

The New Paper

May, 1977

Bennington College

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Bennington Group Arrested at Seabrook



Photo by Nate Williams

By NATE WILLIAMS

Our involvement in the largest anti-nuclear power plant demonstration in the United States became a reality Saturday afternoon as we joined with fellow occupiers on Public Service Company (PSC) land. By Saturday evening, 2,000 people had established camp in a parking lot just outside the fenced in construction site. The world watched through the eyes of the local and national media. It had been a tiring march from our staging area and we wondered to ourselves what effect all our training, planning and dedication would have on the days ahead.

The occupation had been carefully designed by the Clamshell Alliance. Occupiers were organized into affinity groups, the size ranging from five to twenty people. Each group had a medic, two peace keepers and a spokes-person.

"Spokes" from each group met to make decisions based on the opinions held in the affinity groups. The Bennington, Vermont Affinity Group, formed two weeks before the occupation, consisted of, Anita Stephen, Valerie Storfer, Lauren Sargent, Jim Howell, Doug LeBrun, Philip Scott, Sarah Keyishian, Robyn Bowie, Margot Perron, Odin Brudie, Nate Williams and Southern Vermont College students, Allen Margerum and Richard Frank. Philip and Doug were our support people remaining outside the occupation.

After a hearty breakfast at the Blue Benn Diner, we set off for New Hampshire in good spirits. We arrived in Newton where we joined other groups from Connecticut, Vermont and New Hampshire. Volunteered trucks transported people to some land to the south and contiguous with the PSC land. This property was donated

by an elderly couple as a staging area for the occupation. We referred to the area as "south friendly." Contingents in the east, north and west would be marching on the site the next day.

The State Police helicopter was continually flying overhead while last minute strategy and organization was taking place on the ground. Rumors passed through the group concerning the number of police and the possibility of "provoketeers." The latter rumor was a serious concern, for violence threatened the goals and success of the demonstration.

The peace keepers from each group met to develop a security system and means of dealing with "provoketeers." The "spokes" met to discuss numbers, schedules, and logistics. Scouting reports from the field and aerial photographs were analyzed to determine the best approach to the site. The evening wore on as affinity groups sat in circles or tried to sleep.

At 10:00 p.m., an emergency "spokes meeting" was called. After fighting all day in the courts, lawyers had been able to reduce the number of acres that came under a court injunction. As long as we did not go on to the actual construction site or block the main access road, we would not be in contempt of court. Plans were revised so the southern contingent was in for a long walk the next day.

"Fire! Everybody stay calm. We need help out front!" were the cries heard at two in the morning. Three had been set at opposite ends of the camp but all were successfully put out. Were they set by teenagers or "provoketeers?" Unease swept through the camp. Our affinity group held hands and tried to calm each other. Concern raced through our minds. Was this the first of similar events? Watches were established, Vermont taking the first two hour watch. We listened closely to the

woods, hoping nothing more would happen.

We ate breakfast together and talked of the excitement and lack of sleep the night before. We sat in a circle holding hands and sharing the bond of our friendship. Some affinity groups had worked together for months, developing elaborate songs, games and established relationships. For the first time we had the opportunity to express the feelings we had for each other. We grew much stronger as a group that morning.

After a series of group meetings, the 182 members of the southern approach met together. We sang some spirited songs and went on to discuss procedure in the event of tear gas, the route of our march, discipline while marching, what to do if a "provoketeer" was exposed and last minute legal questions.

We began our approach at 1:00 Saturday afternoon with the good wishes of our hosts. "If it weren't for us poor people, they wouldn't be millionaires. God be with you."

As many as five helicopters flew over our heads with reporters and police observing our advance. The march was stop and go and tedious. It took us two hours to travel a little over a mile. The fenced in area was finally reached. State Police from Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island (Massachusetts would not send any police) stood in groups of three inside the fence. We passed by them silently in single file. Undoubtedly, we both wondered what the other was going to do in the days to come. We marched on until we met the group from the east.

The eastern contingent had been ferried across a bay by boat and had continued on over a marsh. As we stood at the top of a hill, they marched toward us, accompanied by the proud and majestic

Continued on Page 2

Murphy speaks in three-hour session

By COLM DOBBYN

On Tuesday, May 3rd, President Murphy answered questions prepared by student council in a three hour session which took place in the new dining room. Somewhat less than 100 people attended this informal community meeting which included some faculty members in the audience.

The questions, which were originally submitted by Stephen Court before changes were made by suggestions submitted to the student council from the student body, were broken down into six categories. After answering questions from each category, Murphy responded to additional inquiries from the audience. Bill Hendler, President of the Student Council, acted as moderator.

In response to the introductory category, which was concerned with the President's function within the ad-

ministration, Murphy pointed to three important goals — raising "money, money, and money." Aside from this considerable task he noted "academic leadership" in encouraging the faculty to maintain the highest standards possible, as another primary function.

Under the category of "Educational Policy," quite a range of topics was covered. The question dealing with the possible elimination of components of certain divisions was worded in such a way that it also touched upon the question of the Trustee's role in this matter. Murphy refused to commit himself in answering, and gave the impression that the Trustee's are giving him a "free rein." He did not specify any contemplated changes.

On a question about NRT, Murphy skirted the issue. While admitting that some students had had problems with the current system he stressed the "historical

significance" of the program and that it should not be radically altered without prior careful contemplation.

With regard to the "Pearson Plan" Murphy compared it to the present calendar plan at Antioch and stated that that college's social cohesiveness had suffered as a result of the current set-up. In addition, he questioned whether Bennington would be able to attract the students need to enlarge the total enrollment to 900, in an era marked by declining applications on a nationwide level.

A more concrete answer was elicited from the President on the issue of the "plans" system. He pointed to the unnecessary anxiety that the current system produces in students and that it also fosters a fear of experimentation. Murphy further noted the politics inherent in such

Continued on Page 2



Photo by Alex Brown

JOE MURPHY

Capital Campaign Fund: A Question of Credibility

By KEVIN COMMINS

The Capital Campaign for Bennington College is an attempt to overcome Bennington's present financial problems. The document explains that inflationary pressures (chiefly the dramatic increase in fuel costs) coupled with the yearly debt of \$326,000 for The Arts Center has forced the college to draw on its endowment to balance the budget. They want to raise \$8.9 million — a figure arrived at by a consultant — by soliciting friends, trustees, and alumni.

The case for the college is argued with vehement abstraction which tends less to example than hyperbole. It is understandable that the administration would want to paint the best possible picture of Bennington. They have to convince people that their money will be spent on noble purposes. But in so doing they tend to confuse the ideal and the actual. I don't doubt that Bennington is an exceptional school and that students and faculty are seriously committed to their respective endeavors. However, the pomposity of statements like, "The sense of major work being done, of important conversations taking place, of intellectual passion and devotion to ideas, is everywhere," brings into question the integrity of the authors. They ought to tone down the language if they want to maintain credibility.

If the advertising proves successful and the \$8.9 million is raised here is how they plan to spend it.

Endowment for Faculty Salaries	\$2,400,000
Operating Needs	\$1,700,000
Endowment for Scholarships	\$1,000,000
The Arts Center	\$1,000,000
The Library	\$1,000,000
Plant Improvement and Maintenance	\$700,000
Unrestricted Endowment	\$600,000
Debt Retirement	\$500,000

The \$1.7 million for operating needs is for the projected spending deficit of the next three years. To balance the budget and to pay off Bennington Summers the

college has had to dip into its rather paltry endowment of \$4.2 million. Despite whatever money is raised over the next three years a substantial portion will not accumulate interest but will have to be spent immediately. Thus the college is in dire need of spendable capital. If enough cash is not forthcoming we'll see a deterioration of educational standards.

The long range financial goal of the college is to raise its endowment. The interest earned from the endowment is spent but the endowment itself is a sum of money which remains untouched. The campaign calls for a \$4 million increase in endowment of which \$600,000 could be used for any purpose.

Bennington has yet to explore all the sources of money available. In the past, according to Rebecca Stickney, fund-raisers were not aggressive enough. The college can no longer afford to be hesitant in this matter. Though it may be faulty in presentation, the Capital Campaign document demonstrates a commitment to fund-raising that was not evidenced in the past.

Continued from Page 1

music of a bag pipe. The peaceful troops combined, rested, and moved on.

The new numbers revived our spirits though we were hot and tired. Our hike had completely circumnavigated the fence. In the distance we could see the group from the north approaching over the marsh. The next sequence of events were probably the most awesome of all. With the group from the north right on our heels, we marched past construction materials and throngs of reporters up to the parking lot where the group from the west had already arrived.

We were met by a sea of people, all cheering, celebrating and congratulating our arrival. Within a half hour, there were 2,000 of us on the PCS land — the occupation had begun.

experiencing, what can be said?

A teacher can only offer the exercises, set the rules. Only you, Jan, can be your own inspiration, the organizer of your own experiences, the motivator of your own goals. It is apparent that your article was written from an understandably ignorant point of view. We believe that if you go back to Mr. Sills' class, give yourself some time and experience what you can, you will someday come to a subjective understanding of the improvisation and not need to write the kind of article we saw in the New Paper. An article that, ergo, makes all B.C. students seem average. An article that can discourage fine teachers like Mr. Sills and others of his distinction from someday returning to our school.

Sincerely,

Jill Wisoff
Ellen Maxted
Paul Zimmerman
Nancy Bolnick
Nicole Connolly
Paul Lazar
Heidi Stonier
Peter Scott Delano
Alex Foster
Josh Broder
Tim Daily
Robin Schram
Miranda H. Schooley

Murphy...

Continued from Page 1

a system and suggested that a committee of three, not necessarily from the student's own division, be instituted as an alternative. On grades Murphy commented that the college should be more flexible and give students the option of choosing either letter grades or comments if they so desire. However, he does not feel that the present evaluation system will threaten student's chances of getting into graduate schools and the current practice of presenting schools with a virtual "biography" of the applicant was perhaps just as effective, if not more so, than grades.

The question session following the section on educational policy was marked by a long exchange between Murphy and philosophy teacher Steven Harris who remarked on the "disconnectedness" of the meeting. He went further to say that while he did not blame Murphy for this problem, he complained about the lack of a proper forum for the testing of particular issues in which participants would actually discuss those matters of import. Harris suggested as one alternative to open the faculty meetings to students. Later, Harris criticized the poor study conditions in the library and said that money should be spent on small details such as carpets and softer lighting which would make the library a more pleasant place in which to work. Murphy was taken aback by this

suggestion commenting that the money should be spent on books. However, he did say that he would take Harris' suggestion into serious consideration.

In the last part of the meeting Murphy was confronted by the question of whether he had plans to alter the size of the student body. Murphy made it clear that he could not do this even if he wanted to as that type of decision is under the jurisdiction of the Trustees. One other question dealt with the possibility of an over-registration of students in a division in which one of the teachers takes a leave of absence. This brought up the question of how vacant faculty slots would be filled and Murphy replied that vacancies should be filled after determining the number of students registered in a particular division.

Finally, the President was requested to comment on the article which appeared in the Village Voice a few months ago in which he was accused of making a morally questionable deal with the Shah of Iran. Murphy said that the affair was an embarrassment to him and that his intentions were good in that he was trying to create jobs. At the close of the meeting, Murphy and Harris came to an agreement on the matter of the "decline of western civilization." Harris asked of Murphy, "Do you think that it is a good thing?" Murphy replied, "That's like asking whether Detroit is significant. It's just there."

Seabrook

Temporary Community

The numbers may have been less than Woodstocks or sports events but we had all trained and planned for this moment. We were not there to listen or to watch but to be heard. As cameras clicked, tents went up and singing began. Occupiers went over to the fence to converse with the State Police and the spirit of a new settlement filled the air.

Our affinity group acclimatized to the new home, ate dinner and massaged sore shoulders. After dinner we played guitar and read from the play, "Waiting for Godot," (an appropriate play at the time). Desiring as much publicity as possible, we collected press releases from each group. Our statement emphasized the danger inherent in man's ability to manipulate his environment.

Security became a problem as night fell, for drunks began to wonder in off the street to crash what they thought was a huge party. The peace keepers took shifts policing the camp site. Most slept well after the long day. The uncertainties that lay ahead were many.

1414 Arrested

The atmosphere Sunday morning was a bit apprehensive. The new community had its own medical facilities, a security

system and its own government, but how long would they last?

Throughout the day, activity increased in the ranks of National Guard and police. Occupiers attempted to ignore the inevitable but a press conference with the colonel of the State Police and the governor made our situation clear — we were going to be arrested.

At 3:09 p.m. Colonel Paul Doyon of the New Hampshire State Police announced that we had one half hour to leave the site. If we did not, we would be in violation of various sections and paragraphs of the law or in short, criminal trespass. People responded to the announcement with cries of, NO NUKES! Some left along with the press who were also ordered off the site. Arrests began at 3:30 but with the exception of one of us, it would be a long time before we left the site.

While three of us were taking pictures, Richard was caught unaware by two troopers and arrested without any of his personal belongings. That was the last we saw of him for some time — days.

We moved closer to the buses, hoping that we would be able to catch up with Richard but they continued to load and leave without us. Finally, at 9:15 Allen was

Continued on Page 3

A Reply:

Sills Defended

Dear Editor:

We wish to publicly repudiate Jan Hadwen's article on Paul Sills that recently appeared in the New Paper.

It is not only an honor to the Drama Department that Mr. Sills is teaching here, it is an honor to the entire Bennington College community. His wealth of experience is a valuable resource that does not isolate him from students, but rather is drawn upon to create stimulating classes. We, can personally attest to his assiduity as a teacher of dramatic improvisation; he relentlessly challenges us to deal with problems to the best of our personal capabilities.

To the actor, improvisation is somewhat analogous to the scales the pianist practices. To the improvisational actor, the improvisation is an end unto itself. To both types of actor, improvisation is experientially fecund in that it stretches the individual's creative sensibilities.

To say someone reaches perfection when warming up or practicing scales is hogwash. Perfection is something unobtainable, something just out of reach. Some people become frustrated by exercises, as we believe Jan did, and ply their teachers with questions like, "Why doesn't this sound right, or look right, or feel right?" Or, "explain it to me." If "it" means improvisation, or doing and

Correction

An article entitled "The Pearson Alternative," which appeared in the April issue of the "New Paper," contained a statement which incorrectly suggested that the Budget Committee had sponsored a proposal to relocate the college

bookstore onto Route 67A. With all due respect to the Budget Committee this was not their idea at all but the brainchild of the author of that article — Mr. Peter Pochna. Our sincerest apologies are extended to both parties.

The New Paper

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF — Amy Spound
ASSISTANT EDITOR — Nate Williams

STAFF WRITERS — Liz Shacknove, Anne Soorikian, Colm Dobbyn, Erin Quinn

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER — Karen E. Solstad

ART AND DESIGN DIRECTOR — Liz Cobbett

LAYOUT — Steve Petrica

ADVERTISING AND BUSINESS MGR. — John Holland

CONTRIBUTORS — Kevin Commins, Wayne Euster, Joe Kaufman

Occupation

Continued from Page 2

put on a truck. He waved goodbye with a big smile on his face, not knowing what he was in for. At 9:45 the remainder of the Bennington group was placed on two different buses.

My bus reached the Portsmouth armory at 10:10. The parking lot was jammed with buses and trucks full of occupiers waiting to be processed and arraigned. My bus sat for seven and a half hours before we were able to go inside. Others had to wait up to fifteen hours, some not even being allowed to get out and go to the bathroom. Of the 1,414 that were arrested, a minority were read their rights or allowed to make a telephone call. The arraignments were held in assembly line fashion and the setting of bail varied from judge to judge. For the most part, there was a good rapport between police and occupiers. Police and National Guard had been working shifts of six hours on, three hours off since Friday. It was a type of hell for us all.

Four armories were gradually filled with occupiers, our group being in three of them. In the Manchester armory we spread our sleeping bags out on the floor and gathered what medical supplies and expertise we could find while the "spokes" met to discuss the situation.

In the past occupations, people were held for a day and then released on personal recognizance. With the exception of those that had to leave, people were committed to bail solidarity. It seemed sensible that so many people would be too great a burden on the state.

The lawyers waited to obtain consensus from all the armories before taking the petition for personal recognizance to the courts on Wednesday. The majority of Tuesday was spent reaching consensus. It was fascinating to see how 691 people in the Manchester armory reached consensus through general discussion, group discussions and vote after vote. There were periods of stress, unbearable frustration and finally relief when the

decision to petition was made. The alternative to personal recognizance had been to wait until the state granted "PR" on its own, or at best, dropped the charges altogether.

Meanwhile the condition in the armories grew worse. Stress and poor diets were decreasing peoples' resistance to disease. The tight sleeping quarters facilitated the transmission of germs. It was not until Wednesday that a doctor came in to see people and cots were provided to get people off the dusty floor. The National Guard was not prepared to feed the prisoners as well as guard them. It was fortunate that people had been allowed to keep the food they had brought for the occupation. I left the armory on bail Wednesday afternoon only to find out later that "PR" had been denied in the Rockingham Superior Court.

Although people were leaving on bail, allowing more room for those that remained, disease continued to spread and "PR" was again denied in the State Supreme Court. It seemed imperative that the remainder of the Bennington group be provided with the option of leaving on bail. Bennington College provided a loan for \$1,000.00 and an additional \$236.00 was raised privately.

The occupation may have no determining effect on the construction of the Seabrook plant. Continued delays in construction due to an unapproved cooling system may ultimately make the cost of constructing the plant prohibitive for the PSC.

Those who participated may be a small minority opposing nuclear power in the state of New Hampshire. The action has, however, made nuclear power a primary issue across the nation. The successfully peaceful demonstration has interesting implications for our political, economic and technological systems. I was proud to share the dedication to commitment with the others and am thankful for their courage.

New Music

Continued from Page 8

she does not possess, a girl with a doll, a man who crawls and smiles at himself in a mirror, a woman who smokes a cigarette and rubs the ashes into her face, a man who waves his hat and throws kisses to the audience and a boy in the act of giving daisies to his lover. The characters move linearly across the stage and at varying speeds, such that the old man is both the first and last to be seen. The characters move; the cello sounds beautiful. The figures, composites of the child with the wild red hair, create an aura of emotional fecundity which would never have been realized if there were only the auditory experience of the cello. What you are seeing is not theater, but the cello's music.

There is a maxim that states nothing new is ever said in art, only that the same, age-old materials, are sometimes improved upon. In one sense this is true: there are no new emotions, so despite varying forms, art relates to that which is never-changing. The maxim is fallacious if you recognize the possibilities of affecting this pool of emotions in ways they've never before been touched. Form acts upon substance to present art in a

Live Band

Continued from Page 7

tradition that was started by Kip Perkins. Free beer will be provided for this event. After the game, Seilers will provide an outdoor picnic from 5:00 to 6:30. Then, beginning at 9 o'clock and lasting until 1 a.m., an outdoor dance concert with a live band will be performing behind Tishman. Admission will be free.

For further information contact Eileen McMahon or Joe Kaufman.

Julie Miller and Ellen Masted in Margaret Holloway's play "Facials."



Photo by Karen E. Solstad



Photo by Nate Williams

High Energy Bill, College seeks Aid

By ERIN QUINN

This year approximately \$220,000 will be spent for energy on the Bennington campus. There are many reasons for this high figure. Wasted heat, fuel costs and VAPA are some of the outstanding reasons.

When most of the buildings on this campus were built, fuel was not expensive. Thus it was cheaper not to insulate and to use single pane glass. It was possible to burn cheap fuel by the gallons and not worry about the waste. In the past five years, however, the cost of fuel oil has jumped from \$.10 to \$.32 per gallon, which adds up when the school uses 687,000 gallons per year.

Recently, I asked Bernie Iser, business manager at Bennington College, what the school was planning to do about the energy situation. His answer was, "worry." In the past year, however, the school has realized the seriousness of the problem, as costs rise every month. Since my conversation with Mr. Iser, a real change has taken place on campus.

The college has hired the Energy-Resource Management Co. of New Haven, Connecticut, who as their name suggests, are in the business of consulting institutions that want to conserve energy. At the request of Rebecca Stickney and Mr. Iser they have been reviewing the college's energy cost and consumption profiles. They have compiled figures in order to accurately assess conservation potential. At the April 21st Art and Architecture meeting, they presented the first part of their findings. Before coming to Bennington they stressed the point that they would not work with any committee unless it was composed of members representing the entire community.

At the meeting Mr. John Embersits, a member of ERM, told the committee that the college can expect to save 10 per cent to 15 per cent within the next year if it starts to conserve on a community wide basis. With additional funds spent on measures such as insulation for the old dorms and thermopane glass for VAPA the savings in the future could reach 40 per cent.

At this point the college is planning to borrow money from President Carter's new energy fund which is specifically

designated for institutions that are trying to conserve energy. With this money the college will be able to insulate all the old dorms, furnish storm windows and install thermopane glass in VAPA's north windows. There are, however, things that the college can do now without expenditure.

Currently, maintenance and ERM are experimenting with VAPA. Since VAPA opened, the fans and blowers have been running 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This winter when VAPA was open for the few students that stayed during NRT, it is estimated that it cost \$3,000.00 a day per student to keep the building running. The expenditure is not in heating the air as much as it is for circulating it. Energy-Resource has requested that maintenance now run the blowers and fans for only a few hours, four times a day. In the past few weeks a difference in cost has been recorded.

The college is also planning to install electric water heaters in VAPA. This will allow the steam lines to VAPA to be completely shut off in the summer. Their cost will be approximately \$490.00. Considering the fact it costs \$100.00 a day in fuel oil just to pump hot water from maintenance to VAPA, it is a definite saving.

Along with ERM, other groups on campus have suggestions concerning energy conservation. The solar energy group tutorial proposed to Mr. Iser that before any new structures are built on campus the college should consider alternative energy sources. Another suggestion is that they install a wood stove in the guardbooth. At present the guardbooth, which is not connected to the steamline, is heated by electricity. It would save money besides adding character and providing the atmosphere for a good poker game.

A lot needs to be accomplished in order to educate the community in regard to energy conservation. An energy committee is being formed to specifically work in conjunction with Energy-Resource Management, comprised of students, faculty, administration and maintenance. Campus support is necessary if an effective energy program is to be generated. The opportunity for saving valuable fuel and energy resources is great and thus the need for action is too great to ignore.

Bennington Scenes:

A.



All photos by Karen E. Solstad unless otherwise indicated.

A. Mary Lyman dancing (by Meyer Goldstein)

B. 'Swinging'

C. Gunnar Schonbeck conducting in the Music Workshop

D. Friday night party (by Perry Adelman)

E. Outdoors class in Spring

F. Leigh Strimbeck applies make-up for a performance

G. Vapa Scenes (opposite page)

B.



C.



D.



E.



F.



G.



Interview with Bill Kaur, the man in white

By ELIZABETH GAIL SHACKNOVE

The mysterious man in the white turban, frequently seen at Bennington College, is Bill Kaur. He is an American Sikh and he is here teaching Kundalini Yoga.

He became a Sikh two years ago when he was still in high school in Oregon. He was without a family and the Ashram Yoga family came in contact with him and suggested to him that he become part of their family.

Yogi Bhajan, from India, brought Sikhism to America. He was in the United States with a sense of mission to share Indian ideas of humanity. American Sikhs differ from Indian Sikhs as Indian Sikhs have traditionally been warriors. Yogi Bhajan suggested the Sikh way of life for Americans as an alternative to their disillusionment with interpersonal commitments, American war practices, and unhealthy diets. This includes a lifestyle that prohibits eggs and meat in the diet. American Sikhs allow their hair and beard to grow long. They wear white clothing and a white turban. They believe marriage is the forum in which to express sexuality and to have children. Drugs, smoking and drinking are not allowed.

Meditation is also a large part of the Sikh lifestyle. Bill Kaur believes that all forms of meditation are very good. Empathy, vision and meditation are ways that one can understand the nature of life in the world. After spending two years with the Ashram Yoga family, learning the yogic lifestyle he earned a certificate attesting



Bill Kaur illustrating Yoga technique.

to his ability to teach Kundalini Yoga.

Kundalini refers to "one person". The yoga includes a discipline of meditation and exercise with immediate results in improving physical health. One must be careful with respect to the spinal column and stretchable muscles not to cause damage. Bill Kaur says it is very important that only a knowledgeable person instruct this form of yoga.

The way of the Sikh is to see God in everything, and his lifestyle is a living testimonial to God. God is a part of being and community life every day. God refers to everything, the all, the energy of the whole universe.

Bill Kaur believes there is a great danger in trying to convince other parts of the world or this country to accept this philosophy as being the only way. It

requires a deep sense of humility for an individual or an institution to exchange services with the world without making or asking the world to be exactly like oneself. It is important to recognize the interdependence of different individual qualities of the whole.

He describes himself as tolerant and hopeful of a return of tolerance in different people's behavior and religious persuasions. He is enthusiastic about variety. He likes to inspire it and find it in people. People have choices of behavior and when they make their choice they hopefully realize that there are dues to pay for everything we are or will become. He feels that America is really ideal and beautiful for individual variations in dress, lifestyle, and employment opportunities. He believes that we here at Bennington can be thankful that we are not in explosive and violent surroundings.

Bill Kaur has a positive attitude toward Bennington College and the way in which the classical and contemporary arts are explored here. He thinks Bennington College has a good philosophy and that there is harmony between life, its purpose and the institutional purpose of the school. He says he receives good feelings when he watches performances and productions here at the College. He also believes that college life is good and that people should not feel guilty because they are not getting their hands dirty. In this multivarious world, each individual possesses different physical, emotional and intellectual abilities.

Photo by Karan E. Solstad

Town seeks solution to water problem

By COLM DOBBYN

In October 1976, the Vermont State Health Department performed a routine test of occupational hazards, in this case, exposure of workers' families to lead dust at the Globe Union battery plant in Bennington. In a sample of 50 families, (25 workers, 25 control) cases of elevated blood lead levels were found in five families, the most severe of which appeared in a child — 55 microliters per 100 cc blood, well over the federal and state limits of 30 microliters.

Several years ago, due to bacterial contamination in older sources, Bennington's water department added Bolles Brook to the system. The ancient water system had been deeded to the town in Dec. 1912 by W.H. Putnam. Any profits were tied to the Putnam Memorial Hospital by his will. As a result, the system suffered neglect. It was not realized then, what effect the acidic Bolles Brook mountain stream would have on the water system.

The fact that a problem existed, was first brought to the public's eyes by an article in The Bennington Banner dated Nov. 17, 1976, which noted some of the effects of lead poisoning: abdominal cramping, weakness in the hands and feet, irritability and bowel troubles. Longer term consequences such as anemia, mental retardation, and stillborn births were also mentioned. The non-specificity of symptoms complicates pinpointing lead

poisoning in many cases. Severe lead poisoning affects the nervous system, blood, kidneys and gastro-intestinal tract. In children, mental retardation may be brought on by the lead causing the brain cells to swell and push against the skull.

By December, it was certain that the problem stemmed from lead "leaching" into the water from the lead service lines and feeder pipes to people's homes. The seriousness of the situation was exposed when the family of Biology Prof. Ed Flaccus was tested following the suspicious death of a family dog which exhibited signs of lead poisoning. Blood levels of 24, 22, 18 ug-100 cc were found in the family.

The town board of selectmen did not appear to want to address the problem at first. Citing the simple logic that they had been drinking this water (but not Bolles water) all their lives, they were lackadaisical in their efforts. One concerned citizen, C. Frank Velkas went to the point of getting the deputy sheriff to serve papers on the town manager petitioning for an injunction to halt the supply of contaminated water. The town selectmen countersued for court fees. Mr. Velkas, a clinical psychologist who had been involved in the effects of various types of toxicity for years was active in the early stages in alerting outside authorities.

Just after the New Year, the Environmental Protection Agency Regional Office 1 in Boston, headed by Floyd B.

Kelley, entered in the dilemma. Of seven water samples taken from residences in town, six were found to have lead levels exceeding the maximum safe level of .05 mg-liter or parts per million, with an average of .077 ppm. The town at this time decided to set up supply areas where lead free water would be available. Coincidentally, the U.S. Safe Drinking Water Act (Public Law 93-523), which established fines of up to \$5,000 per day against communities supplying contaminated water went into effect on Jan. 24.

Duane Knapp, the young foreman of the water department, who stepped into a troublesome job about the time the first reports were coming in and who has had to deal with skeptical boards and selectmen, estimated the cost of pipe replacement for 800 low and middle income homes eligible for federal grants. The town applied for \$400,000 in federal money for replacement equipment, but later amended the application to include anti-corrosive equipment.

One stop gap measure which was proposed was to run water for 10 minutes in the morning before using for cooking or drinking purposes. The idea was that overnight the lead has more chance to accumulate. The EPA found significant levels even after "flushing," but notes that it does some good.

In the past few months, work done has included follow-ups by the state Health Lab in Burlington. Dr. William Watson, an epidemiologist, and Linden Witheral, a sanitary engineer, have done another study which again showed more than half the homes in Bennington tested have unsafe lead levels in their water supply, and one house in the study had 14 times the maximum. Two outside specialists — Dr. James Patterson, a corrosive control

expert at Illinois Institute of Technology and Dr. Joseph O'Brien of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Quality and Engineering — worked here in the last two months and recommended to the town that water "hardening" techniques be used. Basically, this means that some 550 pounds of sodium bicarbonate and a small amount (less than a pound) of the strong base sodium hydroxide be added to the water supply each day to control the acidity. An ideal pH of 8.4 is hoped for.

The town water department and board of selectmen approved, on a one year basis, the recommendations (4-12-77), following the endorsement of the county medical society. The system will cost \$30,000 to run the first year and \$20,000 a year subsequently. Initial concern about the ramifications of increasing the sodium content of the water have been allayed for now by the fact that Bennington's water is very low in sodium naturally, and even with the added amount, the resultant 6 ppm is about a fifth of the federal limit. Operation is slated to start on June 1.

The addition of chemicals to the water supply is not a complete solution. The estimated 1,300 lead service lines constructed before 1930 (the water mains are cast iron) may eventually have to be replaced at considerable cost. For now, though, it is the only reasonable alternative.

The most recent development (Banner, March 5) is that the state health labs will begin a test on 150 children aged 1-12 years. In addition to water and blood samples, tooth X-rays and eventually a nerve conduction test will be performed. No money or time for psychiatric studies of retardation due to lead poisoning in Bennington are foreseeable.

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A Review

The New Paper is interested in receiving contributions from anyone who would like to submit work. Our third issue comes out in June before the last day of classes. Anyone who would like to cover some aspect of the inauguration, review a play or a concert, interview a favorite teacher, reveal a scandal in the administration, or submit a cartoon or art work, please speak to Amy Spound or Nate Williams. Also, anyone interested in any aspect of the newspaper and would like to work on it next fall (especially for business, advertising, and circulation), please attend meetings on Monday nights at 6:00 p.m. in the new dining room.

"House of Blue Leaves:"

By ANNE SOORIKIAN

Written by John Guare, the "House of Blue Leaves" is humorous, as well as powerfully symbolic of the fear of involvement in Vietnam in the mid-nineteen sixties. The play was presented at Bennington College for four nights, May 5-8, and truly represented the type of "normal" insanity that dominated the lives of many people in the transforming sixties.

"The House of Blue Leaves" is about the Shaughnessy's. They are a family experiencing rejection from their only child Ronnie, who will soon depart for Vietnam, and the disintegration of their marriage, tormented by mental stress, as well as another woman — Bunny Flingus. Artie Shaughnessy, an aging man who wants to begin his life again as a songwriter in Hollywood, refuses the responsibilities that he has made his own over the years.

His wife Banana appears to be going insane, for that makes distance in dealing with her more acceptable. The plot falls out of order as it progresses, as we see that Banana's facade of insanity is part of everyone's personality.

The production of the play was very cohesive and it related a sense of immediacy in the frenzied actions of the characters, especially towards the end.

The cast, which included Paul Zimmerman, Megan Robinson, Judy Knoop, and Mitchell Lichtenstein, illustrated different components of society, that when combined can be disastrous, for they are all so diverse, yet so much alike. The presentation of the play was enjoyable, as well as thought provoking because it forces one to consider who and what in our society is really insane.

Live band, dance marathon in May

"Outer Space," a dance band from Stockbridge, Mass., is playing here Friday, May 13th, in the Carriage Barn from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Admission is one dollar at the door. The appearance of "Outer Space" is only one of the many events happening on the Bennington campus in May.

A Dance Marathon to benefit the Bennington College Financial Aid Fund will be held Saturday, May 21st at 10:00 p.m. through Sunday morning May 22nd at 10:00 a.m., in the carriage barn. Couples will pledge a certain amount of money and then will be expected to dance the entire twelve hour period or until they drop. Music will be provided by the recreation committee and will consist of new tapes (!) comprised of soul, funk, reggae, rock-n-roll, and top-40 songs from the mid-1960's. Refreshments will be available and will be free for those actually participating in the marathon. Prizes will be handed out throughout the evening and spectators will be encouraged to take part in the fun.

Volunteers are needed now. Anyone who is interested in dancing, taping music, making signs, serving refreshments, greeting visitors, and cleaning up afterwards should contact Dan Cameron, Box 177.

Also, a Spring Day is planned on Friday, May 27th. Starting in the afternoon, the campus baseball players will challenge the Bennington town players which is a

Continued on Page 3

Announcement from Special Projects

Christine Graham would like to remind students who intend to apply to any of the summer workshops, that decisions for acceptance are made on a rolling admissions basis and that a given workshop might be closed before the "first preference" deadline, which is May 15. Currently the Prose Writing, Flute, Painting, and Puppetry workshops are drawing the greatest number of applicants and they have limited enrollments. Ms. Graham encourages students to apply as early as possible and not to wait until June.

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New Music by Marc Falcone and Michael Convertino

By JOE KAUFMAN

Art should be continually evolving. If art is meant to both celebrate and elucidate life, it must change with or ahead of the times. Most art, developed outside the standard sensibilities of the time period in which it is or was created, is largely regarded as radical departure. If the "new" art is either strong enough or idiosyncratic enough, with time, it is assimilated and categorized into societal aesthetics. Gertrude Stein had to be much persuaded by her brother before buying Matisse and Cezanne, yet a Matisse was recently bought by a New York museum for one million dollars. John Coltrane was panned by critics yet is now considered a prophet. No one knew what to make of Joyce, but he is currently considered mandatory reading. It is this symbiotic relationship between innovator and assimilator, an ongoing dynamic cycle, which is a necessity if art is to evolve.

New Music by Marc Falcone and Michael Convertino, which appeared at Carnegie Recital Hall April 29, was, if not innovative, avant-garde, and if not avant-garde, certainly has not been accepted as bona-fide. But resist labels; they are too convenient. Reactions to the concert ranged from "Pure crap," to "I didn't understand," to "Loved it."

My experiences with radical depar-

tures from traditionally defined art has been that the "new" art is largely conceptual; that is, to say, art created from perceptions by the artist, contrary to accepted form, of what art should be all about. The art form is seen by the artist as valid but stale, valuable (for the knowledge that tradition affords) but too comfortable, too imitated and too blunt.

The artist who works conceptually searches for redefinition: he wants to take the art form where it has never been before.

Falcone's and Convertino's music strikes me as largely conceptual. Their pieces seek to break conditioned attitudes of what music is and instead, present a vision of what music can be: music as movement and mime, as visual performance and emotional representation — music operating under the premise that music as a sensual three-dimensional medium strengthens itself as an emotional experience, a statement of the will, and as a vehicle for the exploration of the soul.

The seven pieces in the concert: *le chant a la porte* (written by Michael Convertino), *red crescendo* (Convertino), *threes and eights* (Convertino), *cross-patch* (Falcone), *the instruments of the orchestra: part one, the bass fiddle* (Falcone), *the little girl and her red shoes* (Falcone), and *the child with the wild red*

hair (Convertino) all showed unconventional approaches to music.

In *le chant a la porte*, a woman clutching a bouquet of Easter lilies languishes inside a grand piano. Accompanied by a pianist in bare feet and tails who mimes the playing of the piano, the girl sings and screeches in French, resembles a femme fatale, and is very comical until you realize she is mourning her dead lover.

The pianist exudes a virtuosity which makes one forget he is not striking notes — but he is playing and you do hear. Notes become irrelevant and unnecessary.

Superficially a spoof on opera, *le chant a la porte* is at once funny and tragic. It becomes too eloquent to be merely parody, both becoming opera's antithesis and its equal in its self-image as an art form.

Red crescendo is an alto saxophone and string bass duo. Both instruments begin on one note and gradually separate, each playing scales and chords. They converge, separate, and join again. I was reminded of Ornette Coleman and of a couple attempting to discover their natures and their limitations in order to better communicate with each other.

Three and eights showed Falcone playing a bass, slide whistle, hand accordion, harmonica, washboard, alto sax, his hands, trumpet, banjo, and flute in a variety of positions in around and out of a spotlight. The spotlight heightens and fades with each instrument, creating drama via vignettes and episodes. In *three and eights*, the sounds of the different instruments range from Beethoven to the lilt of a timid voice. The instruments seem to be playing Falcone. You think: there is reversal here. You wonder: who is playing whom?

Cross-patch takes this theme of victimization from music (the instruments being the symbols of music incarnate) one

step further. The instruments become alive and dynamic. A tympani mallet almost kills one man and sends two others into the wings. The one man is whistled and violined to life. He crawls to a piano and struggles to get on top of it. Succeeding in climbing the piano and making his way to the keyboard, the man domineers the piano as, analogously enough, the tympani mallet did the three men. *Cross-patch* is rank and reversal, the establishing of hierarchies of power which are turned over, constructed, and turned over once more.

The instruments of the orchestra: part one, the bass fiddle shows a man caught in his fluctuating free-associative personalities. The man stands at the center of the stage talking about the bass fiddle but never playing it. His attempts at communication are painfully limited, his only point of reference being his bass fiddle.

The man is snared in his own nomenclature, twisting his pronunciation of bass violins into base violence, from viol to vile. Alternately frenzied and sedate, he doesn't know how to puncture his self-deluding microcosm and, after mucking his speech, groans in despair. "What does that leave you? I mean what have you got?"

The little girl and her red shoes, a violin concerto, was the "least departed" piece in the program. There was no mime, no acting, nor any movement. Structurally, little girl resembled *red crescendo*; the same ideas of separation and convergence coupled with the motion of stretching the violin's range of produceable sounds.

The last piece on the program, *the child with the wild red hair*, struck me as being the most accomplished. It is a piece written for cello, but the cello is never seen. On the stage, a woman sits on a stool miming the opening of a door. The door is opened, an old man totters out (from the wings) and is followed by a woman with a baby carriage, a lover, a man stabbed with a dagger, a woman reaching for what

Continued on Page 3

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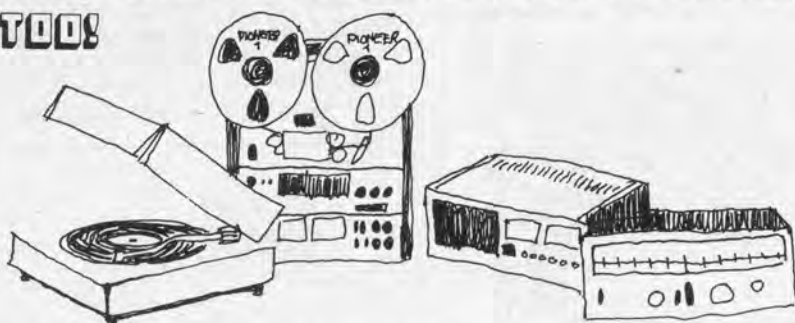


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