

NEWSLETTER

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
BENNINGTON, VERMONT

June 1963

COMMENCEMENT -- JUNE 15

The class of 1963 is the second largest in the College's history. It numbers seventy-five, seventy-six if one Masters candidate is tallied in. The Literature Division recommended twenty-five for the B.A. degree, Social Science twenty-one, Visual Arts thirteen. The remaining fifteen majored in Drama, Science, Music and Dance, with one general major. The Masters degree was granted in Dance.

David Riesman, Henry Ford II Professor of Social Sciences at Harvard University, delivered the Commencement address on Friday evening after the traditional dinner on Jennings lawn. The next morning, long before the last stroke of 10:00, those in charge had decided to postpone the ceremony until 11:00, hoping, as weather reports indicated, that the rain would cease, and the sun would shine forth as usual on Bennington's Commencement Day. But by 10:45 it was thicker than ever, and for the second time in 28, we were rained out. The ceremony was held in the Theatre, inadequate but the best at hand, and although the degrees were conferred with less order than is our way, the pride and delight of the faculty in those receiving them was complete. Like every class, this one was distinctive, made so of course by the individuals who were in it, but each of those individuals has something in common with every other who has graduated from Bennington. She is her own person. She is someone.

SUSTAINED AND INDEPENDENT

For a year or year and a half, the members of this class (in addition to two other courses) were at work on their independent theses, or projects. The theses vary, ranging from original short stories and poetry, to titles like: "Le Thème du Labyrinthe dans l'oeuvre de Michel Butor"; "Poetry and the Church in Fourteenth Century England"; "Role and Status of the Hindu Woman in Northern India"; "The Theoretical and Experimental Basis of Concept Formation"; "The Progressive Movement - Justice in an Industrial Society"; "A Developmental Study of the Relations Between a Percept and a Memory"; "The 'Eternal Moment' in Dostoevsky's Fiction"; "Jean Santeuil et Jacques Thibault" - "L'Étude des années de formation dans l'oeuvre de Marcel Proust et dans celle de Roger Martin du Gard"; "Religious Selectivity and Change Among the Ibo." There are fifty such.

In the Carriage Barn, all space that could support, suspend or sustain canvas, rice paper, clay, steel and lead (among other media) did. What wasn't in evidence were the performances, concerts and recitals presented earlier by majors in the performing arts. But they happened and will be remembered too. The hard work and energy these works represented was enough to heat a Vermont winter. The quality of it all called forth hurrahs from the valley's floor to Mt. Anthony's peak.

MARJORIE BEEBE FISK

Marjorie Beebe Fisk, secretary to the President since the founding of the College, and Executive Secretary to the College, died in the North Adams Hospital on Wednesday morning, June 5. She had been seriously ill for about three weeks.

Mrs. Fisk was born in Williamstown in 1904. She graduated from the Williamstown High School in 1922, and received her certificate from Bliss Business College, North Adams, the following year. From 1923-29 she was secretary to Dr. Vanderpoel Adriance, staff physician at Williams College. In August of 1929 Robert Devore Leigh, the first president of Bennington College, wrote her a letter which began "I am ready now to make definite the arrangement that you start work as a stenographer for Bennington College in (its) New York City (office) this fall."

Mrs. Fisk's association with Bennington thus began three years before the College opened, and continued under four presidents. During her thirty-four years of uninterrupted service at the center of administration, she had witnessed the transfer of the College from mind to substance, a steady succession of faculty, administrative staff, and trustees, major and minor crises through depression and war. In her head and in her files she commanded a store of information which gave each new president a sense of continuity with the past. The College's loss is large, and one which will be keenly felt both on and off campus, in Bennington's world.

"THE ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE IS HAPPY TO TELL YOU....."

The class of 1967 has been signed and selected, and will be delivered on Friday, September 6, when the new students arrive. There are 120 of them, including 13 transfers. Four are National Merit Finalists. Twenty-five will receive financial aid totaling over \$30,000. Sixty-one percent are from public schools, 39% from private. The mean SAT scores are V636, M585. They were chosen from 576 applications.

These figures represent hard work for everyone -- the applicant and her parents, the schools, the office and the Faculty Admissions Committee. Mr. Handy and Mrs. Holt traveled for a total of ten weeks, visiting 15 areas and 150 schools. Over 99% of the applicants had personal interviews (approximately 1/5 conducted by alumnae).

HONORS TO THE LIBRARY....

In April the Edward Clark Crossett Library was chosen to receive a top architectural award. The American Institute of Architects, the American Library Association and the National Book Committee named the Bennington College library, as one of two college and university libraries completed after January 1958, for the honor. Over sixty institutions competed in the first Library Buildings Award Program initiated by the three organizations to "encourage excellence in the architectural design and planning of libraries..." Pietro Belluschi, architect of the building, was among the guests present at the April 25th ceremony held at the College when the citation was presented. The undergraduate library at the University of South Carolina received the other First Honors. Two public libraries were also chosen, and several others received merit awards.

...and A FIRST FOR SILO

Silo, edited and produced by a Board of Bennington students, has been named the outstanding student literary magazine, chosen on the basis of best single issue, in the first national student literary magazine contest, co-sponsored by the United States National Student Association and the Saturday Review. Silo was chosen for the award for its consistent quality, layout and design. It won the top award out of 170 entries. A prize of \$250 will be awarded Silo by the Saturday Review.

Silo has been Bennington's literary magazine for many years. Last year the magazine's board decided that it should expand its scope. Included now in its pages with the fiction and poetry are musical compositions, woodcuts, journals, philosophical essays, dance scores and architectural plans. The work of other college students is invited and published. Two issues of the new format have appeared and a third is currently available. The magazine is on sale in several bookstores in New York City, and Boston. It may be subscribed to (\$2.00 for one year, \$5.00 for three years) by sending such a request, and a check, to Silo, Bennington College.

NEW FACES

At this writing, five new additions to the faculty and one to the administrative staff can be announced. The Fall Newsletter will carry notice of the several additional appointments still to be made.

Barton J. Bernstein, who will teach "The Transformation of America 1865-1963," "The Age of Roosevelt and Truman 1933-1963" (Fall term), and "America at Midcentury" (Spring term), is currently finishing the work for his doctoral degree in American political and economic history at Harvard University. He has taught at Harvard, at Washington University, and Queens College, from which he graduated in 1957 with special honors in history.

Helen Codere, a graduate of the University of Minnesota and holder of a Ph.D. degree from Columbia University, has been teaching anthropology at Vassar College since 1946. During this year's winter quarter, she was a lecturer at the Center for Social Science Research, Northwestern University. Miss Codere's work in the field has included the northwest coast Indian tribes, a trip to Iceland, and, in 1959-60, to Ruanda, Belgian Central Africa. She is now at work on a book about Ruanda-Urundi. Miss Codere contributes articles and reviews to numerous professional journals in or related to her field. Her courses at Bennington next year are: "Introduction to Anthropology - The Problem of Evolution"; "Primitive Culture and Society" (Fall term), "Anthropological Theory" (Spring term).

Manuela Escamilla, who will teach "Beginning and Intermediate Spanish," and "Contemporary Letters in Spain: Sources and Forms," was born in Spain and studied at the University of Madrid until interrupted by the Spanish civil war. She also taught in public schools in Granada and Jaen. Coming to this country in 1951, Miss Escamilla taught at Wellesley College from 1951-55, and again from 1959 to the present. She received her Master's degree from Wellesley in 1956. She has also taught Spanish literature at Douglass College.

Kazuko Hirabayashi, assistant in Dance, was born in Nagoya, Japan in 1933. She graduated from the Aichi High School and entered Maiji University, Tokyo, from which she received her B.A. degree from the English Law Department

in 1957. She was admitted to the College of Law but came to the United States to study at Montana State University. In 1958 she entered the Juilliard School of Dance. She graduated from there in 1962 with a distinguished record in both modern dance and choreography and was awarded the American Guild of Music Artists Prize at her graduation. She has danced with Ethel Winter, performed in and around New York, and taught privately.

Isabelle Kaplan (Mrs. Harold Kaplan) is a native of France who received her license ès lettres, diplôme étude supérieure, and a second postgraduate degree for teaching from l'Université Clermont-Ferrand. She has taught in the Lycée Clermont-Ferrand, the Lycée Dijon, and at the University of Durham in England. Mrs. Kaplan will teach two sections of "Intermediate French."

Ion Laskaris, who joins the Drama Division, earned his A.B. degree in 1955 from Boston University where his major was English Literature. In the summer of 1954 he studied at Oxford, and concentrated in modern poetic drama. In 1957 he received his M.F.A. in Theatre Arts from Columbia where his work had emphasized directing, dramatic literature and playwriting. Since 1957 Mr. Laskaris has been directing the theatre program at the Putney School. In the summer of 1962 he was a member of the administration and stage director of the Rockland Lyric Theatre where he produced three operas in collaboration with Frank Baker of the Bennington College Music Division.

Jean Miller, Director of the Student Personnel Office, received her B.A. degree from Pembroke in 1949, and her M.A. from Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury, in 1953. She joined the faculty at Mt. Vernon Seminary after teaching in public schools in Maine and Massachusetts, and six years ago went to the Masters School where, in addition to teaching, she has been Academic Dean and Assistant to the Headmaster.

UNDER AND OVER

The heating portion of the new heating-maintenance plant will (with a little luck) be completed and ready for operation by September. The two 20,000 gallon tanks will soon be sunk 15 feet in the ground. The walls are rising and the heat supply and return lines are being laid. Perhaps it would interest some to know that a material called Gilsulate, a product mined and ground in Colorado and Utah, will be used to insulate these pipes. One of its virtues is that it rejects water, which means that the system will be prevented from heating up frozen ground as it travels to the buildings.