



**BENNINGTON COLLEGE:  
A WORKING EXPERIMENT**

*The chemistry of intellectual and artistic growth is a great mystery. It cannot be forced; it cannot be legislated. The best we can do is to create the circumstances and conditions which seem to favor it. Bennington provides an environment which has encouraged extraordinary creative vitality and has made learning a compelling and intense venture for students. Our inability to explain the phenomenon fully in no way shades the fact that the chemistry is here; the same chemistry that provided such fertile ground for major movements in American cultural life — from modern dance to abstract expressionism.*

—President Joseph S. Murphy

*...probably the most remarkable thing about Bennington (is) the way students can surpass all expectation. Expectation is a dry word for it. Students are given great dignity here and they get it partly from other students, too; but whatever they can be, they can be here. I don't know what the mystery is and how it happens, but I can see it in students who change from one year to the next.*

—Marguerite Stewart, member of the Literature and Languages faculty

Photography by: Perry Adleman '79, Alex Brown '73, Julia Driskell '83, Virginia A. Gamage '77, Kristen Lippincott '76, Charles R. Putney, Don Raina, Tyler Resch, Leonard Sachs '75.



Joseph S. Murphy



Marguerite Stewart

## Bennington College at a Glance

Private, co-educational since 1969; enrollment is approximately 600 students (400 women, 200 men).

College calendar: between September and mid-June, there are two resident terms of 14 weeks each, separated by a non-resident term of 9 weeks.

Four-year liberal arts program with possible majors in Black Music, Dance, Drama, Literature and Languages, Natural Science and Mathematics, Music, Social Science, Visual Arts, and Interdivisional, leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree; two-year graduate programs in Dance, Drama, Music, and Visual Arts, leading to the Master of Fine Arts.

Graduates by Division of Major, June, 1979:

Dance	7
Drama	8
Literature and Languages	26
Music	13
Natural Science and Mathematics	8
Social Science	23
Visual Arts	14
Interdivisional	<u>46</u>
(11 academic combinations,	145
(24 arts/academic combinations,	
(11 arts combinations)	

37% of the student body receives financial aid, with average financial aid package totaling \$5,600 for those entering in Fall, 1979.

After Bennington, approximately 35% of graduates go directly to graduate schools in professional and academic fields.

Student/faculty ratio is 9:1; average class size is 14.

*I don't know why I'm here. I don't know anything about education and I only went through eighth grade myself; but I have been on a silo base before and know all about silage. And perhaps education based on a silo has some appropriateness after all, because both silos and colleges are supposed to take green things and through great fermentation, mature them.*

**—Vermont Governor Stanley C. Wilson, speaking at the Bennington College groundbreaking ceremony on August 16, 1931**



## THE EXPERIMENT

Fifty years ago Bennington College was an experiment. Today, it is a working experiment. A liberal arts college dedicated to the study and practice of the arts, sciences and humanities, Bennington was born of and remains bound to the idea that education is the process of an individual's self-development. Bennington's strength lies in the consistency with which it has practiced the philosophical ideals that are the foundations of the College.

A word of caution at the outset: the chances of forming an accurate impression of Bennington from this sort of booklet are probably no better than even. This is due partly to perception—nearly every member of the community sees the College differently—and partly to the College's remarkable flexibility, which makes it difficult to be general and accurate about Bennington at the same time. Moreover, many elements of what was once a striking departure in higher education have

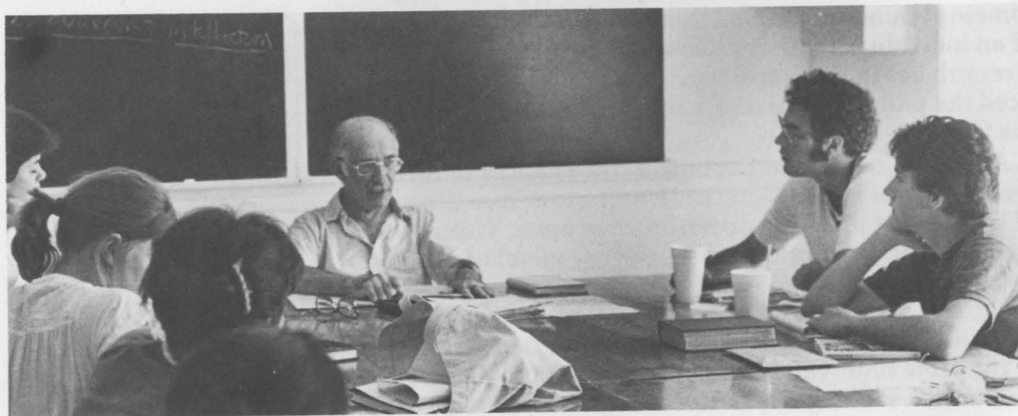
Photo from the College archives shows Governor Wilson on the silo base in 1931 ceremonies. The same silo base is used for annual graduation ceremonies.



now been absorbed by other institutions and their spokesmen. Or, more precisely, the *language* has been absorbed, so that words and phrases used to describe Bennington—once fresh and telling—may now seem hackneyed. But the distinction, the specialness Bennington has enjoyed for fifty years persists. Many colleges have by now adopted some of the educational practices pioneered by Bennington in the early 1930's; few, however, have adopted the philosophy and commitment to the individual that is at the core of this unique approach to education. The educational policies practiced here since the beginning—the incorporation of the arts and an off-campus work term into the formal curriculum, the absence of imposed social regulations, required courses, or grades—are simply realizations of an educational ideal that was considered radically experimental fifty years ago.

It is no longer so. What we do is no longer considered extreme, but we have not become ordinary. It is unlikely that we will: even though in one sense the experiment is over (what we do *works*), in another sense the experiment is ongoing and no less important. We know the *method* works but not for everyone; and so the experimental factor that remains is human risk. The bringing together of carefully selected unknown elements—students and teachers—is the essential function of this working experiment.

**Bernard Malamud and his Virginia Woolf course.**



## THE BENNINGTON IDEA

What makes the Bennington approach to education valuable is the College's commitment to an educational process in which the primary goal is that students learn to read, think, analyze, write, perform, experiment—in sum, to get their hands dirty in developing and exercising intellectual and artistic discrimination. There is no accomplishment of more lasting value than this. The acquisition of factual knowledge is a natural and welcome by-product of refined critical faculties but it is not considered to be the only end. It is the development of an imaginative intellect—of the *capacity* for knowledge and rational thought—that forms the basis of Bennington's approach to the teaching of academic subject matter. Bennington's pedagogical approach to the visual and performing arts, regarded here as essential to a liberal education, is, on the one hand, specifically non-academic: art is to be *made*, and to do so one must carefully cultivate and exercise creative abilities. On the other hand, the Bennington approach is an intellectual one also: the process of making art is first of all an operation of ideas. At Bennington, these enterprises—the artistic and the intellectual, as they are traditionally perceived—are enlivened and joined by the belief that learning is industry and *doing*: making historical and literary analyses, undertaking scientific experiments, composing dance and music; in short, being a practitioner, not an observer.

It is a necessary corollary to this notion that the people who teach at Bennington are also participants and doers. The faculty is made up of working social scientists, historians, writers, scientists, performing and visual artists; they teach here because, as one faculty member put it, they are free to teach "what keeps us awake at night." Furthermore, they are able to teach and counsel bright, responsive, adventurous students who value the opportunity to work closely with professionals and scholars.

The student/faculty ratio at Bennington is 9:1. It is an extraordinarily rich correspondence, indispensable to an educational process in which individuals are dealt with individually. The College is looking for inquisitive,



able students who want to take part in this experiment, who want to take advantage of the richness that is at the very center of Bennington's purpose.



Howard Nemerov

*Ideally, what we develop in the student is neither knowledge nor technique but an attitude that seems compounded of humility and confidence; this comes from being at the center of something, and the sense of being at the center of something comes from trying to do that something, trying to know it rather than know about it; the attitude also has a touch of gaiety, or anyhow does not confuse seriousness with a church-going expression.*

—Howard Nemerov, poet and former member of the Literature and Languages faculty

## Organization of Study

The fact that Bennington has no required courses (except those that are inherent within the study of any given discipline) is confirmation of a belief that students' educational needs are as varied as the students themselves; moreover, that Bennington students are, with faculty counsel, capable of exercising sound judgment in the planning of their programs of study and should be given the freedom to do so. At the same time, Bennington is emphatically a liberal arts college, and students who come here should want to use the College as a liberal arts college should be used: broadly.

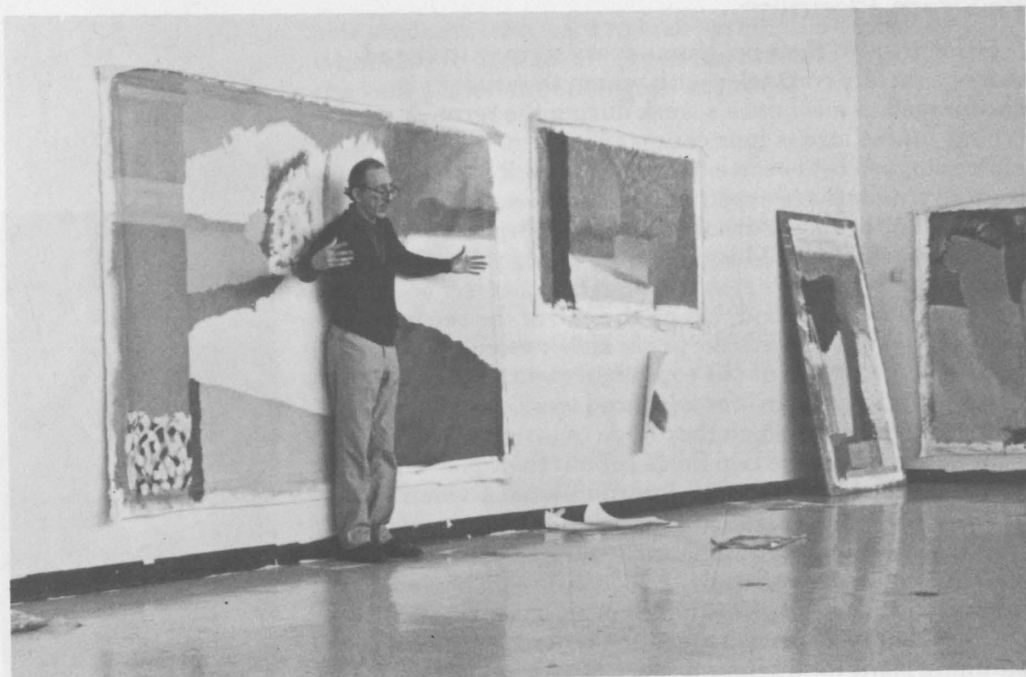
## Program Planning

Students plan their programs every term with the advice of a faculty counselor with whom the student is encouraged to meet once a week during the term. A typical course load is four courses per term. Because we at Bennington believe in exploration as well as concentration, students are expected to include work in at least four of the eight divisions of the College within their first two years. Most students satisfy this requirement in their first semester without being aware of it and quite a number find that by the end of the second year they have sampled five or six divisions out of sheer curiosity. At the end of the sophomore year, students write a "tentative plan" for advanced work and submit it to the division in which they hope to major. Students who want to combine two fields submit their plans for Interdivisional majors to an Interdivisional committee.

The second two years are devoted to acquiring mastery in the major field as well as continuing work in at least one other area of study. A "confirmation of plan" is submitted at the end of the junior year, indicating any changes that have been made in the tentative plan and outlining plans for a senior project. Senior projects are required in all divisions except Natural Science and Mathematics, where they are optional. In Social Science and Literature and Languages, the senior project is normally a thesis—an extended piece of research, criticism or creative writing. In the performing arts it is, naturally enough, a performance; in the visual arts it is the completion of a body of work to be included in the Senior Show.

The view from Commons lawn.





Faculty member Sidney Tillim, painter and art historian.

The following is a selected list of senior theses written by graduates of the class of 1979:

*Perspectives on Aging: Seven Case Studies; On Intuition: Jung and Merleau-Ponty; Robert Frost: the Winter Moment; Epic Myth-making in Don Quixote: A Study of Inversions; Evil and Disorder in Anthropological Perspective; A Translation: Bestiario and Carta a una Señorita en Paris, written by Julio Cortazar; The Ecological Role of Tamarack, Parix laricina (DuRoi) K. Koch in the Southern Vermont Valley; Age-Related Organic Brain Syndrome: Tillie: A Case History; Ambivalence and Desolation: A Study of the Late Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins; The Transition of the Italian Communes (1130-1250); Energy Policy in Vermont; Central Park: The Fulfillment of an American Dream; The Absurd and Other Blues: An Appreciation of Samuel Beckett's Trilogy; An Analysis of Grimm's Fairy Tales; Urban Migrants to Ankara, Turkey: A Case Study of the Migrants from Ortakoy Village; Collected Short Stories (creative thesis); Aspiration and Action: German Middle and Lower Classes in the Revolution of 1848; The Islamic City: A Koranic Interpretation; Social Science and Methodological Critiques.*

## Evaluation of Study

Further confirmation of Bennington's belief that education is a wholly individual process is the fact that the College is not interested in assessing students' progress by making mechanical comparisons between them. Bennington faculty members evaluate a student's progress through written comments about the student's strengths and weaknesses. While it is important to evaluate how a student is developing his or her potential relative to the demands of a given discipline, competition between students as a spur to achievement is antithetical to Bennington's philosophy. Competition *within* students is another matter, however, and the College encourages students to see intellectual and creative accomplishments as their own reward rather than viewing them through the prism of grades. Moreover, the absence of grades may stimulate a student to take some risks which the presence of grades might discourage.

Students receive written mid-term and end-of-term comments from faculty for each course. The final comments comprise a student's official transcript. Given the success of Bennington graduates in gaining admission to leading graduate and professional schools, we have little reason to believe that an ungraded transcript is detrimental to any qualified and well-recommended Bennington graduate seeking admission to graduate school.

A tutorial in German with faculty member Reinhard Mayer, left.



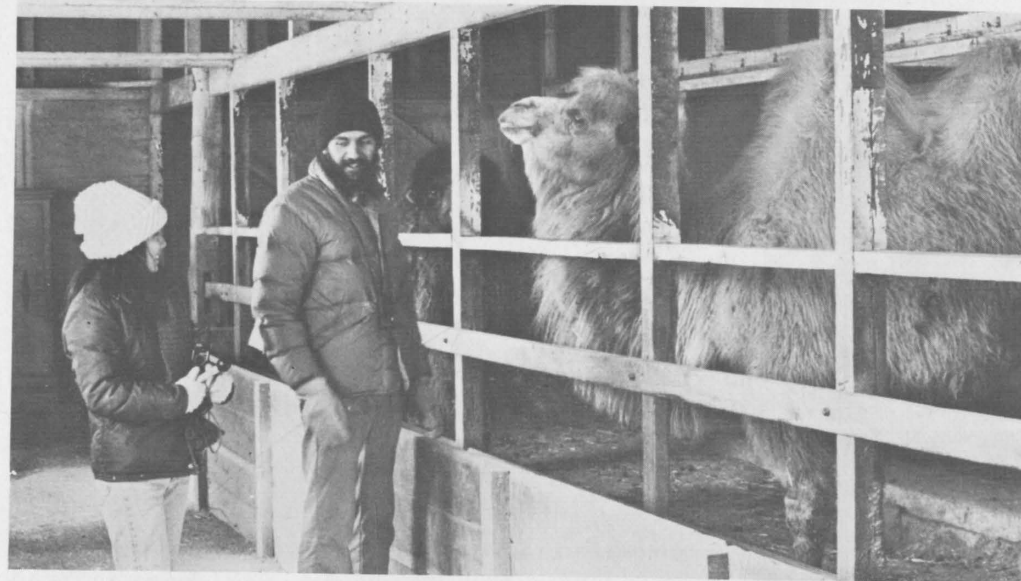
## Practice of Study: The Non-Resident Term

A Bennington education involves practice as well as theory: the third manifestation of the College's unusual philosophy, an off-campus work term, is an essential part of the academic program. The annual Non-Resident Term, nine weeks between the Fall and Spring terms, provides students with opportunities for employment in the working world.

While Bennington does not attempt to train students for specific careers or professions (nor does any liberal arts college), the College recognizes the importance of helping them explore the practical applications of what seems to some a rarefied, impractical type of education. The Office of Students and Student Placement is enormously helpful to students in securing employment for the winter period. With the help of alumni and friends of the College, the office develops and lists NRT jobs made available by employers throughout the United States and abroad. (This office is also responsible for providing students with information about on-campus, summer and post-graduate employment.)

In the 1978-79 academic year, there were 1,195 jobs listed in the NRT files, half paying and half volunteer. About 60% of the student body can be expected to find NRT jobs through the Office of Students and Student Placement, while some students take advantage of personal contacts to find work. Some advanced students may use the nine weeks for independent study projects, but students are ordinarily expected to be employed full time. Students are not required to have jobs that relate directly to their field of major but are encouraged to take full advantage of time and opportunity to gain exposure to careers of interest to them. Frequently, these are specific fields that do not fall within the purview of a liberal arts curriculum. The NRT is therefore extremely valuable both as a way of expanding the range of what can be studied and experienced in residence at Bennington and as a possible source of employment afterwards.

A geographical breakdown of all jobs on file (as of



December, 1978) for the 1978-79 NRT covers 35 states and 6 foreign countries, with heaviest emphasis on New York, Boston and Washington.

A partial list of employers of Bennington NRT students includes:

*ABC News, Actors Studio in New York, American School in Rome, American Folklife Center in Washington, Aspen Institute for Humanistic Study, Boston magazine, Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, Children's Museum in Boston, Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, Composers Recordings Inc. in New York, Conde Nast Publications, E.P. Dutton Inc., U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, First National Bank of Boston, Frontier Nursing Society of Kentucky, Greenpeace Foundation in Honolulu, Harvard Medical School, Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, Holabird & Root architects in Chicago, I.M. Pei & Partners in New York, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, National Zoological Park in Front Royal, Virginia, W.W. Norton & Company, Sotheby-Parke Bernet, Paris Review in New York, Philadelphia Museum of Art, San Diego Zoo, Santa Fe Community School, St. Ann's Episcopal School, Tibor de Nagy Gallery, Time Inc., Village Voice, WNET-TV in New York.*

On an NRT job at the National Zoological Park in Front Royal, Virginia: Judy Shizuru '79 and Doug LeBrun '80.





Henry Brant

*We feel here that a musician who leads his own active musical life, and who is animated by a contagious enthusiasm in his work, can transmit what he has learned first hand...If there are students who can be inspired to cultivate an inventive imagination of what future music is going to be like or is in the process of becoming, this is the way...*

**—Henry Brant, composer and member of the Music faculty**



Elizabeth Sherman

*In my advanced class in physiology this year, each student did an independent lab project, a research project of the student's own design. At the end of the year we had a mock scientific meeting where the students presented their 20-minute talks just as though we were at a conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. We timed it, we had an audience, the students made posters and slides and so forth. It was the best thing I had ever seen from undergraduates. I don't think those students are aware of how good they were. We had other faculty there and they were very impressed. The students just did remarkable work and those who will go on to graduate school will do fine, fine work because they are not afraid of manipulating things. These particular students are open, they are awed, (they) are easily surprised and joyful about science.*

**—Elizabeth Sherman, physiologist and faculty member in Natural Science and Mathematics**

## The Curriculum

Course offerings at Bennington change from year to year and vary according to current scholarly interests and concerns of the faculty. The curriculum in all divisions on the introductory level tends to be more fixed, however, in the interest of providing new students with a reasonably consistent foundation for advanced work. Students with interests that fall outside of courses offered may request tutorials, individually or in groups, with members of the faculty. Tutorials are designed primarily, but not exclusively, by third and fourth-year students.

Faculty members at Bennington follow whichever teaching method will best serve the subject matter at hand. Lectures, discussions, conferences and tutorials are all used. The aim is to teach the student how to respond to material by a critical approach which necessitates independent thinking, and to demonstrate familiarity with material by whatever means are appropriate to the subject matter. This is achieved in the sciences by laboratory and field experimentation and, frequently, examinations; in the humanities, by reading, discussion, and writing; in the arts, by creation, composition and performance.

## The Divisions

The curriculum of the College is arranged in eight divisions: Black Music, Dance, Drama, Literature and Languages, Music, Natural Science and Mathematics, Social Science, and Visual Arts. The divisions are further divided into disciplines; for example, history, psychology, economics, etc. in social Science; painting, ceramics, sculpture, etc. in Visual Arts. A student may major in one division or may design a program for advanced work that crosses divisional lines.

Brief descriptions of the eight divisions follow, along with titles and descriptions of sample courses offered in the Fall Term, 1979. A complete course listing is contained in the Bennington College Catalogue; this very small list is intended only to provide an insight into Bennington's working philosophy.



Bill Dixon of the Black Music faculty and Leslie Winston '77 during a workshop.

## Black Music

The Black Music Division, instituted in 1973, explores and performs the music black Americans have created over the past thirty years. Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor: the enlivening musical tradition embodied in these and other practitioners is the focus of attention for the Division. The Division's esthetics and music history classes serve to make students more fully aware of the influence black music has had on all contemporary music. The curriculum for musicians—ensembles, tutorials, workshops, improvisation classes—has performance as its main goal. The philosophy of all the ensembles is that even a rehearsal is a form of performance and therefore students quickly become aware of what the performer is able and allowed to do. Both improvisation and composition are emphasized.

Being black is not a prerequisite for being a participant in or a contributor to the musical offerings. All music is made up of the same emotion, ideas, sound, silence, rhythm and harmony; the inquisitive student knows that the study of any music serves to enlarge one's musical capabilities in all other musical genres as well.

### Introduction to Black Music Stephen Horenstein/Bill Dixon

*This survey course is designed to give an understanding of innovations and developments in contemporary black music from the mid-'40's to the present. Individual instrumental approaches with regard to the contrasting styles of various artists (e.g., tenor saxophonists Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Don Byas, Ben Webster, to name a few) will be a focal point. Other instruments to be explored include piano, drums, trumpet, alto saxophone, trombone, and bass. Periodic lectures by other members of the faculty. Open to all students.*

### Keyboard Harmony Black Music Faculty

*This course is designed for the intermediate and advanced level musician who desires a working knowledge of keyboard harmony and how it relates to current practices in contemporary black music. Chords and their construction, voicings, cycles, traditional progressions, voice leading, and inversions will be explored.*

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Black Music, Fall, 1979: 13.

## Dance

Bennington's history of teaching modern dance encompasses a whole stream of ideas, activities, and work created by countless numbers of students and teachers over many years. Musicians and designers are as much a part of this history as are the dancers and choreographers themselves. Dancers at Bennington, in addition to their investigation of the physical aspects of moving and the discipline of movement, learn the technical aspects of theatre such as lighting, stagecraft and costuming.

Four years is a short span of time for the study of anything—and most particularly dance. In whatever ways they can devise, students and teachers at Bennington endeavor to make their study and practice of dance as real and immediate as time and circumstances will permit. They strive for technical strength and freedom, physical and aesthetic sensitivity and creative expression. At Bennington, dance is taught and experienced as a performing art. It is easy, and sometimes tempting, to confuse the study of dance with other things—with, for instance, exercise, therapy, meditation or sheer physical fun. Dance is, of course, a relative of all these areas—but it is considerably more. It is a communicative art form which necessitates an awareness of audience and a sense of occasion and presentation, a certain personal risk-taking in the making and performing of one's own work. These are the areas of work in dance that are given greatest attention at Bennington.

### Sources: An Introduction to Dance

Martha Wittman/  
Josef Wittman

*Partly historical, partly practical, this course is designed for students new to Bennington and new to dance. Materials of movements and sound will be explored in relation to our present day selves and culture. We will look at the past in the double context of experiencing dance as a social activity and as a performing art. Moving, listening, reading, writing, talking, watching. Open to first year students.*

### Composition

Dance Faculty

*The emphasis in composition will be on the creation and organization of movement materials into a coherent and communicative whole. Approaches studied will range from those in which decisions as to time, place, space, ges-*



Dancers Mary Lyman '79 and Frances Edwards '80 in a rehearsal.



ture and tone are set, to improvisation in which composition and performance take place simultaneously.

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Dance, Fall, 1979: 12 (does not include 14 technique classes).



Actress Estelle Parsons, one of many visiting artists to the campus, during a performance in the Lester Martin Theatre of the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

## Drama

The Drama Division believes strongly that because theatre is a performing art, all training—whether it be in acting, directing, playwriting or design—must eventually be put to use on stage. Although the curriculum includes the study of dramatic literature, history, and theory, the practice of the art of theatre predominates. A wide range of acting classes is available, as well as classes in directing (taught by visiting professional directors), dance for the actor, voice, and speech. Courses are offered in all areas of design—set, costume, and lighting. One-act plays, faculty-directed full productions, original works, and senior projects take up a major share of a theatre student's time.

As is true of all divisions at Bennington, participation is not limited to the majoring student; many advanced students in other fields are also serious students of drama. Each student in drama is expected to participate in workshops and productions, whether as a set builder, actor or costume maker. Visiting groups, guest directors, playwrights and theatre professionals contribute further to the understanding of theatre arts. Individual tutorials can be arranged when a student has a specialized need or a keen interest in a subject which is not part of the regular curriculum.

A drama major's last term is spent working on a creative senior project which should call forth all the skills, competence, and training the student has acquired at Bennington.

### Intermediate Acting

Leroy Logan

*This one-term course is designated as the second half of Introductory Acting, but may be entered by incoming students with considerable previous experience or training. Entry in this case is gained by interview and audition. The work will continue to center around improvisation, but will broaden to include more in-depth work on monologues. Required reading includes Stanislavski, Chekhov, Grotowski, and Chaikin.*

## Design for Performance

Tony Carruthers

*A non-technical introduction to the spatial and pictorial elements of performance: the stage, its scenic elements and how they define a place, a mood, a time. The course will emphasize the process of integrating design into the overall structure of a performance, and will include model making and the fundamentals of scale, drafting, and visual representation. It will include the discussion of material on slides showing both past and current theatrical styles. Open to all students.*

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Drama, Fall, 1979: 15.

## Literature and Languages

Instead of taking survey courses, students of literature at Bennington study with working critics, novelists and poets in small classes and seminars. Students are expected to demonstrate an imaginative appreciation of literary values and critical techniques through their own written work. Creative writing is accorded academic status equal to critical and historical analysis; workshops in poetry and prose (ordinarily not open to freshmen) are taught every semester by different members of the faculty. As in all divisions at Bennington, tutorials are available to those who have interests that fall outside the standard curriculum.

Students of language may work at the introductory, intermediate or advanced level in French, German or Spanish; there are also limited offerings in Latin and Greek. As soon as their proficiency permits, usually at the intermediate level of study, students turn to concentrate on the relevant literature. Language majors are encouraged to spend one or two terms studying abroad at universities appropriate to their interests and to explore other English language and foreign literature; or, alternatively, they may choose to combine their study of language with the history, art or social structure of another culture.

A thesis is required to complete a major in the Literature and Languages Division; it may take the form of literary criticism, a collection of poems or a sustained piece of fiction. Students concentrating in language usually undertake a translation or a critical analysis written in the language being studied.



George Steiner, author and critic, delivering the first annual Ben Belitt Lecture.



## Language and Literature

## Literature Faculty

All members of the Literature Division, with a few occasional exceptions, teach the introductory course in literature. The beginnings of a discipline are the most difficult and important and therefore demand not the least but the most skilled teachers to teach them effectively. The Fall Term is not elective but assigned by sections to all students electing to begin the study of literature. The purpose of the course is to teach students how to read and write. This is done best by teaching reading and writing as a single indivisible activity. Reading in the course is taught by a close and careful scrutiny of a few major and representative texts in a given genre, and writing is taught by the writing—with detailed criticisms afterwards—of at least four short papers each term. One of these is usually a poem or a story. The Fall Term is devoted to the study of poetry—because poetry seems to be the best way to learn to read any language with precision and insight and because the study of poetry, an art in itself, is usually the area least familiar to beginning students. In the Spring, members of the Division teach narrative and drama. The course is elective in the way any other course in the Division is. One course in poetry in the Spring, and one in narrative in the Fall, is offered for students entering in March and for students deciding to study literature only after their first term. All courses are limited to fifteen students. Two terms of introductory work are usual before intermediate and advanced work.

### Memory and Narrative Sequence

Jerome Mazzaro

The course will probe the relationship between memory and fictional form, beginning with Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and moving to James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. The course will center on Augustin trilogy of memory, word, and will and using word (language) as primal myth, and will deal with the theories of memory from the pre-Socratics to the post-Bergsonians and contemporary linguistic theory. Open to second, third and fourth-year students.

### Poetry Workshop

Stephen Sandy

Writing of original verses to form self-expression; writing of exercises in verse to stem self-expression. Open to qualified students upon consent of instructor after submission of samples of written work. Prerequisite: work in literature. Open to second, third and fourth-year students.

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Literature and Languages, Fall, 1979: 34.

## Music

The aim of Bennington's music program is to make music. Since this requires the constant interaction of three crafts—composing, performing and instrument building—all students start off almost immediately writing music, performing in classes and concerts, and making instruments. Classes are open to all students, regardless of musical background, but students are grouped according to level of proficiency.

Even at elementary levels, composition at Bennington goes beyond exercises in abstract technique; it is valued as a powerful vehicle both for individual expression and for providing insight into understanding the minds of master composers past and present. Believing that student composers are entitled to hear their music as soon as possible, the faculty makes every effort to ensure that all student work, no matter how short or how long, is properly rehearsed, and where appropriate, performed and recorded. Music students focus on the devices of composition essential to all periods and ages of music, but 20th century idiom, language and thought are generally stressed.

Because performance is an essential part of making music, students are expected to take tutorial, group or class instruction from performing members of the faculty. Classes in all areas of chamber music are part of group tutorial and classroom work. Single or group tutorials can be arranged for aspects of music that are not part of the regular curriculum. The curriculum also includes offerings in musical electronics and acoustics.

Bennington's extensive schedule of public concerts includes group and solo efforts presented by the faculty, by students alone, by students and faculty together, and often with the collaboration of visiting artists. Programs are purposely chosen to demonstrate as many different periods and genres as possible, with frequent presentation of contemporary music, including new works by students and faculty.

### Music I

Louis Calabro/Vivian Fine/Henry Brant

A broad introductory presentation of fundamental aspects of practical musicianship, involving both performing and writing skills. Open to all stu-



Marianne Finckel of the Music faculty and Heidi Holman '79.

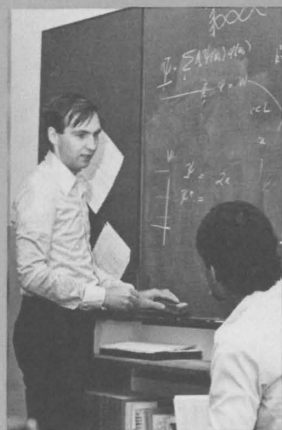
dents, irrespective of musical background and experience, including total beginners. The class is divided into three sections, each of which studies the creative written uses of primary musical elements under the guidance of a faculty composer. Every student additionally studies a performing skill under the guidance of a faculty performing artist. Studies in performance are scheduled separately as individual or group tutorials. Both areas of study, performance and writing, are required to receive 1/4 credit for the course. This is a full year course. Open to all students.

### Classical Chamber Music

Jacob Glick

The study of classical and romantic chamber music compositions. The class will be coached in the performance of chamber music techniques. Certain chamber music works will be taught in depth and other works will be sight-read as a way of introducing works that may be pursued independently outside of the class at the prerogative of the students. Prerequisite: rudimentary reading ability. Open to all students.

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Music, Fall, 1979: 24.



A physics class with Science faculty member Norman Derby, at the blackboard.

## Natural Science and Mathematics

Members of the science faculty at Bennington share their intellectual interests and independent research with students, and in turn encourage them to do creative work of their own. The faculty includes a molecular biologist-biochemist, physiologist-animal behaviorist, plant ecologist-botanist, physical chemist, organic chemist, physicist and two mathematicians. Interdisciplinary work is encouraged and the various courses are designed to meet the needs of students who do and those who do not expect to go on to advanced work in the sciences.

The Elizabeth Harrington Dickinson Science Building provides sophisticated space and equipment for a wide range of science exploration. Computer facilities include a PDP 11/34 computer, and BASIC, FORTRAN IV and PASCAL languages. The combination of small class size, flexible course sequences and tutorials gives students a chance to advance at their own rate—frequently more rapidly than more traditional science programs allow.

The Non-Resident Term provides an opportunity to gain first-hand research experience in a wide range of settings, including computer, medical, biological, chem-

ical and physical research laboratories, museums and field research stations. The strength of the Bennington science program is attested to by the success of its graduates in being admitted to and completing degree programs at the leading graduate, medical and other professional schools.

### Organic Evolution

Edward Flaccus

Reading and discussion of the processes which result in the evolution of plants and animals, with emphasis on modern evidence bearing on molecular evolution, genetic mechanisms, selection, speciation. This course interrelates many disciplines of biological science, in which background is desirable. Familiarity with genetics is recommended. Prerequisites: Introductory Biology and/or Botany and permission of instructor.

### Introductory Computer Course

Dennis Aebersold/  
Lee J. Supowit

This is a course for students who don't understand computers and their use but would like to know about the utility of computers in our society and want to learn how to use one of our most interesting inventions. Students will learn to use several types of computers. They will have the opportunity to use the computer for projects such as architectural design, color graphics, artistic displays and music synthesis. Open to all students.

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Natural Science and Mathematics, Fall, 1979: 18.

## Social Science

Scholars in eight fields of inquiry within the social sciences share an underlying commitment to the study of man and his society: how he has lived, how he does live and how he might live among his fellow human beings. The disciplines represented include anthropology, early childhood studies, economics, history, philosophy, politics and psychology; the teachers in these areas do not, however, view their activities as confined within narrow disciplinary boundaries, and majors are expected to be knowledgeable in more than one area. The Division emphasizes inquiry in depth. All courses, from introductory to advanced, are designed to teach students to read, write and think critically and independently. In senior tutorials the student learns how to do scholarly work for himself, seeking to maintain a careful balance between individual imagination and dis-

A student volunteer observing at the Early Childhood Center.





ciplined skills. Majors complete a senior project or thesis with a tutor of their choice.

**The Politics of Food and Natural Resources** Rosemary Galli

*The course examines the production of food as the basis for material life and "civilization." Although it begins by outlining the historical context, 1400-1800, it concentrates on contemporary food production, particularly in the United States. This includes production, processing and marketing. The course examines the impact of the industrialization of agriculture since the 1950s upon American life and the implication of this model of agricultural development for the rest of the world, particularly in light of limited fossil fuel resources. The major theme is the crisis of contemporary material life, the relationship of food production and hunger to this crisis and alternatives for social change. Intermediate. Prerequisite: previous work in social science.*

**The American** Rush Welter

*This is a seminar intended primarily for advanced students in history, philosophy or literature who wish to use one of these disciplines as the point of departure for a sustained exploration of characteristic American social ideas and values. It is intended to provide both an historical understanding of American thought and a strategy for approaching its separate elements analytically and systematically. One year course, indivisible. Open to third and fourth-year students.*

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Social Science, Fall, 1979: 30.

## Visual Arts

The Visual Arts Division at Bennington has always maintained the important distinction between "training" and "education," thus confirming the appropriateness of the position of art in a liberal arts curriculum. This has eliminated the art school approach and has made courses in literature and science, for example, relevant to work in the visual arts.

Members of the visual arts faculty are professionally active in the art world. They are not merely teaching about something, but are sharing their profession in a serious way with students who are curious about the fine arts and willing to explore that field with them. The Visual Arts Division offers a concentration in a variety of disciplines including painting, drawing, graphics, sculpture, architecture, photography and ceramics, with courses in art history and criticism as well.

Students of art at Bennington work closely with experienced artists and explore in great depth the various disciplines offered. A major in visual arts generally concentrates in two media and exhibits representative work in the Senior Show.

The unequalled facilities of the new Visual and Performing Arts Center provide large classrooms and individual studios for advanced students. The Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery holds exhibits planned by the faculty to bring current and historical work to the College community. Students are given regular opportunity to show their work in this and other less formal exhibition areas in the Visual and Performing Arts building.

**Introduction to Studio Art** Art Faculty

*The introductory course in studio art consists of two areas of concentration during the student's first year: one term in three-dimensional studies (Sculpture, Ceramics, History of Art & Ideas) and one term in two-dimensional studies (Drawing, Painting, Graphic Arts, History of Art & Ideas). The art faculty (practicing painters, sculptors, printmakers, an architect and a ceramist) will offer an extended course concentrating not only upon their particular craft but also problems pertaining to art in general. Attitudes toward history, form, design and drawing will be covered. Open to first-year students and others by permission.*

**Neo-Classicism and Romanticism** Sidney Tillim

*A course dealing primarily with painting and sculpture "from David to Delacroix"—that is, from the late 18th to the mid-19th century. Besides French art, appropriate art of England, Germany and the United States will be included, also photography. The combined epochs of Neo-Classicism and Romanticism paved the way for "Modernism." Prerequisite: Introduction to Studio Art or equivalent. Open to third and fourth-year students. (Senior and junior art majors have priority.)*

Total number of regular courses and group tutorials offered in Visual Arts, Fall, 1979: 26.

## Interdivisional

Because students design their programs of study with regard to the development and coherence of their own interests, areas of concentration frequently fall wholly within no single division, but rather between two or among several. Students who realize that their interests lie in two divisions or who wish to combine disci-

An exhibit in the College's Suzanne Lemberg Usdan Gallery.





plines from disparate fields may choose to be Interdivisional majors at the end of their second year. Many students have designed such programs in recent years. Interdivisional majors are required to include senior projects in their programs of study; they may do non-integrated projects, one term in each discipline, or they may choose to combine the disciplines in a single, full-year project.

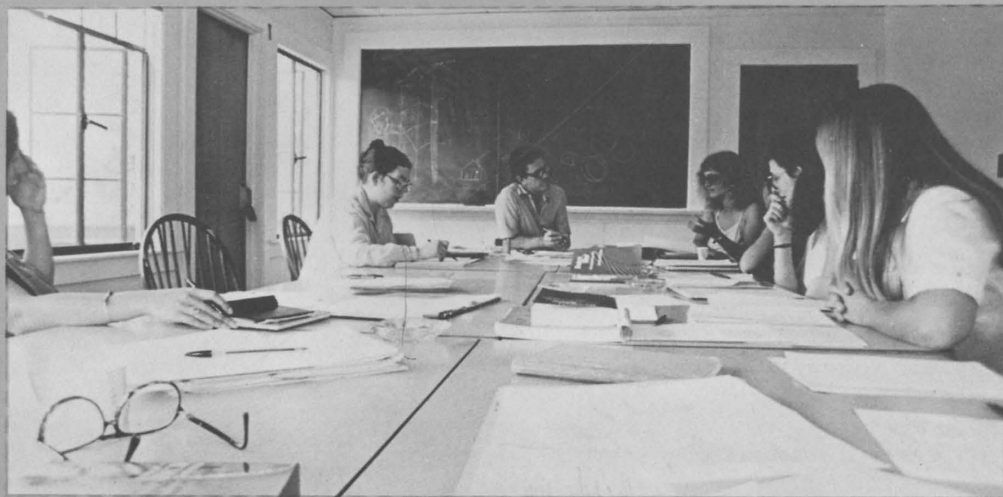
#### Average class size by division in the 1979 Fall Term:

Black Music	9
Dance	14
Dance/Drama	11
Drama	26
Literature	16
Languages	12
Music	9
Natural Science and Mathematics	12
Social Science	16
Visual Arts	15

Poet Stephen Sandy conducting a poetry workshop.

Number of individual and group tutorials given, Fall, 1978

230 individual  
15 group



## GENERAL INFORMATION



A painter finds a pastoral setting on the campus.

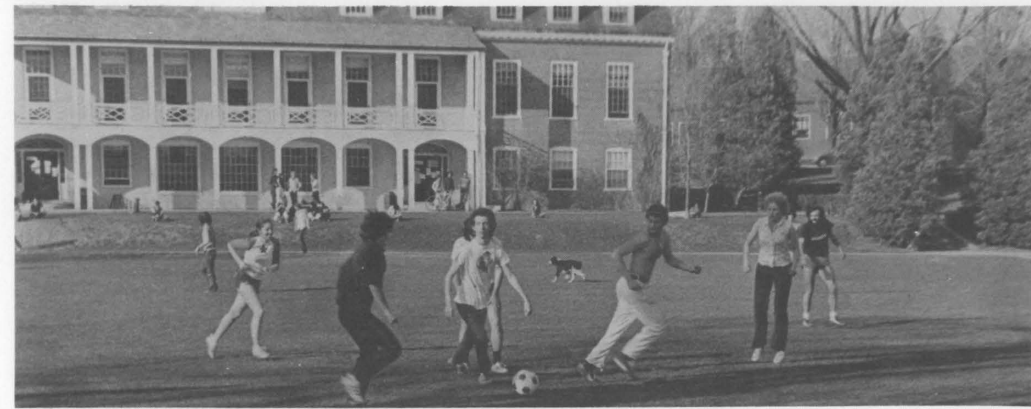
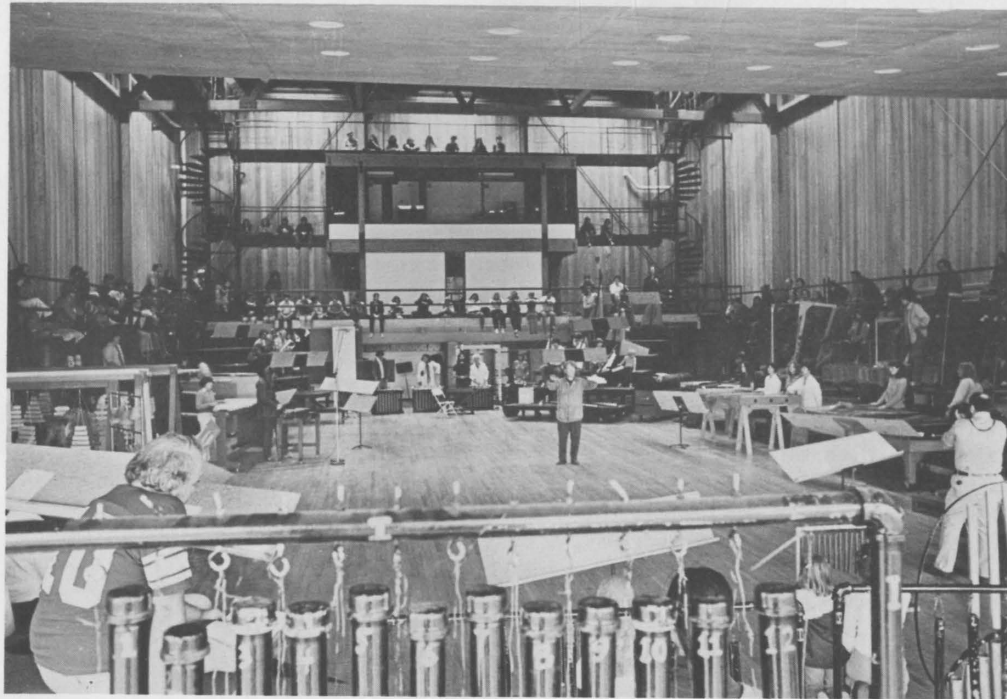
### The Campus

Bennington College is situated on 500 acres of rolling countryside in southwestern Vermont, four miles north of the town of Bennington. The site of the College is a former farm and many of the College buildings were originally barns, chicken coops and stables which have been converted to buildings with functions more suitable to academic endeavors. Some additions have been made over the years: a library of 75,000 volumes, and most recently, a well-equipped science building and a handsome new Visual and Performing Arts Center with 120,000 square feet of studios and rehearsal halls, galleries and theatres. Students have virtually unlimited access to these work spaces.

There are fifteen student residences, white clap-board with slate shingles; each has rooms for about thirty students, with kitchenettes and large central living rooms. They are laid out in the New England manner, around two sides of a central green. On the third side stands ivy-covered Commons, location of the dining halls, post office, infirmary and a lounge. The fourth side, open, looks out over a valley to Mt. Anthony and the Green Mountain range beyond.

The physical environment—with all the delights and inconveniences of rural New England—is a powerful influence. There are falls of almost blinding brilliance, and early springs when the campus seems drowned in mud. A walk in a meadow on a clear night offers unbroken quiet, quantities of stars. In one sense this beauty is paid for with isolation, but the absence of distractions provides ample opportunity for thought, study and practice.

Gunnar Schonbeck of the Music faculty conducting his Experimental Orchestra in the Greenwall Music Workshop.



Soccer on Commons lawn.

## Student Life

Because students at Bennington are individuals actively pursuing artistic and intellectual goals of importance to them, there is relatively little distinction between the curricular and the extra-curricular, the academic and the social. The College has no fraternities or sororities, no permanent clubs or organizations, and, with the exception of tennis and soccer, no athletic teams. Since students work at what they care most about within the classroom, much of their activity outside it is closely related to their course work. The result is intense and varied creative activity—concerts, plays, readings, lectures—involving students, faculty and frequent guests.

There are, of course, movies (old favorites and obscure experiments, at least two each week) and the celebrated Friday night parties. But generally, “activities” at Bennington are more the result of spontaneous collective exuberance than an impulse to organize. Rise and fall of student interest determines the nature of whatever “extra-curricular” activities there are at Bennington. A cafe run entirely by students sprang up three years ago and has persisted through three incarnations and changes in staff, clientele and character. A newspaper publishes four issues a year, give or take an issue, and there are two literary magazines on campus at the moment.



A student room.

All of this activity is generated by a student body composed of about 400 women and 200 men. Forty-six of the fifty states are represented, with the largest share of students coming from the northeast, particularly metropolitan New York and Boston. The west coast accounts for 10% of the students, however, and 10% come from foreign countries.

Students undertake primary responsibility for their own lives on campus just as they do for the direction of their own educational programs. The College is a residential community and a large part of learning how Bennington works has to do with life in the campus houses, which are all co-ed and self-governing. Each house has its own distinct character—quiet, noisy, bookish and so on—but ideally there is a prevailing thoughtfulness and consideration for others that is common to all.

## Admissions

Bennington seeks resourceful, inventive young men and women who will make intelligent, responsible use of the academic and personal freedom this community provides. Since the challenge of Bennington is more than academic, the College must look not just for scholars but for whole individuals with personal as well as academic strengths. We do not confine our search only to those who have already demonstrated the independence of mind and spirit, the maturity that is important to doing well here. Many students understandably have never been expected to take responsibility for making decisions about their educations and lives. What is important is that a student have the willingness, the desire (and the ability) to *become* self-directing, self-disciplined and self-reliant, not necessarily that he or she be that way before coming here.

In considering applicants, the Admissions Committee attempts to gain as complete and personal a view of a candidate as possible by gathering information about the applicant from a number of sources. We find out much of what we want to know by reading what applicants write about themselves and by talking to them. Transcripts, school records and test scores

(SATs and Achievements are optional) speak for themselves and we encourage applicants to do the same in their written Personal Statement and the required interview.

## Application Procedures

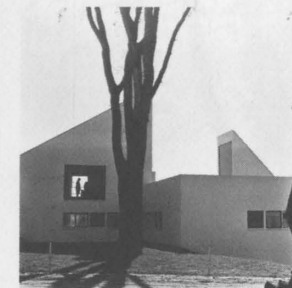
New students are admitted for entrance at the beginning of either the Fall or Spring semester. Applicants for the Fall Term should make every effort to have their applications complete (including the interview) and the \$25 application fee on file by March 1. The recommended filing date for applicants for the Spring Term is February 1. All applicants will be notified of the Admissions Committee's decision as soon as possible, but accepted applicants will not be obliged to respond to an offer of admission from Bennington until May 1, the Candidate's Reply Date. At this time students accepting an offer of admission are asked to make a \$250 deposit to hold their places.

Applicants for whom Bennington is clearly the first choice may wish to consider submitting an application for Early Decision by November 15. Decisions will be made by December 10 and accepted Early Decision candidates are required to make the necessary \$250 deposit by December 30. Bennington occasionally admits students who, for one reason or another, have not completed high school; students who wish to apply for Early Admission should have the strong support of both their family and school and are most strongly urged to come to the College for their interviews.

If you would like to receive a copy of the Bennington Catalogue and application forms, please fill out and return the attached postcard. If at all possible, plan to visit the College during one of the resident terms.

## Transfer Students

Bennington encourages applications for transfer from students with strong records and sound reasons for transferring. Students with experience elsewhere are often especially well-equipped to take advantage of Bennington's freedom and emphasis on self-moti-



Sawtell House, one of three new houses for students.





A winter scene at Booth House, one of 15 student residences on the campus.

Each year, about 20% of new students are transfers from other institutions. It is important for transfer students to know that Bennington does not routinely count and transfer credits earned at other institutions. In keeping with the College's view that education is not a mechanical process, work done elsewhere is evaluated in light of work done at Bennington. Most transfer students do graduate "on time," but occasionally a student is asked to spend extra time in pursuing the degree.

Students who will have completed two years' work elsewhere before coming to Bennington should be aware of the need to plan the major soon after entrance; they are therefore asked to come to campus for their interviews and to meet with faculty in their field(s) of interest. Transfer candidates in writing disciplines should submit samples of work in their proposed fields; students in visual arts should submit slides or a portfolio; students of performing disciplines should be prepared for an audition; those in science should be prepared to talk about their previous work in detail. Two-year transfer candidates who will be unable to come to the College for interviews should contact the Admissions Office.

Transfer students are admitted for both the Fall and Spring semesters. The recommended filing dates for applications are May 1 for the Fall Term and February 1 for the Spring Term.

### Fees and Financial Aid

Bennington charges its students a single fee for tuition, room and board, and all on-campus services. The fee is truly comprehensive in that there are no extra charges for music lessons, use of the library, graduation, or other activities. For 1979-80, the comprehensive fee is \$8,420.

All college costs have risen dramatically in the past few years. This is especially true for the private, unsubsidized colleges like Bennington which are beset with the same inflationary pressures that individuals have all felt. For this reason, students and families who are apprehensive about being able to meet these costs at Bennington—and elsewhere—should consider applying for financial aid.

Most families, however, are concerned with a basic question: "Is it worth my while to apply for financial aid since I may not qualify for it?" There is no sure answer in advance because each family's circumstances are different. Two families with precisely the same taxable income may have different demands on that income and the *total* financial picture may differ greatly. The following analysis of financial aid applications for students admitted to Bennington for 1979-80 may be a useful guideline for you and your family:

Income	Number applied	Number aided	Average grant
under \$10,000.....	17.....	10.....	\$5,415 range: \$3,150-\$7,046
\$10,000-\$20,000 .....	34.....	23.....	\$4,365 range: \$2,120-\$7,050
\$20,000-\$25,000 .....	22.....	14.....	\$4,065 range: \$1,000-\$6,450
\$25,000-\$30,000 .....	18.....	16.....	\$3,926 range: \$2,000-\$5,450
over \$30,000.....	41.....	33.....	\$2,894 range: \$1,000-\$5,550

Some 37% of entering students are receiving aid from Bennington; the average financial aid package for 1979-80 is \$5,600 (\$3,700 in grant; \$1,900 in loans and work). The figures above, however, bear some further scrutiny.

The Barn, from Tishman Lecture Hall.



Of the total 132 accepted students who were candidates for financial aid, 36 were not aided: 5 were deemed not to have need by both standardized analysis and by us; the other 31 showed need but were not funded.

There are two factors contributing to the College's inability to aid every admitted candidate: one is the great increase in financial aid applicants in the past year, but the other is that it is our policy to meet the *full* need—that is, the difference between family contribution and estimated cost of our education—and we try to meet that need without burdening the student and family with unduly high loan and work commitments. Another way of looking at the figures is to see that slightly more than 3 out of every 4 accepted candidates received financial aid last year.

If you decide to apply for admission to Bennington and feel that you will need financial aid, we hope you will file an application for financial aid this coming year. The procedure for initiating an application is explained in greater detail in our Financial Aid Handbook which will be sent with our admissions packet. The basic documents that we ask students and their parents to submit are: a Bennington College Application for Financial Aid, the College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Form and the Supplement and a complete copy of the parents' federal income tax return. In the case of students whose parents are separated or divorced, we ask the parent with whom the student lives to file the Financial Aid Form (and Supplement) with the College Scholarship Service; the other parent should send us a Financial Aid Form directly. Both parents should send a copy of their tax returns to the College. We also encourage you and your family to be very clear before entrance about whether you will need financial aid; our policy stipulates that if you have not received aid upon entering Bennington you will not be eligible in succeeding years unless there is a radical change in family circumstances *after* entrance.

Although the financial aid application process is cumbersome and detailed and in some ways invites a bureaucratic mentality, we encourage you to look upon it not as an adverse procedure but rather as one in which we can jointly arrive at some reasonably equi-



Graduation festivities, 1976.

table assessment of your need on the basis of full information shared. The College is committed to this attitude and it asks the same of all applicants.



## The Campus Visit

The campus visit and interview are extremely useful. Bennington is an unusual college, difficult to understand from the outside, and it is just as important for the candidate to understand clearly and assess the College as it is for us to understand and assess the candidate. A visit to the campus to sit in on classes and talk with students, teachers and several of us in the Admissions Office is the best way to serve both purposes. If distance makes a visit to the campus impossible, an interview can be arranged with one of our field staff or alumni interviewers.

Interviews and tours can be scheduled with the Admissions Office weekdays between 9 and 3; Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays are the days most convenient for visitors. The Admissions Office is open on Saturdays during the Fall and Spring semesters between 10 and 2. Please write or call before coming so that we may be prepared for your visit.

An aerial view of the campus, emphasizing the Visual and Performing Arts Center.

## The Area and Approaches to Bennington

Bennington is a town of 15,000 people with an economy based primarily on industry, farming and tourism. The major tourist attractions during spring and summer are the Bennington Museum, the Old First Church in Old Bennington and the Bennington Battle Monument; in the autumn, the foliage and in the winter, skiing. Cultural life centers mainly around the community's two colleges, Bennington College and Southern Vermont College. Williamstown, Massachusetts, 16 miles to the south, offers, among other things, the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute and Williams College.

Bennington is approximately 180 miles north of New York City and 150 miles northwest of Boston. The nearest commercial airport is at Albany, New York, one hour's drive from the College. As of June, 1979, there is twice daily bus service (Vermont Transit) between Albany Airport and Bennington. The fare is about \$11 one way. Students who plan to arrive at the Albany Airport or train station on a Thursday, stay overnight in Bennington and leave the following day, can also arrange to be picked up and returned to Albany by the Bennington College driver. The cost of this service is \$10 round trip and arrangements can be made through the Admissions Office.

**Public Transportation:** There is frequent bus service (Greyhound and Vermont Transit) from the Port of Authority Bus Terminal in New York City directly to Bennington via Albany; Amtrak trains also serve Albany (Rensselaer station) from points west and south (via Grand Central Station, New York City). From Boston, the only convenient public transportation to Bennington is by bus. Taxi fare from the bus station in Bennington to the College is approximately \$2.50 per person; mini-bus service to the campus from town is also available and the cost is 50 cents one way.

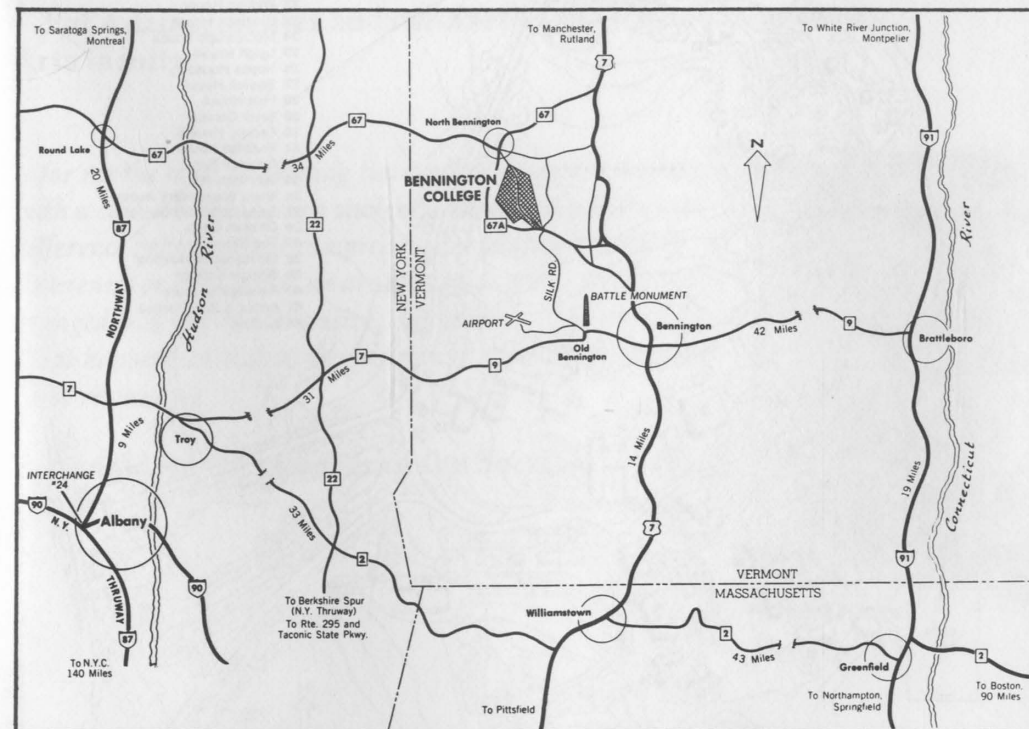
**By car:** Bennington College can be reached in four hours from New York City via the Taconic State Parkway to the Route 295 exit, east to Route 22, north to Route 7, east to Bennington (N.Y. Route 7 becomes Vt.

Route 9). From Boston, 3 1/2 hours distant, the best way is Route 2 to Greenfield, I-91 north to Brattleboro (Exit 2), then Route 9 west to Bennington. In Bennington, follow U.S. Route 7 north to Route 67A to the College.

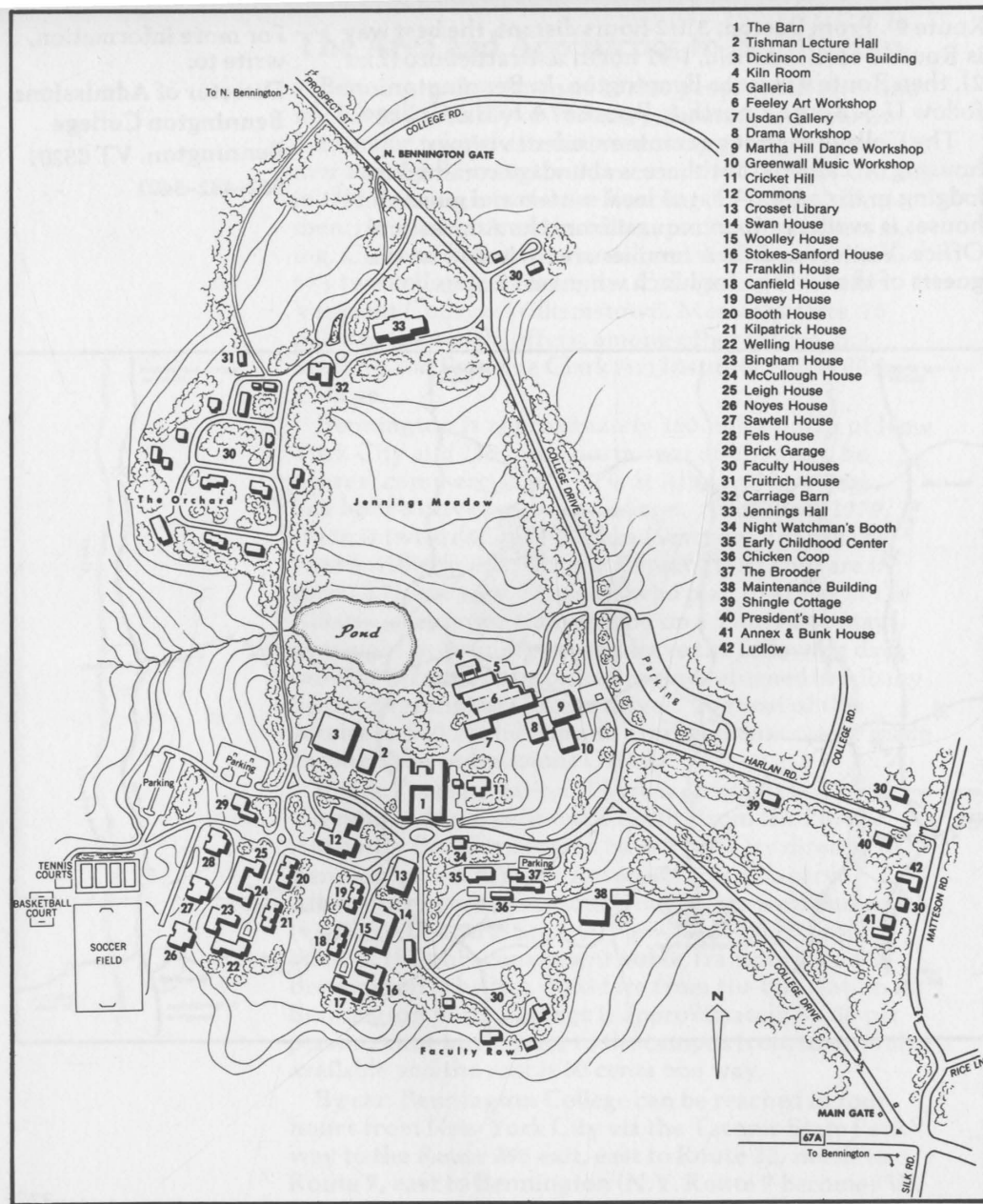
The College cannot guarantee student visitors housing on campus, but there is abundant commercial lodging in the area. A list of local motels and guest houses is available upon request from the Admissions Office. Visitors and their families are invited to be the guests of the College for lunch when on campus.

For more information, write to:

**Director of Admissions  
Bennington College  
Bennington, VT 05201  
802-442-5401**







- 1 The Barn
- 2 Tishman Lecture Hall
- 3 Dickinson Science Building
- 4 Kiln Room
- 5 Galleria
- 6 Feeley Art Workshop
- 7 Usdan Gallery
- 8 Drama Workshop
- 9 Martha Hill Dance Workshop
- 10 Greenwall Music Workshop
- 11 Cricket Hill
- 12 Commons
- 13 Crossett Library
- 14 Swan House
- 15 Woolley House
- 16 Stokes-Sanford House
- 17 Franklin House
- 18 Canfield House
- 19 Dewey House
- 20 Booth House
- 21 Kilpatrick House
- 22 Welling House
- 23 Bingham House
- 24 McCullough House
- 25 Leigh House
- 26 Noyes House
- 27 Sawtell House
- 28 Fels House
- 29 Brick Garage
- 30 Faculty Houses
- 31 Fruitrich House
- 32 Carriage Barn
- 33 Jennings Hall
- 34 Night Watchman's Booth
- 35 Early Childhood Center
- 36 Chicken Coop
- 37 The Brooder
- 38 Maintenance Building
- 39 Shingle Cottage
- 40 President's House
- 41 Annex & Bunk House
- 42 Ludlow

We do get right down to it at Bennington, directly and immediately going to the central questions involved in painting, in working. We win through to the locating base, to the floor of the young painter's understanding, and nudge him to push out from there. Oh, it's done with all the pain and passion of any intimate enterprise, not unlike the route of a lovers' quarrel. It is no careless haranguing of process and intuition, but rather the awakening of an appraising, knowing, preferring sensibility.

—Pat Adams, painter and member of the Visual Arts faculty

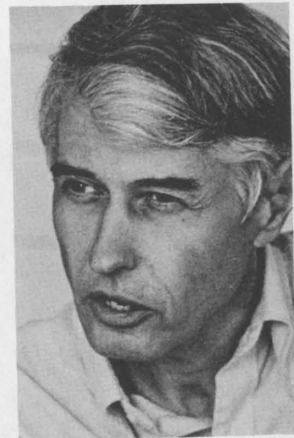
...for me the most rewarding times occur when I'm dealing with a class or talking to a student and suddenly there's no difference between their comprehension and my knowledge or awareness or experience; we are talking as peers, as colleagues, engaged in a similar, obsessive, compelling, vital activity. That happens enough at Bennington to make the whole enterprise rewarding.

—Arnold Ricks, member of the Social Science faculty

It is the policy of Bennington College to recruit, employ, retain and promote employees and to admit and provide service for students without regard to sex, age, religion, handicap, race or color. The College complies with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 which protects persons from discrimination on the basis of sex.



Pat Adams



Arnold Ricks

**Bennington College**  
**Bennington**  
**Vermont**  
**05201**

