

NEWSLETTER

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
BENNINGTON, VERMONT

June 1961

THE FUTURE ISN'T PAST

You all know that a Trustee-Faculty Committee has been at work for over a year thinking in long-range terms about the future of the College. A plan was recommended and put forward. Last week the Faculty voted on it.

The Committee asked that the plan be considered first as a whole, and without amendment. The Faculty adopted a voting procedure calling for a two-thirds majority in the individual vote and majorities in five out of seven divisions, for passage.

The Faculty discussed the proposed plan in three Faculty Meetings, then voted by written ballot. The plan obtained a majority of the individual vote but failed to obtain the necessary two-thirds or five divisions. Tally:

Individual vote	
Total "yes"	29
Total "no"	23
(Needed for approval: 35 "yes")	
Divisional vote	
Two divisions - "yes"	
Five divisions - "no"	

According to the previously agreed procedure the Faculty will now register in a straw vote its opinions on the various parts of the plan and will decide next fall how to proceed from there. The main points on which there was a difference of opinion were, as one might expect, curricular and counseling matters. It is impossible to express the variety of bases for support and dissent, but not impossible to say they were expressed forcefully. More later.

IT WAS A BALL!

Two hundred alumnae and their husbands came back to Bennington for a three-day weekend at the end of April. They went to twenty-eight class sessions with fifteen faculty members, heard five ex-faculty, seven alumnae, the College president and a trustee discuss education, attended two cocktail parties, one evening party, heard a concert, saw a dance recital and a play. A spread of photographs on The Weekend will be published in the fall (November) issue of the Bulletin.

ANOTHER FIRST FOR THE FIRST CLASS

A special gift of \$7500 raised by fifty members of the Class of 1936 and the parent of one, was announced at the Alumnae Weekend. The money is given

in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversary of graduation. Its use will be one which should be especially close to the hearts of the first class who, as individuals, perhaps made a more particular choice in coming to Bennington than any others who followed them. The money will be used in special grants to faculty for the pursuit of research, scholarship or artistic activity which they would otherwise be unable to afford.

The classes coming after 1936 have followed many of the examples (dare we use the word "traditions"?) set by them, and the College hopes this one will be followed too. Purposes may vary from year to year, but the basic purpose will remain the same and ever more important -- support of education.

COMMENCEMENT - 1961

Royal midnight blue. If Bennington has a June color, this is it. Load after load of it has recently been delivered to the Barn. Commencement robes and hoods, freshly cleaned by King & Co. have been arriving back this last week. The plastic coverings are already removed, and gowns are now tagged with a name - after height of girl and length of gown was matched. (Not a hem needed adjusting!!)

The parents, relatives and friends of 64 seniors will begin arriving in earnest on Friday, June 16th. On that day too, at noon, 10 students will arrange themselves into a belt-line and make sandwiches for the boxed picnic lunches to be served an hour from then. Their labor frees the kitchen staff - who are preparing the lobster and shrimp salad, chicken, cucumber mousse, etc., for the 600 guests expected for buffet supper on Jennings Lawn that evening. Henri Peyre, Commencement Speaker, will address the Class that evening.

Saturday, a traditionally cloudless morning, guests find seats in the Barn Quadrangle. As the Commons clock strikes the last note of ten, the clarions and kettle drums take up the beat and to the processional composed by Louis Calabro, Mr. Fels and Mr. Ruebhausen, Chairman of the Board, lead the seniors forth.

By four o'clock Mrs. Winnie Knapp will officially put the College to bed. Every house is checked, open windows closed and doors locked. Quiet descends, and for those permanent residents left behind, there is a longed-for sense of relaxation - but there is nostalgia too.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

But really, for many, there is little time for relaxation. The speed picks up in the offices immediately Monday morning, June 18th. The only difference is, it's quieter. That, however, is short-lived. The College plant will be in heavy use this summer, starting on July 1. At one point late in August, all twelve student houses will be in use.

The John Hay Whitney Fellows, - selected high school teachers engaged in humanistic studies - their families, dogs and cats, arrive 120 strong first and for four weeks. Mr. Irwin Freundlich of Juilliard and his group of music students come in July and study and perform here for six weeks. They overlap with the State Department's foreign students' Orientation Center, who overlap with the Composers, who overlap with Mr. Holt's Art Seminar for teachers, who overlap with a workshop on evaluation, sponsored by New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. During the summer then, we function at full tilt.

MRS. BESSIE WOODLOCK

That Mrs. Bessie Woodlock is the only lady member of the kitchen staff has nothing to do with the fact that she is the prettiest. She would be anyway.

For as long as we can remember Mrs. Woodlock has been in charge of the salads. We have a salad here every day - either as the meal or as an accompaniment - and it is Mrs. Woodlock who makes them uniformly delicious. She has washed and crisped the 48 - 72 heads of lettuce, endive and escarole. It's no mystery that one is torn when making a choice between French, Russian, garlic, Roquefort or mayonnaise dressing because Mrs. Woodlock has made them all herself - from recipes handed down to her by her mother - twenty gallons at a time and measured in gills.

Mrs. Woodlock is retiring at the end of this academic year. It is a sad business to contemplate her absence. Returning alumnae (they know her and she knows them) will miss her but the daily lunch line will miss her most of all. Her looks, her charm, her greeting, will not be easily replaced.

ADMISSIONS

In our February Newsletter we said, "There will be between 600-650 applications to make decisions about for next fall's entering freshman class." There were 644. From this group about 180 were offered admission with the expectation that 115 would choose us. They did. We came through the "guessing game" in good shape - neither too fat nor too thin.

The new class contains nine alumnae daughters, two alumnae nieces (that we know of) and six alumnae (or almost-alumnae) sisters. Fourteen are transfers from other colleges. Twenty-one have been granted a tuition reduction. There are more Nancys, Marys, and Elizabeths, than Joans, Marjories and Kates and there's only one Selina, one Tonia and one Reed. They are bright - in SAT terms anyway. Their mean scores are; Verbal 635 - Math 553. (Their future sophomore sisters measured Verbal 625, Math 527.) They will arrive at Bennington on September 8th, decide on their individual programs on the 9th, rest on Sunday and start classes on Monday. We look forward to greeting each and every one of them here.

LAST WORD

This is the third and last of the Newsletters we promised you in '60-'61. It is also the only one which succeeded in being "briefer." Expect three more in '61-'62.