

Iser resigns as College business manager

By ELLEN McMAHON

College Business Manager, Bernie Iser, has submitted his resignation to President Joseph Murphy. The announcement was revealed shortly before the start of this term.

Hoping to leave as soon as the college is able to find a replacement and possibly before the end of the term, Iser cited his deteriorating health as a major factor in his decision.

Iser, who has been with the college since President Joseph Murphy's inauguration in January, 1977, denied that his departure is linked to the current financial difficulties of the college.

"My original commitment was for two years. Now that time is nearly up and I have chosen to leave," he said.

Concerning the college's current deficit of \$800,000, Iser claims that it came as no surprise. He blamed the deficit on an accumulation of debts related to operation costs and the college's outmoded fiscal guidelines, stating that the financial state of the country has changed so drastically in

the past 10 years that the increased cost of utilities was just not anticipated.

Asked if the present administration's fiscal policies emphasizing an increased spending on "student life" has contributed to the current deficit or his departure, Iser said, "No. The previous administration's attitude that only the academic life of the institution was important was just not healthy for the college. Only half the job is recruiting students — the other half is keeping them."

Since Iser's appointment to the College, students feel there has been a considerable improvement in those programs affecting student life, such as N.R.T., Admissions, and Financial Aid and Student Services. However, Iser refuses to take the credit for those improvements, saying: "I do not act alone; my policies reflect those of the president."

He did stress that the College's 50th Anniversary Campaign's efforts to raise \$9 million dollars (\$3,000,000 a year) over a three-year period plays a key role in Bennington's future. If the campaign fund is successful, Iser sees the future financial security of Bennington

College as practically guaranteed. As it stands now, though, Iser predicts radical changes within the college, predominantly in its technical systems.

"I am sorry about leaving," Iser said. "Bennington is an extraordinarily interesting place and a community that agrees with me personally."

He says it was his doctor's suggestion that he resign, noting that diabetes and an assortment of other ailments have been aggravated by Vermont's climate and work related pressure. He also said that the area's lack of substantial arts and entertainment contributed to his decision to leave and that he is anxious to return to the city and pursue his interests in opera and ballet.

Iser, who worked at Queens College as a financial administrator previous to his appointment at Bennington, has no desire to return to administrative work. Instead he talks, enthusiastically, of returning to teaching English, which he did at the high school level from 1957 to 1964.

Iser will be leaving Bennington "no later than the end of the term, but probably at the time of the May board meeting."

Vanguard

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Bennington College

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Fellow named

Novelist, critic and photographer Wright Morris has been named the Ernestine Cohen Meyer Fellow at the College for the spring term. Morris, the creator of 27 published works between 1942 and 1977 and a three-time Guggenheim Fellow, will be in residence in Bennington during the second half of the spring term.

Morris's appointment inaugurates a College fellowship in honor of the late Ernestine Cohen Meyer.

Farley elected Student Council President

Sophomore Kevin Farley was elected Student Council President, it was announced yesterday by Elections Committee Chairperson Anita Stephen.

Farley defeated Jeff Sarnoff, his lone opponent.

"I am obviously delighted with the results, and I'm extremely eager to start working for the school. That's my main priority — the school," Farley said.

The election came following a debate last week between the two presidential candidates, and was conducted Monday and Tuesday of this week.

Farley sees the school as in need of some sort of unifying force, and thinks the Student Council can provide this for the

students:

"The College is fragmented — there is no one person or office that is functioning as a coordinating and managing unit for the affairs of the College. As a result, the students are also fragmented."

Farley's platform had been outlined in a College-wide galley, distributed a week before the elections. Among his major concerns:

+ **Crossett Library.** "The Library's resources are extremely limited for even a school of our size. One staff position has been cut, making the workload very heavy... for a school like Bennington, which prides itself in the pursuit of knowledge outside of class, the library is a very

important resource. Are we doing it justice?"

+ **VAPA.** "VAPA is an example of poor management. It is an immense financial drain on the College's fiscal resources. However, it is there, and we must figure out a better way to utilize its amazing resources."

+ **Academics.** "Generally, the concern of the students here for academic pursuit is at a low level. When it comes to the end of their sophomore year, the student has either dropped out, or unenthusiastically picked a course of action, or actually been stimulated by what Bennington has to offer and charged forth. Why aren't more of them charging forth?"



Kevin Farley

Photo by Alison McKinley

...new Student Council President...

Immigration officials investigate College

By TIMOTHY LITTLEFIELD

Bennington College was recently examined by U.S. Immigration officials for unethical and possible illegal distribution of admission forms (I-20's) to foreign students.

Bennington had issued pre-signed blank I-20 forms to Iranian students, which are required before foreign students can enter the U.S.

The investigation was prompted by an ABC News broadcast, which stated that Bennington was one of several colleges that distributed pre-signed blank I-20 forms. ABC interviewed New York-based representative of Hunter College, Saeed Noorbakhsh, who said that he had taken a number of signed applications to Iran at Bennington's request.

College officials say that the forms were only issued to expedite the arrival of qualified students, and that Bennington

was not interested in "collecting warm bodies."

According to College President Joseph Murphy, pre-signed forms were issued to assist Iranian students in leaving their country. The College issued 50 I-20 forms this year, of which 19 are still unaccounted for.

District Immigration Director George Lara called this practice "a questionable habit... there's no control. It's totally improper."

"There's no law that says you're not supposed to, but these

forms should not be handed out just like that."

College Admissions Director John Nissen had no comment, saying only "talk to Murphy." Student Services Director Short Aldrich, who according to Noorbakhsh, signed the forms, said the same thing.

Murphy stated that pre-signed admissions forms were issued to "cut through red tape." He said the main interest of the College was to "increase the applicant pool."

Murphy insisted that Bennington had done nothing illegal and was just being dragged into the spotlight because of the publicity received by Windham College, a school upstate forced to close down.

"I am embarrassed as anyone can be," the President said. "It was a procedural error."

Dean of Studies Ricky Blake said that he thought "the college got itself into trouble for no reason... our lines of com-

munication were stretched."

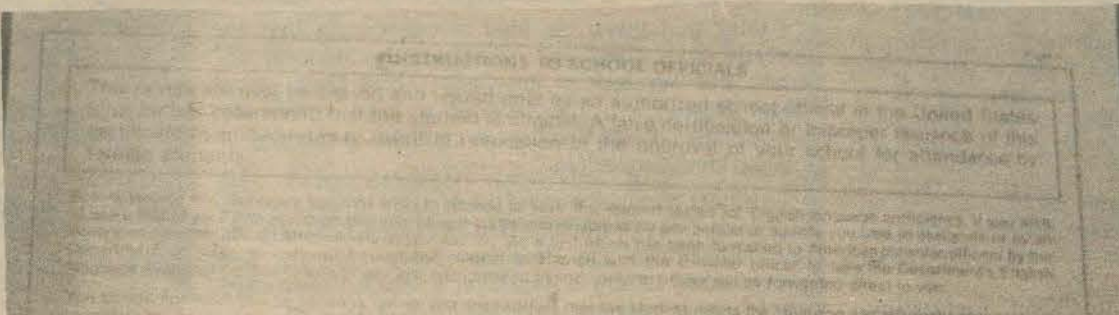
Faculty member Stephen Ferruolo asked this: "How can Bennington practice such unethical admissions policies and still parade itself as a selective school?"

Ferruolo pointed out that the forms clearly state that they are not to be filled out until a student's name is inserted.

Student reaction was varied. One said this:

"The Iranians are the victims in this case... good Iranian students arrived, but the policy was stupid and the College received a lot of detrimental — and deserved — publicity from it."

Bennington has since been cleared of all charges concerning illegal admissions policies. But as Kevin Farley put it, "The ethics of such a policy have to be examined, not to mention the wisdom."



I-20 Form ...cannot be presigned...

News Trip

A journey through the news

College raises tuition

The College has announced that tuition for the 1979-80 year will increase by 7 percent, raising yearly tuition to \$6,590.

The only alternative to higher fees, President Joseph Murphy explained by letter, would be reductions in the quality of education at Bennington. Any such reductions would eliminate the very reason for Bennington's existence, Murphy noted.

The per-term cost of tuition, which will be \$3,295, represents an increase of 7 percent. Room charges, at \$405 per term, and food service charges, at \$510 per term, have risen at somewhat higher rates, and reflect "the general increase in wholesale and consumer prices." The total cost for the year, exclusive of personal and travel expenses, will be \$8,420, as compared with \$7,540 for the current year.

Group show to open

Works by professional artists among the alumni and faculty of the College are being collected for a group show to open May 4, 1979 at the Hirshberg Gallery in Boston.

The show, which will include artists from New England who generally have had one-person exhibitions, is part of the College's Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration. The works are being selected by Boston artist Carole Bolsey, co-directing the show with sculptor Miriam Knapp of Chestnut Hill.

The exhibition is scheduled to run through May, with some form of music or literary entertainment tentatively scheduled to be presented at the gallery by persons affiliated with Bennington College.

Workshops continue

For the third consecutive summer, the College will offer summer workshops in a dozen disciplines.

Bennington Workshops, featuring College faculty and guest artists, will take place from July 1-28 on the Bennington campus.

Workshops will be offered in the following areas: writing workshops, which will consist of prose fiction, non-fiction and poetry; music workshops, to be conducted in composing, cello/bass, violin, flute and voice; painting; children's literature; acting; dance/video; and criticism and performance.

College faculty member Nicholas Delbanco will lead the prose fiction workshop, one of the most popular of the courses offered. He will be assisted by author George Garrett and visiting artists John Gardner, John Irving and Bernard Malamud.

The cost of the four-week sessions totals \$700, including room, board and tuition. Applications are available through Workshop Director Christine Graham.



One to one
with
Nick Delbanco
last
summer

Academy honors Fine

Composer Vivian Fine, a teacher of composition at the College, has been honored by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters for her work in music. The award carries a \$4,000 prize and a recording of one of Fine's compositions by Composers Recording Inc., a professional firm.

Fine was one of four winners of the Academy-Institute award, given to honor and encourage qualified non-members and help them continue their creative work. The others were Paul Chihara, Robert Subotnick and Robert Starer. The winners are selected by a jury of composer members of the Academy-Institute.

Past winners of the award include John Cage, Elliott Carter, Henry Cowell, George Crumb, Gian Carlo Menotti, Gunther Schuller and William Schuman.

Fine, who has been at Bennington since 1964, was a student of Ruth Crawford-Seeger and Roger Sessions. She studied Piano with Djuna Levoie-Herz and Abby Whiteside. She has received grants from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and in 1974 and 1976 from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Marker wins competition

Senior Catherine Marker has won a Music Teachers' National Association composition competition.

"Configurations," Marker's award-winning work, was recently performed at the regional MTNA meeting in College Park, Md., by Marker and soprano Peggy Richardson, a recent Bennington graduate. "Configurations" is a song cycle in four movements for soprano and piano, and is based on poems by A.R. Ammons.

Marker, of Hoosick Falls, N.Y., began studying piano and composition eight years ago with Rosamond van der Linde, a Bennington graduate living in Old Bennington. While in high school, she won the eastern division of the MTNA's competition at the high school level.

Kensinger gets tenure

Anthropology teacher Ken Kensinger has been granted presumptive tenure, it was recently announced by a college-wide gallery.

Kensinger's contract had been one of several that had not been renewed following a June review by the Faculty Personnel Committee; he then appealed the case. Following a *Vanguard* editorial and many letters in support of Kensinger, the Faculty Personnel Review Committee reviewed the case and decided to renew his contract.

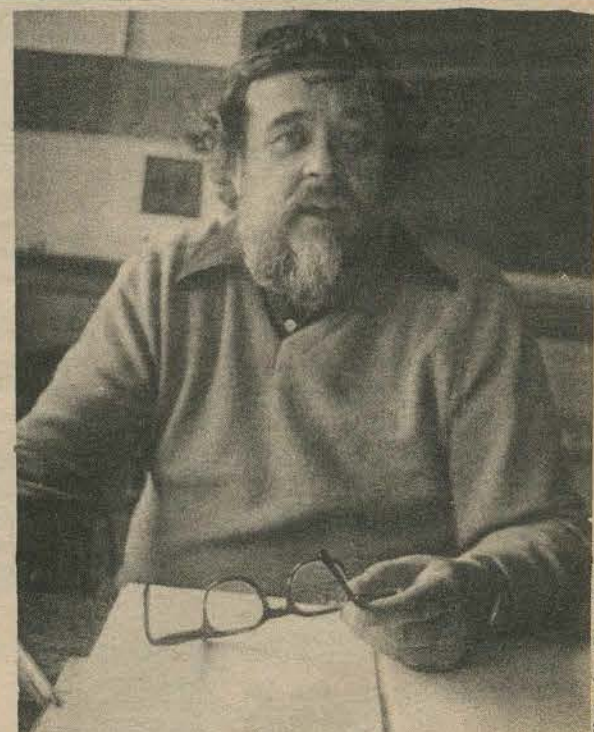
"I'm delighted that what I perceived as a wrong decision based on a lack of information was corrected when that information came to the committee's attention," Kensinger said.

The committee had originally cited professional

competence and productivity as the areas of concern. However, no outside judgments of Kensinger had been solicited by the review committee.

"I think that given the kind of information that we generally have about our colleagues' professional activities, and our lack of knowledge about their status outside Bennington, the lack of a pure review by professionals outside Bennington can lead to the kind of situation I found myself in."

Kensinger received word of the decision in his favor via letter from Dean of Faculty Don Brown on February 12, after both Brown and President Joseph Murphy had received many letters in Kensinger's behalf. Brown cited these letters as instrumental in the FPRC's decision.



Ken Kensinger

Photos by Alison McKinley



Photo by Allison McKinley

Secretaries at work

...Office — struggles to raise \$10 million...

Fund reaches \$3 million

The College's Fiftieth Anniversary fund-raising drive has raised almost \$3 million, according to Rebecca Stickney, director of the newly-formed Fiftieth Office.

The drive has a goal of \$10 million, and is aimed at giving the College some financial security in the future.

"The money is definitely out there," Stickney says. "It's just a matter of going out there and getting it."

Gifts already received have included one of \$1 million and two of close to \$300,000.

However, Stickney feels there should be more money coming in.

"There are a great deal of alumni who could be giving us a lot more than they are — they're not putting their money where their mouth is."

Although the fund-raising drive is the primary concern of the Fiftieth Anniversary celebration,

there are a number of other events planned, among them a "Pioneers' Weekend" in mid-May for the classes of '36-'44. Former faculty are also being invited, and Stickney expects between 250 and 500 to actually show.

"The primary purpose of the anniversary celebration is to make people aware of our need for funds," Stickney stresses.

The money is scheduled to be used in the following manner:

- + \$2.4 million for endowment of faculty salaries.
- + \$1 million for endowment of student financial aid.
- + \$700,000 for improvement and maintenance of the campus.
- + \$1 million to support VAPA.
- + \$1.7 million for operating needs.
- + \$1 million for endowment to the library.

There will also be about \$1 million for endowments to cover

the college's debts on facilities already built and for unrestricted endowment.

"I think we can get it," Stickney predicts. "It may take us longer than we originally thought, but I think we can do it."

She is convinced that the drive will not stop when the goal is reached.

"I think this fund-raising drive will be going on forever — we're not going to be called the 'Fiftieth Anniversary Office,' but there will definitely be some sort of office specifically dedicated to raising money for the College."

Fiftieth Anniversary events that have taken place to date include the Ben Belitt Lecture, delivered by guest speaker George Steiner in October, and a revival of Doris Humphrey's "Life of the Bee," performed in early December by advanced students in the dance division.

Library says yes; college says no

By KEVIN FARLEY

Due to financial considerations, a library position that had been filled will remain vacant for an undetermined amount of time. This decision approved by Bennington administration in February, created a wave of uproar among the staff at Crossett Library.

This winter, three candidates for the position of cataloger were selected by the Library Committee to visit the College for interviews, at the college's expense. The three, Eleanor Munn, Sybil Brigham and Margi Schoenberg, traveled to Bennington at slightly different times and were interviewed by both library staff and the Library Committee. Both agreed upon Margi Schoenberg as the most qualified candidate; the Library Committee thus informed her she had the job.

Before the final arrangements of the job were worked out, however, the administration decided that the extra salary was an added financial burden. Dean of Faculty Don Brown then informed Margi Schoenberg and the library staff that the position would not be filled. The library was asked to reapportion their duties to cover those duties normally done by a cataloger.

The position of cataloger has been vacant since Jane Rudd left the College's employ as cataloger for medical reasons last October ending an association with the college that had lasted since 1939. She had actually taken a medical leave that ran into her time for retirement, so in effect she retired.

In response to both the decision to cut out the position of cataloger and the financial restraints being

imposed on the library, Crossett Library Head Librarian Robert Agard stated: "It comes down to a question of the quality of library service the college wants."

Another source within the library said that "...the filling of the position with a new face was our big chance to pull the library staff together. Then the rug was pulled out from under us."

Cataloging, a technical service rather than a personal service, such as a reference librarian, entails the assigning of catalog numbers to new books.

Concert planned

A memorial concert is being planned to honor Dr. Charles L. Stevenson, a philosophy teacher at the College, who died in his office two weeks ago.

Dr. Stevenson, 71, taught here for the first time last semester, following a 30 year stint at the University of Michigan.

Dr. Stevenson, a past president of the western division of the American Philosophical Association, was considered a major influence in the study of Meta-ethics, a branch of study in which the language of ethical discourse and the methods by which ethical judgments can be supported are studied.

His first production, "Ethics and Language" in 1944, is considered one of the most original works in his field.

He is survived by his wife, Nora Carrol, and son Daniel.

Security director hired



Peter Blind, a veteran of more than 10 years experience in the security field, has been named the College's new security director.

Blind, who assumed his post the first week of March, is in charge of the entire security operation at the College, including traffic and parking enforcement.

"I'm very excited about Bennington. For the first few weeks, I've been primarily getting acquainted with the campus and the people, and I like them both very much," Blind said.

Blind has spent the past seven years as a security specialist for the State of New York, involved

with security procedures and investigating fire and safety on colleges throughout the state. Before that, he worked for three years as an investigator in the Army.

Blind cites fire safety as being one of his main concerns:

"The students here are very naive with regard to fire safety on campus. Fires and candles are all over the place and are being used where they shouldn't be. My second week here, there was a fire in one of the houses because a girl threw some burning paper into a wooden basket. These types of things just shouldn't happen."

Blind is very satisfied with his staff:

"There are 10 security guards, and they're very professional and I look forward to working with them. I'm very pleased with their reactions to the situations I've been involved in."

Other concerns of Blind include training of the security guards in first aid and CPR "as soon as possible," and changes in patrolling the campus:

"There should be less control of the booth in the daytime and more patrol of the actual campus — I don't think we have to be like a concentration camp during the day and screen what are, for the majority, people coming and going on normal college business."

Photo by Allison McKinley



Security Director Peter Blind

Library increase seen as top priority

Crossett Library Head Librarian Robert Agard has asked for an increase in funds for the upcoming fiscal year. It has now become apparent, however, that the library may not only not get this raise, but in fact have their budget cut. We urge President Murphy to recommend to the Board of Trustees an increase in funding for the library, even if it means slashing funds in another area.

The College library has long been an issue to both its students and faculty—both have found it severely lacking and unsuitable as a place to do anything but

required course reading. Even that, however, may be threatened by this budget cut. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, in their accrediting report, had this to say about the library:

"The holdings of the library are small even for a college of only 600 students. The present acquisitions budget is not adequate for the needs of the College. The College might consider setting aside for acquisitions something closer to recommended national norms, namely 5% of the operating budget."

We agree. As Agard points out in a special report, even a hold-the-line budget is actually a reduced budget, considering the soaring costs of books and periodicals. There should be no hesitation involved—it is a question of priorities and of how important the library is to the College. We feel a library should be an intellectual barometer of its environment, reflecting the community's diversity and depth.

The President obviously disagrees. Consider his actions: first the elimination of the position of cataloger, a position essential for any library, and secondly his demurring on this budget increase. Actions speak louder than words, the old saying goes, and the President's seem to indicate that he sees the library as superfluous. We can't defend his passivity even in light of the financial crunch.

If there is any money at all, the library should be the first to receive it; if it doesn't it will be the intellectual state of the College the President will be eulogizing in his next meeting. We hope the President and the Board of Trustees understand the imperative nature of increasing the library's budget, and take the appropriate steps immediately.

Applause for the President

Last Monday, President Murphy spoke and answered questions for nearly three hours on the state of the College. This kind of contact with the President is always welcome, though certainly not obligatory on his part. We applaud the President's efforts and would like to see it more often.

The meeting was not called primarily to prophesize financial disaster, nor was it a last minute attempt to make the community aware of an emergency situation, as some at the meeting insisted. The shaky financial state of the College has long been obvious to those who've been following it: the current situation is no surprise.

The real purpose of the meeting was to squelch a number of rumors spreading around campus and to personally inform the community of the College's current state. To this end, we thought it a success: Murphy took full responsibility for the questionable practice of pre-signing I-20 forms, admitting he had made a mistake and that it would not happen again; and he confirmed the stories concerning the College's financial woes.

We thought it was an admirable per-

formance, considering the situation: a hostile crowd of irate students intent on backing the President into a corner, firing question after question, belaboring many points and often rambling inanely. In our opinion, the President fielded the question admirably and managed to retain a certain degree of decorum. Granted, he evaded a question here and there, dodged a few issues and was vague on others; but when pressed, we thought he answered honestly and with a concerned conviction, displaying a sense of humor and patience with an audience that seemed to be, by and large, ignorantly accusing.

"There ought to be a little more effort on the part of the people here to find out what's going on," President Murphy said a bit angrily toward the end of the meeting. We agree, and would like to see this type of meeting more often. It is a realistic way for the entire college community to communicate with each other. And the more the President is seen and heard, the more impressive and concerned he seems.

Now about those cocktail parties...

Commentary

More trouble at the dinner table

By ALISON DAVIES

Being the laid-back peach from California that I am, I, as a pilgrim in this unforsaken land, have witnessed a fastly staid and practical culture virtually unknown in the West. Although fastly staid and practical, the East Coast, like a cat, is capable of cultural and sociological leaps that even an encounter group graduate couldn't comprehend. As a traveler possessing a voracious appetite for the dangerous, I have beheld many curious and wondrous sights in the jungles of NYC and its suburbs. These sights, with due respect to the practical nature and the private reticent mind of the New Englander, are not subtle. For lack of a better way to put it: I'm going to bring up a sore subject, I'm going to drag some dug up bones into the kitchen. Why? Why? Frankly, I don't know. Seems this strange magic causes a great excuse for a political stir in Bennington's cultural stew, however mild the seasoning. Well, stir it up, little darlin's. My query is simply put and in fact quite bland, if you want to know the truth; Whad-ya-think?... Dim the lights, Fred, I want a slow fade, 65° pan. Dirk, when the spotlight is stressed, I want a sudden turn as you reach the top of the staircase. You know your line, say it as if a chill has gone through your bones: "Punk Rock."

I approached many people in New York and Vermont, but for the most part made up responses of my own, concerning the phenomena of this, this, how you say... punk rock. My first encounter was with an art student from Rutgers. I asked him, I says "What do you think of punk rock?" He says, "I think its pretty indicative of everything." When I asked him to elaborate, he continued, "Motherwell says, 'There's no festival without malice.'... I mean Nietzsche said that. Motherwell says 'It's better to be brutal than indifferent.' Punk really speaks for the artist, who feels the brutality of the art world. I mean there are a lot of different movements out

there. Like the Talking Heads say, 'I'm painting, I'm painting again.' They weren't painting before but now they are. I think that's really emotive, it's really indicative..." He was beginning to choke on his words. I had dragged up too much silt from the bottom. I gave him a valium. He asked for another, and left.

Outside Le Club Mud, some punk rockers had been waiting to see the Blenders. Stupidly I asked them what they thought:

"Get off my back."

"It's O.K."

"I'm not a punk, I'm a preppie."

"I'm not a preppie, I'm a graduate student."

"I'm not a graduate student, I'm a cabby with a PhD."

"I'm not a punk, I'm Andy Warhol."

"I'm not Andy Warhol, I'm Margeaux Hemingway."

"I'm not Margeaux, but I can act."

"I can't act but I like art."

"I like art but I don't like life."

"I like life but I don't like art."

On 47th Street and Fifth, I saw a tall older woman, holding shopping bags from Gimbel's. She was shouting something about socialized medicine. It was Katherine Hepburn. We exchanged a few pleasantries: I told her I liked her last movie; she said she liked mine. I told her I liked her aviator glasses, she said she liked mine. "Thanks" I said and shuffled my feet. I gave her my autograph and she gave me hers. As we parted, warmly shaking hands, she placed a small piece of paper in my hand. It announced the opening of a new disco. I remembered my original query: "What do you think of Punk Rock?" She was wending her way uptown, through downtown traffic on her skateboard. "Lacks character, they all need cold showers and a brisk walk." She disappeared up through a fleet of yellow cabs. I turned away.

Feeling a little bit like Barbara Walters, I wondered why this innocuous question kept popping up in the first place. Perhaps I should ask Joe Murphy if he shaved under his chin. Deeply questioning my integrity, I returned to Bennington. I donned a light grey Chanel suit and my aviator glasses, hoping I would further be able to extract the meaning from the meaningless of my question, or vice versa. It didn't really matter. What had begun to matter though, was that through this inner questioning and deep torment and the fact that the waist of my Chanel skirt was too tight, I was beginning to feel incredible angst. Luckily enough, I arrived on time to find people coming out of Tishman after seeing the premier of The Punk Rock Retrospective. This was a grand effort on the part of the Ford, and Peggy Guggenheim Foundations, together with the Cousteau Society, to nationalize Punk Rock, underwater. It was a gala event. The Guggenheims were there: Peggy, Peggy Sue, Sue Ann. The Ford brothers: Henry, Glenn and John. Jacques provided the entertainment perfectly lovely harbour seal. As most were off to dinner after the show, the responses were brief:

"Marvelously funny."

"Haunting and witty."

"Unabashedly bold."

"A marvelous underwater vaudeville. I loved the lobster."

"Never liked punks. I like stroking better than pounding."

"I've seen it twice."

And on this note I'll close. You've seen this twice and you'll never see it again. I heartily defend my ambivalence. Mind you ambivalence, not indifference. Like a fencer I'll hop from one opinion to the other and I'll hop any social barrier for a cigarette. Cheers kids.

Vantage

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Bennington abandons comments, goes grades

My roommate, Ralph, came into the dishroom at Sieler's. I was loading dirty dishes into the huge washer.

"What's wrong," I asked. "You look awful."

"Grades," he said, his voice cracking. "The term grades are out."

I heard the rumor that the college was switching to letter grades at one of the president's cocktail parties. I was sloshed and did not take the news too seriously. Another rumor, something to bitch about on the way to class.

"Get serious," I told Ralph.

He shoved a piece of paper into my face, hands shaking wildly.

"Look at this sweetheart..." He looked strung out.

I glanced at the pink sheet of paper. From the registrar's office of Bennington College. But what the hell? No comments? Lord Almighty — grades...

"Not bad, sport." He had an A, two B's and a C minus. "I mean, that's probably a lot better'n I'm gonna do."

"Not bad?" he screamed into my face, spraying me with a stream of psychotic spittle. "NOT BAD? THAT C MINUS?"

"Easy," I said. The other workers eyed him warily.

"NOT BAD?" he yelled again. "THERE GOES GRAD SCHOOL!" He looked at me. I didn't know what to say. He threw his arms high above his head and stood back 10 paces from the dish machine.

"YAAA" He took a running start and dove right into the bowels of the machine. I heard him through the metal, screaming as the water scorched his skin, as the soap flooded over his flesh. I walked the length of the machine, listening to his boots bang against the walls, listening to the conveyor belt groan under his weight. He popped out the other end — fresh, rosy and clean. He had calmed down considerably. He smiled loonily and burst into a chorus of maniacal laughter.

"What am I gonna do?" he chanted over and over.

I clasped his shoulder, man to man. "Time to take action, sport," I said as I helped him to his feet. "Time to take some action."

The whole campus was in an uproar when I got off work. Girls lined the roof of Booth House, threatening to jump. Sports cars tore dangerously across Commons lawn. Franklin House was in flames. I held my own grades in my hand, having retrieved them from my mailbox. I wanted to see them in silence, in my room — amidst familiar settings... the Sid Viscous posters, the security of the three foot sneakers, my boot collection. I sat in my dorm room at the shitty wooden desk and nervously tore the envelope open.

Oh God, four D's...

I couldn't believe my eyes. I had done more work this term than the previous one and still, even then, I hadn't done so badly. At least comments are ambiguous, at least even the dimmest and dreariest of comments is open to a little interpretation. When my creative writing teacher wrote: "He persistently produces pathetic piles of painfully pointless pornographic pulp," for my final comment last year, I remember thinking, with a certain fondness, how cleverly offbeat the man was, how unusually roundabout — I mean, what an odd way to call a student prolific. And my philosophy teacher — he wrote that I was very erratic. What insight! What sensitivity!

Although my performance in his course was a bit, ah — shaky, let's say, at least the man understood I had good days and bad days... and he did not harp on either. My other two courses were incomplete, for I was busily getting adjusted to my new environment.

The present term had started badly. First, my car died. Then my lovely henna-haired honey blew me off. Without companionship and wheels, I was left with no exits. I struggled with the academic world and for a time, I was amazed by my accomplishments. Sculpture for sculpture class. Wonderfully primitive paintings for painting class. Papers pumped out like oil gushing from the earth. Books absorbed without effort. Ideas flooding through my electrified skull, visions of Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, of great office buildings and luxurious apartments and summer homes by the sea, scores of children, grand children, a long and happy life and an obituary in the Times — all this and more. One day, God knows why, I became disenchanted. My old habits returned, creeping upon me like ivy on a wall, bearing me away, covering my intentions with the frantic greenness of new life, of youth. Back to The V. Long nights at the bar drowning in the sweet wonders of youth and beer. My studies suffered, but I figured there were enough brownie points stored up in the bank to pull me through the term honorably.

My academic past is a sore subject. Thrown out of three elementary schools and four high schools, I found it necessary to apply to 18 colleges. I was accepted to two: Hunter College in New York and Bennington. I decided to sacrifice good education for the pleasures of country living. Now I found myself once again on the line but I didn't panic; as I had told my roommate, it was time to take action.

In sculpture class, I had made a zip gun. Needless to say, my intentions had been misunderstood. Mr. Stein, my Black Painting teacher, had obviously not understood my desire to authenticate my work. He must not have liked my use of Afro-Sheen in place of gesso. My religion teacher didn't like my paper on Jim Jones' People's Punch Party entitled Come II Faut and my music teacher said I couldn't keep a beat. What the hell.

I knew I had to do something. I had never been one to end the show with a whimper. I preferred a bang. But what to do? With a bang, not a whimper... hm-mm. A bang. My heart sank, for my good gal was gone — no, wait a minute. A bang — the zip gun....

I found a pair of dark pants and a black turtleneck and put them on. I donned a dark woolen longshoreman's cap and smeared my face with charcoal. I put the zipgun in my belt and studied myself in the mirror. Perfect, perfect. I ran to the bureau and extracted three bullets from a sweatsock — hollow pointed, .22's — they would mushroom out and leave a hole the size of a silver dollar. It was a hit or miss situation: I was going to pay the President a visit.

Ralph stuck his head into my room. "What the hell?"

"I've got business to take care of," I told him.

He looked at me. "I wouldn't go outside, if I were you."

"What do you mean?"

"Don't you know?" He shook his head. "Red

Feathers group just blew up the barn. The National Guard is coming any second."

I smiled and edged past him.

"I wouldn't go," he pleaded. "It couldn't be that important."

"It is," I assured him. "I'm going to bump off the Pres."

He rolled his eyes. "You're nuts," he said.

"I probably am. I probably am."

I stayed in the shadows as I meandered my way across campus. The smell of smoke filled the air. Sirens moaned and gunshots cackled over the din of screaming students. Before I reached the President's house, I loaded the zipgun and smoked a final cigarette. I soon found myself on the President's porch. A light was on in one of the upstairs bedrooms. The rest of the house was dark. I knew I would probably wait until morning to complete my mission. I leaned against the wooden porch rail and readied myself for an all-night vigil. My palms sweated; the gun was slippery in my hand. Oh God, I thought, if I'd only done my work. If only the school had stayed with comments, if only I'd never heard of Bennington, then none of us would be in this mess.

I thought I heard a car, yet there were no headlights. I resumed my post. I heard something stirring in the bushes and I crossed the porch, moving towards the spot where I thought the sound had come from. Nothing was there. Nerves, I guess. I heard yet another noise and a high-beam light flooded into my face and I knew the jig was up. I heard Don Ryan's voice.

"Okay, this is security. Your roommate called us. Surrender and there'll be no blood."

The lights went on in the President's house. I heard more sirens on the way.

"You'll never get me alive, Ryan." I pointed the gun at him and he backed away. "Mr. President, this is your fault." Ryan guffawed and I raised the gun again. He backed off and I resumed my speech. "This is a school for individuals. You can't assign labels of assessment to such highly individual people without expecting the worst. You destroy—"

More police cars tore down the drive. I could not collect my thoughts.

"You c-c-can't expect p-people to tolerate such b-blatant tyranny. We are tomorrow's future. W-w-what about the n-new world?"

Scores of uniformed cops stood outside their cars, laughing heartily in the cold night air.

"Communist," came a voice from the crowd. Someone threw a rock at me. It bounced off my shoulder and went sailing through the President's window. I tried to carry on.

"You have to r-realize —" Another rock beamed me on the skull. I staggered back against the wall. I heard Don Ryan's voice over the crowd.

"Let me at him," he said. "Just let me at him." He moved towards me, unfaltering, determined. I knew my goose was cooked. I put the gun in my mouth. The crowd gasped.

Well, fortunately, I guess, function followed form. The gun did not work. As Ryan took me by the arm and proceeded to stomp the life out of me, I remember thinking that a stint in Payne Whitney didn't seem so bad after all.

Letters

To the Editor:

Having just read the letter informing us of the tuition increase, I am struck with one question: why doesn't this 8:1 student/teacher ratio manifest itself in classroom size?

I am now a sophomore and have yet to take a class with under 10 students — more likely, between 15-20. This year, I have two classes with over 20, and I hear there are classes with 60-plus students.

If the main justification for the increase is this ratio, I think there should be an increase in faculty so that tutorials might be available to everyone, or so at least there is a better classroom size.

Name withheld
upon request

To the Editor:

As a newcomer to Bennington, I do not yet have a grasp on the political workings of the school; however, last Monday, after witnessing the bloodletting at Tishman, it became apparent to me that some sort of spirit of unity is lacking in the College's approach to its current financial crisis.

Time and again, a student would wield a pointed question, search for some soft flesh on President Murphy's flank (which wasn't a scarcity) and then jab and twist as if there were some pleasure involved in the whole ordeal. Tempers flared and egos entangled themselves where they are of little help. I don't think Bennington will make it if the self-righteous attitude of most everyone involved doesn't give way to cooperation and a serious effort to alleviate the precarious position of the school.

Name withheld upon request

To the Editor:

I'm writing to express my relief that the President has finally gotten together with the College community and let us know what the hell is going on. I think it's about time, and think we should be first on his list of priorities when it comes to hearing news releases, rather than relying on stories in national magazines and national television.

We, the students, comprise the people who pay the President's salary; but even more importantly, the school is being run for us — don't we have the right, before anyone else, to know exactly what's going on?

Let's leave these emergency meetings to the hospitals.

Name withheld
upon request

Warriors' fighting just too much fun

"The Warriors" has evoked quite an astounding variety of reactions and criticism since its release less than three months ago. Paramount Pictures was delighted by the movie's terrific draw at the box office: over \$17 million grossed in the first six weeks. But their cheerful mood was dampened somewhat when it became apparent that the movie was provoking acts of violence in and around the theaters where it opened. Apprehension soon turned into something like panic when three deaths were attributed to the movie's influence. Fearing lawsuits, which typically follow right on the heels of violent deaths, Paramount abruptly halted their provocative ad campaign which featured various gang members in their colors, complete with bats, chains and defiant demeanors. There was some talk of retracting the movie completely but a Paramount spokesman successfully argued that such a rash move would set an ugly precedent.

By MICHAEL ROGERS

Down at the local Cinema, I asked the policeman sitting in a patrol car out front of the ticket booth if he thought that there might be some trouble after the late showing of "The Warriors." "No," he said flatly and turned his key in the ignition. "Well, don't underestimate us," I mumbled over the rumble of the engine and swaggered to the window to have my ticket halved. This "Warriors" movie really does something to people, I thought, as I bought a 75¢ popcorn; am I exempt from its influence?

What is it about "The Warriors" that inspires violence? It isn't the most violent movie I've seen by any means. Clint Eastwood in "Dirty Harry" and even Bruce Lee in "Enter the Dragon" were more brutal than any one of the Warriors. The rhythmic martial arts style of fighting in the movie has been called, by none other than The New York Times, "exhilaratingly visceral, with no thought of pain or gore." There aren't even any fatalities resulting directly from the bat, switchblade and chain gang battles (although a cop does throw a Warrior in front of a subway train and the Riffs triple team the gang's leader Cleon). Only in director Walter Hill's carefully

staged visual effects is the violence evident. We see it in the vivid 'dayglo' colors set against black backgrounds, a subway tunnel say or a forbidding Riverside Park. The streets are like "wet greenish-black velvet" and the buildings appear to have an ominous lean to them. The actors themselves are stone-jawed and expressionless for the most part. The conversation between the characters is downplayed. The focus falls, by no accident, on the action, and the fighting is thereby glorified.

Sol Yurick's 1965 novel, on which the movie is based, evidently deals heavily with the psychology of gang violence, but Hill abandoned that emphasis in his highly stylized "comic-book" version. As the adventure begins, we see a subway train crawling along an elevated track past the Wonder Wheel in Coney Island. The Warriors are on the train. They are headed for a convention in the Bronx, to which they have been summoned by Cyrus, leader of the Riffs, a large and influential Bronx group. Everybody is coming to hear this "magic dude," Cyrus. As it plunges in and out of tunnels collecting gaudily-dressed gang members, the subway establishes itself as the "central nervous system" of the film and is representative of the screaming intensity so vital to the movie's life. Heavy rock music, composed by Joe Walsh especially for "The Warriors," sustains the movie's pulse.

"Do ya think we'll get tah waste a few heads along thuh way?," grins Alex, a particularly powerful Warrior.

"You just soldier and keep your mouth shut," snaps Cleon, the black gang leader.

The tension of the subway ride gives way to the volatile atmosphere of the convention, held in an outdoor playground, where all the gangs mull uneasily without mingling, perhaps anticipating a break in the truce that has been declared. The Riffs police the podium. Cyrus' speech is unconvincing but inspires the assembly to shout and wave their arms. The plan: to take over New York City, borough by borough, through the sheer strength of numbers. "Can you count, suckers?," wails Cleon. New York's police force, numbering 20,000, versus gang members and affiliates totaling 60,000. Unite and conquer for a big piece of the action. Cyrus is mercifully assassinated in the middle of his pathetic oration (he would have been far more convincing as a gospel-type speaker) by a psychotic gang leader in the crowd. In the ensuing confusion, the Warriors' leader Cleon is falsely accused of the shooting and killed by the Riffs, though not without an impressive fighting exhibition (I found myself wishing he was with his

scatters as the police make the scene but the word is out: the Warriors did it. Every gang in the tribal patterned city between the Bronx and Coney Island is out to get the Warriors. A disc jockey dedicates "Nowhere to Run" to the gang and broadcasts reports of their whereabouts. The Riffs surrogate leader says to his kimono-clad hoodlums "I want them, alive if possible, but I want them!"

The plot is, again according to The New York Times, "a comic-book version of Xenophon's account of how the Greek warriors, whose leader was killed in Persia, had to make their own way home." The performance ethic from the ancient Trojan battlefield comes alive; prowess in battle and quick-witted street savvy are the necessary criteria to earn the esteem of your gang members. The Warriors are resourceful and loyal to the end. The tone of the film is similar to that of Kubrick's "A Clockwork Orange." Ajax, for example is just like Dim, worth three men in a fight but not too bright. The gang falls from one confrontation to the next. They slide by the fearsome Turnbull A.C.'s, skinheads in overalls, and step on the Orphan's turf. They hop their way through a terrific battle with the uniformed, painted-faced Baseball Furies only to succumb to a thorny-rose seduction by a lesbian gang called the Lizzies (Sirens, thank you). The Warriors are constantly sidetracked by women — a girl named Mercy (the most brutal scene of the movie occurs when she delivers her mushy little philosophy of life to Swann, the gang member who is appointed "warchief" after Cleon gets wasted), a policewoman (who doesn't look like a policewoman), and the Lizzies — and all cost them a lot of time and bruises. They make it back to Coney, but not without their losses.

In the end the Warriors, once punks, are bona-fide heroes. "You Warriors are good," says the Riffs leader after an informer finally tells him that our team was not at fault, "real good."

"The best," replies Swann.

They suffered unjustly, but without complaint. "Grit your teeth and forge ahead" might be their motto. The Times noted that the movie comes out strong for "courage, loyalty and true love — for just about everything in fact except motherhood." This is the intrinsic flaw involved in the movie's very conception. Hill has taken the very real problems of low-class urban male adolescence, its identity crises, its territorial aspect, even its clumsy sexuality, and put them into a fantastic comic-book context. Some kids who see it are bound to emulate their heroes and find out that it really hurts.

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Bi-weekly

Vanguard, the student newspaper, will appear bi-weekly this semester, it was announced by the Vanguard Editorial Board recently.

Following its first issue last semester, Vanguard appeared only once, due to an auto accident in which several staff members were involved.

"I don't think we'll have any problems at all if we can get some student support," says Barry Weinbaum, Vanguard Editor-in-Chief.

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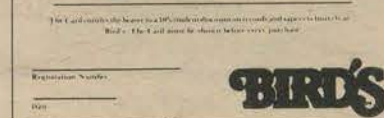
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College President Joseph Murphy called a special community meeting last week in which he spoke and answered questions on many of the problems that have besieged the College of late.

Speaking before a packed Tishman audience, the President said that the school is in no danger of closing its doors, but said there will have to be more trustee responsibility if the College is to do more than survive.

Murphy also commented on the I-20 controversy, saying "I've made a mistake and I regret it, and I don't know what more I can say."

Photo by Ty Rensch

THE FOUR CHIMNEYS

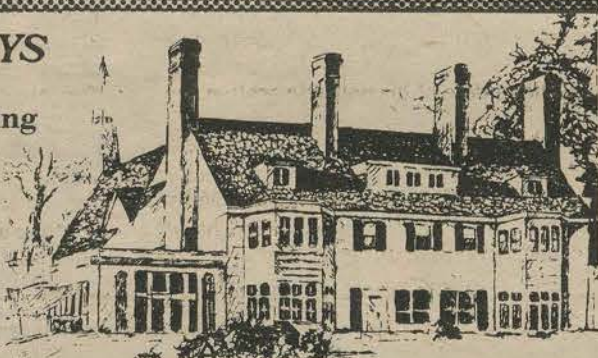
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Softball preview

Season opens next week against 'The V'

By SIDNEY SLAYTER

"Spring training has begun," shouted softball player Ken Fowler as he toppled from his familiar perch at the end of the bar. Utility outfielder Topper "Hot Spot" Lilien reaffirmed Ryan's sentiments, ordering another round, and presidential-hopeful "Spike" Farley was not one to argue. For it is one of those custom-made coincidences of The Almighty — like the dove-tailing of Ted Williams and Yaz — that the members of this year's softball squad are also The Villager's most frequent patrons. So while others excel at academics, searching for new horizons and pushing forth man's half-assed pursuit of wisdom, and still other's greet spring by classical rituals and orgies at the end of the world, this untidy band of alcoholic novelists will be knocking the cover off the old ball.

The team looks strong this year, having lost only John Ryan to the Yankees and Michael Tarbox to the S.F.P.D. ("A bum wrap," Tarbox shrieked to reporters.) A few bright faces even turned up in The V, though only for a monetary stay. ("He hit me first," an angry Mike Roger's lamented.) But from the only practice the team attempted ("—it, let's go to The V," a tired Barry Weinbaum suggested), things are indeed far from sober. Routine flies were swatted at as if they were smaller than insects. Throws from rusty arms were sluggish and inaccurate. And things promise only to get worse as the weather warms, the beers cool and the women shed their clothes to revealing dimensions.

With the season opener in a week against The Villager, the squad will have to work "damn hard," Ryan says, to be spared embarrassment. Here's how the team shapes up:

Topper Lilien: Always strong in the late innings, Top could single-handedly drink the entirety of the softball team's meager budget. A preppie reject by habit and a poor baseball player by nature, Topper will have to work hard to find a spot in a very competitive line-up.

Michael Rogers: Another preppie who is used to winning, Rogers will have to learn not to take the game so seriously if he wants to play. A recent brawl at The Villager, though, proves his quick assimilation into the American Way and general lack of purpose.

Kenrick Fowler: Always good for a few laughs every inning, "Frosty" is assured a position on this year's squad. A second-year letterman, he knows the game well, though to the casual and sober spectator, his play might suggest otherwise. Likely position: catcher or metaphysician.

Barry Weinbaum: No stick, no woman, no arm, but what the hell, no cry. "The Kid" is definitely this team's Bucky Dent, with his crazy and wild sex appeal (hey girls, wouldn't you just love to run your hands through his back), lack of ability and amazing luck.

Tim Littlefield: Ryan is concerned as to whether or not Littlefield will ever take off his topsiders to don spikes. A controversial player who has the residents of Canfield in tears with his countless foul balls, "TW," as he affectionately calls himself, has all the right virtues of a young Republican.

Kevin Farley: Intelligent, handsome, athletic and quick of wit, "Spike" doesn't drink enough to deserve a high spot in the batting order. A new craving for power might also distract from his graceful swing on and off the field.

Perry Norris: Serious academic work (no kidding) and George Guy might hinder this 5th term senior's poking this spring. I mean to the opposite field.

Noah Rosen: Spends much too much time in VAPA and

Jennings changing the world of contemporary music to take ball seriously this spring.

Chris Clark: A classic example that those who can, do study, and those who can't, do play softball. Ah, but what the hell, Clark's just there for the beer and women.

Andy Ratchett: "The Torch" is a real asset and a nice guy.

David Becker: E Pluribus Unum.

Other hopefuls include: Carroll Cartwright and brother Hoss, Bader Howar, Joe Murphy, Evans and Mara Maizitis.

For others interested in try-outs, practices are held randomly at 3:30 everyday.

Some objections have been raised about the team's nonacademic candor and lack of women. "Sexist," one Benny U. female charged and a philosophy major was heard saying he saw no "existential merit to this sort of subhuman behavior." Kevin Earley apologized and added, "at least we play at the far end of commons."

At right, third base coach Topper Lilien flashes the sign for the Ol' Senecan suicidal squeeze. Below: much of the team has been laid up by social disease, but a few hard cores (from left: Barry Weinbaum, Perry Norris, Ken Fowler, Topper, Mike and Clark) pose for a photographer in better days at Fort Lauderdale, Florida.



Photo by Bader Howar



Photo by Bader Howar



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