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BFP

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Will Your Vote Count in the Green Mountain State?



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Be Unique

By Adrian Agredo

The graffiti culture is one of wavering rationality, unable at times to express its meditative qualities in relation to its seemingly thoughtless marks and symbolic imagery. Even at its most articulate, graffiti can, to some, seem just plain stupid. Though I am not one who views graffiti itself as such, I am an unreasonably picky graffiti writer who thinks other graffiti writers can, at times, be just plain stupid.

As a medium for expression, I have a hard time placing judgment on what "the right kind of graffiti" is because, essentially, there is no right kind. Graffiti, in its historical relevance, is an idea that expands far further than my immediate appreciation for it in its modern urban contexts. Therefore, instead of trying to figure out what graffiti should and should not do, I find it easier to explore the relevance in the things that it outright does.

Graffiti reaches an audience. It offers one access to the public eye through anonymous means and allows the writer to relate their personal message to the world through symbolism. In the past, graffiti has been the vehicle by which many powerful ideas have been transferred, ranging from ancient hieroglyphics to antiwar sentiments.

For the most part, the messages behind many of the names and images in modern graffiti range from "I exist in this world" to "look how fresh my skills are" to "I'm dope."

"As a writer he or she must ask, did the graffiti prove anything to anyone?"

Don't get me wrong. I think these messages are awesome. For many people, especially those trapped within overwhelmingly impersonal cities and social structures, graffiti is the first chance for them to validate their existence. The act of choosing a name, a new identity from which to gain power and respect, is important for those who might otherwise feel worthless and irrelevant when considering their position in the world.

But here's the trick: if one comes out of his or her shell, forces his or her message upon others without permission, begins reclaiming public space for the individual and then sucks at it, chances are his or her message to the world is going to be misconstrued. Instead of people seeing a beautiful tag and thinking, "Damn, that cat is fresh," the writer's piece of art will be scoffed at by the elderly and his or her peers will think he or she is a lame-o.

Is his or her message to the world insignificant? Maybe. It's not my place to say. But his or her position as an artist with talented direction is certainly questioned. Maybe this too does not matter unless the "artist" in question cares about art in general. If the artist does, like most graffiti artists do, he or she will work day and night, developing his or her style until his or her declarations of "dope-hood" ring true. If the artist does not, the writer has only his or herself to answer to and must personally investigate his or her tact and effectiveness as someone who wants to get a point across. As a writer he or she must ask, did the graffiti prove anything to anyone?

Graffiti continued on page 10

The World Comes First

By Jim Bentley

Recently I was able to hear an NPR special featuring *Newsweek* journalist and foreign policy expert Fareed Zakaria addressing the UVM student body in Burlington. He discussed the responsibilities that America faces in a rapidly changing, hostile world and soberly listed off terrifying statistics that one might hear in a typical international relations class:

In the next twenty years, the world's population will increase by another 2.2 billion. Out of those billions, only 200 million will be from industrialized countries; the rest will be born into the third world.

Many countries are experiencing extreme poverty, AIDS, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Worst of all, by his account, anti-Americanism is becoming a new global ideology.

Yet the most enlightening comment he made came not from the apocalyptic prophecies but rather in response to a student question, one I should hope is on the mind of any man or woman who thinks beyond the grinding day to day. The question was "do we change the world at home or abroad?"

Zakaria's response was simple and burdening at the same time. He said that we are the most affluent and privileged generation in human history, and if we don't care about the world's problems, then nobody will.

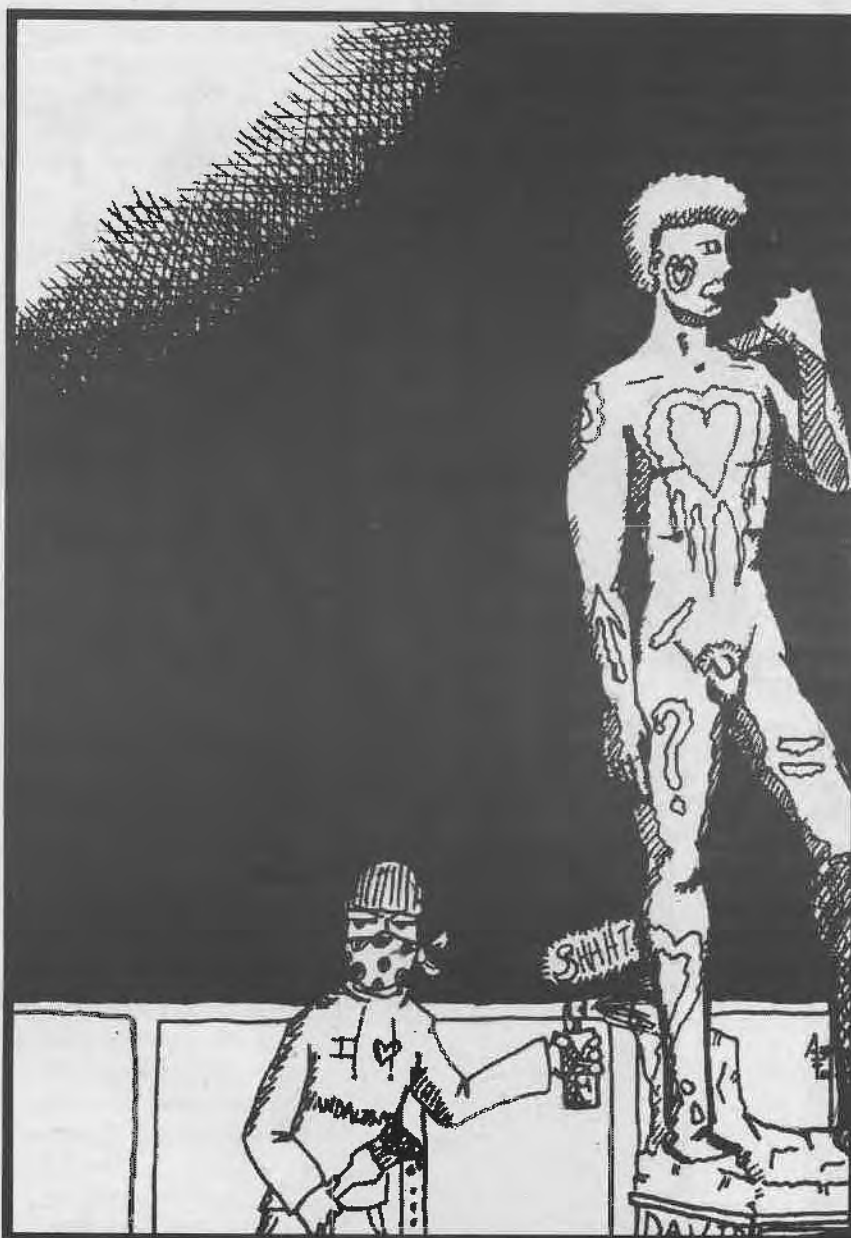
Suddenly, the porn tree becomes a shrub in a forest of crises.

A letter in this issue referred to the student body as "bratty." I disagree. It is good that we get passionate about campus issues. Freedom at Bennington can be just as important as freedom anywhere else in the world. Perhaps change should occur at home first. Yet something within me wants to see the same piss and vinegar that was pumped into the naked protest channeled into more pressing concerns.

The genocide in Sudan (see Alatorre's article on page 5) is a terrible tragedy, and America is passively watching on the sidelines. Where is the protest for this very real and immediate problem?

I ask this question not to chastise Student Council for finally standing up and organizing the student body. I applaud their efforts to give us a voice on campus. I would just like to see more. As much as the contradictory policies of Bennington can send me into a terrifying rage during dining hall conversation, I have to agree with Zakaria.

The world comes first. Porn comes second.



"artistic expression"

Drawing by Adam Freed

Lions and Tigers and HPV, Oh My!

By Randy Anselmo, M.D.

You are not going to like this. You thought you'd heard of every possible sexually transmitted disease, but I'm finding that some of you don't know about human papilloma virus, or HPV. I bet most of you don't know that it is the most common STD among you. Depending upon the study one cites, somewhere between 30 and 60% of women on college campuses have it. Men have traditionally been less enthusiastic about showing up for such studies, but we can safely assume that just as many of them carry the virus. I don't think we're in Kansas anymore.

HPV is nothing new. We've known about it for a long time: it is the causative agent in all warts. It gets into the skin cells by direct contact, and then inserts its DNA into yours and co-opts your cell into making more of its progeny. More than 70 subtypes have been identified, and each has its own affinity for certain types of skin cells. Some affect the hands and feet, some affect hair-bearing skin, and some of the naughty buggers prefer the genitals. What is fairly new about our knowledge of HPV is that with infections of certain "high risk" subtypes, the viral DNA can cause cells in the human cervix (and quite possibly the anus) to grow wildly out of control in a condition known as cancer. Yes, that's right: HPV causes cervical cancer. Thankfully, the progression to cancer is slow, and the vast majority of women who get HPV do not go on to getting cancer.

So what does all this have to do with Pap smears? I'm glad you asked, Toto. Women, unfortunately, bear the brunt of the most serious consequence of HPV. The Pap smear is a simple test whereby a few cells are gently brushed from a woman's cervix and looked at under a microscope for characteristics associated with pre-cancerous changes. Is it a test for HPV? Why yes, and no. If HPV didn't cause cervical cancer, we wouldn't worry too much about it. So the ultimate issue is preventing death and illness from cervical cancer, and that's what the Pap does very well. Deaths from cervical cancer have dropped by over 75% since the Pap smear was introduced. These days, the vast majority of invasive cervical cancers occur in women who haven't had their Paps. If you have not followed up on an abnormal one, when a Pap is abnormal, it can generally be assumed that HPV is at work.

"Yes, that's right. HPV causes cervical cancer."

And then there are the flying monkeys. The other distasteful, but certainly less serious consequence of HPV infection affects both sexes equally: genital warts. They are very, very ugly, but in the end, the warts themselves are an aesthetic nuisance and nothing more. Warts can be treated fairly easily in a number of ways so don't fret.

HPV continued on page 10

Sketchy Democracy? Car Crashes into Crosset

By Zubin Soleimany

As the 2003-04 school year wound down, a story of botched democracy and electoral interference tried to circulate but was mostly drowned out by the usual end-of-year hustle and graduation scene. The rumor, as spun by its tellers and remembered by this reporter and many others who heard it, went roughly like this:

Michelle Hogle and Scott Neagle ran for head of Judicial. Neagle won the popular vote, as was printed in the May issue of the *Free Press*. However, the Selection Committee decided that result was no good. As it was too late in the term for another election, Student Council reviewed new candidates James Bentley, Heather Burns and Elissa Sullivan.

The Committee, the buzz ran, didn't agree with Neagle or Hogle's views because they were too radical. The Selection Committee circumvented our democratic process and undermined our vote to effectively appoint a student who would reinforce the "administrative" position.

In the end, the Selection Committee selected Heather Burns as Head

for the 2004-05 school year.

Upperclassmen who remembered the older electoral process seemed especially miffed by a democratic process that second-guessed the popular vote.

Until the 2003-2004 school year, students elected the Head of Judicial by a direct popular vote. According to Scott Neagle, former candidate and Judicial member, the electoral process was amended to include review of the top four vote getters by the Selection Committee because 2002-2003 Head Kryssy Wright's views did not mesh well enough with those of then Assistant Director of Student Life Sidney Kozort. Similar to House Chair or Talking Head selection, the student vote is taken into account as only one part of the selection process.

Hogle and Neagle, the two initial candidates, were interviewed after Neagle won the vote and were then told that the handbook required at least four candidates to run before the committee could make a decision. Although only three candidates ran in the previous year's election, current Assistant of Student Life, Kate Nicholson said that those three candidates were enough.

Judicial continued on page 11

By Daly Clement

On the night of October 15, while students mourned the passing of John Barleycorn at Leigh's prohibition party, Chuck Dane, the funeral's bartender, lamented another death: his new car had been firmly implanted in the north side of Crossett Library. And Dane wasn't the one who put it there.

When security and off campus police arrived at the scene, the car was found abandoned, its engine still running. A stolen vehicle report was filed with the Bennington police department.

At this point, facts about the incident are still unclear. Although it seems likely that a student was responsible, the possibility that someone from off campus stole the car cannot be ruled out.

Because Dane parked on the north side of commons, near the ramp entrance facing Dickinson, the car could have been put in gear and then abandoned, rolling into the building with no one behind the wheel.

Dane, who periodically works for the college, usually at beer gardens, was once a full time dining hall employee.

Obviously, he has come to trust the community; he didn't remove the keys from his ignition when he left to work a five hour shift.

Students and employees have been willing to help Dane. Jim Bolenhaugh, a student, has organized a collection to assist Dane. Deb Sherman, a dining hall employee, is collecting money from her co-workers.

"Hopefully, they'll find out who did it, but regardless, Chuck is out of a car right now and he has two little kids to support," Jim said.

Ernie Paquette, head of security, said this was not an isolated incident.

"You go back to when I first started here, the first few years," said Paquette. "We may have been a lot crazier, but a couple of things never happened. People didn't mess with other students' artwork or personal belonging—their cars, their stereos—but that's been happening a lot more in the last three or four years. And that's kind of discouraging, because that was one of the nice things about Bennington compared to other schools."

A Bare-Breasted Protest

By Kathryn Furby

On Wednesday, October 6, approximately 240 students gathered in front of Commons for the purpose of making their collective voices heard.

After a brief rally led by vocal Student Council member Wythe Marschall, the group moved en masse to protest a rumored ban on nudity. They bared three breasts, marched up the path toward the barn and, without cutting across the grass, filed into the red U-shaped building, cramming politely into the President's Gallery and adjacent areas.

Discovering most of the administrative staff missing, the students remained positive. "Well, we've really impressed their assistants," said Marschall.

The demonstration moved on to VAPA and tracked down the administrators and professors at a faculty meeting. Standing outside the large second-story window, with members of the local media watching, the protestors waved and smiled at a confused collection of faculty.

The peaceful demonstration centered around the delivery to the

administration and faculty of a carefully written letter. The letter was drafted at an open meeting, attended by approximately 40 students, and was in response to a number of complaints to Student Council.

Earlier in the week, students were polled about the issues addressed in the letter and at the protest as they exited the dining hall. 89% opposed a ban on nudity, 93% wanted the campus to be clothing optional, and 88% thought that the pine tree did not create a hostile environment. More than two-thirds of the campus filled out the survey.

The results served as a check to ensure that Student Council's actions would be representative of the majority of the campus.

The letter addressed the student body's recent concerns about an administration and school that appear to be continually ignoring them. It called for a more meaningful relationship between the administration and the students. It emphasized the importance of a new distribution of power, one that included an effective student government.

Protest continued on page 10



Students outside of VAPA protesting for the right to bear breast

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Vermont Governor Jim Douglas (R)

Tools & Fools

By Gabriel Greenstein

When three Bennington College students, including myself, went to hear Vermont Governor Jim Douglas speak a couple of weeks ago, we never expected a warm reception. My expectations had been that relations would degenerate into a bar room-style brawl, with chairs flying and broken pool cues being swung, when we were juxtaposed with a mostly conservative constituency. In my head I could see the Republican Governor grabbing me from behind in a full Nelson while Bennington locals pummeled me relentlessly in the mid- to nether-regions, the latter with uncanny efficiency and fervor.

When we got to the firehouse, walked past the live feed video cameras and sat down in front of the governor in the second to front row of chairs, I thought the governor looked a little uncomfortable at witnessing our arrival. Who knows, we could have been Ganja smoking eco terrorists—socialists, even. He looked as if he were saying a silent prayer that we would not be subversive and disruptive.

The gentleman hosting Douglas, and who had already asked him numerous questions, said that it was real good that us young people had come. He invited us to ask the governor questions.

Throughout our questioning, Douglas tried to show himself to be somewhat moderate on a lot of issues, such as suing the FDA, allowing the import of drugs from Canada, and holding the EPA to higher emissions standards.

I didn't want to hold Douglas responsible for what I consider the sins of the national GOP platform and the Bush administration. However, Douglas is the head of the Vermont Bush-Cheney reelection campaign, so I did feel that it was fair game to ask what he felt about the Bush doctrine of preemptive military engagements and régime changes in light of the current logistical failures in Iraq—including growing insurgency and violence and an increasingly deteriorating post-war infrastructure. I also asked that if

this foreign policy was allowed to continue in another Bush term in office, how could there be no reinstatement of the draft with the military stretched beyond its limits in numbers inadequate even for the current theater in Iraq.

Lieutenant Governor Dubie, who was debating both an independent and a democratic candidate a couple of nights later, replied to that question. "I wouldn't have had the guts to go into Iraq," said Dubie. He seemed to use the word "guts" very ambivalently, as if it were a code to mask his dissent.

No one, however, shed any light on or even answered any direct questions about the draft. It seems it's just not politically savvy talk about it.

"He kept talking about tools. I just wanted to shout out, dude, you're a tool."

As reported by Dave Lindorff in *CounterPunch Magazine*, "The government is quietly trying to fill up hundreds of vacancies in over 2,000 local draft boards and draft appeals boards. If the guerilla war in Iraq gets worse," Lindorff wrote, "then the day after election, the president could decide on either a phase withdrawal or an escalation—and a national call up."

"Faced with the same choices in Southeast Asia," Lindorff continued, "Presidents Johnson and Nixon both chose escalation over withdrawal."

After the Douglas spoke, State Senator Mark Shepard gave a compelling speech about the potentially booming micro-technology industry in Vermont.

Lori, freshman, had this to say of State Senator Shepard's speech: "He kept talking about tools. I just wanted to shout out, dude, you're a tool."



State Senator Mark Shepard (R)

No Vote For You!

By Sarah McAbee

Registered to vote in Vermont? Somebody doesn't want your voice to be heard in the Green Mountain State.

Recently, Shira Sternberg, co-chair of Student Action Network and a staple of the Bennington County political scene, invited Republican senator Mark Shepard to a forum scheduled for October 17. When he expressed concern over the value of attending such an event, she gave him the numbers of students SAN had registered to vote.

According to Sternberg, Senator Shepard informed her that her voting drives at the College were illegal and students would be "in a whole lot of trouble" if their tax status and vehicle registrations weren't changed to Vermont within 60 days.

Fearing a mistake that would let down over 100 students, Sternberg contacted the Secretary of State, Deb Markowitz, who reassured her that any Bennington student registering to vote in Vermont is doing so under the law.

Vermont's requirements for voters, as outlined on the Secretary's Vermont-Elections.org, specifies that "you can vote in Vermont ONLY if you: 1. are a citizen of the United States, [and] 2. Are a resident of Vermont and a resident of the town in which you apply to be added to the checklist."

Although Senator Shepard later assured me that his "concern was that the students don't get into any problems," I thought I would look into the residency issue after reading Republican House Speaker Walt Freed's stance that out-of-state students would need to transfer tax and vehicle information to Vermont because "it's more than just saying, 'I'm signing up to vote.'"

Residency can be argued after as little as an hour, says Rolf Sternberg, a partner of the Bennington law firm Barr, Sternberg, Moss, Lawrence, Silver, and Saltonstall. Sternberg, a former president of the Vermont Trial Lawyers Association who has practiced in the state of Vermont

for over 20 years, once won a case based on that very stipulation as found in Vermont case law.

Also appearing in Vermont's Title Seventeen, Chapter 3, Section 1 is the statement on municipal residence: "Under subsection (a) of this section, a citizen who has resided in Vermont for 30 days next preceding a general election, shall vote in that election, in the municipality in which he has his legal domicile, regardless of how short or long a period of time he may have had his residence in that municipality."

Basically, anyone living in Bennington who has been here since the first day of school can vote in Vermont.

Although Senator Shepard decided not to attend the College forum because of campaign issues and the fact that the forum was designed for short sound bites rather than any type of discussion, he considers Bennington students his constituents as he would if they were raised in Vermont.

"Student participation is good, but I'd hope they would not merely vote in Vermont, but rather become a part of the communities they are voting in," Shepard.

Every time another out-of-state Bennington student registers in Vermont, that line blurs a little more. Student Billy Ulmer registered in Vermont for the first time last Monday, saying she sometimes "slips up and refers to Bennington as home."

"I'd really like the full-on Vermont experience, which is why I registered," Ulmer. "It's going to make the experience more real to me, and hopefully do it without offending anyone who was born and raised in Vermont."

Before you're a Vermonter, you're a Floridian or a Mainer, you're an American. No matter where you vote this November, make sure that you do.

How Could We Let It Happen Again?

By Jessica Alatorre

In the Sudan's western region of Darfur, "the greatest humanitarian catastrophe in the world today" is occurring, according to the United Nations. President George W. Bush and US Congress and Secretary of State Colin Powell have outwardly expressed their deep concern and declared that the crisis has reached the level of genocide.

Pro-Arab government militias have been accused of ethnic cleansing against the black indigenous African population in Darfur. In early 2003, a rebel group began attacking government targets, advocating that the government officials in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, were neglecting the region. The black Africans are blaming the Janjaweed for systematic killings, rape, looting and burning of villages—or in larger terms, ethnic cleansing. The Sudanese government denies any connection to the Janjaweed, though as reported on BBC News, they do admit to mobilizing "self defense" militias after the rebel attacks. President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan referred to the Janjaweed as "thieves and gangsters."

As with any case of ethnic cleansing, the African rebels feel the black Africans are being oppressed in favor of the African Arabs.

The mass media in America, however, has not treated Darfur as an emergency, though there are 70,000 dead so far, and UN health agency estimates that at this rate, it will be 10,000 a month if we fail to respond with urgency. More than 1.5 million people have fled their homes and villages, leaving them displaced. 200,000 of these people have crossed the border into neighboring Chad.

"Every time genocide happens, after the fact the discussion is how could the world stand by and let that happen?" said Mansour Farhang, International Relations professor at Bennington.

Comparisons are already being made between this genocide and that of Rwanda in 1994. The Rwandan genocide saw 800,000 murdered, and still the international community did not respond. Bill Clinton came out after the fact and admitted that as an international community we had not acted swiftly enough, that we had permitted the atrocities to continue for too long.

It is time for us to question whether governments and world leaders are allowing this to happen again. Simon Salimani, a coordinator for the World Food Program, states, "When there's a catastrophe coming, people don't react

until they're counting the dead."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly outlines genocide, crimes of war and crimes against humanity as condemnable actions that we, as an international community, must respond to, and yet the violence in Sudan continues to spiral out of control. The reports coming out of Sudan right now are that air raids by the government are continuing; followed by the Janjaweed riding into villages, slaughtering men and kidnapping women, keeping them as sex slaves and raping them. In a desperate attempt to escape from these horrors, people are fleeing their homes and setting up camp elsewhere.

*"Every time genocide happens,
after the fact the discussion is
how could the world stand by
and let that happen?"*

Aid was initially slow in reaching the Sudanese people because of customs delays and hampering bureaucracies for permits to aid workers. Those people who make it to Chad live in refugee camps; the refugees who stay within Sudan may either be inaccessible to aid relief or threatened by the fact that the Janjaweed has begun patrolling outside of the camps now also. Aid agencies have said many are at risk of starvation in the refugee camps. Children are dying of malnutrition, and there is simply not enough food, water or medicine for the sheer amount of refugees that continue to arrive everyday.

The World Food Programme reports that not all stereotypes are true. While it may be true that black Africans are in the majority among the hundreds of thousands of displaced, there are also displaced Arab communities, whose villages were attacked by African groups and who are victims of inter-African ethnic fighting. In both of these groups, most people caught in the conflict were farmers. Land is now lying fallow and unused as people are forced to abandon their homes. Regional markets will not be producing as much food as they need, and everyone will feel the impact of the fighting.

So why is it then that our President can so forwardly call this a genocide and yet the UN is not taking action?

First, we must consider that the UN is legally



obliged to condemn actions that amount to genocide. Action would have to occur swiftly and effectively, and because the UN Security Council know this would not be possible, the problem is not brought forth. Even if it did make the agenda, countries like China and Russia would veto impeding on sovereign rule.

It is worth pointing out that the United States is the only UN Permanent Security Council Member to have acknowledged the genocide.

The UN has made empty promises to the Sudanese government of sanctions on their oil sector should they not disarm the Janjaweed, but so far there is little evidence of such actions on either part. As it stands, the UN does not have the necessary resources available to deploy peacekeeping troops and sufficient aid. At the moment the UN has barely half the \$300 million of the estimated cost to cut down on mortality rates and provide urgent aid.

Second, there are no national interests to those countries that could help. There is no oil source to protect or economic power to gain, so instead we leave Africa to work through its complex, long-standing issues. Some might argue that we are doing our best—indeed the United States is the largest donor in funds and supply—but it is simply not enough. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General, has agreed to begin compiling a record over the next three months to decide whether or not genocide has occurred, but by that point how much further will the crisis have escalated?

In a report to the UN General Assembly, Annan outlined the challenge that lies ahead. He pointed out that the Sudan is 35 times larger than Sierra Leone, which cost the international community several billions of dollars and until recently held the largest UN peace keeping force in the world during its years of civil strife. If it took 17,000 troops to pacify Sierra Leone, it might, therefore, take 35 times that number, or some 600,000, to do the same thing in Sudan. The African Union has already deployed 300 troops to help with the peacekeeping efforts, but many African Union members see this as a matter of national sovereignty and do not agree with international intervention.

The plight of the Sudanese people is beginning to resonate in the international community, though the uptake has been painfully slow. Media coverage is becoming more extensive, and our leaders can no longer turn a blind eye to the severity of this genocide.

Student Nominated for Pushcart Prize

By Marina Boynton & Holli Jakalow

Nathan Garton, senior, a literature and physics major, has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize. The Pushcart Prize is a prestigious prize awarded to short story, essay and poetry writers. Garton was nominated for his short story "Scale Model," published in the WestWind Review Literary Journal of Southern Oregon University.

"I felt really humbled, really humbled by it," said Garton. "I didn't submit the story. A friend did it for me without my knowledge and then it was published. And then I received a really nice letter from the editor that he enjoyed it

and nominated it for the Pushcart."

Garton's story takes the perspective of a 12-year old girl involved in pageantry and modeling.

"It's the only thing I've ever done like it, so that's why it was pretty shocking to have it nominated," said Garton. "A lot of it is TV on paper—action and dialogue."

The Pushcart Prize is "the best of the small presses." According to its website, it continues to be one of "the most honored literary projects in America." Thousands of writers are shown in the annual pages of the Pushcart.

"I'm really happy and honored to be nominated," said Garton. "I wasn't expecting this."

COLD FRANCE AND OTHER PERMUTATIONS

by Wythe
McSweeney's issue 12, Winter 2003

EVERY FRANCE

There are many Frances. The France that you see on your map or happen to inhabit is a fine one, but it is just one of thousands, millions even. To understand them all, you must examine a wide cross-section. The following is a sampling of all existing Frances.

SPONGE FRANCE

Everywhere you go in Montmartre you see people soaking sunlight into bricks, happiness into candy, and love into memories. Everything in France is porous, you see, and everyone spends every minute trying to save everything. If you stand too long in one place, you will slip inside France like a drop of water spilled in the desert. If you move too quickly, you won't absorb anything, unless you are from France, but—either way—France and its people will absorb you. If, however, you find a quiet spot in a cafe on a lazy Sunday afternoon and sit for a few minutes at a time, occasionally rising to buy another espresso or latte or to check the weather or to watch a football match, then you will bear a great gift when you leave France. The football players' jersey numbers will be tattooed onto your eyes; your feet will smell like daylight; your coffees will always taste like vacation; and you will marry someone who reminds you of that girl in the pink sundress by the soda fountain, the one who winked at you twice already and is playing footsie with you (her Mary Janes versus your sensible loafers) from across the cafe floor.

YOUNG FRANCE

Everyone in France is young. Little Adrien, nearing forty, is really only twenty-seven. Astrid looks like a white China doll, though she is well into her eighties. Matthieu still eats pears after skipping school on Wednesdays. He is a thousand. Colette died on Tuesday, but she looks great. She has no wrinkles. She loves pickles. She is young at heart, but you'd never have to guess it, as she is also young at body. At her funeral, Thierry and Margaux weep like babes, then kiss violently and run off. They say "nuh-uh!" when a friend tells them to stop being rude. Victor married Sabine because she is excellent wrist at quarters and can drink more than most mountain rams. France is not known for mountains, except of the very young variety. Every mountain is a volcano and erupts daily. No one lives in mountainous regions except the very, very old, those who wish they were from Bulgaria or Modena or a fishing resort on a Micronesian island. Because France is so young, no one has heard of it, and commerce is difficult. Candy is the preferred currency. This sometimes makes Margaux weep, for she is allergic to sugar.

MIND FRANCE

France is all in your head. Both Notre Dame cathedrals—imaginary. Cardinal Richelieu—never existed. Even French cats aren't entirely real. No one built a castle in France, though she might tell you she did, especially after a glass of pastis made thick with lamb gravy and fried potatoes. None of these foods are known in France, because France is a lie. Dostoevsky, Cervantes, and El Greco banded together and invented France to prevent a third World War. Bill Clinton allowed France to join NATO to stop the Russians from advancing into Poland again. The Pope christened France a nation out of Brotherly love for all people, even those who do not, technically, exist. Many people concentrate on imagining France at any given time, so it is real. Discussion of France comprises the bulk of internet traffic. Everyone has a .france site; everyone maintains at least one "French" personality online. Nearly all dating occurs via MindFrance.net. People pretend to be Alain-Alexandre and Aimee but are really Motomochi and Gzifa. This doesn't seem to matter, except to the deluded who actually believe in France. They hide in chat rooms and spew insults at those who will not pay homage to the glorious *Fleur de Lis*.

Grandmother's Yearly Checkup

by Adrian Agredo

And they come to Vermont for the fall.
Stand thoughtfully along the sides of roads
as their silver hair dims the chrome
from their Pennsylvania station wagons,
New Jersey,
and other sections from the lower east,
to witness the flush of carmine
and gold across the hills.

In pairs,
they gather tightly into each other's wool,
their throats neatly stored within lengths of cotton;
scarves the color of sand and upward collars,
as they smile and take pictures of the New England woods.
Their shoulders are humbled by the winds,
and I wonder if they believe their passing
will be this glorious,
a final performance
appreciated and marveled at,
before they coat the ground
and are crushed neglectfully
into the puddles
of early winter.
As they compare their design,
matching skin tones to the fallen leaves
with watches in hand,
it is most likely,
that I
will forget you.

theater

The Measures Taken

By Jennifer Funk

When Bennington students arrive back after long weekend, enthusiasm revived, there will be much to look forward to, especially in the realm of the theater.

The weekend of November 5th and 6th will see the opening of Bertolt Brecht's *The Measures Taken*, directed by Penn Genthner, senior.

Because *Measures* is a German expressionist play, it is not surprising the direction being taken is thoroughly minimalist.

"It functions as a circus sideshow," said Genthner.

The sets change in front of the audience's eyes and everything has double uses, including the costume pieces. There are even a few tunes designed to play with the path of the audience's attention.

Because it is a highly political piece, it is even more relevant that *The Measures Taken* will be opening election week.

The play's creative team includes

Oriana Shapely, set designer; Mil O'Conner, light designer; Eric Taxil, composer; Dana Braszinsky, costume designer; and Ayla Kapiloff, stage manager.

Exxon Butterfly, this term's faculty production, will open November 12th and playing through the 14th.

With direction from faculty member Kathleen Dimmick, *Exxon Butterfly* offers an intriguing premise.

The first half will be a performance of David Belasco's classic tragedy, *Madame Butterfly*; the second act will be a related but strikingly different piece that involves the global ramifications of Exxon-Mobil's not so earth-friendly policies.

"While some may pin this show as very Bennington," said Alex Rosenberger, stage manager, "I think that is what is potentially great about it."

Butterfly's creative team includes Nicole Asselin, costume design; Spencer Masterson, music design; and Sue Reed, set design.

Send us your
contributions!

Excerpts, works in progress, final pieces:

BFPlit@bennington.edu

The Top Five Worst Mistakes in Men's Fashion on Campus

By Elissa Sullivan

- 1. Women's Sarongs**— Unless you are an exchange student from Fiji, please refrain from wearing these.
- 2. Smelly T-shirts**— Are some of you not bathing or washing your clothes? If so please start, the odors are totally offensive.
- 3. Unkempt Facial Hair**— Find yourself ten minutes in the morning to shave or trim your beard and all your lady admirers will take notice.
- 4. Ankle-Length Shorts**— Just buy some pants, really what is the point of these?
- 5. Tie-Dye**— Jerry's dead, Phish broke up, put away the tie-dye.



sarong a no-no.

The Top Five Worst Mistakes in Women's Fashion on Campus

- 1. Sweatpants**— These are not be worn outside of the house under any circumstance besides a late-night fire drill.
- 2. School Issued Key and Card Holders**— Spend the extra money and buy yourself a pretty change purse to keep your ID and room key safe and accessible.
- 3. Pigtails**— Let's try to find a different way to stay connected with our youth.
- 4. Underwear as Outerwear**— Slips are meant to go under skirts and dresses ladies.
- 5. Very Very Low Rise Jeans**— Very very few people have the right shape for these kind of pants and no one wants to see your gut or ass-crack hanging out over them.



Who wears long shorts?



Sweatpants inside only.



How low can they go?



BFP has no problem with this look.

Mark Shepard

- discourages voter registration
- is anti-gay marriage
- is pro-life

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Acting Dean Talks Admissions

By Maj Anya DeBear

The Office of Admissions doesn't play much of a role in students' day to day lives here at Bennington, aside from being a necessary coffee stop on the way to early morning classes at VAPA. But in some ways, it is the heart of the school. There aren't too many other schools that treat prospective students with as much personal attention as Bennington.

"We're trying to make Admissions adhere as closely as possible to the Bennington philosophy," said Ken Himmelman.

Himmelman, who counts wanting to join Bennington's soccer team among his goals, has this year replaced Ben Jones as the acting Dean of Admissions. He is one of many new employees at the office.

Himmelman is taking things as they come and picking up how the office is run from veteran employees.

"I've been here a long, long time," said Marta Stringham. "It amazes me how personal [the process] is. It's always been about personal connection with the prospectives. That should never change. Never. Never, never, never."

Himmelman and his coworkers have no intention of changing that policy. Rather, they want to improve it. Himmelman and the other staff members feel strongly that more communication is necessary in order to improve the admissions process, as well as the overall quality of the school.

Himmelman's desire for increased communication has already been put into effect.

Rachel Shirk, a recent graduate who is now working as a counselor for Admissions, feels there is more dialogue between staff members about applications and less of people being specialists in their own separate fields.



Dean of Admissions Ken Himmelman

It is clear that Bennington is still working its way out of a tough period in its history.

"I think that our old reputation always precedes us," said Stringham. "Bennington was a school for spoiled kids with lots of money. And that's not what it is at all. We are trying to make it look like what it should be: a great institution."

And however much students may dislike the fact that triples are now housing three people, the numbers are a sign of Bennington's increasing popularity.

Himmelman states that "the idea that more people want to come here is a definite factor. Now that we know that there are more people willing to come after being accepted, we can be more selective about who we want."

Despite the number of incoming students increasing slightly each of the past few years (last year there were 198 freshmen and this year there are 204), Admissions has no intention of increasing the size of the school beyond its current number.

Of course, Admissions ultimately can't control how many people accept their invitations to attend Bennington. But the staff knows that the people living here

make Bennington College what it is, and they want to bring in only the strongest students available.

"It is about selectivity, but people have different opinions of what that means," said Himmelman. "You're looking for people that will thrive here. This is not a numbers game. Really, the question is how do you get more people to apply to Bennington."

Himmelman stresses the importance of word-of-mouth. "If we do admissions in the Bennington way, even if a student decides not to come to Bennington the process will excite them."

Although rankings are certainly not the most important aspect of how Bennington is presented to college-seeking students, they do play a role. It is to Bennington's benefit to be listed on top-five lists for subjects other than 'Dodge-Ball Targets.'

"You don't attract those great important people if you're not in the rankings. We can't kid ourselves. We have to understand that people are making the same judgments about us that we are making about them."

Himmelman knows, however, that those rankings need to actually reflect improvements in the institution.

"By being true to the place we can have an affect on rankings," said Himmelman. "If we did it in reverse and tried to improve our rankings first, we wouldn't get there."

Himmelman feels strongly that communication is key when trying to be true to the Bennington philosophy. He looks forward to continued communication with students and encourages anyone who wants to talk to stop by his office.

"We want to keep doing what we're doing but doing it better," said Himmelman. "It's a question of pushing deeper."

Sexual Harassment: Who Decides?

By Kara Bloomgarden-Smoke

When Bob Graves met with residents of Kilpatrick, he tried to explain his reasons for taking down the Porn Tree.

"Any reasonable woman would be offended," Graves told around twenty women who live in the house. "Especially any woman who has been sexually harassed or abused should feel violated."

According to one Kilpatrick woman who would prefer to remain nameless, nearly half of the women who live in the house have been sexually abused or harassed in some way at some point in their lives.

None felt violated or offended by the display in the living room.

Graves' contention that a woman who has been sexually harassed would feel especially violated by a display of pornography seems like a logical leap to thought.

The problem with this leap, however, is that there have been no studies done on whether pornography triggers memories of sexual abuse, and no women have come forward to say that this is the case.

Sex offenders, by an overwhelming percentage, have been shown to read explicit material before they commit a crime.

The problem with these findings says psychology professor Ron Cohen is that just as many men may partake in explicit material and not go on to commit crimes.

"There is a huge debate on whether pornography is or is not harmful to women," said civil rights consultant and lawyer Susan Sussman. "Most scholars on the subject agree that it contributes to a hostile environment."

FWT Jobs from Heaven & Hell

By Natalie Rose Apar

It's November 23rd and I swear there's something I forgot to do. I managed to finish all my linear algebra homework last night, and I'm going to work on my drawing assignment this afternoon. It's not homework. What did I forget?

"Hey Natalie! Guess what job I got for FWT?" "Shoot! Field Work Term!"

Procrastination is a fine art but not one that earns you a Bachelor's Degree.

Field Work Term doesn't have to be painful. Some students have managed to get comfortable or even enjoyable FWTs. Others, however, have been borderline slave labor at their internships. Bennington students have many stories of hardship and heroism when they had to finally get the job done over FWT.

Allison Stillwell, sophomore, found herself in Nashville, Tennessee, working for the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute during her freshman FWT. Aside from the terrible morning commute, Allison said her experience as an Interpretation and Translation Services Assistant was "fabulous."

A large part of her duties consisted of requesting money from county judges. The judges were often rather gruff, but Allison found a way to get what she needed.

"In the first judge's office, I started crying when he refused to sign the paper and he signed it," said Stillwell. "That was when we had a great idea: I would cry for every single one of the judges in the city of Nashville. Luckily, I only had to cry once more because the next judge felt so bad he signed every single one of my payment requests."

The job taught her how to be more organized and that men are saps for tears.

Another Allison, Allison Zoll, found herself in the City of Angels her freshman year, working for TokyoPop. A fan of TokyoPop's manga publications and a Japanese discipline at Bennington, Allison jumped at the opportunity to be a marketing and public relations intern.

Though the job entailed mostly photocopying, writing press releases, and proofreading catalogue material, the internship was exciting in ways Zoll didn't expect.

Zoll became a star in the office when word got out that she had a Lupin the Third tattoo, an image taken from one of TokyoPop's publications.

"I had people stopping by my desk all day for a week asking to see it," said Zoll. "I even got to show it to the guy who had done the cover design it was taken from! It was great."

If nothing else, Zoll earned a great recommendation from the job.

Wren A. Leader found himself in one of the most dangerous parts of Detroit, working for 54 Sound, a recording studio. The atmosphere was much more stressful than he was expecting, and to make matters worse, Leader's wavering interest in recording was finally petering out.

Leader's first and only week at Sound 54 was a flop. It soon became apparent that his intern position was more "lunch errand guy" and sometimes included massive amounts of photocopying and mass mailings.

One of Wren's fondest and most depressing memories of Detroit took place when he and a coworker had to drive through 8 Mile, the most dangerous part of Detroit.

"We're driving along and he explains to me how there's a shooting or a death practically every day," said Leader. "He points to this tree on the side of the road. It's covered in flowers, stuffed animals, and other presents. He says that a little girl was shot there a year ago. We pass a fence with a large RIP sign. He says that his best friend was killed there. It was quite moving and sad."

Leader started to make a few connections at the job but soon realized the record industry wasn't for him.

Judith Gold, senior, had a freshman FWT from hell.

Gold procrastinated her FWT

search her first year but wound up getting a job in Graton, California, close enough where she could go home on the weekends. On the surface, it seemed like a good deal.

Working for a non-profit organization, Gold was told she would be researching but instead wound up generating countless charts, at all hours of the day, at both the office and home.

Gold lived in a room in her employer's den, with only a curtain separating it from the rest of the house. She was expected to baby-sit her employer's bratty son as well as wash dishes and other house chores.

On top of that, the house was infested with fleas from the two cats living there.

As if things couldn't get any worse, one of Gold's employers kept trying to slip alcohol into her orange juice.

"Since the first day I was there, one of my employers kept on wanting to give me vodka in my orange juice," Gold said. "Well, after a while of me saying my employer slipped some into my orange juice one day after dinner. Needless to say, I realized it right away and wasn't too happy about it."

After this FWT experience, Gold almost wanted to transfer to a different FWT altogether. Fortunately, things improved for her in recent years.

Bennington Triangle Still Unsolved

By Keith Hendershot

This article first appeared in the Oct. 2003 issue of the BFP.

Paula Welden, blonde-haired, pretty, and well-bred, was exemplary of the 'type' you see smiling in the black-and-white photos from the college archives, taken at the height of those golden years following World War II when the school basked in its status as the most prestigious women's college in the country. The 18-year old sophomore came to Bennington College from a wealthy family and a good area. Her father was an industrial designer for the Revere Copper and Brass Company back home in Stamford, CT. She majored in fine arts and was in good scholastic standing. By all accounts, she was a cheerful young woman. Lately, however, she had confided to her roommate that she had been experiencing some depression.

This much we know. On a Sunday afternoon, December 1, 1946, Welden, dressed in jeans and a red parka, walked out of her room in Dewey having told her roommate that she was going to take a quick hike on the Long Trail before she sat down to her studies. She hitched a ride along Route 9 to the mouth of the Long Trail. Several people witnessed her entering the trail. That afternoon, a middle-aged couple hiking the trail saw her walking about a hundred yards ahead of them. She rounded a rocky out-cropping and by the time the couple reached the outcropping themselves, they had lost sight of her distinctive red parka. That was the last time Paula Welden was seen or heard from again.

The very next day, when Welden didn't show up to her classes, the Admissions office contacted the State Attorney's office after learning that no one had seen her on campus since the previous day. Welden was declared missing. Her father arrived immediately to Bennington upon hearing the news and, in conjunction with the college, Sheriff's department, and the state attorney, began organizing a massive search for his daughter. More than 500 volunteers of the Sheriff's department, as well New York and Connecticut state police, the National Guard, and the Boy Scouts participated in the manhunt. All classes were cancelled for that week as students and faculty joined the search, combing every inch of the snow-covered campus and nearby wilderness. Despite all this, no trace of Welden was recovered.

A media frenzy built around the search as newsmen from Albany, Boston, and New York flocked to Vermont to cover the disappearance this affluent young woman. The story stayed on the front page of the *Bennington Banner* for 42 days straight. It was 2nd largest news story in New England that year, surpassed only by the Red Sox's defeat in that year's World Series.

An extensive 22-day search produced no substantial leads and Vermont and Connecticut investigators admitted that they were "totally baffled." In the last days of the search, a distraught father packed his Welden's belongings from her empty room in Dewey, struggling to come to grips with the plain fact that his daughter had seemingly vanished into thin air.

Bennington locals who followed the story, could not resist remembering that at around the same time last year, a 74-year old hunter had vanished mysteriously in approximately the same area, between Bickford and Hell Hollows. On November 12, 1945 Middle Rivers, an experience woodsman, separated from his hunting party and never returned to meet them. A National Guard-led canvas of the area recovered only a single bullet from Rivers' gunbelt. The bullet may have fallen from his belt as he bent down to drink from a creek.

Within three years of Welden's disappearance, Fall of 1949, the town's fire alarm sounded two more times, and

the *Banner's* front pages were filled once again with stories of disappearances. On October 12, 8-Year old Paul Jepson vanished from a parked truck, waiting for his mother to finish tending the pigs at the town dump she managed. The boy had a history of running away into the woods. A team of bloodhounds was released to follow Paul's scent. The rain-soaked seach party followed the dogs through the White Chapel Woods out past the dump. The dogs lost the boy's scent at the junction between East and Chapel Roads. It was speculated that he may have been picked up from there. Regardless, no trace of him ever surfaced. Less than two weeks later on October 28, 53-year old Frieda Langer of North Adams disappeared while hiking with her cousin on the Eastern side of Glazenbury Mountain, near Somerset Reservoir. Langer's body finally turned up the following May, in the woods near the area she had disappeared. The cause of death was never determined, due to the "gruesome" condition of her body. It did seem strange that despite extensive manhunt of the area, the body somehow evaded discovery.

Following these two notable disappearances, a less-publicised but considerably stranger disappearance occurred a month later on the exact date of Welden's disappearance. According to Joseph Citro, author of *Passing Strange, True Tales of New England Hauntings and Horrors*, James Tetford, a resident of the Bennington Veteran's Home, vanished on a bus, returning from a visit with family in northern Vermont. Fellow passengers claimed to have seen him on the bus, but when the bus reached Bennington, Tetford never got off. His coat, luggage bags, and bus schedule were all that remained in his seat.

It's seemingly impossible to track down a solid number for the number of people that vanished during that brief period in the 1940's in the area that has been dubbed, "The Bennington Triangle." Citro sets the number at 8 people in the course of 8 years, adding the 1949 disappearances of three hunters in the nearby wilderness of Massachusetts and the 1942 disappearance of 13-year-old Melvin Hills of Bennington to the list. A blurb printed in the *Banner* in the midst of the 1949 disappearances stated, "Bennington has more lost persons than any other county in the state; 11 in 20 years, by some estimates. But estimates, like news stories, tend to be exaggerated."

No further disappearances have been reported since 1950, and the phenomenon of "The Bennington Triangle," has become what para-psychologists call a "dead cell"—no further unexplainable activity in the area. There are a few speculations that may account for what was going on at the time. Some say that Welden ran off to Canada with a secret boyfriend. It is likely that a serial killer roamed this area and was never discovered. The list of victims, however, offered no pattern with one another, and no evidence of foul play was ever uncovered.

There are those, however, that feel one needs only to look back to the freakish history of the wilderness between Bennington and the ghost town of Glazenbury for explanations. These people know that the Indians never settled in this area, believing it was cursed, and used the woods only as a burial ground. Some may also recall the local Indian legend about a mystic rock that swallowed those who stepped on it. Or they may remember an account from the 19th Century of a strange creature, labeled "The Bennington Monster," which attacked a stage coach as it travelled through the woods.

Whatever secrets these woods may have harbored have receded with age into the soft-bedded layers of earth in the hells and hollows of the Glazenbury wilderness, and we might hope they remain there forever.



PAULA WELDEN



1946 Bennington Banner headline and photos pertaining to Weldens disappearance.

Paula Welden Missing Since Sunday From College Campus; Search Is Made Over Wide Area

Harassment continued from page 8

"There were no negative connotations to the porn tree," said the Kilpat resident. "It was totally outlandish. It was a sense of relief, of making fun of ridiculous sexual situations."

"Sexually charged situations or physical confrontations might feel like sexual harassment, but not asinine pictures," said the Kilpat resident.

"The standard for sexual harassment is the effect that it has on the victim," said Cohen. "It is defined by what the person affected feels."

The women of Kilpat were especially put off by Graves' use of the "reasonable woman clause" because they felt that Graves was saying that they were unreasonable.

Traditionally, criminal laws were written to define a reasonable person as a reasonable man, for example, how a man would react in self-defense were he to find that his house had been burglarized. The Feminist movement alleged that this was sexist because a woman would not be apt to react in the same way. Thus, a reasonable woman was born.

The porn tree was never seen as offensive, partly because women are now seen as removed from the protected minority category they had been put in.

"What if the pictures were demeaning pictures of gays and lesbian students or the outlandish photographs from the Abu Ghraib prison scandal?" said Susan Sussman. Sussman's argument could be viewed as a "slippery slope" argument of the variety favored by indignant students, but it does provide a perspective on pornography.

Feminist writer and lesbian activist Andrea Dworkin argues that pornography is not different.

"Pornography is central in creating and maintaining the civil inequality of the sexes," writes Dworkin. "Pornography is a systematic practice of exploitation and subordination based on sex which differentially harms women."

This pornography issue proved extremely divisive to the women's movement. There were those that agreed with Dworkin and those that found pornography to be a liberating expression of women's sexuality.

Just as the definition of sexual harassment is ambiguous, so too is the definition of pornography.

All the issues surrounding the porn tree were hazy and difficult to define, from whether it was hazing to what constitutes a hostile environment.

Graves might not have had anything to back-up the correlation between victims

of sexual abuse and pornography, but it doesn't mean that it is not an issue.

Graffiti continued from page 2

in your application of style and make the public work for your art, graffiti is sometimes at its best when it is most secretive. It is a time capsule, proof that you did mean something when you were there. Be an artist about it. If you don't care about graffiti then at least care about the people who are inadvertently affected by your statements. Make a decision about who you are trying to make an impact on because graffiti is a violent medium to assume power through and love is something you need to earn.

First, we analyze the graffiti in its context. If an artist is putting up anti-Bush stencils on a primarily anti-Bush campus, chances are this artist is not making a very powerful statement to anyone. Also, if one decides to paint an unmentioned building on said campus pink, with accompanying hearts, demanding "you can't hate love" to a campus that most certainly does not hate love, the message's effect seems to lose its profundity.

But maybe these messages were not intended for the student body; maybe they were directed towards the administration of the campus. Perhaps then a message that would not affect the financial and credible states of the student body would be more appropriate. It seems slightly counterproductive to use misdirected vandalism to satisfy one's need to say something because the wrong message is being sent. Instead of being seen as someone who is voicing their opinion and speaking out against the monotony of the world, the graffiti writer is seen as some typical jerk with an indulgence for website stencil copying and heartbreakingly ugly color combinations.

No one has the authority to define whose illegal messages are more important than others, but something can certainly be said about those whose messages are more appropriately used. Understand me when I suggest no superiority over the matter, for I am not perfect, and I certainly do not feel as though I am speaking from any divine position. But here is a general message to anyone who feels like they have something they need to say to the world:

If you care about graffiti as a culture and as an art form, then try a little harder. Be unique.

Protest continued from page 3

The issue was less a question of civil liberties than it was of self-governance. "I feel that even if people don't agree with the porn tree or with nudity, [the protest] is more about the administration's lack of concern for how the student body feels about decisions," said Mindy Koopmans, a senior at the protest.

The two seemingly unrelated incidents—the removal of Kilpatrick's annual porn tree and a student leader's probation due to nudity—are both founded on a fundamental lack of communication between the college administration and its students. No policy has been written regarding either incident and what Dean of Students Bob Graves deems appropriate is still a grey area.

The handbook does not define whether or not a house living room is public or private, and it does not forbid student leaders from taking their clothes off, regardless of the time of year. At last week's Student Council meeting, Graves outlined the next step as a reevaluation of the student handbook.

However, the administration still has not formally responded to the protest. The rules are still vague and what notions the students have of the issues stem from verbal rumors.

After an hour of skirting any definite response, Graves told Student Council at their weekly meeting that he stands by his recent decisions but that the protest "made people hear that students are concerned and that they want more dialogue."

When questioned about his views on nudity, Graves said he does not intend to write a nudity policy and compared it to noise. "If it comes to my attention, I have to do something about it," said Graves.

HPV continued from page 2

So, the warts are gone. No more virus, right? Wrong. Here's where the forest of science gets dark and deep. Wart treatments get rid of the obvious physical consequence of the virus but not necessarily the virus itself. Some theories propose that the virus never leaves a body but lies dormant. Others suggest that the immune system can eradicate the virus completely, but that it is so prevalent that there's a good likelihood of re-infection.

Oh great and terrible Oz, how can I prevent HPV? The answer is not what you had hoped. Condoms, while definitely a splendid idea, may not be protective in

this case. It is possible that HPV can pass through the microscopic pores in condoms, and it is quite certain that condoms do not cover all areas of skin that might be infected with HPV. Remember that condoms protect by restricting the movement of bodily fluids, but HPV is spread by direct contact as well. The other point to make here is that most people with HPV have no idea they have it (i.e. no visible warts), and there is no reliable test one can have to insure that they don't have it. You fly blind on this one. What then? The most effective ways of reducing the risk of HPV infection are in decreasing order as follows: sexual abstinence, sex with a virgin followed by lifetime monogamy, minimizing your number of sexual partners, and avoiding sex with someone who has had numerous partners. Women can reduce their risk of HPV turning into cervical cancer by, in addition to the above, not smoking and having regular Pap smears. Men who have sex with men may be able to reduce their risk of developing HPV-related anal cancer by avoiding receptive anal sex.

The Yellow Brick Road is long and winding but allow me to summarize. HPV is the most common STD. It presents the greatest health risk to women (and probably men who have receptive anal intercourse) because of its potential to cause cancer. Warts are treatable, and progression to cervical cancer is preventable if discovered early by Pap smear. Limiting your exposure reduces your risk of contracting HPV, and condoms may not be effective. Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man that he didn't, didn't already have. Feel free to contact Health Services if you would like to know more.

Contribute to the BFP.
Send Letters and
Submissions to
bfp@bennington.edu

**EARLY, ELIZABETH LAUDER**

October 18, 2004

Elizabeth Lauder Early, 19, beloved daughter of Scott and Deborah; cherished sister of Michael, passed away suddenly. She is also survived by loving grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and many dear friends. Liz attended Lincoln Park Cooperative Nursery School and Francis Parker School, and graduated from the Chicago Waldorf School in 2003. After a semester at Bennington College, she returned to Chicago where she worked in floral design and sales. Her struggle grieves us all. A Memorial Service will be held at 3:30 p.m. Oct. 29 at Church of the Three Crosses, 333 W. Wisconsin, followed by a gathering in the neighborhood. Contributions will be welcomed at Amigos de las Americas, Chicago North Chapter, P.O. Box 367, Winnetka, IL 60093 or The Chicago Waldorf School, 1300 W. Loyola, Chicago, 60626.

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obituary

New Cafe Ready by '06

By Leah M. Wichler

On Wednesday, October 18, the student body received a letter from Joan Goodrich and Bob Graves announcing the approval of plans for the construction of the new student center designed by Taylor and Burns, an architectural firm located in Boston.

The new center will incorporate the existing café building as well as a new lounge, performance space, snack bar and bar area. The existing downstairs café will become the new game room and the old game room will be demolished.

As long as the school is able to obtain the necessary permits, building will begin in the spring and the café is projected to be completed in fall 2006.

The architecture of the student center ties together elements of the various styles of student housing on campus. The building is rectangular like the milk cartons, angular and many-windowed like the new houses, and uses the same building material as the old houses. Mirroring the geographical location of the library, the new student center will create a centralized, student-focused area.

Students have been very involved in determining the plans for this building. Joan Goodrich, as well as the architects, have met with members of CAB, the House Chairs, and a select student committee to determine the best use of this space.

These meetings have resulted in a large, open building containing a performance space with a 30-foot high ceiling. Soft seating will surround the perimeter of the performance space and a partial wall will enclose a small, inviting lounge area. The lounge area will exhibit

artwork on a 30-foot wall.

A larger stage will offer more performance space, a backstage area connected by a sliding door, and a vestibule containing lighting and sound equipment. A professional acoustician was consulted to create a sound-friendly environment.

Replacing the snack bar in commons, the new student center will house a bar/snack bar with an expanded menu. There will also be vending machines containing prepared food and convenience items.

The new complex will connect to the old café by a terrace and a glass covered walkway with sliding doors. The performance area will have large garage-style doors, which will open during nice weather, allowing traffic to spill onto the terrace. Students will be able to exhibit their art on the terrace.

Overall, those involved in planning the center concerned themselves with creating a versatile space, one large enough to be enjoyed by the entire student body. With seating, the new lounge area can hold approximately 150 students; without table and chairs, the lounge can house a dance party for more than 300 students.

Bob Graves and Joan Goodrich will be leading a walk-through of the construction site in order to assure students of their involvement in the creation of their new student center. Students will also have the opportunity to attend an open meeting with the architects.

The upstairs café, downstairs café and snack bar will continue business as usual until the new student center is up and running. The game room will be destroyed, however, and the construction will somewhat impact the area.

What Welling Wall?

By Kara Bloomgarden-Smoke

Specific incidents recede into memory and individual problems are forgotten, but one constant remains: the rift between Bennington the town and Bennington the college.

A problem arose last month that forced the college and town to work together, opening the lines of communication.

Bennington College decided to tear down the stone wall in front of the Welling Town House, naively believing that they were doing the town a service by removing a safety hazard. The college wrecked the wall after taking bids and determining that they could not afford to restore it.

Ron Pembroke, North Bennington trustee and landscaper, had put in a bid but never told the town about the plans that were underway.

The wall was seen by North Bennington residents as a landmark. The village residents were especially angry that the college neglected to inform them.

Indignant letters and articles appeared in the Bennington Banner, including an angry letter from the last remaining Welling descendent in the area.

"Nobody called to tell us. It was harsh to find it out in the paper, but we sprang into action," said Joan Goodrich.

"We realized that there must be more behind the town's anger. We decided to hold a meeting between the town and college to correct and talk about all the misinformation and negative publicity."

The meeting was moderated by Danny Michaelson, faculty member and mediator, who helped the two sides reach an agreement. A liaison was formed between representatives for the town and those for

the college.

The college will look into enhancement grants that will help fund the rebuilding of the wall, and there is now a plan underway to rebuild.

One group of people who were also affected by the wall were the residents of the Welling Town House, but their irritation had nothing to do with a sentimental attachment.

"The bulldozers woke us up at seven in the morning," said Forrest England, townhouse resident. "Maintenance hadn't informed us that anything was going to happen. There needs to be more communication."

The wall was seen by North Bennington residents as a landmark.

This tension is a result of the precarious status of the townhouse due to the nature of an off-campus, school-owned co-op. The residents are in charge of housekeeping and cooking, but the house is subjected to all the same rules as an on-campus house.

The town house residents, although in a sense the eye of the storm, recognize that the college needed to do something but wishes that there could be more dialogue between the town house and the college.

As town house-dweller Ava Helier explained, "There is a lack of communication between people in leadership positions and those that they lead."

This seems to be at the heart of the whole debacle. Hopefully, issues such as this that arise in the future will continue to bring the college and the town closer.

Judicial continued from page 3

Wondering why the Selection Committee didn't address this issue before voters bothered to choose from a shallow candidate pool, Hogle, Neagle and others were led to believe that the Selection Committee was tampering with the selection process.

"I think they were looking for somebody a little more status quo, somebody a little less outspoken than Scott or myself," said Hogle.

With no time for another election, new candidates were solicited to run for the position in the next week's house chair minutes. According to Neagle, students were notified of the second opportunity to run on application deadline and at coffee hour, two days later, while specific students were singled out earlier.

Hogle understood the situation as abiding by a technicality to consider four candidates: "[Former Head of Student Life] Renzi told [Scott and myself] that they couldn't make a decision between the two of us, and that it was just for a sense of comparison and that it would come down to one of us."

Bentley, Burns and Sullivan were interviewed by Student Council, who approved Bentley, Burns and the two initial candidates for review by the Selection Committee.

"We had a second set of interviews and it wasn't really an interview," said Neagle. "I just went in there and said, this is ridiculous, I can't believe this is even happening, you guys don't even have a reason for this. Basically, 'screw you.'"

The Committee did not select Neagle.

Newcomer Heather Burns was selected and by the end of the ordeal, the initial election looked like nothing more than a phony gesture of democracy. Nicholson herself admitted that last year's electoral process seemed far from perfect but defended the choices made as consistent with that year's handbook. According to her, the handbook did not require four candidates but allowed the selection committee to ask for a fuller ballot if they were not satisfied. Such intricacies of process seem almost impossible to glean from the text of last year's handbook.

Kate would not say why the Committee did not select between Neagle or Hogle initially. "They went with who was on the ballot and had they thought one of the

candidates was right for the position they wouldn't have needed the four," said Nicholson.

Regarding the idea that the Selection Committee wanted nothing more than a student to reinforce its own position, Nicholson was quick to note that the Head does not vote and their opinion does not or should not effect the Committee's proceedings.



Senior Scott Neagle won the popular vote

"I think this was just another example of the power being taken away from the students," said Hogle. "When people are appointed I don't know how much they'll represent my views and I don't know how much they'll listen to me when I speak to them."

"Being Head of Judicial is all about facilitating, being approachable, facilitating actual judicial hearings," said Nicholson. "They get the position because they can maintain a sense of neutrality and of the present status of the handbook."

The impression was made that student and faculty Heads of the Committee, at odds with themselves, could not facilitate hearings effectively. In response, Neagle said, "If they had a problem with [Hogle and I] as candidates, that would've been one thing, but inventing a new electoral process with no discussion, does a disservice to the community."

This reporter thinks it's worth noting that, in this

country, federal judges are also appointed to uphold and defend the law, and only a legislature of fools would appoint a judge with known intentions to change current law. That has always been the job of the legislative branch.

"I think we need a better system if people don't agree with the candidate chosen," said Nicholson, who herself did not know that Heads of Judicial were directly elected before her time at Bennington. "That opinion needs to have a bigger voice and I think that comes down to Student Council, and I don't think Student Council's been doing its job in being a voice for students."

These rational intentions aside, the point of an election that is, in Nicholson's words, "a recommendation," seems superficial and futile. How seriously the student "vote" was considered is unknown, but many students wonder "why bother?" Regarding the Judicial elections, one student who wished to go unnamed told me, "If they want to appoint someone, appoint someone. But don't patronize this phony democracy bullshit."

Perhaps sensing this, the process for Judicial Chair selection (see pp. 28-29 of this year's handbook) was rewritten over the summer, eliminating the student vote from the process entirely, a change that Nicholson made no mention of during our interview.

Nicholson sympathizes with students miffed by last year's roundabout process but seems dismissive when it comes to gripes about the final result. "In protecting the process, we served the student interest and got the right person for the job. I think the fact that all [student] Judicial Committee members are directly elected should be enough, and they are the ones who make the decisions."

While the new process may be more appropriate for an institution whose citizenry changes every four years, the lack of transparency and the shiftiness of last year's elections cannot have done any good for student trust in the process or the school's reputation as democratic and self-governing.

Nicholson notes that six candidates ran unopposed for six spots, effectively awarded that influence for filing a form. "So that says something, too, about how serious students are. You know, there were more students running opposed for CAB than Judicial."

The Stately Old Maple

By Eleanor Martin
and Phoebe Judge

Bennington College is notorious for the academic freedom it allows its students. It's a privilege to attend a school where we can study what we are passionate about and what we love, a school that trusts us to make many of our own scholastic decisions. During these past couple weeks we've watched many of our fellow students act downright bratty when the administration denied them a "freedom" that almost any other institution would have forbidden long ago. Is the porn tree really the biggest problem on our campus right now? It's certainly being addressed as such.

The last issue of the BFP repeatedly referred to the porn tree as Bennington "culture." It was labeled a "shared value." We're trying to speak for those students who don't feel that the porn tree is part of the life they live at Bennington. Some of us did not treasure the porn tree as our "culture." It's not that we have any strong feelings one way or the other. In fact, it's just the opposite: we don't really, pardon the expression, give a shit about the porn tree. It's bewildering and upsetting that this is what the campus has chosen to fight for. Has Bennington ever fought so hard for something academic, something that directly concerns our education?

*"We really don't,
pardon the expres-
sion, give a shit
about the porn
tree"*

After reading the first issue of the BFP and talking to a few people who were especially beholden to the "tree," we can't help but feel that Bennington students are acting a bit, shall we say, *entitled*. We spoke to one freshman student who brazenly declared that she "didn't choose to come to some square-ass shithole" and that she would "consider leaving if [Bob Graves] started censoring everything [she] did."

Maybe some of you see where we're coming from with "entitled."

Call us crazy, but it doesn't quite seem that complete censorship is right around the corner here at Bennington. We've gathered that the aforementioned freshman student and many others believe that they are protecting the best interest of the entire student body by fighting for their right to a porn tree. Frankly, if our fellow students are going to protect our best interests, we would appreciate it if they fought for smaller classes and more teachers—whether or not the Kilpatrick living room contains a stick with some porn stuck on it is not our biggest concern. We would even dare to say that it has little to no effect on the day to day lives of the vast majority of students on this campus. Furthermore, when students throw temper tantrums about such minor issues, it trivializes the voice of the entire student body. Will the administration take us seriously in the future when we choose such juvenile battles today?

Although it saddened us to see the photo of the somber bunch of Kilpatrick

residents clinging to the last limb of their precious tree (one that is generally destroyed within weeks of its creation), our hearts are remarkably resilient. Even mere weeks after the removal of this prized possession, we find our minds drifting to other, surely less pressing matters: the sizes of classes, what our transcripts will look like, what the faculty hiring plans for the next few years are, how the college is planning to house the growing campus population—not to say, of course, that we would ever place these concerns on par with the drastic violation of our freedom of expression: the removal of the time honored and stately old maple.

My Values Are Not For Sale

To the Editor and the community:

I would like to applaud the BFP for its commitment to a high-quality, ever improving, consistent publication.

As a student who has witnessed the rise and fall of many school sponsored papers, I am overjoyed that an independently run forum, such as yours, has flourished to the point where it is printed on news-stock. But I am worried that the price of success has comprised your values.

Specifically, I was shocked that the BFP would accept and print a full page ad from Care Net. According to their mission statement (from the web), "Care Net is a Christian ministry assisting and promoting the evangelistic, pro-life work of pregnancy centers in North America." I understand that they have a constitutional right to exist and to free speech, including advertising, but does the BFP have to print it? It seems to me that any publication that promotes any organization, even if they are being paid, is by default endorsing that organization.

Furthermore, I am concerned about the ad itself. While I am confident everything published in the ad is legally true, I believe it is misleading enough to be ethically questionable. First of all the ad does not fully declare Care Net's motives. Nowhere are the words Christian or pro-life. Secondly, the ad claims that "all [Care Net's] services are free and confidential," but their privacy policy states that they "endeavor to take steps to assure that any information you provide to [them] will remain secure. However, if it is necessary, [they] will share information for legal reasons," but they do not specify which situations, what reasons, or to whom they will release information.

If the BFP is going to take their money shouldn't it demand full disclosure? Doesn't the community deserve it?

I urge all students, student council, and the administration to support the BFP during the budget process so the paper need not rely on ideological advertisements. And if more money is still needed I will be the first person buy a subscription or contribute to an anti-advertising fund, or help sponsor a funded Gallery page, or anything else.

My values are not for sale. I hope that yours aren't either.

Sincerely,
Adam Mills

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