

THE BENNINGTON VOICE

Volume III, No.2

October 28, 1992



Happy
Oktoberfest!

INSIDE:

MORE DONNA TARTT THAN EVER BEFORE NEW AND IMPROVED MAURA SPIEGEL
COVERAGE PLUS ENHANCED SEPC REPORTING GOODBYE COLUMBUS FONDLY
REMEMBERING THE FOLIAGE THAT WACKY ELECTION MADAME TOBY'S HOROSCOPE
AND MUCH MUCH MORE

Letter from an Editor

This will be the final issue of the Bennington Voice. Just kidding. However, this will be the final issue of the Voice that you read before Bill Clinton is elected to be the next President of the United States. But this letter has nothing do with that...

The Editors would like to thank the student body for supporting the Voice again this term. With our budget allocation, we will be able to produce at least four issues. We have already made the following improvements (as promised), effective immediately:

1. With the help of Colonial Printing, we have moved to recycled paper at a minimal increase in cost.
2. We have a new format, submitted here for your approval. The Editorial Staff has voted to share responsibility for producing the Voice by rotating the position of Senior Editor. We believe that by changing the "editorial agenda" as often as possible, the Voice will grow faster, and offer the community a wider variety of artistic, political, and social perspectives, to better represent the diversity that the phrase "Bennington College newspaper" implies.
3. Part of the new format includes a switch to more magazine-oriented features, e.g. interviews. In the future, you might find an entire issue of the Voice dedicated to politics or art. We also plan to incorporate more photographs and other graphics.
4. From now on, you will also see the Voice appear on a regular schedule, with submission deadlines announced for the following issue in each issue. The deadline will usually be one week from the day the Voice comes out.
5. We also plan to make sure that there are always enough copies to go around.

When the Voice's original editors said "This is a newspaper, do with it what you will," (or something like that), they didn't mean use it to clean up a spill, they meant make it what you want by contributing, in any way, in any form. The Voice has yet to receive so much as an editorial from anyone in the Barn. This issue marks the first time that we've received an editorial from any member of the faculty. And although students have been supportive, we still need more contributions. Take this how you will: dare, insult, or memo... Just respond. Thanks.

Deadline for Issue 3: November 4, 7:00pm

Mark A. Prince, Sr. Editor/Issue 2

Letters and submissions will be printed as space permits. Submissions must be of interest to the readers of the Voice and be free of potentially libelous or slanderous material. Submissions may be dropped in the newspaper box located in the Commons mail room. The editorial committee reserves the right to edit and condense all submissions. The views of the writers do not necessarily reflect those of the Bennington Voice.

Skip's Top Ten Gifts for Senator Jesse Helms:

10. Ted Kennedy's little black book.
9. A pink slip.
8. Madonna's new picture book.
7. Aids Awareness Ribbon.
6. The 93' Maplethorpe calendar.
5. Public Enemy CD.
4. Jeff Koons and Chicolina sculpture.
3. A rocking chair.
2. Subscription to Playboy.
1. A life.

(The Voice is now accepting Personals. Please put them in the VOICE Box, on the faculty side of the post office.)

YOUR BELLY'S DELI & THE DAIQUIRI FACTORY TUESDAYS

Bennington College NIGHT

1) 25% Off Food (5-7pm)

2) Drink Specials All Night

(All beers, mixed drinks, & wines)

Specials valid with Bennington Student Id

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THE BENNINGTON VOICE EDITORIAL STAFF

Mark A. Prince-Senior Editor
Erica-Lynn Gambino- Contributing Editor
David Henderson- Contributing Editor
Joanne Lembo- Photo Editor
Chris Scannell- Copy Editor

Michael Sharkey- Editorial Advisor

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

REDNECK

To the Editors,

Suppose you noticed a poster on campus featuring a fat, middle-age black woman with nine children in tow, flies buzzing around her, a bulging book of food stamps in her hand, and a Cadillac parked in the background—all this, an invitation to a Nigger Jitterbug. Would you be offended? For the life of me, I cannot see any difference between that and the extent of bigotry exhibited in the Redneck Bar poster. The *form* of prejudice is different. Here, the target is a poor, ignorant, rural Southern white. But it makes the same assumption as the Klan-fantasy described above—that this is a portrait of a lower life form. That is sometimes considered a source of amusement for those who imagine themselves superior. The bigotry in the Redneck Bar poster seems so obvious to me that I mainly want to comment on several points raised in informal discussions:

1. *I have a Southern friend who thinks it's funny.* So what? Would you accept this argument in defense of a vicious anti-Semitic or racist caricature? Anyway, what stands out to me most is class prejudice.

2. *These are the kind of people who harass people like us.* When Axl Rose was asked why he wrote a violently anti-homophobic song, he said it was because he had been personally hassled by gays. Both are textbook bigotries, identifying a disliked trait of individuals with a group as a whole.

3. *Lighten up, it's a joke.* No, it isn't. Look at the face, that's malevolence. It's exhilarating to indulge in prejudice without inhibition, but it's not very enlightened, and it's not funny.

4. *Aren't you advocating censorship?* No. Bigotry is legal. The poster should not be prohibited, just discussed.

When I worked for ten years in Cincinnati as a factory laborer, most of the white employees were Appalachian. They seemed to have the normal range of human qualities. A few were small-minded and intolerant—as, judging by this poster, are a small number of Bennington students. Next term I am teaching a course about poor, undereducated Southern sharecroppers, in this case blacks, who produced a world-renowned musical form. The plantation owners were dumbfounded when they learned that their farmhands had created something that respectable types admired. Their prejudice is easy to see. It is not so easy to see our own.

Marc Lendler

To the Editors (and the community):

In Defense of Rednecks?

I had already decided not to attend the Redneck Party before I saw The Poster: a caricature of “a redneck” dressed in torn clothing, surrounded by flies, holding a bottle of alcohol in one hand and a pig in the other. This disgusting poster, which immediately brought to my mind caricatures of African-Americans found in white supremacist propaganda, captured and emphasized my reasons not to attend Redneck Bar: that the party itself, and this poster in particular, is an attack on the rural white poor.

I decided to look up the word “redneck” in a few dictionaries. The Dictionary of American Slang simply defines Redneck as “a rustic; esp. a poor white Southern farmer.” Webster's 3rd New International Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd Edition defines Redneck as follows:

n. 1. an uneducated white farm laborer, esp. from the South; n. 2. a bigot or reactionary, esp. from the rural working class; adj. 3. narrow, prejudice or reactionary.

It seems that the idea of a Redneck as a bigot or reactionary is what most Bennington students respond to and see as fit for attack, and at the heart of the Redneck Party idea. When I've explained my feelings about the party to some of my peers, I'm often told that the word Redneck has nothing to do with class, that “Redneck is a [bigoted, prejudice] state of mind.” I am all for fighting bigotry and prejudice. It is ironic that this party, which some view as a response to bigotry and prejudice, would produce the most shocking display of bigotry and prejudice I've seen in my two plus years at Bennington: the poster. Nothing about the figure in the poster necessarily said that he was a bigot, but it did say (in its grossly caricatured way) that he is rural and poor. To defame the rural white poor is certainly as pernicious as any form of prejudice.

Sincerely, Rosie Schaap

Editorials continued on next page



The Fresh Alternative



JEFF ENDEE

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227 NORTH STREET BENNINGTON, VERMONT

Letters to the Editors

To the Editors:

Lately I have been hearing alot of negative comments concerning the recent "Redneck Party" at Dewey. It troubles me to no end to see that certain individuals cannot or will not loosen up a little and have some fun. It's a party for God's sake! I come from the rural south, I love to fish and hunt, my family owns a pickup truck (complete with gunrack), and members of my family even listen to country music. However, I take no offense in the celebration of America's cultural diversity with a party in honor of the spirit of country living. Maybe you who take offense do so because you have not yet dealt with your own insecurities concerning class, cultural, and racial strife. I assume we will be hearing you whine about the "Transvestite Party" because it singles out those individuals who enjoy cross-dressing. And I guess we will be hearing from you after the "Bacchus Party" because a poster showing a guy in a toga drinking a beer and wearing Doc Martins bugs you. Or I suppose you will complain about the "Dress to Get Laid" party because it leaves out asexuals. I am sorry but some of us have learned how to laugh at the crazy world we all live in; including the very stereotypes that, when taken too seriously, muddle the process by which we will eventually come together. So please take a deep breath and allow yourself to have a little fun. For all of you who decided not to go to the Dewey party come to the party on Thursday and the drinks will be on me.

Sincerely,
David Henderson

Opinion: The Redneck party

Was the Redneck party promo-poster racist? You know the one: a guy holding a pig in one hand, beer in the other, flies buzzing around him. In the context of a Bennington party promotion I find the poster neither surprising, nor offensive. If the creator were to pin this kind of add on the walls of a charity institution trying to raise money for needy rural persons, then, in that case, it might be inappropriate.

The argument against the poster has been this: What if I put a poster of a black person holding a crack pipe, up on the wall in Commons, and the purpose of this was the advertise the upcoming "ghetto party?" Would that be okay? Should we still relax and learn to have a good time? Isn't the "Redneck" satire analous to the type of caricatures Tom Metzger and his Aryan movement publish in their newsletters?

The argument continues: Even if you are from a poor, rural background and claim that you don't find the poster or the party offensive, aren't you missing some deep point?

The answer to both arguments is: No. Listen, I'm

"Art is the only thing that can go on mat-
tering once it has stopped hurting."

--Bowen

Jewish, I tell a "Jew" joke, am I promoting racism and ignorance? No. Intelligent people know I am joking. And people at Bennington, I like to think, are intelligent. Here is a funny joke: How was copper wire invented? Two Jews found a penny. Oops, sorry. Did I just cross a line? What is the line? What the hell is the line between free speech and the promotion of ignorance and racism? Did that poster cross the line, or was it just mingling in the gray area?

My answer to these questions will be different from yours. It's called values. And we all have different definitions of these values. I didn't find the poster offensive and I don't think it has promoted ignorance or racist thoughts and actions. By taking the chance, the artist of that cartoon has now placed these issues in my face and yours. Admit that. Do good things grow out of bad seeds? Or is it the other way around? Neither. Bad seeds are bad seeds, and there is no such thing as a good seed. Think about that because we are all racist. Everyone lives and thinks in that gray area. The trick is the degree. And that poster wasn't hoe enough for me to cry bloody murder.

--Martin Gelbard

To the VOICE,

It is my opinion that a very bad decision was made by the Bennington College administration when a qualified person was not immediately placed into the Field Work Term office to take over Irenes' duties for this term. The administration had ample warning of Irenes departure however, she has not been replaced although the FWT office is now one of the most visited offices on campus and most important. Optimally a replacement should have been hired prior to Irenes departure and trained by her to adequately cope with the heavy influx of students now needing assistance. Susan is doing the best she can now, and I realize the hiring process can take some time, however, I think the administration responsible could do better. Please get on the ball! This gap in the FWT staff can and will deprive students, especially freshmen and transfers, of the maximum guidance and assistance required to make the FWT as successful as possible. I believe I speak for the entire student body of this school when say we expect more of Bennington and we deserve more.

--anonymous

This has happened before: Sally Webster, Bobbi Gabrenya, Marryellen Gilroy. We got lucky with Roberta Tansman. But you point out why we can't rely on luck. --Ed.

The Editors wish to encourage responses to the articles printed in the VOICE.

(Lit)

The Donna Tartt Interview

Michael Sharkey & Mark Prince

Novelist and Bennington College graduate Donna Tartt spoke to Michael Sharkey and Mark Prince from her apartment in New York City on Thursday, October 15, by telephone. The following are excerpts from the conversation:

Telephone: ring-ring-ring.

Donna's answering machine: "Hello, I'm out of town, and unable to return your call. If you'd like to leave a message for Caitlin or Cathy, who will be staying here during my absence, leave a message after the sound of the beep. Thanks."

Michael Sharkey: Hi Donna, this is Michael from Bennington College, and (phone picks up)

Donna Tartt: Oh, hi Michael, how are you?

MS: Good, how are you doing?

DT: OK.

MS: Um, just calling to do the interview.

DT: OK, great.

MS: And I just wanted to let you know before we begin that the conversation is being recorded.

DT: OK, that's good.

MS: And I'll let the other person that's doing the interview with me introduce himself...

Mark Prince: Hi there, my name's Mark Prince.

DT: Hi.

MP: I wouldn't expect you to remember me, but we met, I mean met, briefly, at your signing in Manchester a few weeks ago.

DT: We met?

DT and MS: hahaha.

DT: Interesting pun.

MS: Freudian slip.

MP: I think I'm transposing my letters here.

MS: (to Donna) So, are you feeling better?

DT: Um, actually I had a pretty fun night last night. Robert Stone and Ken Kesey were reading.

MS: Really?

DT: Yeah, it was a great double bill. Couldn't pass that up. Ken Kesey did a magic trick with my ring, he made it float in the air.

MP: Was your hand still attached to the ring?

DT: No, the ring was off, you know. It was great, he's a great performer. And I love Robert Stone, too. He's one of my favorite writers. It was fun to see them together because, gosh, they've known each other for thirty years. So anyway, that's what I did... Hang on a minute, I have to go get a cigarette.

(a minute passes, then Donna returns.)

DT: Sorry... cigarettes, matches- it's a process.

MS: What kind of cigarettes do you smoke, Donna?

DT: um, I actually smoke different kinds, but right now I'm smoking Marlboro Lights.

MS: 100's or Regulars?

DT: I hate those 100's, they're awful. I like short cigarettes... I used to smoke filterless. Lucky Strikes.

MS: What was the cigarette of choice when you were at Bennington?

DT: Marlboro Reds, Camel Filters, and then a few incredibly cool people smoked Players. And then, I don't even know if you can buy clove cigarettes anymore, but it used to be that whenever you went in Booth House there would be a stench of cloves in the air. You never saw anything else. Except Alvin Feinstein, who still, I was surprised to see, smokes Parliaments.

MS: God, he's a smokestack.

DT: Him and Eddie Sedgewick, she smoked Parliaments too.

MP: How did you come across that piece of info?

DT: It's funny, I just read somewhere that that was her brand. I'm just interested in cigarettes, and I remember things about them. These things stick in my mind.

MS: What was Bennington like when you were here?

DT: Bennington was just a glorious place to be in the early eighties. So many writers came out of our class, I think about the faces sitting around the table, in Arturo Vivante's writing workshops, someone else who is no longer there, and, you know, nearly half these people have published novels. **MPMP:** And there are more

MP: And there are more coming?

DT: There are more coming, and good ones, too. Three that I know of.



DONNA ↗

(Film)

1492: Resolving the Consequences of Truth and Myth

Erica-Lynn Gambino

The arrival of the five hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus' famed voyage to the Americas, and the arrival of the film *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (directed by Ridley Scott), have once again forced attention and controversy on one of the most important figures in history. In myth, Christopher Columbus has gone from legendary, enlightened hero who argued there was a way to get to China, west and by sea, against his superstitious peers, to stubborn villain who, among other horrific things, was an exploitative slave-trader and promoter of genocide. The most common view of Columbus is that of the brave explorer, out to prove the new geographic theory that the world was round—not exactly a monster, but not quite hero, either. And not exactly accurate.

Ridley Scott's fascinating and visually beautiful account of Columbus' discovery and the consequences of it, gives a surprisingly accurate account of these events. Though, just as surprisingly, *1492* does not touch on some of the details that might help people understand what all the Columbus hoopla is about. Filled with documentation and plot, one wonders whether it is even feasible to undertake this story in two and a half hours. Scott begins the film a year or so prior to Columbus' departure from Spain and ends it with his death. Although this satisfies the curiosity of the viewer, the disproportionate time frames with which Scott chose to depict significant events leaves one feeling, at times, disconnected from the plot and the powerful emotions it provokes. Gerard Depardieu brings a real sense of humanity and compassion to the role of Columbus (though his curious French lisp could lead one to believe he was a Castillian Spaniard). Sigourney Weaver's role of Queen Isabella is disappointingly and shallowly written. Luckily, she is a competent actress, capable of conveying emotion and communication without benefit of dialogue. However, the relationship between Isabella and Columbus remains vague. The supporting cast is also, at times, ambiguously drawn, but strongly acted.

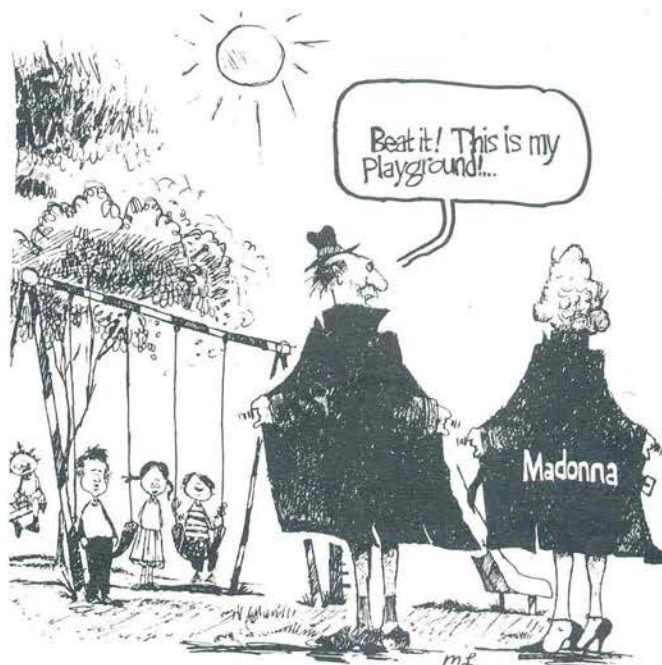
One of the controversies surrounding Christopher Columbus in the context of history, is the question of ethnic rivalry (including completely unfounded claims that he was a Portuguese, a Greek, a Majorcan Jew, a Swiss, or anything other than the Genoa-born Catholic that he was). This question of ethnicity is sometimes used to deflate

Columbus' historical significance. Related to this are attempts to show that the Norsemen got to the New World first, and that he learned of its existence from them. (That Columbus or any of his European peers knew anything about early expeditions to North America is unsubstantiated speculation). His ethnic origin also has been used as a convenient excuse for anti-Italian sentiment when needed. None of this, however, resolves the moral controversy surrounding his voyage and its lasting effect on society and the world.

The film *1492* could have done a better job in helping to define Columbus as an Italian man of the High Renaissance. From the beginning of the film, even when Columbus is shown in Genoa, we are not rooted in his culture. The cultural difference between Spain and Italy in the late 15th Century was, in actuality, quite real—the Renaissance simply had not reached Spain yet. Though the costumes and scenery were accurate, one feels more rooted in the fear and darkness of the Middle Ages, even during the scenes in Genoa. I wondered throughout the first twenty minutes of the film if I were not, in fact, watching some strange out-take of the *Name of the Rose*. Ridley Scott could not seem to help himself in showing Columbus' passion that the earth is round, coupled with the remark made by his father, "They are burning people for [believing] that."

In actuality, the theory that the world is a sphere was held by most educated people in late 15th Century Italy. And, though heretics were still burned, it was certainly not

See *1492*, page 12



*(Opinion)***Faculty-Administration Politics****Julian Young**

In an act unprecedented in the history of Bennington College, the Board of Trustees, in June of this year, overruled the recommendation of the Faculty Personnel Committee and the President of the College, denying Maura Spiegel her first five-year presumptive tenure contract. Ms Spiegel, a Bennington alumna, has taught at Bennington since 1984. In that time, Ms Spiegel has earned a reputation as one of the most extraordinary, and committed teachers at this college. Almost any student who has attended Bennington College during the last four years will remember the lines outside her office as students competed for a place in her ever popular classes, and the amount of time she gave to students in counseling, and discussing their work. Alvin Feinman, her Literature Division colleague, described her in a letter to the faculty, as "already a legendary teacher". Orlando DiMambro, SEPC representative to the Literature Division, responsible for reviewing Ms Spiegel's teaching, quotes (in a letter to the Board) a student as saying "Maura is the model which others could only hope to imitate." Having come to the end of her most recent three-year contract, Ms Spiegel became eligible for her first five-year presumptive tenure contract. Ms Spiegel was reviewed by the FPC according to three basic criteria: Student evaluations of her teaching, involvement in the College community, and professional contributions to the field such as books and articles.

The FPC, having examined all the materials available to them and interviewed Ms Spiegel, then passed on a recommendation for a tenure contract to the President. Indeed, as the Dean of Faculty stated in a summary letter of July: "Because of the quality of the external tenure review of (Ms Spiegel's) thesis, combined with exceptional reviews of (Ms Spiegel's) teaching, the Committee felt it was possible to recommend (Ms Spiegel) for tenure." The President is assumed to have concurred in this judgment since had she not, according to procedure, she would have been required to explain herself to the faculty. So, the President having passed on her recommendation, the matter rested with the Board of Trustees. The Board, then citing "absence of adequate completed professional work", overturned the recommendations, denying Ms Spiegel the contract. On closer examination however, the Board's reasons do not seem compelling. Ms Spiegel will complete her Ph.D. this month. The work she submitted

for review by experts outside the College is her doctoral thesis: a history of the emotions in Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth Century literature and thought. Ms Spiegel has been working on this text for the past eight years. In a letter to the Chairman of the Board, she described her interview with the FPC, saying that she was informed that the Committee "unanimously and enthusiastically" endorsed her tenure and furthermore, "three of the most eminent Dickens scholars in the country" had reviewed her work and that their letters of review were "outstanding." Also present at the interview, as Ms Spiegel's faculty advisor, was Alvin Feinman. Mr. Feinman states (letter to the Faculty, Sept.): "The Committee emphatically stated that the outside referees had strongly praised her work. Maura was told that eminent authorities judged the work to be a distinguished scholarly contribution." Mr. Feinman was criticized by the Chairman of the Board, John Barr, for representing confidential reviews "with certainty and in some detail. Regrettably (the) representations are both fragmentary and critically inaccurate." But Mr. Feinman did not characterize the actual review in any way, he merely reported the interview as he recalled it. Is there any reason to suppose that the FPC would deliberately mislead a candidate as to the quality of reviews of her work? Indeed, Prof. David Damrosch, who as one of Ms Spiegel's dissertation advisors has direct access to Ms Spiegel's work, describes it as "nothing other than superb."

The Board have stated on several occasions that they, the FPC, and the President agree as to the facts of Ms Spiegel's review and it is simply a matter of different interpretations. It should be a straightforward enough matter to agree as to whether a particular review is positive or negative—and yet there appears to be a great deal of confusion surrounding the nature of these materials. As we have seen, the Dean of Faculty spoke in her summary of the high quality of the external tenure reviews. The President on the other hand, in an interview with a student, House Chair Jennifer Zeuli, strongly suggested that the external reviews of Ms Spiegel's work were negative. Either Ms Sgorbati is correct, or the President is correct. They cannot both be correct. Once

See Maura, page 14

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 : "Life without industry is guilt, and in- :
 : industry without art is brutality" :
 :
 : --Ruskin :
 :

(Seasonal)

Manchester Retrospective

Heidi Leah Hojnicky

Fall is a wonderful time of the year, for that is when tourists come out of hibernation to see the Vermont maples at their peak. Sure, trees all over the country lose their leaves once a year, but they don't look quite the same as the colorful Green Mountains, or shall I say, the Rainbow Mountains. The intensity of the colors is what makes the difference. Plus, where else can you get fall foliage, mountains, a church, an old graveyard with toppling headstones, a cornfield, and a couple of cows all in one photograph?

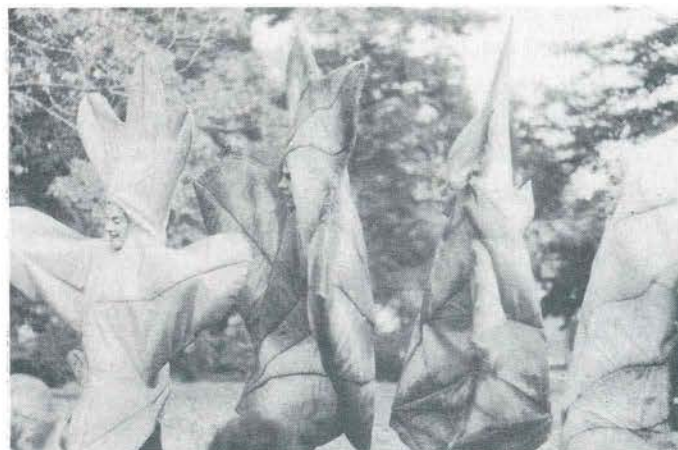
So people pile in their cars to drive up to glorious Vermont to spend a weekend being touristy in little New England towns.

Also being a tourist, I was driving along Historic 7A (also known as Tourist 7A), and it was simply beautiful. But as we approached the village of Manchester we got to witness what some may consider the best part of peak season. There were all sorts of Jaguars, BMW's, Mustang convertibles, and a couple of old Buicks, among many other cars. Let's just say there was a traffic jam from hell at (from what I know is called) "Malfunction Junction". Most every other weekend of the year you can zip through Manchester in no time at all, hardly seeing a soul. One of the best things about Vermont is the fact that you don't have to deal with hordes of nincompoops. In the reality of a Fall Foliage weekend, when George and Martha hop in the car for a nice relaxing drive up to Vermont to see the countryside, they also get to see Jaguars, BMW's, Mustang convertibles, and a bunch of old Buicks. On top of this, they can have anxiety attacks from sitting in all of this traffic. Aside from some down and out shopkeepers, the locals must dread this time of year. That's when they pack up the kids and go to New York City or Boston, because they figure that the population ratio will change. And what in particular attracts all of these tourists to Manchester? Not the foliage, but the outlet stores. Rather than getting up at the crack of dawn to climb a Vermont mountain and see a magnificent view, people leave their mall-infested communities to come to the J. Crew outlet. What bargains they'll get! People come in busloads from such places as Cherry Hill, New Jersey to participate in the event.

Being a tourist isn't always that bad, because there are these great little places that you never get to experience if you aren't a tourist. On Route 2 in MA there is a unique souvenir shop that has an obnoxiously huge wooden Indian in front of it. You can't miss this happening place. Along with the non-PC Native American, there is a sign advertis-

ing their "Live Deer". When you take a look, you see two very tiny deer that look as if they've been mistreated one too many times, and a llama. I'm not sure if the shopkeeper was trying to pull a fast one on all of us, or if this poor creature was supposed to be an added attraction. Whatever the case, any tourist would really be missing out if they passed this joint without stopping.

So if you're one of those people who just want to see the Vermont landscape in its most colorful form and you don't want to deal with large crowds, just let me know and I'll send you a postcard. You won't be missing much. ■



SEPC REPORT

Thammarath Jamikorn

On September 18, 1992, in its first meeting this semester, the Student Educational Policy Committee talked with Jenni Person and Jonathan Schwartz, trustees of Bennington College. The SEPC Division representatives wanted to know: Why the Board of Trustees overturned the recommendations of the Faculty Personnel Committee and President Elizabeth Coleman to renew Maura Spiegel's and Andre Bernold's contracts? What did John Barr, chairman of the Board of Trustees, mean when he asked the literature division to do a self-study? What exactly is the Deans' Study? Instead of clarifying these concerns, Jenni and Jon baffled and confused us.

However, Susan Borden, alumna and trustee, spoke to us on September 30th and responded concretely and openly to our concerns. We came away from the meeting with divergent opinions, but assured that the students will take part in the Deans' Study, now understood to be a college-wide educational and extracurricular self-evaluation. As to how we could participate, we were unsure.

So in the two weeks that followed, Lizbet Simmons, SEPC chair, summoned us to solicit educational concerns

See SEPC, page 13

(Politics)

Election '92 Pt. II Bar vs. Hill: The Real Competition

Erica-Lynn Gambino

America loves Barbara Bush. I think she's great. Come on, admit it, even you think she's great. She's like the cool grandmother we never had—a high-spirited, sparkling, talkative woman who speaks her mind, believes in fair discipline, loves children, and refuses to dye her hair. One can't even joke about her looking older than George anymore (have you noticed the proverbial Presidential wrinkles?). Twice as popular as her husband, she even lent an element of surprise to a sometimes boring and embarrassingly inept GOP. campaign.

Hillary, on the other hand, presents a problem. A bad problem? Doubtful. Just a different sort of problem. A Rosalyn Carter sort of problem. She, too, is a sparkling and talkative woman who speaks her mind, believes in fair discipline, loves children and is, well, chic—but not so chic as to distract us from her personality. Hillary Clinton is also a high-powered attorney, the primary wage-earner in her family, and says things like, "I'm not Tammy Wynette" (eluding to the woman-who-loves-too-much anthem "Stand By Your Man"). Rated as one of the top one hundred lawyers in America, Hillary is, unarguably and outwardly, her husband's professional and intellectual equal.

One of the things about Hillary that may be worrying voters is her "two-for-one" attitude. No one wants a First Lady who mistakes herself for President, otherwise we would have elected her ourselves, right? Just how important is the role of First Lady and why should we care what that role is? For both generational and social reasons, Barbara Bush will probably be the last of the "traditional" First Ladies—women who, though they may have been intelligent, strong, counseling, or outspoken, were so in secret or behind the facade of their Presidential husbands. However traditional these women may have been, their role as First Lady was not always conventional.

In fact, First Ladies have always had some form of influence on the President, whether in the forum of open advice or hidden control. Woodrow Wilson's wife, Edith, was practically, and illegally, President herself during his long illness.



MILLIE'S MOM, BAR

And documented letters between Abigail Adams and her husband show not just the extent of her advice and counseling, but how much of an influence she had on him as a leader of the independence movement and, later, as President. Even Eleanor Roosevelt, much like Barbara Bush, stood by her husband. However, she did not hesitate to tour the country and the world for her own causes, issues that the President was mute on (such as civil rights) and in doing so, gave a picture of Franklin Roosevelt as being supportive of these causes.

Hillary Clinton has said she has been, over the years, influenced by Mrs. Roosevelt, "because of the heavy issues she was willing to tackle." Hillary is an interesting and well-rounded woman who has vowed to be a voice for children in the White House. Growing up in Chicago, she actually supported Republican Barry Goldwater for President. She has also been influenced by Lady Bird Johnson who had what she recalls as "very strong positions on the environment."

But, by not conforming to more traditional campaign rules, Hillary helped to fuel her critics. She has been a constant GOP. target and recently, Bill Clinton was heard wondering aloud whether "George Bush was running for First Lady." Richard Nixon warned that her intelligence and outspoken nature would likely make Bill "look like a wimp" (a strange person for that comment to be coming from).

I won't even get into Marilyn Quayle, who has insisted that as a representative of the "liberal, radical wing of the feminist movement" (I believe that was supposed to be a put-down), Hillary was fair game. I wonder who took care of Marilyn's kids while she was busy being Dan's campaign manager or while she was on that nine-state book tour to promote her co-authored novel *Embrace the Serpent*?

HILL, IN GROOVY DAYS



In a TIME/CNN poll, Hillary came up with a 40% approval rating in terms of family values, while Barbara came in at a whopping 76%. What does this say about what Americans want in a First Lady? Perhaps we are ready for a strong, intelligent, outspoken woman, but maybe we are also still afraid to let her step outside of her husband's shadow—

**See Bar vs. Hill.
page 8**

Bar vs. Hill, Continued from page 7

at least not directly. No one would think of calling Barbara Bush a hypocrite or cynic for letting it be known that she is pro-choice, while her husband is so obviously trying to make abortion illegal.

Yes, in the midst of the Great Family Values battle, Bar has dropped a few bombshells of her own. She recently told reporters that abortion should not even be on the ticket (a sentiment capitalized on by the Perot party). In September, she told TIME magazine, "Fine if you're pro-choice. I understand that. And great if you're pro-life. I understand that, too. And I know that you can argue yourself blue in the face...it's a waste of your time and my time to try to change minds." She further added to this bold statement, "You know, you can't pin a child down and say you can't have an abortion; that's against the law."

She, like Hillary, has even come up against some humiliating allegations of her husband's affairs, and reacted with honesty and wit. When her fifteen-year-old granddaughter Noelle asked her what all the fuss was about regarding the Post charges, Barbara did not hesitate to explain the circumstances. Noelle laughed, saying, "Come on, Ganny." Barbara later concluded, "Well, I guess he looks ancient to her."

George Bush may just be a better President for having his wife at his side, not because he listens to her counsel (we don't know if he does or doesn't), but because her image helps enhance our view of him. Barbara does remain, however, a steadfast supporter of her husband, even if it means contradicting herself. When asked by Newsweek reporters if issues of abortion or homosexuality are issues of personal preference she replied, "Indeed they are." When asked if she is pro-choice, however, she replied, "That's none of your business. But when I run for office, I'll tell you first thing. But do I agree with my husband? Yes."

Hopelessly modest, incurably classy and smart, Barbara Bush makes most Americans feel safe, cared about, and gives America a female representation of our country we can feel good about (with the possible exception of having to be officially joined at the hip to George). "We sometimes fantasize," said a Bush campaign official, "what it would be like to have Barbara on the ticket."

Incredibly intelligent, successful and caring, Hillary Clinton might be the most misquoted Presidential candidate's wife. In the now infamous response to Jerry Brown's allegations that she benefited unfairly as a lawyer from her marriage to the governor, she said, "I suppose I could have stayed home, baked cookies and had teas." No one seems to have reported the rest of the quote: "The work I have done as a professional, and a public advocate, has

been aimed to assure that women can make the choices...whether it's full-time career, full-time motherhood, or some combination." She has also, along with her husband, helped institute some radical and much need change in the education system of Arkansas.

Though most of us will be choosing the Presidential candidate who best fits our values and our criteria, one way to judge a man's values and character is to look at the woman he's married to. In this election, I wonder if we should not be looking at the candidates' wives as candidates themselves.

.....
 "Rules and models destroy genius"

 --Hazlitt

(Vehicles on the Lawn)

Those Aren't Parents...

David Henderson

As the huge Winnabego pulled in front of Commons last week, I wondered to myself whose parents had come to see their child in his/her new college home, and why they were driving across the lawn. Perhaps on the drive from Oklahoma to Vermont they had picked up some really cool roadside finds and were going to sell them during lunch. One of those plastic bubbles with snow violently swirling around a model of Graceland would look really terrific on my desk. I've always wanted to have the complete set of United States refrigerator magnets. A big pecan log from Stuckeys' would be a nice change of pace from the snack bar's selection of sweets. I sauntered over to the enormous highway monster, silently congratulating myself for being the first to arrive for the sale and quickly rapped on the vinyl door. I heard heavy footsteps inside and waited expectantly for the mysterious occupants to open the door and show themselves. The door opened quickly and, to my disappointment and surprise, a husky uniformed police officer answered my knock. My first impulse was to run far away from this troop of vacationing public servants, for they surely wouldn't have brought any good stuff from their road-trip and I don't like doughnuts. But I swallowed the lump in my throat that always comes up upon close encounters with an officer, and accepted his invitation to come in. It turned out they were here to help educate students about the effects of drugs and alcohol. Since I know a-plenty about these matters from friends, I asked him if I could get a closer look at his gun. He quickly said "No!" and kindly offered me a ride on the "Drunken Driving Machine." I quickly said "No!" I wondered if he could punch my name in the police department's computer to see if the points from that speeding ticket in Pennsylvania were on my

See Winnabego, page 10

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Madame Toby's Horoscope ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This issue's astrological sign is: **SCORPIO** (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)— Division and domesticity plague you this month. Just when you think everyone is out to get you, you find out you are your own worst enemy. So face your inhibitions and branch out into the realm of the unexplored. Get rid of the broom and pick up a cold drink. You share your sign with: Simon LeBon and Lauren Hutton.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)— You always think you're right, and this month you are! Although you may run into some opposition, just nod and smile. Resist the temptation to withdraw into your protective shell. If you're feeling lonely, try shaving your head.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)— It's been slow in coming but you're now ready to take command of your life in a way you've never done before. Your ability to remain calm may get you through a temporary setback. Let go of your second thoughts and do what you've been wanting to do, whatever it may be.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)— You have set your sights on something you at first thought was unobtainable. But don't give up the ship...you'll get what you want if you relax and enjoy the challenge. Leave a note in someone's box and see what happens.

PISCES (Feb. 19-Mar 20)— Love is on your mind now and is confusing you daily. It will be flood or famine depending on whether or not you come out of your room. Take a little more time to really play up your assets, then get out there and flaunt them! Earth tones are excellent for you.

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr. 19)— Think big, work hard, and whatever you want will come to pass. Dedication is the very key to your success. A social or financial windfall may come your way very soon. Keep your eyes open so it doesn't pass you by. Spend, spend, spend!

TAURUS (Apr. 20-May 20)— Things may have gotten tough so hold your head high and you're sure to get satisfaction. This period marks a crucial beginning to a new phase of your life. Give a little and get ready to have some serious fun. Attend all parties to be sure you don't miss a thing.

GEMINI (May 21-Jun. 21)— You are full of energy and ready to go! Channel that energy equally into work and play. Artistic endeavors could prove quite fruitful now.

Start thinking about your appearance and love or lust is soon to follow. Jeans are particularly sexy this time of year.

CANCER (Jun. 22-July 22)— You'll want to keep looking over your shoulder now. You might have trouble expressing yourself. Throw caution to the wind and you will be able to hurdle over all obstacles in your path. At the end of the path is a pot O' gold. But don't look for it in the dining halls.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)— You've been achieving goals with little interference. Be prepared to achieve even higher goals, but with a new perspective and some extra effort. Social activity remains consistent. True entertainment is just around the corner. Prepare for your evenings with some type of group recreation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)— Money may be foremost on your mind. Don't be afraid to question authority for you will be rewarded. Your living conditions become surprisingly more comfortable and you just might have unexpected company some enchanted evening.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)— You've been on the defensive for so long that you've neglected to recognize your part in an ongoing conflict. Forgive and you shall be forgiven. Look for signs of a secret admirer soon. Free beer hand-outs may help your situation. A scarf and mittens become a necessity.

★ ★ ★
 Madame Toby wishes all a fruitful Octoberfest. I hope you all had an inspiring long weekend and look forward to receiving your questions and comments in the VOICE box. May light shine upon you these coming ★ weeks!



Michelle's Minute:

An updated cafe calendar has been posted in the dining halls. Check it for and/movie cancellations and/or additions. Activities are subject to change at the last moment! Suggestions for next term are welcome.

This month, don't miss:
JAWBOX.

First week in November, shake your booty to
BIM SKALA BIM and **THE AUTHORITY**.
 And by the way, who wrote the tasty bit about the
 bunnies?

1492, Continued from page 4

over this theory.

In showing his culture better, one might come to understand that Columbus was a man who was a true product of this Italy. He was brought into a period in his country's history dedicated to the belief that all cultures and movements (be they art, music, technology, commerce, learning, vanity or fashion) must not be repressed, but expressed legitimately as being God-given. Columbus was an extremely religious man and his motivations for his voyage to the New World were mixed, believing that as a Christian he had to fulfill certain preconditions ordained by God to prepare for Armageddon (including bringing together the people of the world through conversion).

He also, as the film depicts, initially landed in the West Indies with peaceful intentions. In *1492*, his voice over is heard: "We come in peace and honor. If the natives will be converted, it will be by persuasion, not by force...Treat them as you would your wives and children" (this, taken from historical documents).

The characterization of Columbus in *1492* is an interesting and complicated one, though I suspect the underlying theme of the film through his character was speculation. He is portrayed humanistically, and as a family man (he was a widow with two sons). A sort of wistful dreamer with a passionate temper, he is an honest and rather compassionate man who sticks to his ideals until he is pushed by circumstance to resort to cruelty. Eccentric and ambitious (the viewer is not told why), he is a man eventually caught in a turmoil that is started, but not intended, by him (Einstein's discovery of atomic energy without the intention that it would be applied to a lethal weapon, comes to mind).

When confronted with the fact that he went searching for Paradise, but found Hell instead, Columbus replies, "Paradise and Hell both can be earthly; we carry them with us wherever we go." Herein lies what I suspect to be the underlying theme of *1492*: the personal and spiritual voyage of Christopher Columbus. In the film, Columbus seems to have found God after and through the voyage, rather than before. His religious nature appears strangely clearer by the end of the film, instead of the other way around. He is simultaneously mocked and admired by all sides, as a traditional martyr would be.

In *1492*, there is great ambiguity and chaos surrounding the consequences of the discovery of the New World. One is not certain whether this was a deliberate attempt on the part of the director to get us to feel the actual ambiguity and chaos that surrounded the second and third voyages (in which the crew of the Santa Maria was murdered by the natives of San Salvador island, a civil war

breaks out resulting in fighting between the Spaniards, Columbus, the Indians, and any combination of the above, and Columbus in return brings back the Indians as slaves). The question is then raised, can *1492*'s Columbus (or the real Columbus) explore not only the New World, but himself and his beliefs, and still retain control? Can any individual retain control in this situation? And can we then blame or not blame Columbus as an individual for the consequences of discovering a new continent?

In reality, Christopher Columbus died almost forgotten in his own time, while Amerigo Vespucci was already charting much of the coastline of South and Central America and being given credit for the 1492 discovery of the West Indies. Now, five hundred years later, scholars and the politically concerned academic left are trying to re-define an historical figure. Many times we attempt to gain larger parts of the truth by embellishing and aiding history in creating myths. These myths then take on a life of their own in trying to show us where the truth may really lie. Through these myths we create villains and heroes, failing to show what may lie in between. I believe *1492: Conquest of Paradise* tries to return us to a more moderate position that broadens our view of history as we think we know it. And if it does so, with all its technical flaws, then it has accomplished something worth our attention.

It is up to us as scholars, students, and Americans with diverse cultural backgrounds, to resolve the moral controversy surrounding Columbus and the discovery of our home continent.

Columbus' enslavement of the West Indies natives for forced labor to find gold and as punishment for the atrocities of civil war deserve to be condemned, but we must be careful in selecting our moral standards when doing so. Our 20th Century moral sensibility on issues like slavery or religious conversion are never going to be satisfied with regard to history. If they were, we would no sooner give Columbus his due than Jefferson or Washington (both slave-owners), on whose principals we were able to form a slavery-free country.

Contrary to some of today's anti-Western scholars, violent, ugly, and cruel conquest was not a European invention. In the 15th Century, and long before, slavery was practiced in every form and not just by Europeans but by native peoples of the Near East, sub-Sahara Africa, Asia, South America, and even by some American Indian tribes.

It is very hard for us to understand that people believed in what they do not believe now, and held onto their beliefs with the same conviction we do. But it is nevertheless important to understand that this is the reality of human

See *1492*, page 13

1492, Continued from page 12

nature and history. Those of us who demand our historical heroes be confined to our contemporary standards, and therefore be truly noble and good in our eyes, will have few in the past to admire (except for, of course, legendary and mythical individuals). Columbus was both traditional and enlightened in a way that is difficult for us in the 20th Century to appreciate. He was a man of his time, not ours, and deserves to be viewed as such. ■

"The excellency of art is its intensity,
capable of making all disagreeables
evaporate from their being in close
relationship with beauty and truth."
--Keats

Winnabego, continued from page 10

license yet, but refrained from inquiring as I dutifully picked out a couple of pamphlets off the table and started making my way towards the exit. The officer thanked me for stopping by for it seemed he had had very few visitors. I waved good-bye as I took brisk, determined steps, heading for the snack bar for a Baby Ruth. It isn't Stuckeys' but it'll have to do. ■

**spice'n
nice**

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SEPC, Continued from page 5

that students have. During that time, we also talked with Danny Michaelson, Dean of Studies, and Susan Sgorbati, Dean of Faculty. Then we drew up an agenda that we will work on until late March of next year:

1) Plans. Under this title are anything from counseling problems, to inconsistent criteria for inter-divisional and double majors, to difficulty in getting plans passed.

2) Faculty-student relations. What do students like about their teachers? How are these qualities unique to Bennington and what can we do to promote them?

Once completed, this agenda will provide us with specific questions that we can evaluate; it will represent students' contribution to the Deans' Study. As this is a work in progress, we would like to hear your ideas and opinions. The division representatives plan to meet with students in their retrospective divisions over the next few weeks to collect information. We need to hear your voices to really represent the student body.

Here is a catalogue of SEPC members you can contact for further information:

Chair: Lizbet Simmons, who generously contributed this article; *Dance:* Christina Montoya, Tabitha Kaigle; *Art:* Belle Isgowitz, Douglas Gillock; *Music:* Josh Schreiber; *Drama:* Holly Norris, Melissa Feldman; *Science:* Katy Zingle, Kendra Buresch; *Languages:* Tina Gross; *Literature:* Rosie Schaap, Michael Sharkey; *Social Sciences:* Rebecca Stubbs, Thamm Jamikorn ■



SEPC Reps

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WE NOW CARRY CLIFFS' NOTES

Maura, continued from page 5

again, what reason would the FPC have to misrepresent the quality of such reviews?

Then there is the question of the President's recommendation to the Board. As I have stated, procedure requires that if the President has significant problems with an FPC recommendation the President must explain her reasoning to the faculty. Alumni Trustees, in a meeting with students, have said that when asked if she recommended all eleven candidates for new contracts the President replied that she had reservations about two candidates. In the same interview with Ms Zeuli, the President said, "Of course I had reservations, of course I had issues—there are always issues." Since these reservations would seem to include a radically different assessment of Ms Spiegel's reviews from that made by her faculty colleagues, one might imagine this to be a matter for discussion with faculty prior to the Trustee meeting. But no. Is it possible that the President secretly opposed Ms Spiegel's tenure appointment, and in an attempt to avoid controversy last spring, deliberately concealed it from the faculty?

In any case, part of what makes this decision so shocking is the unprecedented privileging of publication above all other criteria. Ms Spiegel's record as a teacher is unchallenged. As for community involvement, Ms Spiegel has participated in numerous Admissions, Parent's Weekend, Orientation, and other activities. She has often attended student readings, concerts and plays. She has been very much a part of our college community. This is not a large research university; we should not behave as if it were. Publication is a virtue, but it should not be the overriding concern. The very reason that Ms Spiegel has been slow to publish over the last eight years is not lack of intellect, but dedication to *teaching*. The Board of Trustees appears to entertain a very different view of the place of teaching in the hiring and retention of faculty at this institution. Indeed, while the Board may have ultimate custodial responsibility for the College, are they really qualified to make a judgment of this kind? Ms Spiegel's *peers* have examined her, her teaching and her written work, and have not, apparently, found her wanting. The Trustees, having made this decision, then instituted the Dean's Study; "a comprehensive study of all matters relating to the policies and practices of faculty appointments and responsibilities"—simply, a review of what makes a good Bennington teacher, and what qualifies them for reappointment. It seems strange, to say the least, to deny Ms Spiegel tenure, and then institute a review of appointment criteria *after the fact*. Would it not make more sense to simply postpone such a decision until after

the study? Or is the Dean's Study, and the sudden concern over criteria, merely an attempt to retroactively lend spurious credibility to what is essentially a political firing? For it is well known that from April, when the intention was announced to make cuts in faculty positions—cuts which ultimately mean the loss of thirty-two courses a year from the curriculum—Ms Spiegel opposed both the scale of the cuts, and the manner in which they were being implemented. She herself submitted an alternate plan involving much gentler reductions, but this was ignored. When students demonstrated against cuts, occupying the Barn for a week, Ms Spiegel's support was open. For her pains she was accused, in a closed meeting, of agitating and unethically manipulating students into demonstrating—a charge which, knowing the independent nature of Bennington students, is as absurd as it is baseless in fact. At the end of the term Ms Spiegel was one of several faculty called before the Executive Committee of the Board, to discuss student unrest. Bearing this in mind, when the Board chose Ms Spiegel's tenure candidacy as the one with which they had the most problems, it had the appearance at least, of a *suspicious* coincidence.

What can students do about this? Trustee Educational Policy Committee Chairperson Susan Borden stated that if the FPC were to make a recommendation for a different kind of contract in Ms Spiegel's case—one year, or three year—she "did not know" what the Board's response would be. I suggest therefore a mass petition of the Faculty Personnel Committee in support of Maura Spiegel. Students should also write to the President, and the Chairman of the Board, Mr. John Barr, with their questions. The Literature Division has received at least 150 letters from alumni, including many recent graduates, supporting Ms Spiegel—all of which are on file in the Literature Division office and open to any to read. Readers who doubt what I have said here should examine these letters, and see that I am not alone. We, as free-thinking, independently minded Bennington College students should not sit still for this absolutely unprecedented action—for if we do we will have allowed what is at best a serious mistake on the part of the Board, involving a much valued member of this community, to go unchallenged. ■

Donna, continued from page 3

MP: Do you keep in touch, or have you heard through the publishing grapevine?

DT: My class, in a funny way, never really graduated. It's been like one long NRT (Non-Resident-Term, the old name for FWT).

MP and MS: hahaha.

DT: It's true, it's been like one long summer after graduation.

MP: What did you do for your NRTs?

DT: Well, I worked at a radio station, and I worked for the Atlantic Monthly. Tell me something, I heard that Bennington requires SAT scores now, is that true?

MS: yeah.

MP: sort of.

DT: Because I wouldn't have been there if they had required them when I applied. I think I got in on a short story I sent in. Nobody I know would have been there if they had required SAT scores. That was part of the reason I went to Bennington. I must stress that Bennington was wonderful when I was there. Although I don't like some of the things I've been hearing lately about the changes that are going on. These beloved teachers are being fired, and all the changes in the Administration. One of my dearest friends went to Harvard after Bennington, and he kept saying "Bennington has it all over Harvard." And I know someone else who taught writing at Harvard, who also taught at Bennington briefly, and this person said that the quality of writing was so much better at Bennington than at Harvard. That was the great thing about Bennington when I was there, I mean our class was, you know, everybody there was like the oddly gifted person who made bad grades and hung out in the parking lot.

MP: Is that why you came to Bennington? I mean, was it more attractive to you because of who was here?

DT: It was attractive to me on all counts. Vermont is just beautiful. Everything about it was really good. Whenever I go back, I expect to see my old friends come walking out of buildings. I was there over the summer with one of my classmates, and we were walking down by the End of the World, and the lights were coming on, and my friend said to me, if we walked upstairs at the moment, it would have been ten years ago, and our friends would be waiting for us. We thought we graduated, but these things happen, you know.

MS: How was it to be back? Did you go back to your old house? Where did you live?

DT: I lived in Leigh for a long time. My first house was Kilpatrick. I lived upstairs in one of those double rooms. Then Leigh, which I loved, I think room seven. Then I moved to Franklin, number eleven. I lived there for two years. And then Welling for my last term, I think room twenty in the Senior Suite. Can I get a glass of water? Hold on a moment.

(a minute passes, Donna returns)

DT: OK, I'm back.

MP: Hi. You mentioned earlier that you were upset about some of the faculty decisions, and I know that the book is dedicated to Maura, among others. Have

you spoken to her?

DT: I haven't spoken to her, but I've spoken to people who have. People have come up to me in several places over the country, in San Francisco and Seattle, and specifically mentioned Maura. A lot of alumni have expressed approval for what I said (about this issue) in the *Boston Globe*. And in fact, I don't think I've talked to anyone who has been happy with the changes that have gone on. You know, everyone seems to be really non-plused about this.

MS: That's been my experience.

DT: I mean, people just seem to be outraged, you know, universally, people I've never met. If one quarter of what I hear about Liz and the letting go of Maura is true, then I don't know... I think that that was reprehensible.

MP: What classes did you take with Maura?

DT: Um, the reason Maura is in the book's dedication is because I took a class with Maura, I don't remember the name of the class, but it was basically from Dickens to Dostoyevsky, you know, a class on the novel. It was the only class where you read nothing but novels, and a lot of criticism. It really gave me with a lot of invaluable knowledge about how a novel was constructed. It really kind of changed my life, that class. And now she's gone. It infuriates and enrages me, and many people feel as I do.

MS: How do you feel about Claude?

DT: Mandatory retirement? What is this, Russia? Basically, Maura and Claude were the two most important teachers that I had there, and I loved Alvin, and Richard Tristman. And there were other teachers. It was very funny, because there was a party at Bret Ellis' house, and there was an editor from Simon and Schuster who asked a group of Bennington people who were standing around, who had all written novels, at least four of us, and he asked "What is it? Do they put something in the water?" and the only thing we could think of that we all had in common was we all had taken Writing Workshops with Arturo Vivante. And he's not there anymore.

MP: A lot has changed, apparently. One of the things you mentioned before was the clove odor in Booth, and I think they have a no smoking suite now.

DT: Oh Lord.

MS: Booth is one of the tamest houses on campus.

DT: Well, I'll tell you a story... You could basically go to Booth anytime. I have a problem sleeping, and Booth was always great because you go there at any hour of the day or night and there would be somebody, usually five or six people, sitting in Booth Living Room. They had a

See *Donna*, page 16

Donna, continued from page 15

crappy little stereo, there was always a keg of beer, you know, it was the party equivalent of the All Night Study Room.

MP: Which is in the cafeteria these days.

DT: Disgusting. But this is a great story about Booth House... One day, about two o'clock, the day after a party, there were these Booth guys, sitting around hung over, they all sort of just got up, and there were whiskey bottles around, a complete mess, and this nicely dressed little old lady hobbles in the door. And she says (Donna in her little old lady voice): "Is this Booth House?" And you know, it was horrible, because there were all these whiskey bottles lying around, and the place was completely trashed, there were obscene pictures all over the walls, banisters missing. So the guys stood up, kind of embarrassed, and said "Yes, this is Booth," and they felt really bad. So the old lady stood there for a minute, looked around, and she said (again in little old lady voice): "Well boys, I'm happy to say that Booth is still the wildest house on campus."

MP, MS, and DT: hahahahaha.

DT: It's a true story.

MS: Did you hear about the party that ended Booth House?

DT: Yeah yeah yeah.

MS: With the crucified possum?

DT: Well it was already dead, right? I mean, I do have a problem with crucified possums, frankly, but you know, they found it. If they had killed it, I don't know, I would have to...

MP (to Michael) : Donna draws the line at killing small animals.

DT: I do. I definitely draw the line at that. Not acceptable, under any circumstances. Even for Booth.

MS: Let's go into the novel for a minute.

DT: Uh huh.

MS: I have a question about Apollonian and Dionysian ideals. It seems apparent in your novel that you are playing on some sort of transitory stage that's occurring- I mean I may be reading too much into it, but do you feel as though we are at a point in 1992 with the millennium approaching in 8 years... is something changing?

DT: Any social commentary that novelists make- I think that they do make it all the time- but I think that is best made unconsciously. If they try to do it, it becomes labored and bad. Novelists are kind of a lightning rod they do tell us things that are going on. It's very funny, the Greeks are much closer to us now than they ever have

been. Each age refracts the Greeks through its own... the renaissance had their Greeks, the Victorians had their Greeks. We know more now, in the latter half of the 20th century. We're able to see the Greeks more clearly than I think people have been able to for a really long time- probably since the middle ages. Also we have a lot in common with the Greeks. When Plato was around the Greeks were very materialistic- just as we are. There was still religion but people didn't really believe. There were temples and people went to them sort of like what's going on right now. There were religious holidays like there are now. It was not an age of faith and this is not an age of faith. The Greeks were obsessed with youth and obsessed with beauty as we are. You look at a Medieval Madonna and you see that's its not as important to them how the body of the Madonna looks. What they want you to see is something that does not exist in the world. They want to represent something that is divine. The things that the Greeks did, something that is so charming about the Greeks, is that they like to show you how everything is put together- they like to show you how things are constructed. They want you to see how the muscles in an arm work. For example in their architecture the Greeks knew all about the arch and it would have been a handy thing for them to use in their buildings, but they wouldn't use it just because it was sort of unclear with the arch what was supporting what. They liked to see how the building was being held up. That's one reason the Greeks are interesting. They're sort of a source of perpetual interest. With the Greeks its pure skeleton and pure structure and its beautiful in that sense. It's so clear, it's so pure, it's so true. The lily is not gilded, it's just the lily as it is.

MS: There's another question about the novel. A problem that I had with the character Richard was, well, I had a gender problem. I couldn't disassociate him from you, knowing that the writer was female. Also Richard Papen doesn't really reveal much about himself. Could you comment on this?

DT: Sure.

MS: I mean, is this you? Is Richard Papen you?

DT: No. No, he's not. It was ventriloquism, it was method acting. It was me going to my desk and being someone else.

MP: Did you have a chance to take acting at Bennington?

DT: Yes, I did, with Leroy, another teacher I loved who's no longer there. But it's funny, when this novel was being submitted, they (the publishers) knew nothing

See Donna, page 17

Donna, continued from page 16

about me, and people were talking about the author as "he," and would be sort of shocked to discover a woman had written this. But you know, there are two things about this: Richard is actually a very skewed character. He's not supposed to be a normal, representative, teenage boy. His sexuality is kind of weird. He's so paranoid about where he comes from, and that's a large part of the paranoia of the book; his fear of being found out. And that's where a lot of that pedantic voice comes from. Even years later, he's still trying to show you how much he knows, he's overly anxious to impress the reader. He's a character, a vehicle for observation. You're seeing things through his eyes, his filter.

MP: What relation do you see between Richard and the characters at his school, and the characters who do appear in real life at Bennington?

DT: What do you mean?

MP: Well, this particular type of anxiety about covering up where he's from, and adjusting to Hampden, is something that someone might feel when they come to Bennington.

DT: In a lot of ways, the college in my book is similar to Bennington, but in a lot of other ways it's really not. I sort of changed it to suit my purposes. My experience differs from Richard's in that I spent my first year at the University of Mississippi, where the most popular kids were the richest ones. The most popular girl was the one who had the reddest Mercedes convertible and the prettiest clothes, where at Bennington, you don't know who has money and who doesn't. Somebody's dad could be the president of Visa. Money and social standing and popularity don't have anything to do with your experience. You could be friends with someone for months before you realize that they come from a completely different socio-economic background, and it wouldn't really matter a bit. That's where the college in my book differs from Bennington, just because it had to for the purposes of the book, with Richard's paranoia.

MP: Are you looking forward to the film?

DT: Alan Pakula is directing the movie, which is good because he's good at translating books to film. He's done it before, he did *Sophie's Choice*, he did *To Kill a Mockingbird* when he was young, and you couldn't ask for a more perfect adaptation of a book to a movie. He's pretty faithful, and you know when they sell movie rights, they can say "OK, we'll have this book, but we're going to set it at a college in Southern California and instead of studying Greek, these people are going to be surfers or roller bladers and the mysticism will center

around roller blading."

MP and MS: hahaha.

DT: They can do this, you know, they pay you a lot of money, and basically you're selling your characters up the river. They can have a TV series, they can have a cartoon series, you know, "*Henry Winthrop, Boy Detective*." I'm very happy because I'm in good hands.

MP: Who's doing the adaptation to screenplay?

DT: Joan Didion and John Gregory Dunn were going to do it, and now there's a problem with the production company. I don't understand half of this Hollywood stuff, and things are in sort of a holding pattern. But they might be free when and if it goes into production. You know, this is far from certain.

MP: I don't know about Michael, but I only have one more question...

DT: Uh huh.

MP: Do you like Star Trek?

DT: I do, actually.

MS: Mark's a Trekkie. He even watches the New Generation.

DT: I have problems with that. I love the old Star Trek.

MP: Did you ever see the one where they meet Apollo?

DT: I did! I remember seeing that when I was a kid. Yeah, I remember seeing that. It's funny, when I was young people used to tease me because if Mr. Spock had had a child, you know, I looked like a little Vulcan. When I was a little girl, I had really dark, straight hair, and really pointy eyebrows. If there had been a casting call, if Mr. Spock had to have a six year old daughter, it would have been me.

MP: Amazing.

MS: Well, this interview has gone places I never expected. But is there one final thing you would want to say to Bennington?

DT: (laughs) I don't know, that's hard. I can't think of anything good. I'd like to come up with something profound to say, but I can't. Other than Maura and Claude, you know, bring them back. ■

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FIPSE Progress: October 13, 1992

As the new project on campus, we'd like to keep people informed of our progress and plans. As it was introduced in our press release, this Grant is funded by the Federal Department of Education for Drug and Alcohol Abuse Prevention Programs.

Our staff includes Roberta Tansman, as project Director, myself, Gail DeGioia R.N. as Project Coordinator, Brian Clark and Kimberly Bergman as assistants. Brian and Kimberly will be assisting with education and programming, in addition to working on the Emergency on Call team. David Rosenthal of Psychological services and Linda Campbell of Housing and Activities will also be working very closely with our staff.

Our first semester is going to be primarily a planning period. At this time, these funds will allow the Cafe to extend its hours to seven days a week beginning on long weekend. We wish the Cafe much success and hope that students will take advantage of this opportunity.

As required by the grant, a pretest survey was distributed by housechairs at coffee hour. We thank you all for your cooperation. We anticipate these results will help us to assess our needs and facilitate the development of an substance abuse education program. These results will not be available till November.

Following the death of Brian Healy, an informal meeting was held in Commons on September 30th. This meeting was for housechairs and freshman to discuss Heroin, Alcohol and other substance abuse. John Hearst, Director of Health Services and myself presented some basic information and answered questions. We would gladly repeat this at any time in the future upon request or present information on other topics of interest.

Bennington is part of the Berkshire Consortium. Members of our group will be attending monthly meetings. The last meeting was held at North Adams State College on October 16th. This time was spent previewing videos and materials that each institution has available for resources that may be exchanged among the members of this Consortium. If any student is interested in attending they may do so. There is an effort to create a "student Consortium" among the Peer Educators from each member institution.

On October 23, David Rosenthal and I will be attending a mandatory training conference for New Grantees. We hope to obtain some information that will enable us to proceed with our grant successfully.

A FIPSE student committee has been formed and is meeting bimonthly. Our intent is to plan and organize a

series of presentations for the end of the semester. Both students and faculty will be preparing for these presentations to be offered in memory of Brian Healy. We will also be reviewing material and planning for a Resouce Library. If anyone knows of a book or video they feel should be considered for this library please bring the title, author and publisher information to our attention

We have advertised in College Week for students interested in the Peer Educator Program to contact us. There will be a formal training conference in November that we would like selected students to attend. Further training will continue as we initiate this part of our project.

Still to be discussed and planned with the Steering Committee are the Mini grants and the student video production. When policy and guidelines are in place students will be informed. We still need to discuss the video production with faculty before we can offer students more information.

I welcome any comments regarding these events and programs. Feel free to put comments in Health Services mailbox or come in and speak with me. Next month we will continue to provide students with our continued progress. Take a few minutes to read the additional information and articles provided, and watch our calendar of events and let us know if you would like to get more involved.

Alcohol & Your Body

Alcohol is a drug. It is a dipressant that is absorbed into the bloodstream & transmitted to virtually all parts of the body.

The impact of alcohol varies among individuals. However, even moderate doses of alcohol reduce physical coordination and mental alertness, making certain activities, such as sports or driving, dangerous. Larger doses of alcohol cause staggering, slurred speech, double vision, sudden mood swings, & unconsciousness.

Drinking to excess in any situation is poisoning yourself.

In addition, long-term heavy drinking & binge drinking may result in respiratory arrest & death. Long-term heavy drinkers increase their risk of developing liver and heart disease, circulatory problems, peptic ulcers, various forms of cancer, and irreversible brain damage. Heavy drinkers may also become hooked on the drug and die if it is withdrawn too quickly. The surest way to avoid any physical damage due to drinking is to avoid alcohol.

Paid Editorial

Grief Work

By David Rosenthal

Psychological Services

The reaction of grief to the loss of a person is generally recognized as a universal experience. People are repeatedly subjected to losses and separations throughout their life. The loss may be of a possession, an opportunity, youth, a body function, or of a relationship.

The recent events on the Bennington College campus surrounding Brian Healy's death have evoked many reactions and feelings in this small community. There are as many individual emotional responses to this situation as there are people on campus. The range of feelings we may be experiencing are sadness, anger, frustration, guilt, relief, and the common experience of feeling nothing at all.

Students who lived with Brian, who socialized with him, and who studied with him feel the impact of his loss more intensely than others in this community who must deal with the reverberations that have resulted. For those of us who didn't know Brian, what did we lose? We lost the promise of a carefree fall semester at college where we are sheltered by the harsh realities of the world outside. We lost our concentration on our studies and our work. Many people may have lost some sense of predictability in their lives. Questions have been asked: Will there be major changes on campus? Can you die from using drugs? Will my parents want to withdraw me from school?

It is important to be aware of the mourning process that people go through when they have experienced a loss. These phases are both necessary and natural. The mourning process is experienced no matter how tragic or how trivial the loss may be. The only difference is the length of time it takes for recovery and the intensity of emotions.

When a traumatic event happens we become overwhelmed and we temporarily lose a sense of control, connection, and meaning. We enter a phase of shock which can be characterized by a numbing or a stunned feeling. Common thoughts are "I couldn't believe it" or "I was in a dream and it didn't seem real". We can be rendered powerless and helpless to act in any sort of rational manner.

Following shock we quickly fall into a state of denial. We tend not to believe what obviously happened and may still act or feel like nothing has changed. We may act as though Brian has not really died, and expect to see him again. Denial functions as a buffer or as self protection after unexpected news. We are then allowed some time to collect ourselves.

When denial can't be maintained it is replaced by

feelings of anger, rage, and resentment. When a person experiences a loss our thoughts and personal resources try to recover what has been lost. Anger can be understood as the disappointment of not being able to recapture the past. The reality of the loss can no longer be defended against, and anger may be directed at those who encourage acceptance when our own pacing may be slower. Anger and guilt may be at yourself or others who you thought could have prevented the death. There is a sense that Brian's death could have been prevented ("If only...").

Sadness is a normal and healthy response to any misfortune. More intense episodes of sadness are elicited by a loss of either a loved person or a friend. At this phase the loss is very real. We accept the fact that we will never see the person again and that our life has changed because of it. The loss may trigger memories of previous losses we have experienced. It is natural for those who experience loss to react with loneliness and despair. As long as there is an active interchange between ourselves and the outside world, our own experience is not one of depression.

To facilitate the recovery process we must feel we have a sense of safety and security in the place and people around us. Our own room and familiar possessions become vital. We look to friends, House Chairs, faculty, staff, and administration for support. It's important to feel like you are in control and empowered to know what is best for you. Then we can begin the process of mourning and remembering. We must not postpone or deny or cover up. The sooner you allow to be with your pain the sooner it will pass. Pretending to have more energy or enthusiasm or happiness then you actually have does not help. Avoid use of substances, this only covers up feelings. Its okay to be low-key for awhile.

Brian Healy's death was clearly untimely for this community. It is premature for someone to die at his age. The death of a child, adolescent, or young adult is untimely, regardless of cause, because the person is thought to have been deprived. A sudden unexpected death is felt as a far greater shock then a predictable one. The way Brian was discovered, the sequence of events that followed, all within the intimate proximity of people he knew, leaves in our mind an extremely tragic visual image.

After enough time has passed and people around us have been understanding and supportive of the range of feelings and of the mourning process, we can begin to accept the loss. Acceptance is not once again being happy, but the pain is gone and the struggle is over. Life's activities are resumed and the experience becomes part of who we are.

(Infomercial)

Alcohol Misinformation

1. Alcohol is a sexual stimulant.

False. Increasing your alcohol intake decreases your ability to function sexually. Although you may be less inhibited when you are high, you are less likely to be able to follow through.

Alcohol weakens your defenses, lessens your inhibitions and lowers your ability to make safe, smart decisions about sex partners and activities. As a result mixing alcohol and sex increases your chances of getting pregnant or getting a sexually transmitted disease, including AIDS. It also can set the stage for date rape.

2. It is okay to mix alcohol with other drugs.

False. Combining alcohol and other drugs is the number one cause of drug-related death in this country.

Alcohol can cause adverse or potentially fatal reactions in people taking prescriptions or non-prescription medications. In addition, mixing alcohol and street drugs, such as crack or PCP, is especially risky because the true ingredients and quality of the street drugs are unknown.

3. Drinking only beer or wine does not lead to serious drinking problems.

False. Wine and beer drinkers can develop serious drinking problems. A bottle of beer or wine cooler, a glass of wine, and a shot of hard liquor all have about the same amount of pure alcohol—a little more than one-half ounce. Alcohol in wine or beer is absorbed more slowly because it is diluted. Thus, while you probably will not feel the effects of the alcohol as quickly when you drink beer or wine, you are pouring the same amount of alcohol into your system. And you may be developing a serious drinking problem.

4. There is no way to sober up quickly.

True. Time is the only sobering agent. Coffee won't do it. Neither will cold showers, vomiting, or any other remedy you know. To become sober your body must metabolize the alcohol, and this is a slow process. As a rule, it will take one hour for a male weighing 150 lbs. to metabolize the alcohol in a standard drink (one glass of wine, shot of liquor, or bottle of beer.) Factors such as weight, health, and age will affect how quickly your liver can metabolize the alcohol.

5. Anyone can drink two or three drinks without their behavior and judgment changing noticeably.

False. Alcohol changes behavior and judgment beginning

with the first drink. The change is progressive. The number of drinks it takes for the changes to be noticeable varies for each individual.

The impact of two, three, or any number of drinks on your behavior and judgment varies in response to social and physical factors. Social factors include your mood and setting (both people and place). Physical factors include your body weight, the amount of food in your stomach, the amount of rest that you have had, how quickly the alcohol enters your system, and your health and gender. (Women usually feel the effects of alcohol faster than men even when compared to men of the same weight. Hormonal changes and the use of oral contraceptives also change the impact of alcohol.)

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