

The New Paper

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
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April

Bennington College

Vol. II No. 1

photos by Peter Platten



BILL HENDLER



MARGIT ERDMAN



DAVID
SMALLMAN

Hendler, Erdman Student Elections

by Amy Spound

For a while it seemed as if the flood of Galleys would never cease. Students who complained of empty mail boxes before the elections now wished to be able to once again contemplate that wonderful vacant space which had formerly signified at best a certain tranquility in their lives and at worst a sense of impending isolation. But despite the momentary inconvenience of taking extra time to read what seemed to be at first glance superfluous and petty materials they responded in kind on March 16 and 17 and turned out to preside judgment over the two presidential candidates Bill Hendler and David Smallman and the four Vice-Presidential candidates George Coyne, Wynn Miller, Margit Erdman, and Leidi Geer. The turnout was the largest in recent memory with 402 votes cast for president and 393 for vice president. Bill Hendler gained the confidence of a substantial majority of the electorate and coasted to an easy victory

over David Smallman as the vice presidential race more precisely reflected the intense nature of a contest that had been hotly contested since the first student council meeting of the year and ended in a three-way tie between Ms. Erdman, Mr. Coyne and Mr. Miller each registering less than 30 per cent of the vote. Ms. Geer, who is a second semester freshman this term, came in fourth registering a very respectable 16 per cent of the vote.

To decide the contest for vice-president a run-off election was held March 22 and 23 between Mr. Miller, who had just two days before the first election been running for president on the "Dog Ticket," Mr. Coyne, whose candidacy was endorsed by Bill Hendler, and Margit Erdman who had been a last minute entry in the first election. Ms. Erdman was victorious as she snatched the majority of Ms. Geer's votes, who lacking enough votes to be a realistic competitor, was excluded from the run off.

People Say No to Nukes

by NATE WILLIAMS

More and more, Americans are facing the conflict of corporate interest vs. the peoples' interest. Businessmen, farmers, craftsmen and the general public are beginning to feel the threatening conflict between nature and corporate economics. Our country requires vast quantities of energy, much of which is wasted, to maintain the high standards of living that we are accustomed to. Concern for future energy supplies is growing in light of dwindling fossil fuel reserves. We can choose between developing our solar, wind, hydroelectric or nuclear energy technologies. It is the latter direction, the most controversial, that the federal government has chosen to pursue. People are questioning this decision and the complexity of the battle is illustrated by the continued effort to stop the construction of a nuclear power plant in Seabrook, New Hampshire.

The Public Service Company (PSC) of New Hampshire, was given the permit to begin construction of a twin reactor power plant in 1976. The permit was granted after six years of citizen "intervention." In March, 1976, the people of Seabrook voted 768-632 against construction of the plant. On August 1, the first occupation of a nuke (nuclear power plant) site took place. Eighteen people were arrested for "criminal trespassing." One-hundred eighty people marched on the site again on

August 22, and were also arrested. After the Seabrook town vote in March 1976, a group of citizens formed the Clamshell Alliance, with a vow to cancel the Seabrook nuke, the first step in stopping nuclear power in New England.

The plant will have two 1,150 megawatt reactors. About one-third of the heat created will be used in power production. The remaining heat will be waste heat. Inflation has driven 1960 cost estimates up from \$973 million to \$2.6 billion. Seabrook is two miles from the Atlantic Ocean which it will be drawing its cooling water from, (and replacing its heated water to). It is 12 miles south of Portsmouth and 40 miles north of Boston. The construction site is above an old Indian burial ground and greatly threatens the ecology of nearby estuaries and coastline.

People claim there is no need for the Seabrook plant. The plant was planned during a time of increasing demands for electricity. Demand, however, has been decreasing since the 1974 "energy crisis." The Clamshell coalition argues that it is more sensible to implement conservation measures than it is to construct a dangerous nuke. PSC's generating capacity will be doubled by the Seabrook plant yet the company is already selling power out of state. The consumer's rates are necessarily going to have to go up.

Nuclear power plants do not provide more jobs. Out of 2,500 temporary con-

struction jobs, 125-150 specially trained personnel, most from out of state, run the plant once it is in operation. Studies show, that more jobs are produced by conservation measures than by energy intensive, automated nuclear technology.

Safety is the first question one asks about nuclear power. A plant the size of Seabrook produces in one year, more than 1,000 times the radioactivity of the Hiroshima type atom bomb. Most of that radiation is contained yet there is always a certain amount of leakage through cooling systems, exhaust stacks or general radiation. The allowable amounts of leakage have been lowered considerably in the past years as more is known about prolonged exposure to radioactivity. The storage and transportation of power plant waste pose the biggest safety problems at present. Volatile material that is radioactive for 250,000 years can not simply be swept under the rug.

Accidents have occurred and should be expected to. There is bound to be human or equipment failure. The fact that the Seabrook plant is near the Boston-Ottawa fault increases chances for accidents. Seabrook is surrounded by densely populated areas. Anyone with ideas on how to evacuate the coast from Seabrook to

Boston should contact the Clamshell Alliance immediately.

If the EPA approves the present cooling system, thermal pollution will be a grave danger to the fishing industries of Maine and New Hampshire. Fish and lobster larvae will be lost to the large cooling intake pipe. Some species of fish will be driven from the area by warmer waters while some species will be attracted by the heated discharge. These latter species will be killed by the thousands by cold shock when the plant is shut down for repairs.

Nuclear plants provide the greatest profit for the electric industry. The industry's priorities are reflected by those of the Federal government. The Federal research fund for fossil fuel energy was \$208.3 million as opposed to \$17.2 million for Conservation. Conservation is an impossible goal for our industries that depend on profits through growth and expansion.

The fight led by the Clamshell Alliance demands that some very serious questions be asked concerning the priorities and values of the 20th century. Perhaps it is not reasonable to spend so much money on power plants that are proving to be less efficient and safe than planned. People

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Editorial

by AMY SPOUND

Two days prior to the student council elections, a galley appeared which briefly stated that The New Paper endorsed Bill Hendler for president of student council. No explanation accompanied that statement and therefore it goes without saying that a justification is called for.

Hendler's unobtrusive entry into a contest which for a week had been dominated by the flippant and nihilistic candidacy of Wynn Miller ("the Bow-Wow Biscuit Ticket"), and the subtly aggressive and "issues" oriented rhetoric of Savid Smallman, provided for the community what was sorely lacking in those other candidates — a modest demeanor and an unrelenting sincerity concerning our student government. His experience as a student representative and as student council vice-president serves as an invaluable asset in gauging student moods and in operating an organization such as student council.

In addition he has been in close contact with many members of the administration and as president of the council he will continue to utilize these administrative channels to express to them the major concerns of Bennington students. Mr. Miller has had little experience within this realm while Mr. Smallman, though he boasts an impressive list of names with whom he has been in contact over the past two years, has undeniably, through his own belligerent attitude, sealed off many of the administrative channels which were once available to him and he would not have been able to affect the changes which were the cornerstone of his candidacy. It was therefore the opinion of myself and the majority of the staff members that Mr. Hendler was the most viable candidate of the three and because of his ability to relate to both students and administration that he would have the best chance of administering student government policy.

by DAVID B. SMALLMAN

If I am decidedly less aggressive in this rebuttal to the new newspapers editorial than I was in my galleys, it is only because arguing with the result of a lost election is like trying to wrestle with a corpse; you can always win the argument — but so what?

Still, I find it very difficult to take Ms. Spound's editorial seriously. To a dismaying degree, her amateur social analysis reminds me very much of a freshman literature paper, e.g. Byron was indulgent and Coleridge was a junkie but Wordsworth was a gentleman, etc. But, for purposes of examination, let us willingly suspend disbelief (if only for a moment).

The most naive notion of Ms. Spound's is that voter turnout in an election is indicative of "political consciousness." I am tempted to say something about the omnipresent ballot box at the bottom of Seiller's and locate the voting function somewhere between digestion and excretion. However, I will observe that any individual studying voting behavior would note that for any 500 people voting there are always at least 500 different reasons for their participation. This includes everything from liking the sound of the candidates name (viz. Corky Merkel — I ran the ballot box, veritas!) to supporting the candidates particular brand of ideological perversion.

Now then, I may be mistaken but my reading shows very little difference between the "mere ritual casting of ballots" and students awaking "from their somnolent state to deliver their verdict." It all sounds like voting to me, though the latter phrase does have the vengeful imagery of Godzilla suddenly up from his slumbers to wreck destruction on Tokyo and toy soldiers.

At this juncture, with nothing left to lose, I'll very clearly expose the roots of my anger qua discontent. Bennington College

However, Mr. Hendler's victory is the least of my concerns here — far from it.

One must regard this election from many angles in order to comprehend fully its significance. Indeed, the election itself, the mere ritual casting of ballots, was just the beginning. More important is the sudden appearance of what seems to be a political consciousness on the part of the general student body. The students exhibited what might be considered an encouraging sign of life, as they awoke from their somnolent state to deliver their verdict. It is to their credit that they did not shrink in fear and revulsion from the recent profusion of galleys which plagued this particular political contest. In other years that certainly would have been the case, with most students mumbling under their breaths about the "dirtiness" of politics and disdainfully turning their heads away, refusing all association with such a "distasteful" business. But this time the overwhelming majority of students chose to vote.

Could it be that the student body is not as fearful of politics as the Smallman camp would have one believe in their recent post-election galleys? Or is it that for the first time we are developing a cooperative consciousness, an ability to affect change through the power of collective activism? That is to say that the students now realize that they must be able to pinpoint the issues which are most important to them and be able to articulate them clearly to the student representatives and to the administration. The formation of any type of organization, be it political, social, or academic, would visibly alter the complexion of our social predicament as a whole. With the realization that cooperative efforts are the catalysts of change there arises an awareness of the individual as a political entity.

It is with this in mind that one may understand why Mr. Smallman failed to ascend to the presidency. This failure lies

students pay close to 85 per cent of the operating costs of the college. For the approximately \$7,000 a year we pay, I think we get very little. There are no student lounges (except for good old Murphy's Cafe and it's not much); the sports facilities are so minimal as to be a disgrace; photography students have to run benefits in order to pay for basic equipment. In terms of academic space: Black Music still has substandard practice space; painting students must use plasterboard cutouts as studios (in a \$6 million building!); ceramic studios are overcrowded and cluttered — on and on — is there anything right with this goddamn college?

I don't know. All I know is that change is slow and that Bennington as it is now operating is realizing almost none of its huge potential for excitement and excellence.

I further think that President Murphy's administrative theory — that good administration exists solely to smooth the transformation from means to ends, without addressing the overall purpose of the institution — is a sham, a businessman's solution to a problem he doesn't dare to solve lest discontent with a proposed solution appear on his desk.

To show you the deceit that operates on a higher political level, I suggest that you all read President Murphy's document: **The Capital Campaign for Bennington College.** The breakdown summary of figures that Murphy proposes to raise for various institutional activities is as follows:

- Endowment for faculty salaries — \$2,400,000
- Endowment for scholarships — \$1,000,000
- Plant improvement and maintenance — \$700,000
- The arts center — \$1,000,000
- The library — \$1,000,000
- Debt retirement — \$500,000
- Operating needs — \$1,700,000

not in the fact that he failed to convince the student body of the existence of certain important issues but that he lacked the ability to make these issues socially significant means for change. His insistence on maintaining his individual efforts as personal battles without directly involving other members of the community contributed to the development of an image which reflected a rigid Faustian outlook rather than a true concern for social issues and social organization. His use of language in the two galleys which he distributed further reinforced that image. Phrases such as "I took on Alice Miller. . .", "I fought to get this place. . .", "My job will be to transform student desires into student realities. . ." does not reveal social awareness — only the delusion that he sees himself as the savior of Bennington College. For Corky Merkle and John Sheldon to accuse Mr. Smallman of having a "political axe to grind" is hypocritical and inaccurate. Indeed, all of our campus politicians have a political axe to grind" if they consider themselves to be good politicians. It is when an individual disguises personal anger in the cloak of political intrigue then it would be accurate to say that he has a "personal axe to grind."

I would like to emphasize that it is unfair to accuse Mr. Smallman of being the only person on this campus to exhibit such qualities. Indeed, anyone who comes to Bennington might at any given time be accused of putting individual goals and priorities before social considerations. That, my friends, is the purpose of Bennington College — to promote the development of the individual. So while each of us is occupied with our individual academic and artistic renaissance we remain socially in the "Dark Ages." Until we recognize ourselves as social beings who can affect change then Student Council elections, Galleys, and New Paper editorials will be little more than glorified personality evaluations.

Unrestricted endowment — \$600,000

These figures show the financial breakdown of the fund raising drive, but they indicate something far more subtle. Murphy knows that \$500,000 isn't enough for the debt retirement on the Arts Center. After all, he must know the old fund raising adage that "it's hard to raise money for a building that's already built." So what does he do? He kills two birds with one stone. He overinflates the amount for faculty salaries (\$2.4 million) thereby winning over the faculty. But monies donated to the college all go into the same general fund; it's really all the same financial pie and what Murphy is doing is setting up a fund raising drive that gives the best appearance. In fact, the distribution is false — it is a lie to get individuals to donate money.

Okay. What's wrong with separating a fool from his money? Nothing really. It is bothersome, however, that what Murphy does, because no one knows about it, is perfectly all right. But for a student, lying and even white-collar thievery in the public interest is construed differently. I think that the students at this college are hypocrites. I was honest — I admitted my methods were extreme. My methods worked though, and they were the only methods that produced results. Next time you munch on pop corn at Murphy's, think about it.

It seems that the best way to control opinions is to limit access to information. My attitudes are the way they are because I've had personal contact with the slimy aspects of college government — the lying, the stealing, the greed and selfishness of individuals and divisions. The students always seem to lose and it disturbs — no — sickens me. Rather than hiding my head or retreating into the safer realm of academia, I tried to fight it head on. I lost.

Battle

of

The Galleys

The Following

is a Reply by

David B. Smallman

Tractatus Paideutico-Philosophicus

by DOUGLAS BERGGREN

1. Any situation one learns from is education.
 - 1.01 Sex can be educational.
 - 1.02 Poverty can be educational.
 - 1.03 An impoverished sex life can also be educational.
- 1.1 Even a college education can be educational.
- 1.11 The style of a college education may be either conventional or unconventional.
- 1.12 Imitation and innovation are possible in either style.
- 1.13 Consequently, conventional education may be innovative, and unconventional education not.
- 1.14 The distinction between innovation and imitation is irrelevant to the question of either aesthetic or educational worth.
- 1.2 In order to determine educational excellence, some normative definition of learning must be introduced.
 - 1.21 This normative definition must not be arbitrary, but theoretically justifiable in terms of its ultimate consequences.
2. To learn from any situation is to go from anywhere to somewhere.
 - 2.01 To go from somewhere to anywhere is educational.
- 2.1 Unconventional, soft-minded education is often not educational, since it tends either to go anywhere, or to get nowhere.
- 2.2 Conventional, tough-minded education may appear to get nowhere, or to go anywhere, especially to soft-minded people.
 - 2.21 But tough-minded education is far more likely to get somewhere, and so

improve one's love life.

- 2.22 Admittedly, even tough-minded education must start anywhere, if it wants to get somewhere. Romance is not educationally irrelevant.
- 2.23 If romance is not to be abortive, however, it must give birth to more definite understanding.
- 2.24 Having got somewhere, this should in turn lead to somewhere else. Fathers should also be citizens.
- 2.25 Ideally, the educational process should move towards a somewhere that is not anywhere or nowhere, but everywhere.
3. If a college education is to go from anywhere to somewhere, data and the ability to reason must be acquired.
 - 3.01 Data provides the content, while reason provides the form of education.
 - 3.02 Form and content challenge one another, but are fundamentally inseparable.
- 3.1 Contemporary students tend to lack both form and content.
- 3.11 Contemporary students tend, therefore, to miss the challenge of education.
- 3.2 In missing the challenge, obviously contemporary students often fail to see the point of being in college.
 - 3.21 The point of being in college is not to get a job.
 - 3.22 The point of being in college is not to put off getting a job.
 - 3.23 The point of being in college is not to be a leader of men.
 - 3.24 The point of being in college is not to be a social drop out.
 - 3.25 The point of being in college is to be educated.

4. To acquire facts and an ability to reason, academic demands must be inherent in the college situation.
 - 4.01 For a perfect intellectual, an academic demand is not an ought but an internal must.
 - 4.02 For an aspiring intellectual, an academic ought is not an internal must.
 - 4.03 For an anti-intellectual, an academic ought is not even an ought, but a problematic imperative for someone else.
- 4.1 No actual student or professor is a perfect intellectual.
- 4.11 Hence if the demands inherent in the college situation are to be satisfied, an external must which is more than an ought is required.
- 4.12 An infrequent external must is not sufficient.
- 4.13 Any college which only provides its professors with frequent musts, and not its students, is bound to demoralize everyone.
- 4.2 Granted, it is better to act for the sake of duty than to act simply in accordance with it.
- 4.21 But it is also better to act in accordance with duty than in conflict with it.
- 4.22 Idealism without realism is self-destructive sentimentality.
5. The demands inherent in the college situation should be set by those aspiring intellectuals who most intimately know what the educational challenge of form and content is all about.
 - 5.01 This means that the process of education should be directed by professionals rather than amateurs.
 - 5.02 This does not mean that human values should be neglected.
 - 5.03 Quite the contrary, human values are too crucial to be left to untutored prejudice, or to amateurish dilettantism.
- 5.1 An amateur educator is a quack, however sincere.
- 5.11 A professional educator who ignores

his students is negligent.

- 5.12 A professional educator who simply prescribes in Latin what his students want to hear is either a fool or a hypocrite.
- 5.13 A professional educator must listen to his students. But then he should try to be of help.
- 5.2 To help students is inevitably to change them.
- 5.21 To change students for the better is not necessarily to mould them in one's own image.
- 5.22 But to change students for the better is to help them acquire the form and content for making their own intelligent decisions.
- 5.23 Educational pluralism should never be confused with educational relativism.
6. To meet the professional demands inherent in a college education is finally to see the mystical relevance of academic excellence.
 - 6.01 If such demands have not yet been met, some degree of faith is indispensable.
 - 6.02 If a person cannot make this leap of faith, the relevance of educational excellence will never be understood.
- 6.1 If a person never understands the relevance of academic excellence, he will never become a free individual.
- 6.11 A free individual is one who can critically escape from the blind conditioning of his childhood.
- 6.12 A free individual is also one who can creatively integrate his various critical commitments.
- 6.13 But a free individual is ultimately one who can discover the joy of life in the tragedy of death.
- 6.2 Any individual who understands the deep relevance of academic excellence sees that all of my propositions are unnecessary, even uneducational.
- 6.21 Having climbed the ladder, he should throw it away, and get on with the job of education in and for itself.
7. Beyond everywhere there is only silence.

Bennington Opportunity Council: Community Involvement

by ELIZABETH GALE SHACKNOVE

The Bennington Opportunity Council is next door to The Oasis, up the stairs. It is unlikely that any member of the Bennington College Community would wander in to browse; it does not sell anything and it is doubtful that any of us would be in need of the services the agency offers. But, Director Shirley Hoisington McTernan told me that occasionally, Bennington College students will come into BOC to purchase their food stamps.

BOC aids low income families and individuals who are in need. The state welfare agency is able to pay up to only 73 per cent of the determined subsistence standard of living in Vermont. By the end of the month, many times the cash has run out and there is no other place to which these people can turn. BOC steps in as a referral service for the disabled, the elderly, the unemployed, and connects them with the appropriate agencies which help them. Where other programs are inadequate, BOC offers alternatives. For example, one BOC program, Part Time Job Clearinghouse, provides temporary employment. Another program, Community Gardens, teaches individuals to utilize barren lots, to grow their own gardens, and to preserve what they have grown. Emergency loans for food and fuel are also available.

BOC runs approximately nine programs that try to meet the immediate needs of people and also they operate instructive programs providing long term benefits for Bennington County residents. Budget and Credit Counseling is an instructive

program that assists individuals in learning how to prepare a budget within their income. In Bennington County, 30 per cent of the population are eligible for poverty programs and in the town of Bennington 35 per cent are eligible. Therefore, there is a real need for the services that BOC offers.

BOC has been in existence for eleven years as an offshoot of the Johnson Administration's "war on poverty" program. It was at that time a group of concerned citizens in Bennington and Rutland Counties gathered together, formed BOC, and elected a Board of Directors. An appeal for a grant was drawn up and the grant was received from the Community Services Administration in the federal government. Economic Opportunity in Bennington, later to become the Bennington Opportunity Council, split into two groups, one in Rutland and one in Bennington. To better serve the needs of each particular community, they are still officially connected to each other for funding purposes, but their focuses differ.

BOC receives the same federal monies it originally received eleven years ago, but inflation and rising costs have led the agency to seek aid from other sources. This year is the first time that certain areas of Bennington County have voted that funds from town appropriations and revenue sharings be spent on BOC programs. In the past, selectmen have not been willing to have the issue placed on ballots. Ms. McTernan believes that many people in Bennington County possess a

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The New Paper

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF — Amy Spound

ASSISTANT EDITOR — Nate Williams

ARTS EDITOR — Jan Hadwen

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS — Liz Shacknove, Anne Soorikian

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER — Karen Solstad

ART AND DESIGN DIRECTOR — Liz Cobbett

LAYOUT — Steve Petrica

ADVERTISING AND BUSINESS MGR. — John Holland

CONTRIBUTORS — Douglas Berggren, Frances Edwards, Wayne Euster, L.

Lyedie Geer, Peter Pochna, David Smallman, Karen Solstad

People Say No

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should be aware that nuclear facilities mean tremendous national and international profits for companies like G.E. and Westinghouse. The more nuclear plants built, the more material will be potentially available for nuclear weapons. Perhaps nuclear energy is the best answer for future energy needs, but its development should not continue without careful planning and thorough research. Meeting the demand for energy should not be the only approach to our energy needs. Even if it takes dramatic changes in our life styles and social structures, we are going to have to reduce our consumption in all aspects of life.

The Clamshell Alliance fight is an example of what happens when present economic structures are challenged. The public outcries are labeled civil disobedience and we are told that the

corporate interest is naturally in the public's interest. It is expensive for the people to speak out against the big money of the Federal government and nuclear industries. The Alliance is planning another act of "civil disobedience" for April 30. People from Massachusetts to Alaska plan to join the occupation of the site in April. The success of this demonstration may determine the future of nuclear power in New England.

It is time to examine our individual values for the future. Is the corporate interest the best interest according to the laws of nature? Is civil disobedience our only course for change? If you are interested in supporting the Clamshell Alliance or the occupation of the Seabrook site, contact: Clamshell Alliance, Box 162, Seabrook, N.H. (603) 436-5414. Representatives from the Alliance will be visiting Bennington in early April.

Around Campus

Admissions Hanging by the Grapevine

By ANNE SOORIKIAN

Anyone who considers Bennington or who is a member of the community inevitably comes in contact with the admissions office. Lately, the admissions department has been reorganizing the office and consolidating with the financial aid offices. John Nissen has recently been hired to lead in this task. Previously, Mr. Nissen was a freelance financial aid consultant at Lawrence College. His job here will be to coordinate operations in the Admissions and Financial Aid offices. The goal in consolidating the two offices is to increase effectiveness and efficiency that have been criticized a great deal.

Presently, the enrollment at Bennington for the spring term is 545 as opposed to the usual 595. There are 30 new people on campus this term; 17 transfer students, and 13 first term freshmen. Tom Fels and Polly Runyan are responsible for interviewing students and answering inquiries. Mr. Fels attributes the decline in enrollment to the unusually large senior class that graduated last December. By the end of the spring term admissions will have to fill approximately 220 spaces rather than the normal 150. This unexpected drop in admissions stems from the lack of adequate long range planning. Of the total number of people who apply to Bennington, 50 per cent are accepted.

Presently, however, only 400 applications have been received for the fall term. Mr. Fels emphasized the fact, that despite the decreasing number of applicants, the quality of those accepted has not decreased in any way. Fels did admit, though, that they were not as selective as they would like to be.

Last term, the admissions office took a poll among enrolled students asking how they initially came into contact with Bennington. The poll showed that 55.2 per cent heard of Bennington by word of mouth. In a newsletter sent to students during NRT, the Admissions office stated that it would continue to rely on word of mouth, based on the results of the poll. Mr. Fels feels that the admissions process should expand to high school counselors. Bennington could be brought into the public sphere more effectively by advertising special events such as plays and arts exhibits.

Jean Aldrich will be visiting school and college conventions while Mr. Fels and Ms. Runyan plan to rewrite the Bennington pamphlet. The new program should give the entire admissions process a brighter outlook. Hopefully, Mr. Nissen will be able to provide the time, energy and organization needed to increase the application pool.



Tim Daly and Jill Wisoff rehearse for "Hello and Goodbye."

Hello & Goodbye

"Hello & Goodbye," a two-act play by South African playwright Athol Fugard, will be presented at Bennington College on April 7, 8, 9 and 10 at 7:30 p.m. and on April 9 at 1:30 p.m. in the Drama Workshop of the Arts Center. The play was directed by theatre major Wendy Bower, and features students Timothy Daly and Jill Wisoff. Admission is free and refreshments will be served.

"Hello & Goodbye" takes place in South Africa in 1965. Athol Fugard, easily South Africa's best-known playwright and one of the leading young playwrights working today, has had his work produced in London and New York City. His recent works include "The Island," "Sizwe Banzi

is Dead" and "The Blood Knot." The biracial theme of the last play caused South African authorities to revoke the author's passport.

"Hello and Goodbye" approaches the subjects of family relationships and humanism simply and incisively.

The play's characters, Johnny and Hester, are brother and sister. Hester, who ran away from home 20 years before, seeks Johnny out. They spend an evening journeying through their mutual memories.

The play is finally the portrait of a man on the edge of reality and a woman too much involved in the rock bottom reality of staying alive.

The Pearson Alternative

by PETER POCHNA

In December, I attended the last faculty meeting of 1976. Chief among the interests being considered at the time was the matter of faculty salary levels which, in spite of modest dollar gains, are 40 per cent below the purchasing power a faculty member enjoyed five years ago. It is not surprising that a move towards restoring this power is under way and is receiving near unanimous support from the faculty.

What interested me was a minority voice. Pat Adams noted that the news from the admissions office had been uniformly bad and that a substantial increase in faculty pay might cause further shrinking in Bennington's application pool in that a tuition increase (stemming from faculty salary increase) might scare off even more potential applicants. After a moment or two, I endorsed Ms. Adams' sentiment by proposing that while the faculty restores its former income they should

support a tuition freeze which would be in effect for five years (the estimated time required for faculty raises to become effective). Had there been a secret ballot to elect the most naive person in the room, Ms. Adams and I would have split the vote rather evenly. Nonetheless, I feel it is a proposal that should be taken seriously.

One of the greatest advantages to such an idea is that faculty and students can pursue their own goals most efficiently by supporting each other in another proposal with virtually no ideological color. A natural forum already exists that would enable the college community to explore and implement such a proposal, according to the Budget Committee which is comprised of students, faculty, and two administrators.

One of these proposals lies in relocating the college bookstore on the corner of Silk Road and Route 67A. This would give an already profitable business an extra boost by making it accessible to non-Bennington

College customers. Another idea was formally drawn up in March of 1972 by Harry Pearson. The Pearson Plan proposes the rearrangement of Bennington's calendar year to include three semesters and to increase enrollment to 900 with only 500 students in attendance at any given semester. Non-term time would consist of a three- to four-week break between terms and then a 20-week NRT. The source of the plan's strength lies in the fact that there is very little difference in the expense of maintaining the school for three terms rather than two. In addition, the income derived from the institution of a third term would be in large part profit. In a chat with Mr. Pearson some time ago, he noted that the college fuel bill for a typical year in the early 70s was \$175,000. The income from one term's fees would be \$1.5 million.

There have been several objections to this plan. The admissions personnel feel

that it would be very difficult to find 300 more students. However, one can point to Dartmouth College which received a grant of \$350,000 just to try the idea out. In addition, the Pearson plan could wipe out a greater part of the running deficit of the college with a year round enrollment averaging only 80 per cent of the current enrollment. Another objection comes from the fact that many teachers remain here because of NRT. But the Pearson Plan only lengthens the NRT period. (Recently a prominent Bennington administrator said of NRT, "I'm surprised the school has not been sued for false advertising.")

The primary reason for writing this article is not so much to outline the contents of the Pearson Plan, but to reiterate the fact that it has never even been discussed. Perhaps the "get-down-to-business" attitude demonstrated in the recent student elections will alter that.

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BUMMER BOY



Council

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"bootstrap" mentality and that previous to the Past town vote on the BOC issue, selectmen and a large proportion of the community felt that funds should be spent in other areas other than programs sponsored by BOC. Other funds are received from the New England Regional Commission and the State of Vermont. Donations of food and clothing are received from local churches and individuals from the community.

People discover BOC when they come to purchase food stamps or they hear about it word-of-mouth. The agency publicizes itself in the Bennington Banner and on WBTN, the local radio station. BOC wants the community to know that it exists and they want their services to be used. The administration and the staff at BOC insist that the people they serve maintain their self-respect throughout their interactions at BOC and that they are treated humanely.

Bennington Opportunity Council is interested in finding out if they are successfully and effectively serving the community. They want an interested student who would conduct a survey of a variety of people in Bennington to find out if their goals are achieved. If there is someone interested in undertaking such a project contact the Director of Bennington Opportunity Council, Shirley Hoisington McTernan at 442-9519 or 442-6898.

Dear Ms Lonelyhearts

Editor's note — Having a problem you just can't handle? You can reach Ms. Lonelyhearts (although she's hardly ever home) by leaving a note care of box 40Bl.

Dear Ms. Lonelyhearts,

I'm a vegetarian from Far Rockaways, N.Y. I recently transferred to Bennington, lured by the promise of an accommodating pastoral setting in which to pursue self-realization. And suddenly I'm bombarded by a raft of papers, spewing forth spiritually and morally offensive propaganda of the worst kind. I myself was suckled at my mother's breast. What's going on here? Don't Bennington folk know the days of Off The Pig are over? I had hoped to pursue (as Ralph Waldo so cunningly put it) an original relation to nature, but I had no idea the place was overridden with upstarts a la Mark Rudd. Is it possible that these marauders may lead a violent student revolt? Shall I get my walking papers and try Goddard? Sign me

— Unnerved

Dear Unnerved,

Not to worry. Allow me to explain. This "offensive propaganda" has been written by an inoffensive little group who stalk the campus carrying the Portable Nietzsche and wearing leather jackets. They are actually the last vestige of a small

motorcycle gang that originated just outside Portland, Oregon.

A large cache of cocaine has been put in escrow by a recent president of the college — (who now operates out of a Lake Shore Drive apartment). In return for occasional hits, this band of desperados has sworn to keep the spirit of "planned suicide" (see Esquire, Sept. 1976) alive, while clandestinely attempting to avenge the name of Alfred North Whitehead.

Now don't get itchy — it's a well-known fact that this band has been infiltrated by lit majors, and their influence is just about as faded as my jeans. To the average Bennington student, all their jeremiads are just so much jello. Unpack your bags.

Yours,
Ms. L

Dear Ms. Lonelyhearts

And I'm lonelyhearted, indeed. Two to one ratio and I can't score. Needless to say, I'm a guy. Not that I haven't scored before — believe me I have. But it seems to me and to a number of the other stallions on campus that the women seem a bit uppity this term. Now, why this is, is the question. Lonely, they're banding together. You go to a party, dressed to kill and panting... and leave the same way. Any ice-breaking suggestions would be devilishly appreciated.

— All Thumbs

P.S. Actually, I don't think anyone will take this seriously, but it is an interesting phenomenon.

Incidentally, to borrow your lilting metaphor, you and the other stallions on campus might want to try less obvious stations from which to pick up a load. Hang by the washing machines one day. I'll be the girl wearing the green carnation.

— Ciao
Ms. L

Dear All,

Save your postscripts — I'm the one who does the editorializing around here. Just state your business and sign off.

Now then, let's look at your problem. You clearly have the worst syntax of anyone writing in this paper. "Why this is" — really.

But about your social life. Simple. Buy the girl of your dreams a four-door Seville. Positively guaranteed to start the con-

Pearson Plan

Continued from Page 4

Apparently, the college is to rent its facilities out to a group of cheerleaders this coming summer which is not the kind of incident that makes one proud of the college. If the college can not survive providing the service for which it was originally intended then this institution may become no more than a real estate enterprise which is kept warm by students. That is why it is very important for a discussion of Mr. Pearson's plan to take place.

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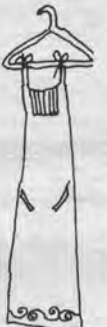
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Vermont Women Hold Regional Conference

ELIZABETH GALE SHACKNOVE

A few years ago there was an attempt to raise the consciousness level of the people in the Town of Bennington. A group of women tried to start a women's group to find out and deal with the needs, wants and problems of women in the community. There was not enough interest demonstrated for a group of this nature and their efforts were unsuccessful. But this year another attempt has been made and this time the efforts were met with success.

On February 26th of this year Vermont held a statewide Women's Town Meeting in Montpelier. There was a surprising turnout of 1,019 women. This was the first statewide meeting.

Now Bennington County is planning a regional meeting to be held towards the end of May in North Bennington. There will be guest speakers and seminars on Friday evening and all day Saturday. Perspective dates for these events are May 20th and 21st. The conference will elect a regional delegate to attend the National Meeting to be held in Houston later in the fall of this year. They intend to make new resolutions and reaffirm resolutions that were made at the state meeting. In addition they will discuss the organization of a Woman's Health Care Center, Job Training for Women, the needs unique to elderly women, and other relevant issues.

If you are involved in women's issues you can contact the following individuals: Kathy Schmitt at 823-5437, Arleen LaBella at 442-9674 or Doris Gable at 442-4360 or 442-8514, or Cheryl Briggs at 442-9519. If you are interested in filling out a questionnaire, asking what issues are important to women, you can contact me at Box 592.

Curtis Photographs Coming to College

by LESLIE LYEDECKER GEER

An exhibition of Edward S. Curtis photogravures will begin on April 12th in the Usdan Gallery. The show, presented by the Art Division in collaboration with the Bennington American Indian Heritage Committee, will fascinate all art and anthropology students as well as anyone interested in American history and the American Indian.

Curtis understood the Indians he photographed. His 34 years of work with them gave him an acute sensitivity to the beauty of their traditions and their lifestyle. "His message is of people and of culture, it is a multitude of ways of being and living..." Curtis captures the fading traditions of the American Indian with images so humanly beautiful they reach across the barriers of time and culture to leave you spellbound.

Curtis began his work on the Northwest Coast in 1896 and completed it in 1930. He produced 20 volumes of written material and 20 folios of photogravures. He received support from figures such as Theodore Roosevelt, H.R. Harriman, and George Bird Grinnell. J.P. Morgan, his financier, challenged him to publish his work in a "set of books, the handsomest ever published." That he did, though it

took him 19 years longer than he'd anticipated.

The original owner of the Curtis photos was Hall Parke McCullough. The photogravures on exhibit are part of the set found in the McCullough farmhouse in North Bennington.

200 of the photogravures will be displayed and the remaining part of the set will be available for view by those who are interested. A symposium of scholars and of American Indian Activists will be held in Bennington on May 7th and May 14th, sponsored by the Bennington American Indian Heritage Committee. Please contact Jane Hanks in N. Bennington for more information.

Art History Coming to Bennington?

by ERIN QUINN

Camille Paglia recently expressed concern over the lack of an art-history major at Bennington. She feels that art-history is crucial to a liberal arts education and that the college is only hurting itself by not offering more in this area. Many students have expressed their desire to study art-history to Ms. Paglia. The desire for the major has been brought to President Murphy's attention. The present art-history course offered at Bennington is reserved for art majors and is impossible for freshman or sophomores to enter. Ms. Paglia would like to hire an art historian and have available art-history as a major. If you have an interest in art-history and would like to see it offered as a regular part of the curriculum, contact Camille Paglia.

Annabelle Gamson Dances at Bennington

by FRANCES EDWARDS

On Thursday, March 24, in the Martha Hill Theatre, Annabelle Gamson gave a solo performance, the Dances of Isadora Duncan. A living tribute to Isadora in this year of her centennial birthday, Ms. Gamson is a master. She emitted a grace and presence which illuminated every aspect of her performance.

The program began with six of Duncan's shorter works dating from 1903 to 1907. These were, Water Study from Graz Waltzes by Schubert, Prelude, Mazurka, Waltz, Valse Brillante, all accompanied by the piano music of Chopin, and Dance of the Furies, a very powerful and vibrant piece from Orfeo, danced to the music of Gluck. Also in her program were two beautiful waltzes by Brahms, which Isadora referred to as the Faces of Love, and two Scriabin pieces, Mother and Etude, dated 1921 and 1922, respectively.

Ms. Gamson ended her program with a discussion period and explained how the dances were passed on to her and how Isadora conceived of the pieces she performed. Afterwards, Annabelle led a short

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PATCHIN' PLACE

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informal dance lesson on the composition of Water Study. Dance teachers, dance majors and non-dancers alike flocked the stage barefooted as Annabelle explained what she felt and what they should feel as the dance progressed.

The performance was both straightforward and exuberant. The dancing was extremely beautiful perhaps because of Ms. Gamson's ability to make an audience perceive every movement that she creates. Without fanfare or illusionistic backgrounds, Annabelle's muscular figure garbed in the simple cloth draperies unique to Isadora's style of costume, graced the stage with her vivid emotional dancing. It is unfortunate that she could only be here for one performance, for we would all like to see her again.



PAUL SILLS

Dealing with Those Damned Intellectuals: Interview with Paul Sills

by JAN HADWEN

Paul Sills, a hulky figure disheveled gray hair and watery blue-red eyes, with small pieces of white paper in his hands, looms over the students who lounge in directors' chairs. He runs his hand over his forehead and takes two or three small directionless steps, shifts the pieces of paper to the other hand.

"All right! All right!" he wails and walks a small circle in the floor of VAPA 207. Class begins with a game of freeze tag, red rover, Indian chief and numerous other childhood playground games.

"I just want you to play," Paul Sills tells us this and no more. In the very first class he made it clear that he would not talk with us about what we were doing or why we were doing it. "You damned intellectuals! You wouldn't understand if I told you, so I'm not going to explain!"

What kind of teacher is this, I thought. He won't answer our questions. He won't explain anything. Paul Sills insists we, in the Improvisational Theater class, just experience the games. "What you get is what you get out of it." Nothing more,

nothing less. He doesn't think he can teach us anything. He is simply a presenter of games, games his mother, Viola Spolin developed and collected into a book.

His hope is that we can become aware of ourselves, particularly aware physically so that we, as actors, can "put our minds at rest." It is only when the mind is at rest, when the intellect is outsmarted and ceases to be a barrier that prevents the students from acting, that improvisation as an art can happen. For this reason Sills is constantly emphasizing the importance of getting acting (in the class) out of the head and into the space. We do many exercises and games to promote this. To make the body more aware, we try to make the body feel time, not a place or a setting or an activity, just alone in time.

And without telling or showing the time, somehow the body must physicalize a time, such as 7:30 A.M. A yawn, a stretch, a sleepy look, an awakening action, all of these are showing and telling. These are not right. What is it then? What is it that the body alone in time, at 7:30 A.M. feels? What does it look like? Ah, but no

questions are allowed! We must experience it. Experience is the only way to learn, Sills feels. Learn by doing. Learn by feeling.

And Sills does not consider himself an organizer, a teacher, a director; he is a helper. He is here at Bennington as the Hadley Fellow, to help the students in his Improvisation Theater classes become aware, to help them outsmart their intellects, to help them become more intuitive, to help them get to know each other and to know themselves. "It could be

Continued on Page 8

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Sills Dealing With Average Kids

Continued from Page 7

done playing volley ball or baseball Sills said, "this is not drama, this is not theater," Sills insists. "It is parallel to it. There are no objects, no scripts."

"If anyone here is acting, you are in trouble," Sills yelled in class one day. Just talk, just be aware of yourself he recommends. And always during the class he spurts over and over again, we are not to do scenes, this is not a scene, that is not a scene. Fit the objects into the space! Work with each other! Amidst the confusion that runs free and frustrated in the classroom, Sills beckons us to say "curtain" before and after some of the "games." Why is this, I ask myself, if this is not theater, if we are not acting? It is only one of the many contradictions of Sills as teacher-helper.

Paul Sills, who spouts words about awareness, intuition, etc. said to me when I asked him what he thought of Bennington students, that they are just an average group of American kids. "They're just college kids. They're all just 20 years old, all of them. They're just kids; What do they know?" And of course he asked it with the answer, "nothing" trailing on his breath. He actually told me that I didn't know enough even to conduct the interview. I admitted, "Okay, I know nothing about improvisation. Please," I said, "please tell me something, explain it to me. Explain it to the people who read the paper." But, no, he would not, could not. It was the same old frustrating

problems; he wouldn't answer questions.

I asked him if he ever taught before.

"Yes, yes," he huffed.

"Where?" I asked.

"Oh lots of places. Yale," he answered.

Here is this man, I thought, who vaguely talks of awareness and intuition and he is so totally unperceptive that he thinks we are just an average group of American kids. Even I know better than that. It is obvious to me after going to another college and two different high schools, after being in other places with other people my age, that Bennington College students, the average Bennington College student is not in the least average. The B.C. student is really quite different. And indeed, along those lines, they do know something, a far cry from the "nothing" that Paul Sills feels. Where do we go from here?, I ask. Where do we go when we have a frustrated unperceptive man, who thinks we know nothing, not even enough to ask questions, teaching us, as a guest professor at this college?

If our mentors don't take us seriously then we begin not to take our experience with them seriously. We are reaching for validity, meaningfulness in experiences and life. We know we are learning something here, we know that somehow the classes, the experiences here will take their toll on our lives, will change us in some way, in some way will make us think differently. But why must the learning come through negative insight and impressions? Why can't it be pleasant too?

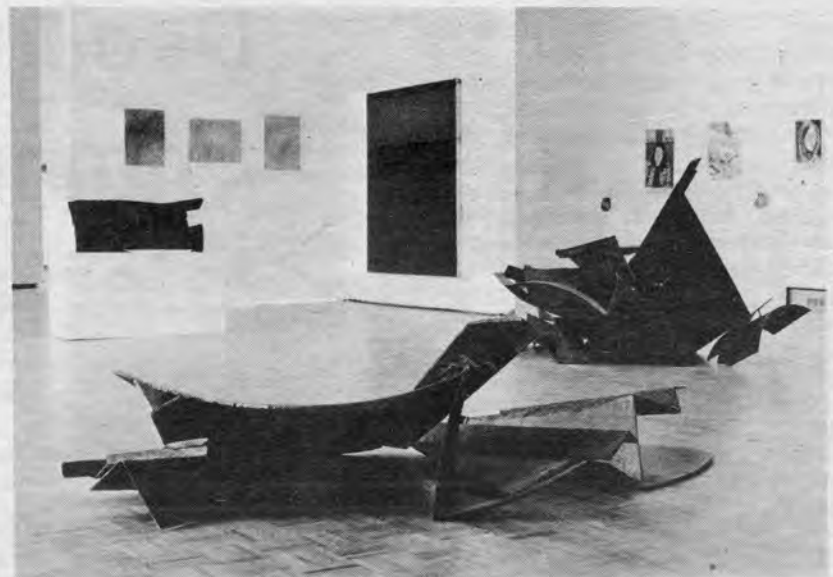


Photo by Karen E. Solstad

Student Work in Usdan Gallery

From March 22 to April 2 of this year, the walls of the Suzanne L. Usdan Gallery were hung with new works by Bennington students. This was the first time the Gallery was used for such a show. Fifty artists were represented by over 110 paintings, drawings, photographs, architectural models, graphics, ceramics, and sculptures. BRAVO for the show, and may it become a tradition!

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