

BENNINGTON

summer
2018

SUMMER 2018 • COMMONS

COMMONS



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ABOUT THE COVER

An aerial view of the northeast side of the renovated Commons building, looking northwest. In the foreground is the Wolery Terrace, a new outdoor dining space named and dedicated in honor of **Penelope Perkins Wilson '45**. Sketch by Shane Neufeld for Christoff:Finio.

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An aerial photograph of the Bennington College campus. The Commons building, a large, multi-story brick structure with a central tower, is highlighted in a darker shade of red. It is surrounded by other campus buildings, green lawns, and winding paths. The background shows rolling hills under a soft sky.

Bennington College has enlisted Christoff:Finio Architecture (C:FA) to collaborate on a full renovation of its Commons building—the original centerpiece of the College’s 1932 Beaux-Arts campus plan. The 45,000-square-foot renovation is the first substantial upgrade to the building since the 1930s, and reinforces Commons’ unique character and history while envisioning how it can continue to serve the college community for years to come.

As the original hub of campus activity, Commons was the one building that combined learning, socializing, and dining under one roof. Our work restores this spectrum of programming while rejuvenating the spaces and circulation according to contemporary academic, social, and architectural contexts. Central to this goal is reoccupying nearly 14,000 square feet of unused space as a new campus learning center, expanding academic programming in a cost-effective and practical manner. New learning spaces are combined with an enlarged dining facility and revamped social spaces to restore Commons’ position as a vibrant center in the lived experience of the campus.

In its original Beaux-Arts conception, Commons was a two-sided building; its monumental southern façade anchoring the great lawn and flanking Colonial Houses, while the smaller north wing was a service entry for back-of-house operations. As Bennington’s campus has expanded northward over the last 80 years, Commons is now the geographic center of campus. Despite this, flow remained obstructed both within the building and between the north and south halves of the campus—a condition that stands in stark opposition to the ethos of the college, which emphasizes seamless integration across disciplines.

Our work clarifies the space to improve circulation throughout the building, while establishing strong connections between the interior life of the building and the surrounding landscape.

—ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT FROM CHRISTOFF:FINIO

"I have never felt so a part of something as I have here at Bennington" our senior speaker, Lauren Omokheoa '18, told us at Commencement this spring.



Many who work and study here would echo those words. Bennington is a community of fiercely individual people, each in bold pursuit of a belief held in common: that we can direct our energies toward self-fulfillment and constructive social purposes at one and the same time. This shared belief alone sets us apart; but what truly distinguishes us is that the pursuit is carried out together, in shared spaces.

Something extraordinary happens because we are all here, together, at Bennington. Bennington asks us to be fully engaged, together: to be attentive to what is happening in front of us, willing to listen, to be vulnerable, to learn, to be changed. Here we learn to become ourselves, and we learn how to be ourselves together. In this way we enact an ethos that we carry with us into the wider world.

This profound quality of engagement is manifest in the campus itself, almost as if inscribed by our actions year after year in the houses, the classrooms, the landscape—in Stokes, in the Barn, in Crossett, in Jennings, in Dickinson, at the End of the World. Visitors to the College feel this, often powerfully, when they arrive on campus for the first time. There is a remarkable liveliness and thoughtfulness palpable in buildings and spaces all across the campus. The spirit and beauty of Bennington exist in its people and its places, each informing, inspiring, and challenging the other. Our campus spaces reflect and inform the community we are. This is, of course, by design.

Open spaces and blank walls become opportunities for us to show our work: performances enliven the gardens; empty mailboxes become frames for animation (see page 32); and the dining hall is a crucible, serving hard questions and inspiration with a side of sweet potato fries. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors to Bennington learn how to imagine, together; how to create, together; how to understand and push boundaries, together; and how to be, together. This is as true for students now (see Sundara's story, page 24) as it has been in years past (see more about history page 26). Like these spaces, we must be flexible, able to adapt, willing to move freely from one moment on to the next.

This issue of the Bennington magazine is therefore about Commons, both as a building and as an ideal. It is about what Commons has held, enabled, and created, and about what it will be next year and in the years ahead as it again becomes the hub of our community and our work. But, crucially, this issue is also about how the Bennington ethos lives and breathes in all of its buildings.

I am deeply grateful to the people who design, maintain, and otherwise take care of our extraordinary spaces (you can learn more about B&G staff on page 30); I am also deeply grateful to those whose vision and support allow us to carry the College forward into the next era. The world needs more Bennington.

I hope to see you back on campus soon.

Sincerely,

Mariko Silver
President



A poem on campus planning written
by former planning committee member
Betty Mills Brown '39

BENNINGTON MAGAZINE

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Buildings"

Brian Pietras '07, "Legends in the Attic"

Jeva Lange '15, "Behind the Scenes at
Buildings & Grounds"

Charlotte West, "The Greenest Building
Is the One That's Already Built"

Brie Della Rocca, "Common Artifacts";
"Play It Right"

Erin Lyons, In Memoriam

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Brie Della Rocca | pp. 2, 12, 30, 32,
34, 35, 44, 57

Alex Rhea | p. 4

Andy Schlatter | pp. 8, 10

Dane Whitman '16 | pp. 9, 10

Chiara Brandi '19 | p. 24

Keegan Ead | pp. 31, 36

Todd Norwood | p. 38

Photos courtesy of the Bennington
College archives, with special thanks
to Laura Payne and Oceana Wilson
pp. 3, 26, 27, 28, 29

Marker renderings of Commons
by Shane Neufeld, provided by
Christoff:Finio

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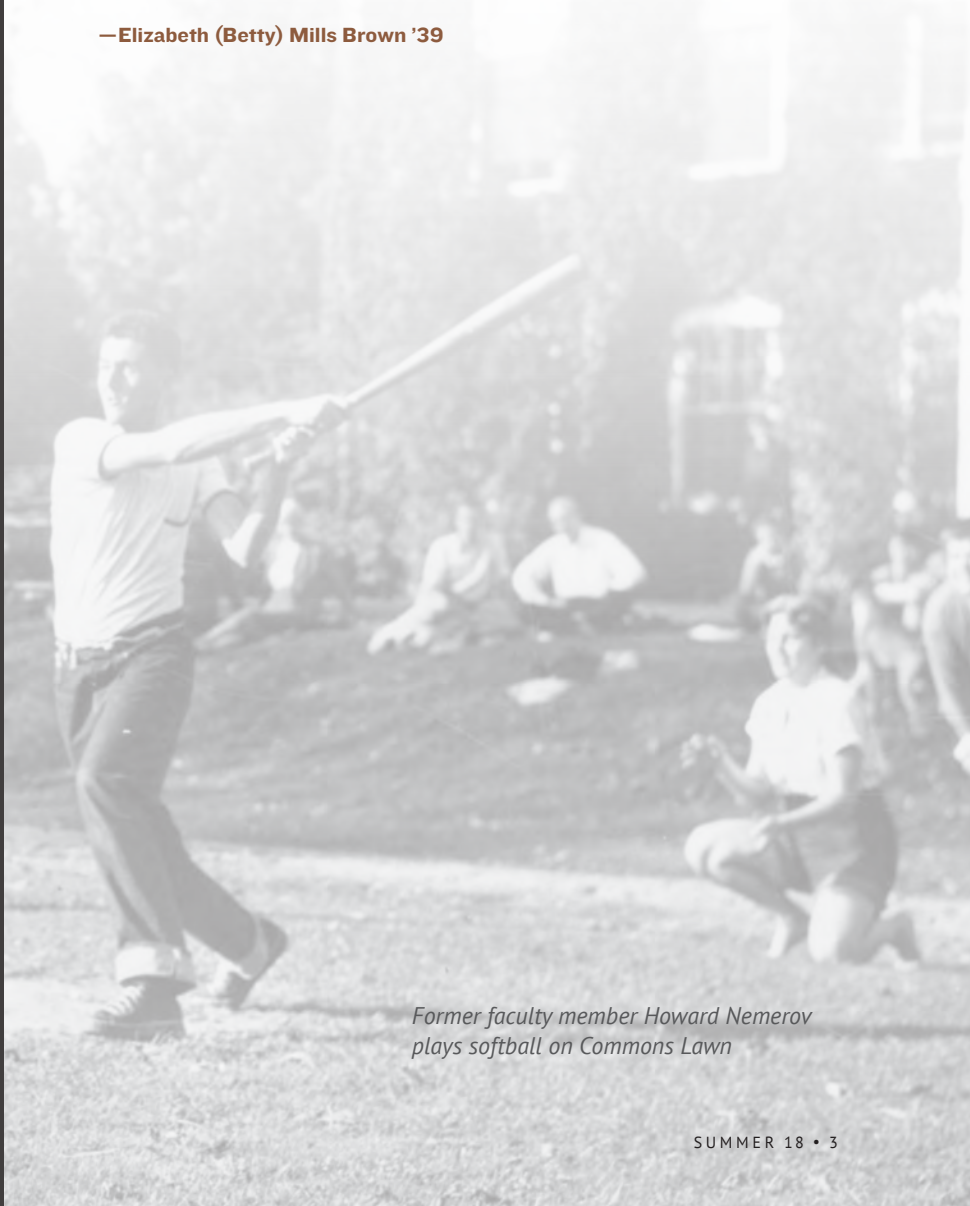
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Honorable Mention.

**"Why not think in terms of a continuous whole,
something that would be neither one big building
nor forty small ones, but both—
something supple and wandering—
partly indoors and partly outdoors ...
all this not exactly one building,
not exactly many,
not exactly a building at all,
simply a stream of energy rising and falling
with areas of concentration and areas of
expansion."**

—Elizabeth (Betty) Mills Brown '39



Former faculty member Howard Nemerov
plays softball on Commons Lawn

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a building's exterior. It features a blue-painted wooden structure, possibly a door or a large panel, with several graffiti pieces. A prominent red circle with a white outline is visible on the left. To its right, there's a green circle with a white outline, partially obscured by a large, stylized letter 'N' made of overlapping green and white geometric shapes. Above the blue structure, there's a brown wooden surface with a large red and yellow star-like graffiti piece. The overall scene is one of urban art and graffiti.

SUMMER 2018

Third-floor murals by **Manju Shandler '95**,
alongside other graffiti contributors.

CON

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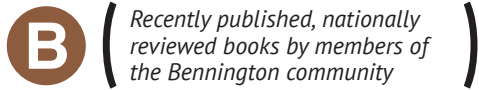
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ENT



FICTION



Mark Sarvas MFA '19
Memento Park
 Farrar, Straus and Giroux (March 2018)

“... an absorbing drama about a first generation Hungarian-American rooting around in his family’s buried past in the hopes of fathoming his legacy”

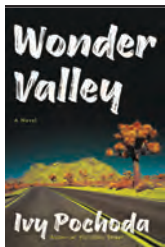
—NPR



Christine Mangan '04
Tangerine
 Ecco (March 2018)

“The thriller that everyone will be talking about . . . One of those sinuous, Hitchcockian tales that disorients in the best way. . . . Hypnotic.”

— Esquire



Ivy Pochoda MFA '11
Wonder Valley
 Ecco (November 2017)

“A dizzying, kaleidoscopic thriller that refuses to let readers look away from the dark side of Southern California . . . Impossible to put down . . . It’s the memorable characters and beautiful prose that make the novel so successful.”

—Los Angeles Times

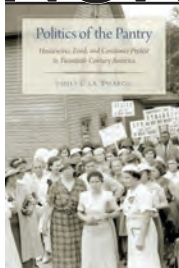


Jasmin Darznik MFA '14
Song of a Captive Bird
 Ballantine Books (February 2018)

“a complex and beautiful rendering of that vanished country and its scattered people; a reminder of the power and purpose of art; and an ode to female creativity under a patriarchy that repeatedly tries to snuff it out.”

—The New York Times

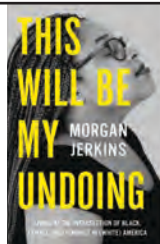
NONFICTION



Emily E. LB. Twarog '92
Politics of the Pantry: Housewives, Food, and Consumer Protest in Twentieth-Century America
 Oxford University Press (October 2017)

“A new book examines the legacy of the women-led consumer protests of the mid-20th century.”

—The Atlantic



Morgan Jerkins MFA '16
This Will be My Undoing: Living at the Intersection of Black, Female, and Feminist in (White) America
 Harper Perennial (January 2018)

“A beautiful example of possibility, nuance and passion coexisting, even in our heightened political moment . . .”

—Los Angeles Times

Chandler Klang Smith '05
The Sky Is Yours
Hogarth (January 2018)

“Smith’s gifts of imagination are staggering. Her world-building is a tangled sprawl of past, present, and future, a wickedly satirical synthesis that underlines just how fractured our own realities can be during periods of fear, unrest, inequality, and instability.”

—NPR



Michael Pollan '76
*How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of
Psychedelics Teaches Us About Consciousness, Dying,
Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence*
Penguin Press (May 2018)

“... a calm survey of the past, present and future. A book about a blurry subject, it is clear eyed and assured”

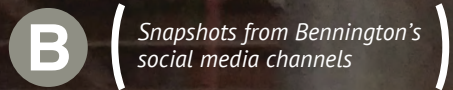
—The New York Times

The Bennington Bookshelf includes work that has been published within the calendar year and that has been reviewed by national publications. To submit a book to Bookshelf, email magazine@bennington.edu with your name, class year or affiliation to the College, title of your book, and a link to a national review. You may also mail the books directly to the attention of Briece Della Rocca:

Bennington College
One College Drive
Bennington, Vermont 05201




#BENNINGTON



BENNINGTON CONSTRUCTS

bennington-constructs.tumblr.com





Developed by last year's Kilpatrick Fellow for Buildings & Grounds, **Dane Whitman '16**, Bennington Constructs is an illustrative journey through campus renewal projects. The introduction of bennington-constructs.tumblr.com sets the stage: "Bennington College has more than 480,000 square feet of buildings, roughly 400 acres of land, and a little more than 1,000 students, staff, and faculty members who make up our campus community. The proposed renovation of our historic Commons building (constructed in 1931) will set in motion numerous projects: from a new health center to a new way of doing laundry. This blog's intent is to document and share the story of our campus, from the eyes of the Buildings & Grounds office." Followers are given an on-the-ground look and a thorough education in what it takes to renew the campus center.

6 17

MAKING COMMONS POSSIBLE

To renovate Bennington's most central building we first have to create new homes for the services that currently live in Commons: Dining, Health/Wellness, post office, laundry, and offices for the Master of Fine Arts in Writing program. Rather than finding temporary fixes, we focused on designing long-term solutions. The accommodation of these services will result in many permanent improvements to our campus. Instead of using construction trailers for laundry, we are creating new laundry rooms within student houses that do not already have laundry facilities. Our new Health Center will be housed in a completely renovated, historic building and give new life to an early 20th-century agricultural building. Dining will be made possible through a permanent addition to our Student Center, alongside extensive modifications to the existing interior space and infrastructure.

6 17

PRELUDE TO A RENOVATION



Historically, the northern side of Commons has been understood as the back side, as initial campus development was largely oriented toward the south. In response to decades of succeeding development surrounding Commons on all sides, Commons can now serve as a central and accessible link at the heart of campus. It will join residential, academic, and social facilities.



The floor plan above represents nearly 15,000 square feet of

restored classroom and learning space, including a new "co-curricular lab" space for which details are still in development (represented in this drawing by the loose "bubbles" of program in the central space). While the development of the third floor as a collection of learning spaces may seem like a considerable shift for current students, it is not far off from the building's history.



While these classroom spaces will preserve the spacial characteristics of Commons, they will also incorporate new technology, including updated AV, heating, cooling, and lighting systems. Multiple classrooms with individual thermostats make it very important for doors between classrooms to be air tight. Doors will also need to be acoustically robust to minimize sound disturbance from the outside. This means we will need to replace most of the doors in Commons.

7 17

MAKING PROGRESS

Much of our work has been dedicated to preparing the Student Center addition, as well as the new Health Center. These facilities will help make the Commons renovation possible, while still providing necessary dining and health/psych services to the campus community.



Beginning construction of the new salad bar—May 24, 2017



Stormwater retention basin in action—June 7, 2017



The Student Center addition—July 13, 2017



The new Health Center—July 13, 2017



Student Center salad bar completed, self-cook stations included—July 13, 2017



Look familiar? Most of the cabinets in this salad bar were actually re-purposed from the Commons kitchen—July 13, 2017



The Student Center is already serving meals to summer programs! July 13, 2017



The post office in the East Academic Center is up and running! You can come here for letter mail, whereas large packages can be picked up and delivered from Buildings & Grounds. Soon, mailboxes will be installed in the Barn where inter-college mail and notices will be placed.

8 17

THE JOY OF LAUNDRY

With the Commons renovation coming into reality, I've been making some big picture blog posts. On a slightly less monumental note, here are a few words about our new laundry situation: We now have laundry machines in the Colonial houses!



During the summer, we've been preparing the new homes for the dozen or so washers and dryers that were previously housed in Commons. To find a replacement to the Commons laundry room, we toyed with lots of ideas including re-purposing parts of nearby buildings, renting temporary laundry trailers, even building a whole new laundry shack! We ultimately decided that providing laundry facilities directly to the houses that didn't already have them would be the best long-term and convenient solution.

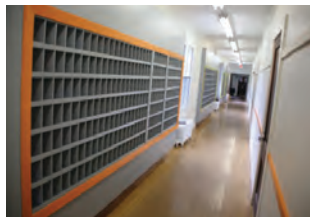


The main task was the installation of electrical, plumbing, and ventilation to support the washers and dryers. The machines have been placed in different

locations: student rooms, house-keeping closets, and various other nooks and crannies have been converted into the new laundry facilities.

8 17

THE FINISH LINE



The new mailboxes, installed in the Barn hallway. Below, paving and landscaping around the Student Center addition on August 31—a few days before the first lunch is served.



The Health Center is receiving its last touch-ups. This building has certainly come a long way. It houses the Office of Student Health Promotion and Campus Life. By combining these offices into one space, we hope to achieve a more holistic approach to developing students' plans for health and well-being.

9 17

SELECTIVE DEMOLITION



The third-floor stage of Commons before demolition. This renovation is a culmination of initiatives to preserve the embodied history of the building and to realize Bennington's vision for progressive education. The entire third floor has been inaccessible for decades due to code and accessibility concerns.



Looking out from the third-floor stage, we see the backbones of the Commons clock. The pinhole of light shining through the center illustrates very poor insulation. Adding thermal and water barriers throughout Commons will help us save energy, keep occupants comfy, and keep the building dry!



These murals were the creation of **Manju Shandler '95** (with various other graffiti contributors during the years). The abatement of hazardous materials throughout the building necessitated that we remove the paint and wall materials from this space.



The "big room" in the dining hall will become one of the main kitchens in Commons.



With paintings safely stored, this wall will be fully removed, connecting the 1970s addition to the location that recently housed the kitchen.



A floor plan of the second level, including multiple kitchen stations, outdoor seating, and even a few classrooms to the north. One goal for this design was to create more room for seating and a more open arrangement while remaining within the original footprint of the building.



Another historic feature set to remain is the Commons Lounge.



These two staircases on either side will be southern points of access that lead to the Dining Hall and the third floor. A passenger elevator will be installed on the north side to ensure accessibility throughout the building.

9 17

(RE)BUILDERS



We have tons of tradespeople on-site, pushing to make Commons a reality. Structural steel, insulation, electrical lines, sprinkler systems, ventilation, and mechanical rooms are the building blocks of this renovation.



Sometimes "building blocks" are literal blocks. This tower of concrete is the new passenger elevator shaft, which will facilitate accessibility to all levels of Commons.



Upon close inspection, we found that the copper roofs on our iconic cupola are wearing thin and letting water into the structures below. To prevent future sogginess, we will replace the copper roofs—as well as paint, replace, and restore the wooden components as needed.

B

B (Andy Schlatter on manifesting
attitudes of adaptation)



NO MONUMENTAL BUILDINGS

THE BEST CAMPUS ARCHITECTURE IS A PHYSICAL

manifestation of an institution's identity, and at Bennington that manifests in many forms. Unlike most colleges and universities, Bennington's campus and architecture is not as much identified by its style of building as it is by its attitude toward adaptation. That attitude is not only a felt one at Bennington, but also a founding declaration. In the 1929 college *Prospectus*, the founders wrote: "It is the policy of the Trustees that Bennington shall erect no monumental buildings, but will adhere to a principle of alertness and readiness to meet changing conditions. Building requirements in modern education are subject to change and flexibility; therefore, utility rather than elaborateness, will be the basis of the architectural scheme."

In contrast to the dominant image of collegiate architecture as defined by imposing structures hewn from stone in a range of neoclassical styles, Bennington's architecture includes a barn, a chicken brooder, wood-framed Colonial Revival houses, a grand old mansion, and a wide-ranging collection of remarkable mid-century modernist buildings. Here history is layered into buildings, but constantly adapting to the changing needs of the present day. The diversity of our architecture speaks to Bennington's adventurous spirit and open-minded aesthetic vision, but perhaps even more to our inventiveness and commitment to making the most out of everything we have, to seeing the value and possibilities in even apparently hopeless cases, to continual adaptation and creative renewal. We don't tear down buildings, we don't throw out things—we keep working with them, and when that's not enough we rework them, reinvent them.

Mundane as it sounds, maintenance of our land and buildings is perhaps one of the deepest means we have of engaging with our physical home; it is also the most subtle, and the least recognized. Through myriad actions and interventions, through damages repaired and failures corrected, through obsolete

parts replaced with new, through layers and layers of patching and painting and mending and fixing, through surgeries minor and major, we endeavor to help our buildings keep pace with changing times and resist the wearing forces of weather and constant use. Through this consistent effort we come to care for our buildings as we might care for an aging family member, gaining through experience over time an intimate knowledge of all their chronic ailments and the particular remedies for each, becoming sensitive to their fluctuating moods and empathizing with them on their bad days. With each leak in the roof, each clogged drain, each broken window screen, damaged wall, or busted door hinge, we feel a little bit of what it means to be an aging building in a world where the occupants are perpetually young.

If maintenance is about keeping things healthy and functioning in their current state for as long as possible, then renovation is about making a change. Renovation happens when maintenance is no longer sufficient. Most often, this is not because the building has failed to serve its original purpose, but rather because that purpose has become obsolete, because there is a new purpose to which the building must respond. Or renovations can happen for reasons more aesthetic than functional—simply because tastes have changed, or because better things come along: shag carpet, floral wallpaper, and red toilets go out of style, LED lighting and thermal windows save energy, and so on. Renovations can be holistic and comprehensive in nature, or piecemeal and targeted. More often, on a college campus, they are the latter.

Staff are hired, so we make a few more offices by subdividing a few of the larger existing ones; we get a new piece of fabrication equipment in the sculpture shop, so we build a nook for it in the corner of the shop and add a ventilation system; enrollment increases and we find a way to carve out a few more bedrooms in one of the student residences. In this way, buildings are modified incrementally—almost always to accommodate growth rather than shrinkage—resulting in a process by which, slowly over time, added uses start to fill in whatever voids may be found within the volume of a building, like mushrooms colonizing the interior of a hollow log. Eventually there is no more room to expand inwardly, and the building must either be expanded or be augmented by a new structure to relieve spatial pressure.

MAPPING ADAPTIVE USE

The Bennington campus is home to a remarkable collection of historically significant buildings, built over a span of more than 200 years (Shingle Cottage is the oldest, circa 1785). Unlike a static historic landmark, however, we live here. The forms and layers of our built history are continuously inhabited, and thus constantly adapting to the changing needs of the present-day institution. The buildings and land, in this sense, are always learning, which is in part what keeps them young.

To understand the life and evolution of a building on the Bennington campus, one need look no farther than the Barn. Built as a purely agricultural structure at the turn of the 20th century, the Barn (now a proper noun) has become a center for our community both physically and symbolically, housing nearly all of the College's administrative offices, along with a host of classrooms and offices. On the outside, the building retains the look and feel of a New England vernacular agricul-

tural structure, even as the interior has been transformed into a densely programmed 21st-century academic office building—albeit without shedding entirely the rustic charm of creaking wood floors and temperamental steam heating systems.

From the earliest days of the College, the Barn has proven its ability and constant willingness to adapt to the changing needs of the institution: during the years it has housed studios, a theater, the library, the bookstore, as well as classrooms and offices of all configurations, shapes, and sizes, all the while retaining a strong sense of its identity as, well, a Barn. The ongoing dialogue between the building and the College is a testament not only to the capacity of the structure to adapt to new uses, but to the values, spirit, and creativity of the Bennington community itself, which has proven equally adaptable and resilient, while continuing to value its commitment to the history and identity of this very particular place we inhabit.

Just downhill from the Barn is a collection of three smaller structures originally built for chickens. Since the day the chickens left and students arrived, these buildings have seen just as much change as the Barn itself, serving during the years as studios, offices, faculty apartments, and even the Early Childhood Center. In the last decade, each of these three buildings has received a complete renovation, transforming them into facilities suited to their current uses: the East Academic Center (EAC) classroom building, the Word and Image Lab, and most recently, the Health Center. Despite the comprehensive nature of these renovations, the fundamental architectural concept for each project was focused on retaining the vernacular character and identity of the buildings, reflected in materials, scale, and detail. The result is a collection of buildings that fit the rural

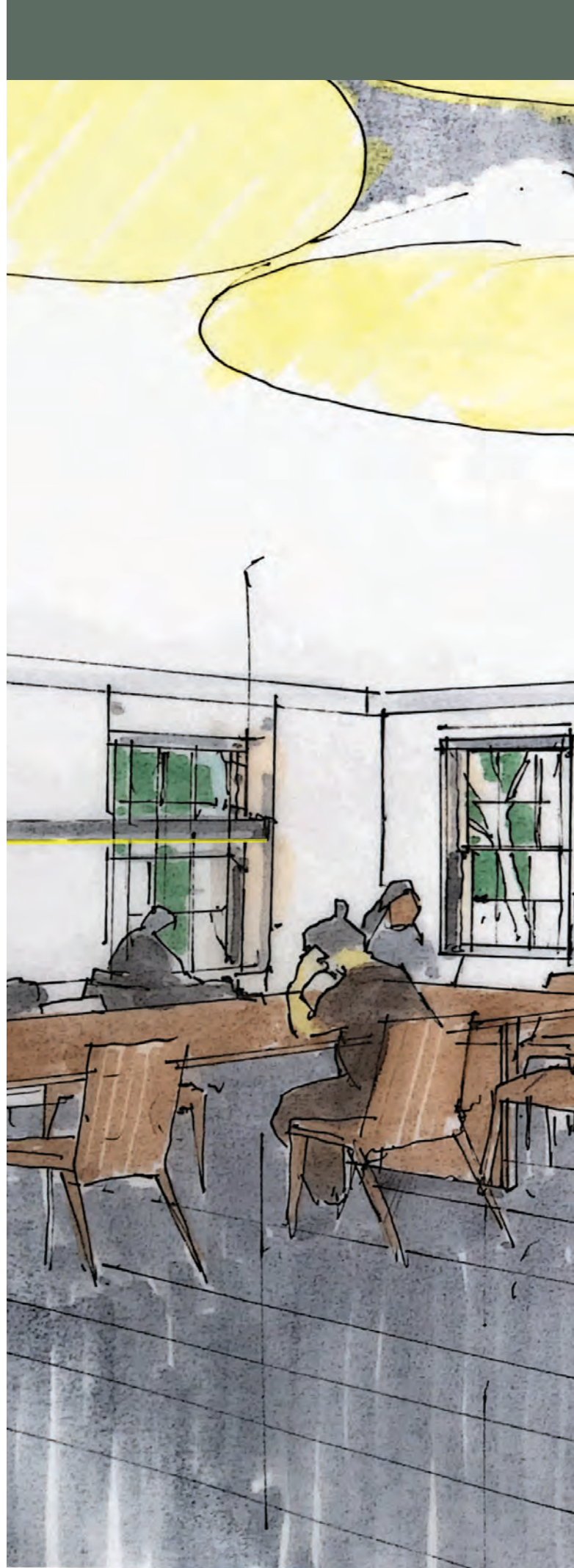
“ Mundane as it sounds, maintenance of our land and buildings is perhaps one of the deepest means we have of engaging with our physical home; it is also the most subtle, and the least recognized.”

landscape they both inhabit and define; moreover, they don't "feel" like institutional buildings—they have the personality, warmth, and easy grace of farm buildings. Although difficult to define, this sort of feel is a fundamental aspect of the Bennington campus, its sense of place.

In addition to the Barn and the three former chicken houses, many of the campus's most loved buildings were not designed for the purposes they currently serve. Cricket Hill, the admissions office, is an 1840s farmhouse that predates the Barn, sited adjacent to it; with its wraparound porch and comfortable scale, it still feels like a place where one wants to stay a while. In between the Barn and Cricket Hill sits Cricket Hill Barn, a former garage, converted to a state-of-the-art meeting room with an incredible view, its interior lined with weathered wood from the building's original shiplap sheathing. The Jennings mansion, now the Jennings Music Building, was originally the summer mansion of Lila and Frederick Jennings—they called it "Fairview." Its original grandeur still defines the character of the first-floor library and music classrooms, while upstairs the living-spaces have been carved into an array of practice rooms and faculty offices. Deane Carriage Barn—a spectacular music, gathering, and performance space—once stored hay and agricultural equipment. The Old Carpenter Shop (aka Blacksmith's House) now serves as a home for painting studios, in a space once used for crafting horseshoes. Down at the other end of campus, the cars have been moved out of Swan Garage to make room for more painting studios, complete with roll-up garage doors. The DownCaf performance space and UpCaf Student Life spaces inhabit the two levels of another converted garage building.

Enter any of these buildings, and—irrespective of its modern-day program or its original purpose on the farm a century ago—there is evidence of a lively and creative dialogue between the historic building and its current use, defining a sort of perpetual equilibrium between past and present, between new and old, between the farm and the College. This state of balance feels less like a stable state than a moment in an ongoing process, a sort of living, ongoing improvisational work. And it is not just those pre-existing (B.C., Before College) and "adapted" buildings where this improvisation takes place. To varying degrees, and manifested in many ways, this is the spirit in which we as a community engage with *all* of our buildings, as well as our landscape, regardless of age or design or historical use. The Bennington campus is not merely a "setting" or backdrop for the performance of our daily lives, but an active participant in the vital processes of learning, communicating, and making that characterize our creative engagement with the world. Students are constantly finding new and unexpected ways to discover and engage the various spaces that comprise our campus—staging dance performances in overlooked corners of student houses, creating sculptures custom fit to an exterior balcony or a stairwell wall in VAPA, projecting video art in a forest clearing, recording music in basements and attics.

Beautiful as our campus is, we do not treat it as "precious" in the sense that it cannot be touched or engaged; it is a place full of possibility, enlivened by the myriad ways in which the creative output of our community is manifested in its spaces and places. This feeling is palpable throughout the Bennington campus, and it somehow makes the present moment feel *more present*, and reminds us that we are all, ourselves, works in progress, like our buildings. **B**

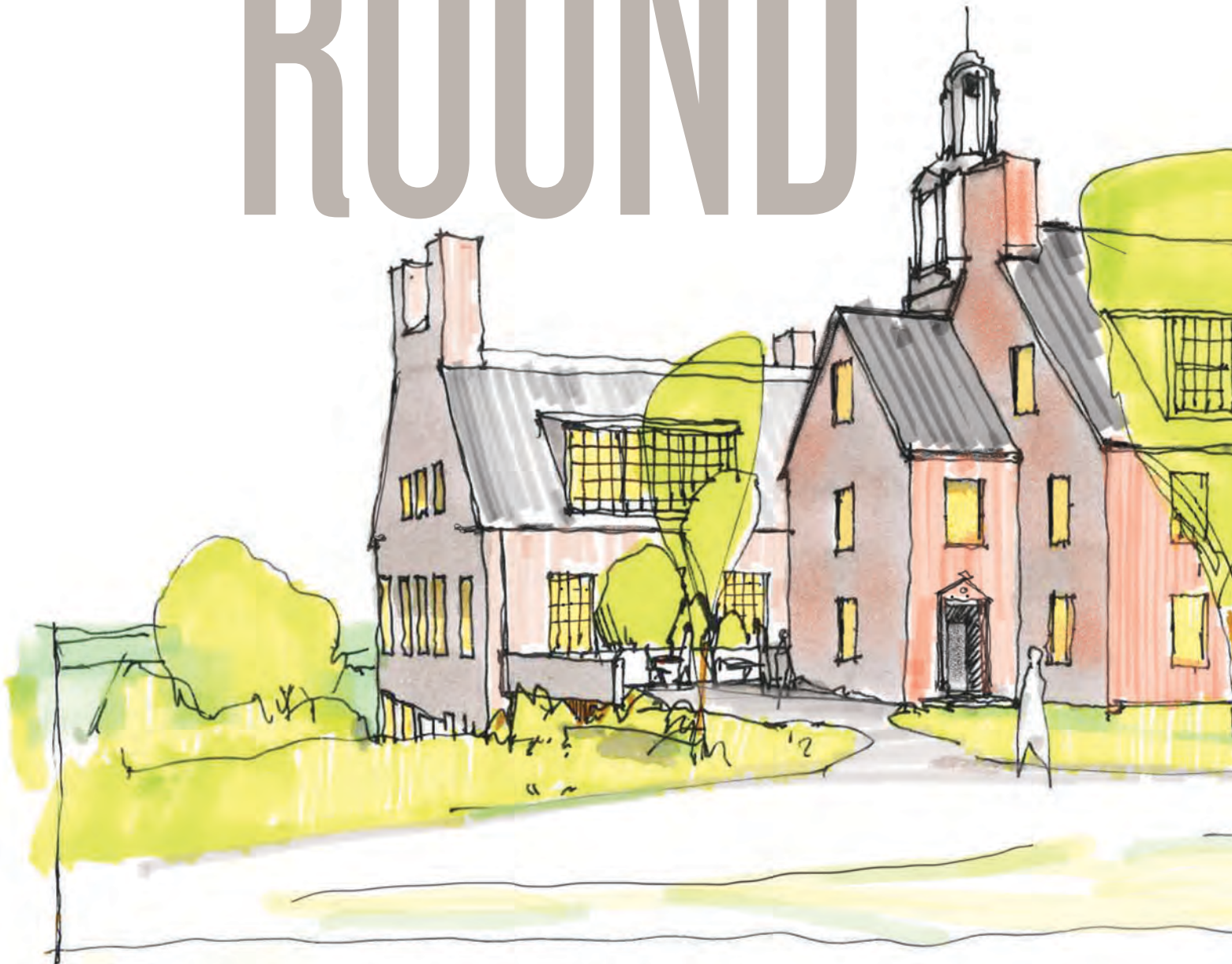


B*Members of the Commons cafe design team invite the community to design a new pattern of light*

The new cafe space, which will be located on the first floor of the renovated Commons building, will incorporate a collection of 50 unique, custom light fixtures, designed and fabricated in a collaboration between the architectural design team, faculty member **Jon Isherwood**, and sculpture technician **Michael Stradley**. The fixtures will be arrayed in a pattern to create the ceiling over the bakery and servery area, becoming one of the defining features of the space. In May, Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Planning, **Andy Schlatter**, along with the design team, invited all members of the Bennington community to contribute to the generation of the form for the fixtures as part of the design process. Submissions were received in May and June with 50 entries selected at random and used as the basis for the design of a unique fixture. The contributions will be acknowledged as a permanent part of the space.

B (How the renewal of Commons is driven by the philosophy of a Bennington education, by Heather DiLeo)

BUILDING with many fronts in the ROUND



In the 1950s, an alum of Bennington's fourth graduating class, **Elizabeth (Betty) Mills Brown '39**, wrote a moving public poem considering the impact of plans to enlarge the campus along with the student body (from 300 to 600). Brown, by then an architectural historian and member of the College's Architecture Committee, assessed the relationship between the College community and the spaces it inhabits. She challenged her colleagues to reject the American tendency toward "academic suburbia":

**"With a Science Building here,
surrounded by a sea of green lawn,
and an Art Building there,
surrounded by a sea of green lawn,
and a Theater out there,
surrounded by a sea of green lawn,
and everything connected up with diagonal paths and juniper bushes."**



There's more than one explanation for why Bennington looks and feels different from other American campuses—or why the buildings and grounds seem not merely purpose-built but expressive of the school's educational philosophy. This was largely by design, thanks to advocates such as Brown—but not entirely. Chance and even misfortune played a role in shaping the campus.

Architecture faculty member **Don Sherefkin** points out that, as the first school to take art as seriously as every other subject of academic inquiry, the College infused the campus with the imperative to explore and collect influences that enrich artistic practice. Most of the school's buildings are designed to encourage the kind of experience the studio artist working in VAPA has. But before VAPA or Dickinson Science Building were constructed, exposure to a vast variety of students and work was inevitable. A painting student could not help but pass the work of a scientist or a philosopher before arriving at their studio in Commons. And yet even as the College expanded, it has maintained for students the sense of serendipitous discovery.

"I've always found it interesting about the campus that, even though it's very symmetrical in its planning, there's really no front door to any building. You sort of always enter diagonally on corners. You have to create your own path," says Sherefkin.

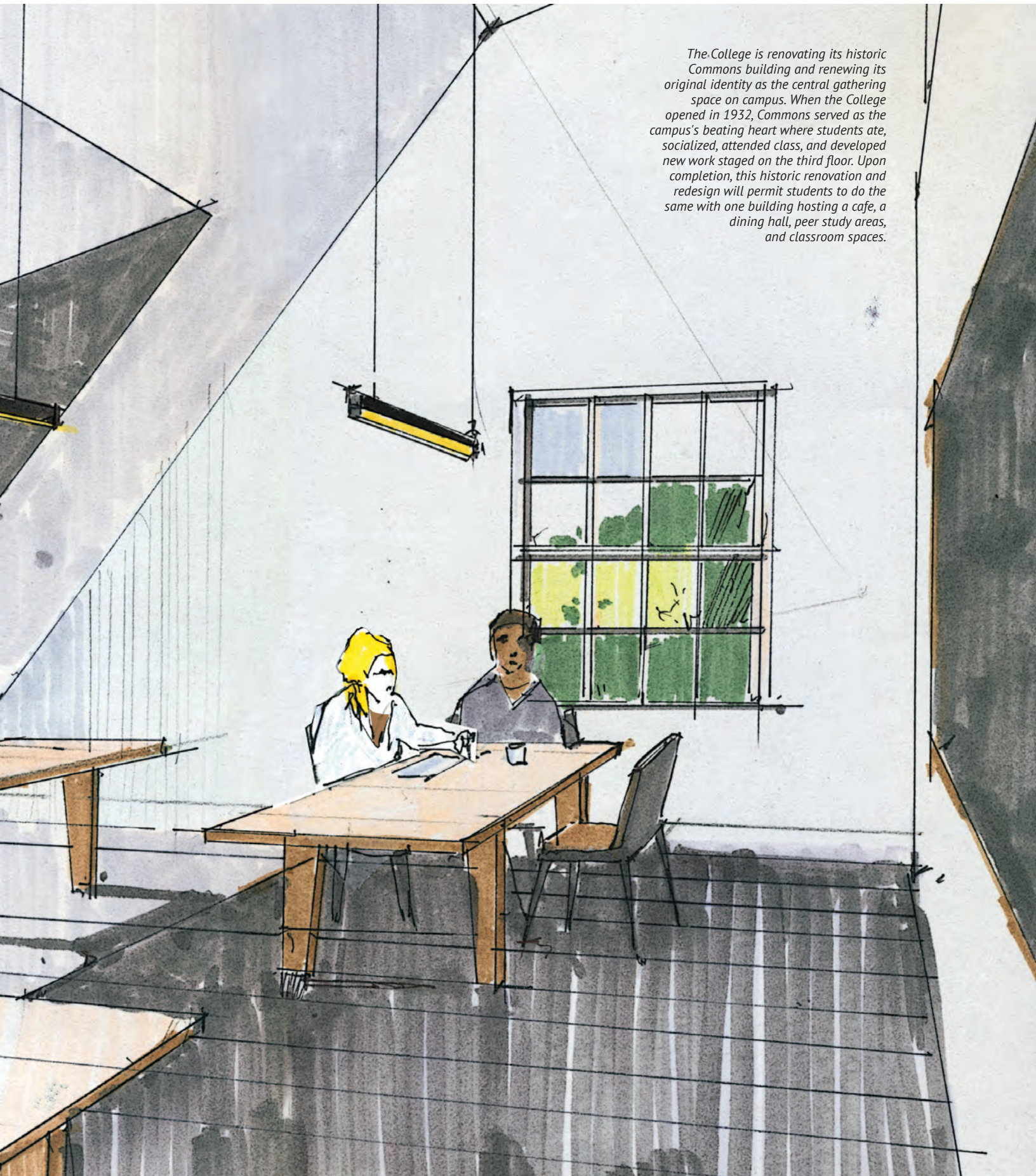
That path is all the more interesting when we consider the plans of the College's original architects, the Ecole des Beaux Arts-trained, Boston-based, John Ames and Edwin Dodge. Ames and Dodge, who worked on buildings for Smith College and Harvard as well as Bennington's Commons and the original student houses, modeled their plans for Bennington after Thomas Jefferson's neoclassical design for the University of Virginia. They projected a tightly logical American college, with Commons, serving as the head of the organism, at the top of a splendid lawn, flanked by two rows of mirror-image, facing dormitories.

However, Ames and Dodge drafted their first plans under the assumption that they would build opposite Old First Church on 45 acres owned by the Colgate family in Monument Circle Drive of Old Bennington. But this was not to be. Fortune intervened in the form of the stock market crash of 1929, causing the Colgates and other patrons to revoke their gifts to the College. Happily, the Jennings family stepped in, donating the 140 acres that became the core of today's College campus.

Naturally, Ames and Dodge had to adjust to the new landscape and straightened financial circumstances—replacing their projected three-story brick dorms with wood-clad student houses and scrapping designs for a gymnasium and swimming pool. They had also to scale back their rather grand conception of Commons—complete with a columned, domed rotunda and a substantial library.



The College is renovating its historic Commons building and renewing its original identity as the central gathering space on campus. When the College opened in 1932, Commons served as the campus's beating heart where students ate, socialized, attended class, and developed new work staged on the third floor. Upon completion, this historic renovation and redesign will permit students to do the same with one building hosting a cafe, a dining hall, peer study areas, and classroom spaces.



“We’re making a building that rightly belongs at the geometric center of campus; one that is as open and accessible from the north, east, and west as it is from the south. A building in the round, that has many fronts, and one that programmatically serves as the embodiment of the Bennington experience.” — Martin Finio

Although situating the College on Monument Circle Drive might well have been a boon for Old Bennington, there’s no doubt that the country’s financial collapse proved providential for the school. “Having this larger piece of land meant that when the College expanded, it could be much more adventurous—all of the subsequent buildings are more appropriately modern for a progressive college,” says Sherefkin. “Rather than being a very fancy school with a progressive agenda, we became a school that had to make do with whatever it could. We are used to figuring out and making do with what we’ve got on hand. When you’re converting chicken coops into faculty dwellings, you have a different perspective on things.”

Commons was the nucleus of the new campus at the College’s founding: the focal point of its design and the center of academic and social life. It was where residential and academic space coincided, serving not only as dining hall and meeting place but housing the architecture and painting studios on its top floor—flooded with light from large north-facing windows, as well as a storied performance stage.

In its vivid first half-century, Commons was where **Martha Graham** invented a new language of movement and where **Gunnar Schonbeck**’s students experimented on handmade instruments: hanging pipes, plywood guitars, and disassembled pianos.

Over time, as the College expanded, visual and performing arts found new homes on the campus, and Commons’ third floor was ultimately closed in 1985. From then until 2017, Commons was operating at two-thirds of its

capacity. After 85 years of adaptation, particularly on its north end, it had been subdivided—to include things such as Health Services and the post office—and particularized.

“It lost the original clarity of intent it had when it was put into place. It was very hard to understand the building as a thing in the absence of all of these accretions—like an ocean rock where sand has crystallized around a bunch of shells,” says architect **Andy Schlatter**, Associate Vice President of Facilities Management and Planning.

While it remained a vital gathering space, where students and faculty and staff would converge for meals, the center of campus no longer served as a vital estuary of ideas and work that it once was. It became clear to the College the space it most missed was one in which all facets of student academic and social life and all members of the community would come together. And while the imaginative Betty Brown was writing 50 years ago, as the College was planning for VAPA, her thinking is still relevant today:

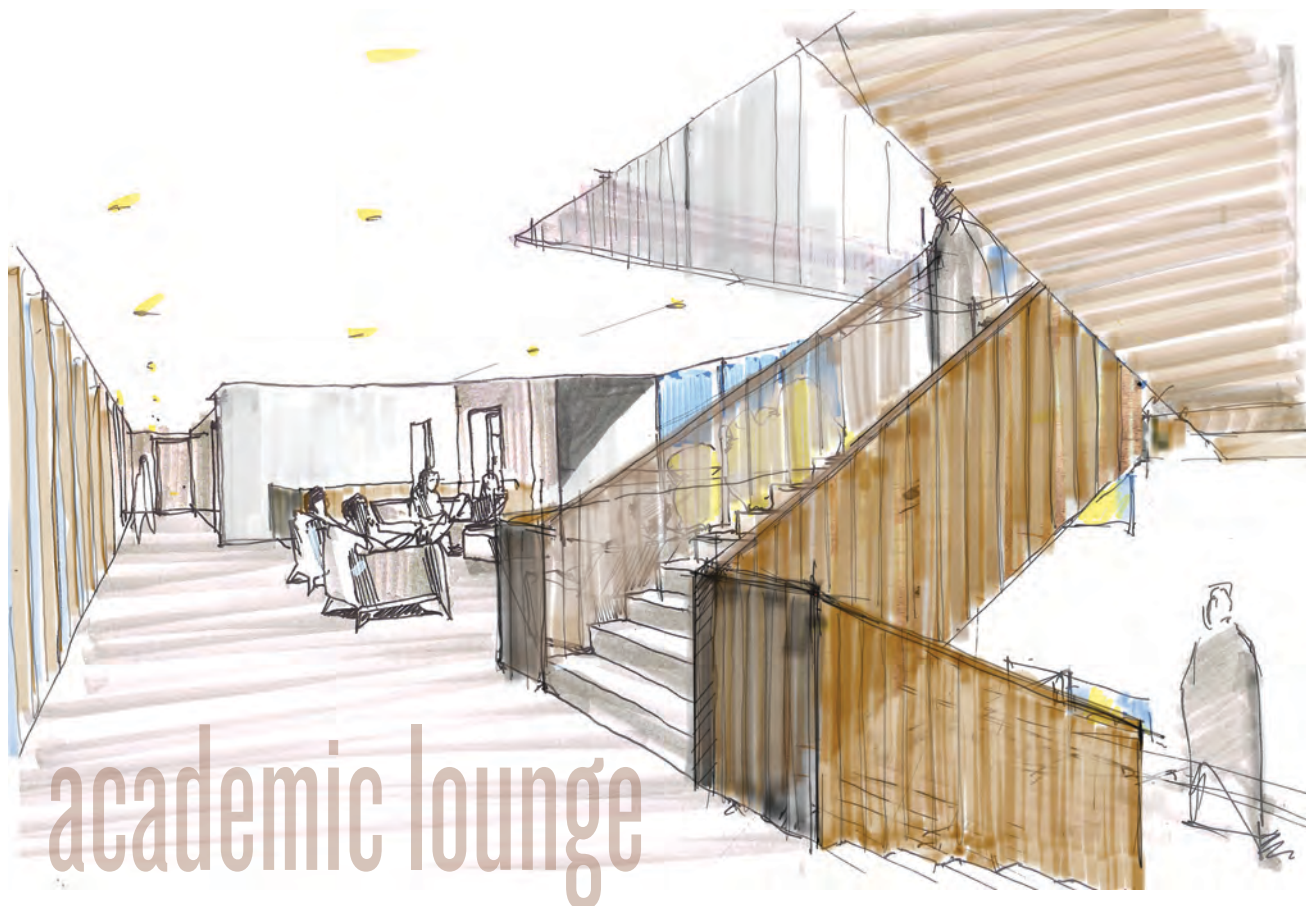
“Why not think in terms of a continuous whole, something that would be neither one big building nor forty small ones, but both—something supple and wandering—partly indoors and partly outdoors ... all this not exactly one building, not exactly many, not exactly a building at all, simply a stream of energy rising and falling with areas of concentration and areas of expansion.”

REIMAGINING

Practically speaking, the reinvention of Commons began four years ago—but is informed by the history of the College and at least 20 years’ worth of community members’ ideas. The interior demolition of the building revealed its three-dimensional presence and possibility, a much larger space than anyone anticipated and even previously hidden fireplaces. The project is currently at the halfway mark and is expected to be completed within the next year.

“It’s the sort of building, both in its original form and in renovation that has a real diversity of spaces, in terms of scale and feel and materiality. Our task is to recognize the inherent qualities of the building and try not to get in the way of them,” says Schlatter.

The northern entrance that had been a doorway but not an entrance is transforming to become a glassed-in portal to welcome people from that side of campus that has expanded so far beyond the original architects’ imaginings. There’s a planned terrace that wraps around the east side that will be an outdoor dining space to supplement the indoor dining rooms on the second floor.



“We’re making a building that rightly belongs at the geometric center of campus; one that is as open and accessible from the north, east, and west as it is from the south. A building in the round, that has many fronts, and one that programmatically serves as the embodiment of the Bennington experience: a place where learning happens as much in the more conventional space of the classroom as it does while communing over a meal, or socializing in the in-between spaces, says Martin Finio, co-lead architect for the project, along with Taryn Christoff, both of New York architecture firm Christoff: Finio.

Literature, language, and social science classes will be sited on the third floor, although the space won’t be “owned” by any discipline or entirely devoted to classrooms.

Spatially, the floor is shaped like the letter “H,” with the center bar of that letter representing Bennington’s original stage. What happens in this open-24-hours-a-day core space of the building is essentially up to Bennington students and will include peer education and peer learning spaces that are planned for, but informal.

“We decided to take disparate areas of peer education and peer learning and centralize them. There are going to be peer tutors in writing and language and technology— students teaching, and learning from, each other. It’s the academic representation of peer learning. To have a space that physically embodies that is exciting,” says

“I’ve always found it interesting about the campus that, even though it’s very symmetrical in its planning, there’s really no front door to any building. You sort of always enter diagonally on corners. You have to create your own path.” — Don Sherefkin

Dean of the Library **Oceana Wilson**. And Wilson’s is only one of the ambitions that will be realized here.

“It’s about collaborative space, weaving together the curricular and the co-curricular and giving that a home and a manifestation,” says **Isabel Roche**, Provost and Dean of the College.

Although disciplines such as philosophy, Spanish, or history don’t aim to produce physical objects in the same

way as artistic disciplines or the sciences, some contemporary design principles in service of creative production are influencing planning for the spaces. For instance, the ideas animating Makerspaces—gathering tools (some of them interactive) and expertise together in loose arrangement to allow for adaptation, reconfiguration, and “temporary ownership” of a space to encourage collaboration and invention.

PEDAGOGY AND PLACE

Not every school has a physical manifestation of its philosophy. Don Sherefkin had a nonresidential college experience at The Cooper Union. Schlatter cannot recall a single space on the Dartmouth campus, where he was an undergrad, that brought everyone together. Schools do have a *nominal* center, a multifunctional hub of a building. Schlatter mentions Houston Hall at the University of Pennsylvania, where he attended graduate school, as an example. “A segment of the school used those facilities. Certain students gravitated toward using that building but it wasn’t the whole school,” he says. “That’s the big difference with Commons.”

Commons is designed (and thoughtfully un-designed) to be where all of what might possibly happen in a single place can—sharing a meal, eating alone, putting on a performance, watching one, taking classes, learning from friends, participating in a group meeting, having a chance encounter with a long-missed someone, studying, thinking in a flexible way.

But it’s not about being a flexible structure, a multi-use environment. Neither necessarily engenders community or experimentation—see the proliferation of co-working spaces in major cities across the country, which are open and adaptable but essentially empty. “Flexibility is wonderful, but neutrality is deadly,” says Sherefkin. “There’s nothing to work up against.”

What imbues a physical space with life is its context—the intention of its designers and its users.

“You have to imagine ways students and place interact,” says President **Mariko Silver**, a geographer by training. Silver sees an integral relationship between spatial environments and the theoretical space an inquiry opens. “Students are filling the space with their own work, the work of their peers and of their teams, their groups, their performance collective. Our entire institution and educational philosophy is based on the idea of students filling that space.”

“I think it is going to go a long way to create much more interaction between people from across the campus. Because there will be classrooms and dining and study spaces and multi-use spaces, it’s going to be a great place to see people you may not see on a day-to-day basis,” says Sherefkin. **B**





B

*A two-day-only show on the third floor of Commons,
curated and organized by Sundara Ziegler '18*





Conceived for **Liz Deschenes'** course, *Strategies of Display (The Museum as Muse)*, **Sundara Ziegler '18** curated the last visual and performing arts show on the third floor of Commons in May before renovations began. After visiting the space with another class, intermediate painting taught by faculty member **Josh Blackwell '05**, Ziegler sought to organize a show that would weave together the College's past and present moments. The completely student-run third-floor show included student visual and performing art and student performers improving and interacting with the objects left behind in the space. For more photos of the show, visit [@thirdfloorshow](#) on Instagram.

VISUAL ART

India Abbott '19, Michael Ash '18, Chiara Brandi '19, Halle Darling-Menking '19, Lucas Galante '18, Owen Gerber-Hatem '18, Sadie Heisler '17, Eloise Hess '17, Rose Hoffman '20, Jonas Laforteza '18, Matthew Mahoney '17, Ray Malmoli '20, Elana Mendelsohn '18, Jahsiya Oliver '19, Hans Olsen '17, Max Ostrow '17, Janie Radler '17, Benjamin Ritsch '19

DANCE

Chloe Amos '18, Shana Crawford '18, Webb Crawford '18, Fiona McGovern '18, Lucy Nielsen '19, Colin Powers '18, Danielle Robbins '18

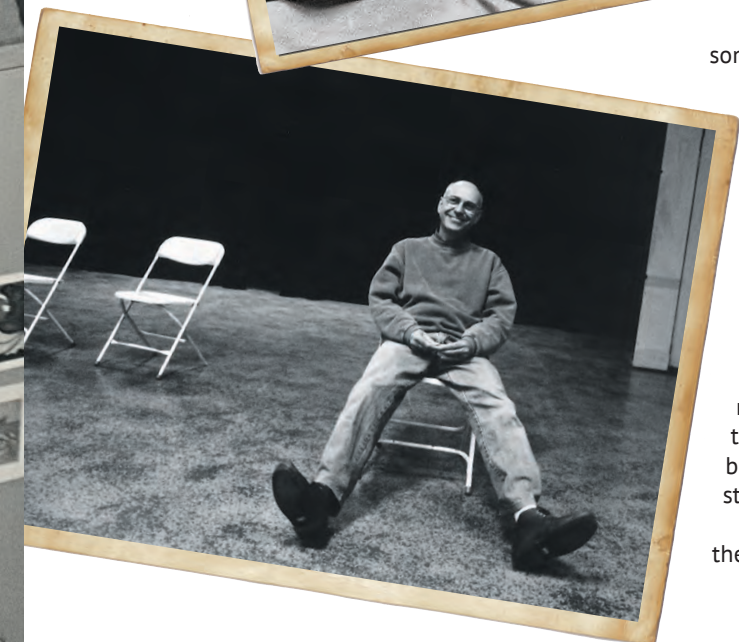
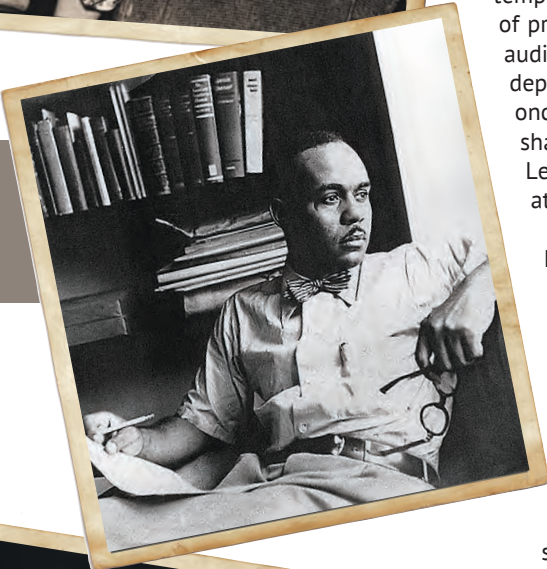
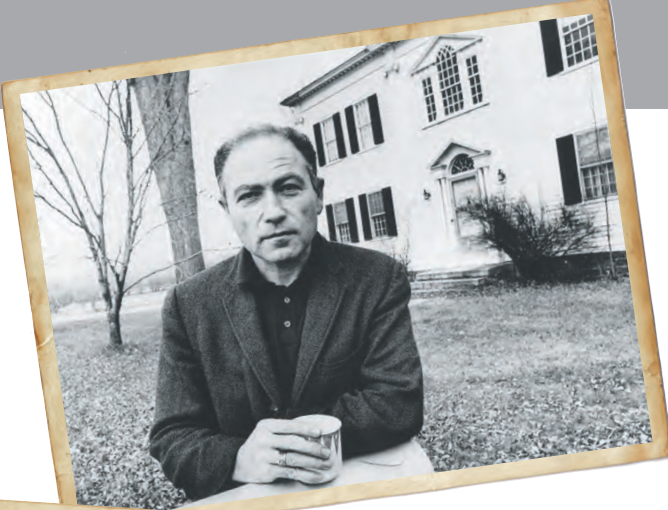
B (Setting the stage for a new era of innovation by Brian Pietras '07)

LEGENDS in the attic

IN OCTOBER 1961, A LITTLE-KNOWN FOLK SINGER NAMED BOB DYLAN took to a tiny, cramped stage on the third floor of Bennington College's Commons Building—and was promptly booed. As one eyewitness later recalled, it wasn't the future legend's music that upset the audience, but his late start: scheduled to open for the blues and gospel singer Reverend Gary Davis, Dylan began performing an hour later than expected (apparently because Davis had overindulged at their pre-show dinner, and needed to sober up backstage). But while the College's folk fans were irritated at the wait, their frustration soon faded; as the eyewitness observes, "it took all of about 20 seconds to realize you were hearing an unusual musician ... his stage presence was just extraordinary."

Former faculty member Paul Feely teaches students on the third floor, including Helen Frankenthaler '49 seen in the front row, second in from the left. (Top to bottom) Jules Olitski was one of many iconic visual artists who taught in Bennington's Commons studio. Iconic fiction writer and wife of former faculty member Stanley Edgar Hyman, Shirley Jackson would attend and engage in literature gatherings in Commons during her time at Bennington. Giving one of his first public talks, Ralph Ellison read from his book, *Invisible Man*, at the invitation of the literature faculty. Both readings, recorded in Commons, can be heard when visiting the Crossett Library digital archives. Alan Arkin '55 was one of the first male drama students to attend Bennington, making theatre on the third floor.





Famous though he is today, Bob Dylan is far from the only extraordinary presence to have made his mark on the third floor of Commons. Before the opening of VAPA in 1976, this area served as the College's visual and performing arts space, and it hosted a steady stream of notable faculty members and visitors: architects, musicians, poets, painters, dancers, and more. In the College's first five years alone, the third floor saw lectures and performances by luminaries such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Buckminster Fuller, and e. e. cummings. (The latter was quite dazzled by his visit, later writing to his friend and fellow poet Ezra Pound that

Bennington students "of all dimensions and costumes ... sit around each other's rooms quaffing applejack neat.") In the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, major figures came to teach at Bennington: **Paul Feeley**, **Erich Fromm**, **Peter Drucker**, **Richard Neutra**, **Jules Olitski**, **Karl Polayni**, **Sidney Tillim**, and sculptors **Sir Anthony Caro** and **David Smith** among countless others.

In 1940, modern dance legend **Martha Graham** used the third-floor small theatre stage to debut *Letter to the World*, a piece based on the life of Emily Dickinson. In a later review, *New York Times* dance critic John Martin exclaimed that the work was "one of the most beautiful creations yet to be revealed in the American dance," the product of "a uniquely personal genius."

But if the works performed on the third floor of Commons tended to earn effusive praise, assessments of the third floor itself tended to be less complimentary. In a different review of Graham's work, Martin complained that the College's "little temporary theatre ... is utterly inadequate for either dance or theatre productions of professional caliber. Its stage, though deep, is narrow and cramping, and its auditorium is anything but commodious." The first head of the College's drama department, **Francis Fergusson**, had similarly sharp words for the third floor: he once called it the building's "scandalously inadequate attic." His concerns were shared by Bennington's first president, **Robert Devore Leigh**. In the mid-1930s, Leigh had architectural plans drawn up for a larger and more permanent theatre—but the necessary funds never materialized.

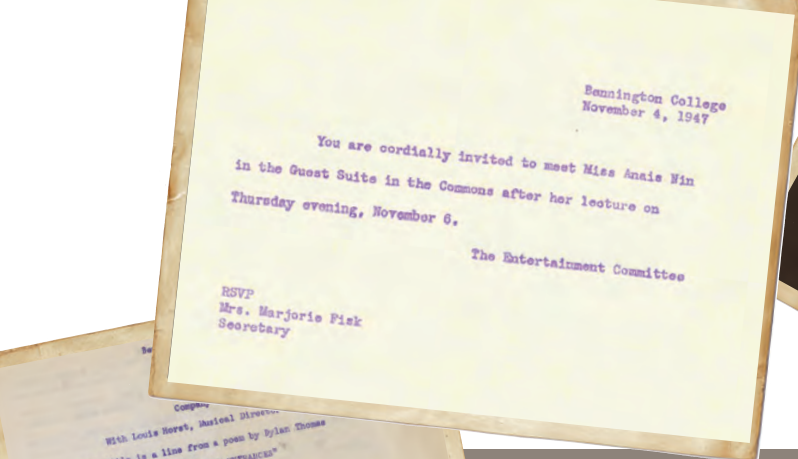
In his account of the College's early years, *Bennington in the Beginning*, historian and former faculty member **Thomas Brockway** notes that Leigh stepped down from the presidency in the spring of 1941 in part because he was frustrated by the large amount of fundraising that remained to be done for the still-young college; he was "particularly disappointed" that the new theater had never been built.

Penelope (Penny) Perkins Wilson '45, who arrived at Bennington in the fall of 1941, not long after Leigh's departure, would nearly 80 years later provide the vision, enthusiasm, and philanthropy necessary to completely transform the "scandalously inadequate attic."

Wilson chose the new and quite experimental school for two reasons: she wanted to "avoid 'required' courses," and "to try [her] hand at art and science." Her interest in art often led her to the third floor, where students in visual arts, architecture, and dance all worked in adjoining studios. Wilson's memories of the busy, bustling space coincide with Brockway's own recollections of how, in the College's early days, the third floor served as a multidisciplinary forum for student work: "Three or four times a week," he writes, "everyone climbed the Commons stairs to the theatre to hear a lecture or to find out what the dancers, actors or musicians had been up to."

But the third floor began to lose its centrality in the 1970s, supplanted by VAPA's more spacious art studios and theaters. By the late 1980s, the once-vibrant third floor needed to be closed because it was not in compliance with national fire code and ADA accessibility regulations. As time passed and years turned into decades, the attic of Commons became a shadowy place, its nearly 15,000 square feet used mostly for storage and little-seen by students—a half-remembered legend.

That's where Wilson comes in. A current trustee and the Chair of the Campus Planning Committee, Wilson has been a driving force behind



From right to left, top to bottom | Martha Graham premiered her famous *Letter to the World* on the third floor of Commons. An invitation to one of Anais Nin's talks in Commons. Martha Graham's correspondence to composers and dancers, inviting them to Bennington to create new work. Sculptor David Smith visiting Bennington, surrounded by students after a talk. Sir Anthony Caro, photographed on campus during one of his visits, was one of the many luminary visual artists to mentor students in Commons.

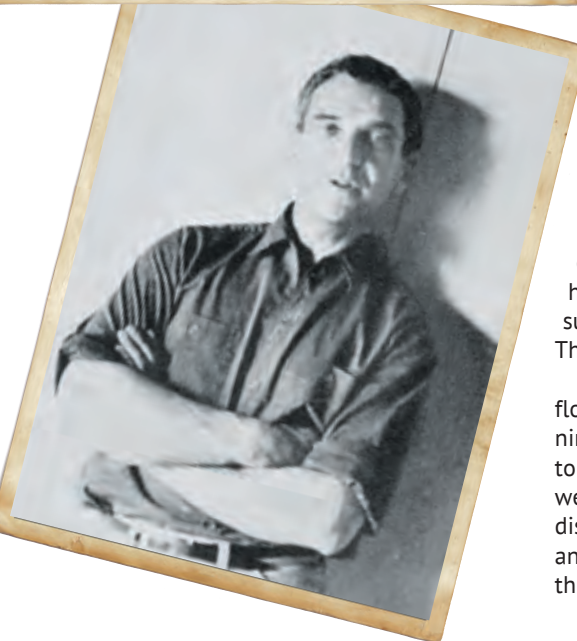
campus renewal for decades, encouraging the College both to preserve its architectural heritage and also to thoughtfully develop its physical plant. Because of Wilson, the College was able to renovate Cricket Hill into the Admissions building; to restore the original 12 student houses from the 1930s; to convert the campus heating system from an oil-based process to a much more environmentally friendly one; to build new student houses (one of which bears her name); and more. Her example has inspired other alumni to join in campus renewal efforts.

Last June, a comprehensive restoration of Commons began. Led by the New York-based architecture and design studio, Christoff:Finio, the third floor is one of the most striking beneficiaries of this transformation. The College's Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Planning, **Andy Schlatter**, explains that by remodeling the third floor, the College will gain 10 more classrooms, many of which will likely be used for humanities courses. Each classroom will have a unique shape, and their windows will look out over campus, revealing beautiful views that have been concealed for decades. In his remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony held last spring, Martin Finio of Christoff:Finio observed that the classrooms on the third floor "will become ... a visual symbol of Commons' resuscitated role as a central space of learning."

While the new classrooms will occupy the north section of the building (which faces the Barn) and the south section (which faces the Commons Lawn), the area in between these two sections will be the heart of the third floor. Located directly beneath the iconic Commons cupola, this large, open, high-ceilinged space will serve numerous purposes. A prime purpose, as Dean of the Library **Oceana Wilson** explains, will be providing students with a Peer Learning Lab, to give central space for peer instruction and collaboration. Elsewhere in this area, students will be able to showcase their work through a small stage on the site of the College's original theater. This new venue will complement VAPA's theaters instead of competing with them, providing an intentionally small space for intimate talks, rehearsals, and performances.

As **Paige Bartels**, Senior Vice President for Strategic Partnerships, notes, reclaiming the third floor has "enormous value to College in practical terms." With its new classrooms, performance areas, and study spaces, the renewed attic will function as a kind of VAPA for humanities and social science students. At the same time, however, the decision transcends the purely practical. As Bartels observes, the third floor historically has been "a hallowed space—the pulse of a community known for its creativity"—and, as such, its thoughtful renovation affirms the College's commitment to its founding principles. This is a place, Bartels observes, "where our very values are being enacted."

At the groundbreaking ceremony, **President Silver** held up a set of keys to the third floor of the building—a set given to her by **Katy Schonbeck '95**, daughter of beloved Bennington music faculty member **Gunnar Schonbeck**, who for decades used the third floor to create, play, and store his enormous, beautiful instruments. (Many of these instruments were gifted to MASS MoCA in 2011, where they are now part of a permanent, interactive display in the museum.) As she held Gunnar's keys in the air, Silver said, "With these keys—and with this renovation—we are reopening this space to the creative, free, and innovative thinking that has so long been at the heart of Bennington." **B**



The Times They'RE A CHANGIN'

Come gather round people wherever yuh roam
An admit that the waters around yuh've grown
An accept it that soon yuh'll be drenched + the bone
An if yer breath + yuh's worth savin
Yuh better start swimmin or yuh'll sink like a stone
For the times they are a changin' —

Come writers. An critics who prophesize with yer pen
An keep yer eyes wide the chance won't come again
An don' speak too soon for the wheel's still in spin
An there's no tellin who that it's Namin
~~AN~~ the loser now could be later twin
For the times they ARE a changin' —

Come senators congressmen please heed the call
Don' stand in the doorway don' block up the hall
~~AN~~ he that gets hurt'll be he who has stalled
~~cause~~ the battle outside ragin
Will soon shake yer windows An vibrate yer walls
For the times they are a changin' —

Come mothers An fathers thru out the LAND
An don' criticize what yuh CAN'T understand
Yer sons An yer daughters be beyond yer command
An yer old road's rapidly ragin
Please get outa the new one if yuh CAN'T lend yer hand
For the times they ARE a changin' —

The line it is drawn the curve it is cast
The slowest now will later be fast
As the present now will later be past
The order's rapidly fadin
An the first now will later be last
For the times they are a changin'

me
Bob
Dylan



"Our studio was one room off the dining room...of Commons, where we painted easel-to-easel on our own projects. Or as a group, confronted by a shivering model or dusty still life. Seminars in that studio were conducted in front of a bulletin board covered with color reproductions from art magazines."

—HELEN FRANKENTHALER '49

B (A story about “The Guardians of Bennington” by Jeva Lange ’15)

behind the scenes at

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS



The Key Room

A HOG'S HEAD

in the refrigerator. A gigantic wooden pipe organ with real ivory keys, dislodged from a dusty, long-forgotten storage space. A squirrel skittering helter-skelter through the attic of the Barn, its feet making a frenzied rat-a-tat across the wood. The lobster—oh boy, the lobster. They've seen it all.

They are the army waging a war against dry rot and leaks and that mightiest enemy of them all: Time.

“The guardians of Bennington,” Kilpatrick Fellow for Buildings & Grounds **Dane Whitman '16** calls his colleagues in Penny Wilson Buildings & Grounds, a

rather lofty term for a group who, in the same breath, he describes as “actual, true people.”

You might forgive the mythologizing, though. Ranging from architects to plumbers to managers and grounds-keepers, a core team of about 40 or so people is responsible for the taming of all the 440 acres of uncooperative Vermont mountainside—hills and wetland, woods and Commons Lawn—as well as some 60 odd buildings, the oldest of which predates the Civil War. Their task, which is so outwardly simple that it can be explained as “making stuff work,” is in practice nothing less than Herculean.

There may be no job harder than

making stuff work, after all. The drafty clock over Commons welcomes gusts of bitter winter cold that for years had to be fended off by a 1930s heating system. The Orchard Houses are also lacking in basic insulation and Jennings still uses something like 10,000 gallons of fuel oil in a year to remain habitable.

“There’s this huge tension between the architecture, between the historic and the modern,” explains project manager **Holly Andersen**, a true proselytizer of the Buildings & Grounds department if there is one. She describes her job as involving everything from managing the Commons renovation to reviewing “all the nuts and bolts and fabric swatches and paint chips”

that go into a house. She also possesses the rare and enviable gift of making steam lines and pumps sound exciting when she gets on a roll.

Andersen is a green-energy enthusiast (although she laughs off the phrase, preferring terms such as “efficient”), so it might come as a surprise that she will be the first to tell you “aesthetics matter. There are a lot of high-efficiency light fixtures out there that we would totally love to use, but they’re ugly, so we’re not going to, ‘cause it’s Bennington.”

The Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Planning, **Andy Schlatter**, is a licensed architect who will casually lapse into talking about the beautiful “volumes of the sloping roofline” on the third floor of Commons with such love and appreciation that you almost forget it’s his job to oversee the technicalities of the massive college-wide department. He feels the same way as Andersen: “The reason we are all drawn to this place and love it is the character that all of these buildings have,” he says.

The demands of the job are manifold, though. “The range of things we deal with here is so great, from the power going out or the boiler malfunctioning and not being able to deliver heat to a good portion of the campus, which is grand scale stuff, down to the minutia of, like, there’s a bat in the Office of Student Life,” Schlatter adds (and yes, that’s happened).

Operations manager and conference services coordinator **Angel Kwasniak** and her staff of 36: 16 craftspeople, 19 housekeepers, and one management assistant are often on the frontline of addressing those minor emergencies. Her team, which does everything from maintenance to housekeeping, has additionally taken on special “in-house projects” as a kind of challenge. “In the past we were more routine maintenance, work orders, plugged toilet, fix the ceiling, change a lightbulb, those kinds of things,” Kwasniak said. “Now we’re getting more in-depth with projects and not outsourcing as much.”

For the staff of Buildings & Grounds, the work is personal. How could it not be, when there are some 6,200 work orders processed by the department, on average, in-house every single year? “There’s always something going on, there’s always a problem somewhere, there’s

something that needs to be fixed constantly,” says **Todd Siclari**, the systems manager—not as a complaint, but rather as a matter of fact.

Of course, maintaining a space primarily occupied by a bunch of young adults who are living on their own for the first time often means a lot of good-natured eye rolls. “When I started working here, I could hear staff people and people in Buildings & Grounds referring to the students as ‘kids,’” says Whitman, the Kilpatrick fellow who will soon be departing for a job at MSK Engineering & Design in downtown Bennington. “As a student I would have found it really paternalistic, but it really makes sense that they call us kids, from the beautiful love-hate relationship of mostly cleaning up after our messes and fixing whatever we might have broken.”

Lynn Harrington is the management assistant who fields every single work order that comes into the department, and she has been with Buildings & Grounds for more than two decades. She shrugs off the suggestion that college students might wear you down with all their antics—“if you keep showing up here for 21 years, you must like what you’re doing,” she points out.

Perhaps nothing encapsulates the take-it-in-stride mentality of Buildings & Grounds better than when she tells the lobster story. It goes something like this:

The school had hired a new plumber, who within days on his new job was called to the Kilpatrick house to fix a clogged toilet. What he didn’t understand until arriving, though, was what was propped up in the toilet was a lobster.

Harrington can barely get through telling the story without laughing. She says she joked to the baffled plumber that it was his “initiation.” The staff who have been around the longest all have these kinds of stories.

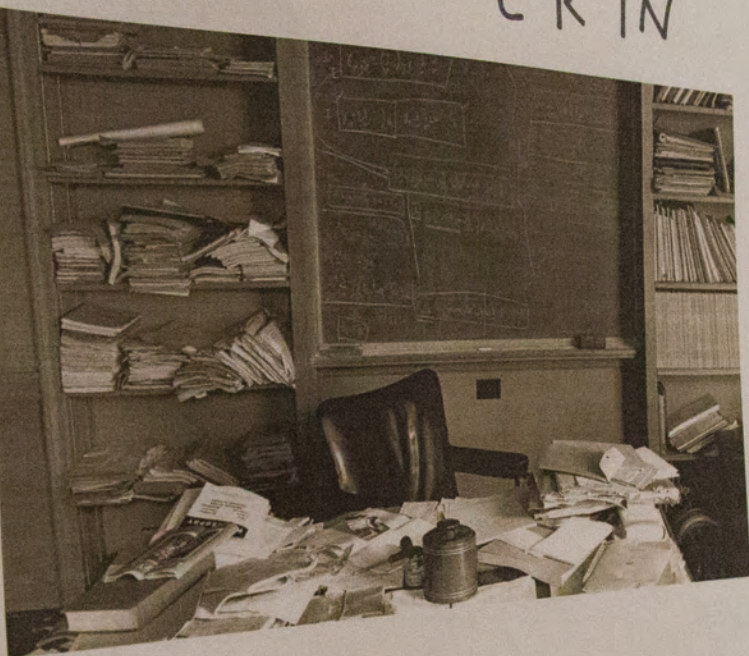
Like every job, there are the bad days, sure. But who could ask for a better group to pull through it with? Whitman admits he got his first cavity this past year because of all the desserts foisted onto him by the staff, who he describes, almost embarrassed by the cliché, as his “family.” From his desk in Penny Wilson Buildings & Grounds, he watches the day-to-day goings-on like it’s a sitcom. You just can’t have such a job without a sense of humor.

“I have a love and appreciation for Bennington, and it doesn’t matter who it is—whether it’s students, staff, or faculty,” Kwasniak says. “I want to do my best and do a good job at what I’m doing regardless. Not to say I’m never going to fail: I’m going to fail. But I want to make the experience here the best that it can be for people.”

Harrington puts it another way: “We always get it done. Somehow, we always get it done.” **B**



HOLLY + ERIN



ALBERT EINSTEIN'S OFFICE

Just sayin'!



Tune in to our conversation with Erin McKenny by visiting Soundcloud or www.bennington.edu/magazine. We speak about repurposed artifacts, what informs interior design at Bennington, and what's planned for the interior of Commons in the next year.



Design coordinator Erin McKenny shares Commons artifacts to look for on campus by Brie Della Rocca

COMMON ARTIFACTS

Erin McKenny is a collector, and everyone knows it. She collects walnuts and acorns, pressed Queen Anne's lace, old mailbox numbers, felt samples, and quaint little "Made in Vermont" package stickers. Her office, shared with project manager **Holly Andersen**, is a cornucopia of textures and treasures sourced from across campus—Andersen, the big and rustic: steam pipes, paned windows, a box of hard hats. McKenny, the wild and small: a splintered wooden E, a "ringer" box, campus posters.

McKenny is the College's design coordinator. She is one of the primary stewards of the College's art collection and de-facto collector of all things Bennington. And she has been a part of decorating every space that has been moved or changed or updated or rethought at the College for the last 15 years.

Part decorator, part matchmaker, McKenny is always "on the hunt" for the rare and wonderful pieces that will make a space—an office, a lounge, a dining room—feel like home. Last fall, she (and most of the Buildings & Grounds team) went on the ultimate hunt in a hollowed Commons. They removed light fixtures, instruments, mailboxes, bells, garbage cans, wood slabs, mirrors, chairs, and more. From the hard to define to the totally unidentifiable—hundreds and hundreds of Commons artifacts found their way back to Buildings & Grounds before construction crews came to work.

Limited by space (and time) the team had to make choices about what they should save. Saved in this case means stored, and more often than not, restored. Objects or furniture or clothing that would not be put to use on campus were donated to a variety of nonprofit organizations throughout the community. And what could not be donated was offered to the campus and local community in a weeklong kind of free pile event in Martha Hill.

Many of the objects that came out of Commons will be restored and brought back into Commons when the building reopens. But already several of the objects have found a new home or have returned to their original use in the College's new student Health Services Office and Dining Center. These are some campus favorites.

THE MAILROOM

COUNTER DOOR

Most restored doors were salvaged from Commons, but others (second photo) were salvaged from an old cow barn on campus. This one in particular serves as the new counter at the campus post office. It is topped with a counter crafted by carpenters in Buildings & Grounds from felled trees on campus. The post office also retained its original backroom sorting cabinet and signs, which now adorn the doors and counter.



DOORS

COMMONS DOORS

Reclaimed Commons doors are painted and connected to make partitions that block the dish-return and composting area in the temporary, open-space dining hall. Other doors were built into the dining-area feature wall in their original, unpainted state.



HEALTH SERVICES

MEDICAL TRAY

The yellow medical tray could have had a thousand homes, but this stunner has been in Health Services from the time the College opened the office. Dr. Randy Anselmo, director of Health Services, plans to continue to use it exactly as it is intended. Sometimes the best medical tray is an antique.



SCHONBECK COLLECTABLES

THE BENCH

Gunnar Schonbeck and his students were prolific music and art makers. Many pieces still remained on the third floor even after the massive inventory and restoration of most of the pieces by faculty member **Nick Brooke** and select students for the MASS MoCA exhibition. The remaining objects ranged from knockers to piano boxes to giant bells. There are still many plans in the works to integrate the objects in spaces throughout campus, but some of the pieces already have been brought into offices, including this weathered wood piece that was placed in the President's Office middle lobby area.

REIMAGINED OBJECTS

LIGHTS

The old Commons lights have found a new home in the Robert Frost Stone House Museum, which was gifted to the College in the fall. Buildings & Grounds spent some time in the spring restoring the stone house. In May, the house reopened to the public, programmed with readings and performances, exhibitions, and talks.





WASTE CANS | CUP DISPENSERS MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

People get passionate about the cup dispenser, a simple and functional piece that was returned to Health Services in its new location. While the entire Health Services Office was moved, the medical offices were not refurnished. All of the exam rooms still use most of the equipment purchased decades ago, including the waste cans, cup dispenser, medical instruments, sand hourglasses, and even exam-room tables.



MEDICINE CABINET

Some of the furniture removed from Health Services was brought into other offices. This medical cabinet is now placed in Provost and Dean **Isabel Roche's** office.



B

(One set of mailboxes as a rotating canvas for students and faculty)

THE MAILBOXES

Bennington's open mailboxes, a fixture in Commons, are almost like iconic objects. A backdrop to countless living room talks, admissions tour stops, a venue for untold numbers of student art pieces—they feel more important than their utility and were treated that way when moved to the Barn, where Associate Vice President for Building & Grounds, **Andy Schlatter** had them installed along the west arm of the Barn. After a shift in the way that faculty mail is delivered (all faculty members now have their mail distributed by coordinators), there was a block of extra mailboxes. They are now a new exhibition space for rotating artworks. The first pieces were paper cut-out animations made by students in **Sue Rees'** animation course. The piece was based loosely on Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. Students used the sequence of the boxes to create pieces and to think in frames of animation.



by India Abbott '19



by Amelia Miller '20



by Emily Walker '19





Work by India Abbott '19, Maegan George '19, Minahil Ghaffoor '18, Eloise Gibbin '20, Paing Hein '20, Lea Lee '21, Amelia Miller '20, Jia Murtaza '18, Hunter O'Brian '19, Emily Walker '19 is included to the right.

B

(Bringing Bennington's buildings into the next century sustainably and responsibly by Charlotte West)



Before the College was able to completely renovate the Commons, Health Services, the Dining Hall, and the post office needed to be moved. By renovating the Brooder building, which most recently served as faculty apartments, enough space was gained to support a program that would combine all of Health Services and the student health arm of Student Life. Simultaneously, the College added 4,000 square feet to the Student Center and retrofitted the kitchen to move all dining hall functions to the Student Center while Commons undergoes renovation.

THE GREENEST BUILDING IS THE ONE THAT IS ALREADY BUILT



UNTIL VERY RECENTLY, WITH THE RISE OF MOOCS and online college attendance, the idea of a college education has been bound up with a sense of place created by the buildings and campus that make up the essence of the learning environment. For many, the physical space they learn within is a central facet of the student experience. As campuses grow and change, colleges must choose between renewal or building new. For many years many institutions chose to build new, and in many well reported cases, not just new but expensive.

But throughout most of Bennington's history, the choice was not to build new but to repurpose existing structures to meet new educational needs, address environmental concerns, and maintain core campus aesthetics.

The College's first foray into adaptive reuse was at its founding in 1932, when economic conditions required founders to think creatively about the use of each existing building. Now the College has launched its biggest adaptive reuse project yet: restoring Commons.

Renovations began last June, with the upgrades slated to increase the building's energy efficiency, add a new entrance to the north facade, and open 15,000 square feet of academic space on the third floor, all of which come without increasing the building's footprint. While the practice of renovation and renewal is not LEED certified, it is perhaps the greenest way to build. As Carl Elefante, principal and director of sustainability for Quinn Evans Architects and the current president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), put it in a seminal essay, "the greenest building is one that is already built."

One of the first phases of the Commons renovation was to relocate several of the student services that were housed there, including health and psychological services, to the \$2 million dollar renovated chicken brooder and now a state-of-the-art health services center.

"It turned out to be about the right size in terms of its footprint and it's in a really central location, but it was underutilized," **Andy Schlatter** explains. "We essentially rebuilt it, but retained the historic character of it through an agricultural vernacular."

Most campus renovation projects are financed in part through Bennington's campus renewal fund. According to **Matt Rizzo**, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, during the last four years the College has raised more than \$15 million in donations earmarked for campus renewal, with an ultimate goal of \$30-40 million.

The fund, which will support ongoing campus renovations as well as the College's general capital expenditures budget, is relatively modest when compared to other institutions that have pursued similar renewal endeavors. Yale University's School of Art and Architecture, a building originally designed by modernist architect Paul Rudolph in 1963, is one such example. In 2008, Yale invested \$126 million to restore and extend the building, with a focus on more purposeful use. But, Rizzo says, "Small colleges like ours don't have large endowments and therefore we must be creative." While well-endowed institutions such as Yale and others can draw down their endowment to reestablish its buildings, Bennington cannot. The campus renewal fund, though, scales what the College does have to, as Rizzo put it, "invest in our strengths."

And that fund remains an essential driver that will fuel plans to upgrade other iconic buildings such as the Barn,

Jennings, VAPA, and the Colonial Houses during the next 10 years will rely on the campus renewal fund.

"I think there's a higher ambition to introduce and adapt buildings to new technology and needs in a small-scale way. We are interested in working within existing buildings to upgrade them in a more targeted way," Schlatter says.

While renovation and reuse is often less expensive than new construction, campus renewal at Bennington has been driven by much more than cost savings. "To us, the value of Commons and other projects we've done around campus is not necessarily monetary. The value of these buildings is about the sense of place ... you would lose a lot in terms of the cultural value of those pieces of architecture," Schlatter explains.

Of course, there is the environmental benefit too. In the book, *University Trends: Contemporary Campus Design*, authors Jonathan Coulson, Paul Roberts, and Isabelle Taylor argue that "reuse can provide an efficient means of meeting new spatial requirements at a mitigated environmental cost." That mitigation is apparent in the main idea behind the Commons overhaul: to expand its impact without increasing its footprint.

"As the plans for renovation evolved, the thing really started to get distilled back into the footprint of the existing building. It became a lot more about just stripping the building down to its original intent in terms of what functions happened there," Schlatter says. Martin Finio, the architect leading the renovation, adds they had to rethink how dining happens within the building so they could double the capacity without changing the footprint. To get there, the solution was part architectural and partly about extending the hours of operation and revamping the meal plans.

In the mid-1980s, the third floor of Commons—once the center of performance and campus life—was shut down after failing to meet modern fire code and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements. According to Schlatter, the third floor was left fallow because a huge amount of structural work would have been needed to install an elevator, which was required to make the building accessible, and to ensure safe egress, which would have also meant renovating all stairwells. "While it may sound like a small thing to bring that space up to code, it affects the entire building, which is why the complexity and cost of it just got [to be] too much," he says.

Once the College committed to renovating the building, renovating the third floor became a focus that allowed architects to reclaim the space without increasing the building's footprint; Finio says, "we were able to add 10 new classrooms—almost the equivalent of a brand-new building for the campus."

While adaptive reuse is not new, its strategic use has become more prevalent since 2008 when many universi-

ties' large-scale expansion plans were put on hold following the financial crisis. Coulson, Roberts, and Taylor note that "the financial strictures of recent years have encouraged a more widespread and creative attitude to retrofitting and repurposing."

Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), for instance, has purchased and converted nearly three million square feet of building space since it was founded in 1978. The school first reclaimed the former Savannah Volunteer Guard Armory, built in 1892. SCAD has subsequently preserved and revitalized more than 100 historic buildings on three continents, including a 12th-century structure on its campus in Lacoste, France.

Other institutions have also integrated adaptive reuse into their strategic planning for the entire campus. Boston University (BU), for instance, adopted an adaptive reuse program in 1971 to preserve its historic buildings, and an official historic preservation plan has been in place since 2005.

Similarly, in 2004, Bennington undertook a master planning process, led by Kyu Sung Woo Architects and landscape architects Reed Hilderbrand Associates, that explored how the fundamental character, unique evolution, and configuration of the campus could guide future growth.

From that plan, the College has focused its renewal strategy on breathing new life into overlooked, underperforming structures on campus. There have been three major, new construction projects on Bennington's campus in the last 20 years: the Woo Houses, the Student Center, and the Elizabeth Coleman Center for the Advancement of Public Action in 2011. But during the same period, the College renovated six historic buildings from the Brooder to the Deane Carriage Barn to the Brick Garage, which was incorporated into the Student Center in 2005.

More than a decade later, Finio continued this approach in thinking about the Commons renovation. "We went through and documented every single building on campus, not only in terms of their physical manifestations, but in how they operated programmatically—when it was operational during the day and which students were in these buildings at any one time. That yielded several wonderful ideas about how certain buildings might be better occupied."

In addition to preserving the core campus aesthetic, adaptive reuse also offers environmental benefits and enhanced sustainability. New buildings, however efficient, consume significantly more energy in raw material extraction, processing, transportation, and construction. A 2012 study from the Preservation Green Lab, for instance, found that building reuse almost always offers environmental savings over demolition and construction. It can take 10 to 80 years for the benefits of a new, energy-

"Small colleges like ours don't have large endowments and therefore we must be creative."

**—Matt Rizzo,
Vice President for Institutional
Advancement**

efficient building to overcome the negative environmental impacts that occurred during construction.

"There is a tremendous amount of embodied energy in all the materials and all the effort that goes into construction. The more years you can stretch that out, the less the carbon costs of that building," faculty member **Don Sherefkin** explains, likening it to the life cycle of a car. While new cars such as Priuses are much more energy efficient, it may still be greener to keep driving a 30-year-old vehicle.

President **Mariko Silver** sees it in similar terms and has included renewal efforts as part of the College's commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral campus by 2030. Focusing on Commons was one of the more obvious first starts. "It makes sense, especially when you consider that the building houses dining. That function alone accounts for why Commons uses more energy than any other facility on campus."

But with strategic adaptive reuse and modern energy efficiencies that included adding insulation, reconfiguring the heating system to work with the College's biomass plant, adding variable and energy-recovery ventilators, and reducing restroom water usage by a third, it is expected that the College will lower Commons' energy load by 40 percent compared to a new building of the same style.

"We have to think about every object and every space through a lens of adaptive reuse. There are lots of practical reasons to redo an existing building, including our commitment to continuity in the community and looking forward to what we want our students to accomplish in the world," Silver says. But ultimately, it's all about sustainability because, she points out, "Sustainability is about the long-term view." **B**



www.bennington.edu/magazine

SUMMER TOUR

- JUN 09** Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival Manchester, TN
- JUL 10** Greek Theatre Los Angeles, CA
- JUL 12** Hearst Greek Theatre Berkeley, CA
- JUL 13** Edgefield Amphitheatre Troutdale, OR
- JUL 14** Marymoor Amphitheater Redmond, WA
- JUL 16** Knitting Factory Concert House Boise, ID
- JUL 17** Ogden Amphitheatre Ogden, UT
- JUL 18** Red Rocks Amphitheatre Morrison, CO
- JUL 20** Surly Brewing Co. Minneapolis, MN
- JUL 21** Pabst Theater Milwaukee, WI
- JUL 22** Pabst Theater Milwaukee, WI
- JUL 23** Riviera Theatre Chicago, IL
- JUL 24** Vic Theatre Chicago, IL
- JUL 26** The Anthem Washington, DC
- JUL 27** XPN Fest Philadelphia, PA
- JUL 28** Blue Hills Bank Pavilion Boston, MA
- JUL 30** Upstate Concert Hall Clifton Park, NY
- JUL 31** The Danforth Music Hall Toronto, Canada
- AUG 01** The Danforth Music Hall Toronto, Canada
- AUG 02** The Green At Shelburne Museum Burlington, VT
- AUG 03** Osheaga Music Festival Montreal, Canada
- SEP 21** Life Is Beautiful Las Vegas, NV
- SEP 22** Life Is Beautiful Las Vegas, NV
- SEP 23** Life Is Beautiful Las Vegas, NV

B

(Brie Della Rocca interviews Sylvan Esso's Amelia Meath '10;
edited by Keegan Ead)

PLAY IT RIGHT

Off-stage with Sylvan Esso's Amelia Meath '10

Sylvan Esso (led by singer-songwriter, Amelia Meath '10) came as close to Bennington as any of their shows would bring them when they played to an adoring MASS MoCA crowd, just 40 miles from the College, in March. The show sold out faster than any of their other spring 2018 tour stops. Meath's partner, Nick Sanborn, had a hunch. He joked during the show that the venue was probably shoulder-to-shoulder with Meath's friends and family. He wasn't too far off.

Front rows and aisles were packed with Bennington alumni, students, faculty, and staff who were as faithful fans as they were old friends. And if the cheers to inside Bennington references between songs were any indication of just how many from the Bennington community filled the rows, it was a lot. How many would know a Tom Bogdan warm-up vocal reference after all?

But sold-out venues are becoming the norm these days, with audiences far more familiar with the band's songs, than with the band members. After their 2014 debut, self-titled album, *SE* was released, Sylvan Esso were guests on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*, *The Conan O'Brien Show*, and were a favorite on NPR. The hit single "Coffee" helped *SE* reach 39th on the Billboard charts and seventh on the independent music charts.

Last year they released their second album, *What Now*, which earned the group their first Grammy nomination, and generated even more popular attention. The success of that album has Meath and Sanborn booking bigger shows and more of them. This summer they go on a shed tour, playing amphitheaters across the country. But success, as Meath defines it, has as much to do with her character as it does her music. A goal, she says, is to tour and keep playing without becoming a jerk.

When we reached out to Meath, inviting her to record an interview after the show, she was more than generous. She invited me to breakfast the next day. Recording at the Gramercy Bistro, Easter morning, Meath spoke about her time at Bennington, the influence of teachers and staff, what success looks like, and how she manages to maintain her voice and develop authentic work, even in the spotlight.



faculty notes

IAS

 INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED STUDY

David Bond
was invited

to become a member of the School of Social Sciences at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton University for the upcoming academic year. In January, Bond and **Susan Sgorbati** were named Global Affiliates at the Gund Institute for Environment at the University of Vermont.



Michael Giannitti's 2017 theatrical lighting design projects included *The Hard Problem* at the Studio Theatre

in Washington, DC; *Arsenic and Old Lace* at Portland Stage Company; the dance piece *The Ubiquitous Mass of Us* at Middlebury College; *The Merchant of Venice* at the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey; the world premiere of Theresa Rebeck's play *Downstairs*, starring Tim Daly '79 and sister Tyne Daly, at the Dorset Theatre Festival; *Baskerville: A Sherlock Holmes Mystery* also at the Dorset Theatre Festival; *The School For Lies* at the Arkansas Repertory Theatre; and the new musical *Cross that River* at 59E59 Theatres in New York City. In addition, he presented a week-long lecture series at the Guangxi Arts Institute in Nanning, China.

Camille Guthrie wrote two poem guides for the Poetry Foundation—one on John

Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn," called "How to Read the Most Famous Poem 'Forever'" and one on Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," called "A Poet Uses a Punctuation Mark to Plot a Crime." Guthrie also had new poems published in *The Iowa Review*, *At Length*, and *PoetryNow*.



*Art and Authority:
Moral Rights
and Meaning in*

Contemporary Visual Art by **Karen Gover** was published with Oxford University Press in April. The book is an original investigation of artists' authority over their own work and illumination of the theoretical issues surrounding art and ownership using case studies of disputed artworks. In December, *Ceramics Monthly* published Gover's feature story on the influential work of former faculty member Stanley Rosen. Visit tinyurl.com/artandauthority for expanded stories on Gover's new work.

The City Council of Minucciano, Italy named **Jon Isherwood** an Honorary Citizen in recognition of his work promoting the region through an art and technology initiative he has led for the past five years.

Vanessa Lyon's "'My Original, a Woman,' Copies, Origins, and Sor Juana's Iconic Portraits" appeared in the *Routledge*

Research Companion to the Works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Routledge, 2017). As the volume's sole art historical consideration of the Baroque poet-nun's legacy in visual culture, Lyon's chapter examines portraits of Sor Juana within the contexts of Spanish and Flemish art as well as Mexican banknote designs and contemporary media.



LUXTC, a solo show of work by **Ann Pibal**, is currently on exhibit at team (bungalow) in Los Angeles, CA and

concludes in early August. In November, the Pifo Gallery in Beijing, China hosted a solo exhibition, *Ann Pibal: Diamond Eye*, where Pibal traveled to give an artist talk and participate in a panel discussion at the Central Academy of Fine Art. Pibal's work was also included in several group exhibitions this year: *A Short History of Abstraction* at Rønnebæksholm (Næstved, Denmark); *Spirit of Abstraction* and *Edge* at the Philip Slein Gallery (St. Louis, MO); *The Fuel and Lumber Company Presents: On-Site at Atlanta Contemporary* (Atlanta, GA); and *Expanding Abstraction: New England Women Painters 1950 to Now* at the deCordova Museum (Lincoln, MA). Last July, Ann Pibal and Suzanne McClelland organized the show *Put Me in the Zoo: Bill Adams, Polly Apfelbaum, Colin Brant, Kirsten Hassenfeld, Hanneline Røgeberg* for Lucien Terras, Inc.



In the last two terms, **Don Sherefkin** has taught two courses that have taken campus architecture as its subject—*Bennington Campus: Real and Imagined* (offered to current students last fall) and a briefer version of the same course, *Bennington: Real and Imagined—the Libraries* (offered online for alumni). Both invited students to look at Bennington's architecture in the context of the larger history of global architecture and document the buildings with new drawings and scale models. Photographed to the left is a senior project by **Faruk Calkic '18**. The model imagines a design for new student housing and studios to be located on the hill between Crossett Library and Campus Safety.

Jean Randich directed Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* for the Connecticut Repertory Theatre in October.



Sue Rees undertook the second phase

of the Fulbright Nehru Senior Research Grant where she is studying how theatrical form has adapted to changes occurring in India. With support from the grant, Rees completed a documentary profiling the actor P. Rajagopal and theatre tradition in India. In addition to her work, Rees worked on a touring production of *Hamlet* for Hudson Valley Shakespeare Educational Touring Company in Cold Springs, NY, which tours to more than 100 schools in the TriState area.



Latitude, by **Dana Reitz**, was performed with **Elena Demyanenko** and **Yanan Yu MFA '18** in February at New York Live Arts. *The New*

York Times included the performance as a critic's pick, lauding the choreography, performance, lighting (also designed by Reitz), and costumes (developed by **Charles Schoonmaker**). *The Times'* glowing review concluded, "The sustained peacefulness is remarkable: *Latitude* is as satisfying as listening to wind chimes or watching birds on a lawn."



The Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO),

conducted by Ward Stare, commissioned an Oboe Concerto by **Allen Shawn**, written specifically for RPO principal oboist, Erik Behr. The 25-minute work was warmly received at its premier performances on March 22 and 24. This is the fourth work by Shawn that the orchestra has played. Shawn describes it as "multifaceted meditation on life, with the oboe center stage."



In January, Northeast Public Radio interviewed **Tim Schroeder** about his latest research, which focuses on understanding the underground water systems in the region in response to the PFOA contamination.

Debbie Warnock was selected to chair the sampling subcommittee for the American Sociological Association's task force on first-generation and working-class persons. Warnock was also selected to serve on the working group for postsecondary education continuation as part of Vermont Governor Phil Scott's 70x2025vt

initiative. The initiative aims to increase the percentage of Vermont residents with an educational credential of value to 70 percent by 2025.

MFA IN WRITING



"Girls Win, Boys Lose," an essay

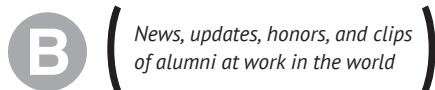
by **Doug Bauer** originally published in *Sports Illustrated*, was included in the anthology, *Basketball: Great Writing About America's Game*, edited by Alexander Wolff, published by The Library of America.



Alice Mattison's seventh novel, *Conscience*, will be published by Pegasus Books on August 7. In March, her personal essay, "Eye Trouble," was published in *The New Yorker*.

In January, **Jill McCorkle** was selected for a place in the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame.

Lynne Schwartz edited a new book, *Crossing Borders: Stories and Essays About Translation*, was published by Seven Stories Press in January. The book is a collection of stories by distinguished writers on the intricacies of translation as they affect people's lives. **B**



40s

Alison Hennig Moore '49 celebrated her 90th birthday this year with her six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She remains in good health.

50s

Even in semi-retirement **Dick Cuyler MA '56** continues to teach juggling, voice, and movement, which he has done for 35 years.

In November, **Carole Ione Lewis '59** premiered *The Nubian Word for Flowers; A Phantom Opera* at the Roulette Intermedium in Brooklyn to a sold-out audience. The piece was praised by *The New York Times* as a "surreal meditation on colonialism."

60s

Stanley M. Berke '60, P '19 is in the process of working on a piece he titles, *Seasons in the Sky*. He's proud to report that his son is a junior at Bennington studying audio engineering.

Fran Bull '60 had her artwork included in two European shows this fall, *Due Per Due*, exhibited in Spazio LOA in Milan, Italy, and etchings shown in Barcelona, Spain, in November. It was there she was invited to have work included in the Venice Biennale.

This summer **Ruth Mordecai '60** will show *New Works on Paper 2018* at the Trident Gallery in Gloucester, MA. A book of her work will be published by Puritan Capital at the same time.

Shannon Theobald Devoe '61 moved to Ipswich, MA to be closer to family. She is involved in many activities including taking dance classes and volunteering for the Red Cross and the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families.

The Fountain Theatre in Los Angeles, founded by **Deborah Culver Lawlor '61** with co-artistic director Stephen Sacks, is entering its 27th year. The theater presents mainly new plays and dance concerts.

The fourth edition of *The Anthropology of Language* by **Harriet Joseph Ottenheimer '62** was published in January. Also in January, Harriet's third granddaughter was born.

Ellen Kaplan Kardon '63 just celebrated her 76th birthday. She writes, "Unfortunately, my beloved husband, Steve, died three years ago. Busy with family and friends. Fond memories of Bennington. Susie Fogg, where are you?"

Louise Reichlin '63 and her dance company continue their workshops with the Los Angeles Unified Schools. Two of her dance programs will be presented this year, one at the Las Vegas Clark County Library and one in Philadelphia at the International Performing Arts for Youth.

Deborah Bluestein '65 published the first of three novels inspired by her junior year abroad in Italy. Her historical novel *Botticelli's Muse* was released by Juiceboxartists Press in July 2017 and has received many positive reviews. Artnet News selected it as one of 15 best summer reads.

Under the umbrella of Silver Fox Cinema, **Barbara Glasser '65** is producing *Son of Houdini*, a coming-of-age romantic comedy. Barbara reports that she reunited with **Lucy James '64** and **Judy Rosenberg Pritchett '65** recently; she is also in touch with the not-a-mean-bone-in-her-body **Liuda Doydenas '65**, and the ever-supportive and **Pril Smiley**

'65. She lives in downtown Yonkers, NY and would welcome visitors.

Mary Kelley '65 and MIT professor Chris Capozzola gave a program based on Mary's *The Weeping Angel, Letters and Poems from WWI France, 1917-1919* at the Massachusetts Historical Society in November. They will repeat it this fall at the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement.

Kathran Seigel '66 launched a new website featuring her current and past work (www.kathranseigel.com).

Anne Waldman '66 was the keynote speaker for the Jaipur Literature Festival, the curator for the Casa Del Lago Voz Alta Festival in Mexico City, and lectured at Harvard Divinity School last year. In March, Anne helped organize a literary event with PEN in front of the New York Public Library after the second Women's March. In April, she performed with Meredith Monk at Brown University, as well as at the Other Minds Poetry Festival in San Francisco, CA. Anne is taping an oral history for the Woodberry Library at Harvard. It is based on her experiences as founder and director of The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in The Bowery, as well as co-founder of the Department of Writing & Poetics at Naropa University with Allen Ginsberg. She remains the artistic director of Naropa's summer writing program.

70s

Victoria Ellington '70 is continuing to publish a journal on the business of medical innovation in Europe with her husband (www.mednous.com).

Following a long career in the nonprofit community mental health field, **Ruth Arnold '71** will be working as the CEO for Colorado

SI

FORTIES FIFTIES SIXTIES SEVENTIES

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AWARDS + HONORS

In October **Peggy Adler '63** received the Marquis Who's Who Lifetime Achievement Award, which recognized her work in the arts and entertainment industries.

Janine Beichman '63 received the National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowship and PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant for translations of the poetry of Yosano Akiko (1878–1942), Japan's leading modern female poet.

In January 2018, **Kathleen Norris '69** received a Lifetime Achievement Award in the Christianity and Literature section of the Modern Language Association.

In May, **Susanna Reich '75** was given the 2018 Rip Van Winkle Award, which is chosen by the school librarians of seven Hudson Valley counties. The award recognizes a regional children's book author for "outstanding contributions to the world of children's literature."

Thomas T. Chin '87 won an honorable mention from the 37th Annual Photography Contest, hosted by *Photographer's Forum*, for one of his black-and-white photos. It was also featured in *Best of Photography 2017*.

Eugenia Kim MFA '01 was awarded a 2018 DC Commission on Arts and Humanities Fellowship towards work on her third novel.

Jeanne Bonner MFA '16 won the 2018 PEN Grant for the English Translation of Italian Literature. The award, which was announced by PEN America in February and was the largest translation grant the organization disbursed, will provide \$5,000 for the continuation of Jeanne's translation of Mariateresa Di Lascia's *A Walk in the Shadows*.



(News, updates, honors, and clips
of alumni at work in the world)



Recovery. You can email her at rarnold@coloradorecovery.com for mental health continuum care advice.

David Appel '72 presented his new solo work, *close at hand (starry night)*, in December at Dixon Place, NYC.

Starlina Peyson Bradbury '72 is retiring after 18 years as the director of sales and marketing at Oak Hammock at the University of Florida. Her new business and website is starbradbury.com.

Randall Denker '72 was accepted as a Fulbright Scholar in early February. With the scholarship, she and her partner will be teaching a class concerning equitable allocation of waters in river basins.

Francesca Lyman '72 is a reporter and writer based in Seattle, WA. Her reporting on consumer deception at for-profit thrift stores was cited by Bob Ferguson, the Washington Attorney General, in his suit against the nation's largest for-profit thrift store, Value Village/Savers LLC.

In September, the Soprafina Gallery in Boston, MA will exhibit paintings and large-scale photographs by **Leslie Parke '74, MA '76**. Leslie will also have a show at Martin Muller Art Gallery at SUNY Oneonta in November.

Bellanne Meltzer Toren '75 was named a featured member of the Association of International Petroleum Negotiators (AIPN) in December. She is proud to report that she ran the Marathon of Afghanistan in October, while on a trip with Untamed Borders, and three weeks later she ran the Desert Half Marathon in Eilat, Israel. "Not bad for a 65-year-old!"

Amy Sawelson Landes '76 has moved from Tarzana, CA to downtown Encino, CA. She writes about food and food styling.

Max Mackenzie '76 and **Rebecca Cross Mackenzie '78** became grandparents in September,

welcoming granddaughter Cleo Madeleine Mackenzie.

Elevated Luxury Life featured a cover article by **Jan Hadwen Hubbell '78** in October. The article is a profile of Bode Miller, the most decorated U.S. Olympic skier of all time.

Identity Theft, directed by **Linda Bouchard '79**, was staged last summer. The show included one dancer, one actor, one musician, live video, and live electronics.

80s

John Bertles '81 designed instruments for the Broadway musical *Once on This Island*, which opened in December. **Michael Starobin '79** received a Tony nomination for his orchestrations for the musical.

Eve Kaplan '81 is living in Columbia County, NY, working in ceramics, making mirror frames, tables, and lighting.

Founder and artistic director of UBU Theater, **Ann Paffrath Gallo '82** conceived and produced a community, site-specific, local cast production of *Our Town* in Tyngham, MA (population 411), last August. The play was staged in two locations in town, with actors and audience moving from one site to the other for each of the four daytime productions. A reprise is being planned for next summer.

Rhea Nowak '85 had a solo exhibition at the Earlville Opera House Gallery in Earlville, NY. Some of her prints were also included in a small group exhibition entitled *Between the Lines* at the Albany Center Gallery in January.

Ramoncita V. Reyes '85 is the co-managing partner of the corporate law practice Snorez and Reyes Law Offices.

Julia Prud'homme '87 has landed a part in the motion picture *Lean on Pete*. The film includes actors such as Charlie Plummer, Steve Buscemi, Chloe Sevigny, and Steve Zahn. The film opened in select U.S. cities in April, and in Europe and Australia in May and June.

Gioia Chilton '89 had chapters published in the new *Handbook of Arts-based Research*, and in Judy Rubin's 3rd edition of *Approaches to Art Therapy, Theory and Technique* (Psychology Press). She recently moved to Alexandria, VA.

90s

Odili Donald Odita '90 was elected a member of the National Academy. National Academicians serve as ambassadors for the arts in America, show their work at the National Academy Museum, teach in the National Academy School, and contribute a work to the Academy's collection.

Emily Labarbera-Twarog '93 is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She published her book, *Politics of the Pantry: Housewives, Food, and Consumer Protest in 20th Century America*, with Oxford University Press in 2017 (see Bookshelf).

Karina Mitchell '94 is enjoying her new role as manager of adult tours and programs at the Currier Museum of Art. She would welcome private group tours for any Bennington alumni (kmitchell@currier.org).

Ana Miljački '95 has been promoted to associate professor with tenure in MIT's Department of Architecture. Ana contributes to exhibitions and installations as an exhibitor and curator, and she was selected to curate the United States Pavilion in the 2014 Venice Biennale of Architecture.

THIRTIESNINETIES THOUSANDS

Michael Sharkey '95 had an exhibition entitled, *Queer Kids* shown in the fall at the Lamont Gallery at Phillips Academy. The work documents the experiences of gay youth in the U.S. and abroad.

Taliesin Thomas '98 is working toward her PhD in art theory and philosophy at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts. She hopes to finish her dissertation in the next two years.

Carleen Zimbalatti '98 has been included in the book, *In the Details*, which features artwork of 17 artists. It was released last year.

00s

Eighteen years ago, **Lily Kortlandt Colasurdo '04**, **Heidi Sulzendorf-Liszkiewicz '04**, and **Justin Vitello '04** met when sharing a suite in Booth as first-year students. In celebration of their friendships, they vacationed together in Hawaii this year. Highlights included watching Kilauea erupt from a lookout on Mauna Loa, snorkeling with dozens of yellow tangs, and reminiscing about their Bennington days.

Patrick Evans '04 lives in Charlottesville, VA. In 2014, he and his husband opened Marie-Bette Cafe and Bakery, named after their two daughters, Marian and Betty.

Thomas Hughes '06 cofounded Lavender Cat Creative, a media production company specializing in music composition and video (clients include Microsoft, Planned Parenthood, and Hennessy). He recently scored the feature-length film *Sylvio*, which debuted at the 2017 SXSW film festival. Thomas has also created music for other short films and podcasts, most notably *The Orbiting Human Circus (of the Air)*, part of the Night Vale Presents (named by the *Guardian* as one of the 50 best podcasts of 2016). He lives with his wife (and

collaborator) Gretchen Lohse in Philadelphia, PA.

Krista Meany Reed '06 was married to Scott Reed in September. **Rachael Hayes '04** officiated, with **Toby Levin '06** and **Heather Burns '06** in attendance. The couple lives in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn with their cat, Vitruvius.

Lillie Webb '07 received her PhD in French language and literature from Boston University last year. She plans to "move mountains and build bridges" in her newest adventure as the inaugural director of Boston University's Global House. She extends credit to her husband **Chris Burgan '06** and **Isabel Roche** for their encouragement and support.

After wrapping up book promotion for *Hand-Built Outdoor Furniture: 20 Step-By-Step projects Anyone Can Build*, **Katie Jackson '08** moved from Northampton to Williamstown, MA. She has started work at a tiny house construction company in North Adams, MA: B&B Micro Manufacturing. Katie writes, "I would love to connect with alums in the northern Berkshires (kathrynjljackson@gmail.com)."

Seattle dancers **Amy Ross '08** and **Corina Dalzell '13** performed with The Three Yells Dance Company in *Giselle Deconstruct* at the Cornish Playhouse last January. The following January they performed *A Crack in the Noise* at Cornish. In June, they performed in two works by Veronica Lee Baik for the Seattle International Dance Festival at Broadway Performance Hall.

Real Artists, an award-winning short film by **Cameo Wood '08**, is on track to play at more than 100 film festivals this year. Cameo is writing and developing a feature film called *The Atavist*, which will be shot this year in Pittsfield, MA, her hometown.

In January, **Amy Bernstein '09** was sworn in as a deputy attorney general with the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General, where she completed her first Field Work Term and

numerous internships after graduation. She will continue her focus on family law matters by representing the Division of Child Protection and Permanency in its termination of parental rights proceedings.

Hannah Wolfe '09 published her paper "Singing Robots: How Embodiment Affects Emotional Responses to Non-linguistic Utterances," in *IEEE Transactions on Affective Computing*.

10s

This summer, *Where All Good Rabbits Go*, a play by **Karina Cochran '10** will have its East Coast premiere at Thrown Stone Theatre in Ridgefield, CT.

Stevie Feliciano '12 obtained her MSLIS from Pratt Institute. She recently accepted a Senior Children's Librarian position at the New York Public Library.

Catherine Weingarten '13 got her MFA in playwriting from Ohio University and now lives in NYC. Her play, *A Roller Rink Temptation*, which was developed at Bennington, was produced in May with the Dare Tactic.

Julia Barstow '16 writes: "Breakfast Club held its second summit in August. Twenty-three current and former students participated in 11 virtual workshops. In-person gatherings were hosted in Bennington, VT, and Portland, OR. We reconnected, shared current work, and helped each other into action. Topics included queer representation in film, collective college debt reduction, knitting and crocheting, meditation, self-curation, and the future of Breakfast Club. Attendees included **Celene Barrera '15**, **Julia Barstow '16**, **Lauren Brady**, **Alana Cooper '15**, **Alison Dennis '94**, **Rivvy Eisenberg '16**, **Jesse Gates '16**, **Laura "Maggie" Ammons '15**, **Clea Howard '16**, **Adityajit Kang '19**, **Oona Kilcommons '16**,



RECENT RELEASES

Rima Faber '65, co-authored with Sandra Mintonco, *Thinking with the Dancing Brain*.

Anne Waldman '66's new book of interwoven poems of crossroads and protest, *Trickster Feminism* will be published by Penguin this June. It is her sixth book with Penguin.

Jim Bloom '72 published a new book, *Reading the Male Gaze in Literature and Culture: Studies in Erotic Epistemology*.

Betsy Robinson '73, along with Dawn Baumann Brunke, has published *The Practice: Dee and Bea's Quick & Easy Guide to Enlightenment*. It is available on Kindle.

Gordon Robert Abrams '80 released his novel, *Charon's Ferry*, in March.

In 2015, **Megan Chaskey '80** published a book, *Birdsong Under the Wisdom Tree*, a collection of poems, journal entries, and sections of memoir.

Florian Louisoder '82 released his new novel, *Shock Wave*, a fantasy action-adventure story, last August.

Jill Eisenstadt '85 published her third novel, *Swell*, in June 2017 by Little Brown and Co., along with a re-issue of her first book, *From Rockaway*. *Swell* came out in paperback in June 2018.

In November, *Sign of the Apocalypse* by **John Getchell '86**, was published through Skyhorse Publishing.

Gioia Chilton '89 recently published a book, co-authored with Rebecca Wilkinson, *Positive Art Therapy Theory and Practice: Integrating Positive Psychology with Art Therapy*.

The Optimum Imperative: Czech Architecture for the Socialist Lifestyle, 1938-1968 by **Ana Miljački '95** was published by Routledge in November.

Becky Strohmer '03 has co-authored a philosophy book, *Friendly Philosophies*, with a close friend. It was released in February.

Leslie McGrath MFA '05 published her third poetry collection, *Feminists Are Passing from Our Lives*, in April by The Word Works.

In August, **Sandra Worsham '06** published her memoir titled *Going to Wings* through Third Lung Press.



CORRECTION: *Botticelli's Muse*, by Dorah Blume (**Deborah Rubin Bluestein '65**), was selected as one of Artnet's 15 best summer reads, not as the Best Book of 2017. It was released by Juiceboxartists not The New Press, as we incorrectly printed in the last issue. We apologize for this error.

THOUSANDS TENS OF THOUSANDS

Christopher Larsen '16, John Lawson '15, Erika Lygren '16, Jordan Macintosh-Hougham '16, Sylvia Madaras '16, Abby Mahler '16, Marshall McGraw '18, Liam McRae '18, Abby Morical '16, Lindsey Sadlou '16, Karen Trop '16, and Brendon Walter '16. Breakfast Club is always seeking new talent (yellowdining-room@gmail.com)."

Angie Holiday Williams-Van Steenberg '17 is "doing well and has returned to Cuba," according to her father, Timothy B. Williams.

Lulwama Mulalu '18 is a self-described "panicked senior." But, this winter, she accomplished a storytelling night at the LGBTQ+ center in NYC and was excited to learn that "life works out in weird ways."

MFAS

Emilie C. Harting MFA '97 is writing travel articles in major publications.

Gail Hosking MFA '97 had three essays published: "Re-visit" (*Buffalo News*, fall 2017), "A Conversation on Leaving the University" (*Assay Journal*, fall 2017), and "Distinguished Member of the Regiment" (*Waxwing*, June 2018). Gail also has poems in *Anchor Magazine* (fall 2017) and *Stone Canoe* (spring 2018). She is featured in *Nothing Short of 100*, an anthology made up entirely of 100-word stories, which was released in April.

The Keepers of the Ghost Bird, an essay by **Jenn Dean MFA '01**, has been published by Mass Review's Working Titles series as an Amazon ebook. The essay will also be anthologized in *Trailhead, Literature for the Backcountry* (Lime-Hawk Press). It was a 2016 finalist in the *New Millennium Writings* Literary Awards.

"Tending to the Rituals of My Lost and Found Father," an essay by **Andrea Jarrell MFA '01** appeared in *The New York Times* in September. She has forthcoming essays in

LitHub, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Washingtonian Magazine*.

In March, **Keith Thompson MFA '03, Brendan McCall MFA '03, and Kryssy Wright '03** met in Tokyo, Japan to perform, *A Piece of Hamlet Machine* with Keith's company DanceTactics at TokyoX.

Eva Karczag MFA '04, a former member of the Trisha Brown Dance Company (1979–1985), is now a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. She continues to perform solo and collaborative work internationally.

Leslie McGrath MFA '05 teaches creative writing at Central Connecticut State University and is the series editor of *The Tenth Gate*, an imprint featuring the work of mid-career poets. It is inspired by the career of former MFA in Writing faculty member, Jane Hirshfield.

Gariot P. Louima MFA '10 was named dean of admissions and external relations of Antioch College. He was previously dean of enrollment at Goddard College.

An essay by **Michelle Oppenheimer MFA '13**, "Kintsugi, or Golden Joinery," was published on *The Manifest-Station* in December 2017.

Italian rights to **Joanne Proulx MFA '14** award-winning debut novel *Anthem of a Reluctant Prophet* sold to Fanucci Editore. Russian rights sold to Palmyra Publishers. A film adaptation of the novel starring Juliette Lewis, Cameron Monaghan, and Peyton List is forthcoming from Sepia Films this year.

Jamie Zvirzdin MFA '15 teaches in the Master of Arts science writing program at Johns Hopkins University. Her essay "Shuddering Before the Beautiful: Trains of Thought Across the Mormon Cosmos" won the \$5,000 prize in a collaborative Science & Religion issue published by both *Creative Nonfiction Magazine* and *Issues in Science & Technology*.

Jessica Danger MFA '16 has published several feature pieces on women in sports. She recently sold her first long-form essay, donating the payment to Bennington.

keep us posted

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You can submit your Class Note in one of three ways:

1. by email to classnotes@bennington.edu or magazine@bennington.edu
2. online at bennington.edu (click on "Alumni & Families," "Connect," then "Share Your News")
3. by mail to the Office of Institutional Advancement, Bennington College, One College Drive, Bennington, VT 05201-6003

Please note: Due to space constraints, *Bennington* reserves the right to edit and condense Class Note submissions. **B**

While every effort has been made to include class notes submitted on time for this issue, we apologize for any omissions. Please inform the Office of Institutional Advancement (800-598-2979) if we have omitted your class note in error. Thank you.



HUDAS SCHWARTZ LIFF '47, P '77

One of Bennington College's foremost alumni leaders, Hudas Schwartz Liff '47, died February 20, 2018 at the age of 92. She is remembered as a lifelong standard-bearer for the College, the most successful chair in the history of the College's Alumni Association, and a devoted trustee who offered sage guidance to the College and the alumni community. In 1985, the College established the Hudas Schwartz Liff Award, one of Bennington's few named awards, to recognize alumni who have volunteered their time and efforts in outstanding ways.

Upon Hudas's passing, President Mariko Silver said, "We are hard-pressed to name a more devoted champion of the College or a more influential voice of wisdom on all things Bennington than Hudas Schwartz Liff. Her passing is a great loss to our entire community and we are humbled by the opportunity to reflect upon her immense contribution. She was a singular force in the College's history."

Hudas entered Bennington in 1943 and concentrated her studies on social science. She said that one of the highlights of her College career were the two years she worked with renowned social psychologist and faculty member Erich Fromm. Hudas also met Martha Hill at Bennington College when she took dance at the suggestion of her counselor. The two women became close friends and went on to represent Bennington together at various functions in New York City in the 1980s. Hudas later co-founded the Martha Hill Dance Fund in 2000, served as treasurer from 2000 to 2003, president from 2004 to 2008, vice president from 2009 to 2014, and remained involved with the organization in an emeritus role until her death. Hudas also served as president of Suffolk County Planned Parenthood in the 1970's and received a Margaret Sanger award for her work there.

Hudas served as a trustee from 1980 to 1996, chair of the Bennington College Alumni Association from 1984 to 1988, and chair of the Annual Fund from 1989 to 1994. Hudas's love of the College was infectious; every conversation with her strengthened a belief of the unique value of a Bennington education, and she inspired generations of alumni to maintain their ties to the College and to continue to contribute to its success in ways financial and not. She brought fundraising to record highs during her tenure as Alumni Association chair and, in 1997, she received the Hudas Schwartz Liff Award that was established in her honor. Her decades of support for the College continues, even today, as she remembered Bennington in her plans as a member of the the Silo Legacy Society.

Remarks and memories from the Bennington community poured in after her death. Senior Vice President for Strategic Partnerships Paige Bartels said, "There are so many people who looked up to Hudas. She was fiercely committed to what was best for Bennington and she devoted a significant portion of her life to the College in terms of her time, thought leadership, and philanthropy. Bennington was in her marrow."

Vice Chair of the Bennington College Board of Trustees Nick Stephens '77 said, "Hudas was never shy with her passionate opinions about Bennington; her fierce belief in the College never wavered. She had a keen eye about what mattered, an amazing sense of humor, and the remarkable ability to convince everyone and anyone she encountered that Bennington mattered. Generations of alumni, fellow Board members, and staff looked to Hudas for her counsel and experience. They have fond and lasting memories of her strength and spirit. She will truly be missed."

Hudas was predeceased by her husband, Julius. She is survived by her children, Bradford Kirkman-Liff (Tracy Kirkman Liff), Wendy Liff '77 (Christopher Flynn), Janet Liff, and her grandchildren Julia, Emma, and Jessamyn.



KAY CRAWFORD MURRAY '56

As one of Bennington College's most distinguished alumni in the legal profession, Kay Crawford Murray '56 is lovingly remembered for her leadership as a trailblazing attorney who advanced social justice, particularly for children and families involved in New York City's juvenile justice system. She died peacefully at home on January 13, 2018 at the age of 83.

Among her many awards and accomplishments, Kay received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice, where she served as General Counsel for 23 years. For her tireless advancement of the legal careers of African American women, the Committee on Women in the Law of the New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) created the Kay Crawford Murray Award in her honor and made her the first recipient. She also received the 1989 William Nelson Cromwell Medal and the 2002 Edith I. Spivack Award from the New York County Lawyers Association; the Howard A. Levine Award for Excellence in Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare from the NYSBA in 1997; the Servant of Justice Award from the Episcopal Diocese of New York in 2000; the Kathryn A. MacDonald Award for Excellence in Service to the Family Court in 2003; and the Outstanding Achievement Award from the New York Fellows of the American Bar Foundation in 2005.

Kay was one of the first African American students at Bennington, where she pursued her interest in psychology and graduated in 1956. She then went on to earn a master's in psychology from Columbia University Teachers College and then her JD from Columbia University School of Law in 1976. After law school, Kay worked as a litigation associate at Shearman & Sterling. She became General Counsel to the New York City Department of Juvenile Justice when the agency formed in 1979. She held the position until her retirement in 2002.

Kay married Archibald R. Murray, the first black president of the New York State Bar Association and the longtime head of the Legal Aid Society. Kay and Archibald worked side-by-side in their respective careers to raise the percentage of minority lawyers in New York State and to improve access to high-quality legal representation for indigent people with cases in juvenile, family, or criminal courts. Archibald died in 2001.

Throughout their lives, Kay and Archibald always gave back to the institutions that were so important to them—including Bennington College. In her 50th Reunion book, Kay wrote, "After my mother and my husband, Bennington had the greatest impact on my intellectual, social, and emotional development. I feel greatly indebted to Bennington for the experience and opportunities it afforded me."

Kay served on the Board of Trustees for Bennington from 1970 to 1977 and is remembered as one of the College's most devoted volunteers. She received the Hudas Schwartz Liff '47 Award in 1986 and was a member of the 2010 Class Reunion Committee, the 75th Anniversary Host Committee, and the Elizabeth J. Franklin Associates Society Committee. A member of the Silo Legacy Society, Kay also generously remembered the College in her estate, extending her legacy as a dedicated lead donor to the College.



POLLY RUNYON '74

Polly Runyon was well known in the Bennington College community as a passionate advocate of the arts and education and an accomplished fundraiser for Bennington College. She died at her home in Manhattan on November 22, 2017 from Alzheimer's disease. She was 65 years old.

During her long career in public service, Polly worked for the College in the office of admissions and later for the Office of Institutional Advancement as the director of the 21st Century Fund. She also directed development programs for WNYC, the New York Public Library's Performing Arts Research Center, and The Big Apple Circus. Polly was an accomplished flutist and singer, an avid reader, a generous colleague, and a loyal friend. She served the College as a devoted alum, through thick and thin, steadfast and principled.

While a student at Bennington, Polly pursued her love of music and formed lifelong friendships with her classmates, especially Chris Pozerycki '75 and Anno Radow Ballard '74, and her beloved literature teacher, Jo Carson Rider. Polly generously supported the College throughout her life as a loyal donor and a member of the Silo Legacy Society, in addition to volunteering as a class agent and a Host Committee member for Bennington's 75th Anniversary.

Polly is survived by her husband, Thomas Wittrock, her son, John Wittrock, and her daughter, Lily Wittrock.

SIGNA LYNCH READ '79

Signa Lynch Read—one of the first female stockbrokers on Wall Street—died at her home in East Dorset, VT, on February 21, 2018. She was 87.

Born in 1930, Signa was the daughter of Edmund C. Lynch, co-founder of Merrill Lynch, and Signa Fornaris. She attended Sarah Lawrence College for two years and then married Alexander D. "Sandy" Read. In 1957, Signa became the first female stockbroker at Clark Dodge & Co., an old-line Wall Street brokerage house.

She later moved with her husband in the 1960s to a farm in Vermont where they raised prized Hampshire sheep, horses, and a menagerie of lovingly cared for animals. She entered Bennington College in 1976, at the age of 46. Upon graduation, Signa founded Three Meadows Riders, a horseback-riding center for people with disabilities—one of the country's first equine-assisted therapy programs. She continued to blaze an entrepreneurial trail throughout her life, pursuing an incredible array of interests and endeavors that included dog-agility training, real estate, activewear imports, wealth management, and public service.

Signa was a Bennington College trustee from 1981 to 1985, which included a role on the Recent Graduates Committee. As an active philanthropist, she generously supported the College and its students for decades by way of her own giving, as well as her time in raising gifts from many Bennington alumni. Through Signa's estate plans, the bookstore, to be housed in the renovated Commons, will



be renamed the Signa Lynch Read '79 Bookstore in her honor. Signa also supported various causes in animal rights, child and family welfare, the arts, and environmental conservation.

Signa and Sandy remarried in 2007, 20 years after their divorce, and shared two happy years together before Sandy's death in 2009. She is survived by her daughter Susan Read Cronin (Edward W. Cronin) of Montecito, CA and her son Stewart W. Read (Dorothy Grover Read, Bennington '99) of Bellows Falls, VT, as well as four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

R. ARNOLD RICKS III, RETIRED FACULTY MEMBER

Retired faculty member R. Arnold Ricks III died at his home in Bennington, VT, on February 24, 2018. He was 94.

Arnold was a lifelong Quaker and served as a conscientious objector in the Civilian Public Service. From 1941 to 1943, he served in a firefighting and reforestation unit in the wilderness region of Oregon, and participated as a subject in experiments with hepatitis, which he contracted. In 1945, he joined the British-American relief work team in the rebuilding of Cologne, Germany, which included the construction of a children's center. Fifty years later, the mayor of Cologne, one of the children who benefitted from their work, led a celebration in honor of Arnold and the other surviving team members.

Arnold graduated Phi Beta Kappa in philosophy from Haverford College in 1948. Following his graduate study in European history at Harvard University (A.M. 1954), he taught history at Swarthmore College before joining the Bennington College faculty from 1964 to 1992, and for two years of that time, served as Dean of Studies. As a beloved teacher, he spoke of "classes as an assault on the unknown, and the imperfectly known."

In 1972, Arnold married Pat Adams, a painter and faculty colleague at Bennington. In 1973, on a four-month sabbatical, they traveled through Europe and the Middle East with stepsons Matthew and Jason. In June of that year, the family became residents of Old Bennington.

Beginning the following year, and for the next 40 years, Arnold served the community as a trustee of the Village of Old Bennington and as Road Commissioner. He oversaw the design and reconstruction of Monument Avenue, the village road leading to the Bennington Battle Monument. As a trustee of the Bennington Museum from 1995 to 2015, Arnold helped initiate a period of growth and revitalization for the museum. In 2013, the museum created the Hiland Hall Award to recognize Arnold's service to the museum and the Bennington community.

Arnold is survived by his wife Pat Adams, stepsons Matthew A. Longo of Cambridge, MA, and Jason R. Longo of Duxbury, VT; his niece Francie Ricks of La Crosse, WI; and his three grandsons Nicholas, Oliver, and William.

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We honor the memory of those who have died and regret that space restrictions do not allow the publication of full obituaries. This list contains the names of deceased Bennington College alumni and community members for whom the College was notified as of March 26, 2018. If you would like more information, please contact us at alumnirelations@bennington.edu

ALUMNI

The Bennington community extends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the following alumni.

Nancy Gottfried Bundgus '37
February 5, 2018

Florence Bateson Berry '38, P '73
January 9, 2018

Emmalie Wright Millard '44
February 19, 2018

Holly Appel Silverthorne '45
February 21, 2018

Flora Bond Hollinger '45
January 28, 2018

Katharine Sawtell Plimpton '46, P '73, G '07
February 12, 2018

Jane Hopper Ware '47
January 27, 2018

Ruth Lyons Marshak '48
October 28, 2017

Jane Stewart Young '50
February 21, 2018

Mary Hunter Logan '51
February 23, 2018

Barbara Overlock Mahler '52
February 16, 2018

Joseph I. Schaaf '53
November 26, 2017

Elaine Bland Whiting '56
November 17, 2017

Abigail Morgan Lawton '58
February 13, 2018

Marilyn Brooke Goffstein '62
December 20, 2017

Susan LeRoy Merrill '64
October 24, 2017

Novelene Yatsko Walters '66
February 17, 2018

Jocelyn Bloomfield Rose '70
January 2, 2018

Sarah Bailey Hackworth '71
October 21, 2017

Leslie H. Lowe '73
November 1, 2017

Rebecca Fiske '80
January 3, 2018

Barbara A. Henry '85, P '87, '91
December 31, 2017

Mary Louise Willey MFA-W '99
October 28, 2017

Andrea Lull Diehl MFA-W '00, former faculty and staff
November 8, 2017

Margaret Barnes MFA-W '03
December 5, 2017

Jason F. Perkins '03
November 12, 2017

FACULTY, STAFF, TRUSTEES, PARENTS, AND FRIENDS

The College is sad to learn of the deaths of the following parents, friends, faculty, staff, and trustees.

Ryan Lane, former staff
January 5, 2018

John Forbes, former faculty
January 19, 2018

Lucia Brock-Broido, former faculty
March 6, 2018

Pamela Addison, friend
November 27, 2017

Ronald Katsky P '91
November 20, 2017

Laura Nowak P '55, P '70, G '85, former faculty and staff
January 5, 2018

JUST RECEIVED

We acknowledge the passing of the following alumni and members of the Bennington College community of which we were only recently notified.

Katherine Smith Livingston '38, P '65
October 6, 2017

Elizabeth Johnson Stickney '49
April 6, 2017

Elisabeth Smith Waltz '50
October 4, 2017

Joan Simons Constantikes-Agnew '56
October 5, 2017

Honora Fergusson Neumann '58
July 1, 2012

Pat Sloan-Jones '58
December 14, 2012

Laurie Vance Adams '60
June 23, 2017

Susan Whitacre Ward '62
May 10, 2017

Julia Agee Bollinger '68
October 1, 2016

Kate Morgan Reiss '68
March 1, 2016

Valerie Van Winkle '68
September 30, 2002

Sharon Elliott Fuller '78
June 14, 2017

Christopher Bacher '81
November 24, 2015

Francis Golffing, former faculty
January 9, 2012

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
SHOP ORDER

Date 6/25/46
Mr. Rebeck

Please have the following work done for the.....
Division by Rebeck

What did you do
with Mrs. Smith
Refrigerator. It is
off now and full
of food.

Work completed Rebeck

Vac in McCullough
needs fixing.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
SERVICE ORDER

No. 732 S Date June 3, 1946

SUPERINTENDENT: Please have the following work done for
President's Office Division by June 15th Date

DESCRIPTION

Repair buzzer that rings in office of
Secretary to the President.

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
SERVICE ORDER

No. 781 S Date June

SUPERINTENDENT: Please have the following work done for
..... Division by Date

DESCRIPTION

Flat iron in Kilpatrick
is out of order

Work completed Rebeck
Date 6/25/46
Superintendent Rebeck
Date 6/25/46

BENNINGTON COLLEGE
SHOP ORDER

No. 859 Date 6/25/46

Work Order No. Rebeck
Mr. Rebeck

Please have the following work done for the.....
Division by

Will you check the
Barn Corridor where
pictures are displayed to
see if large bulb
can be used or not
without causing trouble
if so will you put it
in while display is there

Date 6/25/46

Members of the Buildings & Grounds team discovered old work orders in the walls of Commons. They read, from top to bottom, left to right: "What did you do with Mrs. Smith refrigerator. It is off now and full of food;" "Vac in McCullough needs fixing;" "Repair buzzer that rings in office of Secretary of President;" "Flat iron in Kilpatrick is out of order;" "Will you check the Barn corridor where pictures are displayed to see if layer ... can be used or not without causing trouble. If so will you put them in while display is there."



BENNINGTON COLLEGE

One College Drive
Bennington, Vermont 05201-6003

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

