

FEPC: order from chaos?

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The question of political identity seemed to be uppermost in people's minds, and "What the Hell are we doing?" became the topic for the first day's plenary. Here are some of the ideas that came out of it:

(Excerpts from a position paper by Harvey Stone of The Rag, Austin, Texas.) "By posing a media with alternative views, interpretations and values to those presented in the highly centralized 'establishment' media, we are capable of creating a revolutionary consciousness within a significant number of people. Our papers, therefore, are very much political weapons, and we must view them as such. Con-

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Poet Mixes Art and Politics

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40 LET A=B
50 LET B=R
60 IF R=0 THEN 100
70 NEXT I
100 LET K=I-1
105 LET X(0)=1
110 LET X(1)=Q(1)
115 LET Y(0)=Q(0)
118 LET Y(1)=1+Q(0)*Q(1)
120 FOR I=2 TO K
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150 PRINT "WEIGHTS : "X(K)" ",-Y(K)
160 PRINT "** GCD ** : " A;
170 IF A=1 THEN 220
200 PRINT
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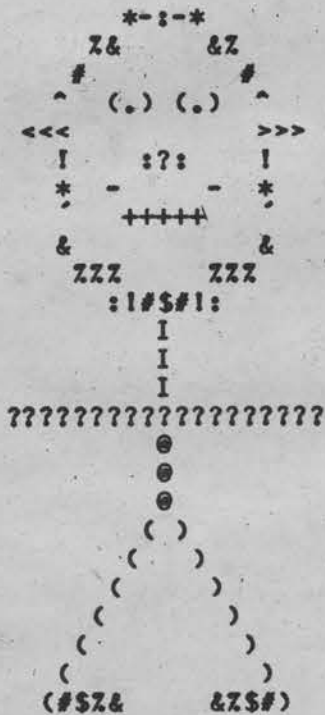
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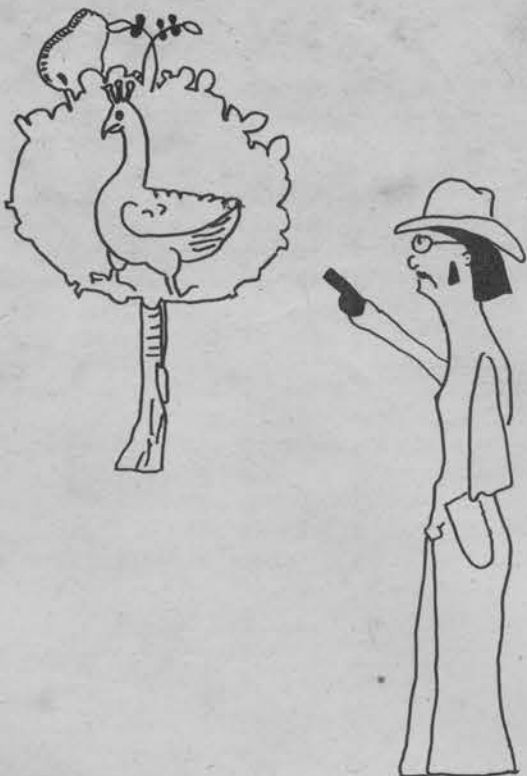
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The computer uses this figure to play "Hangman", but game-playing with the computer is discouraged



"Screens" Interview

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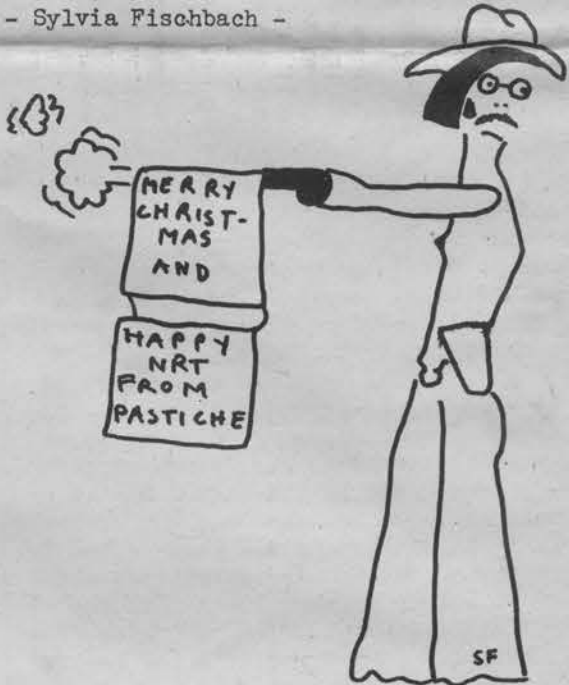
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Budget Reviewed

In the light of new proposals concerning counselling, curriculum, and program planning, many students have been concerned with the deficit in the operating costs budget and the implications a growing deficit might have on the educational plans that are now being formulated.

There is a deficit of approximately \$400,000 each year, of which one-half to five-eighths is made up through gifts; the remainder is made up by drawing on the capital of certain designated funds, such as endowment. But by drawing on such capital as this, the income from that base is slowly decreased; this causes the deficit to rise over a period of time.

There are a number of ways to reduce the deficit, the most obvious of which are expansion and tuition increase. The budget could also be decreased through cuts in counselling, number of courses taken by each student, etc. Another con-

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Letter Budget Piercy

To the editor:

We are appalled at the lack of knowledge and inefficiency displayed by the administration in their handling of graduate/professional school applications. It seems to us that it is incumbent upon school authorities to keep abreast of current expectations and requirements in the area of graduate studies. Granted that Bennington does not choose to employ a conventional grading system and corresponding competitive approach, we feel nonetheless that Bennington students should not be hindered by such systems in their attempts to gain admission to professional schools. The ineptitude, the bureaucratic inefficiency is inexcusable.

This situation regarding medical schools has become particularly aggravated. Surely most undergraduate institutions maintain actual files on professional preparation preferences as to the nature of the nature of the transcript, its content, timing etc. Why not Bennington? With the growing recognition on all sides that Bennington students increasingly seek graduate training it is deplorable that each new application is greeted with gleeful, pristine naivete. Obviously this apparent disorganization operates to the distinct disadvantage of the applicant concerned. And while we recognize and appreciate the sincere though belated efforts of the administration, we are stunned to learn that a certain medical school has already admitted 90% of next year's freshman class. Unfortunately, it is more than likely that this represents a trend. And all the while our application forms ferment and smoulder on the face of some nameless desk.

-Doreen Seidler, Barbara Steinberg-

sideration is that of increasing endowment, but for too many colleges that seems like "hitting against a brick wall". There is hope, however, that with the capital funds program (which includes the science building, performing arts building, visual arts building, remodelling, and some endowment money for faculty, students, library, etc.) grants and endowments might become more available. Monies collected for the capital funds program, however, cannot be used for operating costs--the maintenance of the college, salaries, etc.--and capital funds are often specified for a particular building or program. Theoretically, the college might go bankrupt but the construction of the science building will continue.

That remark is not to be taken too seriously for it is possible that the capital funds program will open new avenues for operating revenue. In the meantime, however, different committees (primarily FEPC and SEPC) are studying other possibilities. It must be emphasized nonetheless that the budget deficit is in no way restricting their inquiries. SEPC requested that all educational planning not be restricted to financial possibilities or problems, but be evaluated on their educational merit, and this has been the course of the discussions.

In all of the suggestions made so far, the considerations and the reasons were educational rather than economic. For example, having an average course load of thirds was suggested by the authors of the "Golden Book" for reasons of educational excellence. When any final plans are formulated, they will be based on educational needs; the budget will have sway only if something is financially ludicrous.

- Felicity Wright -

of art gone political. Marge Piercy seems to be doing a rather dangerous thing; she is trying to make a poetry that has a really new function. Her song is the "song of the earth magician about to disappear into the ground," and as such, is often moving. The danger comes when she asks that poets be responsible for something other than what they do in their poetry. The first question asked after she had read was: "What do you believe in?"; and I was reminded of a Dylan interview in which he defends his aesthetic against "people who think I have some sort of responsibility toward them. They probably want me to help them make friends... They probably either want to set me in their house and have me come out every hour and tell them what time it is... how could they possibly understand what I believe in?" Marge Piercy seems to want to be responsible to people for telling them, through her poetry what the times are and what society is to her and everyone else. People must continue to be politically aware; people must continue to write poetry; and Marge Piercy wants to have her poetry stimulate political awareness and concern.

A lot of "political" poetry is being written and will continue to be written, and the question of the function of the poet raised by Marge Piercy and her poetry will be of increasing concern to all of us. A disciple of "pure poetry" would have sustained mortal wounds at the discussion following Mrs. Piercy's reading; but in our uptight culture, we really need such discussions of how it is we can live human lives and make "good" cities for ourselves.

Kathleen Norris

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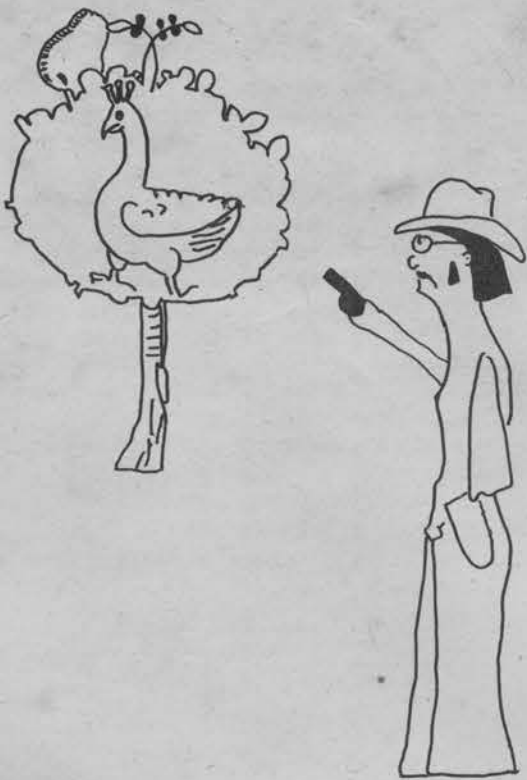
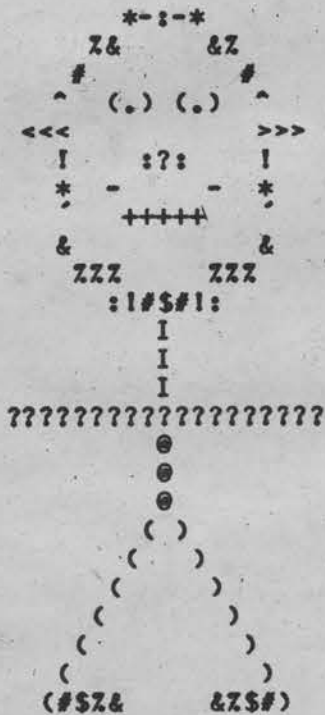
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-continued page three-

extended dance program demands "expanse of energy"

The Bennington Dance Department decided this year to abandon the traditional fine tooth comb of selection day in exchange for the wider if snaggier teeth on the comb of the college audience. We were experimenting, and, in my view, fruitfully. Whether the final fruit indicates a full policy change remains for later decision. The facts are that the expanded program called for an expanse of everyone's energies, resulting in a kind of lateral growth (i.e., variety, room for exploring new regions with less of the concentration on individual works which marked, say, last spring's highly polished and compact programming). Nonetheless, the program was a solid one, including several exciting works and much exploration, the bravado of which might have been lopped off by the selection day guillotine.

The opening piece, by Brenda Kydd, was entitled, "I May Stop In to See You Sometime, Unannounced." The dancers were poised on stage, when suddenly, at the call, "Audience!" a chattering crew emerged upstage, making loud obnoxious comments and burbling with conversation. The dancers did some stylized movements with cynical grins, peered at both audiences in succession. They left the stage and returned several times, running, wandering, pushing each other on chairs. They bowed to their stage audience and marched around with flapping arms and a peacock strut. At the end, they complied to directions issued in shrill exaggerated tones such as, "left ear to right knee," "rib to left foot," etc.

Judging mainly from the obnoxious behavior of the stage audience, I would imagine that the choreographer's intention was to take a broad swipe at The Dance Audience, which is frequently hung up on extracting a "meaning," hostile in their hang ups, rude in its hostilities and impenetrable in its rudeness. I could not decide whether the dance was intended to be nonsense, in which case I might have sympathized with the stage audience, or whether it was meant to be accepted seriously. If the dancers had been involved in a more polished piece, the stage audience would have appeared more dense and less apt to elicit sympathy. What did emerge was an interesting sketch of the relationship between the dancer and his audience, ranging

from the dancers' disinterest to their dependence upon the audience as illustrated by the bowing.

Holly Barret's "Dance" was one of the more penetrating pieces of the evening. It was performed in solo by Ande Peck to Holly's improvised accompaniment on the harmonica. Ande dragged himself prone along the stage by his hands with one leg dangling over the edge, squat-walked and shuffled pathetically on his knees, swaying and snapping his fingers to a rhythm like a hopelessly absorbed teen-ager. As the rhythm slowed he frantically tried to steady himself, falling flat on his face. At the end he pushed himself into a head-stand with his feet supported by the border as the lights dimmed.

This dance speaks largely for itself: an extremely lucid character study for which anyone might supply a title. I kept thinking of Steinbeck's Lenny in *Of Mice And Men*, although that might inject superfluous connections which Holly's unassuming title was tasteful in avoiding.

Leslie Berg's "The Back Country" was a dance in four movements, accompanied by an original tape recorded in West Virginia. After Leslie's brief opening solo, four girls drifted on stage to the sound of a hillbilly tune by Ray Dotoon. Facing in different directions, they performed slow, melting movements, dazed like slow gentle horses. At different times they turned sharply, ran to the borders, and shook them violently. The contrast between the slower movements and the border-rattling struck me with the poignant dualities of young girlhood trying to flower in the desperate back country of Appalachia.

The tape stops and Leslie enters, singing, "Well it's cryin' time again you're gonna leave me," reaching as if for a rope or a hand above her. She runs, shakes the border, turns and runs into a leap, embraces

the air with one arm at a time, sinks back to the floor resting on one elbow. She sings one line at a time, letting the silence penetrate. The tape picks up her song. Two girls enter and Leslie walks off. After a while the tape cuts, they continue with their upward focused glances. The tape breaks in with conversation in thick dialect and the movement breaks into furious spins, ending with the girls gazing upward.

The quick cutting of sound into silence worked well to underline the hardness in the lives of Leslie's characters, as did the keen progression from the melancholy tune through to the drunken conversation. The movement left an aura of simplicity, and was executed with conviction and sensitivity by Risa Tobis, Janis Beaver, Heather Brown, and Katie Reynolds. The dance was touching and tasteful, never lapsing into melodrama.

There won't be room to give fair treatment to the other dances, much as I'd like to, especially to Wendy Perron's exquisite duet, "And Petals Fall in Petaluma." But I would like to point out, in closing, that each of the dances might be viewed as being about dance, in their own ways: Brenda's about dance and the audience, Holly's about the urge to dance and its trauma, Leslie's about the impulse to dance above and beyond our condition. Perhaps holding on to that idea will be instrumental in loosening our minds when we begin to become "an uptight audience" and so allow us to be more receptive to the invention and open-mindedness of dances at Bennington and elsewhere.

-Connie Allentuck-

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