

The New Paper

November 1976

at Bennington College

Vol. I Issue II

Riding Home with John Cheever

JOHN SAVLOV

He gives the impression that his life has been effortless, the simple act of continually working out what he has always assumed to be his natural gifts. John Cheever, internationally acclaimed novelist and short story writer, possesses a mystifying combination of keen intuition and immense intellectual knowledge. One never seems to disturb the other, their development having been parallel, and they interpolate in fiction, which Cheever, quoting Cocteau, calls, "A force of memory that is not understood."

"It's a very dark country," John Cheever said the morning after his reading at Bennington last October 14. A Bennington student drove Cheever to the Albany train station from where he would travel to his home in Ossining, N.Y. I came along for the ride and we conversed in the back seat.

"There's a whole plateau you're working with that is stimulated by current experience and what you recall, but it is an unknown. You're taking very big risks — you must in order to be a good writer. You can do absolutely anything you want. That includes maximum hopefulness and maximum despair. All fiction that's any good is experimental."

But Cheever's awareness of what he can do and the way he values it has preceded

the risks he feels he takes in producing fiction: "I was brought up in the Athenian twilight of Boston. I think I was twelve when I decided to be a writer and in those days it was not improper or unusual to want to be one. My aunt was a painter, my cousin was a concert pianist. I told my parents I wanted to be a writer. They said, 'We'll think it over.' So in a couple of days they came back and said, 'All right. If you want to be a writer, that's fine. But you must not be concerned with fame or wealth.' I said 'All right' — and I think this has genuinely been my approach.

"I write, quite simply, to communicate my most acute intimate feelings to a group of people who are now strangers. With the passing of the British intellectual middle class, we no longer know to whom we are speaking. It's very exciting and it's a way what is to me a very exciting and mysterious life."

Cheever's first widely read story appeared in *The New Republic* when he was 17, following his expulsion from Thayer Academy for smoking.

"Had I gone on to college it would have been the end. I already knew my voice, knew what I wanted to do, had read a freakish amount and had already published some. Harvard would have been the end of me."

Instead, Cheever went on to write 220 short stories and four novels (including one due out this winter). He has also written scripts for the television show *Life With Father*, won the Howells Medal for Fiction and the National Book Award, taught advanced composition at Barnard College and writing at Iowa State, and traveled extensively throughout Europe.

He set his stories exclusively in places he has been, particularly suburbia, and peoples them with absurdly tragic figures. In one story, "Artemis the Well Digger," the romantic, anxious hero finds himself implicated in a Communist plot and "sings the reality blues." In his well-loved "The Enormous Radio," a super-efficient radio broadcasts the miseries and scandals of its owner's apartment house. An idea comes by way of a friend's anecdote or the thought of some face in his past, and he begins.

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Ann C. Cobb

The College Farm: Plucking Chickens at Bennington

Elizabeth Gale Shacknove

Between the years 1942-1944 Bennington College, in addition to academic studies, ran a farm. Two weeks before the end of the fall term Pearl Harbor was bombed. The United States was in a state of emergency and it was questionable if the school would re-open in the spring.

After the end of fall term the college administration made the decision to operate a farm and Robert Woodworth volunteered to coordinate the project. He was on the science faculty and in addition to full time teaching and counselling duties he contributed 1,700 hours to the farm project in its first year.

The feeling prevailed that in addition to the farm being an asset to the college it would give students the opportunity to contribute to the war effort without violating their ethical beliefs. This also familiarized students with agriculture, allowing them to gain an understanding of the relationship of crops in the fields and food on the table. A 1942 Bennington College Bulletin stated the farm was in-

stituted as a war measure but planned as a permanent feature of the college operations, putting into use "arable land and existing equipment belonging to the original estate."

NRT was used to coordinate the program, seedlings were raised in the greenhouse, land was prepared, and plans were made for the purchase of a quick freeze. The quick freeze is still in use. A root cellar to house apples, potatoes and cabbage was constructed and there is still an impression in the land east of Dickenson where it stood. The academic calendar was changed, not so much due to the farm program as to the shortage of oil to heat the school in the winter.

Students returned in the spring and planting began. Farm equipment was renovated from the original Jennings Estate. The maintenance crew was employed to supplement voluntary student labor. Originally each student was to volunteer five hours a week, but it turned out that out of a student body of 250, 25

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Counseling

By LIZ INTRATOR

On October 20, Michael Rock, Dean of Studies, made public the decision to distribute the academic mid-term and final reports to counselors rather than directly to the students. This is the first structural revision of the counseling system to be implemented, and others are presently under consideration of the Deans.

The faculty discussions on counseling

began last Spring when, according to Mr. Rock, "the FEPC had decided that for whatever reasons, counseling was not working as well as it could be." This resulted in a series of "long and torturous" faculty meetings this semester in which the problems facing counseling were discussed. Faculty members were apparently unclear about the counselees' expectations, and some felt unsure as to the precise manner in which non-academic problems should be handled. In an interview, Don Brown, Dean of Faculty, emphasized the need for collaboration with the Health Service, but

Continued on Page 4

Letter Box

To the Editors:

Your first issue was a nice start. We haven't had a place where we could exchange views at the College in a serious way ever since the Hyman-Jackson Lottery was discontinued. Two cheers for editorials!

What we need now is for all of those letter writers to come out of their closets, alumnae like myself, as well as present students. If they don't express their views, the College will remain the participatory autocracy that it is rather than the anarchic aristocracy that it used to be.

Yours for the New Paper,
(Ms.) Rachel Owlglass, '61

HI!

My name is Jef Brown and I am writing you this letter from a state prison. I am 22 years old, white, and I try to keep up on what's happening in the world today. I am in jail for burglary and will be here awhile. I am writing this letter in hopes of finding people interested in corresponding with me!

My address is: Jef Brown, 76-D-7, Box 51, Comstock, New York 12621.

Dear Editors:

I was very pleased to receive a copy of the first issue of The New Paper. Congratulations on having the energy and imagination to do it. Even on a campus of 600 students there is a real need for communication.

I hope in future issues you will be able to write about some of the exciting and interesting things which particular faculty and/or students are doing which the rest of the campus seldom hears about. It also would give those who care but are not there an opportunity to learn about the college in specific ways.

Thanks for starting it — and good luck.
Sincerely,
Merrel Hambleton

Waiting for Word

by LAINE HAMMER

Curious, is it not, to look at the New Paper letter box and realize, with the possible exception of one letter signed by pseudonym, we have received no student mail in response to the first issue? You may look toward the box now and say, "but less than six letters were received anyway." This is a matter worth its own discussion which perhaps will be accommodated shortly.

To glance back at the box, it must be taken for granted that more people have opinions than volunteer them, particularly in writing. More particularly, in writing publicly. Every staff member of the first issue has spoken to more people than will ever expose their words to New Paper pages. This is not limited to students; the same is true of all our readers. Indeed, readers everywhere.

The paper has been graced with a reasonably good reception by the Bennington Community, but my intention in writing is not to record the score of compliments paid vs. epithets hurled. Rather, through exploring the nature of responses thus far received in addition to profound self-examinations between the last issue and this one, we shall hopefully

attain a serviceable community newspaper rather than a glorified galley.

Initially, faculty and trustees (not to mention parents, of course) were kinder critics than the larger portion of fellow students with whom we spoke. But time has been kindest of all and I have since heard students ask with interest when the next issue would be published.

This is the issue they have been asking about. Editorially we have been hard-pressed to respect the various forces of conflict, ranging from outside to inner trespasses at the crossroads between issues.

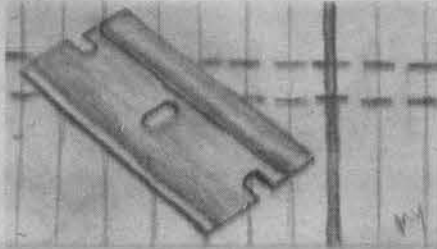
The reasons for lack of student response from the first issue are somewhat enigmatic and worth ruminating. The word regularly grabbed for first is "apathy," but this word presents its own enigma and perhaps for this reason apathy itself has not yet been remedied. The word "apathy" has been used to imply a cause, when it is just another word for the symptom. Its application is not unlike looking at the situation or predicament to which an individual ultimately comes, predestined by his own nature, and trying to interpret its causes only in terms of the present context.

Failure to act often has its source in the

conviction that action will be ineffective. It also reflects the wish to see things remain as they are, although less than satisfactory because there is equal if not more satisfaction in remaining a critic.

It is simply strange, as a staff member, to see the body of my fellow students, each member equally eligible to shape the future contour of their school's newspaper, lie back and ignore a general meeting (held shortly after publication of the first issue), the purpose of which was to find prospective new contributors, and even ignore the invitation to direct responses publicly to the editors.

There is another possible reason for the absence of student response, this apparent apathy; perhaps the topics we considered were not sufficiently pertinent. If this has been the case then your responses and suggestions are needed urgently. By far, your dissatisfaction with the present issue may most deeply result from lack of formal previous reader response. Solipsism can be catching; in isolation from the community we can hardly serve it. In reverence for the potential of written word, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, "The pen becomes a clarion." Do allow for the chance here; together we shall best carry on.



SEEKING PEN PALS

I am incarcerated in prison, and would like to correspond with college students. I'll answer all letters as soon as possible. WRITE SOON, PLEASE. Thank You! Southern Ohio Correctional Facility, Robert Edward Strozier, 131-502, P.O. Box 787, Lucasville, Ohio 45648.

Staff

Dawn Stainback, Scott Baldinger, Laine Hammer, Mary Yntema, John Savlov, Liz Intrator, Wayne, Elizabeth Gale Shacknove, Rose Crowley, Business: John Holland, Amy Spound. Special thanks to Alex Brown.

This will be the last issue of The New Paper for this term due to a lack of student copy and uncompatibility among staff members. We have disbanded temporarily to reflect on our growing pains and plan to continue in the spring. All letters, suggestions and contributions can still go into Box 107-108.

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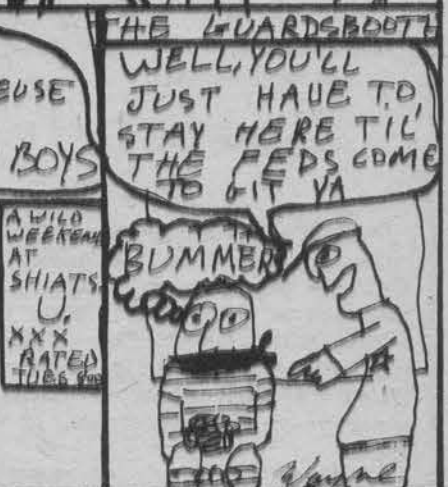
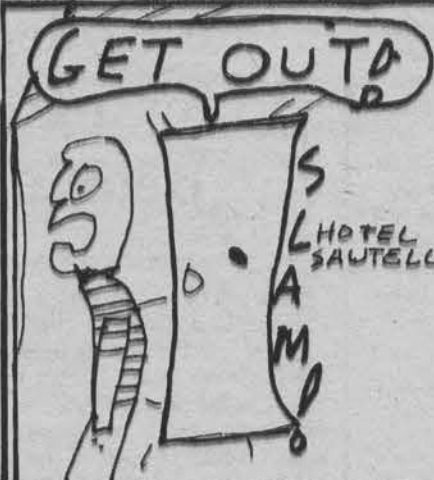
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by Eno

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Dr. MURPHY SPEAKS

By SCOTT BALDINGER

The New Paper:

How do you envision your role as president?

Dr. Murphy:

I don't really have a recipe to begin with. Institutions are curious entities generally, all bureaucracies are. Colleges are like hospitals, prisons and governments in many ways, except colleges are much more frail. The church can manage with mismanagement forever. I've never heard of a church that declared itself bankrupt and went out of existence. And governments of course go on for thousands of years. Societies go on. Colleges are different kinds of things. So when you ask "how do you see your role," it's very hard to say.

I strongly suspect that the values of this institution and my own are very close and I won't look to change the fundamental values on which the institution is based. Some things are glaring. Money is a problem and that has to be first on the agenda. The college never did what conventional schools do: building huge endowments so that during bad times the endowments would pay deficits.

It's surprising because if the reputation of the institution were reflected in endowments we would be financially secure. I would say increasing endowments is the most important issue right now. Another issue is management. The place needs professional management. I don't mean any aspersions on anybody who has done it in the past nor do I think professional management is very important per se. But if you don't have it, then you're not doing what you are supposed to do to create the conditions under which the important things are supposed to happen — the learning and the teaching, which is presumably what it's all about.

I don't know what all the problems are, but many of them are really mundane, like keeping paint on buildings. But it has to be done and someone has to worry about it.

As I see the role of the president, it is not to have great ideas — I have lots to be modest about intellectually — but rather to create the circumstances under which the people who do have ideas — students, teachers and others — will be able to put them forth.

The New Paper:

How strong a role should trustees have in formulating college policy?

Dr. Murphy:

Trustees have three important functions, it seems to me. One is to hire a president. The second is to bring in money. The third is to be responsive to the needs of the institution.

Trustees do themselves a disservice if they become too intimately involved with the management of the institution

because, first, that isn't what their services were secured for and, second, it means that the president isn't doing his or her job.

New Paper:

How will you approach budget cuts; what are your priorities?

Dr. Murphy:

You're asking the right person because I just cut a budget from sixty-one million dollars to forty-six million (at Queens College). There are two ways of balancing a budget. One is to cut services and the other is to create income. It's much nicer to increase income. But as an a priori principle without particular reference to Bennington, the priorities of a college seem to me to be fairly clear. The faculty are the college. A good institution is good because its faculty is good. A poor institution is poor because the faculty is poor. That's the only standard.

It exists for the students but the school is the faculty and that's where you don't look to save, in fact you look to spend more. The vitality of the place is a result of the quality of minds that are brought there, and hopefully, kept there.

There's a tendency in every bureaucracy for the administration to feather its own nest. I would say the first place you'd look are in those myriad, non-academic support services. If offices and classrooms and laboratories on campus get cleaned every other day instead of every day, than I would rather have the place a little filthier than be forced to fire a great, bright, new historian that has just come to the college. Isn't that obvious?

New Paper:

Should the college discourage student specialization?

Dr. Murphy:

I have all kinds of concerns about professionalization. I cannot imagine how you get highly professionalized at a place like Bennington since it is, after all, a fairly determined liberal arts college. The kind of specialization I have come to worry about over the years is, for example, people who take 50 hours of learning how to teach and by the time they graduate with a teacher's certificate they have nothing to teach because they haven't learned anything.

There is a certain tendency among some

undergraduates — I was one like that — that just get fanatic about something to the exclusion of everything else.

As an undergraduate I had something like half my total course work in philosophy. I was going through a phase when I couldn't get enough of it. It was the first thing I got interested in. And in an era in which student interest is at such a low ebb, the prospect of deterring anyone who is wholly committed to something isn't very appealing. My guess is that if your counseling system works well — and it's really at the heart of the system — you don't need heavy requirements.

A counselor is going to set down some fairly rigorous limits based on some interest in you as a human being so you don't walk out of here an idiot savant, able to do logarithms in your head but you can't be let out on the street because you can't tell a green light from a red one. That kind of relationship with a counselor who is interested in your intellectual growth solves the problems of rigorous requirements.

New Paper:

Is it realistic to envision VAPA as an arts center for Southern Vermont?

Dr. Murphy:

Why be parochial, why not the arts center of the world? Look, there's an important principle of life I'm going to let you in on: The more you build, the less space you have.

New Paper:

What about the problem of space here?

Dr. Murphy:

There are three kinds of issues. First are problems and if you look hard enough there are solutions. Then there are perplexities. They are problems to which you can't find a solution. Then there are puzzles. If you look hard enough at a puzzle, you may find a solution, but you're not sure if there is one. I don't know whether the question of space is a problem or a perplexity or a puzzle.

New Paper:

What is your response to Richard Frisch's letter concerning the two music divisions?

Dr. Murphy:

I got the feeling that I was thrust into the middle of a controversy. It was like walking in on the middle of a movie — I didn't see the beginning and I don't see the end. I don't know how to react. I take it that it is a controversial issue and I assume that at one point or another I'll have to be involved with the dialogues.

New Paper:

What do you think of Bennington as it stands now?

Dr. Murphy:

You've got at least two of the critical ingredients. All the time I spent with students has just left me tremendously impressed with how bright they are. And from what I know in a very casual way of the faculty it's an extraordinarily diverse and interesting one and it has some awfully fine minds. Given two of the most critical ingredients, I can't imagine that the outcomes can't be made to be very desirable.

New Paper:

We hear you have a sense of humor. Can you tell us a joke?

Dr. Murphy:

I'll tell you about the scholar who comes home after studying all day and tells his wife that the Messiah is coming. His wife thinks for a moment and says, "Well, God has saved us from Nebuchadnezzar, God has saved us from the Pharaohs, he'll save us from the Messiah."

I looked forward to Ethiopia once, now I'm looking forward to Bennington.



Alex Brown

Counseling

Continued from Page 1

agreed with Mr. Rock that "to the extent that faculty members are adults, they will be willing to listen and do what they can."

The meetings culminated with reaffirmation of a list of seven principles considered essential to the counseling system. All points stressed the need for greater involvement on the part of the counselor in student programming. Point seven reintroduced the following policy: "That counselors once again be actively involved both in the planning of the NRT with the student, in discussing the project with the student on completion, and evaluating the student's performance in a written comment of his own." In an interview, Mr. Brown recognized that, for obvious reasons, no counselor would be able to give more than sketchy appraisal of a student's performance over NRT. The importance of point seven, he felt, was

primarily to insure close student guidance in student NRT planning.

The faculty commitment to counseling was unanimously upheld. Mr. Rock, however, commented that "If we are serious about our commitment to it, let's provide the structure that will make it easier to happen."

Mr. Rock believes the present format of the counselors' report form must report becomes part of the student's academic folder, it is really an evaluation of academic problems and—or progress that a student has made or that might exist in the future. And therefore it is a statement to the ECC about where the student stands academically vis-a-vis the institution." The current report form stresses that faculty members do not address themselves sufficiently to

academic concerns and Mr. Rock said "there are a number of things for the counselors to say in their report form that might aid the ECC in making its decisions and might enable the Dean's Office to catch problems as soon as possible." When asked about the substance of recent counselor reports Mr. Rock stated, "counselor reports do not convey much information of any kind to anyone at all."

Mr. Rock envisages establishing a number of minor structural arrangements that would "make it easier for what goes on in the Dean of Studies Office to go on there, and also improve the quality of counseling." He is currently drawing up a list of specific recommendations.

The commitment to counseling is there. The structure that would insure counseling a less nominal and more active role in assisting students academically should be established by the end of the fall semester.

Long Live Narnia.



Photo by Jill Kremenitz

Continued from page 1

"I can write an amazing amount in three days. I just sit down and it comes out. I have some sort of shape in mind, that applies, but I usually don't know how it's going to end."

He doesn't care where he works, prefers typing to longhand unless he feels he's moving too fast, and can't get out a word if he has heard music prior to or during his writing session. When he's done, "I feel very, very high." Does he ever rewrite? "Almost never."

His high comes from "the muted victory" he feels his characters enjoy at the end of each story. But the mounting tension between the writer and his unfinished words can overwhelm him in other ways: "You work with a story and you live a story. There was one story, 'The Swimmer,' about a man who swims from swimming pool to swimming pool, meeting people along the way. He's a searcher who never reaches his eventual goal. I knew when the story ended 'It's going to be cold, dark, and it's going to be winter for this character. So it's going to be cold, dark and winter for me, too.' I kept going back in shame through my work, almost as though when I finished I was going to die. When I ended it I was clinically depressed. Suicide was something to be very careful of. It was six weeks before I got out of it."

Cheever's creative process seems to involve an unconscious summoning of all he has ever known through an "exalted projection," and then shaped and pruned into a singular event, a specific story: "You have to be convinced that what you have to say has never been said before and that you're describing an emotion or sentiment that never has been isolated."

He claims "A million influences that begin with 'The Book of the Dead' and end with William Burroughs. Flaubert is the only writer I had much trouble with. The French have a so much preciser

approach to rhythm and flow than the English writers. I still use Flaubert's cadences, although no one would be able to pick them out."

But when asked what he would look for in a parody of his own work, Cheever says, "It would be impossible for me to estimate

my influence. I'm quite unconscious about the elements of my style. I couldn't recognize an imitation of mine."

At 64, Cheever's eyes still sparkle with delight. He is a small-framed man, full of charm, ease, and self-absorption, an urbane world-traveler crossed with a Berkshire sportsman. His accent portrays this plainly: part cockney, part Quincy, his Massachusetts birthplace. His face breaks into countless creases when he smiles, which is often.

"This last novel ends with 'Rejoice, rejoice!' It's about two men who win — absolutely win. I mean, they just get out of absolutely everything. This book is the ultimate risk."

"Whenever a book of mine comes out I leave the country six weeks before it's

published. I go off to escape the reviews. This time I may stick around to see. It's a very tricky thing — all I've ever cared about is that my audience be made up of educated, sympathetic people."

The latest novel, "Falconer," came about partly through his experience working with prisoners at Sing Sing for the past two years.

"The idea was to get them to keep a journal. That would be something — to at least have that much of a check on one's self. I had one fellow whose stuff was so far out that nobody would touch it. Not even the Village Voice. Here we have all these magazines complaining about not enough far-out stuff, but once they get something it doesn't go in."

His formal students don't have it quite so easy. An admitted elitist at heart, Cheever required that they read and speak at least one other language besides English and know how to read music. He finds "all kinds of people who aren't any good at it but who are very important for creating the proper climate." These students "make a contribution through enthusiasm, and if they can't write any better for it, they at least read better." He feels our language has been "obscured or lost" by most people.

John Cheever has spent his life creating images and inspiring souls. Within ten minutes of conversation, Cheever said "Interest is the primary canon of aesthetics," "Anyone who claims self-knowledge is a fool" and "Amtrak is like Gogol's Russia." Imagine the effect three such notions should have on a story and you will understand his work a little better than you may have before. John Cheever finds that he has no use for philosophy: "It's history or it's vocabulary." But he did find six words with which to abstract his goal in writing: "To love and to be loved."

Sprouts

By SCOTT BALDINGER

After many a heavy meal at Seiler's I've wondered whether the food is being dosed with some kind of barbituate? It is so oppressively rich, it puts you to sleep. I just feel spoiled at Seiler's. The food, although appetizing is not always easily digestible. Never have I seen or consumed more cholesterol under one roof, except in a bakery, and while I eat it (because it tastes good) I rarely feel healthy afterwards.

One student on campus, Jeffrey Reed, has taken action. He has tried to get his money back from Seiler's, without success, in order to substitute it with the food he is growing inside his house. Although still somewhat dependent on Seiler's he is growing bean sprouts, wheat sprouts and wheat grass to supplement and sometimes substitute meals there. Having worked with Healing Science Practitioners, a group of people finding alternatives to conventional medicine through diet, he has some definite ideas about what to eat and what to avoid eating.

"Cooked and processed foods manufactured by the American food industry lack vital nutrients. Since I've been eating my food I've felt a lot different..."

"For breakfast I take winter wheat grass, cut it off just above the roots and then juice it in a juicer. My juicer isn't electric. With that I mix water that wheat has soaked in. The wheat has a starchy center which is released into the water and ferments. The enriched water is called Rejuvenac..."

"I use dishpans and the most fertile soil I can get (from the forest, with leaf mold and black earth) to grow the wheat in. The wheat groats are soaked overnight in water (making Rejuvenac), drained and then sprouted for two days, planted in the soil and covered with a wet newspaper and plastic. The sprouts push the paper up two days later and are then exposed to sunlight. In five to six days the sprouts will grow into wheat grass about five, six or seven inches tall. Wheat grass contains every known vitamin. After eating that I eat the wheat sprouts that have sprouted for two days with two tablespoons of yogurt, two tablespoons of applesauce, a couple of dried apricots, dried prunes and figs — and that's my cereal. If you use ten dishpans and plant a pan of wheat grass every day you can heat half a tray a day."

The grass and sprouts have brought color to the Kilpatrick foyers, where they are growing on window shelves. I munched on some bean sprouts laid before me. They were crunchy and pleasant tasting and so fresh and "alive" they left me not only energized but with a mild case of heartburn as well. I did however, feel much less stuffed and more filled than at Seiler's.

His dinner consists of: mung and lentil sprouts, sunflower seeds, (extra protein for the day), and wheat sprouts blended with Rejuvenac and fermented for a day or two (for a tangy, Blue Cheese flavor).

"There are over 5,000 food additives in American food today, a lot of which may be carcinogenic. Seiler's overcooks their food to a point where much of the nutritional value of the food is lost. People take in too many calories today. If you eat just two dates a day you'd better do a lot of running afterwards to burn up the date's energy. Otherwise tissues are destroyed and have to be replaced...My food is clean energy."

Mr. Reed suggests Ann Wigmore's "Be Your Own Doctor, Let Living Food Be Your Medicine" for those interested.

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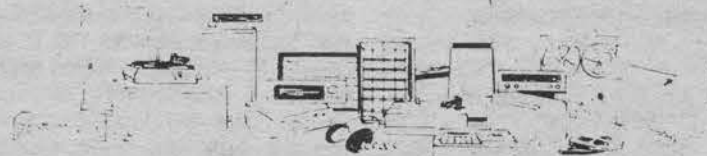
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Saucer for a Cup: the Meteor Cafe

By ROSE CROWLEY

Anyone familiar with the writings of Anais Nin or Ernest Hemingway has had reveries of cafes: sipping slow afternoons from chipped cups, conversations crawling from mouth to mouth into early mornings, and novels spawned on napkins, over newspapers. Empty pocketed artists and feverish intellectuals, gathered like moths over candle lit tables, spill worlds of words into empty wine glasses. A meeting place. A room of their own. Sinking further into worn cushions, feet propped on a rough hewn table top strewn with newspapers and empty cups, I sip tea at Bennington's facsimile. At the Meteor Cafe the stage is set for a scene yet to be enacted. The brick walls and exposed pipes appear to be right out of a So Ho left; incandescent bulbs glow nakedly above the tables and countertops pieced from plywood. A pumpkin sits awaiting metamorphosis into spiced pie or bread; fine teas and coffees, a honey jar nearby rest on the shelves. Beside me a friend sinks further into the sofa and her reading, a cigarette and beer in hand. She quotes a line from Wilhelm Reich to a semi-circle of gaping chairs. Henry Miller, where are you?

Having surveyed the props I'm left wondering who set the stage. A talk with a work study student over a glass of cider tells me the man behind the scene is David Smallman. David Smallman told me the whole story.

It all started with Dingle, a Bennington student who first bargained for the space years ago. Last year Brant Houston, former head of the rec committee, won an unused sculpture studio in the Brick Garage from the Art and Architecture committee. Anticipating its use as a student game room, Brant opened the barren space last fall as the Dingle Memorial Coffee House. Nothing memorable occurred until its re-opening this fall with the first meeting of the student council, not as the Houston Memorial Gameroom, but under the 'Meteor Cafe'.

Smallman expanded Houston's gameroom into what he sees as an alternative to "the atrocity of the commons" and house livingrooms. With a personal investment of \$90, some lumber, power tools and a bit of scavenging, Smallman entered last summer to furnish the interior and install fixtures. He's been running the show since. At this term's initial student council meeting he received repayment for his investments, plus \$500 in funds and the position of cafe business manager. The most important gain, however, was a work study status from Judy Cohen. The cafe has 8-0 workstudy staffers funded by the federal government and a few earnest volunteers.

The volunteer putting in the most time remains Smallman himself. He feels his personal investment has had many returns, and finds the work rewarding enough to continue. A transfer student, he recalls Reed College's own "wateringhole for campus reactionaries (intellectuals?)" as "a place with a good atmosphere", a comfortable place to be with friends and get a good cup of coffee. Bennington provides the students with no facilities (gym, swimming pool, gameroom, etc.) for recreation or social gatherings. Smallman sees the cafe as something the college owes its students. He does not conceive of it as another spot for Friday night parties or as Bennington's backyard V. With a toaster oven, coffee machine, hot plate and negotiations for a

range from Maintenance, the cafe should do what it can do well without supplanting the snackbar. There are plans for a blackboard to announce "daily specials", perhaps student made favorite recipes (time for the campus gourmets to come out of the cupboard).

Most of the budget was used for permanent fixtures, with a \$100 set aside as 'operating capital'. The emphasis is on improvement of the facilities with the intent of attracting greater student use, and creating a more pleasant atmosphere. The business manager does not feel under any pressure but is impatient with the

"Perhaps Bennington students are not used to such intimacy and didn't come prepared to drop their defenses." Both sensed the need for a more relaxed atmosphere. Susan suggested more foot-stomping music and dancing to prompt more gut level reactions.

All the responses I've heard to the performance have been positive. Jesse and Susan enjoyed performing (in the cafe) and mentioned both the staff's cooperation and the excellence of the sound system. I passed this on to Smallman along with some other suggestions for use of the cafe (the space).



speed of development and still considers the cafe inadequate for handling live entertainment and events. He considers waiting until the spring to actively seek events from the outside so artists "won't have to wrestle with the space." Such consideration seems due, but one wonders if the caution isn't a little excessive.

One Saturday night in mid-October two performers from Berkeley proved the cafe can offer more than a good cup of coffee. From 'Java Jive' to their jugband ballads, Jessie Philips and Susan Madely belted out livelier entertainment than Bennington's audience had come to expect. For an hour and a half, at the bargain price of one dollar, you could hear Jessie accompany his wife Susan on cello and guitar, her rich voice moving from foot-stompers to heartwarmers with fingersnapping ease. An audience of over 50 people sipped rose-hip tea and beer, studying each other's reactions with carefully disguised diffi-

idence, a Bennington trademark. By the last number, the performers' cool crowd finally responded with whistles and cries of 'more!' A bawdy 'Little Ball of Yarn' followed for an encore.

I had a chance to talk to the couple before they left for a \$1,000-a-week gig in Georgia. "Well, at first it was like pulling teeth to get a reaction," said Jesse. Susan agreed, adding that she had been struck by the audience's reserve, as if they were unused to reacting to a less sophisticated humor, a music more downhome and disco. "The uninhibited reactions, the raucous laughter, were missing" she continued. "They laughed so sedately and politely, without really letting go. I seemed to catch them checking out each other's reactions as if seeking each other's permission to enjoy themselves. But by the last song they were really warm and enthusiastic," interrupted Jesse.

Square dances, student performances (music, etc.), plants, home-cooking, and wall murals or a rotating show (display) of student work are among the possibilities. Smallman nodded sympathetically, and in spite of a "not so fast; wait and see" attitude, described himself as open to any ideas. He feels the cafe is the students' space; anyone who can summon the initiative is welcome to work at making something of it.

What's in store for the Meteor Cafe? It has plenty of unused potential, and its future rests in our hands. Till then, there's always the jukebox and java jive.

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Announcement

North Bennington, Nov. 10. The Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences announces the Vermont Intercollegiate Art Exhibit for March 5 to 20, 1977 at Middlebury College's Johnson Art Center and invites student work from all Vermont colleges and universities.

As of November 1, seven institutions of higher learning accepted the Academy's invitation, and others are still expected.

For this occasion work by currently enrolled students is invited in the following categories: drawings, graphics, paintings, photography and sculpture. Prizes in each category will be awarded by a jury, which will further award a prize for the institution with the best mounting of its work.

Students wishing to submit work for this Exhibit are advised to contact a member of the Art Department of his institution, for the selection of work to be included will be made by the faculty of each institution, which in turn will be responsible for mounting it in the space assigned at the Johnson Gallery.

A catalogue of the Exhibit is currently planned, and each Art Department will receive forms for naming the artists, categories of work, titles, etc. for inclusion. As this catalogue will require six weeks for assembling, descriptive forms received after January 15 cannot be included. Thus selection will be largely made from work available in the fall semester.

To date the following institutions have indicated their intentions to participate: Castleton State College, Goddard College, Johnson State College, Southern Vermont College, University of Vermont, Vermont Community College and Windham College.

(Lucien Hanks)

SAUDI LIKES 'EM IN THE KITCHEN: Want to know what's wrong with the fabric of American society? Ask Saudi Arabia's U.N. ambassador, and he'll tell you it's the Women's Movement. It destroys the family, causing unemployment, corrupting the women of Asia, fostering homosexuality, and causing the disintegration of society. Said Jamil Baroodi in November, advising his government to beware the feminist movement, men want no part of this "vile movement," so women are "copulating with each other . . . society is disintegrating." Now we know.
The Village Voice



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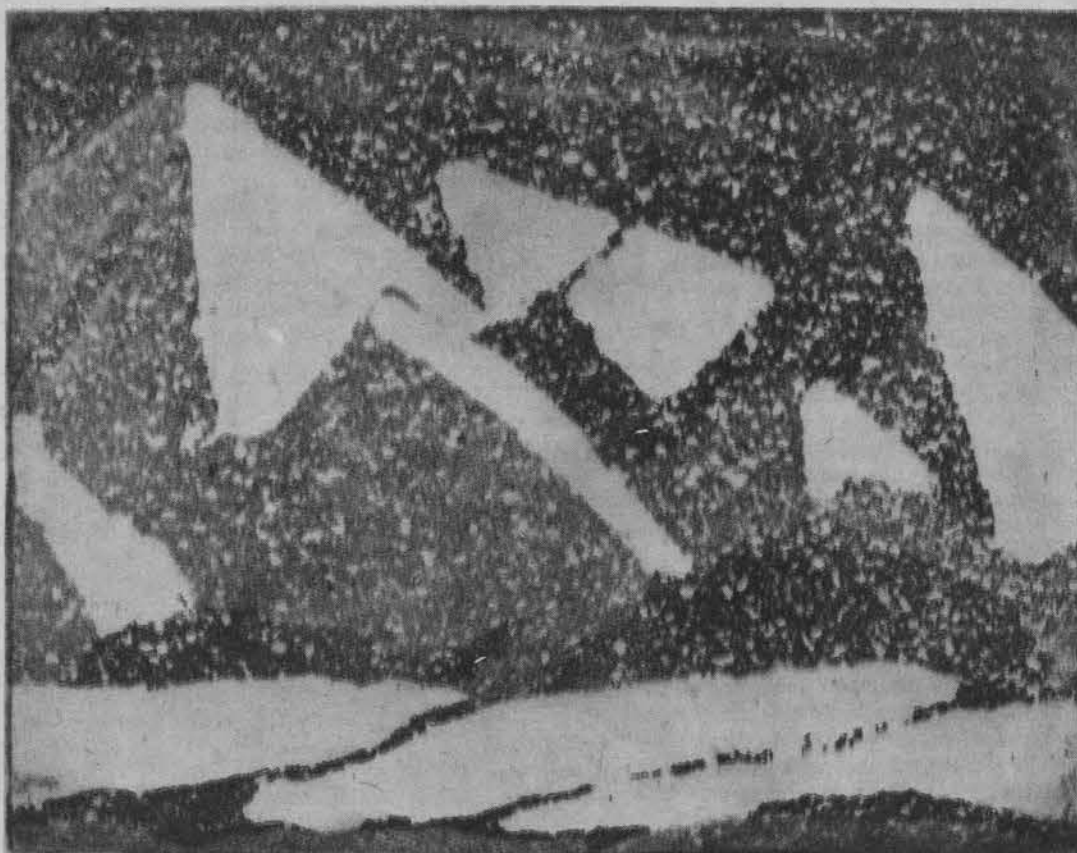
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Lori Goldner



Plucking

Continued from page 1

refused to have anything to do with the project, another 25 were willing to do most anything. The remaining 200 were willing to work in an emergency, but usually when it was time to weed an onion field they needed to be shown what were onions and at the end of two hours it was not uncommon that out of a group of 20, 2 would be left.

When a particular vegetable was ready for harvest Lewis Webster Jones, then president of the College would declare a "farm day." On such days classes were cancelled and both students and faculty were recruited to work the fields. Later they would prepare the crops for storage.

Each faculty member and student was responsible for the slaughtering, scalding and plucking of two chickens. Many people did not enjoy doing this and paid students who were willing to do this work 25 cents a chicken. Some students made a big profit.

It was not uncommon for professors to hold classes outside, while working on the farm. Rebecca Stickney, a student then and now assistant to the president, recalls taking a course with George Lundberg; as they went up and down the rows at the onion field on their hands and knees, weeding, they would discuss his elaborate sociological theories.

Robert Coburn, chemistry professor, remembers one time when after the school community had been spending the day plucking chickens, the community sat down to dinner and when chickens were brought for the evening meal. The entire dining room full of people, faculty and students, stood up and walked out of the room.

Toward the end of the war the farm project slowed down. Students who had volunteered their labor became caught in the mood of the country and relaxed their efforts. The war was coming to a close; there was no longer the feeling of emergency. It was eventually impossible to get students to work and ultimately high school students were employed to harvest the last of the farm's crops in 1944.

The project of growing food at Bennington College stopped and with it the attitude that another project, depending so heavily upon voluntary student labor should never be attempted again.

It was tried, for a short while after the

war to grow hay in the fields in order to gain supplementary income for the college. However, whenever it was time to gather the mown hay, groundsmen who were paid could never be located until after 5:30. At this time they were off work and earned time and a half for their work. This idea was shortly eliminated.

Now fields are rented by independent farmers who are also helping to recondition the land.

According to Woodworth a permanent farm would not be feasible because a full time foreman would have to be hired as well as a few farm hands. It would cost the school a great deal of money.

Woodworth also said that about five years ago some students came to him and said "there was a farm here before, why can't there be a farm here now?" He asked them if they knew people would need to be here in the summer to harvest the crops and if they were willing to stay here over the summer. They said no. He continued anyway and told them the College would select a good area of land for growing crops, plow it and harrow it; the students would have to plant the crops, take care of them and harvest them. He never heard from them again.

To quote Robert Woodworth, in response to a comment as to what Bennington College once was "the school was an experiment, everyone was interested in the college, in making it work. It is no longer that way, everyone is for himself. Not that this is bad; it is inevitable when a place gains history. At first it is exciting but eventually things change; it is evolution."

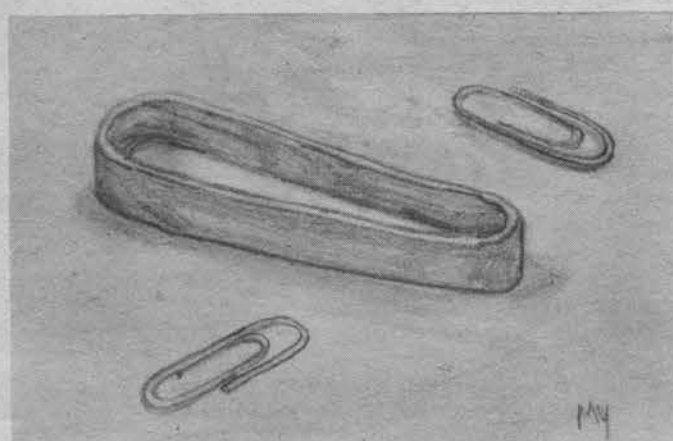
It is difficult to know if students today are more apathetic than they were in the past. People are people, if the financial crunch comes will we clean the tubs or transfer?



Photos by Ann C. Cobb

Farm Production

YIELD 1942		ESTIMATED YIELD 1943
400 bushels	APPLES	400 bushels
50 "	BEETS	100 "
100 "	BROCCOLI	200 "
50 "	CABBAGE	100 "
30 "	CARROTS	150 "
30 "	CAULIFLOWER	100 "
50 "	CHARD	100 "
200 "	CORN (SWEET)	400 "
60 "	DRIED BEANS	100 "
30 "	ENDIVE	100 "
300 "	GREEN BEANS	400 "
150 "	LETTUCE	300 "
0 "	LIMA BEANS	100 "
80 "	ONIONS	100 "
10 "	PARSNIPS	30 "
60 "	PEAS	150 "
1,500 "	POTATOES	1,500 "
50 "	SHELL BEANS	150 "
10 "	SPINACH	100 "
20 "	SUMMER SQUASH	50 "
10 "	SWEET PEPPERS	30 "
300 "	TOMATOES	500 "
1 ton	WINTER SQUASH	2 tons
0 "	BEEF	5 "
0 "	PORK	4 "
0 "	POULTRY	5 "



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