

# NEWSLETTER

BENNINGTON COLLEGE  
BENNINGTON, VERMONT

October 21, 1960

Originally, this newsletter was intended for alumnae only. There seems to be enough in it of general interest, however, to warrant addressing it to all Bennington friends. Plans are afoot to publish a newsletter on a regular schedule. This one is too long, but subsequent issues will be shorter when more frequent. The Alumnae or Public Relations and Development Offices will be glad to have your comments.

## FACULTY CHANGES

The 1960-61 catalogue (available on request to the Public Relations and Development Office) shows several changes in faculty and staff. The Moselsios have resigned after 27 years of teaching at Bennington, and they will be missed by many. A special exhibition of their work was held in the New Gallery in late May, and a book devoted to Simon Moselsio's sculpture was simultaneously published by the Bennington Historical Museum. The Moselsios have been succeeded by Lyman Kipp, for sculpture, and Stanley Rosen, who will teach ceramics. Mr. Kipp attended Pratt Institute and Cranbrook Academy. He is represented in New York by the Betty Parsons Gallery where he has had four one-man shows and he also exhibits frequently in group shows in various museums. Mr. Rosen received his training at the Rhode Island School of Design and Alfred University. He, too, exhibits frequently in numerous galleries.

Miss Bertha Funnell, Director of the Non-Resident Term at Bennington since 1943, has had to resign due to family reasons. She has been succeeded by Miss Polly Karb, a Cornell graduate who comes to Bennington from an administrative position at the Harvard School of Business Administration. Other new faculty include Manuel Duque, who graduated in drama from Bennington last year; Donald McKayle in dance while Ruth Currier is on sabbatical; Lydia Nadejina in Russian while Nora Montesinos is on sabbatical; and Marie Rosanoff, cello, while George Finckel is on sabbatical.

Not noted in the new catalogue is the switch in jobs made by Rebecca Stickney from the Admissions to the Public Relations and Development Office. The College is currently looking for a qualified person to take over her old job -- alumnae applicants especially welcome. Leonard Wilson, Public Relations incumbent for two years, was bitten by the political bug and is running for Lieutenant Governor of Vermont on the Democratic ticket.



## THE NEWEST CLASS

Admissions continue to soar at Bennington as they seem to be doing all over the country these days. Except for the difference in size, the Admissions Office procedures and problems at Bennington are not unlike those at Yale as described by Katharine Kinhead in The New Yorker of September 10th (Reporter-at-Large: "The Brightest Ever"). Total applications for this year's freshman class were 640 (up 127 from last year), of whom 183 were accepted and 107 registered, including six alumnae daughters. This is the smallest freshman class in many years and can only be explained by the fact that the sophomore class is the largest ever. It appears that one result of the current difficulty in getting into the college of one's choice is a new determination to stay there, once in. Since Bennington is geared to handle only 340 students, this has already caused speculation on what could happen in two more years if the attrition rate continues to go down. The Scholastic Aptitude Test score averages continue to rise. The mean Verbal Score this year is 625 and the Math is 527. Twenty-four percent of the freshmen are receiving reduced tuition grants averaging about \$1,000 each, which is approximately one-third of a student's total estimated expenses.

Alumnae were of great help in getting so many good applicants from which to choose a class. Aside from the 475 interviews done by the Admissions Office staff, alumnae did many more in hard-to-get-to places, and also helped out by attending "College Nights." Alumnae gave teas for 192 interested high schoolers and their parents. Twenty-eight of these girls were later admitted to the freshman class.

## INNER SPACE

One of the attributes of the new Crossett Library is empty shelf space, allowing for increased annual purchases of books. During the past year 2,332 were added, a thousand more than the previous year. The number of volumes added during the year brought book stock up to 37,890 volumes. There's room for 37,000 more.

Recent gifts to the Library include a first edition of Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language from Mrs. John M. Woolsey; a large collection of books, periodicals and pamphlets from Mr. and Mrs. Robert Motherwell (Helen Frankenthaler '49); and, for special events, a silver tea service from Bennington's first president Robert Leigh, that belonged to Mrs. Leigh.

The Joan Sidney Drooker Memorial Fund was established in the spring by Joan's parents and contributed to by their friends and Joan's classmates ('54). The Drookers thoughtfully made the fund unrestricted, and the Library is using the money to purchase books in the fields of Joan's interests.

No regular count has been kept of the students in the Library, but a spot check shows that the number of students studying comfortably there these days is far more than could have been accommodated comfortably in the old library. Two of the most comfortable aspects of all, especially for the roommate who isn't even there, are the all-night study and typing rooms. Borrowing and over-night use of books by students was up to a high point of 82.1 per student during the past year.



The Bennington library is one of seven featured in a portfolio of contemporary interior designs which has been produced for distribution to architects across the United States. It was chosen because it illustrates one of the basic precepts of architectural design. Featured in the portfolio are a gallery of photographs of some of the best works of leading American architects. Copy is interlaced with comments by the Roman architect Vitruvius, whose ideas expressed about 40 B.C. still have validity in the twentieth century. The Bennington College building was chosen to illustrate the eurythmy of a building -- "the beauty and fitness in the adjustment of its members." The full color, sixteen page portfolio is being run as an insert in the September issue of Architectural Record, October issue of Progressive Architecture, and November issue of Architectural Forum.

### THE NEW CONSTITUTION

A new publication on the College scene is the Student Handbook, 48 pages of fact to allay fancy. The index ranges from Absences, class, to Williams College, visiting hours for women at, but the subject rating the most space is the new Constitution (9½ pages). The new Constitution differs from the old in several significant ways.

It was often said that the old Constitution held too much undefined division of power. Although the Executive Committee, comprised of house chairmen, student treasurer, secretary and chairman of Exec, was always working closely with the administration, the student body as a whole felt a lack of real communication and complained of feeling powerless. There were, under that old setup, periodic Community Meetings at which the whole community was supposed to come together, discuss specific issues and reach conclusions, but attendance kept dropping lower and lower until the original purpose was necessarily impossible to achieve effectively, and any vote taken was almost meaningless.

The new Constitution tries to solve these problems, and others, by enhancing the importance of the House Meeting, by reserving the Community Meeting for occasions when community-wide discussion is necessary and by making formal provision for the expression of separate faculty, student and administrative viewpoints and the reconciliation of these differences in a joint Constitutional Council.

In another effort toward improved communications, President Fels is meeting this term with all the inmates of three student houses every month, and will repeat the cycle in the spring. He speaks informally on current College affairs, and the students are encouraged to ask all sorts of questions. They do, and it is a helpful experience on both sides.

### LIMELIGHT

Congratulations go to Jane Terpening '60 for shedding a favorable nation-wide light on Bennington by winning a Mademoiselle magazine contest.



An article on her junior year Non-Resident Term job, published in the November 1959 alumnae issue of the Bennington College Bulletin, has just been awarded first prize in the student writing division of Mademoiselle's 1960 "College Publications Contest." Jane gets \$75, the alumnae magazine gets \$50, and publication of part, if not all, of the story is anticipated sometime this winter.

Our appearance in Mademoiselle this winter seems positively sub rosa compared to our recent appearance in Look magazine (September 13th). This was a hassle out of all proportion to the pages that eventually reached print, and was one more event that last term pointed up the fact that a new constitution might improve a community spirit apathetic unless in trouble. It all began a couple of weeks prior to the arrival of Look's two photographers and writer, when the Public Relations and Development Office spoke to the head of the community government about the magazine's request to do a story on the College. An Exec meeting decided that house chairmen should refer the question of approval to their respective houses, and supposedly this was done. The following week, Exec tallied the opinions of the twelve houses and told the Public Relations and Development Office to advise Look to proceed.

The Look people arrived on the Friday of Spring Dance Weekend, spent Saturday and Sunday photographing five girls in a number of fall fashion costumes, and followed one girl to classes all day Monday. By Monday night a large number of students were not happy with the way the operation seemed to be going. A scheduled Council meeting was cancelled and a mass meeting in Commons Lounge was called. The sequence of events leading to the appearance of the Look contingent was reviewed. Many reported that they had never heard about the matter in house meetings, (either the house chairman had defaulted or they had not been at the meetings). The tenor of feeling was that the photos of fashion outfits were not representative. After much cross debate on this and the calibre of Look magazine, a phone call was made to the unsuspecting photographers and writer at their motel. They were asked to meet the community at a mass meeting at 9:30. Before the meeting adjourned, President Fels spoke about the implications of the incident in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of community government communications.

During the adjournment three students went to the motel to discuss and forewarn Look of the tone of the meeting to come. The Look people explained that the fashion photographs were to be used in a fall fashion lay-out, not in the Bennington article itself, and convinced their student visitors that they would represent Bennington as truthfully as possible within the limits of the Look way of doing picture stories. Since the campus had given the original o.k., they felt there was no need for them to "face" a meeting.

Thus, to make a long story short, only the three students returned to speak at the 9:30 meeting. By the end of the meeting, tension had lessened, the original "Tell them to leave, article-or-no" faction retracted, and the community as a whole fully recognized that they themselves, not Look, were at fault. The students had not given the matter full consideration at a time when something could have been done, and, by now, were ready to face the fact that they had to accept the results of their lack of foresight.

As for the final product, it was only two pages instead of an anticipated five. An alumna employee at Look wrote the Alumnae Office when sending an advance copy, "After the experience of our writer with



Bennington's militant independence, every one here is understandably apprehensive!"

#### SUMMER GROUPS AT THE COLLEGE

Six separate summer schools brought over 300 people to the College in July and August. Included were two new groups, the Summer Institute in Humanities sponsored by the John Hay Fellow Program, and the Institute for High School Music Teachers, sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies. Returning were the International Summer School, the Art Workshop, the Chamber Music Center and Composers' Conference, and the Freundlich Group from Juilliard.

Public school administrators and high school teachers from all over the country made up the Humanities group. Their two main purposes were to give recognition to English, history, art, music and philosophy at a time when science is the general major concern, exchange ideas on new educational developments in these fields.

Music teachers from public high schools in Vermont, New York and Massachusetts participated in the six-week Music Institute. They were engaged in discussions pertinent to recent developments in musical thought and projects to advance their musical and teaching competence, and were encouraged to take back to their schools and communities new designs for making music a more creative and satisfying activity. Lionel Nowak, of the Bennington music faculty, directed the group.

For the eighth consecutive year pianist Irwin Freundlich had students in residence. Ranging in age from 16 to 26, all were accomplished pianists bent on learning to play even better.

Wallace Fowlie, member of the Bennington literature faculty, directed the International Summer School. Students from all parts of the world participated. The program, which started at Bennington in 1952, is annually sponsored by the Institute of International Education and the U. S. Department of State to acquaint foreign students (who, in the fall, were to pursue graduate work in American universities) with American history, society and culture, and give them language assistance if needed. As usual, the students attended regular classes, had special meetings with prominent speakers, and attended local events ranging from Tanglewood concerts to a county fair. They were entertained formally and informally by individuals and organizations in the community, and lived in local homes during the last few days of their stay.

The 15th Chamber Music Center and Composers' Conference brought professionals as well as amateurs with a high level of music competence, among them doctors, lawyers, teachers and businessmen. The Center and Conference are run in conjunction. The Center provided an expert coaching staff for chamber players, and an orchestra which rehearsed every day. The Composers' program included seminars, individual criticism interviews and public performance of selected works. Concerts were frequent.

George Holt of the Bennington faculty conducted his second Art Workshop for teachers and students, including several alumnae. The program was especially planned for those already involved or interested in teaching art to children, but also included those working for their own



edification. Students attended discussion sessions as well as working in the painting, sculpture and graphic arts studios.

Altogether, the College kitchen served 21,279 meals during July and August. The Humanities group thought Joe Parry's "institutional" menus so good that every member took a complete set back to his school. Greatest kudos went to the lunches, for no repeat in 30 days.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events scheduled for the fall term include numerous lectures, art shows, foreign films and an election jamboree. In September Dr. Edith Quimby spoke on the "Effects of Radiation on Living Organisms," and Dr. Leonard Feldstein on "Philosophical Problems Relevant to Psychoanalysis." A political debate in October, "Both Our Houses," features Rush Welter (D) and John H. Williams (R), and will be followed just before election day by a non-partisan summation of the presidential campaigns by Oliver Garceau (speaking as an ex-faculty visitor). A special election jamboree is scheduled for November 8th. In late November, Marc Pincherle will tell a general audience about music in prisoner of war camps, and still later in the term John Crowe Ransom will give the Dickinson Poetry Lecture on T. S. Eliot. The Dickinson Lecture series is a gift to the College from trustee Fairleigh S. Dickinson, Jr., a birthday honor to his wife Elizabeth Harrington Dickinson '43. The series will present two speakers a year for several years. The New Gallery opened its exhibition schedule with an impressive showing of "Oceania," art objects from the Pacific Islands loaned to the College by the Fred Olsen Foundation. New exhibitions will be hung each month. And of course the faculty concerts every-other-Wednesday nights, and Saturday night foreign films remain fixed and popular mainstays of evening entertainment.

## BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Since last January, College maintenance has been in the capable hands of Ralph Larson, who has an administrative office in the Barn where he rarely has time to be, and whose formal title is Director of Physical Plant. This new position was created on the recommendation of the National Federation Consulting Service, which made a complete survey of the College a year and a half ago for the purpose of advising on the organization, repairs, operation and long-range planning of the plant.

Mr. Larson, a consulting engineer and construction analyst, has gone to work on Bennington's delayed maintenance problems with a gusto that leaves no doubt but that he means business. Painting and extensive outside structural repairs, including two new chimneys, new plumbing fixtures, a relined hot-water tank and new eaves troughs, have been done on student houses on the east side, and the west side is about to have its face lifted too. A new floor has been laid in the lobby of the Barn, so that uninitiated visitors no longer trip over frost heaves in the hard wood. The whole west wall of the science wing has been bolstered up with new foundations and otherwise repaired.

Until the rigors of a Vermont winter go to work on the resurfaced



roads, complete with drainage catch basins, they are as smooth and well surfaced as a turnpike from front gate to back. In fact, so inviting is the driveway to non-College drivers, that plans are afoot to register the College roads with the state in order to discourage speeders. The College community cars will soon enough wear the roads down without outside help: 60 are registered to students, 60 more to faculty, probably 75 among the staff, and of course there are many delivery trucks as well as the College's own small fleet. The antique Olds fire truck incidentally is now used as a servicing vehicle for the paint crews. The regular fire truck happily sallies forth only at drills. Which reminds us, the Barn has two new fire escapes, one on each wing.

Another Larson touch can be seen on every letter dropped in the Commons post box. The College is now a "contract station," or branch office under the jurisdiction of the Bennington Post Office, and has its own postmark. No longer does the station wagon have to go three times a day to get the mail in town. Now a red, white and blue federal truck drives up to the back door and takes and delivers mail four times a day.

#### PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

The College has been fortunate this year in its gifts from foundations. The Jessie S. Noyes Foundation has renewed its support and this year \$12,500.00 of our budgeted financial aid to students was provided by them.

The Agnes M. Lindsay Trust continues to give the College \$8,000.00 per year for the same purpose. The Presser Foundation and the Isabelle Baker Woolley Award as usual help two music students. The United States Steel Corporation gave a gift of \$20,000.00 to the College for 1959-60 current expenses -- unrestricted.

The interest from a new fund of \$50,000.00 established by a friend of the College will be given each year to worthy and needy Vermont students.

A new organization of donors was established in January of this year. In honor of Mrs. George Franklin, the Elizabeth J. Franklin Student Aid Fund was begun. A Franklin Associate is a donor of \$1,000.00 or more who pledges to give on an annual basis. Within the larger group of Associates of Bennington College, the new Franklin Associates, including eleven alumnae, have thus far contributed close to \$37,000.00.

#### FOR ALUMNAE ONLY

The Alumnae Fund in 1959-60 raised a larger sum than ever before, \$29,103.00. Individual gifts totaling \$26,304.94 came in from 907 alumnae, or 35.7%. There has been a steady slump from 46%, our highest participation figure ever, four years ago. On the other hand, Regional Group gifts from Washington, D.C., San Francisco, New Haven and Fairfield County totaled \$2,497.56, double what they've been in each of the last two years, and four years ago there were none. One might conclude that as Alumnae Association regional activity increases in strength and in demands on



those involved, something has to give. Nevertheless, the decline is puzzling. There is every indication that the alumnae are as anxious as ever to make it possible for this generation of students to have a Bennington education. Why should we be worried about percentage figures when dollars go up? The reason this matters is that the participation figure is the "loyalty index" that outside organizations use in judging our worth as far as foundation and industry gifts are concerned.

The 1960-61 Alumnae Fund drive is now underway. Class secretaries will soon be writing alumnae in classes 1951-60, and the Alumnae Association has undertaken responsibility for soliciting on a regional basis as many people as possible in the 1937-50 group. The Class of 1936 is literally in a class by itself. Next spring is the 25th anniversary of the first graduation at Bennington, and those who shared that honor are plotting and planning among themselves to make a special gift to the College.

Aside from this newsletter, the Alumnae Office this fall is publishing the Biennial Directory of Names and Addresses in October, and the regular alumnae issue of the Bulletin in November. These publications are being sent to every alumna. That's 2,856 people. The magazine will carry a list of the new members of the Alumnae Association Board. In the meantime you should know that Virginia Todahl Davis '40 is the new president, succeeding June Parker Wilson '37, who did such an excellent job for the last three years.

#### SECOND ALUMNAE WEEKEND: APRIL 27 - 30

Not wanting to copy the federal government and waste the talents and training of ex-presidents, June Wilson has been prevailed upon to continue work for the Alumnae Association as co-chairman of the Second Alumnae Weekend next spring. She is being assisted by Joan Cummings Franzen '44. Any suggestions and questions about the Weekend should be addressed to them (Mrs. Kenneth Wilson, 316 South Bedford Road, Chappaqua, New York, and Mrs. Ulrich Franzen, Kirby Lane, Rye, New York). Dates for the affair are Thursday night April 27th through Sunday morning April 30th. Mark them on your calendar now. Taking the majority opinion expressed on the Weekend questionnaire sent out last May, alumnae in all classes are being invited. And of course ex-faculty and staff, as at the first Weekend in 1957. A detailed mailing on the program will be sent out in late January; registration blanks will follow in March. PLAN Ahead!