chairpeople of the Board sit.

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

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Student interaction with trustees will be limited, according to Student Services Director, Short Aldrich. She cites "an extremely crowded schedule" in the short time they will be on campus as the reason.

Most of the trustees will be leaving Friday night and Saturday.

Several students expressed disappointment that they would not be able to speak with the trustees. Said one, who asked that his name not be used:

"Not only am I disappointed, but I'm a little angry. With what we pay to go here, and with so little of the college policies determined by students, I think we should be able to sit down with the trustees and let them know what's on our minds."

Most of the trustees will be staying at the New Englander Motel.

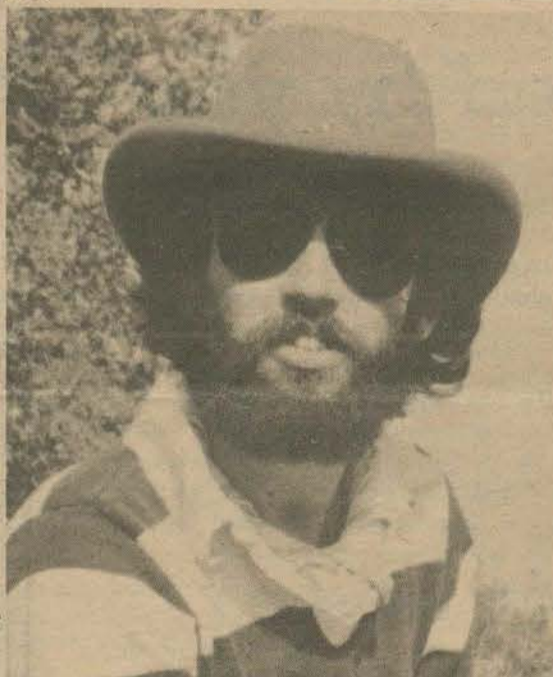
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Erin Quinn

...New Student Council President...



Micah Morrison

...New Student Council Vice-President...

## Quinn, Morrison elected

Senior Erin Quinn has been elected Student Council President for the 1978-79 school year, and Senior Micah Morrison was elected as vice president. The new president and vice president took office on Tuesday.

Quinn received 131 votes out of the total 252 cast. Randy Witlicki finished second with 74 votes and Tim Daly third with 56.

Morrison, Council President this past year, defeated his lone vice presidential opponent, Sophomore CiCi Meyerson, 199-51.

Quinn, an interdivisional political science and biology major who will be working on her thesis this year, cites her aims as "wanting students to have a better opinion of Student Council. I want to make myself available to the students, faculty and administration."

Quinn thinks the Council budget needs some redirecting:

"We didn't put enough money towards things that are needed."

She plans to reserve about

\$5,000 for the Council itself, which will be spent on buying new stereo speakers and hiring out bands.

The new president's responsibilities are mainly to organize Council meetings, to keep in touch with other committees outside of the Council and to keep good relations with faculty and trustees by holding regular meetings.

"I wouldn't have run if I didn't feel secure — I just felt that I could do a better job."

"I'm a pretty low key person, but I have a lot of energy. Throughout the election, I was going to be the low key one. I wasn't determined to win... fine if I do, fine if I don't."

Kevin Farley of the Elections Committee was "very disturbed" about the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the candidates.

"There were no posters, except the few Erin Quinn put out, and each candidates put out only one galley, which is just not enough. To get a higher percentage of

votes, the students will have to know the issues."

Farley adds:

"It's up to the candidates to mobilize their own campaigns and push issues relevant to the student's interests."

The Election Committee consists of Shari Sindel, Ken Fowler, and Farley, and their function is to watch polls, send out galleys and offer to arrange times and places for debates. This year, Farley says, the candidates never responded.

Approximately 45% of the student body voted, a figure which Farley said, "is about right for a place like Bennington." But it shouldn't be that way — in a place like Bennington, there's no excuse why we shouldn't have a very large percentage of the students voting.

"Of course, they have to know there's an election. I had people coming up to me all day saying 'why wasn't there any publicity.'"

# Vantage

• editorials • columns • letters

October 12, 1978

## Review of case supported

This past June, the Faculty Personnel Committee reviewed three teachers, and voted to renew the contract of one. One of those whose contract was not renewed was anthropology teacher Kenneth Kensinger. We think the E.P.C. has made a serious mistake and urge the Personnel Review Committee to review Kensinger's case.

To begin with, the areas cited as concerning the committee were professional competence and productivity. We question the basis for these judgments. Only one person in Kensinger's division was asked for her opinion, and to our knowledge no outside sources, i.e. people actively involved in the field, were asked. Additionally, not one person sitting on the E.P.C. had an up-to-date vitae listing Kensinger's substantial achievements.

How, we wonder, can one be labeled incompetent and unproductive when no-one making the decision is qualified to judge, when no effort is made to find someone who is qualified, and when the reviewers do not directly look at recent performance?

To dismiss Kensinger for any reason would be a grievous mistake, for we think him one of Bennington's best teachers. But if the decision not to rehire him was for any reason other than incompetence, he would have no problem in finding work. To not rehire a teacher is one thing; to smear him professionally is another.

We hope the Personnel Review Committee will review Kensinger's case fairly and look at all the material before coming to a decision. We think an honest review can only lead the committee to renew his contract.

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 in the mailroom or given to individual editors. The Editorial Board reserves the right to edit for purposes of brevity and taste.

### Thanks

We would like to express debts of gratitude to the following people, without whom publication of our first issue would have been unlikely: Bernie Iser, Pat Barr, Tyler Resch, H. Bennie Markowitz and Ken Distler.

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Natasha Thomsen  
Lee Wolford  
Ellen Shapiro  
Cici Meyerson  
Bill Hagen  
Lexey Russell

VAN•GUARD 'van-gard n 1: the troops moving at the front of an army: 2: the forefront of an action or movement

## 'We will be defined by you'

Again, Bennington College has a newspaper. Or, as we would like to think, for the first time. Volume 1, Issue 1 is a matter of record — the pushed back deadlines and last minute frenzies are now a subject for private office jokes and secret grins. But we feel compelled to reduce this typically journalistic secrecy into, at very least, a stage whisper, and occasion this space to give you, our readers, a partial definition of ourselves.

It is this same sense of compulsion we are most conscious of, a sense of duty to ourselves and to you that will surface in many ways. On simplest levels, it is an obligation to report what is going on at Bennington and to write about the people and events before us.

Yet this role goes beyond that of attentive observer, of recorder, and starts to presume a question mark in everything. Why something is going on, or indeed, why something isn't going on, is our inevitable focus. With all the who-what-when-where-why-how credo of journalism, the why seems by far the most important, seems to be the one word to which everything owes an answer to.

With this in mind, we give an explanation for our name. The idea of being vanguard, of being out in front leading the way, came closest to the idea we wanted to represent. For that is what we see as one of our foremost duties: to lead and to influence, to break things down and challenge, to present a fresh opinion.

And with this comes the ultimate aim of any newspaper, to offer not only a perspective in terms of happenings around you, but to offer an intellectual and emotional perspective. Such a perspective can only be vanguard, for it

cannot be one that is especially self conscious or concerned with images and traditions, as such.

Too much at Bennington is. There is too much that is highhanded and serious, injected with sombreness. An awareness of dimensions and importance is one thing; an affected, constantly imposed outlook is another. Our perspective will be one tempered by reality and by a sense of humor; reality because we must remember where we are, we must be aware of our environment, or what we are trying to do; and a sense of humor because it constantly checks us and reminds us of our reality.

For example, we are well aware of the constant grappling for meanings and answers that seems to be the necessary climate of Bennington, and we can see without too much straining the tragedy in, say, not receiving a letter for three weeks. But we are also aware of what it is like to finally receive a letter and find out it is not that half-hoped for revelation from an ex-love, but rather an almost illegible letter from home asking if you stole the light that used to be above the piano.

So a perspective is what we're striving for. Once we have that, things will happen. There's a time and a place, the addage says. We think we've got the potential for both in Bennington College, 1978. But you, our readers, are our only barometer — we will be defined by you, and, we hope, you by us. It make take awhile until both of us get that definition. But in the meantime, we think Bennington College has a newspaper. For the first time.

# Vanguard

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Vanguard is a private, non-profit organization  
pending incorporation.



Sign on Commons door announcing the new policy.  
...Just-established regulations stringently enforced...

Photo by Perry Adleman

## Pet regulations in effect

The Student Council recently passed the new pet regulations now in effect campus wide, and have formed a standing pet committee to handle pet control.

The new regulations:

+ Majority house approval is needed within each particular house.

+ All dogs must be registered in accordance with municipal statutes in the towns of Bennington and North Bennington; dogs under eight months are not allowed.

+ Dogs and cats must be registered at the College and tags must be worn.

+ All pet owners within a designated pet house must sign a written agreement to share responsibility, both financial and otherwise, for all pets in the house.

"I think they're really good rules, and really necessary ones," said Student Services Director Short Aldrich. "It was a matter of making life livable for everybody, and making things better for the animals."

The new rules have, in the words of one on-campus dog owner, been "stringently enforced."

"You've got to be really careful now, though in all fairness I've got to say the new rules are really good. Last spring I was almost afraid to let my dog out, there were so many dogs on commons lawn."

To enforce these new regulations, which went into

effect October 4, the Student Council established a standing pet committee consisting of five members. This committee is responsible for "all disputes concerning pet control and any judicial proceedings which may occur," according to the official minutes.

However, the job of registering the pets will belong to the Student Services office. Money collected for these fees will be kept in an account signed by the office.

"One of the most important rules is that unsprayed females are not allowed now," Aldrich said. "We had so many problems last semester we had to lay down the law on this issue."

Aldrich went on to cite housing as another problem which necessitated more stringent pet control:

"We have to house students — we can't house pets. What was happening was that we would assign rooms and people couldn't take them because they had pets — the whole housing situation was just chaos." New students cannot have pets on campus for this reason.

Since the new regulations went into effect, dogs and cats without I.D. tags were taken to the Bennington County Humane Society in Shaftsbury. Other regulations include:

+ All uncaged pets must be with their owners if they are out of their rooms.

+ No dogs or cats in Commons.

This is a state law, because of the food service in the building.

+ Pets seen without owners will first elicit a written warning to the owner, followed by a four-hour impounding at maintenance the second time and an indefinite impounding the third time at the Bennington County Humane Society.

+ Visitors pets are subject to the same rules and regulations concerning pet behavior and must wear visitors tags.

+ All off-campus pets must be registered also.

Senior Mary Raff is the Pet Warden this term.

## Leaves of absence taken by faculty

Six members of the College faculty have taken the fall term off on leaves of absence, another four are on sabbatical and two have gone abroad, according to the Dean of Faculty's office.

Those teachers on sabbatical include: Henry Brant, from the Music Division and Phoebe Chao and Nick Delbanco from the Literature and Languages Division.

Teachers on leave are Judith Dunn, from the Dance Division; Eduardo Gonzalez and Camille Paglia, from the Literature and Languages Division; Richard Haas and Isaac Witkin from the Visual Arts Division; and Michael Rock from the Division of Social Science.

In addition, two College teachers are abroad, participating in college programs — Sylvia Weil-Sayre is in Paris and Joanna Kirkpatrick is in India.

Faculty members are entitled to a one-term paid sabbatical after each 10 terms of teaching at Bennington, according to the Faculty Handbook. In addition, the teacher must return to the College for at least two more years after a sabbatical.

## Steiner opens up Belitt lectureship

Literary critic George Steiner was the featured speaker at the First Annual Ben Belitt Lecture conducted recently in the Carriage Barn.

Steiner spoke for nearly two hours on the experience of reading and the act of interpretation, using a painting by the French painter Chardin to illustrate his talk.

The series was made possible by a gift to the College from Edith Barbour Andrews, an alumna who was a student in Belitt's first class in modern poetry at the College.

Belitt spoke briefly at the opening ceremonies. He has been affiliated with the College for 38 years and is the author of several volumes of poetry.

Steiner is the author of "After Babel," "The Death of Tragedy," "Tolstoy or Dostoyevski" and "Language and Silence." In addition, he has delivered many endowed lectures, among them the T.S. Eliot Memorial Lectures at Canterbury, the John Crowe Ransom Lectures at Kenyon College, and the Bronowski Lecture on B.B.C.

Steiner is currently director of comparative literature at Geneva University and Extraordinary Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge University. He has taught at Cambridge, Princeton and Yale.

The lecture will be published in chapbook form and will appear sometime in mid-December. Both the lectureship and the book publication are part of Andrew's gift.

The opening ceremonies were presided over by Robert Boyers, Editor-in-Chief of the Bennington Review.

Many students at the lecture knew about Steiner through a course offered at the college. Stephen Becker's "Simple Literary and High Style," an introductory literature class, requires students to read "In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Our Culture."

"In Bluebeard's Castle," is Steiner's views and projections concerning man's inhumanity to man in contemporary culture.

### CAPSULES

#### • Competition

The Bennington College Mounted Posse will have its annual fall competitive trail ride this Saturday at 9 a.m.

There will be four divisions: Pony (all ponies 13.2 hands and under), light weight (rider and tack under 130 pounds), middle weight (rider and tack under 160 pounds) and heavy weight (rider and tack over 160 pounds).

There will be a \$5 entry fee, and the ride will leave from the Stamford Elementary School, Route 8, Stamford.

#### • I.D. Cards

Student I.D. cards are now being replaced at Seiler's Office in the North Suite of Commons. There is a \$5 charge for a new card, but cards will be replaced instantly. The change was made to reduce the confusion of the last system.

#### • Course

"Fruits, Weeds and Late Flowers" is the title of a course now being offered at the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies.

The course takes place on Saturday afternoons from 1 to 5 p.m. and is open to the public. There is an \$18 fee.

Free lance biologist Jerry Jenkins teaches the course.

#### • Bellydancing

An eight week bellydancing course kicks off tonight in the studio above Svaha.

The fee for the course is \$20 and can be paid at this first meeting. Finger cymbals and a veil are suggested for the course.

Those planning to attend should dress comfortably with midriffs exposed.

## New teachers join college staff

A former Bennington student is one of 13 new teachers joining the College faculty this fall.

Wendy Perron, Class of 1969, has entered the dance division as a full time instructor. Perron has received many grants, among them from the National Endowment from the Arts and the Mobil Foundation, and is editor of "Concepts in Performance" for the Soho Weekly News in New York.

Teachers joining the Literature

and Language Division include Octavio Armand, Stephen Becker and Nicole Schott-Desrosiers.

Armand is teaching classes in Spanish and Spanish literature, and is presently editor of "escandalar."

Becker returns to Bennington to teach several literature classes, tutorials, and a workshop. His latest novel, "The Chinese Bandit," was published in 1975 by Random House, and his next is set for spring.

The Natural Sciences and Mathematics Division has three new teachers: Donna Bedard, Norman Derby and Elizabeth Sherman.

Sherman was a postdoctoral fellow in zoology at Cornell last year, and has been granted fellowships by the National Science Foundation, The University of Vermont and the University of Rochester.

Derby, a specialist in physics, has received National Science

Foundation grants and has his doctorate from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Bedard has a doctorate from the University of Chicago and will primarily be teaching biology.

Michael Finckel and Vladimir Havsky have joined the Music Division, and Paul Hohenberg, Charles Stevenson and John Rajchman will be teaching in the Social Sciences Division.

# Reporter KO'd after 391; goes for broke with headline

*Ever wonder what goes on behind the scenes in order to get a newspaper out on time? Well, Vanguard reporter Ken Fowler, in a desperate attempt to write an article he was supposed to have written three weeks ago, penned off the following true-to-life depiction on what it's like working for us.*

It's 2 o'clock in the morning. This article is due at 8 o'clock, six hours from now. My loyal and inspiring editor in chief fell asleep an hour ago, five feet behind my present perch, after telling me to write about "whatever the hell you feel like." He would then motivate me to action with peppy phrases such as "dynamite" and "go for it!" Fortunately, he neither snores or talks in his sleep.

The topic of this article is at this point not only undecided, but also completely unknown. Originally, I was assigned one article, which was changed to another within two days time, followed by a third the next day, given to me by illegible note in my mail box the day that the article was due, four hours later, with assurance from my brash editor that "four hours is plenty of time for 1500 words."

Fortunately, I was able to draw on my experience in writing literature and philosophy papers. A crafty prizefighter, I've been in this ring before. My opponent is time, the perennial contender. He's trained hard for this one — his minute hand is deceptively fast tonight, and the right, his hour hand, is landing with devastating frequency and accuracy. As the middle rounds approach, I realize that I should have

trained harder. Too many nights at The Villager and two few afternoons at the library are taking their toll. My sentences lack the zest and string of those early freshman papers and I'm being hit too often. Desperate, I turn to my corner for strategy: my trainer is still asleep.

Fortunately, this is not a title bout; it's only scheduled to go 600 words, but I'm tiring now — I'm stalling on the ropes for time. My pencil is maintaining a weak defense and the readers know it. Quickly, I recap my career, like the proverbial flashback before death. Ahh, for those stunning victories noted for their arduous preparation, economy and strong late paragraphs! Then it was on the rag, those marginal split decisions against various bums. Finally, in the spring of '78, I suffered a T.B.C.

It was time to quit, my friends told me. "Drop out, throw in your transcripts, you're all washed up!" But I was only a freshman; I was too young to quit. I needed a new approach, I said, a new style. So I turned to journalism. Now, at 391 words, I wonder if I should have listened to my friends.

## Tenure system causes stir

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deliberation.

In the past, the procedure has been either to offer or deny presumptive tenure after two three-year contracts have been completed. Recently, a new alternative has been employed: an offer can now be made of a third three-year contract. Before the FPC met this past July this alternative offer had only been made three times. Don Brown feels that in postponing a "yes or no" decision, the College is simply demonstrating an unwillingness to make a definite judgment on a particular faculty member.

Phebe Chao, given a third three-year contract this past July, stated in a recent interview that she feels the new alternative illustrates a weakness within the review system. Chao, and others, feel that tenure, i.e., professional security, must either be consistently distributed or consistently denied at the time of a third review period.

Chao also notes that only 30 percent of the student evaluations that were distributed last term were returned to the Dean of Faculty's Office. Chao is appealing the Committee's decision at this time, and is presently on sabbatical.

According to Kenneth Kensinger, the important period of two-week discussion was shortened to 24 hours during the last review session in July. Kensinger reports being called before the committee at 4:00 in the afternoon, and facing an exhausted committee board that had already heard testimony from 11 other individuals. The fact that the FPC met during a vacation period drastically reduces the opportunity for student involvement in the system, said Kenneth Kensinger. Kensinger plans to appeal the decision of non-reappointment he received from the Committee.

## Body found . . .



Photos by Mary Raff

## ...on lover's lane

Photo above shows the dirt road where a Bennington youth recently uncovered a body; photo at left shows the approximate site where the body was found.

Bennington police identified the body as that of an upstate New York

man, but thus far they are releasing no further information.

Long-time residents of Bennington say the road, located on the outskirts of town, is popular as a lover's lane type hangout.

# Fashion at Bennington:

## Campus clothes in the fall



Micah Morrison and friend on a VAPA balcony, far left; at left, Sidney Tillum makes a point to one of his classes. At right, Sheila Black on her way to drawing class.



Far left, music teacher Bill Dixon. Above, a student strikes a pose for our photographer. Below, Sara Markowitz catches up on some reading amidst the autumn leaves. Above right, John Bertles sports the latest look from Dewey House, while below right, Dan Cameron shows his style.

Photos by Lexey Russel



# An interview

George Steiner has been called our greatest cultural critic and is acknowledged as one of the world's great literary critics. Born April 23, 1929 in Paris, he came to the United States in 1940. He received his undergraduate education from the University of Chicago, his M.A. from Harvard and his Ph.D from Oxford. His books include "Tolstoy or Dostoevsky," "The Death of Tragedy," "Language and Silence," "In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Toward the Redefinition of Our Culture," and "After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation." Steiner contributes regularly to "The New Yorker" and "The New York Review of Books" and has given many endowed lectures.

Vanguard had an exclusive interview with Steiner at the home of Robert Boyers in Saratoga, the day after Steiner had visited Bennington to give the inaugural lecture for the annual Ben Belitt Lecture Series.

Q: You said last night that education today is "planned amnesia." Could you clarify this?

A: I think that the training of memory has to begin in the extreme early stages, with a great deal of learning by heart. There are no two ways about this — either a culture does this or it will not be able to overcome a very wide measure of what I would call half-literacy, or sub-literacy. This is a fundamental political decision.

Q: So it goes right back to the entire educational system?

A: Yes. There was a very considerable training of memory. American public schools up until the late 1940's still had superb standards, whereas today, there is a very widespread abandonment even of the basic literate skills. No homework is given anymore, no tasks of any kind are imposed.

When people see the present situation, they think it is much more long established than it is — it isn't, it is a matter of a crisis in the last 30 years, which, in terms of the history of a great system of education, is very short.

Q: What do you attribute to this total abandonment of values?

A: It lies, I think, in the tremendous post war prosperity. There came at the same time a leveling, a decision of equality of men, a cultural equality for all which was by no means part of many ethics of American history. There came a period of extreme downward leveling in the name of certain other values, such as spontaneity, doing your own thing, emotional self-fulfillment, generally putting life, the actual quality of life, before any other values. It was certainly connected with the enormous explosion of a consumer prosperity such as no society has ever aimed for.

Q: It seems that the sixties parallels this post-war era in many ways. How do you assess the influence of the 60's on the United States?

A: It has left people profoundly empty. We are going to be paying the price for the abandonment of educational criteria for the next several decades. I mean something very specific by that: if you're young, beautiful, and well off, it is amazing how little luggage you need inside yourself. When these gifts of the gods are no longer there, there will be an emptiness inside because of the lack of ballast — exactly like a ship, which, without ballast, the moment the water gets choppy, the rolling begins.

One is absolutely struck at the moment by the premature sadness, the premature emptiness and restlessness of those who went through this non-education. You expect it from life and from a profession the contract of constant happiness, and that contract is not being kept by America, which is now in a very, very severe economic and social recession.

Q: Do you still stand by your gloomy prophecy for the future of the United States as you outlined it in "In Bluebeard's Castle?"

A: No. I am certainly glad to say I overstated. I certainly did not take into account the political resiliency, the amount of self-correction in the system since Vietnam and Watergate. But the main focus of the book is the component of inhumanity and violence moving ever downward in our ordinary lives. There I am even more pessimistic.

It seems to me that the United States could start overnight the torture camps, the concentration camps, the persecution in dozens of Latin American countries. It is no exaggeration whatsoever to speak of Paraguay and parts of Brazil, and much of Argentina, and much of Chile as comparable in horror to the Nazis. That is not rhetoric. It is mostly run by ex-Nazis and their police systems. We have seen what happened in Nicaragua in these very few last weeks.

These are states which live day-to-day on the charity or active investment of American foreign policy and of American multi-national corporations. The U.S. is not lifting a finger to stop the endemic spread of torture and murder and oppression on its very doorstep.

Q: You said in your lecture last night that theology was inseparable from any discussion of culture. Is the same true with politics?

A: Culture is a political issue and there can be no isolationism of decency. Decency also has to be for export and the staggering thing is this: when we face the world of the gulag, in our rage about Soviet behavior, about dissidents, we forget how immensely more powerful the American position would be if it even cared in cleaning up its own frontyard; but it is not concerned.

Q: Again, to quote from last night's lecture, you commented that America was extremely honest as a country. Do you see this as a self-effacing honesty or —

A: I think it's a very positive honesty. No country has ever been so ready to lay itself naked to itself and its

enemies; no other country that we know of has been as rough on itself and has been as ready to gather evidence against itself. I see America as a cross-examiner of itself, constantly putting itself on trial. This is an immense positive: there is, however, one very great danger: the absorption of America with its immensely passionate and complex problems is bringing on a new kind of isolationism.

We don't have a very good word for it, but the feeling which may be right, that this is where it's at, that what matters is here, the action is here, or the feeling which I would call a new pastoral regionalism; that what you've got to do is in your town or in your county or in your immediate district, invest all your immediate energies, all your genius into getting local things right.

This means that this is now a country far less aware of its world role that it was at certain points. And I flatly agree isolationism isn't the right word for it — domesticity is the kind of word I'm struggling for. But this has created a very great vacuum of values and power in the outside world.

Q: Sociologists say that a return to the whole basic institution of family will start to restore values in our youth. Do you agree?

A: On the contrary. I want young Americans to do what for several centuries young Englishmen did: to learn a dozen foreign languages and get away from home, go out into the world. The whole point is that so many of you, apart from the student trip, or the vacation, or the occasional year of study abroad, to so many of you,



George Steiner

Photo courtesy of Chuck Putney

# with George Steiner

everything that really matters is right here in your own neighborhood. And I think America is not exporting talent or exporting involvement or emotional leadership in the way that the very great powers of the past were able to do.

Q: Do you foresee a future in which there will be no one left who has read all the books or been reared in this "classical" way?

A: Let me divide your very important question into two parts. Assume we were sitting here with pre-law and pre-med students — and I have just been teaching at Stanford, so it's a very fresh impression. What they have to do in terms of sheer gut work, including vast amounts of learning by heart, including tremendous amounts of self-discipline, is enormous.

My case is why have the humanities sold out so cheaply? Why is it that at a time when to get into a good school in physics or biology you must know almost more than any generation before; why is it that we've abolished every prerequisite in the humanities, that we no longer ask any knowledge in the classics or foreign languages, that we don't teach the things I mentioned, prosody and —

Q: Don't you think this might be due to trends in modern literature away from classicism?

A: You could not be more mistaken. Robert Lowell and John Berryman, and T.S. Eliot, and Wallace Stevens and Ezra Pound are people who presume an enormous classical presence in language. The latest American Poetry Review has a translation of the latest thing Lowell was working on — what is it? A translation of Aeschylus' Agamemnon.

On the contrary, we've been in a period of extremely conservative, difficult poetry. Now why is it that other disciplines are prouder and prouder of what they ask from those who would come to them? There has been this embarrassment, a tremendous sellout at the gate of so many of the humanities.

I don't think there's an easy answer, but watch something very carefully: again and again today, you see a point of morale, of self-respect. It is the major in the humanities who is most vulnerable, is worst off compared to his pre-med or pre-law companion.

Q: You use the word self-respect. Do you see this absence of values as a lack of self-respect?

A: Oh yes, very deeply. Somewhere around the '50s and early '60s, a lot of men who should have known better, very able, gifted middle aged teachers of literature, middle aged teachers of creative writing, and middle aged critics on campus decided that they wanted to be young again at almost any price. We went through a wave of delayed adolescence in the middle age. It had very complex roots — sexual, economic, political. And when the gates were opened to so much vulgarity and a moat of barbarism to answer the question, they were opened from inside, they were never battered down.

Q: If you were President of a school like Bennington, how would you go about making it the type of educational institution you see as so imperative?

A: I would very literally — for those in the humanities, that's all I'm talking about — I would very literally around the table almost start all over again. By that I mean to read a text, by beginning to get people to have again a real pride in their own language. I think language is the skin of your and my being, that's what we live in. The saddest thing is the rapid decline in the joy of languages throughout the present educational system. We are, particularly in the United States, choked between a meaningless detergent incredibly pompous and wasteful kind of official ease which sweeps over our daily lives as citizens, on the one hand, and a kind of sub-articularcy on the other. Let me just mention two things: a recent survey of telephone conversations done on average by listening in said that in the United States about 75 percent of all telephone conversations fall within a range of about 800 words. The English language, as the Oxford English Dictionary includes it — and it's far from complete — is over half a million words, one of the richest languages on earth.

Secondly, why is it that in American films, novels, television shows and in popular mythology, a man who mumbles or who speaks badly is always thought to be more honest than one who speaks well? Just think of that strange reversal of values.

Q: It seems to me that language today is very jargonized, that —

A: But it's a very poor jargon. There are jargons of richness which are called precious languages — I'm not for those. But I would welcome a jargon if it had energy and invention in it. But what you're doing now is a kind of minimalism, like those paintings called "Black on Black." These had their moment, of course, but there is a tremendous difference between the laconic economy of a

Hemingway sentence and the kind of sub-economy of the present mumbler who can hardly use a word of more than two syllables. We've reached a point of impoverishment of expressive means which is definitely something very, very new and has very major political and social consequences.

Q: And you're saying we have to go back to the classics to alter this?

A: Or, go to the best that is now being written. We have to begin to have pride in the way that we speak to each other around the table, and we can do that best, I think, in

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*I'm desperately worried...  
A scholar or critic is kind  
of a mailman:  
the letters reach us.*

---

the face of a major text which speaks to us.

Q: Who are some contemporary writers who speak to us in this way?

A: I think we are in a very, very interesting and important period of poetry. I don't want to do catalogues of names. You in Bennington are particularly privileged because you have a number of very important writers right on your doorstep, writers who have known closely and been influenced by other masters. We don't need to draw up a list, but we could find a dozen very, very serious poets. But I think the thing goes more deeply.

I would ask ourselves to what extent our laws in the U.S., the language of our institutions, the languages of our public life, is rooted in the Bible, the book of common prayer, Shakespeare and the great masters of the 18th century. I will take just one or two of the absolutely decisive texts in American history, for instance Jefferson's proposals for the University of Virginia. And I would just begin reading very, very closely, word by word, sentence by sentence, and try to understand what it presumes in our recognitions, what it doesn't need to explain and what it thinks we should know; and wherever we would agree that we no longer know it, we would learn to look it up together.

And the process of looking something up is one of the great moral honesties — that's what I meant by saying a form of prayer is to correct printing errors. It's a moral act, it's not a trivial act. And it's a collaborative thing — I have a vision of what it is to read seriously together: it is one of the greatest sources of inner coherence.

Q: You once wrote that "the critic lives at second-hand, he writes about." What about yourself?

A: I won't speak about myself, but I'll make the obvious answer. We are in a terrible period when critics have things written about them and more and more people know about critics sometimes then about authors. Reading critics on Dante rather than reading Dante is a dreadful joke, it's the cart before the horse.

We are full of critics: since the 1940's every university has bristled with critics. The great South African poet Roy Campbell once wrote about how wonderful it is to have stirrups and bridles, and the next sentence was "but where's the bloody horse?"

The "bloody horse" is the writer, not the critic. The bridle and the stirrup and the saddle may be very important in a culture, but I wish we could do away, for a little while at least, with all the secondary literature and get back to the text itself.

The critic can come later.

The finest critic is the one who led you to the text, and when you have read the text, you say, "Oh for God's sake, he fell so far short of telling me the whole story," and then it has been a very fine piece of criticism. Great criticism falls short of its object, and I hope that some of the work I've been able to do has made people go to the text I'm writing about and kick away the little ladder that I am, and say, "I don't need that ladder anymore." That is fine criticism. The worst criticism is the one that builds the great scaffold around the building, and the scaffold stays but the building is obscured.

Q: To get back for a minute to the subject you raised of America's inhumanity abroad. How long do you think that this will continue?

A: I wish I knew the answer. I cannot understand the indifference of so many Americans, particularly the young, toward what is being committed in the name of American power in so many lands abroad. The ignorance, the uncaring —

Q: Well, isn't that the reason — ignorance? If you don't know about something —

A: Well, when they really got very angry about Cambodia, they knew a great deal and they found out very fast. One must never underestimate the coiled spring of American indignation. When it explodes, it's terrific. We all know that, we saw it in the last Vietnam years and in Watergate. Something could uncoil it, but my god, it's getting late. The massacres in Latin America are a daily fact.

Q: What could uncoil this spring?

A: It could be a political voice or it could be a great work of art.

Q: How could it be a great work of art?

A: Very often in history, it has been a book, an "Uncle Tom's Cabin," it has been a bad film, it has been a series of plays. There, I suppose, I'm terribly old fashioned: I think just about the most dangerous thing in the world is a great poem or a great novel.

I know the United States cannot be the policeman of the world, but when the horror is in its own backyard, where it is all powerful, then we have a real problem. But remember, your generation is not very interested in the world at large, and only you can answer why that is.

Q: What do you think the next generation will be like — the children of the '80s?

A: There could be less of it — the birth rate has declined very much. There is a great danger that we're heading for a rather isolated society, isolated in terms of only its own interests.

Just to give you a small example: I read American newspapers constantly, and their coverage of a very deep crisis in Canada — which isn't very many miles from where you and I are sitting this afternoon — is lamentable. Now little old France and England, with a fraction of the means and a fraction of the resources, know more about the potential split of Canada into several nations, know more about this tremendous inner crisis which will effect the United States, then do the readers of the New York Times — when the New York Times is printed. And that is a weird paradox, one that worries me very much, because America is the electric current in the world, is the generator of human hope, without any doubt.

Q: Is its position as this generator still as secure, still as supported?

A: No, there are serious doubts because of some of the things I've mentioned, particularly in Africa, and in parts of Asia, where America had an incomparable moral prestige and was the reinsurance for human progress. This may no longer be true. Time is running out, but quite frankly, a world without a very strong America frightens me, frightens me very badly.

Q: You wrote in "Bluebeard's Castle" that we stand,

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*Sometimes, I have the  
menacing impression that  
they're all piling up  
in a dead letter office.*

---

with regard to a theory of culture, where Bartok's Judith stands, poised between doors. Have we come any closer to a theory of culture?

A: No, and in fact, we probably distrust that very notion. Remember that even since I've written it some eight years ago, even in that short a period, a great deal of the ambitions of political theory, of sociology, of philosophic political theory have diminished. I would say the economic crisis we're in, where for the first time in modern history you have massive unemployment and rising inflation which every textbook said was totally inconceivable and impossible, has given a tremendous blow to the confidence of these predictors.

We shy back at the moment from prediction — that's one of the interesting aspects of recession.

Q: How do you see yourself among all this?

A: I'm desperately worried. One gets awfully frightened and lonely if one begins seeing or thinking that the books one loves more than anything else may no longer be read by those who are younger than oneself. I want to be absolutely concrete in a selfish and frightened way about this — I would like to help train or educate or work with some of those who will, after my time, care for the things that have been supremely important to me. It's a question of handing on. A scholar, a critic, a philosopher of language or culture is a kind of mailman; the letters reach us. Sometimes, I have the menacing impression that they're all piling up in a dead letter office. I would like to put them back into new mailboxes and send them off. That is the best function a teacher or a critic has.

# Trouble at the contemporary dinner table

By Alison Davies

There are a few qualities inherent in the punk-rock/new wave onslaught of the McDonalds-Leave-it-to-Beaver-Post-Vietnam sensibility that well illustrate the sentiment of the 70s. To elucidate fully the phenomena of punk would be futile. One cannot always put one's finger on all the vegetables of the cultural stew one is in. I read an article in what's left of one of New York's newspapers. It was the centerfold on punk. There was a mention of the generation that eroded from the 60's children: those of us whose consciousnesses at ages eight, nine and ten dreamed of Jeanie, Leave-it-to-Beaver and Gilligan's Island, whose parents proffered no other information about Haight-Ashbury other than 'roll up your windows and lock your doors.' I empathized with this as I had long ago faced up to the fact that I had missed something and had thought more of Jack-In-The-Box than I did of Nixon's Inaugural march down Park Avenue. Political awareness had come after the fact, and indeed, I was a punk the minute I got out of my school uniform.

Three years ago Bennington's student body was the

slightly younger brothers and sisters of rock and roll, communes and intense haters of Richard Nixon. In this case it's okay to bear a grudge. If their parents were at all liberal in their upbringing, at 13 they witnessed a few concerts and protest marches. Being a hippy, like an old postcard of Europe, meant a personal nostalgia. But the hair is short now, tweed collars are turned up and the charge card is no longer a pariah. I was jealous of the passion for sharing toothbrushes (not the spirit of the deed, but the act of doing it), I was jealous of the kids whose parents loaned them the money to buy a flatbed truck so that they might collect old newspapers and cans around upper Manhattan. In effect I was jealous of the cause and nostalgia for something I was not a part of. Try as I might I could not be a hippy. Though I looked like one, my passion for fries and T.V. was terrible. The newspaper article told me it was okay to like Beaver-Cleaver and bad food. It's thesis was that this was punk... that the four-year difference (being 10 in 1968 as opposed to 14) makes for an apolitical sensibility.

Punk, like a disco globe, is multifaceted. European

punk stems mostly from an economically depressed kid culture that was able to put words and music to the jobless life of hanging out on the street. American punk is less political depicting maybe the simplicity of life, as an American Kid. It becomes difficult to distinguish because it all sounds alike.

And the problem with punk is that it inevitably begs for a putdown: the black leather jacket and safety pin in your eyelids is really just too offensive. And this pull towards crudity is strong. But is it really far off the mark from many dinner conversations or family fights? The fact of the matter is that newspapers and fads have merely insulted us in putting all this violence on media's silver platter. We think this is the tight little package punk comes in and that we are expected to eat it. We become stubborn, refuse dessert or coffee, get up, leave the table and listen to disco. It's easy, it's fun and it's cheap. Even reggae would be better than the spastic base of a punk rock band. But reggae is another poetic story.

In looking at punk, style comes into play. A glance backwards into the 50s with our right foot in the future is kind of kinky, and looks good, too. Style in punk can be said to be aggressive change. Amidst all the disparity of style on the lower East Side, to see two tall figures dressed in tight black pants, black shirts, hair standing straight and tall like new mown grass, with a modest nonchalance that does not condone violence, is, if not beautiful, at least striking. And, in the end, maybe what we admire is not the appearance at all, but the nerve. But it is all so easy to reject as fad, when, in truth, fad is a direct cultural statement. I suppose this last description could be said to be a paradigm of punk. Style seems to relieve a certain cultural loneliness. If one loves ones heroes and feels some sort of integral inadequacy (why aren't I in a punk rock band?) then one tries to look and feel like one's heroes. The thing about punk is that you can be in a punk rock band. And the reason emulating our heroes is easy, because it has all been priced and checked (i.e.: 'Romantic Pessimist,' 'Cultural Despair,' 'Indifference,' 'Wild and Rebellious') by the Bloomingdales of Media shorthand, in or out of the Academic Kingdom. Maybe for the first time in a long while Punk Rockers are an obscure form of contemporary cultural hero. We don't have to look so far back into the past to find our idols and feel the insecurity of the glance backwards.

But style does not always mean the message, and punk does not necessitate style. Jimmy Dean and Brando had short hair because everyone had short hair. They were handsome men feeling and playing desperate roles. Their dilemmas ('Where the hell am I going to fit in this world?') descended to feel empathy for the part; so many roles have been stamped and reiterated. Punk is not style and if it is, it's been done. Punk is drastic and simplistic, and that is why it offends. It is awkward, emotional, ambitious and deadpan romantic.

If Rock and Roll of the 60s stands for a rebellion against parents, Punk Rock could be a rebellion against our older brothers and sisters. It disembodies itself from any 60's sensibility, jumping right back into the 50s of Rock and Roll. To a certain extent much of punk rock is a conscious reiteration, even plaguerism of a style that occurred 20 years ago. It is admitted and once admitted becomes an open rejection of 60's consciousness. Though the music of punk retains a definite 'period' sensibility, the lyrics are in the 1970s. The words maintain an indifference to — or contrived ignorance of — the establishment and the establishment fighters. Punks write about political awareness coming after the fact and in the end, though this may sound cold hearted, indifference to an era they were not a part of... too young to tag along after older brothers and sisters. And like Beaver they stayed home, watching T.V.

## Review

Vanguard

Bennington College

October 12, 1978

### Material welcomed

Vanguard actively solicits material for this page. Reviews of movies, books, plays, music, performances and contemporary issues are welcome. All material submitted should be typed, double-spaced, and placed in the Vanguard box in the mail room.

## Album answers 'Who Are You'

By John Wendel

"I've spent the last hour trying to write a nasty review of the new Who album, 'Who Are You,' I felt betrayed by the calmness, and wimpy synthesizer. After playing the album non-stop all day. I'm forced to admit that this is a great record, but merely an O.K. Who record.

The last Who release, 'Why By Numbers' in 1975, was filled with Pete Townshend's bitterness at having realized that he's not going to die before he gets old: the only song in the new album that displays this feeling is the album's opener, 'New Song.'

I write the same old song with a few new lines

And everybody wants to hear it.

He is calmer now, less negative and, I'm afraid, less interesting. It's nice to see him happy and com-

fortable, but I'm not 32 yet and I can relate much better to his old manic aggression.

Keith Moon's death is hard to believe. It was always likely, considering his lifestyle, but he seemed to have some special grace which allowed him to drink three bottles of cognac a day, wreck innumerable cars and still bounce up laughing hysterically and playing drums louder and faster than any human being possibly could.

The album contains only one classic Who rocker, 'Trick of the Light' (written by Entwistle) which opens with crashing power chording and the patented Moon-Entwistle bottom-end explosion.

'Who Are You' is dominated by synthesizers, used very well on Entwistle's '905,' which is reminiscent of Brian Eno and the 801, and very badly

on 'Love is Coming Down,' which is reminiscent of a Donna Summer record.

The album's title track, 'Who Are You' written by Townshend after meeting Sex Pistols Steve Jones and Paul Cook, is unquestionably the album's best song, and the obvious choice for the single. The album version suffers somewhat compared to the single (N2 on the Villager Jukebox) because it goes on too long.

Townshend's best lyrics on the album are in 'Guitar and Pen,' which like much of the rest of the album is concerned with his somewhat defensive reaction to Punk; the song reincarnates everything the Who once stood for and have moved beyond:

You smash you guitar on the end of your pen  
You stick it together and start writing again.

## 'Eyes' offers viewer different perspective

By Natasha Thomsen

Laura Mars is a successful fashion photographer played by Faye Dunaway who uses death scenes as the primary themes of her work. The movie begins with her in her sleep, when "dreaming" a murder in the middle of the night. Who is the murderer? Why does he mysteriously stab the eyes of his victims, people who work for Laura? It is to the movie's credit that the audience is kept guessing in the beginning of the film who the killer is and what his motives are.

But even with the suspense and intrigue a well brought off "whodunit" can inspire, a particular missing link deprives the film of its coherency. Laura only sees through

the eyes of the murderer when he is in the act of committing these crimes — what about all the other times when he was with her, such as in the police station, the studio, or the forest? The audience searches for a reason but there is none.

'Eyes' exploits the synthesis between photographic realism and dramatic illusion. The camera records what has been created (the murders), and it creates, by its manner of recording, the excruciating sensation that we know all about the murders, apart from the whodunit, which is fairly obvious from the beginning. There is an overt use of photographic devices of selection (the negative of Laura's face in the beginning

of the film) and distortion (the switch from negative to positive of Laura's face and the dream-like effect of the murders) that allows us to comment upon the objects being filmed. In 'Eyes,' the camera serves not only as an apparatus to record action, but it selects and molds the images of these murders in Laura's mind so the audience feels it is seeing through the lens of the camera. The juxtaposition of Laura's vision and her own reality is closely controlled by Director Irvin Kershner. He asserts that time and space have not one dimension but two for Laura, and carries this off wonderfully.

But instead of building up to a total effect by a composition of details selected

and welded together, the total effect is presented with the first murder. The audience is thus obliged to sit through the next six murders, all identical, until the unveiling of the murderer. Again, the other fall-back in the "double vision" plan is its unexplainable irregularity. Why didn't Laura see herself through his eyes when they were alone out in the woods or in bed? Why did he wait until the end to confront her, knowing she had a gun to protect herself?

The film's credibility comes from the film-maker's causing us to feel like eyewitnesses of the reality portrayed. For Laura, her reality becomes nearly fatal and turns her into a nervous wreck.

# Council budget hopes stricken

By Andrea Loselle

Hopes were high last spring when Student Council President Micah Morrison proposed to Business and Financial Director Bernie Iser and Student Services Director Short Aldrich a plan to increase the Student Council budget for this school year, 1978-79. Morrison proposed that the budget be doubled from \$15,000 to \$30,000. These hopes were shattered recently when Student Council received an increase of only \$500 giving it a working budget of \$15,500.

Asked why the Council was allocated such a meagre sum in comparison to their original request, Short Aldrich stated emphatically, "The money isn't there."

## Alumna wins contest

Bennington College graduate Anne Macklin was awarded the New England Poetry Club's John Holmes Award during the club's recent monthly dinner.

Macklin, Class of 1978, was awarded the award for her poem, "My Brother's Letter."

Competition for the annual poetry award, named to honor a long-time Tufts University professor, is open to undergraduates at New England Colleges. This year's contest was judged by Gary Miranda, author of "The Seed That Dies" and Florence Trefethen, a club board member and a columnist for "The Writer."

The New England Poetry Club, founded in 1915, is the country's oldest poetry society. Past members include Amy Lowell, Robert Frost, John Holmes and Anne Sexton, and the current membership includes many of New England's most noted poets.

Macklin, a resident of Arlington, Virginia, received her Bennington degree in literature.

Aldrich went on to say that she and Iser had calculated the projected costs for maintaining the college system this year, and that they had arrived with little surplus for either divisional budget increases or a Student Council budget increase. (Funds for the Council's budget are considered after educational, administrative, maintenance, health and food costs are determined.)

According to Morrison, had Council received the \$15,000 budget increase, the funds would have been divided into three parts. The Recreation Committee and the Film Committee each would have received \$10,000, and the rest would have been set aside for three major purposes: to produce more funds to strengthen the effectiveness of the S.E.P.C., to set up an experimental Special Events Committee and to tighten the relationship between the faculty and student body.

The S.E.P.C., Morrison claims, feels that it has been ignored in its capacity to assist with faculty policy decisions, particularly with respect to the faculty review system. Additional funds from Student Council would have enabled S.E.P.C. to form stronger and more efficient programs that would have extended beyond S.E.P.C.'s primary function of compiling and submitting class evaluations to the faculty.

Morrison's experimental Special Events Committee entailed allocating funds for special speakers and workshops which would have then involved Bennington's educational divisions. Morrison also said that the Council would have helped provide funds when any one of the divisions needed it.

Morrison's third aim, to develop a closer relationship between the faculty and student body, was based on his opinion that "there is a lot of mystery here...We (the students) don't know what's going on."

The Williams College social scene has been neglected in recent years and is a very good alternative to facing one more Friday night party here at Bennington. Though all the things you have heard about Williams students are true, (they do tend to drink a lot of beer and play an inordinate amount of team sports), anyone who has spent any time at all at Bennington is equipped to handle a few eccentrics. Many things go on at Williams on weekends, besides a number of house-sponsored parties, and there are a couple of cafes that regularly present a variety of live musical entertainments.

Generally there are parties on both Friday and Saturday nights, but if they just won a football game you can expect there will be partying all throughout the week as well. Freshmen and large dorms, which tend to throw extravagant affairs with free hot dogs, whistles and hats, can be avoided. The "old name" houses give excellent parties though; however, Dodd House, the "ole Williams Inn" notoriously has the best. While you are usually requested to give a few dollars at the door, the cover entitles you to an open bar and, if not a live band, a good choice of tapes to dance to. The notice board in the entry way of the Williams library has posted all the pertinent information about the parties well in advance, so if interested check there.

The Rathskellar, located in the basement of Baxter Hall, (the building that looks like a show boat), is a coffee house on Saturday nights. Starting at 9 p.m., students open the show up with their own original music and then comes banjos and guitars to perhaps sing a ballad, a little blues and maybe even a few sea songs. The entertainment is always free.

"The Log," an unobtrusive, quaint New England tavern located at the lower end of Spring Street, is owned by the college and managed by recent graduates. Once you find the little sign hanging from the porch, you must pass the front desk and sign in as a guest of a Williams student. It doesn't matter who, and it is a formality practiced because of the tavern's liquor license and its restrictions, but Bennington students are certainly welcome. Once inside you will discover college life as you always thought it would be. An overgrown moose head, captured by some industrious student on faculty day, drapes the mantel, and hanging from the beams all over are banners, assorted team pictures, revolutionary drums, mysterious looking bones and other assorted booty collected from the last rival game against Amherst. Imported and Domestic beers are served on tap at the bar; and while it is true that only beer is served here, you get it in great two-fisted mugs and pitchers and is enough to have a superb game of "drink the goat and bang your neighbors knuckles" which everyone plays at "the Log" with abandon. Saturday night at the Log offers excellent jazz music.

## Williams parties offer relief

By Eileen McMahon



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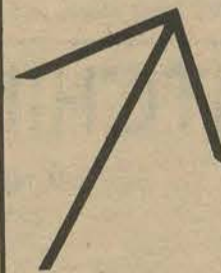
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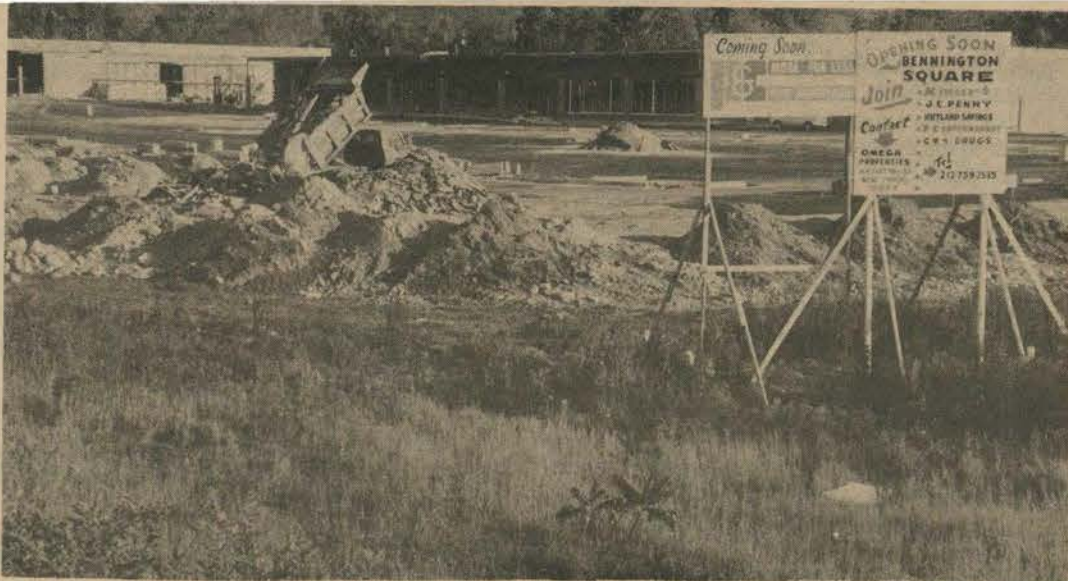


Photo by Mary Raff

The new shopping center in Bennington, scheduled to open in early March, is expected to create nearly 200 jobs for the Bennington community. The bulk of the

construction is planned for the upcoming month, as foremen at the site struggle to complete the job before the cold weather sets in.

## Shopping center underway

Construction is now underway for a new shopping center at the corner of Northside Drive and Route 67, in Bennington. The center, scheduled to open March 8, will feature more than a half dozen stores, including a K Mart and a J.C. Penny's.

More than 75 men are working at the site, according to Frank Ruosteja, Assistant Superintendent of Construction for Seppale and Aho, a New Hampshire-based firm contracted to do the building.

"It's a really good location and I think things will work out really well," Ruosteja said. "We had a few snags in the beginning, but they were mostly in the organizational phases."

Other stores to open at the center include a P and C Supermarket, a Fayva Shoe Store, a CVS Drug Store, and a

Trustworthy Hardware Store. However, Ruosteja feels that K Mart and Penny's will be the big draws.

"Overall, the center will create a lot more jobs for area residents, and I think there's definitely a market for something of this nature," he added.

Tom Saari, Superintendent of the project, agrees:

"It's definitely a growing part of the country, and I think this new shopping center will blend right in, and it will create a couple hundred jobs. I don't think a lot of the local merchants will like it, but that's normal."

Groundbreaking for the shopping center, slated for March 8, is not necessarily when the shops will open — some may open prematurely.

"We don't anticipate any problems," Saari says. "We

won't be burdened by snow because by the time any snow is on the ground, we'll have finished the exterior and we'll be working on the interior."

Seppale and Aho operates out of New Ipswich, New Hampshire, and has worked in Bennington before, having been contracted to build the Bennington Nursing Home six years ago.

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## Bennington tops list as most expensive

Bennington is the most expensive school in the country, according to a recent Vanguard survey.

Despite conflicting reports in a number of newspaper and magazine articles around the country, a telephone survey of admissions offices around the country revealed that the following are the nation's five most expensive schools:

Bennington College heads the list, with a total cost of \$8,390, followed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with a cost of \$8,350. Yale University was third with a comprehensive fee of \$8,300, then Brown University, at \$7,455, and Harvard University, at \$7,428.

Tom Fels of the Bennington College Admissions Office associates the college's high cost with its number of endowments and inflation. According to Fels, because Bennington is a relatively young school, the number of alumni contributors is considerably less than that of larger, older institutions with comparable tuition fees.

The College Entrance

Examination Board, which conducts an annual survey of American Colleges, both public and private, predicted that the average cost of attending a private school in 1978 would be \$5,110.

The Board also found that the average cost of attending public college would be \$3,054.

## Magazine

"Early Harvest," the student literary magazine, is now accepting contributions. The deadline for all material is October 18.

Edited by Junior Ian Gonzalez, the magazine will include student prose, poetry, photography, artwork and music.

Other members of the editorial board include: Paul Wheeler, Valery Levine, Mokie Pratt, Gregory Brown, Stephen Frailey, Deborah Chu and Cate Noyes.

Submissions should be placed in the "Early Harvest" box or given to editorial board members.

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# Softball season survives in hot stove league

The Bennington College softball team, in the words of player-coach Shadwell Nuisance (remember Frank Robinson?) simple suffered from "a lack of players from public schools who at least knew their butt from third base."

Nuisance goes on: "I mean, hell, I ain't no marxist or nothin', I can't even spell them words — but softball's a working man's game. Look at how the Villager beat us."

And he poetically summarizes the matter with: "A lacrosse paddle or raquet or whatever them things are called just ain't a Louisville."

Nuisance is haggard — okay, he's not sober. The lines on his face bleed of those years chopping trees and picking potatoes. He must now emphathise with Yaz and Zimmer.

"It was the preppies that did it to us. Now, Farley was okay but didn't drink enough. That four year hitch in the Guard ruined Fowler — he ain't no Ted Williams. And Noah Rosen, Cwist, ya'd think he wus fuwm Bwookwyn or somethun; but he's classier than Littlefield.

Nuisance paused here to order another turkey and wipe some early tears.

"And Weinbaum, no arms, no stick, no woman, no cry."

But it was a good season. All

the old drunks sitting in the dying light of day guarding the keg at every game, talking baseball and always getting off the track, but always getting back to baseball. And then like pigeons on extended wings, they'd crash the North Gate in Ryan's car (cough, cough) and go to the Villager. More drinks, pinball, bowling, more drinks, recrash the North Gate, a couple for the road, and sure enough, to the all night study to do a little booking.

Now if this all sounds romantic, it is because it was a thumb twirling the pinkies on the nose, to Benny U. Softball has all the virtues of punk rock, only with more class — it requires more skill and intelligence, and wasn't bogged down with the sin of being New Yorkish. Anybody can be a punk rocker, but how many can tag a softball? Going, going, gone! Softball is... is so wonderfully American. God Bless the

flag! Long live Rick Monday!

In fall season action, the College softball team dropped two games to The Villager.

Hindered by the absence of last years self-appointed captain, John Ryan, who has gone off for greener grass, the team showed an unusual flair for making even the easiest plays look hard. Comments Nuisance:

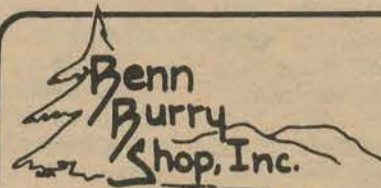
"I just couldn't believe it was my boys out there. We had some schmuck in centerfield and Clark was at second, so right there you know we were hurtin'. And then Kenny Fowler missed about seven in a row and we had to ship him off to the outfield, where Littlefield was fighting with Weinbaum the whole damn time."

Between turkeys, Nuisance went on:

"And speaking of Weinbaum, I don't think I've ever seen a worse

arm. When that ball is hit to him, people inside Booth and Kilpatrick start to move away from their windows. Him and

Norris — man, what'd I ever do to deserve that double play combination! Gimme Mike Andrews anyday."



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# Undefeated team: teamwork the key

"We've just been playing an outstanding game every time we go out there," says Mark Tratten, captain of the undefeated College soccer team.

"Everyone is working really well together and things just seem to be falling into place," Tratten adds.

The squad defeated Green Mountain College, 7-2, in its season opener, and followed it up with consecutive shutouts of 7-0 and 2-0, against Marlboro and Simon's Rock, respectively.

The opener saw Tam Stewart and Nat Scrimshaw "playing superbly," according to Tratten, who played for two years on the Franconia College soccer team before coming to Bennington.

"The second game was a team effort in all respects," he said, "but our shutout against Simon's Rock was dominated by Kevin Farley."

Farley scored both goals in the game with low, hard outside shots.

The soccer team was originally funded by Student Services, which donated the money for soccer balls. However, Tratten says that the team will eventually pay the school back.

"At this point, we're self-sufficient by necessity, and only by necessity," Tratten stresses.

"We're desperately looking for funding."

The team paid for its uniforms with the profits from a Friday night party it hosted above Svaha.

"I think it's important to note that since our inception, we have existed solely on the impetus of the players and their love of the game."

There are between 15 and 20 players on the team, according to Tratten.

"It would really benefit everyone involved if we were funded, either by the school, or by an outside gift, or something..."

The team is coached by Edwin Dickey, a 71-year-old Scotsman and former pro coach who lives in Bennington.

"He's done an incredible job, and we all have nothing but the highest respect for him," Tratten finishes.

The team plays this Saturday at Marlboro. Game time is 2:30 p.m. The next home game is Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. against the College of St. Rose.

All soccer games are played on the field adjoining the tennis courts. The field is lined with lime prior to each game by the maintenance department, who Tratten credits with doing "a great job."



Photo by Mary Raff

A member of the College soccer team checks out some foot-work during a practice session. The team practices every day.

**'We're desperate  
for funding of any kind'**

**— Mark Tratten**

## Girls' tennis still winless; coach hopeful for future

Four returning players highlight this year's girls' tennis team, looking for its first win this Saturday against Hampshire College.

Graciela Garcia-Moliner, Ann Howitt, Connie Humphrey and Dana Hanley have returned and form the nucleus of this year's team, according to coach Dave Finnegan.

"We have a good young team that's going to be really competitive," Finnegan says. "Our two losses came against a really tough Williams College team, and the one game we were rained out of (against Green Mountain) was a sure win for us."

Other players on the team include:

Patricia Ackerman, Beth Barsky, Francesca Brenner, Claire Burkert, Beatrice Dohrn, Megan Kamponann, Katarina Billman and Leah Rosenblatt.

The game this Saturday will be at home.

The team plays and practices at the college courts, which have a clay playing surface. However, Finnegan says that this has not created any unusual problems:

"It takes some getting used to, and if it's been raining or it's really damp it's tough to play on, but we like it."

Finnegan goes on:

"And since not all of our players are experienced — we do have a few beginners — they're learning the game for the first time on clay, which helps."

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