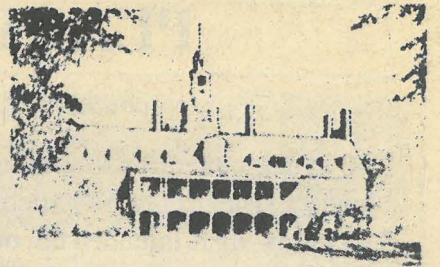


The Commons



VOL. 2, NO. 2

FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 1989

BENNINGTON COLLEGE, BENNINGTON, VT 05201

THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS

Costa Rica

In Central America, President Arias of Costa Rica praised President Bush for abandoning the Reagan Administration's policy of attempting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua through support of the Contras and use of CIA operations. Bush met with the 1987 Nobel Peace prize winner in a 'friendly' meeting which contrasted sharply in tone with the days of the Reagan era. Mr. Arias asked Mr. Bush to help reduce the Costa Rican debt, which is valued at about \$4.6 billion.

Iran/Contra

It seems that the main defense for Oliver North has been a line of witnesses attempting to reinforce his image as a selfless hero. Witness after witness told Vietnam battle stories of North leading counter-attacks that saved American lives. The most heated debate in this eight-week old trial took place last week as prosecution lawyers attacked North's reputation. Brendan Sullivan, Jr., North's lawyer, introduced CIA operative Vincent Cannistaro, who presented evidence that William Casey made North the key Contra contact with President Reagan's permission. Testimony also pointed toward a stronger Bush role in the Iran/Contra struggle.

Cuba

While President Arias was visiting Washington, Soviet leader Gorbachev signed a friendship treaty in Havana with Cuban leader Castro. Each leader spoke for roughly 45 minutes to the Cuban National Assembly. Mr. Castro's speech quickly turned into a cutting anti-American tirade, and senior U.S. diplomat to Havana, John J. Taylor walked out in protest. The treaty signed by both leaders condemned the use of force in international conflict. However, Mr. Castro mentioned during his speech that although he would abide by the agreement, he would still be suspicious of U.S. behavior.

Soviets Jews

For the first time since

continued on page 2, column 3

BENNINGTON STUDENTS MARCH IN D.C.

BY SARI SIEGEL



PHOTO BY SARI SIEGEL

"What do we want?"-"Freedom of choice!"-"When do we want it?"-"NOW!"

"Hey-Hey! Ho-Ho! Sexism has got to go!"

"Bush can tell us we can't choose when he gets pregnant, too!"

These chants, emerging from a yellow schoolbus with Vermont license plates, were heard by residents of various neighborhoods in the Washington, D.C. area around sunrise on Sunday, April 9th. After a long and uncomfortable ride (eight and a half hours there, nearly twelve hours back), forty-plus

sleepy-yet-enthusiastic Benningtonians were among the first busloads of over 600,000 marchers representing every state and many colleges and universities to arrive.

While the guest speakers, representatives of various feminist, womens' rights, religious, and other groups, began at the scheduled time, the march itself began late. Unsubstantiated rumors circulated that the delay was caused by Anti-Pro-Choicers blocking our path. Once the march was underway, such groups remained on the sidewalks, few in number, silently

continued on page 3, column 1

A Journal of the Plague Years

by SPENCER COX

"I must say there are times when I think we are misguided to go out of our way to help some people as much as we do."

—Ed Koch

New York Times, 3/7/89

On March 28, 1989, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) organized 3,000 protesters in the largest AIDS demonstration ever. Two hundred demonstrators were arrested for closing down traffic around New York's City

continued on page 2, column 1

Chapter & Verse: Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses

by Adnan Ashraf

On my way to Karachi for the winter holidays, I made a short stop at Heathrow Airport. I hadn't been in London since my birth. Pakistanis had it rough, I'd been told. Indians, too. Apparently, not all of the British had been willing to embrace a flood of job-hungry, dark-skinned immigrants. And to top it all off, weren't these the same subcontinental folk they'd grown used to ordering about for so long? Theoretically, of course, that had all ceased in 1947, the year

continued on page 7, column 3

D.C. ATTORNEY VISITS SCHOOL

by Richard C. Sander, Jr.

On Monday night this past week students, faculty, administration and others gathered in Greenwall to listen to the first speaker of the new Fellowship program. After a brief welcome and introduction from college president Liz Coleman, the group was given a short and detailed history lesson by Washington attorney, John Nields. Nields, who served as chief counsel for the House Democrats during the Iran / Contra hearings of 1987, provided the audience with many insights and legal theories pertaining to the famous battles between Congress and members of the Executive branch. After his concise speech, Nields fielded questions from the audience.

Although many of the questions dealt with clarification topics, a few seemed to have caught the attorney by surprise. An accusation from one member of the audience suggested that Nields and others had been paid off to avoid implicating a certain Presidential candidate. On a more serious note, comments afterwards were made to the effect that the talk was too centered on the legal, rather than, political viewpoint. However, most agreed that the entire interaction was, overall, very informative and interesting.

On Tuesday, John Nields met with a group of ten students for lunch (no faculty were in attendance). The students were given the opportunity to discuss in better detail the topics covered the night before. After a brief goodbye, Nields was on his way back to Washington to return to his law practice.

The tenacious Iran / Contra attorney who kept Oliver North and a host of others on their toes for several weeks in the Summer of 1987, was very calm and friendly and was an excellent and most educational guest speaker.

Amnesty International
Meeting

Swan Livingroom on Sundays
at Seven

PLAGUE YEARS

continued from the Front Page

Hall to draw attention to the city's bigotry and neglect of the epidemic. The following is intended not only as an overview of the crisis in New York, but also as a warning to any city that refuses to face the crisis in a direct, responsible, and humane way.

* AIDS is currently the leading cause of death among both men and women ages 25-39 in New York City.

* New York's public hospitals, responsible for 16% of the city's acute-care hospital beds, handles 37% of the AIDS caseload.

* Public Hospitals in New York City are working mostly at 95% capacity, with 1/3 working at 100% capacity. A hospital is considered troubled when it is at 85% capacity.

* The average wait for emergency room care in New York City is four hours to three days.

* For fiscal year 1990, Mayor Koch has proposed that the city's contribution to the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), which runs the twelve city-owned hospitals, be cut by 8%, from \$25 million to \$23 million.

* 8,000 hospital beds have been eliminated in NYC since 1976.

* Although Mayor Koch publicly asserts that the city has budgeted \$335 million for AIDS in fiscal year 1989, after the discount of federal funds and expenses like Medicare, which do not go exclusively to AIDS, that amount drops to \$182 million.

* When state health care officials prepared a blistering report on the city's response to the epidemic, the Commissioner of Health, Dr. Stephen Joseph, who had received a copy of the report in advance, prepared a working paper to be released simultaneously that halved the estimated number of New Yorkers infected with HIV from 400,000 to 200,000.

* Estimates of hospital beds that will be occupied by people with HIV-related illness in 1991 range from 2,703 (Dr. Stephen Joseph) to 10,400 (Dr. Michael Alderman, epidemiologist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine).

* In 1986, the state projected that in 1991 people with HIV-related illness would occupy an average of 1,336 NYC hospital beds each day. This figure was reached the next year.

* The city currently provides sixty-two hospital beds for an estimated five to eleven thousand homeless people with AIDS, has

been "bogged down in bureaucratic snafus and fights between the Human Resources Administration (HRA) and budget officials."

* One out of every seventy-eight babies now born in the Bronx carries antibodies to HIV.

* The average life expectancy for a gay white man after AIDS diagnosis is twenty-seven months. The average life expectancy for a person of color after AIDS diagnosis is six months.

* The New York State Division of Substance Abuse estimates that 225,000 New Yorkers are at risk for HIV infection due to drug abuse. There are currently 43,000 slots for substance abusers in NYC's drug treatment programs - including not only heroin users, but also alcoholics, crack addicts, and all other forms of substance addiction.

* New York City has not created a new drug treatment program since 1974, despite the influx of an estimated 600,000 crack addicts.

* Dr. Rand Stoneburner, New York City epidemiologist, estimated in a November '88 article in *Science Magazine* that the city was under-reporting HIV-related deaths in IV drug-users by 130%.

* The NYC needle-exchange program has currently enrolled 63 participants, prompting Dr. Joseph to proclaim it a "bold step in the fight against AIDS."

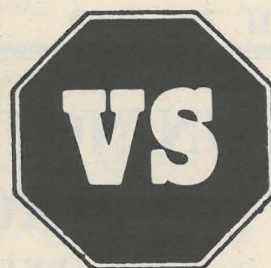
* The city is currently providing its first targeted risk-reduction information to gay white men who live in the village. This is probably the one demographic group in NYC who least needs more risk-reduction information.

* The city provides no safe-sex information to men of color who have sex with men, IV drug-users, sex partners of IV-drug users, lesbians, or teenagers. When asked why city schools do not endorse condom use in high-school AIDS education, Gerri Ableson, AIDS education coordinator for the NYC Board of Education, replied, "If we do that, we'd have to teach them how to use them."

* City ad campaigns encouraging monogamy as a lower-risk behavior do not protect women who are monogamous with IV drug-users. Sex partners of IVDUs account for more than 81% of heterosexual transmission cases in New York.

* To obtain condoms, city prisoners must sign up for a medical appointment and request them from a doctor.

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THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS

continued from the Front Page

1979, over 4,000 Jews were permitted to leave the Soviet Union. Many of the 4,240 emigrants chose the U.S. for their new life, while other traveled to Israel and Europe. In 1979, over 51,000 Jews left the U.S.S.R. The U.S. applauded the figure.

American Jews

An advertisement in the New York Times received national attention last week. The ad, "No Mr. Shamir. Don't assume that American Jews support your policies toward the Palestinians," listed two basic requests, 1) begin negotiations now with the PLO, and 2) don't rule out the possibility of a Palestinian state. It was signed by several hundred prominent Jewish leaders as well as many celebrities, which included Abbie Hoffman and Woody Allen. It is considered to be a major blow to the image of a unified American Jewry.

West Bank and Gaza

While visiting the U.S., Mr. Shamir stated that there would soon be free elections in the occupied territories. Mr. Bush gave support, but mentioned that he does not support long-term control over the areas by Israel.

Third World

While the U.S. and the Soviet Union attempt to limit the number of nuclear weapons in the world, the Indian government is attempting to perfect a ballistic missile that could send a nuclear warhead over 2,500 miles. India is doing so as an attempt to spread its military and political power.

Soviet Elections

In the first election in the Soviet Union since 1917, voters elected enough candidates to make an opposition group of independents in the Supreme Soviet. Party

chiefs, officials, and military administrators were defeated in an upset election. Many unopposed candidates were given a vote of no confidence as voters crossed their names off ballots. A popular sentiment against the older members of the party was realized as Yuri F. Soloyev, the regional head of Leningrad and politburo member, was defeated. Although the election upsets are not viewed as an attack on the Communist party, there is an obvious feeling of disapproval by the voters who want reform to come about more quickly.

Polish Reform

In Poland, a country which was under strict marshall law only eight years ago, there have been striking reforms allowing free voting, multi-level elections, and an opposition party. Although plagued by many last-minute problems, the worker's union, Solidarity, was pronounced as the legal opposition and was guaranteed a minimum of 35% of the seats in Poland's congress. Among the various reforms, there are now public civil rights investigations being held, and elections are being planned for June.

Stark

Iraq agreed to pay the families of the 37 sailors killed aboard the Stark in 1987 a total of \$27.3 million.

Yuppies

A doorbell for pets has been developed by the Hammacher Schlemmer company. Called the Pet Chime, the gadget consists of a set of two chime boxes which can be placed on the inside and outside of your door so that your pet can alert you when it wants to enter or leave the house.

SOURCE: NEW YORK TIMES

STUDENTS MARCH IN D.C.

continued from the Front Page

voicing their opinions with signs bearing dismembered body parts of dolls and such mottos as "ABORTION SUCKS" and "MURDERERS!".

Repulsion proved to be a real means of "getting the point across" for both sides. A particularly discomfiting Anti-Choice display was of a quite real and recently aborted fetus, propped up on a pedestal with flowers on its head and a cross positioned in its would-be hands. On the other side, there were many signs held by the Pro-Choicers bearing a picture of a nude woman lying face down, presumably dead, with a puddle of blood between her legs, captioned with: "WE WILL NOT GO BACK". Another man walking against the flow of the march held a huge sign of a woman in the process of giving birth, while declaring that Pro-Choice does not mean pro-abortion.

Speaking of signs, catchy phrases from the signs became chants as the march progressed. A few of the noteworthy ones are: "KEEP YOUR LAWS OFF OUR BODIES", "WHAT DO WE WANT-FREEDOM OF CHOICE/ ERA-WHEN DO WE WANT IT? NOW", "2-4-6-8 YOU CAN'T MAKE US PROCREATE", "2-4-6-8 WE'RE THE ONES WHO OVULATE", "GEORGE BUSH'S MOTHER DIDN'T HAVE THE CHOICE", "HEY-HEY, HO-HO, THE PATRIARCHY HAS GOT TO GO", and (my favorite:) "POST-MENOPAUSAL

WOMEN NOSTALGICALLY SUPPORT PRO-CHOICE". The most popular image was a wire hanger in a circle with a red line going through it.

A FEW IMPRESSIONS

Hundreds of schools from Amherst to Yale were present and loud. Benningtonians may have only a yellow schoolbus among other colleges' luxurious chartered Greyhounds, but at least we made it there, which is all that really counts. (If it is any consolation, Syracuse students came this way, also.) While Smith College sponsored eight busses and we only had one, please note that many more BC students drove.

Especially amusing was the "CLERGY FOR CHOICE" stage on the side of the Mall opposite to where the schools were organized. Speaking there were representatives of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights. Volunteers were distributing paper badges and signs bearing the motto: "Catholics for Choice". There were Priests and Rabbis sitting next to each other and later marching together in favor of their own interpretation of their respective religions- that abortion may be against their convictions, but that in this country we have the freedom to choose our own morals, and define for ourselves when life begins. One speaker summarized their collective opinion in a metaphorical story of a woman



PHOTO BY SARI SIEGEL

named Miriam who questioned Moses: "Does God speak only to you, or does he speak to the rest of us, as well?" As the march to the Capitol began, members from this and other religious organizations were seen walking with a Gay/Lesbian Rights Coalition. This issue is obviously one concern for many diverse and often opposed beliefs.

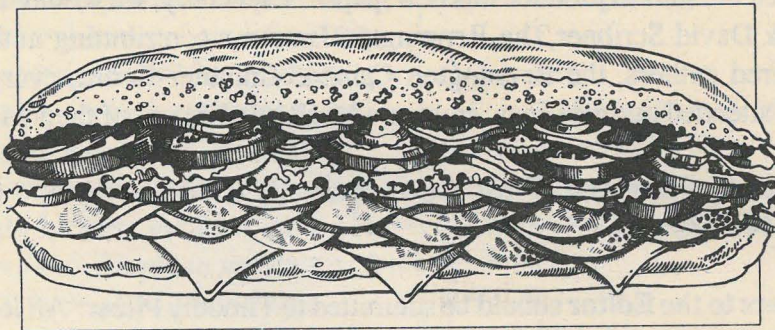
How did the Bennington students feel about the demonstration? Adrienne Marcus remarked that she had "never felt more like a woman" than when she was marching, and that "the march was for much more than abortion rights, it was for the right for a woman to do with her body what she wants." Remaining confident that Roe v. Wade will not be overturned, Anne Becker noted that "a group as big as 600,000 people cannot be ignored", despite the White House's decision to render no comment.

Many students who wished to attend but were unable expressed disappointment.

Those of us who were able to march would like to thank Gitana and Jessica for their organizational efforts, the dining halls for the Soho and pitas and stuff, Spencer Cox for his motivational cheerleading, and the bus driver for maintaining a sense of humor throughout the whole experience.

"I was shocked to see the 'Republicans of California for Choice' sign," commented a Bryn Mawr student. The visibility of such groups amongst the ACLU and NOW signs just goes to show that people, regardless of political, religious, or otherwise philosophical beliefs, can share and voice the same opinion; and that "conservative" does not mean "closed minded".

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ONE IN A BILLION,
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If you're stuck in a styrofoam rut, why not try a fresh alternative: a made-to-order sub, or salad from Subway. At Subway we use only choice meats and cheese, garden fresh

vegetables, and succulent seafood. And the "fixin's" are always free. So why settle for one in a billion when you can get one of a kind from Subway, the fresh alternative.

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Room inspections will take place at the below times in your houses. Make sure all of your candles, hanging tapestries, refrigerators, firearms, and other contraband are well-hidden.

Swan - 9 a.m.	Leigh - 9 a.m.	Fels - 9 a.m.
Woolley - 10 a.m.	McCligh - 10 a.m.	Sawtell - 10 a.m.
Stokes - 11 a.m.	Bingham - 11 a.m.	Noyes - 11 a.m.
Franklin - 1 p.m.	Welling - 1 p.m.	WTH - 1 p.m.
Canfield - 2 p.m.	Kilpat - 2 p.m.	
Dewey - 3 p.m.	Booth - 3 p.m.	

Editorial Page

Editorial

Sees Need For Wider-Ranged F.W.T. and Classes

For the past F.W.T., I found, as many others did, my own job. This was not because there were a low number of jobs available from the F.W.T. office, but rather because I felt that the jobs listed were too narrow in their scope. There are students who are interested in subjects other than the arts. The political jobs offered in the F.W.T. books were too often concerned with canvassing for third-world whale lovers, and were, for the most part, milquetoast. I feel that for the growing number of students currently involved in political subjects, such as economics, there should be a wider choice of jobs, particularly ones which are more politically moderate. Further, the most serious jobs available through the office are only open for one or two students. The remaining students must either choose a job in canvassing or making phone calls for non-profit political groups, or fend for themselves in searching for unsuggested jobs, with very few leads or contacts.

I would also like to see the F.W.T. office begin to make contacts with at least twice as many political or financial institutions as they currently offer. More importantly, I would ask that such jobs not be clerical or otherwise insignificant, as such positions do not offer a job in which one can increase one's knowledge of politics.

On this same topic, I think that students in every division could profit from a class in marketing and small business operations. The skills offered by each will most likely be needed one day by every student as he ventures into a world which demands such skills from people in every field. I would like to encourage the administration to consider finding a professor who can teach both of these classes. This is one of the few of the several thousand schools in the country which offers neither. I think it is unfair that a student should graduate without a fundamental knowledge of how to market and sell the skills which have been nurtured at this school.

I ask both the F.W.T. office and the administration to consider these points, as they are crucial to a well-rounded education anywhere.

Richard C. Sander, Jr.
Social Science Major, Economics and Political Science

Letter to The Editor

Editorial Policy: Any member of the Community may submit an opinion or comment to the *Commons*, care of box 671 in Commons mailroom. Articles should be signed and free from slander. All Letters to the Editor may or may not be signed and should address the newspaper and/or staff. Any piece of non-signed copy is subject to editing without consent of author and such articles will be printed only after the author speaks directly to the Editor(s)-in-Chief.

Simply Rick-

Just a friendly note to tell you the new Commons sucks really hard- it's really boring and totally misrepresentative of this school & its student body. Beside the fact that you're a big goomba.

Letters continue on page 5

Staff Openings

The Commons Staff still invites anyone interested to be a Commons Editor. If you feel that you cannot manage an entire section, you may become a Featured Editor who contributes an article for every issue on a topic that interests you. Examples of Featured subjects are: video reviews, art projects, rehearsals, etc. Think about it!

NOTICE . . .

The Commons invites any campus organization (including independent productions, etc.) which would like to publicize an event or activity to drop a notice and description off at our office in Noyes 23, or in the mailbox of Rick Sander (671). Announcements will be published in the newspaper in an appropriate section or where space is available, **AT NO COST**. Please drop notices off as soon as possible so that your announcement can be printed.

Writing for The Commons

Articles for any section: Letters to the Editor, Creative Writing Pieces, Poems, Public Service Announcements, Rebuttals to Articles, Performance Reviews, Photos, Reactions to Hard News, Comments on food, students services, etc. (Comment Board), Suggestions for the Editorial Staff, etc. Voice your opinions!

Put It on A MAC

The Editorial Staff of *The Commons* requests that any material of over 100 words be submitted on a Macintosh formatted disk. Please use either MicroSoft Word or MacWrite. This simple and easy act saves the staff hours of re-typing the works. If you do not have a Macintosh, we will make one available for you to use. If you lack the program or the disk, either or both can be provided as well. Information on any of the above can be obtained from Noyes 23 (leave a message on the door if no one is available). Please drop disk off in Box 671, Richard Sander. Disks will always be returned the next day. We hope to make it as easy as possible for anyone interested to write for *The Commons*.

Thank You

THE COMMONS

Established 1988

CIRCULATION . . . 1,000

Bennington College Community Newspaper
Bennington, VT 05201
Direct calls to Noyes ext. 370, Room 23

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The Commons would like to extend their thanks to all those who have helped the staff to produce this newspaper. Especially, we would like to thank David Scribner, The Bennington Banner, contributing authors, featured authors, the Bennington Campus Computer Room, everyone who attended our meetings, anyone who allowed us use of their Mac's.

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Letters to the Editor should be submitted to Timothy Pitzer. All letters are subject to editing for clarity and libel by The Commons Staff. The suggested length for actual letters is between 150-250 words. Comments and suggestions may be of any length and will be printed if appropriate. Anyone who wishes to have a letter or article printed anonymously must speak with either Editor-In-Chief.

It is the policy of The Commons to represent the student body of Bennington College. In keeping with this policy, the Editorial Staff wishes to encourage constructive participation by any member of the Bennington College community who wishes to use The Commons as an educational medium for the writing of articles, stories, and poems, the expression of viewpoints, etc. The Editorial Staff reserves the right to omit or reject any material which is not representative of the best interests of the college community. The deadline for all materials to be printed is the Tuesday before The Commons is printed (every other Friday). The Commons office is in Noyes 23 on the Bennington Campus.

Letters Continue

Dear Anonymous,

Just a really quick thank you for taking the time to comment on the paper. We want to really congratulate you on totally finding our box in Commons. We also hope that you continue perusing these pages and find that the student body at large is responsible for putting it together. Really. If you do decide to contribute to the newspaper, be advised that your last line is a sentence fragment.

—Tim Pitzer

Hey-

Your poetry is good for little more than bulimia assistance.

Dear Bulimia,

We're glad you made that comment. The Bennington College student body seems to be very skillful at criticizing and complaining, but never at making an effort to help the situation. It is always the best policy to work for a positive goal. Thus, instead of insulting the work of others, give advice on improvement, or, better yet, write something yourself. We simply have no respect for an insult sloppily written on a Snack Bar receipt and stuck in the box of one of our writers. Please consider what we've said, and don't misinterpret the reason why this note appears in print.

—Tim Pitzer

Dear Editorial staff,

Your newspaper was very hypocritical for a paramount reason. First of all you said that you would not print anything anonymously, yet the most vindictive and base article in the paper was written without an author's name. I am, of course, speaking of the "Pre-casting article," which did more harm than good. It was, in addition, an example of poor journalism, if only because the facts were not straight. I hope in the future, you will have some journalistic integrity.

---Amanda Gross

Dear Amanda,

Thank you for your comments. They are all valid points, and I refer you to our editorial policy on anonymous articles. It was the decision of the editors that no member of the community should be punished for stating an opinion. Please continue reading the newspaper

The (Much Belated) Intro and Body to On The Commons

by Jonathan Marc Sherman

What follows is an article I wrote in November, 1988 and intended to publish in the *Commons*. I finally typed up the material in December, 1988 and submitted it for publication. Unfortunately, the paper was evidently going through some editorial tough times towards the end of term, and no issues were printed after I submitted the piece. Clark Perks lost the first copy of the piece I submitted, but requested another copy for an issue he promised would appear in students' mailboxes the next week. I gave him another copy of the piece, but the *Commons* never materialized. I am submitting it for publication now, even though the copy of the *Commons* I refer to (Volume 1, Number 9) is probably impossible to find, because I feel many of my thought on the paper may still be relevant. I wish the *Commons* a productive, interesting future and urge people to rise above mediocrity if they are publishing work within the paper's pages. The *Commons* is still around. Dan Quayle is still in a position of power. Dan Quayle's hair is turning gray. I wonder what will happen to the *Commons*.

—Jonathan Marc Sherman

April 2, 1989

Allegory

I wrote an allegorical tale called "Circle of Jerks" a few weeks back that expressed some of my feelings about the paper. The staff either missed or ignored the allegory. I boldly express my feelings now with the hope that others who are dissatisfied with the paper will express their feelings as well.

Constraints

It is a shame, when all constraints are lifted, to find that the thing that was being constrained is only a sleeping snail.

Criticism

If one writes criticism, some knowledge of (a) how to write and (b) how to critique should be sought out.

and consider becoming a full-time member. You and all community members who have an interest in journalism are encouraged to help out and assist in the weekly decision-making policies that affect us all.

Gossip

What is the excuse for a gossip column that does not even include more interesting gossip an average Bennington student (if such a thing exists) will be likely to overhear during an average Bennington lunch? Does this article exist to showcase its author's slick photograph (Is the tree holding Gregory up? Is Gregory holding the tree up? If they both fell in a forest, would anybody know?) or to keep a group of insecure people satiated?

History

If historians thumbed through some back issues of *The Commons*, they might find Bret Easton Ellis' depiction of inane, mindless youths on a college campus in *The Rules of Attraction* accurate. If this does not scare you, perhaps a skimming of *The Rules of Attraction* will.

Horoscopes

The horoscopes are pointless and not at all funny, but they look good and harmless when placed near many of the other features.

Inspiration

Somebody approached me at dinner recently and asked if they could borrow the copy of *The Commons* newspaper (Volume 1, Number 9) on the table's top. "Take it," I said. "You can also use it as toilet tissue." Since *The Commons* stated editorial policy is that they will print what they are given (this article included), perhaps a few imaginative and intelligent critical articles will push the paper a few inches in a more interesting direction.

Mediocrity

Why are students here (the ones who write for the paper, at least) so lazy and content with mediocrity? If people tried to challenge themselves, *The Commons* would be worth the paper it's printed on, and the time that goes into printing it up and distributing it. It might also be worth reading.

Perks, Clark

Two pieces by Clark Perks

If you have any further comments, please send them our way.

---Tim Pitzer

smashed onto the front page of the paper? Is his writing so majestic that his voice cannot be ignored, or does he just demand this position as the founder of the paper?

Pseudonyms

If Karl and Kara Sovietunion are going to name names, why not print their own? It's easy to try and appear hip and witty hiding behind some papier-mache pseudonyms.

Self-Glorification

It is continually shocking to see people rush into print with examples of their own ineptness. This may be as much a sign of our times as the recent presidential election and all of its symbolic implications. I always thought the reason one wrote for a newspaper was because one had something to communicate. It seems most people write for *The Commons* just to see their names and their words stuffed in everybody's boxes.

Tardiness

I wrote these thoughts almost a month ago. I have finally typed them up for submission. I apologize for the delay and lost steam.

Theory and Practice

I am very supportive of *The Commons* in theory. The idea of having a printed forum where anybody can say anything is marvelous. What disappoints me is the way the student writers have accepted this idea. Flipping through the pages of the newspaper, I am always hard-pressed to find an article that is not utterly masturbatory and in love with its author's voice—a voice that is not saying much of anything most of the time. The noise made down at the Early Childhood Center is infinitely more interesting and creative than all the literary "noise" on the pages of *The Commons*. Express any feelings you might have on this subject in the paper itself. It'd be nice to read something that was truly about something. Have a pleasant day.

Written on November 10, 1988

Typed on December 6, 1988

Bennington, Vermont

Features

ALEPH

by Joeseeph Mueller

Our man walks down the hilly street. He does not saunter, he does not glide, he does not shuffle. He merely walks. Descriptive verbs are great, but don't outwit yourself with synonyms when the simplest word describes exactly what you mean. Ferguson (there, we've given our character a name so the reader doesn't get confused) is now walking downhill and so moves along more briskly. Why did I mention that? Is some conflict to arise due to his quickened pace? No. I mention it merely so that you, we, the readers, might keep up with the movement of Ferguson, even though I occasionally sidestep to explain things. Okay now. Ferguson walks (downhill) briskly past the Cathedral. "Cathedral" is capitalized because it is important to Ferguson. He even blesses himself as he passes. If this were a cartoon I could draw a thought bubble above his head and fill it with whatever it is I wish him to think. Instead, I write; "Ferguson thought..." or, "Ferguson remembered..." and I create memories from which we can learn about our character. Watch...

Ferguson remembers being in the Cathedral for his brother's baptism. His brother had been crying, the priest was young and smelled of caraway seeds, and his parents were angry because he had tried to burn a hymnal at one of the

candle racks. Instant memories.

<Normal>

Uh-oh, we must pay attention here. Ferguson has passed the small park (where he might have played as a child) and has come to a preternaturally crooked, two-story building. Let's try our powers of description here... There is little about the outside of this place that recommends itself to the eye. The ancient wooden shingles are weather worn and warped. When the wind blows, giant flecks of paint fall like dead moths from the doorframe and windowsills. The extreme slant of the structure gives the impression that a weary-shouldered giant had slumped down and rested against one side of it.

Anyway, there is a bar on the first floor of this place and Ferguson knows its name to be Kelley's. Are you enamored by the past? Shall I have Ferguson reminisce about the first time he drank at this place with the present owner's father? He might remember (for our pleasure) fighting railroad scabs in this bar while the police placed bets on the outcome. But no, let's switch forward to the present (Ferguson's, anyway) and have Ferguson wrap his large, wrinkled hand around the tarnished brass knob of the front door of Kelley's Bar.

He did it! Our man is now

inside the bar. The smell of stale beer and pool chalk and deep-fried food envelopes him. Why doesn't he step to the bar? Okay, a simple stroke of the pen and he's there. Magic.

Ferguson sits on a high-backed barstool (it might even have a red or green cushion on it, if you like) and rests his elbows on the black counter sticky with beer.

All right, hold on. Who yelled, "Where's the dialogue?" and, "Is Ferguson dumb?" Rest easy, reader; Ferguson does indeed have a tongue. In fact,

"How 'bout a pint, Tim?" Ferguson asks flatly.

"Comin' right up Fergie. How's things?"

"Bout the same. Annie been in yet?"

"Nope. Wait, here she comes now." Tim points toward the door.

Did you notice how easily the character of Tim slipped into that scene? If you're going to send Ferguson to a bar, you might as well provide a bartender to serve him and maybe provide a bit of small talk. Now here comes Annie. She walks in (let's say it's raining right now) and shakes some water from her coat (which might be blue wool). Annie nods to Tim and seats herself next to Ferguson. She, too, can speak.

"Fergie," she kisses him on the cheek. "How are you today?"

"Hiya, Annie," he says. "I'm doin' okay."

What with all of this

dialogue, we haven't noticed that Ferguson has finished his beer and motions for two more. You always have to try to keep one step ahead of your fictions or else they might get out of hand. If you're writing a novel and publishing it yourself you have plenty of space in which to formulate plots, create ingenious dialogue, and create and resolve all manner of conflicts. If you are writing for someone else, especially for a newspaper, you only have enough space to ramble a bit, be facetious and, if so inclined, just a little didactic.

Well, the night goes on and Ferguson and Annie drink heartily for three hours and twenty-three minutes before they slide off their barstools to leave. If you like, it can still be raining. Hey! While we weren't looking they both donned their coats and made their exit. Ah, there they are, strolling/stumbling uphill toward Ferguson's apartment.

Ferguson looks at the sky and then at Annie. Insightfully he remarks, "You know, Annie, sometimes I feel like it's somebody else who's makin' me do all the things I think I'm doin' on my own. Y'know what I mean?"

Readers, stay away from metafiction (or anything that even sounds like it) unless you're able to hold fourway conversations with invisible people on a daily basis. Let's have Annie curtail Ferguson's line of thought and this scene by replying, "Yeah. Hey Fergie, how about buying me an umbrella?"

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The Rules and Play of Baseball

[bas bol]

by Reginald Perrin

Well, gang, it's Springtime, when a young man's [or woman's] heart turns to love, lust, and boning. And baseball. We'd like to give all you out there in Newspaperland a quick review of the game and how it's played. Baseball, that is, not sex. This one's for you, Evan.

The game of baseball is played in a large open grassy space called a "village green" or "park." In one corner of the park, there is a huge diamond.

Judging from it's size, I'd estimate its value at about 450 million carats or so, but nobody has ever tried to rip one off. People do, however, attempt to steal bases, which are located along the perimeter of the diamond. These bases are centers or headquarters for internal or external-radial activity, and provide jobs for hundreds of the local citi-

zenry. While their value cannot be nearly as high as that of the diamond, people try to steal bases quite frequently. The punishment for getting caught trying to lift a base is called "getting out." There is no way to logically explain this part of the ritual, especially not to a lay-person like yourself.

In the middle of the diamond is a sandy promontory called "the pitchers' mound." A large pitcher of chilled water is set atop this promontory. Baseballs are ejected from the pitcher towards a ceremonial platter known locally as "home plate." Home plate is made of fine ceramic, is emblazoned with a scene from that classic "Gone With The Wind," and can be ordered from the Franklin Mint for only \$69.95. Hurry, though, because we are limited to 250 firing days, and these fine collectibles

may someday be worth millions.

Pancake batter is dripped from [strangely] a spine brace, otherwise known as the backstop. This batter is poured next to home plate. It holds a Brazilian Fruit Bat (*Chiroptera Frugivora*). When the ball is ejected from the pitcher, the batter swings *Chiroptera Frugivora*. If the ball projectile is accidentally deflected from the back stop, water is added to the batter to loosen the consistency and make it runny. The batter runs down a groove etched into the diamond's face. If the batter is able to ooze it's way down to the first base before some clod throws the ball to that point, the batter is said to have "gotten a single." This phrase is in reference to the fact that the reward for reaching first base (no childish sexual connotations implied) is a 7 inch 45 r.p.m. record. If the batter is capable of reaching second base (straight to First, hang a left, one block up and you're there), it has "gotten a double," for which it is

rewarded with a large shotglass of whiskey. There is no reward for reaching the third base (again, no sexual implications in this game), but if it is said that the batter has gotten a "Homer," (reaching home plate, or effectively having run around in a circle, dog a dog chasing its tail), the reward is a copy of *Ulysees*.

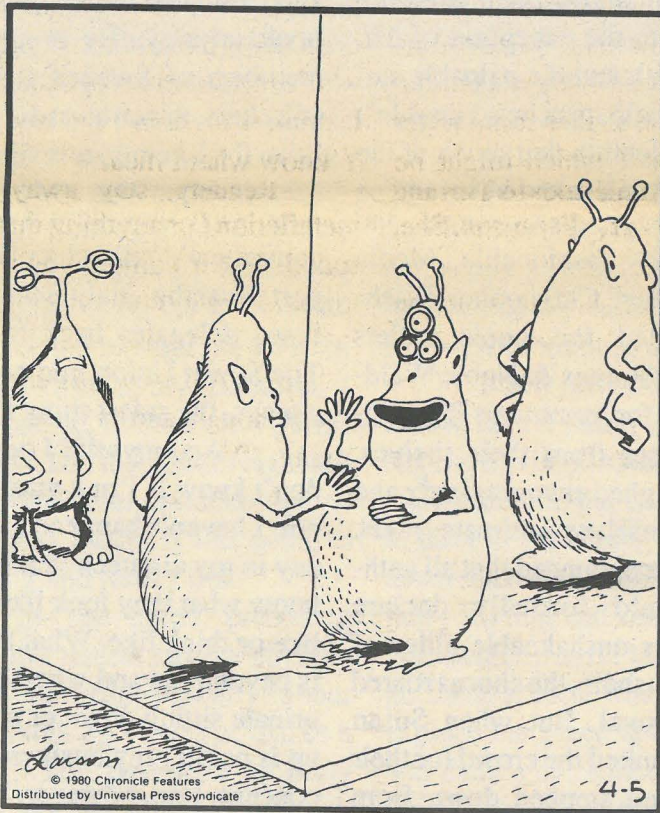
This process is repeated until the grooves get dammed by the opposing team three times. When the base line is properly dammed, the batter pours "out" of the groove, and is rendered useless. The teams now switch places, and the entire procedure is repeated, for better or worse, in sickness and in health, 'til death do us part.

It is easy to see why baseball is such a popular sport, on both the college campuses and corporate parks across this mighty nation, so let's see all you puppies out there on the lawn.

Last one in gets a broken spine!

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Hey, Zoran! What's happenin'?! ... Give me six!"

Rushdie

continued from the Front Page

of partition. Interestingly enough, this is the same year that Salman Rushdie was born.

Back inside the airport, a moving walkway carried me and my suitcases through the ultramodern British Airways terminal and delivered us unto an impressive arcade of duty-free shops and restaurants. Amid the busy noises of humanity-in-transit, I heard a woman cry with joy: "Judith, it's been banned! Can't you just imagine?" Apparently, Judith's interest lay elsewhere, so I approached the excited woman and inquired as to what had been banned. Thusly, I came to know of *The Satanic Verses*.

Of course, Rushdie's latest (4th) novel hadn't been banned in Great Britain, the author's home and the place of its debut. The enthused woman had meant Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, India - all nations with sizable muslim populations. When I arrived in Karachi (Pakistan), half a day later, my mother confirmed this. Such news came as no big surprise. Both *Midnight's Children* and *Shame* (Rushdie's 2nd & 3rd novels) had been banned in Pakistan.

But why? To appreciate the novel and the predicament of its author, one needs at least a partial understanding of the hybrid (Eastern heritage/Western education) culture from which both were born:

Every afternoon, upon completion of school, millions of young, uppercrust muslim children approach their windows with apprehension. Below them, outside the iron-gates of their homes, millions of bearded molvis guide their bicycles into the drive and offer millions of "Salaams" (greetings) to millions of seated, Pathan gatekeepers, smiling through the smoke of their hookahs and the dust of the earth.

Invariably, the children frown with distaste upon the arrival of their white-robed molvisahibs - yet even more lessons! And thus, with the bitter spice of resentment, they swallow millions of "Muhammad-ul-ila-hay"s, "Kulo-wa-Allah"s, and "Allah-ho-akbar"s; divine Islamic poetry dictated in Arabic, a language they don't understand, by mysterious men they don't know, about a God they would gladly sacrifice for a few hours of imported American television.

These are the kids that attend Oxford or Harvard; some even find themselves in Bennington. A handful of them may write books, few get published, but none of them expect to be sentenced to death for creating fiction, be it religiously critical or not. And for this reason, it is even more ironic that the au-

continued on next page

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Rushdie

continued from previous page

thor of The Satanic Verses has been condemned to death.

Salman Rushdie is not a muslim. He doesn't even believe in God! No devout, orthodox, blind-faith muslim, who intends to remain one, should pay him any attention. By unloading perhaps the most influential press release in history, the Ayatollah Khomeini has immortalized The Satanic Verses and its author, in the West, as emblems of Free Expression. If the intent of Khomeini's death sentence was to silence a heretic for his spiritual misdemeanors, then his method is truly absurd. Serious writers who share Rushdie's impressions of religion, will only be more inclined to voice their feelings. It could be so lucrative, that some may even affect blasphemous poses. Of course, Khomeini may delight in this. It offers controversy, over which he can preside, waving his new, self-revised edition of the Qu'ran. Politics is what religion is all about and Islam has become defaced by the perverted politics of its "leaders."

"Nowadays, a powerful tribe of clerics has taken over Islam. These are the contemporary Thought Police. They have turned Muhammad into a perfect being, his life into a perfect life, his revelation into the unambiguous, clear event it originally was not. Powerful taboos have been erected. One may not discuss Muhammad as if he were human, with human virtues and weaknesses. One may not discuss the growth of Islam as a historical phenomenon, as an ideology born out of its time. These are the taboos against which The Satanic Verses has transgressed. It is for this breach of taboo that the novel is being anathematized, fulminated against, and set alight."

Salman Rushdie, Jan. 89.

Of the muslim friends and acquaintances I have spoken with, few regard The Satanic Verses as intentionally blasphemous, that is with no greater purpose than to defame. The essence of Islam, as taught to us, emphasises the all-importance of knowledge. In Muhammad's Hadith (collection of poetic quotes), he singles out the quest for knowledge as the human pursuit in which God takes the most supreme delight. What Khomeini offers is the suppression of this phenomenon and the elimination of its devotees, a fantastic contradiction.

The muslim masses, like

most masses, are poorly educated - if at all. By far, most are illiterate and couldn't read The Satanic Verses even if it was translated into their mother tongue. The selective interpretation of anything, religion, literature, drama, by a few educated people, for an enormous mass of illiterates invariably ends in a bastardization of the primary message. This is the hypocrisy that pervades the present-day manipulation of the Qu'ran. Islam was originally intended to accomodate man's personality. The stone idols and golden calves which it fundamentally opposed have manifested themselves in its very own leaders, virtually negating the intimacy of faith between individual and God. And thus the word Islam conjures the prevailing western images of barbarism, endless jihads, hijackings and a stone-age mentality.

Back in the West, the storm rages: Upon my return to New York, in January, the controversy had quite literally caught flame and the book had begun to sell briskly. Rushdie was scheduled to kick off his promotional tour with a reading for Manhattan-based Writers In Performance on February 20th. When I called two weeks in advance to purchase tickets, they had already sold out. It made no difference, as the Ayatollah's death sentence (Feb. 15th) rendered such plans "impractical" and the tour was cancelled.

A week later, on February 22nd (official publication date), I found myself ducking umbrellas and sliding through a four-block line of raincoated writers, readers and presspeople to get to the PEN offices at 584 Broadway. Finally situated at the head of the line, awaiting further instructions from the "event staff," I had a look about. This downtown stretch of Broadway had become a rain-drenched debating ground. A throng of "outraged" Pakistani muslims had gathered on the side opposite the PEN headquarters to vocalize their anger. Amid intense chants of "Allah-ho-akbar (God is Great)," the exclusively-male crowd waved signs emblazoned with such legends as "Down With Satanic Verses," "Down With Viking-Penguin (the publisher)," and a rather curious one imploring: "GET TO KNOW A MUSLIM." This sign suggested that Rushdie's novel misrepresents Islam in its portrayal of a less-than-divine Prophet Muhammad, and that those readers expecting to find within its pages

a truthful assessment of Allah's word were sorely mistaken.

God refused to take sides in the matter, and so the rain continued to beat down upon all of us. Presently, a rather ironic duo of policemen (who fancied themselves guardians of the gates to Heaven) cleared the entrance to the building and allowed a dozen frenzied bystanders to go inside. The rest of us were told to "go home and watch it on TV!" Most stayed, though, and two hours later a handful of us were rewarded with the sight (and speeches) of such notables as E.L. Doctorow, Norman Mailer, Edward Said, Susan Sontag and Gay Talese.

PEN's makeshift auditorium was filled with shady, grinning literary types, self-absorbed press-people and their cameramen. The audience wore black. Hair was gelled and close-cropped, faces invariably clean-shaven and shiny-skinned. Tall, ruby-lipped models circulated through the crowd. Jay McInerney himself couldn't have been far away. Despite the presence of the above-mentioned notables (with the exception of Mr. McInerney), and the palpable sincerity of their speeches, I couldn't shake the feeling that much of the audience had flocked here in hope of a suitably controversial and delightfully fashionable Media Event. When Christopher Hitchens insulted the book outlets (B. Dalton/Barnes & Noble/Waldenbooks) for removing The Satanic Verses from their shelves, people laughed encouragingly and gave themselves intimate nods. When he pronounced that all gathered should formally declare themselves unshakeable allies of Salman Rushdie, the chorus roared with approval. But when Susan Sontag thanked the crowd for their support and stepped down from the podium, everyone breathed luxuriously, exchanged limp handshakes, still smiling, and left, media event-of-the-week fulfilled, generous, bobbing faces captured on the local news, illiterate dates all suitably impressed.

Hitchens' previously uproarious suggestion was surprisingly taken by many as a joke. A few weeks later, in The New York Review of Books (March 12th), Norman Mailer summed up the intent of the meeting in a short "personal" message to Salman Rushdie: "My country, right or wrong," Stephen Decatur said. That is faith. It seems all we writers who have no faith have been led back to one by your nightmare. The irony is that we have had it all along. We believe in freedom of expression

as an absolute. How dangerous to use that word absolute, but you have pulled it forth from us - your health!"

As winter came to a close, Salman Rushdie fell from the headlines. He remains in hiding, though. Khomeini's \$5.2 million bounty weighs heavily above his head. The major book-chains have restocked The Satanic Verses, and the mainstream can now agonize over shelling out \$20 to take it home, where, unread, it may just ornament the bookshelf as some unassuming trophy of cultural literacy. The choice is excruciating. After all, Danielle Steele and Tom Clancy do come with user-guarantees.

George Bush farted out a statement about a month and a half ago that managed to float neither here nor there. Within days, Dan Quayle heroically dismissed the novel as "insulting" whilst admitting simultaneously that he had never read it. In a grand display of hypocrisy, Cardinal O'Connor decided that the death sentence was indeed a bad thing, but discouraged Catholics from reading the book anyway. By contrast, two members of Sweden's Academy of Letters, which awards the Nobel Prize for Literature, resigned their life memberships (March 15th) over what they described as the committee's refusal to fully support Rushdie. Italy sent its confused delegates back to Tehran. The Soviet Union said nothing, as always, the safest thing to say.

And myself? I personally don't know if I'm a muslim or not. I haven't happened to meet any in my eighteen years. I don't know what they look like, talk like or think like. What they eat is beyond me and whether they urinate sitting down or standing up is neither my business nor my concern. I do, however, know that Islam is a faith that draws all sorts. Those who make the headlines are most often the least representative. I would hope that this malicious group masquerading as the soldiers of God and whatnot, would drop their rifles and clear the dust from their eyes. Perhaps, they could think better when the echos subside. In any case, a final prayer is to be offered on behalf of Salman Rushdie. In the words of Bharati Mukherjee, an Indian novelist and friend of the author's: "I hope in spite of everything your next novel will be so scaldingly blasphemous that even liberals will cringe." Amin.

Saturday Night in The Dark

by Nick Sheer

My head started to spin at about three o'clock in the morning, so I decided to leave the party. Things had not gone well on that particular evening. As a matter of fact, it had been a night of pure, unadulterated sleazery. It had started out pleasantly enough; my girlfriend Adabelle and I were in high spirits when we arrived, and the good vibes continued on for a while, as we danced, drank, and socialized. A little later, I noticed (or thought I noticed) Adabelle and some guy making eyes at each other. I vaguely remembered pulling her off to a deserted room in the house and accusing her of flirting with other guys. A nasty, jealous and stupid argument ensued, culminating in my calling her something to the effect of "bitch," "slut," or "whore."

I wobbled slightly as I stepped out into the cool night. I inhaled deeply, letting the fresh air dissolve some of the cobwebs that the Great Beer Spider had spun in my head. I had no money for a cab, no car (we had come to the party in Adabelle's Volkswagen, and asking her for a ride was completely out of the question), and there was nobody left at the party that I knew well enough to ask for a lift. I had no choice but to walk the three or four miles back to my apartment. I lit a cigarette, walked a few yards, hesitated, and then, realizing that I had no other alternative, continued on my way home. It was going to be a long and lonely trek.

In the hours preceding dawn, the streets have a strange, almost unearthly quality about them. Nothing moves or makes a sound. The pavement is flatly bathed in cold, blue-white street-

lamp haze. I had the feeling that I was walking in a photograph; I was a three-dimensional figure in a two-dimensional landscape. To take my mind off the monotony of my journey, I thought back, trying to piece together a coherent picture of the night's events.

After our little fight, Adabelle had gone off to another section of the party with some of her friends. I had gone over to the keg and started drinking. For a while I stood there watching the dance-floor revelry, expressionlessly downing cup after cup of foamy, tasteless beer. The "fun" section of my brain had curdled into a clump of hardened scar tissue. After about an hour of this I decided to go find Adabelle, apologize for what I'd said, and try to work things out with her. She was nowhere to be found on or around the dance floor, so I went upstairs to look for her in the family bedrooms. I found her. I also found my best friend, Chuck. They were both naked, writhing together on the floor of the master bedroom.

As I walked along the deserted streets, a wave of helpless fury and revulsion tore through me, the memory of that scene having surfaced in my intoxicated mind. In a vicious mood, I trudged on.

A few minutes (or was it an hour?) later I found myself at the edge of Lavington Park. Although it is difficult to put one's finger on it, there is something very bizarre about Lavington Park. It seems fairly normal and mundane when you casually stroll through it, but go there several times and really explore the place and you'll find that there's more there than meets the eye—nothing mind-boggling,

just little things; one day you might find a stream that you never knew existed, another day you'll discover a hidden well or a small cave under some bushes. Lavington Park also seems bigger on the inside than it does from the outside. For some odd reason I was always a little nervous whenever I went through it at night, but to go around it on the night in question would have added close to an hour to my walk home, not a thrilling prospect at the time.

With some trepidation, I entered the park. Maybe it was the alcohol, but that night the park seemed a lot more foreboding than usual. The moonlight that filtered through the ancient, gnarled trees cast strange shadows on the path in front of me. I realized that my mouth had dried out and my heart was beating at an uncomfortable pace. I stopped for a moment, took a few deep breaths, chiding myself for my irrational fear, and continued on. My mind wandered back to the party, to the image of Adabelle and Chuck heaving together on the floor. Anger swallowed up my fear, and my pace quickened.

I thought I saw something move in the bushes ahead of me. I stopped, fear seeping back into my chest. I stood there for a few seconds, staring. There was no more movement, so I walked on, dismissing it as an optical illusion or maybe a stray animal. I had barely taken four steps when I heard the unmistakable sound of a twig snapping. My muscles all contracted at once, leaving my feet welded to the ground. A figure stepped out of the bushes and stood in front of me. It was a man, about twenty-five years old, with a skinny body and short, matted hair. He was completely naked, and was pointing a gun at me. My legs trembled so hard, I didn't know if I could stay on my feet. We stood

face to face for what seemed like hours. Then I smelled him. The only way to describe the way he smelled is "fear". It was a bitter smell, like burning aspirin. I looked into his eyes. They darted around pathetically, like those of a little boy being called into the principal's office for the very first time. I realized that he was almost as terrified as I was. Finally he stammered, "Take off your clothes."

I was in no position to argue, so I stripped. The cold breeze rippled my bare skin with goose-pimples. I stood naked in front of him, dreading whatever he had in store for me. I almost hoped he would shoot me and get it over with right then. Instead he pointed to my clothes and said "Give them to me". I did.

He backed off a bit and awkwardly dressed with one hand, keeping the gun trained on me with the other. He then looked into my eyes with what appeared to be sympathy and did what I least expected. He placed the gun on the ground and sprinted off into the darkness.

I stood there for a while, totally unable to think. I walked over to the gun, picked it up, and checked it. It was loaded. I stared at the gun and thought about my situation. I was naked, I was a long way from home, and I had a loaded .38. In a few hours it would be getting light out.

Suddenly I understood. The realization knocked the wind out of me. I laughed, the mirthless and illogical way one laughs after hearing about the death of a friend. How many had there been before him? How many more would there be? In the distance I heard the footsteps of someone entering Lavington Park. My own footsteps had probably sounded similar...

Society Notes!

Yakking with Yolonda

Yak, yak, yak...there is a lot of talk rustingly through campus and Yolonda (who by the way is a committee of Society-noters) will be here to present some of it. We have nothing to do with Gregory and we will not dwell on groups like the Dewey girls.

But while we're on the subject, let's talk about some of those Dewey people. First of all, was that a miscarriage or yak Friday night in the Dewey bathroom? Second of all, cupids arrows have mis-fired all over campus. Namely to a Charles in Canfield who seems to have forgotten his current girl-

friend and follows others strewing flowers in that very same Dewey suite. Speaking of cupids arrows, is Ellen remaining faithful to that mythical boyfriend in California?

Poor, poor Sasha, blown away within minutes of the start of the lovely war assassin game. Speaking of Sasha, cupid struck her ex-beau in the groin several times this week, starting with a nameless Booth girl following the Reggae bash. In regards to that aforementioned event, Dina Emerson certainly redefined speaker-dancing.

Thank god Shawn Paper

has seemingly settled down, Marlo is it true? Have Dudley and Cinnamon really broken up or is it a front to carry on lots of humpety-bumpety. Now that we're on the humpety-bumpety subject, will Brett and Kate ever do it?

Seen in local eateries: Don and Cybelle. How was that sushi? Meanwhile ol' Kevi-Kev silently slipped off campus with some sleeping beauty (?) and Linky's master/reggae singer has apparently been stealing some innocence. And what girl doesn't want Todd Bakerian?

Gardening tips: Plant marigolds right before the last spring frost, make sure you water them everyday and love them.

Please answer the below by circling either Hit or Miss. Then deposit in Box 671. Your answers will determine the fate of this column!

What do you think of the society column?

Hit

or

Miss

Arts & Entertainment

Portugal Concert

by Ethan Fran

A full and expectant audience gathered in Greenwall on Wednesday night, April 5th to hear a concert of vocal music given by students of Frank Baker. These students had participated in Frank's annual voice workshop held in Praia da Luz, Portugal during FWT. This concert was intended to showcase the accomplishments of this intensive program and the fourteen students gathered for the occasion proved its success and displayed their improvement with satisfaction.

The performers sat in a semicircle on either side of the piano and observed their colleagues attentively and supportively, each

emotions of the spurned lover that the song depicts were expressed somewhat gentler than Ada is surely capable of expressing.

The "Quia Respexit" from Bach's *Magnificat* was then sung by Anne Riesenfeld. Her performance was heartfelt and the emotion of the piece was communicated well. She then assayed the notoriously difficult "Una Voce Poco Fa" from Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. A piece obviously requiring the greatest effort and taking this singer to her present technical limits, Anne managed to convey Rosina's sweet ingenuousness while contending formidable obstacles.



PHOTO BY POEBE BROWN

waiting in anticipation as they took their turns from the left of the stage to the right. It was amusing to note the wide variation in the performers' conceptions of "concert attire".

The program opened with Jason Cagenello singing the vigorous air, "I'll Sail Upon The Dog Star" by Purcell, which he interpreted using extroverted, humorous postures and gestures. The occasional florid passages within the air were executed with notable accuracy. This was followed by the well-known "Amarilli, Mia Bella" by Caccini, which in spite of the innumerable readings the song gets by voice students the world over, Jason sang in a very personal and individual way. It's melody flowed lightly from first phrase to last in a very touching way.

Ada Pitsou then sang "Les Roses d'Ispahan" by Faure. Ada's voice is quite pleasant and carries very clearly. However, one was left with the impression that the

The next singer was Evita Cobo, a resident of North Bennington, who was accompanied by a friend of hers, Mike Schiffer. Her milieu is that of the cabaret-type ballad singer which made for a lovely contrast in the program's repertory. The soft, velvety tone of her voice is well-complemented by the songs she chose: her rendering of "Angel Eyes" was sultry and smoothly-phrased. Excellent rapport with her pianist was demonstrated in Rogers and Hart's "I Didn't Know What Time It Was" as Mr. Schiffer took flight with the sauntering accompaniment.

Stephen Shea, a student at Simon's Rock, then returned the program to the format of the art song presenting two dark songs, "Rast" and "Die Kraehe", from Schubert's haunting song cycle, *Die Winterreise*. Although apparently a person with a deep love of music, Stephen appeared unaccustomed to the concert stage. He fell

continued on page 12, column 3

Major League

by Adam Cohen

Ahh, Spring! Mom, apple pie, Chevrolet, baseball...all spring epidemics.

However, Hollywood ignores spring; it dumps all its films that can't survive except for home video and cable onto the unsuspecting public. Successful formulae are also copied, so the public will buy into them again and again. "Major League" (currently embalmed at Cinema I, II, III) is very much overshadowed by last summer's "Bull Durham," both in plot, writing and execution. Only fans of Bob Eker as a sportscaster will be provided with any entertainment whatsoever by this long and boring comedy.

The film limps to its expected conclusion all too slowly. Essentially the Cleveland Indians are left to a former-show girl who wants the team to be dead last so she can move them to Miami. Her rationale is something to the effect of, "It's been 35 years since we've won a pennant. The stadium's falling apart and we don't draw dick. Besides, I like Miami." She formulates a rag-tag team including pitcher Charlie Sheen, who is miraculously freed from jail, complete with moose and an attitude, in time for spring training. Over the hill, womanizer/catcher Tom Ber-

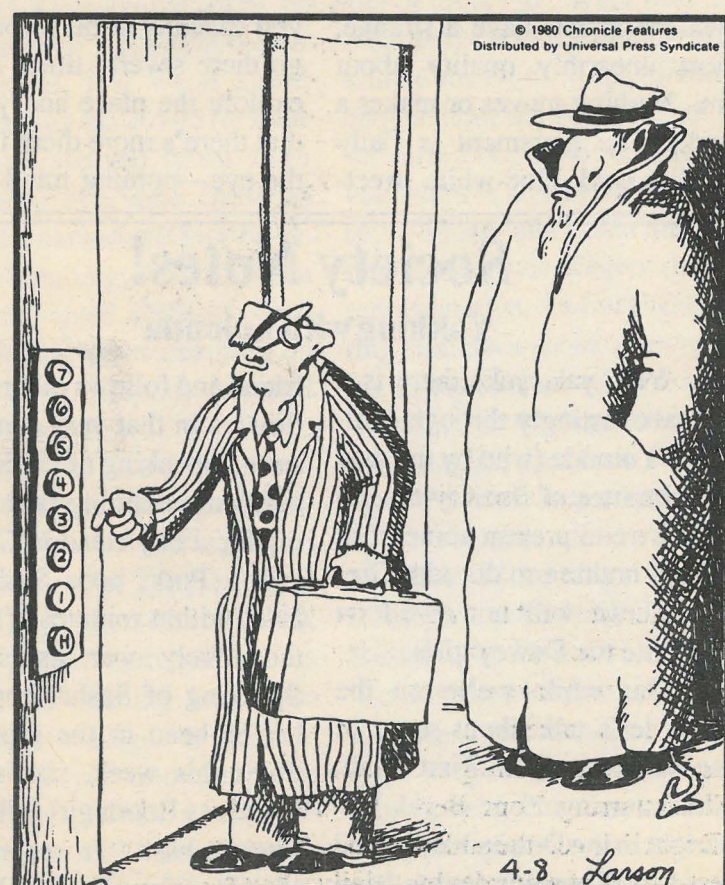
enger and Corbin Bernsen as the pretty boy who won't get dirty, but who is really rich and about to be a free-agent third baseman. So much for character and plot development. The rest of the team consists of black stereotypes, a born-again pitcher, and a voodoo-practitioner straight from "Bull Durham," along with many other non-descript, non-entities. Sub-plots include Berenger trying to win back the athlete-librarian/Susan Sarandon look-alike whom he left years earlier. She's currently involved with a yuppie and has a license plate which says "Read." Needless to say, somehow this mess is all tied together.

Lite Beer, American Express, Cleveland, the Indians and the Yankees all get nice free publicity. No one actor has enough to do to comment on. The direction and writing by David Ward are all by-the-book, with nothing particularly innovative or creative. Generally, the cast looks tan but uncomfortable as they let the player-stunt doubles do the work.

"Major League" should be avoided at any cost, unless you enjoy the old theory that "if you pay people enough, they'll do anything."

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"H, please ... for both of us."

O.K. Dude: The Sporting Life

by Slush

Have you ever wondered what it was like to be a bat? A ferret? The "bumper" on the toe of your favorite Chucks? How about a cardboard tube, freshly liberated from its burden of sheets of paper towelling, ready to exploit its possibilities as a free-spirited, cyclical beast. Once I had the pleasure of conversing with such an animal, who reported that he (this was a "he") felt like Lazarus unwrapped, and began to expound his wisdom on the human condition as he saw it.

Perhaps due to the fact that I had one or two many of those substances of which Tipper, Ron, and Nancy highly disapprove coursing through my veins (never mix your Ozzy with Albini, by the way), most of the conversation burrowed its way into a portion of grey matter from which it is irretrievable. There was one lesson, however, that the human condition, and his only foreseeable solution - one must attempt to understand the simple joys of a cardboard tube, a tube reveling in its freedom from those encumbering sheets which shrivel in Rosie's hands and are continually forced to drink the ritual coffee spill. My friend, the towel tube, rolls. He

rolls up and down the walls of the bathroom in the quiet early morning hours. He throws himself in reckless abandon on the snack bar's floor when the attendants are too busy to notice. He rolled himself across Commons lawn and led me to a long gentle slope next to the "new" dorms and proceeded to guide me to the highest point my spirituality has yet to reach....Ah, the joy of my soul as I first rolled down that hill, hands clasped above my head, carefully breathing in through my nose and out through my mouth, contemplating the wonder of my mother, Earth, and the small joys her contours provide. It was incredible; it was stranger than the Black Music division's member's constant cryptic references to various felines and their amazing musical skills, but the power of the experience is essentially as incommunicable as the faith of Moses. It is, however, available to all who would dare to take that irrational, Kierkegaardian leap. You too, my gentle reader, can discover the inexplicable joy that, for a moment, can absolve the agonizing perils of the self-conscious mind, ridden with angst and desperations...just do find that hill and roll with it.

A Speculation on Eraserhead

by Morgan Roberts

Ever had one of those dreams that make you feel completely shagged after you have it? A tiring, disconcerting dream? If you have, enjoy them to the fullest. If those type of dreams are what you've been searching for to achieve nirvana, but for some reason can't muster up the ability, see David Lynch's Eraserhead.

"And what kind of film is it?" ring the voices of those interested. And I become befuddled and confused trying to come up with an answer. To call it drama is not quite correct, for mainline drama does not have scenes in which a chicken dinner erupts in pain and agony when pierced by a carving fork. Nor is it a horror film or science fiction flick. Definitely not a gangster picture and not in any respects a self-help film, Eraserhead is a total labeling conundrum.

The plot, mysterious little hedgehog that it is, is rather quite simple. Henry and Mary have sex. Mary becomes pregnant. The baby is born prematurely. So much so that they aren't sure it is a baby. Yet it comes home to live with its parents. There it gets sick, gets better, grows to enormous size and appears to devour Henry. I want to

stress that this is only an educated guess. I say educated for I have a slight advantage over the usual first-time viewer of this film, for I have seen the thing at least thirty times. But I could be wrong. This is mere speculation.

It is a film that actually seems to be a dream. Not a dream made into a movie, but an actual REM-stage dream, complete with spatial disorientation and total breakdown of all reason and logic. It's a rare thing to come across a film that makes you feel as though you had just been a subject in some bizarre, CIA brainwashing experiment. When I walk out of a film feeling like I'd been injected with a hefty syringe-ful of DMT, that's a film I will rush back to see again. To anyone interested in the wild, wacky, and loopy world of the prenatal hallucinatory experience, this film should be seen. To anyone who prefers a double feature of Satisfaction starring the multi-talented Justine Bateman, and oh, let's say any film dealing with the 'touching realationships of today's adolescent,' disregard this film. It could cause irreparable damage to your heads. So keep dem littl' uns away! 'Dis one's for the already-imbalanced!

Media Moments

by Jeff Williams

The home video market is booming and movies are finding a quicker turn around from the silver screen to the t.v. screen. A whole slew of films have been released in the last month or so, with many more on their way.

Among the bigger box office successes now available on video are BULL DURHAM, the baseball romance, starring Kevin Costner and Susan Sarandon; the comedy/adventure A FISH CALLED WANDA starring Academy Award winner Kevin Kline with Jamie Lee Curtis, John Cleese and Michael Palin; and also Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry in THE DEAD POOL- unquestionably his best performance yet (not to mention a well written script.) If you haven't seen them yet make a point of a movie spree the weekend.

Also worth mentioning are BETRAYED starring Tom Berenger and Debra Winger- the undercover investigation of a murder by a female F.B.I. agent; and THE



Jeff Bridges in Tucker

CHOCOLATE WAR written and directed by Keith Gordon and starring John Glover, Ilan Mitchell-Smith and a host of other semi-big names, the story based on the children's novel by Robert Cormier. Even though these two films didn't rake in tens of millions of dollars daily, they are well worth renting and would be a bargain at twice the

price.

And as if these won't keep you busy enough, there's always the Danish import BABETTE'S FEAST, the touching story of a maid who spends her life's earnings on an incredible feast for her employers; MR. NORTH the light-hearted comedy based on Thornton Wilder's "Theophilus North" featuring Anthony Andrews, Angelica Huston and a surprisingly wide awake Robert Mitchum; MYSTIC PIZZA, the romantic coming-of-age story of three young waitresses dissatisfied with their lives; and also the gripping murder-mystery THIN BLUE LINE directed by and starring Errol Morris.

With all these great films out on video you may well be asking yourself "how will I find time to see them all?" Well, I'll tell you. The way to see all these greats is to miss all the not-so-greats like BIG BUSINESS with Lily Tomlin and Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin and Bette Midler; HOT TOTROT starring Bob Goldthwait, Dabney Colman and Don the Horse; and THE WIZARD OF LONLINESS starring Lukas Haas which might

be a bargain at half the price but don't risk it.

After all these I know I find myself asking "what more could I want for my viewing pleasure?" How about the releases for the next month of George Lucas' and Francis Ford Coppola's TUCKER starring Jeff Bridges and a whole mess of others in the story of an American legend; CHILD'S PLAY starring Alex Vincent as 6 year old Andy who gets a very special Christmas gift (this film features the best pre-pubescent acting I've ever seen!); and also FRESH HORSES starring Andrew McCarthy, Molly Ringwald and bright newcomer Doug Hutchinson (who can also be seen in THE CHOCOLATE WAR), in a provocative, romantic drama which despite the two stars being who they are, is excellent. What should you miss in the next month? Tom Cruise in COCKTAIL and Miami Vice's Don Johnson in SWEET HEARTS DANCE.

PORTUGAL CONCERT

continued from page 10

prey to some unfortunate contretemps that all performers experience from time to time, including: a false start in which he had to prompt himself of his first line, and a tendency to suppress volume of which inevitable nervousness must certainly be the culprit. The latter sacrificed the clarity of diction which he actually seemed to concentrate on more than the delineation of phrases. This all having been said, Stephen's voice was even and well-blended throughout the rather large range that the music calls for.

The next singer, Erica Herman, impressed the audience greatly with her well-developed voice and her ability to portray strong emotion in music without spilling over into histrionics. In "The Trees on the Mountain" from *Susannah* by Carlisle Floyd, she displayed control of her instrument in attractive phrasing and her secure upper range. She then sang Ravel's setting of the Kaddish. Although at the outset of the song the prayer-like intonements sounded over metrical, it was built to a powerful conclusion. She maintained good pitch over the song's minimal accompaniment. It deserves to be added that these were two very lovely works.

Pamela Coady then came forward to sing "In Quelle Trine Morbide" from Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*. She bravely and gently quavered through Puccini's wistful melody. Now Pamela is a singer with great potential. The color of her voice is appropriate for this music and she has great affinity for it, but one wonders why, so early in her studies, she would plunge headlong into the demanding grand opera repertory. A less hasty approach to voice studies is well-

advised; swift improvement will be certain once Pamela has learned to support her instrument better and can allow her technique to bear her along. To sing by instinct alone is tempting, but even the best instincts need to be buttressed with the skill that comes through practice and experience.

Michael Downs was in attendance at Praia da Luz as Frank's teaching assistant. His performance on Wednesday night marked the halfway point in the concert. He sang three Spanish Folk Songs by de Falla. Michael has always taken an enjoyably intimate and relaxed approach to the music he performs, but in the first song, "Cancion", he was perhaps a little too restrained. In "Nana" which followed, he conveyed everything that the term lullaby connotes. His beautiful pianissimo carried into the audience unchecked by Greenwall's tone-sapping acoustics. The lively "El Pano Moruno" exhibited Michael's excellent pronunciation.

The next song was Schubert's "Nacht und Traume", a work which never fails to move the author deeply with its expression of muted nocturnal bliss. It is my understanding that this was one of the singer Donna Johnson's first forays into the classical repertory and it indeed seemed that she was probing the idiom as a novice - it would be unfair for me to evaluate her in light of standard lieder performance.

"Sabbath" by Lionel Nowak and "Tu, che di gel sei cinta" from Puccini's *Turandot* were prepared well by Allison Tardell. The weary resignation of the former was captured perfectly as was the desperate abandon of the latter. Allison made these selections thoroughly her own.

Diane Barraclough-Briggs created a poignant image of a shepherdess abandoned by her lover in "Delaissado" by Canteloube, but took almost the same approach in "Se Tum' Ami" by Pergolesi which preceeded it. The sentiment was perhaps a bit much for its coquettish subject.

Not only did Cindy Baxter alter the repertoire of the concert but also its instrumentation: "By My Side" by Stephen Schwartz was accompanied softly on the guitar by Anne Riesenfeld. The song was sung unaffectedly in a low tessitura and its lyrics received sympathetic, no-nonsense treatment. Although she did not actually bow formally to the audience, Cindy returned to her seat smiling, her arms outstretched with triumphant elan. This was the evening's most gratified acknowledgement of applause.

Geoff Bender then sang two tender Faure songs. "Après un Reve" has a sweet meandering melody which while sung rather metrically for my taste, did not lack accuracy and agility. Equally melodious was "Chanson d'Amour" which Geoff sang a bit on the introverted side. The song wanted more passion and, in short, projection. To Geoff's credit, his sense of pitch remained solid.

Kerry Ryer was placed at the end of the program in anticipation of the fact that she would be the audience's favorite. Kerry knows her instrument well in many ways and was able to produce the

most satisfyingly-sized sound of all the students. She had a good handle on her music but one is baffled at the coupling of her two pieces. Was a cornerstone of the spinto repertory paired with a staple of the lyric-coloratura repertory meant to exhibit Kerry's versatility? In "Vissi d'Arte" from Puccini's *Tosca*, Kerry showed good form with an understanding of the music and a technique to do it justice. But "Je Veux Vivre" from Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* was perhaps not best suited to Kerry's voice. It's tempo was slower than expected and unsteady, rendering the sound of the coloratura embellishments uncharacteristic. She managed to produce a confident high C at the end, but one feels that the music of this fach, with its high-lying acrobatics, sounds laborious when attempted by those of Kerry's voice type. Nevertheless, the relaxed tempo gave the music a sense of mounting tension and made for an exciting conclusion to the concert.

Marianne Finckel, the accompanist for all of the performers apart from Evita Cobo and Cindy Baxter, reprised her role as the sole resident accompanist of the Portugal workshop. As ever, she moved with the necessary ease and versatility from piece to piece and singer to singer, always sensitive and attentive to their respective needs. She and Michael Downs were presented with large bouquets at the concert's conclusion.



PHOTO BY PHOEBE BROWN

BONUS COMIC

