



THE BENNINGTON FREE PRESS

Vol. 7 No. 1

March 16, 2007

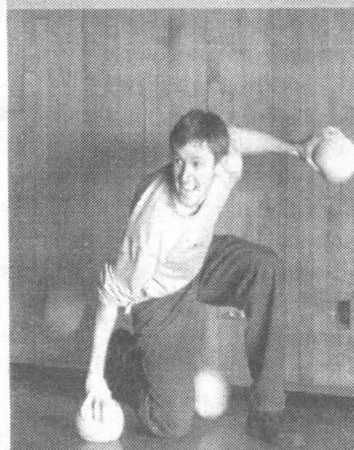
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Rebuilding New Orleans Busch on Iraq



Students worked for Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans over FWT.

Photo by Elizabeth Melsheimer

BY ELIZABETH MELSHEIMER

For my FWT, I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans. I lived in an elementary school that had been converted into a camp for volunteers in June 2006. It is called Camp Hope, and can house roughly 600 people. Thankfully, during the time that I was there the maximum number of people we had was 510, and only for a week.

Classrooms are bedrooms filled with cots and the occasional mattress, and, if you are really lucky, a box spring. There were two sets of bathrooms, no hot water, and the piping was PVC. There were a lot of overflowing toilets. All food was donated, so

there was a lot of chicken and beans. Showers were located on what used to be the stage in the gymnasium. There were no ceilings, and separating the rooms was a thin sheet of drywall. The outside walls were the brick exteriors of the building. There was no insulation, and no heat. Surprisingly, it gets cold in the south, especially at night.

There were about 25 long-term volunteers at Camp Hope, some of whom had been down there for 6 months. The camp sits in St. Bernard Parish (in Louisiana, the word parish is equivalent to county), which borders the Lower 9th Ward. The number of short-term volunteers fluctuates from week to week. The population of

St. Bernard Parish before Katrina was 67,000, a number that has dropped to 7,000. There is only one elementary school open, as well as only one high school. Middle schoolers are separated, some attending the elementary school, and some the high school.

The St. Bernard post office operates out of a trailer, as do the couple of banks that have returned. There is a Walgreen's, a Burger King, and a handful of restaurants. While over 2,000 homes have been gutted, many more remain, along with apartment complexes and stores. Strip malls that once held Rite

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Applicants increase by 25%

BY INGRID JONES

Just three years ago, Ken Himmelman became Bennington's Dean of Admissions with an all-new team of admissions counselors. In 2005, his first year, Bennington received 745 applications from prospective students. In 2006, there were 799 applications. This year the College has received 1000 applications, a noteworthy 25% increase.

Himmelman says that most colleges have been experiencing about a 5 to 10% increase in applicants over the past 5 to 10 years, which is partly because of a "demographic bulge,"

a population increase in the percentage of young people.

Another reason for a widespread influx of prospective students is the growing number of colleges accepting the Common Application. It's now easier for students to apply to as many as 10 to 15 different colleges. Bennington used to have an alternative application, but now accepts just the Common Application with a Bennington supplement.

Admissions is still working every bit as hard to get to know each prospective student, Himmelman says, and the eight Admissions counselors visited between 450 and 500 schools

last year to recruit students. The counselors travel to areas where most students are drawn from. For Bennington, that means New England, the Mid-Atlantic region, the Pacific Northwest, California, New York, and a few areas in the Midwest, like Minnesota.

"We've also increased our electronic recruiting," said Himmelman. "For example, when a student's name is in our database, we send electronic postcards via email based on front page stories from the web site. The Communications Office has been really good about helping us out."

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BY JESSICA ALATORRE
Editor-In-Chief

On March 6, Benjamin Busch, photographer, actor and soldier looked out into the crowd in Tishman Lecture Hall and said, "Art happens, whether we like it or not."

Busch, a 1991 Vassar graduate and Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Marines, went to Iraq on two separate tours. During his time there, he would take an average of two photos a day, trying to capture the images that no one else noticed. Busch talked about his work as art through photography, and not as photojournalism of his time in Iraq. He tried to point out that he was a photographer in and out of Iraq, by comparing images he captured in Iraq with similar shots taken in New York City.

For members of the public, Busch's opportunity to create art in Iraq and his presence there donning a U.S. Marines uniform seemed inextricable. "Vassar Ben and Major Ben are very different on the surface, but I never compromised who I am...it would be a great destruction of soul if I allowed it to be," Busch responded.

When questioned about his decision to become a Marine, Busch replied that it wasn't a choice. "I was always drawn towards duty and service. The Marines were the only ones who had that kind of Spartan-ness." And yet, he went on to describe how, for him, art was inescapable, and so even amongst the madness of Iraq, he wanted to record the images that caught his attention. At one point Busch defended his role as a photographer in Iraq by saying, "Da Vinci designed tanks, Michelangelo built weapons, why can't a Marine take photos?"

Busch explained how he likes to encourage the "waking dream of the viewer." In order to do this with the photographs in his exhibition, he never used the zoom lens; in this way the viewer could be in the same spot, from the same distance to the subject as Busch had been. His photographs from Iraq show a constant seeking for imagery that proved human existence in a place where the evidence might be lacking. He showed photos of an old police station with plaster cast foot molds sitting on a couch; these, he said, would later be gone. Another photograph showed a bag inflated in a gust of wind,

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Are politics polluting our educational experience?



photo by Jessica Alatorre

BY MATTHEW SOUTHER

During this year's first annual Senior Conference, College president Elizabeth Coleman held a discussion with about 30 attendees regarding the value of some Senior Conference programs and the challenges of life after Bennington. Coleman also hosted the talk to learn about what seniors thought of their college experience in retrospect. In what, for many, was a long-awaited inquiry, she posed the

question: "What do I need to know?" A few students were ready with a response.

The most challenging issue that came to light in the following few minutes, and the one that had not been much discussed, had to do with campus politics. Some students had found themselves caught in the crossfire of political, personal and ideological battles being waged between administration and faculty, staff and faculty, faculty and faculty. Repeatedly, grudges unrelated to

students and their work had come in the way of projects central to their college experience. Coleman was clearly concerned by this show of discontent. While acknowledging how difficult it is to talk about, she urged students to find ways to bring this issue into the open and not let it remain below the radar.

This article is the first in what I hope will become a series that seeks to examine whether campus personality politics are a problem at Bennington College. Without

aiming to be incendiary or threatening, and with every effort neither to overstate nor understate the problem, I will be presenting some perspectives on the conflicts just beneath the surface of our collective college life. To avoid causing offense and to keep the focus on the larger issue, I have decided to avoid delving into the particulars of any one student's experiences, though each story is infinitely more complex and specific than they appear here.

Senior Johanna Neufeld

has experienced first-hand the results of miscommunication and ambiguity among the faculty. "Confusion breeds conflict," she says, relating that when clear barriers were not established for a major interdisciplinary project she was working on, each faculty member involved took it as his prerogative to invent requirements for her, leading to jurisdictional squabbles. "There are no guidelines for what I was

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A Bennington Retrospective: Intimates or Inmates?

BY KATHRYN FURBY
Features Editor

Before you ask, I'm not a transfer. I went here long, long ago, when life was simple. There was an Upcaf and a Downcaf, no one taught art history, and there was an annual Pigstock to keep the vegetarians in check. A senior at Bennington College is bizarre in itself; a rare breed of 22-year-old that stalks the snowy grounds and speaks of Goat Boy-haunted lawns. Skipping that transitory junior year makes it all the more unsettling.

Part of Bennington's appeal was always its brand of quirky. A school that costs over \$40,000 a year produces students who dress like they're homeless and make art with bits of trash. A year and half away from this cobwebbed New England town and it's stranger than ever. Walking into the old Snack Bar means walking smack into a wall. The room that used to house the scarce gathering of sports fans, epic competitions between Red Sox and Yankees fanatics, and the only place you could go to see grown men cry in front of a TV is now a "Meditation Room." Meditation Room? I can do that in Welling's recently renovated bathrooms, thank you, I do not need a musty couch or a television. Another large

addition, the new Student Center, has created chaos. Confused, students have compensated by creating space-age names to define it: Moonbase, Space Station, Landing Pad, Airport Bar. Never mind that the garage doors will be used one lonely warm month a semester, I was personally appalled by the automatic sinks and foaming soap. Weren't we pumping our own water last time I was here?

Since I left, the stock characters of Bennington seem to have grown collectively greasier and more scraggly. The upperclassman have been pared down by the Bennington exodus: when due to personal crisis or revelation half your class drops out, transfers, or takes indefinite "time off." But with the reduced population comes a reduced ratio that we are all familiar with. The mass group of women pouncing on the small group of cornered, but (let's face it) lucky, boys. Used to the attention and growing more confident every year, a strange spell comes over the Bennington boy. Curiouser and curiouser, it only makes the girls more catty and territorial. I need a T-shirt that reads "I'm not after your man. Stop competing with me." Where is our sense of community? Ladies, let's pull it together. In the end, he'll

find someone that puts out more anyway (unless you live in Dewey, in which case I hear you're all set). The only thing that is less bizarre than I remember is the party scene, which now resembles a tribal dance rehearsal instead of an epileptic support group.

But I came back to Bennington for a reason. I left tropical paradise down under to return to my snug, isolated liberal arts college. I missed the attention and care at the cost of privacy and dignity. I missed the community despite the magnifying glass. Don't like the dining hall food? Leave a snippy napkin note telling the hardworking kitchen staff that they just aren't up to par. Use a carry-out box and eat dinner in your room! Gone are the days of stuffing bagels in every pocket or seeing how many chocolate chip cookies will fit in a paper cup; gone is the struggle of the anti-socialite sitting alone.

Most importantly, after returning to Bennington, I have realized how amazing it is to leave. Get perspective, get experience, love yourself again, find love (without the asphyxiating complications of the Bennington snowglobe). Go get dirty somewhere and come back to tell us about it.

> voices

It's my party, and I'll be "insensitive" if I want to Hecklin'

BY EMI PIMENTEL
Listings Manager

While we were toiling away at our various jobs during FWT this year, other college and university students nationwide were busy throwing parties. Not just any parties, but theme parties, an idea Bennington is no stranger to.

This January, Clemson University threw a "gangsta"-themed party, replete with bandanas, fake grills, and even one student in blackface. At Tarleton State in Texas, white students dressed up as "gangstas,"

drank malt liquor, and ate fried chicken. A few months before, a party at the University of Texas at Austin drew more white students in blackface drinking malt liquor, and attendees also wore afro wigs and nametags with stereotypical black and Hispanic names.

These parties have shaken up the communities around them, with students, administrators, and the community at large speaking out against them, decrying them as insensitive, offensive, and racist. Although these kinds of parties have likely been happening on campuses for a long time now, the seemingly sudden spike (a

perception furthered by photo-posting abilities on Facebook and MySpace) has raised more than a few eyebrows, with organizations like the NAACP coming out against the practice, and other community leaders standing up and speaking out, as well.

Blackface aside (I'm not even touching that), for many people the most unsavory thing is that in the case of the January events, these students chose to throw their parties on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Even I, a somewhat shameless equal-opportunity offender, find that somehow offensive. But aside

from those two aspects of these parties, I'm inclined to ask, "What's the big deal?"

I think that political correctness is holding up the dialogue in this country. About culture, about government, about education, about media: about everything. I, as well as many of my peers, have become increasingly disillusioned with the cultural and political landscape, and not just because I'm a raving liberal. Political correctness has rendered everything politicians say virtually meaningless. By trying

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BY SARAH MCABEE
Voices Editor

I know. Because I choose to release my work into the public sphere (or the Bennington sphere, at least), I know that some (most?) of you reading this sentence don't care for me, or my writing, much. In more colloquial parlance, you think I suck.

And that's your right. The risk I take in sharing my work is that you'll hate it, and I understand that. Forgive the elementary explanations, but in the short span of years since I matriculated at Bennington, the once-common sight and sound of a good-natured heckling has fallen by that wayside where our forgotten traditions—Porn Tree, nudity at Midnight Breakfast, bouncy houses—go.

In Bennington's very recent past, student performances were usually punctuated by good- and bad-natured heckling. Inspired by hecklers of the past (soccer hooligans and those two old guys from the Muppets, especially), Benningtonians would shout criticisms and demands at performers, frequently to no effect, but occasionally to engage in a fight with the singer-songwriter or poet.

What a rude awakening it was, then, to attend a recent musical event that most students present did not seem to find enjoyable. As is the custom, many chose to listen, arms crossed, to a song before rolling their eyes and leaving the Moon Base. Others were held against their wills while a quesadilla or grilled cheese was fried, and whispered disparaging comments to their friends. Obviously, the act was not delivering what the kids wanted to hear, so at the end of a song, as weak applause sounded from the friends-of-the-band lining the stage, "You suck!" could be heard from the Snack Bar.

Quelle shock! Quelle bad taste! Cue the outrage! But not really "outrage," because that's off-limits here, too. The band cut their eyes in the direction of the voice and mumbled a few words about "that girl" who spoke out. Errant fans glanced quickly back at the offender, and then forward again. The next song began. Those silent dissenters in the crowd offered covert high-fives and "I love you"s to the heckler, but the mood was indeed heavy in the Student Center for the rest of that night.

Gentle reader, reclaim your Student Center. The word "Student" is there for a reason. If a band sucks, tell them they suck, in a restrained and (semi-) respectful manner. Don't attempt to shout over a song, don't make ad hominem attacks, but do communicate your dissatisfaction with what you've seen or heard. The British House of Lords does it, our forebears from First and Second Street did it, and you can do it, too. Don't suffer in silence.

On that note, letters to the editor may be addressed to bfp@bennington.edu.

It's not easy being green

BY TRAVIS KLINE

Recently our campus has been undergoing changes that make it more environmentally friendly, and press releases have begun to give us the label "green." Some of these "green" changes around campus include the use of recycled cellulose insulation on the older houses, the switch to bio-mass as a source of heat, and the appearance of recycling bins in many new areas of the campus facilities. These are all great things in terms of lessening our impact on the environment, but are they enough? To me, to be green means that you are living symbiotically with the environment around you, and that you are conscious of your impact on the earth, as well of the future implications of your actions.

Certainly we can't just become "green" (like donning a flight helmet and declaring "Mission accomplished"). There is something in that declaration that denies the complicated nature of our existence. But when we say we are green, it is like we are

saying we have completed the task. That is certainly not the case at this campus; there are many examples of campus facilities, programs, and people who are far from looking at the legacy they are leaving for the environment, which will be here long after we all have our degrees. Maybe it is the idea that we are all citizens of the world that allows us to study in such a liberal atmosphere while not claiming stakes to any one area, even if only the one we are in temporarily.

To truly become green, I think we must keep in mind the idea of sustainability. I would like to see people demand and actively participate in the creation and fostering of programs that will help take care of the area where we are, the campus, and the world. Our campus is far from green. There is much to do: we have no compost system for the Dining Hall, recycling is far from a regular practice for most people, and energy consumption is rarely talked about. These things mean more than throwing something away in a different container, or

screwing in a compact florescent for three dollars. They mean thinking about consumption in the first place.

I just came from a very enlightening class about the meaning of art (as all classes here seem to address at one point or another) and as I sat contemplating the use of art in society as a catalyst for change, I noticed that on this 50 degree March day, the air conditioning was on. Not only is it just absurd to not open a window, and is a waste of energy that was derived from precious natural resources, this all costs money. Ours. No matter the reason we care, either for efficiency, the environment, or for economic reasons, we all should care about this kind of consumption, because it affects us all in many ways.

I wonder about the nature of our ideas of environmental issues here. We are the thinking liberals that are supposed to care about this stuff. Do we? With Gore's new movie reaching millions and the mention of climate change in the State of the Union

address, perhaps it has become too mainstream to take a serious stand on these topics. Are we so alternative that we would do so just for the sake of being alternative, even if we could help?

I have tried to stay away from making specific suggestions or complaints. I think that to make this a truly green campus we have to do more than just recycle more or print double sided. We have to accompany those changes with thought about usage and sustainability, and we have to realize that we do have a stake in this, that we do have a voice that can be used, and an obligation to use it. We are all busy with our various projects, papers, committees, and lives, but we should also realize that the continuance of all of these things depends on the quality of the world we are creating for tomorrow.

To join the dialogue about these issues, come share your thoughts with the Environmental Initiatives Committee on Wednesday nights at 9 p.m. in the Booth living room.

'politics'

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supposed to do, so they couldn't agree on a structure," says Neufeld. This confusion, she says, is one of the major pitfalls of the Democracy Project, leading to an increased number of showdowns, especially among the social science faculty.

Ryan Biracree, another senior, has had numerous experiences with campus politics as the head of the Campus Activities Board. "Different [administrative] departments have grudges against others," he confessed, though he was reluctant to share many specifics. "Some departments are less willing to work with CAB because of things that happened years ago. Also, if you talk to the wrong people in certain departments, you'll have a hard time getting things accomplished. Departments treat different people differently, and it often depends on whom they like."

Many students have found that the act of getting a project

approved can be dependent on the popularity of the professor backing the project. Senior Sarah McAbee ended up frustrated in her efforts to put a project together a few years ago under a former faculty member, whom she says was generally disliked by the other faculty. Others entering their senior year have found it difficult to get a thesis proposal through the system, and while this does not always have to do with politics per se, some seem to suspect that the difficulty they encountered would have been diminished under a less contentious, self-interested system.

When I asked President Coleman how we can encourage a non-threatening dialogue on the issue at hand, she had no ready answers, but insisted that this was "the central question."

"I fear anything I say will inflame and distort the issue," Coleman admitted, saying that it was "much too serious to risk taking an action that might make matters worse."

Coleman reports that so far,

no students have spoken with her in person about problems arising from personality politics, despite her invitation to do so. She declined to comment on whether Bennington College has created a professional culture of one-upsmanship, suggesting small communities like Bennington's may be particularly prone to this sort of environment.

Nonetheless, she remained confident that "as a whole, the faculty are concerned," and believes that "the likelihood for improvement is great" if the initiative comes from the right places, and in a constructive manner.

The above only begins to scratch the surface of what remains a difficult question. The fact that it has not been much discussed previously seems to suggest that at the very least, most students have not registered politics as problem to the point that they are likely to articulate it. Of course, this issue may be mostly a non-issue, and the students who have had these experiences may be outliers. From a student's

perspective, it can often be difficult to tell why things happen the way they happen amongst those who exercise control over our academics and campus life, and a grudge or prejudice can be difficult to pinpoint.

That said, this reporter hopes that those who may have additional insight into the question will come forward. I plan to speak with a few members of the faculty and administration for the next installment, but student testimonials, either confirming or denying the issue, are essential, and serve both as the source and the end product of all decisions made on campus.

While anonymous letters to the BFP are generally not accepted, it has been agreed that such letters may, if tactfully written, be accepted in response to these articles if received. Anyone who wishes to be interviewed for future articles should contact Matthew Souther at x8233 or msouther@bennington.edu

On the future of survivors

BY TORI AREND

Projected onto a screen, a small girl in a pink shirt looked out to the audience at the close of Rebecca Tinsley's March 7th lecture. "What will her future be?" About two or three, the child's slight frame took up half of the screen and her face, imploring and searching, was turned in the direction of that question Tinsley placed to us: What will her future be?

Rebecca Tinsley came to Bennington to ask this question about the future – and not only the future of the little girl waiting in pink and her fellow Rwandans still beating through the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, nor just the for the victims of the current genocide in Sudan. Rebecca Tinsley came to Bennington to ask the question: what will Africa's future be?

For the present, fourteen people die on the hour in Darfur; four hundred thousand people have already died according to impossible records that somehow come out of the torn region; 2 million – a third of Sudan's population – have been left displaced. It is common knowledge that Darfur is the world's worst humanitarian crisis at the moment; the figures are known and the term is known:

genocide. In an endless circle of semantics and logistics, Darfur is discussed on the world stage. Yes, there is talk, there is awareness. Still, there is no action.

The conflicts began when nomadic groups in the west of Sudan, mainly black African, rose up in Khartoum because of discontent regarding government representation.

The Sudanese government deployed official defense militias in response, sparking the fighting. There is clear evidence, however, that the country's main officials have been supplying arms to the Janjaweed, a rebel army (whose name is derived from the Arabic word for "thieves") that developed as the initial conflicts began, though Sudanese officials deny any involvement with the fighting force.

The Janjaweed's focus on the Sudanese region of Darfur is catastrophic. Honing in on



Rebecca Tinsley talks with students after lecture

photo by Jessica Alatorre

the region of the west, they raze villages, killing those who do not escape, raping women and leaving nothing but ash in their wake. The target is black African villages, pitting the black Muslims of the west against the Arabic Muslims that hold office in Sudan. The violence has been going on, growing for four years since its start in 2003. The African Union has troops in the region and in Chad, where many Sudanese refugees flee the killings. Their capacity, however, is to simply report. They do not take action. Aid is being impeded

and many nonprofit organizations, even formidable ones, have left the region. It is an impossible situation in which the cycle of killings keeps rolling on and on, the world powers sees the cycle, and nothing is done.

On a governmental level, hesitancy reigns supreme, hanging above the strife in the region. Recently, the International Criminal Court named two Sudanese officials as war criminals and called them to the Hague. This would seem to be progress after such a period of killing, but, as Tinsley pointed out, these

two names come from a whittled list of forty-nine. According to Tinsley, "The UN is a self-sustaining organism that long ago lost touch with what it was trying to achieve." The crisis in Darfur is now termed a genocide. In a post-Holocaust environment, where "never again" is the repeated aphorism, it took much for the world's leaders to accept that, yes, this has happened again. Despite realizations that it will happen again if nothing is done, well, nothing is being done.

A political dance is occurring, in which different steps run over one another and the whole of the world's powers end up going in circles around each other, guarding their own self interests. The war on terror, the Chinese hold in Sudanese oil, the ubiquitous question of sovereignty, all seem to come before the conflicts of Darfur – and of Rwanda before it – on "the dark continent" of Africa. This attitude parallels the colonialism of yore, whose effects plague the nations of Africa and result in corruption, violent conflict, and now, as in Rwanda, genocide.

The recognition, though, that we are all capable of genocide remains to be processed. "We have a veneer of civilization. We

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Glen Van Brummelen and Aarti Rana photo by Annie Prud'homme G n reux

Question Everything

BY REID GINOZA
News Editor

"Question Everything" the viewbook's cover instructs. "What would happen if you threw out all the rules about what a university should be, and started with a blank page?"

Ask Glen Van Brummelen, former Bennington mathematics teacher, and Aarti Rana, alumna of Bennington, class of 2006. Both are working to build one answer to this question: Quest University Canada.

Quest University Canada is a brand new institution of higher education located in Squamish, British Columbia, Canada, an hour south of Whistler, and an hour north of Vancouver. It is the first private, secular, and not-for-profit university in Canada, and is also the first liberal arts and sciences university Canada has seen.

Here, Van Brummelen is a founding faculty member and the Curriculum Coordinator for Mathematics. Along with four other coordinators, he will have developed the first curriculum in Canada to encourage cross-disciplinary work. The school's motto is "Intimate. Integrated. International," and faculty at Quest will be referred to as "tutors" in one effort to reflect that statement.

As its name suggests, this university is a place to seek, to discover, and to ask. Here, students will investigate the world and develop a relationship with what they find. Quest therefore divides its education program into two distinct sections: the Foundation Program, which is a set of sixteen courses designed to introduce "the breadth of human knowledge," and the Individual Concentration program, an investigation of a student-proposed Question.

Every student will start Foundation Program with the Cornerstone course, co-taught by all the faculty coordinators. This includes Van Brummelen in mathematics, as well as geology, biology, literature, philosophy, political economy, and outdoor leadership by the Director of Recreation. The theme for this year, the relationship between man and nature, will introduce students to a cross-disciplinary investigation that Quest can offer. The rest of the Foundation Program focuses on "multidisciplinary topics such as disease, technology, globalization and sustainability." With a breadth of academic investigation, students will make informed decisions in the second program.

"I prefer Bennington's system in this regard," said Van Brummelen. "I don't like the idea of separating out the 'breadth' part of the program from the 'depth'; I'd rather intersperse them through the four years... but you can't have everything!"

Despite the differences, Van Brummelen said that between Quest's Individual Concentration Program and Bennington's Plan Process, "the similarities are almost eerie." The Question "guides students' attention in a sustained and rigorous intellectual inquiry" during the second half of their education. This will involve at least six courses in their concentration, an Experiential Learning component, completing a foreign language requirement, and their Capstone course where

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Eva's not just acting anymore

BY KIRK KENNEY

As I sat in one of her comfortable red chairs, discussing with Eva Chatterjee-Sutton the inadequacies of my car's fan belt, I suddenly remembered that I was supposed to be asking her about becoming the new full-time Dean of Students.

With the application deadline in November, a committee comprised of Joan Goodrich, Wendy Hirsch, and Elissa Tenny reviewed nearly 100 candidates for the open Dean position.

Eva stood out among the other candidates, however, with nine years of commitment to students and strong leadership qualities.

"It was clear," said Tenny, "that Eva's qualifications and her commitment to Bennington placed her above the other candidates."

Chatterjee-Sutton's interactions with students while Acting Dean of Students also led the committee to "confirm our assessment," said Tenny.

So, Eva became Dean of Students this winter, after nine years at Bennington, including her term as Acting Dean of Students.

"I went to school for this; I came to Bennington with the intention to take on responsibility like this. I love this school, and I'm ready now more than ever," she said, though admittedly she "expected to be older."

Expecting her own children to be older as well, Chatterjee-Sutton is on the school board of North Bennington, and acknowledges that her new responsibilities will

mean working out new balance between her own family and her Bennington family.

With those families in mind, Chatterjee-Sutton plans to maintain previous Dean of Students Bob Graves' respect for rights and standards of the community. She also has plans for working toward more collaboration with organizations and offices on campus, and particularly with the student body, such that collaboration may reach its full potential.

"Student life and student issues are intertwined with the College," she said.

There are, however, more short-term considerations, some of which already becoming manifest. In preparation for new structuring of the Office of Student Life, open positions, have already been posted for one Associate Director, two Assistant Directors, a Coordinator of Publications and Products, and a Student Center coordinator.

There are also smaller details to be cleaned up, like on what day to start the school year in the fall. At the moment there's also no specific vehicle for external trips, such as those required for classes, nor is there yet an institutionalized option for transportation to Albany, especially with Greyhound no longer in town. These are a couple of the more tedious kinds of issues that require coordination.

While glad to hear of Chatterjee-Sutton's appointment to Dean, some students expressed

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> news

Colloquium addresses Abenaki history

BY INGRID JONES

Speaker Joe Bruchac opened up this spring's Social Science Colloquium, hosted by Bennington senior Joanna Dillon. Bruchac brought ancient Abenaki stories of the world's creation, gave an important lesson on Abenaki history in the state of Vermont, and shared native songs. Bruchac is a storyteller and writer of both children's and adult books.

During his talk, Bruchac stressed the differences in how Abenaki Native Americans and Europeans view and treat land. In Abenaki, the name for Vermont means "our land" or "our place." The tribe perceived the land as

a gift from Mother Earth to be acknowledged and respected, whereas Europeans saw it as a means for exchange of property and capital.

Bruchac took on a human rights perspective at points during his talk, explaining how the government has worked around the law, and claimed originally that the Abenaki were never permanent residents of Vermont, and were only passing through. This was claimed despite the existence of sacred burial grounds and other firm evidence of centuries of inhabitation. Hardship began with the peak of the French and Indian War in 1759, which left Abenaki and other tribes three options, Bruchac explained—the

option to resist, to leave and form refugee communities in the north or west, or to "hide in plain sight," as Bruchac put it.

In 1932, the 3rd International Eugenics Conference built a racist proclamation legalizing the sterilization of Native Americans for purposes of purifying human breeding. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs essentially declares Native Americans "not competent to handle their own land," said Bruchac. Abenaki are still fighting for rights to hunt and fish without a license, and for basic rights to protect their burial grounds.

On a lighter note, Bruchac talked about the nature of the Abenaki language. The Abenaki,

who wake up with the sun, go to sleep with the sun, and eat as they become hungry, could not understand the function of the watch Europeans wore, Bruchac said, and thus the Abenaki word for watch is "that thing which does nothing useful."

The language is also very poetic. Instead of saying "you are wearing blue clothes," translated into Abenaki you would say, "you are wearing clothes the same color of the clothes the sky is wearing."

The Social Science colloquium will be on Monday evenings at 7pm in the renovated Upstairs Café. The next lecture is Monday, March 26.

> the skinny

FWT Photo Contest

Every year students return from Field Work Term with stories and pictures to share. This year was no exception. Here are the winners from this year's "FWT Works" Field Work Term Photo contest:

Best Overall*Katie Barrie*

Jim Henderson Puppet Workshop, NY, NY

"Me surrounded by various Sesame Street puppets."

Most Unusual FWT experience*Orion Jenkins*

Tamakene, Guinea, West Africa

"Jay and Orion almost exposed in Africa!"

Makes me want to do FWT there next year!*Jessa Brown*

New York Aquarium, Coney Island, NY.

"Getting a kiss from Otis [the sea lion]."

Spirit of FWT*Jacob Perkins*

Costa Rica

"Riding high atop a mule, trying to take notes on the physical attributes and spatial details of a piece of property in the foothills just south of the Nicaraguan border."

Honorable Mentions*Julia Walker*

Dominican Carnival, La Vega, Dominican Republic

Cathy McGath

Bharath Montessori School, Ilanji, Tamil Nadu, India
Cathy taught students in India, many of whom were fascinated by her camera.

Christie Goshe

Wearing a plaster cast made by Jennifer Loomis, who takes portraits of pregnant women.

'Tinsley'

Continued from page 4

are better at hiding our savagery," says Tinsley. The hesitation to take action in Darfur, according to Tinsley, lies in a reluctance to connect ourselves to the people of Darfur, of Rwanda, of Africa. An attitude of supremacy, as well as hypocrisy, lies at the source of this, underlined by division of the civilized (us) and the other (them). Genocide is "people being brutal to other people," according to Tinsley; it is the deliberate action of one group of human beings against another, the former attempting to destroy the existence of the latter. However fascinating this is, says Tinsley, however mind-boggling the concept of such hatred and fear, the wake of destruction spreading through Sudan and into Chad and the Central African Republic, as well as neighboring countries, shows that this brutality must end. There must be change.

In Rwanda, 80% of the literate population was murdered in the 1994 genocide; Tinsley is hoping to mitigate this effect. The colonialist mechanisms left behind, she says, must be eradicated. In her eyes, the first step is education. "It is not the education that is important, but

the kind of education," she states clearly.

One element that remains, due to the nature of colonialist endeavors, is blind acceptance of authority. The ability to ask questions was never instilled in African youth. With the evolving climate of Rwanda, however, questioning is arising; after such atrocities, questioning must arise. "These people are not stupid. They may not be able to read, but they are not stupid," Tinsley says, for they can ask the questions of their authority figures and demand accountability.

By investing in their affairs, people can formulate change themselves. This is what Tinsley wants to do. She wants to give those in Rwanda the means to change their own lives, stating that monetary hand outs are not enough. Rebuilding a social and governmental system takes time — "baby steps," she says. Tinsley is starting a school for girls in Rwanda for, she claims, "women are the agents of social change in Africa." The women — raped, widowed and abandoned by war and genocide — have no stake in the left-over colonialist system of African government. They are the ones who can change this and take charge. Tinsley wants to provide them with the means to do this with the girls' school, which will

focus on both empowerment and service. The people need to feel they have the capacity to change their lives and they need to feel the responsibility to change the lives of their fellow Rwandans.

For many, the ways of Africa are a curiosity. Tinsley said she may offend "left-minded liberals" who think African cultures ought to be preserved. As they stand, according to Tinsley, the cultural structures need to be eradicated; for they are the same structures — those in Rwanda, those in Sudan and those elsewhere in Africa — that allowed for genocide to occur.

The efforts in Rwanda will help in the long process of healing and rebuilding necessary after such an expansive blow to a country and its people. In Darfur, however, rebuilding cannot occur until action is taken at an international level to end the killing — to end the genocide. "I really don't think we're going to do anything about Darfur and that it will spill into Chad and the Central African Republic," Tinsley says.

Something, however, must be done. Tinsley thinks economic sanctions must be put in place and adhered to staunchly, as well as travel bans on Sudanese officials. Hitting the government's wallet will produce the most effect, she says, because they like their

money and they like their power. It is unsure, however, when this will happen, how this will happen and whether the murders will cease if it does happen. The future is still up in the air.

"I am a fraud. I'm not an expert. I'm just a journalist who has bumbled through the world," Rebecca Tinsley says humbly. She is a direct witness. Now we, we who sat in our Student Center in the middle of southern Vermont, who watched the slide of images from Rwanda and from Africa — we have a responsibility to do something. The things seen, the people seen, cannot be tucked away into the repository of memory. Rebecca Tinsley took these images, seeing them firsthand, and molded her plans for the future, "one person at a time, one village at a time." As indirect witnesses, we ourselves must take the "baby steps" discussed. We must not separate ourselves and worry simply about our own futures and not those of Africans. We must act to help those in the wake of genocide of the past and present in order to secure a peaceful and productive future, no matter how far Africa actually is from Vermont. In Tinsley's words, "we must never underestimate what our connection can mean."

to talk, though, especially if you time your questions to coincide with lunchtime in the New Room, where she is often joined by other members of Student Life.

Visting historian

BY BRITTANY OLINKIEWICZ

Visiting Social Sciences faculty member Kelly Anderson is teaching two new classes this term, "Sexuality and Politics" and "Women and Social Change." Anderson works for the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College, where she does much more in the business of documenting



photo by Anna Mudd

rather than writing about women's movements. At the Sophia Smith Collection, she also trains those interested in oral history, a practice she plans to teach in her classes here at Bennington. The work she does focuses on social change and activist movements.

Anderson earned her Masters in Women's Studies at Sarah

Lawrence College. The similarities between Sarah Lawrence and Bennington made her feel comfortable, she says. This is her first time teaching at Bennington College and she finds it a very unique teaching experience. "It's nice to be in a classroom with people who are so engaged and dedicated," she explained. Her prior teaching has been with older, non-traditional students, and many of her classrooms have been more multi-generational than those here. "It's interesting to see what women of this generation care about most," she said. Anderson is looking forward to the rest of the term and is thrilled to be working with the students here at Bennington.

'Eva'

Continued from page 4

dismay over the lack of direct student involvement in the decision-making process.

"I believe that whenever possible it is important for students to be involved in the search process, particularly for a position such as the Dean of Students," said Elissa Tenny. She noted, however, that moving ahead on Chatterjee-Sutton's appointment "gave us the opportunity to build the strongest Student Life office possible."

You, too, can discover her surprising wealth of car knowledge (her father-in-law owns a shop in Maryland), in addition to all the day-to-day workings of tending to the student body. Being entirely pleasant to chat with, Chatterjee-Sutton can be found in the Office of Student Life, though you may need to make an appointment, as she's pretty busy these days. She can probably still find time



"Best Overall" FWT photo contest winner Katie Barrie

photo courtesy of Katie Barrie

Vermont pushes vote to impeach Bush

By JESSICA ALATORRE
Editor-In-Chief

The newest anti-Bush campaign is underway as Vermonters pass resolutions across the state calling for the president's impeachment. On Vermont's long-standing Town Meeting Day, held this year on March 5, more than 30 towns across Vermont and over half of Vermont's Democratic County Committees passed resolutions for impeachment.

Town Meeting Day is an open day for citizens to debate major and minor political issues. In Rutland County, Town Meeting Day produced the text known as the Rutland Resolution, which challenges many of the Bush administration's current policies.

The Rutland Resolution outlines many of the ways in which the president has manipulated the Constitution. The resolution makes several claims against the president, pointing fingers at his actions on the war in Iraq, his allowance of the National Security Agency's wiretapping actions, the indefinite detention of U.S. citizens under the Patriot

Act, and his breach of the UN Convention Against Torture in regards to secret prisons and facilities at Guantanamo Bay.

Part of the resolution reads, "George W. Bush has violated his constitutional oath to execute faithfully the office of President and to the best of his ability to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." The resolution calls President Bush's actions "subversive" of constitutional government, thus warranting him disqualified to hold office, and allowing for his removal from office.

Dan DeWalt is a musician and woodworker from Southern Vermont who helped author the Newfane impeachment resolution passed in seven Vermont towns in 2006. His latest impeachment drive blogs have been featured on sites like Michael Moore's domain. The Burlington Free Press quoted DeWalt as saying, "The founders wanted impeachment in the hands of the people... They knew there might come a time when the executive branch, the Congress, and even the press fail us. And that's the circumstance we find ourselves in today." DeWalt's

2006 movement has gained much momentum in just a year.

In Bennington, an impeachment resolution was introduced by a Democrat, and seconded by a Republican. However, the impeachment debate made it no further. Town Moderator James Colvin cited a recent Vermont Supreme Court case in stating that talking about impeaching the president was not germane to town meetings. Vermont citizens who wrote to the Bennington Banner on March 9, 2007 had opposing views on this matter. Amelia Silver of Bennington wrote that a small group had decided that concerned citizens could not speak their minds. She wrote, "The notion that a town in Vermont does not belong to a larger world is a dangerous notion. Vermont is part of the United States, and Bennington is in Vermont, and we have the right and obligation to stand for something beyond maple syrup, skiing and apple picking."

Also in print that day, Dave Garrecht of Guilford stated that the media was erroneously reporting that everyone in Vermont was in favor of impeachment resolutions

against President Bush. In his opinion, "Town meetings are being used by activists to leverage their political bias; rights of free speech are being violated, and the media is promoting this abuse of our town meeting democracy."

Local resolutions have no weight in Washington, D.C. However, the "Impeach Bush" movement hopes all of Vermont will vote in its favor and help start similar initiatives across other states. Formal impeachment efforts begin in the House of Representatives. The Burlington Free Press emailed Vermont State Representative Peter Welch (D) to see where he stood on the issue. Welch emailed back from his Washington office that "Vermonters have a proud tradition of speaking out on issues of conscience. I share the sense of urgency to end the war and outrage with this president." Welch has said he remains committed to ending the war and holding Bush accountable for his actions.

It seems the main essence of these resolutions lies in the question of accountability—and the lack of accountability

supporters of the impeachment movement feel that President Bush has towards his citizens and constitution.

According to the Boston Globe, Town Meeting Day dates back to the Civil War era when towns pushed towards the abolishment of slavery. On this day of small-town democracy, many counties passed resolutions to cut war funds, in the hopes of ending the war and bringing home American troops.

Movements similar to those in Vermont have begun in other states, including California, Hawaii, Indiana, Arizona, and Utah. Many web sites have also been pushing the cause, like ImpeachBush.org using slogans such as "Bush lied. Thousands died." The Impeach Bush.org site has nearly one million people registered as having voted in the referendum to impeach President Bush.

In an era when we can all remember the Lewinsky debacle leading to Clinton's impeachment trial, Vermont is now hoping to use constitutional breaches as a cause for the impeachment of G.W. Bush from office.

'New Orleans'

Continued from page 1

Aid, K-mart, and Dollar Trees stand untouched. One day while driving, I stopped at an untouched Taco Bell. For those of you who know me, I have a very bad sense of smell, almost non-existent. The smell of food that has been rotting for 18 months completely overwhelms you.

Dinner at camp was open to the residents. Slowly, fewer and fewer residents had to come by, as now there's a grocery store, and, well, the food at camp isn't gourmet. However, there are still about ten "regulars" who come every night. Our regulars were mostly elderly people and they came because it's the only place where they can all be together in one place. There is no room in any of their trailers for all of them. None of them have moved back into their houses, simply because they don't have the capabilities to do so.

Eating with these residents, talking with them, listening to their stories, leaves you speechless. They have been through so much, and still somehow manage to get up every morning. I brought down lots of film, thinking that I would be constantly taking pictures. At first I was, but then things stopped shocking me, and looked normal. A group of long-termers including myself continued to gut houses, even though officially Habitat was no longer involved.

A regular day meant waking up at 6 am, eating breakfast, and then donning our gear: coveralls, boots, respirators, goggles, hard hats, and gloves. We would be dropped off at the site and begin working. Depending on the number of people we had that week (anywhere between 6 and 9), we could finish a house in two



photo courtesy of Elizabeth Melsheimer

to three days. First we would take out all appliances, careful not to let the fridge leak, then remove all the debris on the floor, clothes, toiletries, pictures, pots and pans, shelves, and mirrors. Then we tore down the black mold-infested drywall, pulled out the insulation, as well as pounded down the ceilings, then began the tedious process of hauling all the mess outside onto the debris pile. Once all of this was done, we would remove all nails from the studs. Then we would gather up all our tools (crowbars, sledge hammers, shovels, brooms, wheelbarrows, axes, and tile scrapers) and wait to be picked up. After a house was gutted, it is up to the homeowners to get their house sprayed to kill any remaining mold spores. Only then are they ready to be rebuilt.

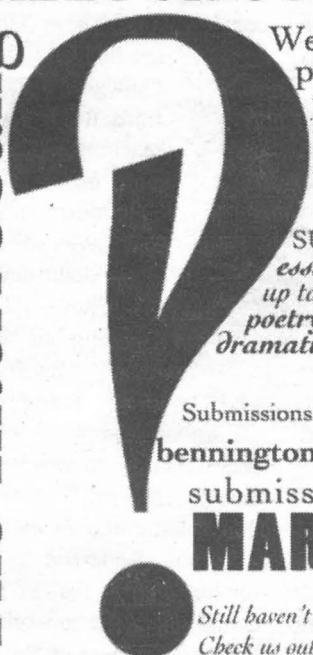
While I was in St. Bernard, there was anywhere between 5 to 24 feet of water, standing for 3 weeks. In some homes we gutted,

there was still a layer of wet mud covering everything.

Rebuilding St. Bernard Parish, the 9th Ward, and other equally effected parishes is a long term project that will need years and years for everything to be returned to what it was before Katrina hit. I think that's something people don't realize, and aren't prepared for. Now more than ever, the residents of the New Orleans area need our continued attention and support. If you are interested in volunteering or otherwise supporting these continuing efforts, start with Common Ground and Acorn (within the 9th Ward), the St. Bernard Project (St. Bernard Parish), Emergency Communities (St. Bernard), as well as Habitat for Humanity (the 9th Ward and St. Bernard).

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Interrobang



We want your prose, poetry, and dramatic writing for issue 2 of Bennington's newest literary magazine

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
essays/creative prose:
up to 10 pages double-spaced
poetry: up to 3 poems
dramatic writing: 5-10 pages

Submissions should be e-mailed to:
benningtoninterrobang@gmail.com
submission deadline:

MARCH 19TH

Still haven't seen issue 1?
Check us out in the Crossett Library!

> feature

Students campaign for global change

BY CLAIBORNE DINGLEDINE

Students for Social Justice, a new student organization, has recently emerged on campus and is actively working to get the Bennington College community involved in global issues of social justice. We are open to any and all ideas for engaging Bennington College in the struggle for social justice and equality. Currently, we are working to open a STAND (a student anti-genocide coalition) chapter which would raise awareness to put a stop to genocide, particularly in the Darfur region of Sudan. STAND will work on many levels to end the genocide; some of the initiatives include encouraging divestment from Sudanese companies, letter writing to Congressmen, and raising awareness.

The SSJ is also becoming a part of the Invisible Children (an organization working to provide aid to displaced children in Uganda) program called Schools for Schools, which

would organize fundraisers to support schools in Uganda for children who have fallen victim to the atrocities of a 20-year civil war. In addition, Displace Me is an event happening throughout the country on April 18th where thousands of Americans will put themselves in an internment camp for 24 hours in an attempt to send the U.S. government a message that America needs to pay attention to what is going on in Northern Uganda, and to support peace talks that would allow the millions of displaced people to return to their home.

In response to the Bush administration's efforts to escalate the Iraq war (and Congress's inability to do anything about it) there will be protests across the nation this weekend to mark the fourth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. A bus has been organized from Bennington to NYC on Sunday for the protest (see the Students for Social Justice page on the wiki, under "student groups," for details). In addition, we are currently working on an

anti-recruitment program that would potentially send some SSJ people to recruitment sites to set up a table to inform young people about the alternatives to the military (scholarships, AmeriCorps, etc.).

There is a lot of great stuff to be done, and we can use all the help we can get. If you are interested in checking it out, feel free to come to a meeting. They are every Monday at 12:45pm in the Student Center (back behind the weird purple dome).

I will leave you with a few inspiring words:

"The only institution in the world today that is more powerful than American government is American civil society." - Arundhati Roy

"States are not moral agents, people are, and can impose moral standards on powerful institutions." - Noam Chomsky

"Thou shalt not be a victim. Thou shalt not be a perpetrator. Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander." - Holocaust Museum, Washington D.C.

Bush goes south

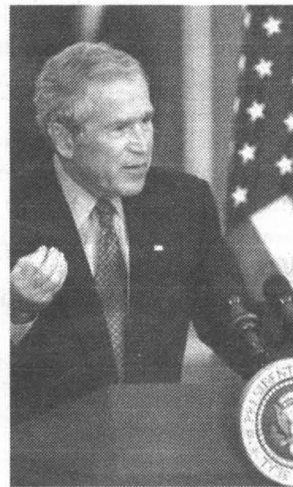
BY BRIAN MORRICE

President Bush went on a tour of Central and South America this past week to boost relations, which have soured during his tenure as president, and to promote trade. He has been met by massive and sometimes violent protest. Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez has been on a counter tour of the region which has seen him giving stinging criticism of President Bush as well as the U.S.

The trip started in Brazil, where the president signed a deal promoting the biofuel, ethanol. President Bush said the deal would help the securities, economies, and environments of both nations. He was met by approximately 5,000

go home!" drawing large response from the crowds. The Venezuelan president also called capitalism "the road to hell." President Chavez proceeded to make statements comparing Bush to Hitler: "The imperialist, genocidal, fascist attitude of the US president has no limits. I think Hitler would be like a suckling baby next to George W. Bush."

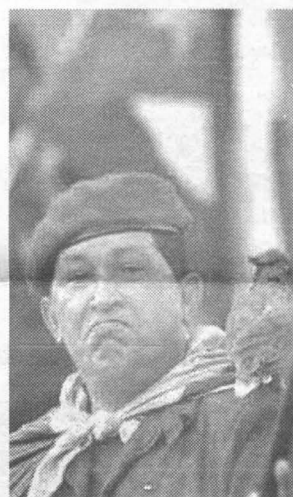
In Columbia, Bush arrived in a show of support for the government's fight against an insurgency. President Bush and President Alvaro Uribe were also to discuss free trade agreements. Just like Brazil and Uruguay, he was met by large protest. Bush has also been promoting US aid in the region, insisting the United States



George W. Bush

is a positive influence on the Americas. President Chavez has pointed to increased Venezuelan aid at a time when the US is reducing contributions. President Bush has refused to answer questions on Chavez, or even speak his name.

The six-day tour continued to Guatemala, where the president toured American-funded social welfare projects and stressed that



Hugo Chavez

the U.S. was a compassionate nation. The final stop was Mexico, where immigration and drugs were at the top of the agenda. The president returned to Washington on Wednesday.

some criticized the deal as promoting the continued deforestation of the Amazon. Bush's next stop was Uruguay, where he met with President Tabare Vazquez to promote trade. Uruguay would like to sign free trade deals with the United States.

Meanwhile, Hugo Chavez was across the river in Argentina with strong rhetoric against Bush and the U.S. He called Bush a political corpse and railed against US domination. He also shouted things like "Gringo,

What is SEPC, Sarah McAbee?

BY SARAH MCABEE
Voices Editor

Snakes Eat People's Children? Sarah Expects Perfect Cartwheels? Strippers, Ecstasy, Porno, and Cash? Sixteen Elephants Playing Cards? Self-Effacing Party Chicks? Somewhat Educational Plastic Cats? Some Educated People Collaborating?

Sort of. SEPC, or the Student Educational Policies Committee, is a student organization that represents and communicates with students on issues of academic life at Bennington. Each year, the community elects two representatives for each academic discipline, and those two representatives then serve

as liaisons between students, faculty members, and the administration.

As a group, SEPC also includes the Class Representatives that each course elects at the beginning of a term. Those Class Reps, as well as the Discipline Representatives, can handle all aspects of the educational experience, including mediating discussions with faculty members, communicating issues to faculty and administrators, and carrying out the class evaluations at mid-term and the end of term.

Those discussions and evaluations are some of the most important parts of the SEPC process, and the parts that each student at Bennington can have.

Each individual evaluation written at the end of a class is reviewed by administrators and used by the Faculty Performance Review Committee (FPRC) to aid in the process of reviewing and re-hiring faculty members. Each form is read, and each form is important.

The Discipline Representatives of SEPC are responsible for overseeing what goes on in their discipline, including gatherings (Music Workshop, Literature Gathering, Drama Forum) and events.

Check out the SEPC wiki at wiki.bennington.edu for discipline updates, places to ask questions, and information about new academic issues.

Switch to plastic

BY REID GINOZA
News Editor

"This week the COLTs have been picking up your paper cup trash, you'll be seeing it again soon..." announced the Community Outreach Leadership Team during the week of February 28th, the first full week of term. The next week, the COLTs created a display in the Commons Lounge with 478 used paper coffee cups. This display covered areas of the floor and tables with towers, pyramids and other arrangements of used coffee cups pulled from the Barn garbage containers over a regular five-day school week.

"It seemed like a waste of new cups," said sophomore Dorothy Allen, of her initial reaction. "After reading the statement, and after I saw the details, I thought it was a really effective way to address the issue on campus. They didn't just tell you not to use coffee cups, they said 'You're all visual learners, here you go!'"

The statement Allen referred to read: "If this display of smelly, rotting garbage strikes you as

disgusting, think about how much of it we create in a whole term, and over the course of our whole lives... think about how little we consider the serious environmental ramifications of the incidental conveniences we take for granted. Which is more disgusting?"

For a "less wasteful alternative," COLT is now offering plastic, American-made, dishwasher-safe travel mugs, decorated with a picture of The End of the World. Made by 4imprint, a company that advertises an "ethically made" and "sustainably made" process, these mugs will cost seven dollars plus sales tax in the Bennington College Bookstore and the Student Center. Bringing this mug to the Student center will give you a coffee or fountain soda for 50 cents instead of the regular price of \$1.

The COLT will also receive a small portion of the proceeds, which will help fund environmental, political, and social action programming on campus. Current COLT members are Jessica Alatorre, Ashley

Davis, and Rosemary Melia. This project started last term, when Emily O'Brien was in the position Melia filled. The Environmental Initiatives Committee (EIC) was also involved. Over Field Work Term, Dean of Students Eva Chatterjee-Sutton and Assistant Director of Student Life Billy Ulmer, as advisors to the COLT, worked on the project to have the mugs ready by the spring term. Dean of Admissions Ken Himmelman has also ordered mugs as a gift for the incoming class.

The End of the World photo was provided by the Communications Office photo archives. In upcoming years, there will be a design contest, and throughout their time at Bennington, students can collect different mugs for every year on campus.

Paper coffee cups are still being used, but the imagery of the display has not disappeared. One cup pyramid still remains in the Commons Lounge. And Allen pointed out, "Every time I pick up a paper cup, I think of that display."



Waste

photo by Anna Mudd

Humanizing fear

BY KARA BLOOMGARDEN-SMOKE
Managing Editor

"I had a dream twenty years ago that I wrote a book about my sister," said Allen Shawn. "In some ways this is that book."

In *Wish I Could Be There: Notes on a Phobic Life*, Shawn has written an intensely personal book wherein he explores his phobias and the idea of phobia itself.

This exploration takes him to recount his family history, which, as Shawn is the son of legendary *New Yorker* editor William Shawn, is in some ways already very well known. Shawn writes about his father's now-publicized "second love relationship outside his marriage" and his father's own phobias. However, he often keeps details vague or omits more private facts when they do not directly relate to his fears.

"I did everything I could to keep my personal life an abstraction," said Shawn. He purposely only mentioned the *New Yorker* by name in the forward. "I knew that if I had used the *New Yorker* by name in the body of the book, it would have been the end," he said.

Shawn writes a lot about his twin sister, Mary, who is autistic and was sent to a special home when they were eight. Mary's departure had a large effect on his life, and he explores how his phobias parallel his sister's condition.

Shawn was careful to protect himself and those close to him even as he disclosed extremely intimate details. "There is an icky line that I did not want to cross, I wanted to maintain my dignity even when talking about the undignified subject of fear."

The other half of the book, which is interspersed with the self-revelatory sections, is a psychological and scientific inquiry into the nature of fear. These were the harder sections to write. The memories just poured out and were relatively straight forward, whereas the scientific and psychological parts required a tremendous amount of research into subjects which, he said, he had no expertise.

"I felt as if I was on two paths simultaneously, and it was hard to bridge the two," said Shawn. "But at a certain point I felt that the two paths merged into one and it was as good as it could be."

Shawn has received a tremendous amount of media attention, which, when asked if he had anticipated it, he replied "God, no," explaining that it is

impossible to predict and, due to the personal nature of the subject, he especially lacked perspective.

Shawn credits the adventurous atmosphere at Bennington with encouraging him to write. When he told Elizabeth Coleman that he was beginning this book, she was very encouraging and appreciative of the subtlety of his ambiguous subject. The book itself has sections where he draws on conversation he had with different faculty members, and he thanks both Chris Miller and Oceana Wilson in his acknowledgments.

Miller helped Shawn track down poems when he remembered only a line and printed the Hiroshima issue of the *New Yorker*, among many other kindnesses, Shawn said.

Wilson helped Shawn research and read the manuscript as someone who doesn't know him as well. This helped Shawn gain a sense of how his writing was doing.

It was hard to answer students' questions about his book while he was working on it because, Shawn said, "I didn't want to burden my students." Once there was a book to talk about, he said, it got easier.

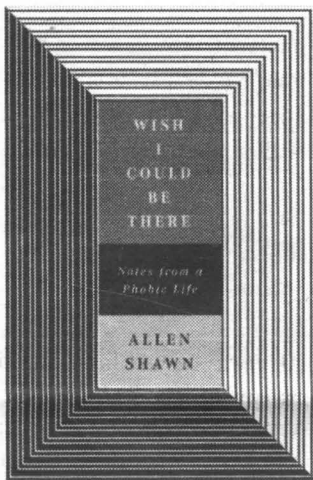
Last fall term, Shawn read from his book at a literature gathering, and it was a revelation for him to see so many interested and supportive students who saw it as literature and related to the subject, he said.

"As a fifty-eight year-old, it was weird to talk to my students about myself at five," he said. He also said this was a weird topic with his own children, who are both college-aged.

His first book, a biography of composer Arnold Schoenberg, came out when he was fifty. Although Shawn experimented with writing as a young child, he gave it up when he became associated with music at an early age. He sees this as a lesson for his students that one never knows what interests will end up being pursued.

Shawn does not like being a "poster-child for phobias" he knew what he was signing up for. However, the aim of his book was to explore his problems in a way which others are able to connect to.

"I was keen on giving voice to types of pain that people experience but are ashamed of," said Shawn. "Most of the time we get scared for good reason, but when we get scared for no reason is the subject of my book."



Allen Shawn Photo by Anna Mudd



Hitler and Riefenstahl.

Bach reconsiders Hitler's filmmaker

BY EMILY HOGUE

Steven Bach makes it clear that he is "not opposed to propaganda." He is, however, "committed to the notion that you should call it by its proper name." In his new book, *Leni: The Life and Work of Leni Riefenstahl*, Bach shows this commitment and decidedly calls propaganda "propaganda." However, he does not only focus on the films that Riefenstahl produced and directed for Hitler's Third Reich, but also at the epic life she led, before and after Nazi Germany.

Riefenstahl died at the age of 101 in 2003. By this time, World War II had been over for 58 years. Never once in that time did Riefenstahl apologize for what she had created. When speaking about this, Bach gives a quotation from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, a book that Riefenstahl most likely knew well—"Propaganda is a means to an end and must therefore be judged by its end." If one were to apply this to Leni Riefenstahl, which Bach does, it equates to "a kind of metaphorical blood on her hands."

Riefenstahl's best-known work *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*), a documentary about the 1934 Nazi Party Congress that took place in Nuremberg, and *Olympia*, a documentary about the 1936 Olympics. In Bach's words, she was given "carte blanche from Hitler himself," because she was given whatever resources she needed to complete the filming and editing. "She never had to observe a budget," says Bach. Because of this, the cost of her films was as unimportant to her as what happened to the Gypsies that she used as extras.

She is quoted by Bach as saying, "Nothing happened to my Gypsies," but Bach reveals that when her cast lists were checked against Nazi concentration camp records, the names of her extras

are right there along with the rest of the names of the dead. Bach says that when she was asked to make a public statement about this instance to defend herself from charges of Holocaust denial, all she said was, "I regret that Gypsies suffered under Democratic Socialism." She did

going on politically. She was apolitical... or it was somehow too vulgar of a subject for her to wrap her mind around while she was busy creating."

When asked if he thinks Riefenstahl worked on her films as an artist creating art for art's sake, Bach says, "Either she was a total dodo who didn't get what was going on in front of her face... or she was an intelligent, creative woman who got it." He is obviously under the impression that she "got it," and expresses this in his book.

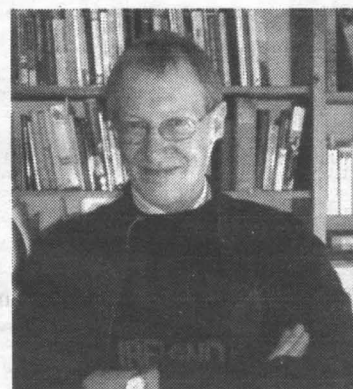
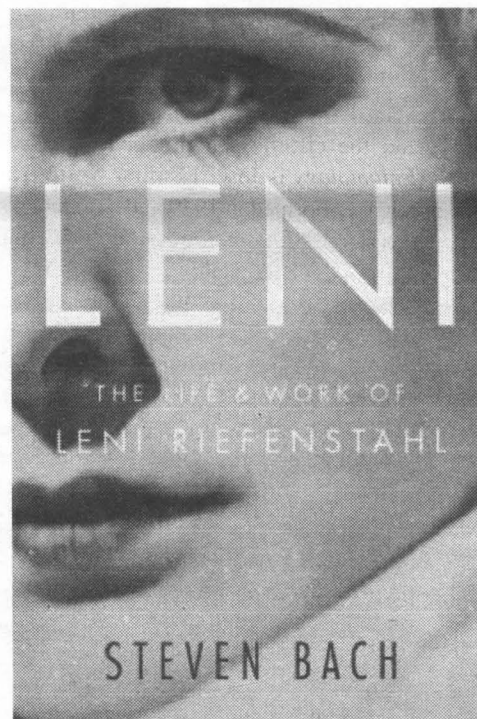
However, Bach wants to make it known that his "point is not to bury Leni Riefenstahl, it's just to say: 'Look. Let's get real about this woman and about her films...and, as a slightly larger topic, let's think about...our moral response to films, and the filmmaker's moral obligations, if any.'"

Bach does not want to sound "preachy" with that statement, he simply wants to awaken thought in his reader's minds. In Donna Seaman's Booklist review of *Leni*, she writes that the book

asks, among other things, "Is devotion to making art an excuse for moral failings?" When Bach is asked this question, he makes the comment that it is not a question he intends to answer in his book, it is an answer he wants readers to ask themselves.

When asked what he would want a Bennington student to take from his book, Bach laughed and said, "I haven't the faintest idea." After some thought, he decided to say that the book is something of a "cautionary tale about ambition and art." After reflecting some more, he added: "You can be an artist and still be a shit. On the very crudest level, that's what's going on."

Leni: The Life and Work of Leni Riefenstahl is due to be released on March 13th, 2007. Bach is now working on another book, but he does not want to reveal its subject, due to superstition.



Steven Bach Photo by Anna Mudd

not apologize.

Riefenstahl apparently said two things over and over again about her films. She would say, "Beauty was all I was looking for" and "Of what am I guilty?" According to Bach, she never once made any semblance of an apology, and evidently this is because she thought she had nothing for which she had to apologize. Bach remarks, "Riefenstahl adopted a pose that lasted until she died at 101... that she was simply too artistic to have known what was

Album Reviews

BY LUNA GALASSINI
Music Editor

SWAN LAKE

Beast Moans (Jagjaguwar)



An indie rock supergroup comprising members of Frog Eyes, Destroyer and Wolf Parade, Swan Lake oscillates between brilliant and blundering. Album opener "Widow's Walk" demonstrates the former with gorgeous harmonic contour reminiscent of another Wolf Parade side project, Sunset Rubdown. Meanwhile, the album reaches its low-point in the impossibly trite "The Freedom" – but fortunately, it does not stay there long. Much of *Beast Moans* is pleasant, well-produced pop, but its moments of breathtaking beauty

are often overshadowed by its numerous missed opportunities.

LILY ALLEN

Alright, Still... (Capitol)



Initial skepticism of Lily Allen may be warranted – her showbiz parents, fairytale discovery on MySpace and sudden rocket to fame based on bad-mouthing Pete Doherty seem telltale signs of a talentless coquette. On the contrary, *Alright, Still...* delivers on most of Allen's MySpace promises: it's heavy on wit, English slang and musical references to ska, punk, and soul. Allen looks fit to be Mike Skinner's female counterpart – her only flaw may be that she knows it.

JOSEF K

Entomology (Domino)

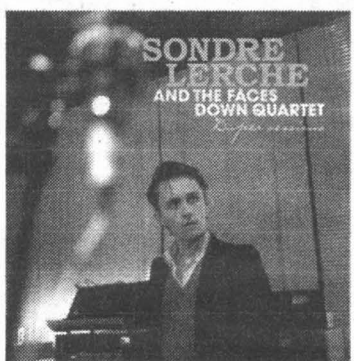


Josef K may be old news for the resourceful and the effortlessly hip, but for most of us *Entomology* is Josef K's first North American release. Formed in 1979 and disbanded shortly thereafter, *Entomology* compiles much of Josef K's small catalogue. Close affinity with their contemporaries is clear – recalling Joy Division's nervous energy, the choppy guitar riffs of the Gang of Four, the gentle brogue of Orange Juice-esque vocals. More than mere imitation, *Entomology* demonstrates the depth

of the era, and its inclusion in any collection next to its contemporaries is not just desirable, but essential.

SONDRE LERCHE & THE FACES DOWN

Phantom Punch (Astralwerks)

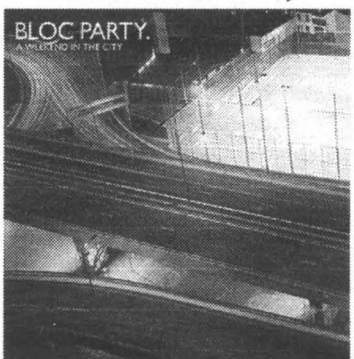


While it seems that The Faces Down and The Faces Down Quartet of Sondre Lerche's last album, *The Duper Sessions*, ought to have something in common, *Phantom Punch* proves just how important one word can be. It plays like an antidote to Lerche's last effort, self-conscious jazz arrangements here replaced by straight-ahead power pop. Even much of the subtle bossanova influence typical of Lerche's songwriting is supplanted in favor of electric guitars and bopping rhythms. Luckily, Lerche is capable of just this kind of versatility; his

deft pop sensibility and playful lyrics are stunning as ever. But another listen to *The Duper Sessions* may be in order, as the contrast can do both albums nothing but good.

BLOC PARTY

A Weekend In The City (Wichita)

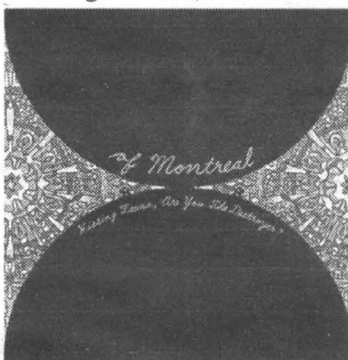


It's been a downhill slide for Bloc Party since their first EP. The strength of their songwriting lies in the texture of careening post-punk guitars and vocal layers less akin to singing than shouting – but at some point, somebody realized they could be pop stars. Like their debut effort, *Silent Alarm*, this sophomore outing showcases Kele Okereke's keening vocals and cringe-inducing lyrics, while any emotional or sonic complexity is battered out of them by predictable dance beats. Unfortunately, with this album Bloc Party doom themselves to

background noise at not-very-good parties.

OF MONTREAL

Hissing Fauna, Are You the Destroyer? (Polyvinyl)



Trading in twee storytelling for screwball synth-driven anthems may be the best move Of Montreal has ever made. While enough bounce and eccentricity remain on *Hissing Fauna* to recall its numerous predecessors, Of Montreal's latest effort proves them faster, smarter and more coherent than ever before. Old fans should be pleasantly surprised to find new members among their ranks, drawn in by the sing-along struggles with chemicals, faggy girls and Georges Bataille.

CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH

Some Loud Thunder (Wichita)



Some Loud Thunder could be an indie rock *Now That's What I Call Music* compilation – in this case, Beyonce is replaced by a robot voice, Gwen Stefani with an accordion showcase, Jay-Z with clumsy lo-fi production values and Kelly Clarkson by predictable populist hand claps. Every contemporary cliché finds its way into *Some Loud Thunder*, and while its faults may be in arrangements appropriate to a hipster time capsule, the

songs stand up to this treatment – they may not be timeless, but they are solid, seductive and at times deeply haunting.

CLINIC

Visitations (Domino)



At their best, Clinic are derivative – the energy of The Fall and the texture of The Velvet Underground, organ riffs reminiscent of the best of the *Nuggets* comps, Can's noise and Suicide's vocal tremors are all ubiquitous on *Visitations*. The album's sole flaw is its interchangeability with Clinic's previous three albums – this is less a "new" album than "another" album, and the band have not yet figured out how to maintain their novelty for the duration of the disc. Still, taken in small doses, the album reveals flashes of brilliance

worthy of their innumerable mentors.

JOHN ZORN

Astronome (Tzadik)

Players: Mike Patton (voice), Trevor Dunn (bass), Joey Baron (drums)



REVIEW BY JON GRUSAUSKAS

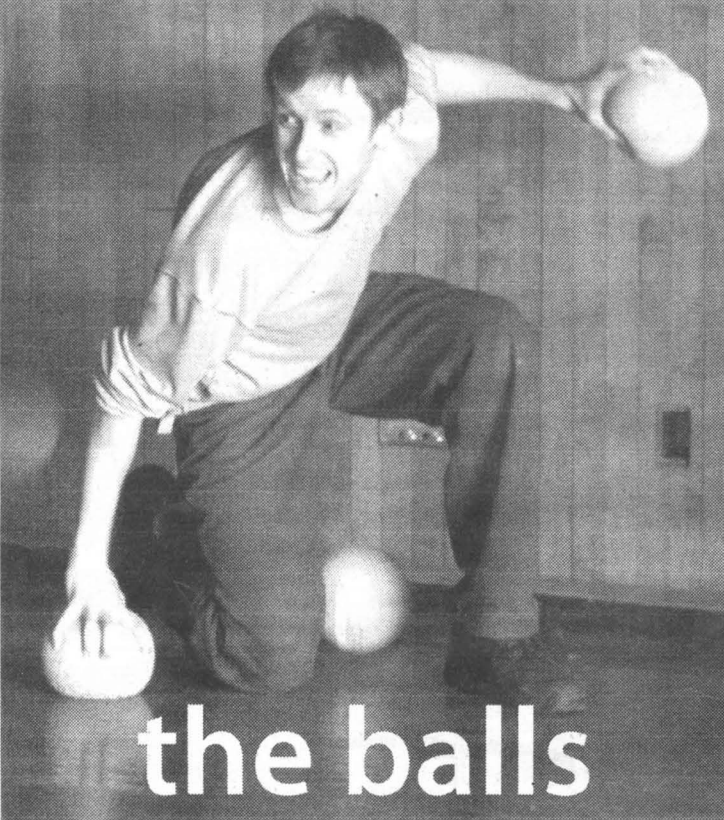
Upon first listen, this album may strike a listener as borderline disturbing due to the uncomfortably adventurous improvisation, or the gurgling esophagus effects of vocalist Mike Patton. Upon second listen, however, the naked honesty of Patton's vocal delivery is as crushing as the mammoth fuzz of Trevor Dunn's bass, which at points snarls and barks like an instrument of electrocution. The genuine dynamic variety and complexity of the piece beckons for the listener's full and

thoughtful attention. John Zorn's musical wizardry is ever-present on this recording, which contains a thought-provoking storyline arrangement meant to be performed as an opera.

Some might dub this album as Zorn's exploration into prog-rock or proto-metal based on some overwhelmingly aggressive and violently distorted odd-meter passages. However, the players on this album and the intentions behind Zorn's musical alchemy truly defy the laws of tradition. While these hectic passages may be the most memorable, tamer rhythms often find their way into the mix as dually expressive parts of Zorn's ever-changing fairytale. Such a wide array of musical territory is explored, from the beautifully unorthodox grooves that Zorn and his behemoth trio stumble into, to the moments when the haunting aggression subsides and a backdrop of washing and squeaking cymbals forms a beautiful collage with wrenching, undistorted bass harmonies.

The instrumentalists are in no way playing to a standard, and they can only be pinned down with a few of the broadest terms, like "experimental," or "improvisational" (although structured parts executed in unison are often) – and those familiar with

Battle of



BY CATHY MCGATH

According to the Princeton Review for 2007, Bennington College has regained its spot at number one on the list of "Dodgeball Targets," but a group of eight strapping young men is about to change this misconception by competing in the Vermont Intercollegiate Dodgeball Tournament on Saturday, March 17 at Johnson State College.

When Student Life received the invitation to the tournament, which was sent to all colleges in Vermont, they contacted the heads of intramurals—Sam Clement and Matt Hanna—to see if they would be interested, and indeed they were. Apparently, Sam set up a team in less than ten minutes. Geoff Otis, Sean Ring,

Tristram Savage, Dylan Shad, Tom Shoemaker, and Trevor Wilson are led by co-captains Sam and Matt to prove the Princeton Review wrong. Regarding the naming of the team, members initially thought the "Bennington Bullseyes"—inspired by the Princeton Review's rating—was a perfect name, but in the end they settled on the Pioneers, like the school's soccer team. Yes, we have a soccer team and they are the Bennington Pioneers. "After all," says co-captain Matt Hanna, "we're pioneering dodgeball at Bennington College. No one before us at Bennington has ever participated in the Vermont Intercollegiate Dodgeball Tournament."

The team has been training intensely with a main focus on catching the ball. They had

originally thought of using medicine balls for practice but decided that would be more harmful than helpful. During training, the team draws inspiration from the movie *Dodgeball* by incessantly declaring "If you can dodge a wrench, you can dodge a ball", though they have not yet incorporated wrenches into their practice sessions for unknown reasons. Clearly, as Tom Shoemaker states, they're "really being very serious about this" and the blisters covering the bottom of his feet can prove it.

As the day of reckoning approaches, some of the team members are becoming a bit anxious. There are fears that "the other teams will be bigger than us". Another concern of the team is the abilities of essential player Geoff Otis. All of his power allegedly comes from his cigarettes, but in this dodgeball tournament—unlike the games out on Commons Lawn—Otis will not be able to smoke during the game. The team hopes that he will have the opportunity to chain smoke before the tournament begins in order to harness all of his power.

Of course, there is also a general fervor and excitement among the members. Many are like Hanna, who ever since he was a young boy "dreamed of winning the prestigious Vermont Intercollegiate Dodgeball Tournament trophy." He hopes to be able to one day sit his grandchildren and great-grandchildren upon his knees and tell them the tale of the great Bennington Pioneers winning first place at the Vermont Intercollegiate Dodgeball Tournament.

After days of practice, the final test is here, and we wish our Pioneers the best of luck to go and "win that tournament on Saturday, maybe."

Student council proactive not reactive

BY KATHRYN FURBY
Features Editor

In fall of 2006, despite the limited access allowed in the Bennington College game room, over 1000 dollars of damage was incurred. The administration hoped to open the game room for twenty-four hour availability; however, even at \$46,000 a year, it is impossible to support such expensive "wear and tear." To compromise, the administration has suggested a video feed. The room would be under constant, not live, taped surveillance. The tape will be reviewed only if damaged is sustained, as a way to hold perpetrators accountable, and not charge the student body. If in reviewing a tape, unrelated improper behaviour is found, the offenders will be held accountable. This potentially controversial issue was proposed by Dean of Students, Eva Chatterjee-Sutton in the Student Council meeting this Thursday. The newly reformed governing body is moving toward a more proactive, less reactionary role on Bennington issues.

As it currently stands, the committee consists of Head of Student Council Josh Nagle, Secretary Lydia Brassard, and two representatives from each house on campus. A Treasurer (once funding is available) and a Freshman-at-Large position will be added in the future. The bylaws were finalized this week and are posted on the Bennington wiki page.

Student Council is presently preoccupied with analyzing effective methods for distributing information throughout campus. They are interested in breaking down the barriers between faculty, administration and students and creating an integrated network channel. To accomplish this, Student Council will post their minutes on the wiki, post issues on a physical message board that will be displayed on campus, and use each member to discuss and inform during Coffee Hour. Nagle acknowledged that obstructions between faculty, administration, and students prevent information flow and he is looking to use Student Council to break down the barriers and transmit information directly to the students.

Below is Student Council's own definition of their role on campus:

A student group voted in by the greater student body (2 representatives per house) to represent, listen, and respond to their interests. Our goal as a student organization is to promote a quality of life that accentuates the roles of individuals within a greater community made up of students, faculty, administration, and staff. We hope to bring connectedness to the different bodies on the Bennington College campus via information networks. These networks (in conjunction with existing networks) will allow an easy flow of information between the bodies on campus.

Radio station resuscitated?

BY LUNA GALASSINI
Music Editor

All that remains of Bennington's former broadcast radio station is a small studio, its single window overlooking the lawn from the condemned third floor of Commons. There are a few shelves with a few records, a mixing board, a microphone, a turntable, a beat-up couch. Then there are the boxes of unsorted CDs, a handmade children's book recounting the adventures of a magical donkey, a few playlist forms and a broadcast schedule circa 2003. The walls are covered in writing, perhaps the strangest of which occupies the doorframe: "Daly Clement is a happening mongoose."

This was my introduction to radio in the fall of 2004. Then, WHIP was still a loosely defined campus club, though funding was a slim prospect and broadcasting even slimmer, due primarily to student apathy and mismanagement. The transmitter still worked, our CMJ subscription

ensured a regular if not thrilling influx of new music, and the space was available for anyone willing to use it. But shortly thereafter, WHIP's manager took off—and took much of the station's equipment with him.

A year later, fresh from both Field Work Term and a summer spent working in college radio, I went to Student Life with the intention of reviving this oft-maligned student venture. Though I was armed with a seven-point plan of action, it was immediately clear that this was irrelevant. The space was off-limits unless significant student interest was somehow demonstrated, and even then, Bennington wasn't interested in a broadcast station—supposedly, podcasting was set to replace it.

But in spring 2006, faculty member Julie Last submitted a proposal to Student Life which incorporated both broadcasting and podcasting, posited the numerous ways in which a radio station of some kind could benefit the Bennington community, and suggested only the most basic

requirements: a space to work and a computer. Last says she was told that "nobody wants [a radio station]" and was denied access to the existing space, though she acknowledges that the administration's trepidation is partly due to the station's "past dysfunction."

While Last continued to develop plans for a radio station largely on her own, students Will Lulofs, Michael Nordine and Kyle Schroeder went to Student Life last fall with their own ideas about radio. Again the issue of space was a primary concern, again the broadcasting equipment was off-limits—but in this case, the latter was irrelevant. Their plans involved strictly streaming and podcasting, and though Student Life again seemed resistant to the idea, a funding proposal was drawn up, the station's new home in the Fels quad was approved, Adam Freed donated a computer, and Devin Gaffney offered to host the website. Though Schroeder insists that, above all, this was "a very long process," he expects the station to be up and running

within the month.

What is baffling about this ordeal is not the administration's hesitancy to fund a station in light of so-called "past dysfunction," nor its refusal of access to a condemned space, but rather the fact that neither Schroeder nor Last were aware of each other's efforts until these last few weeks. As a result, the two potential stations are running on parallel courses and the prospect of merger is, as yet, merely one of myriad possible outcomes. Schroeder is committed to keeping Bennington radio student-run, though he welcomes faculty support and recognizes its necessity. Last maintains hope that a broadcast station could succeed, while Schroeder says that even if broadcasting were possible, "We wouldn't do it. How many people even have a radio in their rooms?"

Still, the two stations are largely running on the same course. Last hopes to archive performances by Bennington students and air work from her radio production class, in addition to traditional

DJed music shows. Schroeder has suggested interviews and live sets with visiting bands, as well as DJ sets, comedy and news spots (though no campus paper has been officially associated with the station). A one-stop web archive for all of these things, should they come to fruition, seems almost inevitable.

Finally, the supposed apathy of the student body, so evident in my first year here, was perhaps overblown by both the administration and upperclassmen. The arrival of so many new students in the last two years, unaware of WHIP's past failings, seems to have erased much of the skepticism about radio—both Last and Schroeder reported that student reaction has been largely enthusiastic. Even though, for the moment, the gossip-ridden graffiti of WHIP's former studio, its donkey fairytale and its out-of-date equipment look lost forever, radio at Bennington most certainly is not.

'Quest'

Continued from page 4

students answer their Question.

Beyond the structure itself, though, courses will aim to integrate knowledge through multiple disciplines. Van Brummelen is working on an initiative called Quantitative Reasoning Across the Curriculum. This will place mathematical thinking into appropriate and meaningful contexts throughout the Foundation Program.

This is vastly different from programs centered around the major at other Canadian universities, which are large state universities or religious institutions. Aarti Rana is an admissions counselor for Quest. Her job, along with four other counselors in Canada and internationally, is to find the first class of 160 students for Quest University.

Most undergraduate programs in Canada ask for Grade 12 grades and post a clear cut-off acceptance point. "We're introducing a model that doesn't exist in Canada," said Rana. Quest upholds a holistic admissions process that with no set guidelines—practically unheard of in Canada. Because the admissions process is relatively simple at other Canadian universities, Quest still receives applications in March, much later than the institutions in the United States.

"Having lived a liberal arts education [at Bennington], I can talk actually talk to students about it," said Rana. "I'm a Canadian and I couldn't find a school for me in Canada. Quest will resonate with certain people the way Bennington resonated with me." There are distinct differences: Bennington's curriculum has been informed by the arts, while Quest is making sure that science is integrated in the curriculum.

Ultimately, Quest graduates should become leaders of discussions between the specialists produced at other institutions. "Of course you have to have some specialization, but this is not about specialization. This is about why the specializations are important," said David W. Strangway, Ph.D., O.C. (Officer of the Order of Canada), Founder and CEO of Quest University Canada.

However innovative, designing a curriculum, will not bring a university to existence by itself. Stewart Blusson, co-discoverer of the Ekati Diamond Mine, and his wife Marilyn Blusson through their private foundation provided a donation to Quest to ensure that campus construction is paid for. Thankfully, students will not have to pay for the construction in tuition fees.

Yet, Rana still faces the challenge of selling a school that does not yet have students or completed buildings. Construction of Phase I is slated to be finished before the first students arrive in September. This includes the University Services Building, where the dining hall and a multipurpose room are located, the Library/Parkade/Utilidor, and the Academic Building.

The Parkade, a design many schools want to convert to, will allow loading and unloading as well as parking for all buildings to occur underground, away from the pedestrian-oriented campus. To adhere to "green technology," the Library and Academic buildings also use a geothermal system for heating and cooling through their floors.

The design of the academic building will allow no more than twenty students per class. Each classroom has a round mobile table that can be taken apart into six smaller pieces. The chairs also have wheels to accommodate different classroom arrangements. Around the classrooms will also be breakout rooms, where students in small groups can work together. Each entering class, like the first, will have 160 students.

Unlike traditional schedules, Quest will run on the Block Plan, modeled after institutions such as Colorado College and Cornell University. Students will take four courses a term, but courses will occur in succession rather than in parallel, each lasting three-and-a-half weeks. Classes occur every weekday for three hours, which may remain one three hour length, or two 90 minute sections.

A Learning Commons will also be available. The coordinator will work closely with the faculty to design curriculum across courses and aid students through their courses. The Learning Commons will also help students maintain their eQuest Portfolio, an electronic file that documents their academic work at Quest.

Although Quest University's curriculum is novel, especially in Canada, the school has received the interest of many including graduate schools in science, law, business, art and design, in Canada as well as in the United States, China, and Germany; the business community including the Council of Canadian Chief Executives; and other support both in Canada and internationally.

Besides Van Brummelen, the faculty consists of a life sciences coordinator, a physical sciences coordinator, a humanities coordinator, a social science coordinator, a religion tutor, a visiting astronomy tutor, and a history of art and architecture tutor. Joining the team soon will be an ecology tutor, an economics tutor, an anthropology tutor, a history tutor, and a physics tutor.

As a new institution, Quest University Canada has many challenges ahead. Its first class will arrive in six months, and the world will be watching. Glen Van Brummelen, Aarti Rana, and the entire Quest University team have asked their Questions and are discovering their answers. This leaves just one more question: "What is your Quest?"

For more information, please visit Quest University Canada's website at <http://www.questu.ca>.

'Busch'

Continued from page 1

glowing during sunset as it wrestled with barbed wire. He described how "wire will be used for farms and borders long after we leave... The bags, like us, will be torn away." Each place Busch spoke of, he later said had been destroyed.

The places and things Busch photographed in Iraq were fleeting and transient. As he captured the image, its reality was destroyed behind him. His photos showed cartoons that would not be there tomorrow, evidence that would be damaged, homes that would be destroyed, and images that were evolving and dissolving. Then, he explained, the dust was sure to follow, leaving everything the same flat tan color.

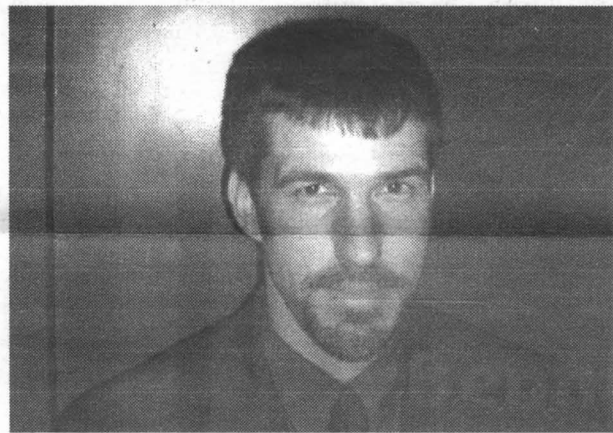
Busch's studio and art history past was evident as he referenced Caravaggio and cave paintings in relation to his own work, though his most obvious artistic questioning came from his deep fascination with composition within a frame. He explained how the artist's eye and, indeed, the soldier's eye, could play the same important function—making everything that moves in the frame important. At the same time, Busch was very clearly aware of what he chose to leave outside the frame. As a photographer, Busch described how the rectangle confines us to a shot; in his photograph of a group of men holding up pictures of lost loved ones the viewer sees just that—as Busch detailed how he intentionally left out the evidence of starvation in their bones and ankles, so as to not change the meaning on why these men wanted their photograph taken.



"Disappeared," a photo by Benjamin Busch.

his fellow Marines perceive his photography, and he commented that often they recognize the context of the photos as portraits of place, but not the images themselves, as they were the things "no one else noticed."

Throughout the slideshow,



Ben Busch

photo by Anna Mudd

the audience witnessed many pictures of Busch's fellow troop member, John. The last picture of Busch's lecture showed a tank that had been hit and caught fire, and he described how Marines abandoned the scene. To the side of the tank, however, is a black tarp which, Busch said, covered what was left of John. This is the one photograph he never gives out because, as he said, "it's personal, and it should be." He went on to explain that although the show

is entitled *The Art in War*, this photograph represented what it means to be a Marine.

In an audience where most had not been to war, one person asked, "So what did you actually do out there?" Busch began by first saying that time was irrelevant in Iraq because each moment was about survival, and the minute it passed, it no longer mattered.

He said he knew time had elapsed because "I came back older, and people asked me where I had been." What followed was a barrage of all the seemingly impossible tasks Major Ben had been ordered to complete. He described looking for 10,000 men

against his 150; his orders to "nation-build;" his constant search [and failure] to find weapons of mass destruction; kicking in doors to make room for NATO; and protecting the Polish soldiers so that Poland would not pull out of the Coalition of the Willing, as the Polish Ambassador had said not one casualty would be tolerated. "I would try to produce something from nothing out of the outrageous demands that the people [of Iraq] would have. It would be rubble," recounted Busch. He outlined how soldiers were trying to do the right thing—trying to rebuild schools,

protect towns—and yet he questioned whether any of those things would still be there today.

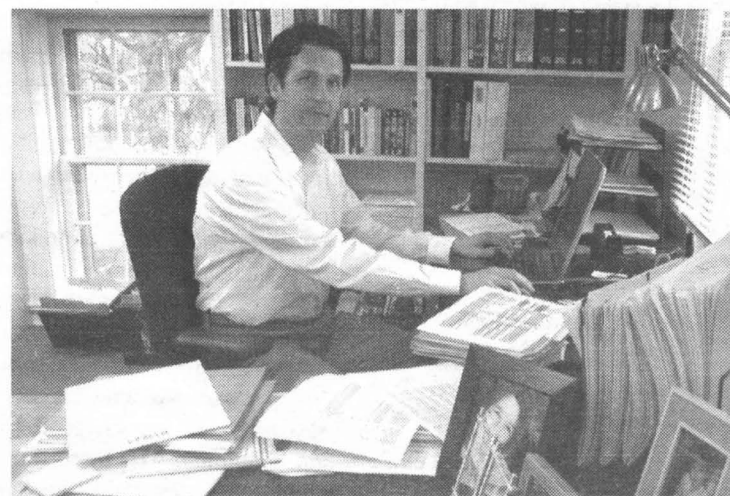
In Bennington's crowded lecture hall stood a man who disagrees with Bennington College's notion of the End of the World. Having captured his own visions of Iraq, he said, "I think that I am done with Iraq. I did what I could; there's nothing there for me now."

'Admissions'

Continued from page 1

Himmelman describes the Bennington applicant pool as "self-selecting." In other words, those who apply to Bennington are, in some way or another, the types of students Bennington is looking for. The College isn't staging any drastic changes in the admissions process, or in the types of students admitted, but the word is obviously spreading more widely about the kind of school Bennington is.

About 80% of admitted students are interviewed, either before or after submitting their applications, which is an important personal aspect of the admissions process. The percentage of admitted students who choose to



Ken Himmelman

photo by Josh Nagle

enroll has fluctuated the last few years, so Himmelman thought it would be hard to predict the exact size of the next freshman class.

The last two incoming classes have had about 130-140 students, but in 2004 Bennington's

incoming class had 201 students. Himmelman explains that the College isn't looking to make any drastic change in overall size, but he expects that the incoming class will be larger than the last two.

> news

Internet outrage causes outbreak of non-electronic "reading"

BY AARON HÉBERT AND JOE HOLT

February 24th, 2007. You might have been supplementing, or supplanting, your actual friendships with e-friendships. You might have been trying to feel better about yourself on your blog. But you couldn't—and not for the usual reasons. The Internet wasn't working right. Strangely, some websites would load, the usual sites: Gmail.com, CNN.com, MustacheMarch.com, et cetera. But websites that were not part of the usual rotation—economist.com, unicef.org, hygiene.com—they wouldn't load for some reason. And that's when we became lost, deeply and emotionally lost. I, for one, turned to my long neglected friend, Leo, and began "War and Piece".

Day two: February 25th, 2007. Running out of water. Left pinky toe/finger looking succulent, moist. Entered Crosset-Library, confused and desperate. Clutched onto computers. No response. I rang the service bell three times until a kind, skinny man with a beard pulled me up from the ground. It was Joe Tucker, the reference services librarian. I asked him if he could email me

some Vitamin Water. "No, Aaron, no," he said, "that time is gone. Shut-up, for Liz's sake. Shutup." I ran upstairs and soiled a Goya book. Bill rescued me three hours later and let me play with his cell phone.

Day three: February 26th, 2007. Much better now, less crazy, less shitzy. Was able to check email. Got one from Wendy, something about buying a book to preserve the integrity of our creative/artistic community. Probably one of those mass emails. Tremors going across body. How will I know the weather without looking at a screen? Back to Leo. It's a good book. Very thematic. Installed a bucket below chin. Non-electronic "reading" creates drool. Email service gone all of the sudden. The horror! The horror!

Day unknown. Baby blue. Bright white. Starched sheets. "We all love you here," someone says. I cannot see them, but the gentle warble of their hall-mark love touches me deeply, with great profundity. Remember that line for blog. A sandy face... glasses... a red sweatshirt. "It's all right," the voice says, "they got that cleaned up back there." But what was he referring to? "It's Joe. Hey." It was the other

Joe, Joe Holt the computer scientist. "Smells a lot better, and our connection to the Internet is fixed."

"What happened?" I asked.

"You were whispering something about extending your social network and, well."

"No, no, the Internet."

"Oh. Right. Right...Well, the problem was with the new Fat Pipe that was installed when the school added its second ISP over Field Work Term. We needed a box to blend the two connections together. Resetting the Fat Pipe off and on made all the problems go away. Like magic. But the reason for the failure is curious. All computers on the internet have unique numbers -- IP addresses -- that are used when they talk to one another. Very much like a phone number. You've seen these numbers before: 12.16.115.34, etc. Early in the development of the Internet the folks with pocket protectors realized it would be more convenient to refer to computers by names such as wikipedia.org and badtattoos.com, so they invented a system that's a lot like the telephone white pages. When you type badtattoos.com into Firefox the first thing it does, before any kind of web

page-related work, is look up the name "badtattoos.com" from this white pages service and get its IP address, which it then must use for all subsequent communications with the website. This looking-up service is called DNS, for Domain Name Service ("domain name" being the technical term for the name part of the entry in the white pages). It's a simple concept: your computer asks a DNS server about a name and the DNS server responds with the IP address. Remember that the Internet was invented in case of nuclear war blowing up a super secret supercomputer. So everything on the Internet, included these white pages, has lots of copies spread out on servers all over, including two on campus.

"This is dragging on, and you're still drooling. The short of it is that the Fat Pipe box for some reason decided to prevent the free flow of DNS traffic to and from the internet to campus. All the other internet traffic worked fine; it was just DNS traffic that it seemed to have blacklisted. As a result, our own DNS servers could no longer ask the rest of the world for names that they didn't have already. That's why some popular websites continued to

work, because their names could be looked up without needing to ask the rest of the Internet, while others wouldn't work. The cool, apocalyptic aspect of this—that I was kind of hoping to see—is that stored domain names have expiration times. Over time, the longer our DNS traffic was shut off, the fewer and fewer web sites would be look-upable on campus. It was the beginning of a wonderful and gradual degradation of service that would probably have led to all kinds of conspiracy theories when the last entry, probably youtube.com, expired.

"Anyway, the Fat Pipe thing is a new piece of hardware and its probably got bugs. So it'll probably act up again, but this problem has been fixed. There are other parts to this story that I skipped over because soccer's about to start on TV. Manchester City v. Blackburn. Should be a good game. And by the way, this is a completely different problem from the Internet connection just being slow. I'll tell you about the evil that is TCP start time delay another time. Wipe off your chin, please."

'Parties'

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to please everyone, they please no one. By trying to appeal to all, they appeal to none. The message gets more and more diluted the more viewpoints you try to incorporate. While some might say trying to incorporate all viewpoints is noble, I would say it's chicken. If this was really about coming to a common understanding, or even just a compromise, I would feel differently about the whole thing. What it's about, instead, is sounding acceptable enough to enough people to get enough votes to get into office.

And this pattern, this long-emerging ultra-P.C.-ness, permeates more than our political culture. In the case of the controversy surrounding these parties, what seems to be happening is we're not allowing the students involved or the community at large a space in which to discuss the reasons they did the things they did, in a constructive way.

A lot of the schools and communities where these parties took place have held forums in which members of the community could express their distaste and get apologies from those involved. Clearly, this may be an important part of the process of clearing the air in the aftermath. But I think by immediately reacting with such violent opposition and disapproval, we're, in many cases, stopping the conversation before it can begin, because this is about more than just some insensitive or clueless privileged white kids throwing an offensively-themed party.

Part of my own reaction is to question how offensive it really is in the first place, and further, why it is offensive. And I think this is

a key piece of the conversation that is being avoided because it's uncomfortable terrain in a culture that is so P.C.

I also have some concerns about where intent factors in to this equation. It's become clear that these kids, like most of us throwing vaguely or very offensive parties, had an intention to make fun of something, but weren't always entirely clear on what they were making fun of. They never meant to cause real harm or seriously offend anyone, and a lot of what motivated them was most likely a wish to play dress-up, to embody a lifestyle and cultural prerogative completely and totally divorced from their own. On some level, it is because white kids aren't supposed to have these parties and act this way that having these parties and acting this way is probably so appealing for them.

Regardless of intent, these parties are still offensive to some. Should we just brush these incidents under the rug with the reasoning that they didn't mean it, or didn't know what they were doing? No. But, like yelling "bad dog" at a naughty canine without making clear what it's done wrong, jumping down these kids' throats about this without clarifying the real core of the issue is mostly pointless. They'll still have the parties; they just won't put pictures up on Facebook next time. If there's a good reason, culturally, why these things shouldn't happen (and I'm skeptical about that), then we should address that, but if yelling at these kids is just a wag of the finger, then why bother?

So now I'll get to the center of it all. Why is it offensive to throw a "gangsta"-themed party, in the first place? It mocks a lifestyle,

and behavioral stereotype associated with that lifestyle, and let's just say it, by default it mocks a race. I say "by default" because while gangs, gangstas, and gangsta-wannabes cross racial and ethnic lines, everyone knows that the people most associated with this lifestyle are blacks and Hispanics. In the same way, while trailer trash is a term that also crosses racial and ethnic lines, when we think it, most of us think white.

Think of it this way: when we make fun of rednecks, are we making fun of white people, or of a certain group of white people? It kind of depends where it's coming from, right? If black people are making fun of rednecks, then it's assumed they're making fun of white people. And if white people are making fun of rednecks, it's assumed they're kind of mocking themselves, but are really talking about a particular stereotype within their own racial group. And somehow that is more okay than when the blacks made fun of it because it's a form of self-deprecation, in a way.

This double-standard is what I have a problem with. I don't advocate that it should be equally acceptable for white people to say "nigger" as it is for black people. But I do think it's a little ridiculous that when I make fun of gangstas, I'm potentially suddenly seen as mocking an entire race just because I'm not part of that race.

I know it's unpopular to make fun of stereotypes, regardless of if they're "yours" or not. The idea is that if you make fun of it, then you allow it to continue on in the cultural lexicon by granting it some validity. This validity apparently comes almost exclusively from the repetition and dissemination of the stereotype, because if you

repeat something often enough (whether it is true or not) then people will catch wind of it and, in many cases, begin to believe it. This simple idea forms the whole basis of gossip, and makes stereotypes similarly infectious.

Now I feel that I'm going to say something unpopular, in addition to my understanding of how stereotypes function.

Stereotypes exist for a reason. Something occurred often enough to make enough sense so that when someone tried to spread an idea, story, or trait, it caught on, and enough people believed it or found that the stereotype rang true.

For example, where I'm from in Arizona, the "dirty Mexican" stereotype of cat-calling, illegal immigrants piled 12-to-a-Chevy who whistle at almost any woman has been able to survive, because most women still experience this on a daily, or at least weekly, basis. Does this mean that all Mexican men are illegal immigrants, or that all of them get their rocks off by degrading any woman in earshot? Of course not, but it does mean that some are, and some do. In much the same way, it's not as though all black people have a silver and gold grill, drive around in Cadillacs and Oldsmobiles, carry concealed weapons, wear platinum and diamond necklaces, and throw gang signs at each other. But some do.

My point here is that I don't think anyone is even pretending to think that all black people act this way, but they are making fun of those who do. And, why not? In the same way that a lot of people make fun of rednecks or hookers by embodying the stereotype for the night, these white kids made fun of gangstas, and I guess the reason it's so offensive

is, what, because they weren't making fun of a subset of their own racial group?

I guess I just see this double-standard as a symptom of the way our culture functions. I use the word "symptom" because I think this points to a sickness. Something's awry in a culture where we are encouraged to buy this lifestyle (and therefore buy into it) by a faction (gangsters and their pretenders) of a larger group (blacks) that largely seems to resist the stereotype that has partially been created and is definitely largely sustained, reinforced, and perpetuated by some of those within their own ranks, so to speak.

A few things need to happen. White people need to stop buying into it as if it is the only image of black people out there, and black people need to stop selling it as if it is the only image they've created. There are white people who know better and black people who do better.

I'm not saying that the cultural idea or lifestyle of "gangsta-hood" should be eradicated, because I don't think it's invalid or inherently "bad." I'm just advocating making other images of black people equally visible, and I would hope that white people could finally open their eyes and start seeing the images and people that are already there.

It's a mutual shift that needs to happen, and I'm not really into playing the blame game, but I think when controversies like those surrounding these parties arise, we perpetuate this pattern of misunderstanding, exclusion, and typification by getting angry without getting thoughtful, and by being too P.C. to allow any other possible reaction that might actually start a discourse.