

summer 2015

BENNINGTON



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Three new trustees joined Bennington's board this spring:

Nick Stephens '77, Tracy Katsky Boomer '91, and recent graduate **Genelle Rankin '15.**



Nick Stephens '77 studied literature at Bennington, graduating with a BA in 1977. He received his MBA in finance from Columbia University in 1981. In 1984, after three years at Coopers & Lybrand as a management consultant, Nick joined Edgewood Management as an analyst. He became a partner in 1986 and was given portfolio management responsibilities in 1987; he is on the firm's investment committee. In addition to serving on Bennington's board, Nick is a member of the investment committee of Sarah Lawrence College, is co-head of the Reformed Church of Bronxville, serves on the board of the Bronxville Historical Conservancy and is on the board of the Greater New York Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Nick and his wife, Lisa Kunstadter, live in Bronxville, NY. They have two adult sons.



Tracy Katsky Boomer '91 studied lighting and drama at Bennington. A veteran Hollywood development executive, she is co-founder of the production company KatCo, and she previously held executive roles at Deedle Dee Productions, Nickelodeon, HBO Independent Productions, and Fox Broadcasting. She has been involved with the College as an alumna since 2007, when she joined the Next Pioneers Steering Committee. Katsky Boomer will bring her significant experience in media to the Board as Bennington works to secure its leadership role in conversations about the future of higher education in the U.S.



Genelle Rankin '15 will serve a two-year term as Recent Graduate Trustee to the Board. She graduated in June with a concentration on neuroscience and chemistry, having spent her Field Work Terms in a lab at Massachusetts General Hospital (run by Bennington alumni Amar Sahay '97) and summers at the Nishi Lab at the University of Vermont and the Turrigiano Lab at Brandeis. Post graduation, Rankin has taken a position in the Chen Lab at Boston Children's Hospital, researching the workings of the mammalian nervous system.



ON THE COVER

Untitled 1, 2008, oil-acrylic on canvas, 53" x 42" by faculty member **Andy Spence**, who is retired this year after 21 years of teaching at Bennington. It is a combination of two images superimposed: The black and white image is a photo silkscreen made from a 35mm slide of an earlier painting; the bright color image painted on top is from a wood block print that is titled *Vanity*. Photograph by Chris Watson.

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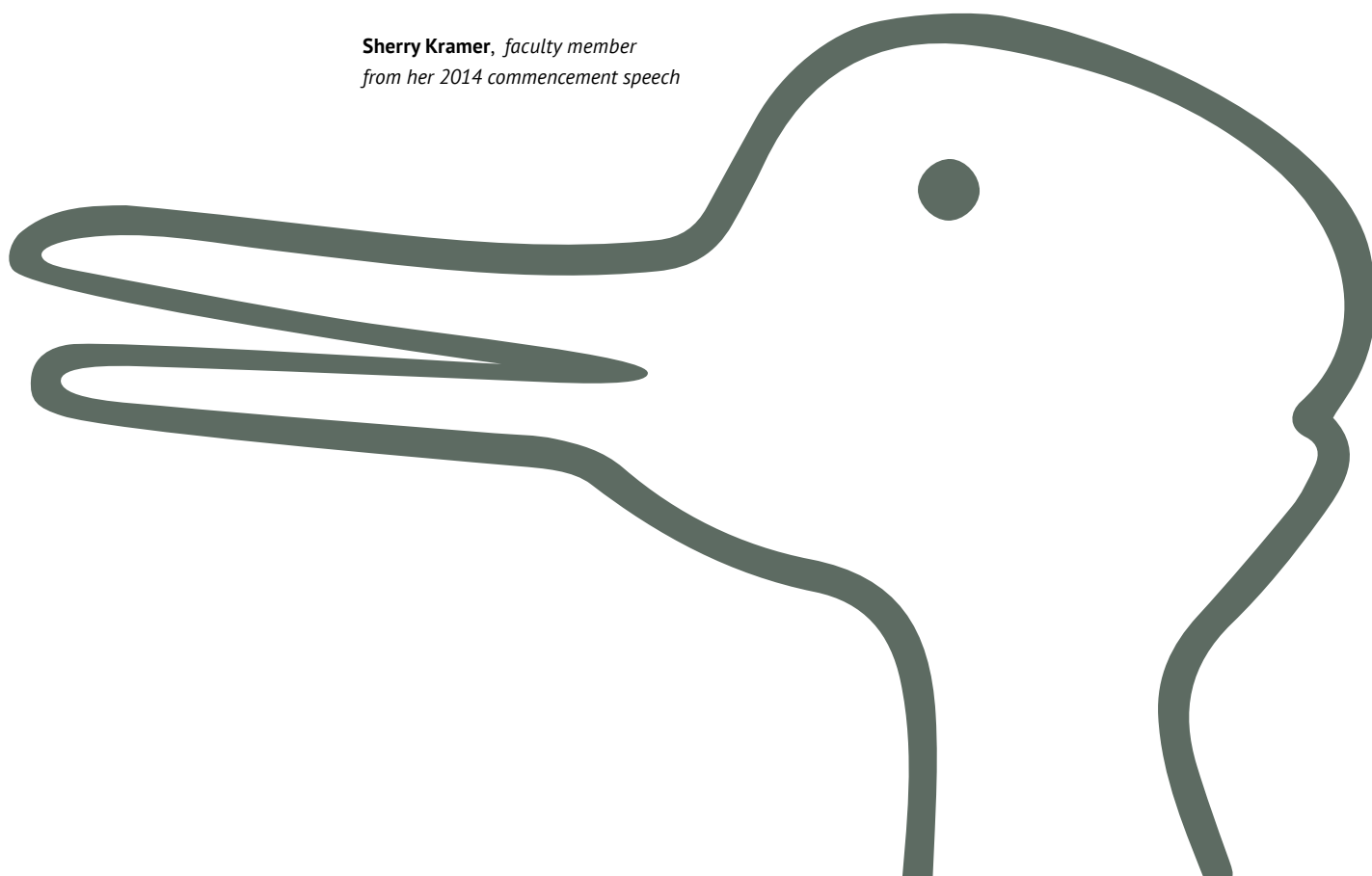




THE DUCK RABBIT

has been my constant companion since I was your age. If I were a character on *Game of Thrones*, this would be the sigil of my house; I would have duck rabbits embroidered on all my bath towels and fine Westeros linen. The Duck Rabbit, you see, is forever and always two things at once. He is in a state of marvelous, simple uncertainty. The duck rabbit never resolves for more than a split instant into one thing. Because once a thing is only one thing, it loses the ability to transform.

Sherry Kramer, *faculty member*
from her 2014 commencement speech



SUMMER 20

The **BIOMIMICRY IN ARCHITECTURE** exhibition was a show of work from the class with the same name taught by faculty member **Karolina Kawiaka**. The pieces were in response to an assignment that had students research and develop architectural concepts and then translate them into two-dimensional and three-dimensional representations. This piece by **Quynh Vo '17** represents snowflake formations. For a full slideshow of all the work, visit <http://tinyurl.com/biommmicry>

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The year after **Helen Frankenthaler '49** graduated from Bennington, she saw the work of Jackson Pollock at Betty Parsons Gallery in New York. In an interview from 1968, she spoke of standing in front of his most recent paintings, knowing that she was witnessing the very moment when postwar American art would change definitively.

She described the paintings' newness as if it were a foreign land: "It was as if I suddenly went to Lisbon and knew no Portuguese but had read enough and had a passionate interest in Lisbon and was eager to live there."

She knew she was ready for this sea change. She had been painting and looking and thinking during her time at Bennington, guided by teachers like **Paul Feeley**, **Ralph Ellison**, and others who were bringing the most challenging ideas of American avant-garde culture to the Green Mountains. She had spent her time at the College testing and challenging her ideas and assumptions, building a toolkit for facing the unknown and unanticipated.

Frankenthaler didn't simply learn Pollock's language—she created her own, introducing a painterly logic that would open up paths for generations of painters who came after her.

And, thanks to a major gift to Bennington from the foundation that bears her name, she will continue to open up paths for generations of students here.

This issue of *Bennington* is filled with stories of alumni who, like Frankenthaler, found themselves facing their most difficult and rewarding work, whether confronting a creative turning point, starting a political party in Nepal, reporting from the front lines of the Afghanistan war, starting a digital union to encourage and support a 21st-century labor movement, or writing a book after decades behind a camera.

It is moments like these—moments in which people find themselves bringing to bear all they learned here, applying the methods and strategies for formulating a question, developing the tools they need to answer that question, and testing, refining, and revisiting their ideas—that inspire so many of our alumni to make Bennington part of their life's work.

It is especially gratifying to see so many alumni investing in this place: by giving generously to the College, by making the benefits of a Bennington education visible in the world, by mentoring and creating internship opportunities for current students and recent graduates, and by offering their time, resources, and expertise to advance the College's goal of providing an educational experience that engages students in the realities of the present and primes them for their futures.

The creation of the Alumni Cooperative, and the launch events each chapter has held over the past year (with more planned in the near future), provides even more avenues for engagement among this essential part of our Bennington community. The recent election of two alumni and a very recent graduate to the College's board of trustees—**Nick Stephens '77**, **Tracy Katsky Boomer '91**, and this year's Recent Graduate Trustee **Genelle Rankin '15**—will bring to our conversations the experience of people who have put their Bennington education to work in worlds in finance, television production, and scientific research.

I hope the stories you read in these pages will sound familiar to you—stories of lives built with purpose, intention, and an ability to seize the moment, by people who have developed the capacity to face unknown and as-of-yet unwritten challenges and opportunities. Having had the pleasure of hearing about the impact Bennington has had on so many of our alumni—and seeing those alumni transform their worlds in turn, in ways big and small—I know that there are many more to be told.

With warm regards,

Mariko Silver
President



Following our last issue of *Bennington*, I heard from many readers the three words editors love more than any others: cover to cover. Of course that is our aim, to make all of the stories worth your attention—from the stories you share in class notes, to those we find tucked away in books, to those we feature. And at Bennington there are so many. Yet the stories I appreciate the most are those that invite you to respond, to transform a story into a conversation. After reading last issue's article on the Dimensional Application, **Marilyn Kropf Kurtz '58, PhD** and **Chris Gage P'18** did just that, sharing memories of their own application—Marilyn as a student, Chris as a parent remembering his child's first view of Bennington (below). **Rob Faucette '96** responded to another story in this issue. He completed the assignment given by **Allen Shawn** to compose a piece for Emily Dickinson's "I felt a Funeral in My Brain." Uploaded to Bennington's SoundCloud channel, <https://soundcloud.com/groups/before-they-were-big>, the piece inspired this from Shawn: "nice urgency... makes you hear/feel the poem." We hope you'll listen and be inspired, too.

In putting this issue together, I had the wisdoms of commencement speeches past and present to inspire me: Gloria Steinem and faculty member **Sherry Kramer**. Each speech should be read (or watched) in the fullness with which it was delivered, but for the purpose of this issue I am, forgive me, putting their ducks in a row. Ducks, which have come to mean for me a way of being and seeing. This issue of *Bennington* is threaded with stories about being and seeing—from a cacophonous social telling of Bennington's 24 Hour Plays to the stories about new ways to start political and social revolutions (p. 22 and p. 25) as well as the little heard stories of women in history (p. 16) and those of the scarcely seen in war zones (p. 38) that would go untold if not for award-winning alumni writers **Megan Mayhew Bergman MFA '10** and **Luke Mogelson '05**.

Of course, there are two stories very dear to us at Bennington—those that trace the work of retired faculty members **Becky Godwin** and **Andy Spence**, emblems of what it is to be in a perpetual making and re-making of work, looking and re-looking, in the sweet spot of being and seeing that gives you a way to find what is new again.

Sincerely,

Brie Della Rocca
Editor

It was my senior year of high school. Everyone had applied to colleges. Most seniors sent off five, six, seven, or eight applications to various schools. I applied to *one*!

I only wanted to go to one school—Bennington College. It was the *only* place for me. And it was in Vermont, far away from my mother! I needed the freedom and independence that Bennington offered, especially since I had none at home.

The senior advisor at my high school argued with me. She said I had to apply to "back-up" schools in case I didn't get in to Bennington. Yes, my SAT scores were wonderful, my extracurricular activities were fine, and my grades for 10th, 11th, and 12th years were excellent. However, my 9th-grade scores weren't so good. (I had fooled around instead of studying during my adolescent rebellious years.)

I didn't care—I had to go to Bennington!

I had a secret: I believed that, since I had never really wanted or wished for anything during my lifetime, that I was not greedy like other people who were always expecting things, that I should be granted my one and only wish. I believed that it would come *as a birthday present*!

My birthday is May 4. Acceptances to colleges were usually sent out at the end of April or the beginning of May.

Well, May 4th came. And May 4th went. Nothing! I was heartbroken.

On May 6 a letter arrived for me dated May 4. *Dear Marilyn, Congratulations. You are accepted at Bennington College.*

Marilyn Kropf Kurtz '58, Ph.D.

I just finished reading the winter 2014-15 edition of *Bennington*. I read it from cover to cover. It was an amazing read, eye opening and inspiring. It made me think back to my college years. I finished exactly one semester; then I ran away to France and hid. I hid from my parents, who were appalled by what I had done. I hid from the Selective Service Bureau, who, after I mailed my draft card back explaining that I would not be participating, were also appalled; upset enough to send two FBI agents over to have a chat with my parents about where I might be. I hid from the future, which didn't look very bright. After a year I came back but continued to hide, responding to a series of accidents that turned into a career of sorts.

Forty-five years later it was my daughter's turn to go to college. She applied to a number and was accepted at Bennington. We came to have a look; she delighted by what she saw, her mother and I concerned about how she would turn her Bennington education into a marketable career. I now find that concern to be profoundly funny. My daughter is not working on a future career, she is making a life, a life that will continue and broaden out into the world. That is what I saw in the magazine. Lots of people making a life, reaching outward, connecting, being, doing. With passion, commitment, dedication, kindness, reaching through the present into the future.

I had no idea there is a place like Bennington, a place that is quietly busy involving students, faculty, staff, parents, in the business of building a world, rebuilding the world. Planting seeds and helping them grow, grafting onto what has come before. Guiding, connecting, growing.

So thank you. Thank you for showing me that I have a place here too, a place in what Richard Dawkins calls (as noted by Jared Della Rocca) the Greatest Show on Earth.

Chris Gage P'18



Following a major gift from the **Helen Frankenthaler '49** Foundation, Bennington names the Visual Arts Center in her honor

TO ENCOUNTER HELEN FRANKENTHALER

On April 12, 2015, members of the board of the Frankenthaler Foundation and Bennington's faculty, Board of Trustees, alumni, and students all gathered to celebrate the **Helen Frankenthaler Visual Arts Center**, named in tribute to the significance of her life's work in the field and in gratitude for a \$5 million gift from the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. The gift, the Foundation's largest single grant to date, will go to support all aspects of Bennington's visual arts program.

"Hers was a genius that married artistry and intellect, with profound results," **President Mariko Silver** remarked at the opening celebration. "I can think of no better way to honor the legacy of **Helen Frankenthaler '49** than to commemorate her impact and influence on the future. Together we will ensure that Bennington continues to be a place where students are encouraged to make their best, most surprising work—as Helen did. Thirty-nine years ago next month, Helen Frankenthaler spoke at the dedication of this building. I am thrilled that now it will bear her name."

Standing before the newly named Helen Frankenthaler Visual Arts Center, Board Chairman **Alan Kornberg '74** also announced that VAPA's Painting Studio would be named in honor of her teacher and mentor, **Paul Feeley**. "In this way, this building embodies the reciprocal nature of a Bennington education: mentor and apprentice, protégé and sage," he explained.

Clifford Ross, chairman of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation Board of Trustees and a nephew of the artist, and **Lise Motherwell '77**, Helen's stepdaughter and alumna, recalled the significance Bennington had on Helen's life, as well as their own.



PAIGE BARTELS

The Feeley family returned to campus for the dedication of the painting studio now named for the former faculty member Paul Feeley and beloved mentor to a generation of visual artists—including Helen Frankenthaler '49.

VAPA HELEN FRANKENTHALER VISUAL ARTS CENTER



From left to right: Alan Kornberg '74, Chairman of Bennington's Board of Trustees, Lise Motherwell '77, President Mariko Silver, Clifford Ross, Chairman of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation Board of Trustees, and faculty member Jon Isherwood.

*Closing the ceremony, faculty member **Jon Isherwood**, who remained close with Helen Frankenthaler, shared his view of the significance of the gift and Helen's gifts to Bennington:*

I want to talk a little bit about what the name **Helen Frankenthaler** signifies. I want to propose that the name signifies an encounter: an unexpected meeting with someone or something. If you listened to Helen closely, look at her career and contributions, her life and art are about encounters.

At Bennington she encountered art, literature, philosophy, and a breadth of liberal arts classes. She encountered **Paul Feeley** and cubism.

For Helen Frankenthaler, Bennington didn't mean a brief brushing with art history, it meant an entanglement and exploration with ideas and concepts to understand art. She encountered Bennington in an immersive sense, in the way in which an encounter provides ownership for the intellectual life.

Looking at a Frankenthaler painting is not for the faint of heart. It is not a brief interlude. It is an encounter. She takes you to the canvas, and that changes the course of art. It begins raw and vacant, and you follow the color as it comes off the brush. The encounter is LIVE. She asks you to be in it with her, side by side, sharing that journey.

When she found herself on one of her travels without paints, we experience the urgency she has to capture the light and color. She takes the liners out of a set of drawers in a hotel room and working with lipstick, eyebrow liner, and blush, she makes a painting. The encounter is improvised, immediate, and urgent.

She was invited to work in Anthony Caro's studio in London to make sculpture from David Smith's steel. Interestingly, Caro had not managed to do this with any success. The studio is weighty; steel is the material and welding is the process. She rented a Mercedes convertible, stayed at the Ritz, and showed up in capri pants.

The material is laid out on the studio floor; what does she do? She denied the gravity of the heavy steel. She hung metal from the roof trusses of the studio, making an incredible sculpture, *Ceiling Horses*. Ten sculptures in total were completed in two weeks!

For Frankenthaler, nothing is passive. She had the confidence to break the rules and turn the sculptor's world upside down. The lineage of her work carries a message: create encounters that challenge, take nothing for granted. Risk is all we have to keep art moving forward.

On Helen's last trip up to Bennington, to attend the opening for the exhibition I organized of these sculptures, we were in the Usdan Gallery. I knelt down next to her and we gazed at *Red Square*, a picture in the College's collection that she painted in 1959.

I asked if the painting had been influenced by Matisse's *Red Studio*. I watched her eyes dart around the picture as if she was painting it all over again. She touched my hand, smiled. I nodded and said "thank you" for what was yet another encounter with Helen Frankenthaler.

Helen always asked about Bennington. "What are the students up to, what's showing in the gallery, who is teaching there?" She cared about the College deeply. So I think the name on this building asks that we encounter and question deeply, that which moves life and art forward.

The last words I remember from Helen were as follows: "Jon, send my love to Bennington."

Helen, this is a lot of love. **B**

To watch the video of the naming ceremony, which includes all remarks given, visit <http://tinyurl.com/vapanaming>

“SHE DENIED THE GRAVITY OF HEAVY STEEL.”

—Jon Isherwood on Helen Frankenthaler '49



“Helen was very photogenic and there have been marvelous photos of her taken over the years. There are two photos which stand out in particular, one is a picture of her taken in front of *Mountains and Sea* with David Smith. There’s another picture that became known to some of us only recently. It’s a picture taken in the dead of winter in the snow of four women playing poker outside on a bridge table. I think that picture says everything about Helen and Bennington. Bennington is a place that Helen learned to be free and use the genius she had. We’re very lucky to have been able to make a gift to Bennington. It’s not only what Helen would have wanted but it’s what Helen taught us to want for everybody. Bennington stands for the kind of excitement that goes with creativity.

So our thanks go from the foundation to Bennington for giving us an opportunity to further Helen’s legacy and create the kind of aura around Helen that she learned during her formative years playing poker in the snow.”

—Clifford Ross, nephew of Helen Frankenthaler and Chairman of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation’s Board of Trustees

B (One night only: A vivid tribute to former faculty member Nicky Martin)

#BENNINGTON24

In January, more than 30 alumni—including Emmy, Tony, and Golden Globe winners and nominees—came together at The Public Theater in New York to write, cast, rehearse, and present six one-act plays within a 24-hour period. They raised more than \$30,000 for a scholarship in honor of the late Nicky (Joel) Martin, an award-winning theater director and beloved former faculty member. Members of the cast, crew, and audience shared their views of Bennington on numerous social media channels including Facebook, Tumblr, Flickr, YouTube, Storify, Twitter, and Instagram. This is a brief glimpse at the hundreds of voices on #Bennington24. (For a full list of cast and crew members, see page 50.)



janeray @janerayarts • Jan 19
the guy all the fun is about c.1982 photo by
[#hallypancer](#) [#bennington24](#)



view photo



The 24 Hour Plays® @24HourPlays • Jan 18
Production meeting for our 20th season kick off - a benefit for @atBennington at @PublicTheaterNY [#bennington24](#)



view photo



Bennington College @AtBennington • Jan 18
Things people have always wanted to play: villains, Russian spies, Catholic school girls, proctologists. [#bennington24](#)

view photo



Bennington College @AtBennington • Jan 18
Special skills: folding origami cranes, headstands, hitting high C, playing Heart-Shaped Box on the ukulele. [#bennington24](#)

view photo



Jonathan M. Sherman @improbablyjust • Jan 19
What to do with a cast like this? [#bennington24](#)



view photo



Susie Felber @susiefelber • Jan 19
3am & I'm still writing. Want to give this cast something they'll never forget... in a good way. [#bennington24](#)



view photo

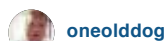


birdabroad

23 likes 21w

@birdabroad
you're all playing yourselves
[#bennington24](#)

view photo



619 likes 21w

[@oneolddog](#) The desperate mug of a man learning 12 pages of dialogue in 11 hours [#bennington24](#)

...



[@susiefelber](#) • Jan 19
Seeing my director, Lorca Peress, in action -- totally amazing. She is inspirational, total pro. [#bennington24](#) [@BenningtonAlum](#)

1 5



[@wurvous](#) • Jan 19
wishing everyone an amazing night as we honor the legendary Nicky Martin [#bennington24](#) :: I'm sure he's watching w/a diet Coke and a straw

1 2



[The 24 Hour Plays](#) [@24HourPlays](#) • Jan 19
At this point, we're all sort of wondering what we'd be like if we'd also gone to Bennington [#bennington24](#)

5 12



[Sarah Biz Storm](#) [@TheSarahBiz](#) • Jan 19
Sitting in our tech in [@PublicTheaterNY](#) = my inner nerd is having perpetual papitations of joy. [#bennington24](#)

1 6



[Tina Fallon](#) [@tina24hour](#) • Jan 19
Booger, Janice and The Wad, rehearsing their curtain call. Long story. [#Bennington24](#)



5 4

[view photo](#)



[Mark Armstrong](#) [@markarmstrong4](#) Jan 23
Two top-shelf producers—[@tina24hour](#) and [@blaineglobal](#)—celebrate the success of [#bennington24](#). [@24HourPlays](#)



[view photo](#)

1 8



[Tim Daly](#) [@TimmyDaly](#) • Jan 20
I had a great time doing the [@24HourPlays](#) for my alma mater, [@atBennington](#) last night! Thanks to all who were involved.

6 21



[janeray](#) [@janerayarts](#) • Jan 20
fabulous day! thanks to all for letting me play xoxo jane [#bennington24](#)



[view photo](#)

2 6



20 likes 21w

[@atBennington](#)
There is no lamb. [#bennington24](#)

...



[Megan Ho Tong](#) [@mgntong](#) • Jan 21
Fun & nostalgic night on Monday - loved the self-deprecating humor of our [#bennington24](#) shows! Insane that it's been 6 years. [#lifeworkterm](#)

1



Following the earthquake in Nepal, **Ujwal Thapa '00** rose to the occasion and now is rising in political popularity, by **Crystal Barrick '11**

THE PROVOKER

Ujwal Thapa '00, Revolutionizing Politics in Nepal

After a magnitude 7.8 earthquake hit Nepal, **Sabina Shrestha '09** emailed Bennington. "I am writing to tell you about a phenomenal Bennington alum," she wrote, "who is working tirelessly here, since day one. His name is **Ujwal Thapa '00**, also a Nepali. He has started his own political party, called **Bibeksheel Nepali**."

"At this horrible time," Shrestha continued, "all political parties were quiet the first five days, with leaders and politicians, including the cabinet ministers, going underground for their own safety. But not Ujwal."

On April 25, when the first earthquake shook Nepal, Bibeksheel Nepali had something nearly every other organization lacked—a strategic disaster plan, with protocols and infrastructure already in place. Within 25 minutes of the quake, Thapa and a team of volunteers arrived at the closest hospital in Kathmandu. They transformed the garden into an "open sky" ICU. They began raising money for emergency medicine, food, and tarps. Hundreds of patients and volunteers flocked to their pop-up help desk, guided by Bibeksheel Nepali's 24-hour hotline and social media accounts. "People saw that we were the only organized team out there that they could trust, that was actually doing something," Thapa says. "Anywhere we found gaps in governance, that's where we were working."

This swift and practical approach has earned Thapa and his party respect at a time when cynicism and mistrust of government pervade.

Bibeksheel Nepali grew out of a protest movement, teeming with young, educated, frustrated—yet optimistic—

Nepalis. Their logo is a simple black-and-white happy face; their goal is “to build a peaceful and prosperous Nepal” in their lifetime. Since the April earthquake and a second in May, more than 1,500 volunteers have joined their relief efforts, inspired by the party’s unparalleled responsiveness and dedication, and its transparency about finances (they publish all expenses and donations online, in real time).

“Today the media is abuzz with criticism for all the political parties in Nepal,” Shrestha says. “There is widespread condemnation among the public, hatred and anger even. Ujwal’s Bibeksheel Nepali is the exception—his Facebook page ‘likes’ grow by the minute, help is pouring in from everywhere in Nepal, because everyone trusts him, they believe in him and look up to him.” *The Nepali Times* recently echoed this sentiment in a May 15 article with the headline: “Bibeksheel Nepali shows how it is done: A party of youthful citizens shows what it means to be committed to the country above self.”

Ujwal Thapa defines much of his work in terms of “provoking” Nepali citizens. He not only urges them to act in the face of disaster, to fill gaps left by the government, but also, “to be ‘bibeksheel’ in nature and bring positive changes within themselves.”

Bibeksheel is a hybrid word that loosely translates to “common sense and wisdom.” The political party in its name captures the span of Thapa’s influences, from America’s Thomas Paine to Nepal’s own Buddha. He says, “What we are trying to do is build politics as a very ethical

“Anywhere we found gaps in governance, that’s where we were working.”

and spiritual experience. It’s a deeply personal experience, and I think that is not taken favorably in the world today. Politics is seen as very cynical, very compromising.”

Bibeksheel Nepali encourages citizens to see politics as something with dignity, as something that can nourish the whole country, as well as each individual. And it balances this idealism with stark pragmatism—prosperity can only reach Nepal, according to the party, after an “entrepreneurial revolution.”

“It’s no use talking about democracy or ethics to someone who is hungry and has no food to eat,” explains Thapa. “We want to build citizens to be more entrepreneurial in nature, so that they have the capacity to take care of themselves.” Natural disasters expose Nepalis’

vulnerability—most citizens are very reliant on the government and government aid, and they are not getting what they need. “We believe it’s not the earthquake that killed people, it’s the politics,” says Thapa. “The sad reality about Nepal is that everyone knew there was a big earthquake coming, no one was actually preparing for it, especially not the government. Hundreds of millions of


“We believe it’s not the earthquake that killed people, it’s the politics.”

dollars were supposedly spent on disaster preparation. We actually realized after the earthquake that they hadn’t really done much.”

And so, as monsoon season approaches, and as Bibeksheel Nepali moves from relief work to rehabilitation and reconstruction, Thapa is looking ahead. For example, 600,000 houses were destroyed in the quake; to rebuild them, Bibeksheel Nepali is “trying to train people, the villagers, to build their own houses, to become builders so that they can get work and get paid for it,” says Thapa. “We want to make sure that people get back on their feet and start being more self-reliant.” At the same time, they are putting pressure on the existing government and advocating for better building policies so that, no matter who does the construction, “better houses are made, better schools are made, better hospitals are made, and there’s no corruption when that happens.”

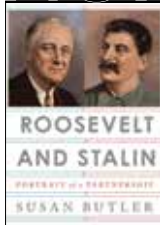
Thapa has a long view of the party’s future, as well. In the last year Bibeksheel Nepali has launched the Leadership Building Academy, determined to create the next 100 statesmen and stateswomen in Nepal. He admits that this work is “a Herculean task,” and he acknowledges that it “might even span a few generations.” But he finds hope in the challenge. He aims to rehabilitate not only his own country, but the world beyond its borders in turn.

“I think there needs to be a place where leaders can be trained, not just to be managers, but to be ethical and practical leaders of their nations,” Thapa says. “Because of [Nepal’s] unique history, we might have the right attitude to build the kind of nation and leaders who will inspire the world in the coming ages. Because we do need politicians to be more like leaders of the world, rather than just politicians of what we expect right now.”

Learn more about Ujwal Thapa and his work by emailing ujwal@leadnepal.com. 

B (Recently published works by members of the Bennington community, reviewed nationally)

NONFICTION



Susan Butler '53
*Roosevelt and Stalin:
Portrait of a Partnership*
(Alfred A. Knopf, March 2015)

“A solid, comprehensive account of Soviet-American relations during World War II.”

—*The Wall Street Journal*



Audrey Shulman '09
Sitting in Bars with Cake
(Harry N. Abrams, April 2015)

“Audrey has packed her book with cake recipes that capture each encounter—bitter, sweet, savoury...”

—*The Guardian*

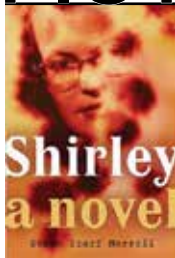


Lissa Warren MFA '99
The Good Luck Cat
(Lyons Press, October 2014)

“[A story about] a close-knit family that turns darkness into light...”

—*The Boston Globe*

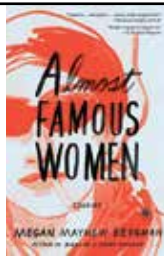
FICTION



Susan Scarf Merrell MFA '09
Shirley, a novel
(Blue Rider Press, June 2014)

“Merrell brilliantly weaves events from Jackson’s life into a hypnotic story line that will please...anyone in search of a solidly written literary thriller.”

—*The Washington Post*



Megan Mayhew Bergman MFA '10
Almost Famous Women
(Scribner, January 2015)

“These stories feel both specific and flexible.... By including these lesser-known women, Bergman emphasizes the charisma of their better-known contemporaries; and by assiduously depicting their intimacy and power struggles, she allows for a close examination of the multiplicity of women’s experiences.”

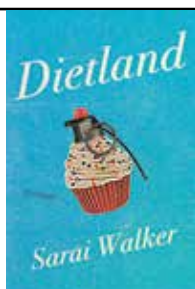
—*New York Times Sunday Book Review* shortlist



Jessica Alcott
(**Jessica White '04**)
Even When You Lie to Me
(Crown Books for Young Readers, June 2015)

“Wallflowers and bookworms everywhere will empathize”

—*Booklist*



Sarai Walker MFA '03
Dietland
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, May 2015)

“*Dietland* leaves chick lit in the pixie dust, treading the rougher terrain of radical critique and shadowy conspiracies...”

—*New York Magazine*



Roxana Robinson '68
Sparta
(Picador, June 2014)

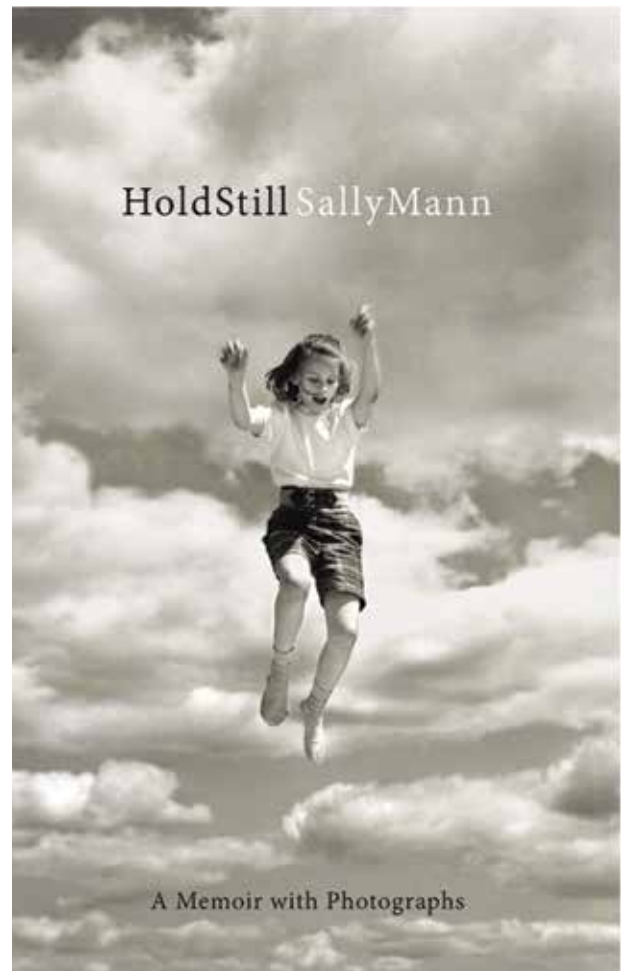
“Robinson brings the tolls of war up close.... Her powerful novel demonstrates that fiction actually can function as a sort of explosive device.”

—*The Washington Post*

Sally Mann '73
Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs
 (Little, Brown and Company, May 2015)

“The best quality of *Hold Still*—a book that strikes me as an instant classic among Southern memoirs of the last 50 years—is its ambient sense of an original, come-as-you-are life that has been well lived and well observed. It’s a book that dials open the aperture on your own senses. Like the photographs she most admires, it is rooted in particulars yet has ‘some rudiment of the eternal in it.’”

—*The New York Times*



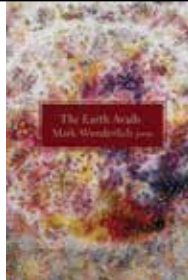
POETRY



Charlotte Silver '03
Bennington Girls Are Easy
 (Knopf Doubleday, July 2015)

“[A] snarky, superb look at female friendship.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*



Faculty member **Mark Wunderlich**'s collection of poetry, *The Earth Avails* (Graywolf Press, February 2014), won the 2015 UNT Rilke Prize for “exceptional artistry and vision.” *The Earth Avails* was additionally a finalist for the \$100,000 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award.

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

Bennington College
 Office of Communications
 One College Drive
 Bennington, Vermont 05201 **B**



(How small-town Southern girl **Megan Mayhew Bergman** MFA '10 became a champion of history's almost famous women, by **Jeva Lange** '15)

HERO OF HER OWN NARRATIVE

THERE IS A GAME YOU CAN PLAY

when you listen to **Megan Mayhew Bergman** MFA '10 talk: count the number of sentences she begins, "*I've always been fascinated by...*" and be prepared to fill in the blank.

"*I've always been fascinated by...my husband's grandmother.*"

Or, "*I've always been fascinated by...the birth-death continuum.*"

"*I'm obsessed with...the artist Egon Schiele and his models.*"

Or (this one you'll hear most of all), "*I am interested in...risk-taking women.*"

Bergman is a collector. A collector in the sense that both her published books are short story collections—*Birds of a Lesser Paradise* and, as of January 2015, *Almost Famous Women*—but also in the sense that she is a collector of anecdotes, people, barnyard animals, ideas, pony bones, Victorian antiques, tarot cards, books. She's a little bit like a 19th-century almanac, containing everything you never thought you needed to know and ready to reference it at a moment's notice. Every aspect of her life—from naming her two daughters to discussing the history of King Arthur Flour—is a small, precious story, a tale so distilled that you could almost imagine holding it in your hand.

It's no surprise, then, that collecting carries over into her work. *Almost Famous Women* has an almost cubist perspective on feminist history, as if Bergman is craning her head to examine the Jazz Era from every possible angle. Here she uses plural first person, there the third. Some stories are only a page or two long; others,

like the masterful "Siege at Whale Cay," stretch for a good portion of the collection and have the feel that, in a different iteration, they could have been full-fledged novels.

"The problem I saw, or the niche I wanted to fill, was that I watched a lot of women from the Jazz Era being represented as the stereotypical flapper in a beautiful French dress with a long cigarette and a gin fizz and I thought, 'Okay yes, that's all well and good and fun and I'm interested in that, too,' but I think what interests a lot of feminists about that era was the risk-taking women," Bergman said. "And I didn't want to write *Almost Famous White Women*, or *Almost Famous Straight Women*. I really wanted to honor risk-taking."

Almost Famous Women opens with a story about conjoined twins Violet and Daisy Hilton; Daisy narrates. Other pieces give glimpses into the lives of M.B. "Joe" Carstairs, "the fastest woman on water"; Lord Byron and Claire Clairmont's illegitimate child, Allegra Byron; and the International

Sweethearts of Rhythm, the first integrated band in the United States.

Bergman isn't merely curious about the women who serve as the gravitational centers of her stories; her interest expands to include secondary or tertiary characters, often taking up their points of view instead of that of the "almost famous woman" in question.

"It was interesting to read some criticism of the book that said, 'These women didn't deserve to be famous,' and I thought, 'Well that's interesting,' because that wasn't the thematic thrust of what I was writing about," Bergman explained. "Fame isn't necessarily a positive end state or way of being. But regardless of good or bad, it does have an impact on relationships. It does create a hierarchy dynamic. And I was interested in exploring what was it like to be in the orbit of these huge characters."

Bergman herself is a huge character, the self-constructed kind. She jokes that mothers and fathers around town often mistake her for a children's book author, perhaps because she's blond-haired, kind-eyed, and a sucker for an animal in need of a home. But when you meet Bergman in person, you'll notice—not at first, perhaps, but eventually—her edge.

Her toughness might have arisen naturally, from the tumultuous early years in her career when her mother-in-law's death led her and her husband to move to rural Vermont in order to

take up the family's veterinary practice. Or perhaps it grew out of being a strong-willed woman in a world that's still afraid of female agency.

"I've noticed my own transition. Early on, growing up in the small-town South—" Bergman stops talking to let one of her many rescue dogs out of the house, then sits back down, picking her sentence back up without breaking a beat. "Early on, I was so interested in assimilating. When I got to college and I had my Southern accent, I was from a small town, all I wanted was to be normal, no matter what I felt like inside. Only later on did I give myself permission, like why *not* be a character? Why not embrace everything that makes you interesting and different? There's knowing that philosophically, and then there's living it. I like big characters."

Bergman's home is an extension of her personality: centered in the kitchen, an enormous red Vermont Castings stove, decorated with serpents or dragons, thickens a vat of home-tapped maple syrup. She serves tea in cups that look almost antique; a tree, painted on the wall behind the staircase, holds the family portraits. The dining room centerpiece is an Irish laying-out table (on which, during the Victorian era, dead bodies were displayed), and the art on the walls has been meticulously combed out of roadside yard sales. She is currently working on her first novel in an office lined with tarot cards.

"I've thrown away a lot of drafts," Bergman said of her new work. "I'm really pushing myself to make something I'm proud of. I feel like the short story format is really natural to me,

and I feel like a lot of Southerners feel that way. Even though I'm totally secular and there's not an ounce of religion in me, if you sit through church sermons long enough as a child you're used to things being distilled, the Flannery O'Connor-esque morality and the use of language and the lyrical flow."

Although she can't yet divulge the details of her new book, Bergman doesn't call herself a historical fiction writer. In fact, *Almost Famous Women* was something of a one-off, brought

considered to be irresponsible. I really approached it as an academic first."

But while raising the interest of her readers was all a part of her "diabolical plan," Bergman admits she had to keep her inner feminist in check.

"I had to think like a biographer and not fall in love with my subjects," Bergman said. "I knew *Almost Famous Women* had to be story-driven or narrative-driven, rather than driven by an agenda. So yes I'm a feminist, but that needs to be nuanced and not driving each story."

Elsewhere, she's not so reserved. In April, Bergman wrote on Twitter: "Parenting struggle: teaching my daughters that it's okay to be mad. It's okay to raise your voice. Because I believe girls need these tools." She followed up with a second tweet: "I worry with manners & politeness, we over-tame girls. Sure I want polite & grateful children. But inevitably they'll need some fight & grit."

Fight & grit. Bergman knows something of that herself—and certainly the words could be applied to any one of the characters in *Almost Famous Women*.

"While [the women] may not have had financial independence the way we do now, there still seems to be a physicality and strength and practicality that I find really

appealing," Bergman said. "There's something about that generation of women that I'm really interested in, that I feel like we may have lost: women as heroes of their own narrative."

And while Bergman does not shy away from society—she is orbited by her family, not to mention friends, furry and otherwise—she gives the distinct impression that she's not afraid to claim her own center, her own individual narrative. **B**

BRIEE DELLA ROCCA



Megan Mayhew Bergman in her home library.

about by her interest in reading biographies and a lingering collegiate interest in anthropology.

"Sometimes what moves us are our experiences, and sometimes it's where our imagination is dwelling," Bergman acknowledged, looking around the room. "I can enlist my imagination the most when I'm writing what I don't know. It feels a little dangerous to be playing with fact, and I didn't do it in a way that I con-



An excerpt of the author notes from *Almost Famous Women* wherein **Megan Mayhew Bergman MFA '10** describes the initial inspirations for her stories

the seeds that became STORIES

The Pretty, Grown-Together Children: I heard a whisper or two about the Hilton twins while living in North Carolina, then came across an entry about them on RoadsideAmerica.com.

The Siege at Whale Cay: I devoured Kate Summerscale's incredible, must-read biography of Joe, *The Queen of Whale Cay*. Further research has led me to the exceptional *Time Life* photoshoot of Joe and Whale Cay, as well as videos of Joe's races, which can be found at tinyurl.com/joecarstairs. I also found inspiration, though not philosophical agreement, in Helen Zenna Smith's novel about the female war experience, *Not So Quiet...*

Norma Millay's Film Noir Period: A friend turned me on to Nancy Milford's biography of Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Savage Beauty*, and like many young women I was perhaps, at first, fascinated more by her biography than by her work. When I was a resident at the Millay Colony for the Arts at Steepletop in 2007, I became acquainted with the wild stories about Edna's sister Norma, and found myself returning to her in my imagination, particularly the fact that she was an actress in her own right, with the renowned Provincetown Players, and inhabited her sister's estate for decades. Norma was a true force, and it was her presence I felt so keenly at Steepletop. Other resources include Cheryl Black's *The Women of Provincetown*, Daniel Mark Epstein's *What Lips My Lips Have Kissed*, Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Collected Poetry*, and her *Collected Letters* edited by Allan Ross MacDougall.

Romaine Remains: I came across this haunted, unusual figure in many books about Paris: *Wild Heart* by Suzanne Rodriguez, *Sylvia Beach and the Lost Generation* by Noel Riley Fitch, but most important, Meryle Secrest's (out of print) biography of Romaine, *Between Me and Life*, titled after Romaine's sentiment that her dead mother stood between her and living happily. I have framed prints of Romaine's line drawings, which I cut from Whitney Chadwick's catalog of Romaine's work, *Amazons in the Drawing Room*. Chadwick points out an element of Romaine's work that made a deep impression on me—the unusual depiction of “heroic femininity.”

Hazel Eaton and the Wall of Death: Let me be intellectually honest here—Internet rabbit hole.

The Autobiography of Allegra Byron: I first heard of Allegra when I studied at Oxford for a summer, and also read Benita Eisler's *Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame*. Furthermore, Dolly Wilde's fascination with Byron and her similarities to his daughter are pointed out in *Oscaria*, the privately printed book of remembrances about Dolly. Both girls were given over to convents at an early age, which was not particularly unusual at the time but could not have been a welcome experience. Allegra's story took off in my head years later, after I had children of my own, and could get more inside the head of a toddler.

Expression Theory: I saw a stunning photograph of Lucia Joyce in a hand-sewn costume, which led me to Carol Loeb

Schloss's biography, *Lucia Joyce: To Dance in the Wake*. I found myself curious about the moment family members decided Lucia was deeply troubled; throwing the chair took on significance.

Saving Butterfly McQueen: I don't remember how I first heard of Butterfly, but when I found out that the *Gone With the Wind* star was an atheist, and had hoped to donate her body to science, I was intrigued, and couldn't help but imagine the waves of patronizing conversation she must have endured.

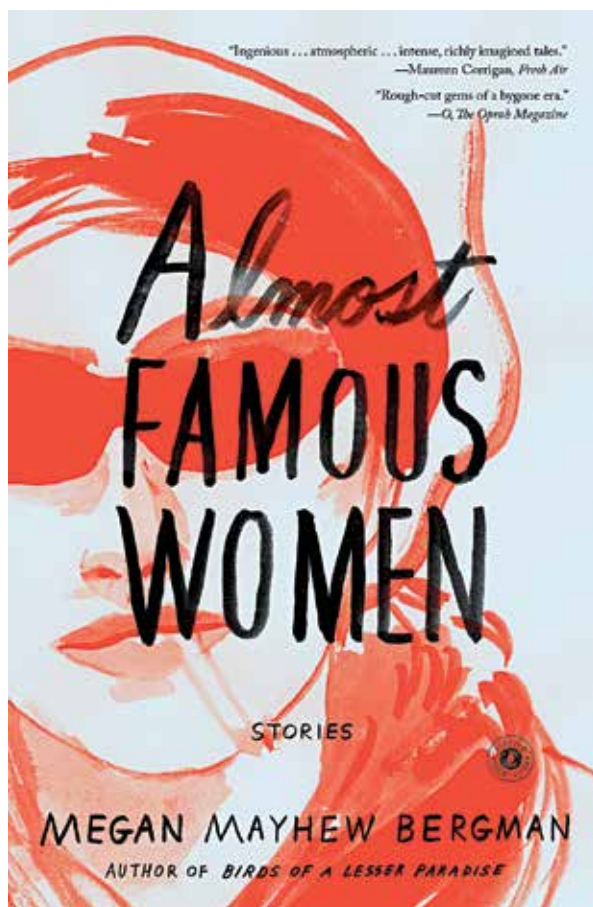
Who Killed Dolly Wilde?: Joan Schenkar's '64 biography of Dolly Wilde, *Truly Wilde*, opened a door in my imagination, perhaps because she invited her readers to do just that, ending the introduction this way: "I have only been able to bring her to you complete with missing parts. It remains for you to do what Dolly could have done so beautifully for us all: Imagine the rest." Other sources include *Oscaria*, the private volume of recollections Natalie Barney had printed in Dolly's memory, which I am thankful for Bennington Librarian **Oceana Wilson's** help in obtaining access to. Additionally, Neil McKenna's *The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde* and Richard Ellmann's biography.

A High-Grade Bitch Sits Down for Lunch: When my mother-in-law passed away in 2009, it took me two years to read her favorite book, *West with the Night*. My mother-in-law was brave and athletic, a horsewoman, a young pilot, and a motorcycle-driving veterinarian—like Beryl Markham, a boundary breaker. I now teach Beryl's memoir, and celebrate the fact that it's one of the few books where we see a woman portrayed as an active hero of her own adventures with the absence of a central love story. While Beryl was a record-breaking pilot and author (not without authorship controversy, mind you), she was also Africa's first female certified horse trainer, a feat that required grit, fearlessness, and athleticism. I like to see

women working in literature, using their bodies. I also read biographical work on Markham from Mary S. Lovell and Errol Trzebinski, as well as Juliet Barnes' *The Ghosts of Happy Valley*.

The Internees: While researching an article about environmentalism and makeup, I came across an anecdote about the boxes of lipstick from Lieutenant Colonel Mervin Willett Gonin, who helped liberate the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945. Later, a friend, Henry Frechette, sent me the picture of Banksy's visual reinterpretation of the internees wearing lipstick. This, to me, is an unpretty and profound take on fame and femininity.

The Lottery, Redux: I was asked by *McSweeney's* to write a "cover story" of a classic, and I chose **Shirley Jackson's** *The Lottery*, because it's the first short story I remember reading, and I drive past her house in Bennington often. I knew I wanted to give homage to it with a matriarchal lineage in mind, and the idea that we pay for the mistakes our forebears make.



Hell-Diving Women: *Oxford American* asked me to write an essay on the International Sweethearts of Rhythm for their annual music issue. I had the pleasure of losing myself in research, and then finding out that the band played long ago in my hometown of Rocky Mount, North Carolina. After the article I found myself still dwelling on the material, and wanting to write a story. For further research, see D. Antoinette Handy's (out of print) biography on the Sweethearts and Jezebel Productions' short

documentary *Tiny and Ruby: Hell-Divin' Women* (the name of Tiny and Ruby's post-World War II band).

There are other books that have enriched my imagination, including but not limited to: *Becoming Modern: The Life of Mina Loy* by Carolyn Burke; *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall; *Women of the Left Bank* by Shari Benstock; *Nightwood* and *Ladies Almanack* by Djuna Barnes. **B**



A brief review of
Bennington in the news



WUNDERLICH POEMS FEATURED IN NYT MAGAZINE

May 12, 2015

Faculty member **Mark Wunderlich**'s "The Corn Baby" was selected by former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Tretheway as a featured poem in *The New York Times Magazine*.



ALL NATURAL WITH MICHAEL POLLAN

May 3, 2015

There's more to the word natural than you may know. **Michael Pollan** '76 discusses the evolution of the word as it relates to our foods in the May 3 issue of *The New York Times Magazine*.



NYT MAGAZINE: SALLY MANN'S EXPOSURE

April 16, 2015

An excerpt adapted from renowned photographer **Sally Mann** '73's forthcoming memoir, *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs*, was published in *The New York Times Magazine*.



DINKLAGE ON THE DAILY SHOW

April 7, 2015

Charming and smart as usual, Emmy and Golden Globe nominee **Peter Dinklage** '91 promoted the new season of *Game of Thrones* in an April appearance on the *Daily Show* with *Jon Stewart*.



VIRAL CASCADES

April 1, 2015

Devin Gaffney '10 spoke with both *The Boston Globe* and WBUR's Here and Now about his cutting-edge research on "viral cascades," a term used to describe "the phenomenon of content spreading quickly and widely through a human social network via its digital shadows." "It pays to be first, it pays to write early and often about what looks like it may take off on the Internet," Gaffney explained. "In many ways, they get to determine what the story is going to be."



FROM BARN DESK TO TINY DESK

March 30, 2015

Sylvan Esso, featuring **Amelia Meath** '10, performed one of National Public Radio's Tiny Desk Concerts in March. In related

desk news, Rose Hips and Ships, featuring **Katherine Perkins** '11 and former MFA faculty member **Thomas Bergeron**, was highlighted as a stand-out entry in NPR's 2015 Tiny Desk Concert Contest.



HELEN FRANKENTHALER FOUNDATION MAKES HISTORIC GIFT

March 26, 2015

Following a \$5 million grant in late March to Bennington's visual and performing arts programming, the news of the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation's most significant donation to date was picked up with coverage in *ARTnews*, *Philanthropy News Digest*, *The Boston Globe*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The New York Observer*. Coverage of Bennington's celebration on page 6.



PETITIONING FACEBOOK (AND WINNING)

March 21, 2015

Catherine Weingarten '13, in partnership with Emerging Bodies, led a Change.org petition in March to remove the "Feeling Fat" emoji from Facebook. Coverage of it was featured in a March 21 article of *USA Today*. More than 16,000 signatures later, Facebook announced they would remove it. Full story on page 25.



BERNSTEIN POWERHOUSE

March 11, 2015

Faculty member **Allen Shawn** was recognized globally this spring for his writings on composer Leonard Bernstein, including *The New York Times* and *BBC Music Magazine*. Additionally, a CD of his compositions by Julia Bartha was also reviewed by *The New York Times ArtsBeat* blog.



VERMONT: THE PLACE FOR ART

March 8, 2015

The National Center for Arts Research ranked the town of Bennington among the country's "Top 20 Arts Vibrant Medium and Small Cities" in its 2015 published list of "Hotbeds of America's Arts and Culture." The news was announced by the *Rutland Herald* on March 8.



GRANDMASTER SACHS

February 27, 2015

Artist and alumnus **Tom Sachs** '89 was profiled in the February 27 issue of *The New York Times Magazine* for his retrospective installation *Boombbox Retrospective* at The Contemporary Austin.



BENNINGTON THEATER DAZZLES, AS ALWAYS

February 19, 2015

Bennington College was one of the top schools included on a list of "The Best B.A. in Theatre Programs in the Country in 2015" by *OnStage*, announced February 19.



EDUCATING MAX

February 8, 2015

A February profile by *The Deseret News* on Bennington, featuring **Max Nanis** '12, discussed how the College's unique curriculum, Field Work Term, and faculty-advising structure help students succeed.



AFGHANISTAN IN DISPUTES AND COOPERATION

January 31, 2015

In a January 31 *New York Times* article about Afghans' increasing reliance on the Taliban to settle justice disputes, faculty member **Noah Coburn** was tapped as expert.



TEACHERS BY DAY, ROCKERS BY NIGHT

January 25, 2015

Punk band No Small Children, including **Nicola Berlinsky** '91, was featured as part of National Public Radio's *Secret Lives of Teachers* series on January 25.



A KALEIDOSCOPE OF MEANING

January 8, 2015

The *New York Times* reviewed **Devin Powers** '05's work, *Through The Valley*, which was shown at the Lesley Heller Workspace in January and February. B



IF IT LOOKS LIKE
A DUCK, WALKS
LIKE A DUCK, AND
SWIMS LIKE A DUCK
AND YOU THINK IT'S
A PIG—IT'S A PIG.

Gloria Steinem, 2015 commencement speaker



B (To remain relevant and agile, worker organizations must embrace the opportunities the digital landscape brings, by **Jess Kutch '03**)

from top down A DIGITAL UNION to ground up



Jess Kutch '03 is a digital strategist and co-founder of Coworker.org, an online platform for workers' rights. Previously, she served

as organizing director at Change.org, where she led a team of organizers in providing strategic support to campaigns on Change.org's platform. Her work raised Change.org's profile around the world and helped inspire thousands of people to launch and lead their own campaigns. Before joining Change.org, Jess spent five years directing online campaigns for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). Her work has been profiled by top-tier media outlets, including ABC World News, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. She is a 2014 Echoing Green Fellow and a Senior Fellow at the New Organizing Institute.

Last summer, something extraordinary happened. Thousands of employees of the New England grocery store chain Market Basket initiated a weeks-long strike and customer boycott across 71 stores.

These striking cashiers, deli clerks, and bakery managers didn't belong to a union. They had no professional organizers or labor groups helping them, either. Instead, these workers used the tools available to them—Facebook, Twitter, and a GoFundMe page that raised nearly \$100,000 for a strike fund. As the strike swelled in July, more than 90,000 people followed an employee-run Facebook page to stay informed of upcoming rallies and strike actions. The #savemarketbasket hashtag frequently trended on Twitter, and employees used the @moreforUR-dollar Twitter account to respond to numerous media requests.

The purpose of the strike was to

“The Market Basket story may seem unusual, but it's also an indication of what's to come.”

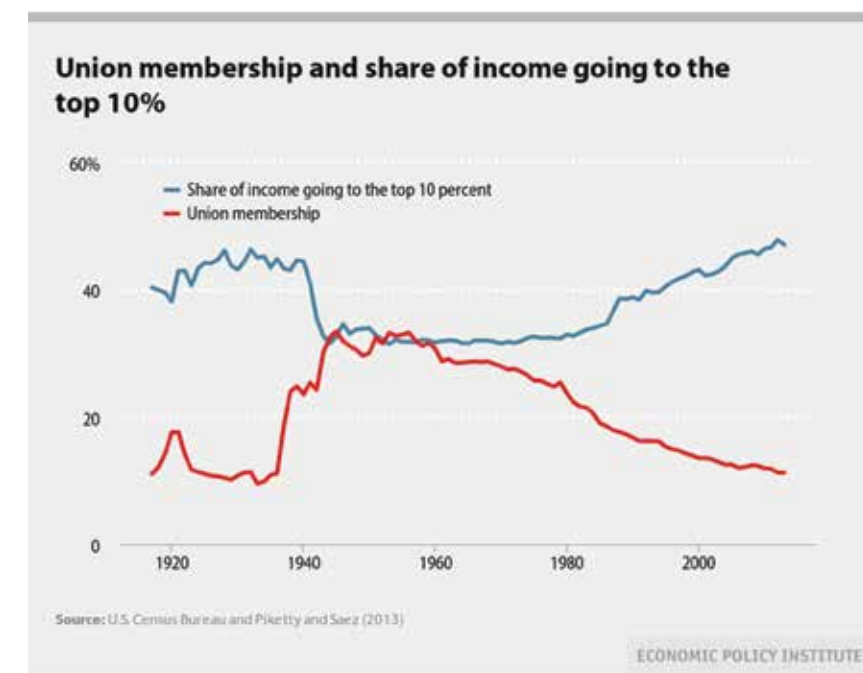
stop the ousting of a beloved CEO—Artie T. Demoulas—by a hostile Board of Directors. Under Demoulas' leadership, Market Basket had implemented a profit-sharing program, employee scholarships, and wages that were at least four dollars per hour above Massachusetts' mini-

mum wage. With the firing of their CEO, employees predicted that cuts to their wages and benefits were not far behind.

By the end of the summer, the company was so crippled by the strike and boycott—losing an estimated \$10 million each day—that the Board relented and allowed Demoulas to return to the company. The workers had won.

The Market Basket story may seem unusual, but it's also an indication of what's to come.

Regardless of what you think about the labor movement, you can't deny its impact in raising the wages and benefits of both union and non-union workers in America. Through sit-down strikes and picket lines, union members managed to win higher wages and benefits like retirement security and health care. Today, union members are 60 percent more likely to have a pension and earn roughly \$200 more each week than their non-union counterparts. But in the past 30 years, union membership has plummeted and wealth inequality has risen sharply. While many factors have contributed to these changes,



ing home nearly half of all income.

For the past few decades, many labor leaders tried to stop this decline. The AFL-CIO shifted resources toward new organizing and political lobbying, and some unions merged to consolidate membership. But none of these experiments stopped the year-over-year decline in union membership rates. There are numerous

lective action, the top-down, opaque structures of labor unions will appear increasingly outdated.

If unions are no longer viable for the vast majority of workers, we must create the conditions for new solutions to emerge. The question then, is how?

The modern U.S. labor movement was born in the chaotic final decades

“One thing is clear—the brick-and-mortar trade union of an industrial America is a poor fit for the increasingly fluid, fast-changing workforce of the 21st century.”

data suggests there is a strong correlation between de-unionization and rising income inequality. The chart on this page shows the mirror-like relationship between these two trends—as union membership climbs, the top 10 percent of earners take home a smaller share of income. Today, private sector unionization is hovering at just 6.6 percent, and the top 10 percent of earners are now tak-

reasons for this (for example, increasingly sophisticated union busting, “right to work” laws, etc.), but one thing is clear—the brick-and-mortar trade union of an industrial America is a poor fit for the increasingly fluid, fast-changing workforce of the 21st century. And as technology makes it easier for people like the employees at Market Basket to share information, make decisions, and take col-

of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Industrialization had dramatically altered life in American towns and cities. For labor organizations, one of the most significant changes was the shift away from regional craft employers toward large-scale, national corporations (or “trusts”) like U.S. Steel. Several labor organizations emerged to confront this new reality—the National Labor Union,

“Today, union members are 60 percent more likely to have a pension and earn roughly \$200 more each week than their non-union counterparts. But in the past 30 years, union membership has plummeted and wealth inequality has risen sharply.”

The Knights of Labor, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), and later, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). These organizations experimented with worker cooperatives, mutual aid programs, political lobbying, and alternative revenue streams in an attempt to scale up their presence. Some organizations found enormous success—though many wouldn’t survive. At one point, the now-defunct Knights of Labor claimed one-fifth of all U.S. workers as members. In post-Civil War America, every labor organization was a start-up. And every union organizer, a social entrepreneur.

We’re in the midst of a similar transformation for 21st-century workers. The economic changes of the Information Age will be as cataclysmic as the Industrial Revolution. Entrepreneur Micha Kaufman argues, “The Internet Revolution is in fact the Industrial Revolution of our time.” If this is true, the models that served us for the past 100 years—on the factory floor and in the office tower—no longer meet our rapidly evolving needs. Even the language we use to describe work is going extinct. Harvard business professor Shoshanna Zuboff recognized this all the way back in 1982, when she noted in her seminal work *In the Age of the Smart Machine* that

our language surrounding work “is still one of a manufacturing enterprise where raw materials are transformed by physical labor and machine power into finished goods.” She concludes, “The images associated with physical labor can no longer guide our conception of work.”

But as these changes take hold, we are adapting. People are finding new ways to influence employers on the age-old issues of wages and working conditions.

Digital tools are enabling workers to advocate for themselves in ways


“The economic changes of the Information Age will be as cataclysmic as the Industrial Revolution.”

that were previously only possible with the backing of a well-staffed union or law firm. In 2013, a Yemen-based freelance journalist, fed up with late payments, created the website “Pay Me Please” for freelancers to publicly report corporate clients with past due bills. Last year, a New York-based Uber driver created

his own website (udriversnetwork.com) and built a network of drivers to push for better treatment from the platform. And on reddit.com, thousands of anonymous workers use employer “subreddits” to share information and safely in anonymous whistleblowing.

At Coworker.org—an organization I co-founded in 2013—we’re building the digital infrastructure to nurture and develop this nascent workplace activism. Our community of users includes American Airlines flight attendants, Uber drivers, Wells Fargo bank tellers, college faculty, and baristas. For example, more than 24,000 Starbucks baristas in 17 different countries—or, 8 percent of the Starbucks total global workforce—have used Coworker.org to win everything from scheduling improvements to changes in the dress code. Baristas in the Philippines are teaming up with their counterparts in Australia and Canada to challenge a multi-national employer. None of these advances came out of the traditional trade union model.

For the first time in human history, workers can communicate and organize in real time, across great distances, and can speak directly to decision-makers in the C Suite. What we’re seeing on the internet right now

are the seedlings of a future labor movement—one that is highly decentralized, global, and driven by technology. Labor *unions* as we’ve come to know them may be dying, but the labor *movement* is on the verge of another renaissance. From these tiny digital uprisings, a new model for worker power will emerge. 



(How recent graduate **Catherine Weingarten '13** changed Facebook, by **Bruna Lobato '15**)

fat is not a feeling, acebook

Facebook offers more than 100 feelings that any user can list alongside their posts, ranging from “feeling blessed” to “pissed off.” As of 2015, “feeling fat” is not among them, after Ohio-based playwright and recent graduate **Catherine Weingarten '13** partnered with the organization Endangered Bodies to create a change.org petition requesting Facebook remove the emoticon.

Weingarten first got the idea when she saw a friend using the chubby-cheeked smiley face emoticon in her status. “I think it was supposed to be funny, but seeing this status made me feel angry.” Ninety-seven percent of women admit to having at least one instance of hating their bodies, and this emoticon was alarming because it reinforced those self-destructive feelings. Weingarten was so alarmed by the body-shaming “I feel fat” and “I feel ugly” emoticons that she contacted Facebook the very same day and put it on the radar of her Endangered Bodies network of activists.

Weingarten is not a stranger to this issue. She has struggled with eating disorders and unrealistic body expectations herself. In the United States alone, 20 million women and 10 million men suffer from a clinically significant eating disorder at some time in their life. The National Eating Disorder Association reports that 81 percent of 10-year-old girls are afraid of being fat and 35–57 percent of adolescent girls engage in crash dieting, self-induced vomiting, fasting, diet pills, or laxatives. For most young women (and, increasingly, men), trying to live up to unrealistic ideals associated with beauty severely affects self-esteem.

“I used to have this idea of ‘I’m fat’ and ‘I feel fat,’ but what I meant was that I didn’t feel thin enough and like I wasn’t good enough,” Weingarten explains. “Everyone has fat, regardless of their weight.”


This uproar came shortly after Facebook managed

a different kind of media storm, when it was released that the company had experimented with news feeds to evaluate the impact content had on a person’s mood and disposition. The backlash focused on the involuntary experimentation, but the findings of the actual study demonstrated that Facebook content, even when seemingly innocuous, greatly impacts human emotions. Weingarten, along with 16,770 people who signed the petition to get Facebook to remove the “feeling fat” emoticon, were aware of the impact content and news feeds have on

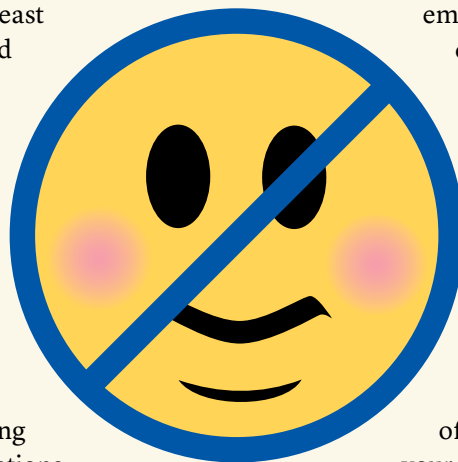
self-image and believed that the “feeling fat” emoticon would overwhelmingly be associated with something negative, and used as a way to put themselves down.

Before Facebook removed the chubby-smiley face they told *People* magazine in an official statement that “People use Facebook to share their feelings with friends and support each other [...]. One option we give people to express themselves is to add a feeling to their posts. You can choose from over 100 feelings we offer based on people’s input or create your own.”

Not good enough for the 16,770 users who signed Weingarten’s petition, which ultimately got the reputedly rigid social media giant to change their ways. A week after the petition was launched in March, Facebook pulled the emoji from the list of status updates.

“As someone who struggled with body image, I am happy that I’ve helped eliminate one form of body-shaming hatred on the internet,” Weingarten said. “I’m proud to have partnered with Endangered Bodies to lead this effort.” 

Bruna Lobato '15 studied comparative literature and creative writing. Her writing has appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Feminist Write*, and *Creative Nonfiction*. She is currently an MFA candidate at New York University.





QUIET GIANT

Faculty member **Liz Deschenes**, dubbed by *The New York Times* as “the quiet giant of post-conceptual photography,” recently created another site-specific photography installation this past May at MASS MoCA. The exhibition is her second major show in a year and follows her first major solo exhibition at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, which opened in November 2014, and is pictured here.

Both exhibitions are vivid renderings of Deschenes’ own articulation of her practice, which she describes as being interested in “cultivating a self-reflexive dialogue, while simultaneously reflecting the world at large, and utilizing a vocabulary that integrates concept with form.” She has pointed out that the word *camera* literally means “room” in Latin—and her work embodies this practice, always utilizing every element of her installation sites—light, size, even history—to make images that astound.

In addition to mounting two major solo shows this year, Deschenes also curated a group exhibition at MASS MoCA featuring six artists whose work expands the field of photography—Dana Hoey, Miranda Lichtenstein, Craig Kalpakjian, Josh Tonsfeldt, Sara VanDerBeek, and Randy West.

B

(A glimpse into the two major solo exhibitions mounted by faculty member **Liz Deschenes**)



BRIEF DELLA ROCCA

an andy
ABSTRA



B (Retracing the work of retired faculty member **Andy Spence**, by Briece Della Rocca)

Andy Spence does not display his own work in the office, except for one piece: an 8 x 4-foot test sheet. Kraft paper with a superimposed slide of an older painting he had blown up and silk screened. It looks like a large “M,” crossed out, retraced, crossed out, retraced. “M, like mistake,” he says smiling. It is a backdrop to other work—including several student mimics of his own work—haphazardly cluttering the edges. The permeability of the piece within the landscape of this small but voluminous, studio-like office makes it inconspicuous, so that if not for the paper’s size you might miss the draft idea altogether.

“It’s very Warhol-like, not in the image but in the quality of the print. Those big splotches you see are enlarged pieces of dust or something. All of that becomes part of this painting,” he says, examining the draft he made 21 years ago when he first came to Bennington. “I did five of them. I didn’t know what I was going to do with them, but now I use them as a ground for other images.”

There is a linear quality to the way Andy Spence retraces his career—a rational, clear progression that, at least in the distance of hindsight, seems designed. He started working after graduate school. He had a studio at a used auto lot in L.A. and a paying gig through an artist connection at Cart and Crate, where he packed and conditioned art with other aspiring artists by day so they could make it at night. “It was the real beginning of my education,” he recalls. He learned how art was placed outside of exhibitions, delivered work for dealers and collectors, familiarized himself with contemporary artists, and picked up lessons where grad school dropped off.

“I realized no one ever told me how to find an art dealer. No one in art school was talking about how to show your work. People didn’t think of it as a career; back then they didn’t call it that.”

He started to make connections with better-known artists, art dealers, and curators, and at night he kept going with his own work—the thing that drove his day jobs.

“It’s funny, because whenever I would get more work, I’d just want to use it to buy more time in my studio. I wasn’t really interested in getting rich or famous. I was

just really focused on what I was doing in the studio, trying to make paintings I really liked.”

When the work at Cart and Crate was slow he took odd jobs painting homes, and was unexpectedly influenced by the insistence on precision and neatness. Intrigued by facades and prefabrications, he explored surface on canvas for several years. His approach appealed to Nicholas Wilder, an art dealer, who followed his progression in the studio for several months before deciding to show Spence’s work in his gallery.

Spence’s work from the 1970s deals a lot with process. In fact, he says, process was his subject. But in 1977 he moved from L.A. to New York, where his monochromatic facade paintings did not make sense. He didn’t see a place for them in the city. “They didn’t have prefab stuff, they didn’t even have condominiums at that point. It was much more about refurbishing what existed.”

For the burgeoning artist this was a critical moment. It took a few years but he found his stride in objects’ abstraction—paintings of things he wanted but could not afford. If he wanted a chair, he’d paint an abstraction of it. He painted tables, wind chimes, windows, dixie cups, everything from the elaborate to the mundane.

“They became more non-representational formal shapes. The surfaces changed,” he explains. “They were painted heavily—the way a lot of abstract expressionists painted—but my paintings were very hard edged and geometric.”

It caught people’s attention. He was showing and selling pieces, making breakthroughs in the New York art scene, and getting lush-language reviews in major publications. The descriptors “wit” and “playful” came up a lot—and still do.

“Not all things that I wanted looked really good,” he laughs, remembering one object in particular. “I mean, how do you paint a sunroof on a car, which I did. It was very awkward. But I guess sometimes it was the awkwardness that made it interesting.”

In 1993, a year before being awarded a Guggenheim, he was at a party when a colleague, **Rochelle Feinstein**,

announced she was heading up to Bennington to give notice after getting a professorship at Yale. At the time, academic positions weren’t appealing to Spence. He belonged in the studio and the art scene. But Feinstein suggested Spence apply anyway. If he was going to find a well-matched home, it would be at Bennington.

Why not, he thought.

At the faculty exhibition last year, Spence showed pieces that were taking another, obviously new direction. If his L.A. period was about process, building surface, and figurative work, and his New York period found something in object abstractions and formal shapes, his Bennington period—at least last year—appears to explore collage, layers, revision, and form. Some pieces sandwich discrete works, transforming verticals to horizontals, others open the canvas of previously considered “finished work.”

Spence talks about his new direction as coming, in some ways, from the challenge of space. For the last year

and a half he’s been preparing to move four decades’ worth of work from Vermont to his Brooklyn studio. In other ways, as he describes the paintings, it is difficult to ignore what seems like an obvious metaphor even if he’s not underlining it. For someone with a clear sensitivity to landscape and place, the work that he’s generating now—or regenerating—seems to draw from Bennington’s cultural, philosophical landscape pushing students to come back to their interests, to find connections in their work, to seed something that they will continue beyond campus. Spence’s new work is recreating, reexamining work he’s done over the four decades of his career—coming to, in some ways, an essence—or as Spence characterizes it, an abstract.

“I got to a place where I just decided to re-combine a couple of my paintings and their

multiple parts. For example, I opened up a diptych and inserted a skinny painting that’s not even quite the same height. It’s *totally* abstract now.”

Here he talks about another piece exhibited in the same show that was cut up and reassembled. “It was sort of like a jigsaw puzzle and appealing to me. It was funny. It



Storm Windows, 2014, oil on canvas, 22 x 16 in.

looked like a painting that exploded, or like what happens to airplanes when they crash and all the pieces get reassembled in a warehouse. That's what this painting looks like." He laughs recalling it. "I mean, it's put together with *push pins*."

Again his work has shifted. Now he is on to duality, or fiction/nonfiction themes, "I know that is a literary term, but I see it as relating to paintings, in that the fiction part of the painting is the illusion, and the nonfiction part is the objectivity of it. I like what happens when the painting looks like a floor and a ceiling, a floor and a wall, and then these lines come down and go across the floor in different perspectives. There is an illusion, but it's also very object-oriented."

In some ways you can use that same framework to think about Spence's career. The foreground and background shift depending on your reference point. "I knew about Andy's work when I took classes with him. It was clever and silly, like him. A sort of hilarious, smart joke on hard-edge abstraction that I always really liked," **Anne Schaffer '11** remembers. But what was front and center, she says, was his teaching. "He didn't take himself too seriously, and he let us be really creative and full in our approach to our paintings, without letting anyone get away with making b.s."

Fellow painting faculty member **Ann Pibal** has looked to him as an exemplar of someone prioritizing student exploration, open structures, and providing students with individual space required to follow first impulses and to develop original ideas. "Andy truly models the Bennington ethos, of teaching by example," she explains. "He is an original, profoundly interesting artist, ultimately dedicated to his own studio practice; his example to students has never been one of conceptual or aesthetic vantage-point but has been continually and simply made through the vitality of the life he leads as an artist."

"Students appreciate in particular his skill in leading critiques," says **Isabel Roche**, dean of the College. "He has a way of guiding them to see the themes and patterns at play in their own work and the work of others."

President Mariko Silver sees that as coming from his own practice as an artist. "That old saying 'those who can,

do; those who can't teach' is turned on its head. Here is an artist whose work is represented in nearly every major public art institution—The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of

American Art, the Walker Art Center, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Carnegie Museum of Art," Silver recites. "And he brings that into the classroom, to his students. There are many talented teachers who tour students through the great works lining our cultural institutions, but it is different to walk those halls with someone whose work is a part of that very lineage."

And then there is this perspective from the College's design coordinator, **Erin McKenny**, who has worked alongside Spence for years on building, conditioning, and exhibiting the College's collection. She sees a master curator, recalling how the Abstract Expressionist show in the Usdan Gallery recently took shape. "It was all Andy. He had this vision and put it up exactly

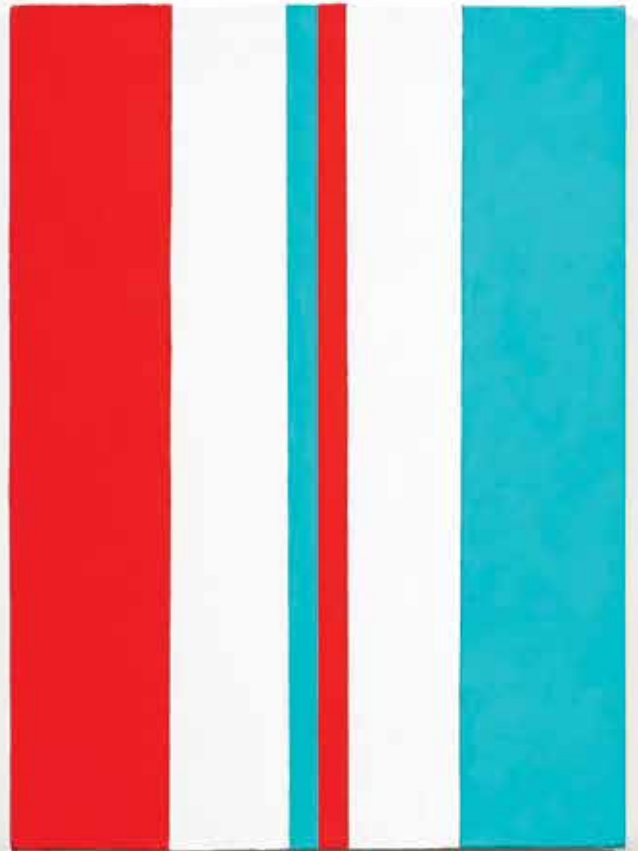
as he wanted it on first imagination. There were almost no changes. It is just so natural for him, like he's been planning this all along."

It's easy to see Spence curating a show of seminal works from memory alone. Conversations with him are like this—in the span of an hour Spence will walk through decades of contemporary artists and what they added to the field, how they've given him perspective on what he's doing in the studio. But now, at the end of our interview, he comes back to his work without the references to others but to his own body of paintings and prints, now four decades full. His curatorial impulses are in high gear. He is "thinning out" his massive portfolio—donating pieces to the College, to museums, to friends and colleagues—and removing work from his website that he is re-evaluating. In other words, everything is on the table. Spence believes that has to be the case when the goal is to come up with a body of work you love. Nothing is finished, he says, until you stop working it. **E**

To listen to Andy Spence trace his work and career, visit <https://soundcloud.com/benningtoncollege/andy-spence/> for the full framing of an extraordinary career.



Wht House, 2014, oil on photograph on wood, 12 x 9.5 in.



PARTNERS

Partners, created by retired faculty member **Andy Spence**, is a series of four pieces exhibited in 2014. Included are two abstract portraits of pets painted with dots and two painted abstractions of vertical stripes. As Spence's work continues to evolve, he has since combined the two striped verticals so that they are now a singular painting.

B

A four-part piece with oil and digital ink on canvas 22 x 72 in.
by **Andrew Spence**





Becky Godwin's journey to and through Bennington, recounted by her former student, Crystal Barrick '11

FROM EVERY VANTAGE

A Look at Retired Faculty Member Becky Godwin's Work at Bennington

"Up here, they let the student explore around, find out what she wants to do, and then proceed on the theory that since you can't teach her everything anyhow, you should teach her how to learn under her own steam, and keep on learning the rest of her life."

Becky Godwin invoked these early impressions of Bennington College, from *Herald Tribune* journalist Ernie Pyle, when she gave her 1998 convocation address to the students and faculty. There may be no better way to describe Becky's own approach to teaching and learning. Her 23 years at Bennington have wended and surprised throughout, steam-powered by a drive to explore. She has seen this place from nearly every vantage point, moving deftly from writing desk to seminar table, even to podium and easel, as a staff member, faculty member, advisor, mentor, and student.

Even before Becky found Bennington, she had experienced "a checkered career," as she describes it. She had worked in a steel mill and an ad agency, owned a real estate brokerage, gotten her master's degree from Middlebury's Bread Loaf School of English, and authored a group of short stories. But by 1992, she was looking for something new, something she could do part time while writing. A position in the paper caught her eye. "It was for 'Writer,'" she says, "Just plain 'Writer.'" She applied, and started writing for Bennington as a staff member that spring.

Her Bennington education began the way most do: with immersion and investigation. "I read every alumni magazine that I could find," Becky remembers. "It was a fascinating place to immerse yourself in—and I was completely hooked." As editor of the alumni magazine, her favorite assignment came early on: "We decid-





ed to do this story about the Pioneers, the first 11 classes of women, for the 60th anniversary of Bennington, and I also interviewed **Martha Hill**. Martha was a pistol, just great, just an inspiration. It changed me—to listen to her and think, while I was in my early 40s, that this was somebody 50 years older than I was, and she was this vibrant, this lively. She is this *together*. I all of a sudden saw life expanding out before me.”

Each alumna she interviewed had her own remarkable story to share. The original intent had been to publish only two interviews—the deciding criterion being that these women “still had to be doing new things”—but Becky couldn’t narrow it down. “Everyone I talked to was still doing new things,” she says. “It was amazing. At the end of that, my outlook on how life could be truly changed. One woman was taking up photography for the first time, in her 90s, and it was just a complete and utter inspiration. I fell in love with those women, with the concept of Bennington and this kind of education.”

By 2003, Becky had well-established herself as a writer—publishing two novels, *Private Parts* (Longstreet Press, 1992) and *Keeper of the House* (St. Martin’s Griffin, 1995), and a number of short stories, and she was awarded a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts—and she also had picked up some advisees and taught a handful of seminars in the MFA in Writing and July Programs. Former provost and dean **Elissa Tenny** and former literature faculty member **Steven Bach** encouraged her to step into the classroom full time, to join the ranks of **April Bernard**, **Ted Hoagland**, and **Mark Wunderlich**, among others. “Steven kept hounding me to apply for this literature faculty position that had opened up,” she remembers. “Every afternoon as I left the Barn, he would be waiting by the side door for me with a challenge. He would say, ‘Have you applied yet? Have you applied yet?’”

She started with two classes: Welty, Woolf, O’Connor: Life into Art (which she taught again and for the last time at Bennington this past spring) and Reading and Writing the Short Story. In both of these classes—and throughout all of her time at Bennington—she structured discussions around what she calls “the honcho system.” This technique demands that students lead conversations around each other’s pieces; one student, the “honcho,” takes ownership over a peer’s story or essay, guiding the critique and eliciting feedback on behalf of the writer. “It takes the pressure off of the writer somehow,” Becky says. “Nobody’s looking at you, and they’re not looking at me, either, which is nice. They’re looking at each other.”

This trust in her students and esteem for their writing has been a hallmark of Becky’s time here. In 2009, as founder and faculty editor of *plain china*, she took her regard for undergraduate writers to a national scale. She built a course around an idea: Bennington students would

solicit, read, select, and edit writing and artwork from undergraduate journals across the country and publish a “best of the best” anthology each year. “I had felt that undergrad writing had been underrepresented and under-respected,” she said; that spring, a small class worked to change that. A statement of purpose from the inaugural year, written by Becky and the first group of student-editors, articulates the aim and heft of the undertaking:

We see plain china as a pioneering form of undergraduate-driven public action. Not only does the anthology enable Bennington students to engage with the world outside of our campus, but it also seeks to radically reform the way undergraduate work is showcased and valued in our country. It provides a forum for a national conversation among college students. The work of undergraduates has often been featured only at their respective institutions; with this anthology, we want to honor and connect young writers and artists, and to create a collective narrative reflective of and relevant to the undergraduate experience.

plain china has since featured writing and artwork from more than 700 students and 118 journals nationally, receiving more than 64,000 site visits from all 50 states and more than 150 countries. Quality was recognized from the get-go: The story originally selected for the Fiction Prize in 2010 was accepted for publication in *The Atlantic*; one of the 2012 essays appeared in *Best American Essays* 2013; a 2013 story received Notable status in the *Best American Non-Required Reading* series; and a 2014 essay was included in *Best of the Net* 2014. And Bennington students have held steady the helm. “This was [Becky’s] baby, but wow, did students drive this thing,” remembers senior vice president for planning and administration, **David Rees**. “She trusted students to be in charge, to be responsible, to be equal partners. From the naming, to the structuring of it, to the website, the whole thing. It was a true collaboration. She led it, but she was not heavy-handed.” Dean of the College **Isabel Roche** echoes that this approach broadly defines Becky’s pedagogy: “Becky, as a teacher, is all in, always. Students in her classroom learn, and learn, and learn—not only about whatever they are studying, but about how to do the work and what it means to work hard.”

Although Becky’s first job title at Bennington was “just plain ‘Writer,’” editor might fit better. When you trace her winding history here—and when you listen to her students and colleagues describe how she transformed not only their work, but their lives—you can tell that her knack for revising extends far beyond line edits. Becky examines, reimagines, re-envisions, and reinvents for a living. She cultivates, with compassion and conviviality. “She always is looking for the best in a piece of writing, a situation, or a person,” says Rees. “It’s not that she denies the less interesting or the darker side. She’s just not interested in it. She’s always looking for the finest—she does this in her work and in her demeanor.

It reflects her values as a person, as an artist and a teacher. She doesn't focus on what's weak. She finds the strength in something, and uses that to bring it along."

These traits reverberate in her students; they credit Becky for giving them the courage and capacity to become more attentive readers, writers, editors, questioners. "'Everything' is a poor placeholder for the continuously growing list of things I owe [Becky] for," echoes **Rebecca Nakaba '13**. "A few things on the list: asking me the right questions that made me ask myself the right questions; teaching me how to learn, and how to teach myself; teaching me the importance of revision, especially when I thought I was finished." **Wyatt Kirby '10** captures the span of her influence succinctly: "I will keep this brief: if my time at Bennington had been limited to a single hour in Becky's classroom, I would have considered it sufficient."

In the spring of 2013, Becky had one more turn to take at Bennington—she became a student. During her sabbatical, she enrolled in two courses: Advanced Playwriting, with **Sherry Kramer**, and a drawing class, Mark-making and Representation, with **Mary Lum**. "It was fantastic," says Becky. "And it changed me yet *again*, enormously." She wrote her first play, based on Eudora Welty's "Where Is the Voice Coming From?" and she did her first sketches and drawings. "I wanted to look at my material in a new way, and I found it terrifying. But it was a beautiful thing to be completely raw... I got to study with two amazing teachers, and it changed the way I thought about my students and my advisees—to see how much time a VAPA class takes, for instance, the way that you get lost in your work, the rigor of it. It opened up how I think about my time after Bennington, too."

When she retires, Becky plans to keep on learning under her own steam.

"I'm going to go back to things I love and admire, and explore and play, and I'm very excited about doing all that. And reading again, closely, in the way I expect my students to read.

"I'll take three or four months to do exactly as I please. And then I plan to immerse myself in the place I live, Edisto Island, South Carolina, and interview people, to hear their stories, so varied and powerful. And I'm continuing my naturalist studies, inspired by the observing I did, on a closer and slower level, in Mary's class. My ideal is to stay open. Our natural tendency, as we get older, is to close down. And I don't want that.

"I hope Bennington does that for everybody," Becky says. "I'm just 'writing a Plan' for this year. But that whole paradigm: find a question, find the resources, make something, test it, make it again? That's life. That's how we do it in a class, that's how we write an essay. That's how I want to live for the rest of my life. Have a question. That's where you start." **B**

**"I WILL KEEP
THIS BRIEF:
IF MY TIME AT
BENNINGTON
HAD BEEN
LIMITED TO A
SINGLE HOUR
IN BECKY'S
CLASSROOM,
I WOULD HAVE
CONSIDERED IT
SUFFICIENT."**

—Wyatt Kirby '10

B (A career built in the shadow of 9/11, by **Jeva Lange '15**)

THE NECESSARY THING TO DO



*After graduating from Bennington in 2005, award-winning journalist **Luke Mogelson '05** made his way to Afghanistan, where he became one of the only U.S. media correspondents living in Kabul. With work published in *The Paris Review* and *The New Yorker*, as well as having penned a number of *New York Times Magazine* cover stories, Mogelson returned to Bennington in March to speak with his colleague, Afghan interpreter Habib Zahori, at an event in the Bennington Translates series.*

Before Jakarta, before Afghanistan, before the refugee boat or the river in Syria, before Mexico City or *The New York Times* or *The New Yorker*, there was a radio in Canfield House at Bennington College that, you might say, started it all.

It was Luke Mogelson's first day of college: September 11, 2001. Classes on campus were cancelled after news broke of the World Trade Center attacks. Instead of attending Reading the Middle Ages, Mogelson gathered with his housemates around a radio in the house's common room. As was the case for many Americans, what he heard changed his life forever.

For the next four years, Mogelson kept himself relatively uninvolved in affairs of the outside world, spending his summers working on fishing boats up in Alaska. College existed as a kind of bubble in which to escape reality and Mogelson lost himself in his studies: fiction became a way out, or a way to not engage at all.

But when Mogelson graduated in 2005, he faced the real world again. And in it, looming bigger than anything else, was Afghanistan.

"I was interested in Afghanistan ever since we went to war there," Mogelson told *Bennington* over Skype. "The

thing about the war in Afghanistan was, for the first nine years, not very much was happening. Even for people who were interested in it, there wasn't a whole lot to do or even to read about. The war there really started in 2010, with the Surge. While I was in Bennington, and for a few years afterward, all the attention was on Iraq."

"Every assignment is chasing people's misery."

Mogelson decided to drop out of New York University's MFA program and enlist in the National Guard as a medic.

"I initially supported the war and felt obligated to participate for that reason," Mogelson said. "Or at least to enlist in the military and make myself available."

But three years later Mogelson still hadn't been deployed and was honorably discharged—still no closer to the Middle East.

It was *The New York Times Magazine* that eventually vouched for Mogelson's visa to Afghanistan and paid for his plane ticket. Mogelson had always been a writer, and a good one at that (**Marguerite Feitlowitz** recalled his student paper on *Madame Bovary* as one of the most brilliant she'd ever seen produced by an undergraduate). But upon arriving in Kabul, he realized that one single story wasn't going to cut it. Mogelson's *New York Times Magazine* assignment became a three-year stay, during which he established a name for himself as one of the few on-the-ground reporters in Afghanistan willing to report from the most dangerous regions and neighborhoods.

Since that first trip to Afghanistan, Mogelson has written multiple cover stories for *The New York Times Magazine*, including "A Beast in the Heart of Every Fighting Man," an investigation of the alleged murders of three Afghan civilians by U.S. soldiers. For another cover story,

made up 2% of U.S. news stories. "The war isn't over. Help us tell the story," the Razistan Kickstarter letter implored.

Today, Mogelson continues to work to bring the forgotten, or ignored, parts of the world to an American audience. His stories have recently taken him to West Africa, to cover the Ebola epidemic, and Mosul, which he wrote about for *The New Yorker*.

"I don't think I'll ever give up doing journalism," Mogelson said. "But there are definitely major ethical dilemmas you confront constantly when you do foreign reporting, especially combat reporting.

"Every assignment is chasing people's misery," he added during his Q&A at Bennington's translation event. "Needing bad things to happen to make a powerful story—you don't need that in fiction, which is a huge relief."

Mogelson described visiting a river in Syria every day to look for the bodies of innocent, executed citizens. He

"His stories have recently taken him to West Africa, to cover the Ebola epidemic, and Mosul, which he wrote about for *The New Yorker*."

Mogelson went undercover to travel with refugees 200 miles in a boat bound for Christmas Island—and nearly died in the process ("The Impossible Refugee Boat Lift to Christmas Island"). He has covered the local Afghan police as well as "The Scariest Little Corner of the World" where Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan meet in a place called Zavanj.

In 2012, Mogelson used Kickstarter to raise \$13,310 from 183 backers in order to launch the website Razistan, a publication focusing on photo essays and short videos to "bring into vivid relief the war in Afghanistan, the country, and its people." Contributors included Sandra Calligaro, Terese Christiansson, Lorenzo Tugnoli, Mikhail Galustov, and John Wendle.

"We all live here in regular houses and in regular neighborhoods, not in compounds and bases," Mogelson told *The New Yorker* in a 2012 article, "Razistan: New Views of Afghanistan." "We feel that this part of the place—the civilian part—has been underrepresented. Most of our contributors want to treat Afghanistan as the endlessly fascinating country that it is, not simply as a war zone."

Although Razistan has since gone defunct, it was once one of the only ways for Americans to get information about the region—coverage of Afghanistan in 2012 barely

recognized the necessity of telling the story to a larger audience, but then hesitated.

"I'm not sure it is justified by the project," Mogelson said. "I'm not even convinced that it is the necessary thing to do."

Later, Mogelson clarified: "The idea is that you're highlighting and exposing what's happening to these people to audiences that might be able to influence policy or help them, but—" Over the phone, he sighed. "—When you're on the ground, doing the reporting, it can feel...you can lose track of those abstract justifications."

Mogelson's fictional story, "Peacetime," was published in *The New Yorker* in April. His reporting on Mosul is forthcoming. **B**

Luke Mogelson '05 is a long-form journalist for *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Nation* among other major publications. He has covered international conflict zones, the refugee crisis, and more recently the Ebola outbreak. He also publishes fiction at *The Paris Review*.

Jeva Lange '15 has contributed to *Vice*, *Bennington*, and is now a staff writer for *The Week*.



(A brief review of the work and achievements of Bennington's faculty members)

Brooke Allen completed a biography of Benazir Bhutto for the *Icons* series, jointly published by Amazon and Houghton Mifflin. It will be released in January 2016. She also edited *Yours in Haste and Adoration: The Selected Letters of Terry Southern*, forthcoming from Antibookclub.

In January, **David Anderegg** gave a series of lectures on "Lacan and the Psychotherapy of Psychosis" in the Psychiatry Residency Training program at Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, MA.

Barry Bartlett was reviewed in the 98th issue of *Ceramics: Art and Perceptions* magazine for his work in the show *Narrative of Fire: Bodies and Clay*. He also participated in an invitational wood firing that was part of the NCECA Conference held in Providence, RI. Currently his work is part of a show at the Fuller Craft Museum called *Continuum of Innovation: Haystack Clay Selects* until August 23 and he is part of the American Museum of Ceramic Art's 10th Anniversary show, *Honoring the Past, Embracing the Future*, which was displayed until June 28.

MFA in Writing faculty member **April Bernard**'s piece on Laura Ingalls Wilder, "Laura's World," was published by the *New York Review of Books* in March.

Tom Bogdan received a Fulbright Specialist Grant. He will be at the University of Manila to recreate Meredith Monk's *A Celebration Service*, which he will also teach a class on in the fall.

OPERA America awarded **Kitty Brazelton** a Discovery Grant from the Opera Grants for Female Composers program. Brazelton was one of seven composers who received a total of \$100,000 to support their opera compositions.



Psychic Driving, a show created by **Nick Brooke**, played in March at HERE Arts

Center in NYC. The show was part of the HERE Artist Residency Program's CULTUREMART 2015, meant to allow current and former resident artists a platform to blur the boundaries between dance, theatre, music, new media, puppetry, and visual art, melding these forms to support their adventurous visions.

Andrew Cencini will serve as the director of software development for vapor IO, a startup company working in the hardware and software space related to modular, hyper-collapsed data centers where floor-space density and power efficiency are of greatest concern. He will use this time working to advance the state of the art in this space, as well as bring back additional skills and an expanded network that will be of benefit to students and the College.



Noah Coburn has been offered a Senior Scholar Multi-Country Research Fulbright to conduct a study of the effects of contracting and intervention in Nepal and India. Coburn was also quoted in a *New York Times* article about Afghans' increasing reliance on the Taliban to settle justice disputes. He also co-authored a paper for *The Diplomat* regarding the viability of Afghanistan as a model for U.S.-China cooperation.



Hailed by *The New York Times* as "silky fluidity: movement that emanates from deep under the skin, where joints are loose, and the spine is airy," **Elena Demyanenko**'s latest work *Blue Room* was performed online in February as a part of the digital dance festival at New York Live Arts. She created the work in collaboration with MFA fellow **Dai Jian**, and **Nick Brooke** was the composer.



Thorsten Dennerline was one of 34 artists selected from

2,000 submissions for inclusion in the International Print Center New York Winter exhibition; his submission is a book of his own images and text by fellow faculty member **Mark Wunderlich**.



Liz Deschenes' solo exhibition, *Gallery 4.1.1.* was opened for viewing at MASS MoCA

this past May; in conjunction, she also curated a group exhibition titled *Artists' Choice: An Expanded Field of Photography*, featuring the work of artists Dana Hoey, Miranda Lichtenstein, Sara VanDerBeek, Josh Tonsfeldt, Randy West, and Craig Kalpakjian.

Kathleen Dimmick served as dramaturg on the Red Bull Theater's production of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* at the Duke in New York City in April.

Marguerite Feitlowitz's original long fiction, "In the House of Stories," appears in the Spring 2015 issue of *91st Meridian*, published by the University of Iowa International Writing Program. Her translation of Luisa Valenzuela's "Mother and Knife," is out in the Winter-Spring '15 issue of *Gobshite Quarterly*.

"A Safe, Secret Place," a chapter from a novel in progress by **Rebecca Godwin**, appeared in *Modern Language Studies*, Volume 44, Number 1, Summer 2014.

The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism published **Karen Gover**'s article on the philosophy of printing, "Are All Multiples the Same?" in their January 2015 issue. She notes the work could not have been done without the information provided

by printmaking faculty member **Thorsten Dennerline**.

Sarah Harris' article, "Trauma y tebeo: Representación del pasado violento en la novela gráfica española" ("Trauma and Tebeo: Representation of the Violent Past in the Spanish Graphic Novel") is coming out in the next issue of the journal of the Spanish Contemporary History Association. She also has another article, co-written with Enrique Del Rey Cabero, set to be published in *Comics Forum* titled "The Spanish Civil War in Comics."

The New York Foundation for the Arts awarded **Yoko Inoue** an Artist's Fellowship for future work in craft/sculpture.

Combining music, philosophy, and the sounds of nature, **Susie Ibarra** performed on Earth Day at the EMPAC concert hall as part of a trio with David Rothenberg and Michael Century. Her course taught last term, Sister City Project, had their proposal for a sister city partnership between the town of Bennington and Tagum City in the Philippines approved. Following the signature of a Memorandum for Partnership between the two, the class celebrated with a cultural festival in the town of Bennington on April 25 with performances by the Philippine Kulintang Ensemble and the Bennington College Songwriters Club.



MFA in Writing faculty member **Major Jackson** read Derek Walcott's "In Italy" for the March episode of *The New Yorker's* Poetry Podcast.

Vermont Public Radio's *All Things Considered* interviewed **Dina Janis** about her work with Dorset Theater Festival to stage the entirety of British playwright Alan Ayckbourn's comedic trilogy, *The Norman Chronicles*, in collaboration with two other theater companies. *Berkshire*

on Stage also wrote about the collaborative effort.

In March, **Jonathan Kline** had work featured at the Art on Paper fair, located on Manhattan's downtown waterfront Pier 36. The exhibition featured artists who consider paper to be a major influence in their work. He also has work on display at the Phoenix Art Museum.



Mary Lum's work was featured in a number of publications, including *Elle Decor*, *Harper's*, and *Artforum*. Her pieces *Finchley Road* and *London 0201* also were

shown at the Yancey Richardson Gallery in NYC last December.

The Journal of Student Research recently published a paper directed by **Amie McClellan** and featuring original work and research by Bennington students. The paper looks at the impact of a common detergent on individual cells. While the impact on more complex organisms has been studied, this is, to McClellan's knowledge, the first such study at the cellular level.

Katie Montovan was published in the April issue of *American Naturalist* for her findings on partial resource use by parasitoid wasps; she and her fellow authors used a combination of field research, laboratory experiments, and mathematical modeling to advance their work and address nine possible explanations for consistent partial resource exploitation by individual wasps.



Ann Pibal has been featured in two shows; the first, *NOW-ISM: Abstraction Today*, is on view at The Pizutti Collection in Columbus, OH. She was also part of the organized exhibition *Reductive*

Minimalism: Women Artists in Dialogue 1960–2014 at the University of Michigan Museum of Art in Ann Arbor, MI.

In December, at the Anthropological Association annual meeting in Washington, DC, anthropologist **Mirka Prazak** teamed up with a Kenyan colleague to give a paper on "Short-term NGO-Based Internships in East Africa: Negotiating New Trends in Study Abroad, Student Zeal, and 'Sustainable' Development." In March, she attended the American Ethnological Society spring meeting on Emergence in San Diego, CA, and presented on the current movement of protests against female genital mutilation in rural Kenya.

Robert Ransick was a working group leader for the No Free Lunch: Food + Climate Change workshop in April, which focused on collectively building a map to connect issues around the food system.

Kerry Ryer-Parke '90 traveled to Corsica to study traditional Corsican and Georgian polyphony. Her current course, World Vocal Ensemble, includes music from these cultures, as well as Bosnia, South Africa, Egypt, Serbia, Haiti and the Philippines.



The Independent Reviewers of New England recognized **Charles Schoonmaker** with a Best Costume Design award for his work on *Venus in Fur* with the Huntington Theatre Company. He also was nominated for an Elliot Norton award.

Director for the Center for the Advancement of Public Action, **Susan Sgorbati '72, MFA '86** writes for the Vera Institute of Justice's Youth Center about her experience developing the Quantum Leap program, which utilizes mediation and mentoring practices to help lower stu-

dent truancy rates in Bennington County schools.



A CD of **Allen Shawn's** compositions, performed by Julia Bartha, was featured in *The New York Times*

ArtsBeat. His recently published book, *Leonard Bernstein: An American Musician*, was reviewed by *BBC Music Magazine*. And this past winter, his composition, *Vermont Fanfare*, opened a performance of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra.

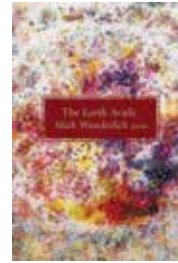
A paper by **Betsy Sherman** "Can sea urchins beat the heat? Sea urchins, thermal tolerance and climate change," was published by *PeerJ* and was highlighted on their website. They wrote, "As ocean temperatures rise, scientists are examining how sea urchins (which are important components of coral reef ecosystems) react to those changes."

Andy Spence was one of 30 artists included in a major exhibition at the 1285 Avenue of the Americas Art Gallery. The exhibition, *between works and candy: new works in pattern + repetition + motif*, was shown from March 16–June 12.

Bruce Williamson performed and conducted improvisation workshops in Paris, Ecuador, California, and Texas. He can be heard on the soundtrack for director Julie Taymor's recent film version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Upcoming New York City events include performances at the Lincoln Center with the orchestra for the American Ballet Theater, and an evening at the NYC jazz venue Kitano, with noted jazz pianist Art Lande.

Kerry Woods completed his Fulbright Specialist Grant project last semester in collaboration with scientists at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. His

project was developing a network of forest researchers in eastern/central Europe to use long-term data-sets from European old-growth forests.



Poet **Mark Wunderlich** won the Rilke Prize for his 2014 book, *The Earth Avails*, and was a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. His poem, "My Night with Jeffrey Dahmer," was

published in *The Stranger*, and another, "The Corn Baby," was selected as a featured poem by *The New York Times Magazine*, published on May 15.

The 2015 *Cambridge Rawls Lexicon* included four entries by **Paul Voice**, featuring writings on love, moral theory, comprehensive doctrine, and reasonable hope. **B**

A TOAST TO ROSIE ON HER 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Provost and Dean of the College, Isabel Roche toasted Associate Registrar Rosie Odell at a gathering in Commons that celebrated her 50-year career at the College.

January 9, 1965. Just six years after Crossett Library opened its doors, **Rosie Flynn** walked through them for the first time. Some of you may know that Rosie's first role at Bennington was as clerical assistant in the library, *part time*. Little more than a year later—and Oceana may forgive us for this—the Dean's Office snatched her up. And we've never looked back.

Until now. Fifty years of service deserves a highlight reel, whether you like it or not! I'd like to share a few favorites—yes, Rosie, from your personnel file. But don't worry. It's all good.

- 1971: Rosie gets a new title—"Recorder." I love that.
- March 1977: A memo, on College letterhead, to presumably the entire community, "Please join us for Rosie's bridal shower on Friday, March 25, in Barn 5." Rosie, where *is* Barn 5?
- 1986: Her supervisor writes, "Rosie has been here a long time"—this, a mere 20 years into her tenure. "She is attracted to the idea of using a computer to facilitate her work." Would either of them have guessed that a full 30 years later students would be registering online for the first time and Rosie, naturally, would be helping to ensure it all goes as planned?
- Perhaps. Because her supervisor goes on to write: "Rosie is one of the people who makes the College work in spite of itself." If that's not the truth, I don't know what is.

"Intelligent, loyal, caring, extraordinarily committed, insightful, patient, dependable. A joy to work with. A true asset." These are the words people use to describe Rosie. They are the words I use to describe her.

Rosie, I count myself among the lucky ones who have gotten to call you a colleague and friend. I would venture to guess that's the case for just about everyone in this room, and a good many more who could not be here today to celebrate with you. Thank you for carving out such a big space in your life for Bennington. It has mattered so very much.

A 50-year career says a lot about a person. About a person's family. I hope it also says a lot about an organization. In this way, you remain Bennington's official "Recorder." You are our institutional memory and our vision for the future. You inspire us to be the kind of place that people want to stay for 50 years. We love you for this and so many other reasons.



SUSAN P. HUGGINS



Faculty member **Charles Schoonmaker** on dressing characters, by Alex Dery Snider

DRESS THE PART

FASHION IS A TOOL.

Students in costume designer **Charles Schoonmaker's** Character and Modern Dress class learned to use it to help tell a story. While they did traditional work on characters and scripts—such as the premiere production of Sherry Kramer's *How Water Behaves*—they didn't stop there.

Their final assignment: Dress the 8G Band.

The band had big shoes to fill when they were formed as the house band for NBC's *Late Night with Seth Meyers* in 2014 to replace the Roots. Bandleader Fred Armisen of *SNL* and *Portlandia* fame is as much a musician as a comedian, having spent time as the drummer in the punk band Trenchmouth. Quickly proving its musical chops, the 8G Band is getting increased respect—and attention.

"This is a project I would have assigned to students in a grad program," said Schoonmaker. "That's the template."

Students were asked to write up wardrobe style sheets, as though they had gotten a job with the 8G Band. They recommended looks and styles to reflect the band and the musicians' stage personas—from Fred Armisen's geek chic glasses to bassist Syd Butler's leather cuffs and colorful shoes.

"I wanted to help them realize that someone is backstage at the Seth Meyers show thinking about how to dress them," said Schoonmaker. "The assignment was meant to help students see possibilities that, at this point in their experience, they are probably not aware of."

Ready to create wardrobe style sheets for the 8G Band? Great. Get to it and then share the fruits of your assignment with us online. Submit your sheets to benningtoncollege.tumblr.com, where we will post some of the most imaginative collections. Make sure to reflect the band and the musicians' stage personas for extra credit.



B

SIXTIESSEVEN

40s

"I am 91 and reasonably well!" reports **Olga Owens '45**, who hopes to be able to attend her 70th reunion.

50s

Carol Davis Goodman '51 has had a long and happy life: after graduating "with a babe in arms," she went on to have three other children with her husband, who passed away in 2012. Goodman's eldest child, **Logan**, attended Bennington class of 1973. "At 86, I hope to go on writing and painting until I can't see or think, which may be soon, who knows," Goodman writes. "Thanks to Bennington for my career."

Martha Fehsenfeld '53 was designated by Samuel Beckett to publish and edit his letters after his death. The third collection, written during the years of 1957–1965, was on display at the 92 Street Y's Weill Art Gallery.

Drue Weild '53 has enjoyed watching the success of her daughter, Kim A. Weild, who is a freelance director in New York City.



"The interest in politics continues in my family, as my daughter is now Campaign Director of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment," reports **Judy Schur '54**.

Aldona Naudzius '55 keeps busy by substitute teaching, playing piano, and traveling.

It's important to find meaningful ways to give back: **Ellen Weber '55** continues to practice psychotherapy in New York City and has taken on a recent graduate as a mentor.



Carol Kardon '56 continues to teach painting at several art centers and a retirement community. She exhibited her pastels in an invitational exhibition at Montgomery Community College in Pennsylvania. She also exhibited at the Salmagundi Club in New York City.

In May 2014, **Alice Marie Nelson '59** gave a recital of opera arias "Pages and Prayers," contrasting two aspects of the mezzo-soprano repertoire, at the National Opera Center in New York City.

60s

Wilma Kantrowich Chandler '60 is directing and choreographing in the Monterey Bay area as well as writing, traveling, and enjoying life as a grandmother.

"I just retired after 31 years as the music/art/drama specialist at the Perelman Jewish Day School in Philly," writes **Brenda Alpar '62**. "Now, I am trying to find space so that I can open my own teaching workshop in my house. Not easy with all the stuff I have accumulated over the

years, after eight children's operas, many musicals, lots of songs, costumes, props, and paintings not to mention the Middle East component. My son, Joe, is back in Istanbul completing his PhD dissertation research on the music of the Jewish community there. I've got his stuff, too. Thank you, Bennington, for your continuing legacy to inspire. You are the quintessential place for promoting creativity!"

Louise Reichlin '63 and her Los Angeles dance company will celebrate 35 years of dancing by putting on two new original works, "The Tennis Dances" and "Tap Dance Widow Club," at the Bootleg Theater in LA.



"I would be happy to give a tour to Bennington-connected folks in return for a donation to Friends of the High Line, which manages and supports the park," says **Barbara Rohdie '63**, who is a docent at New York City's High Line.

Edith Sweeney '64 recalls her short time at Bennington fondly, in particular her friendship with **Susan Crile '65**. "I have lost track of her but every alum I've met since has been a joy. Must be the Bennington karma that remains with us all. I am retired fundraiser for Harvard, mother of four, grandma of eight. Enjoying."

Sally Bowie '66 writes, "I love seeing **Jeannie Humez '66**, **Loren Siegel '66**, and **Elin Leonard**

FORTIES FIFTIES / ENTIES EIGHTIES

'66. No retirement in sight. Older son, Dolph, getting second master's in speech language pathology. My younger son, Jesse, is in first year of medical school. Husband Randy is still working as a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, meditation teacher. I have a private practice, specializing in couples therapy."

At NYU in April, **Roxana Robinson '68** gave a lecture titled, "Georgia O'Keeffe: The Life We Want."

70s

This news from **Elizabeth Vick '70**: "I continue to live on a small farm in Marlboro, VT with my husband, Craig Hammond, and a motley assortment of chickens. We work hard raising most of our own vegetables and meat. My family is spread out from San Francisco to London, which gives us lots of great excuses for travel!"

Choreographer **David Appel '72** has launched Off the Shelf, "a bookstore project." Appel writes, "Off the Shelf is about entering a completely different milieu within which to place new short pieces involving multiple performers. Using diverse combinations of composed and improvised dancing, and occasionally weaving in original and encountered text, [I am rethinking] twists and processes [I've] pursued variously over the past several years."

Randall Denker '72 writes, "I am still running my own environmental law practice and also doing environmental education and mediation through Waters Without Borders. I recently downsized, sold my horse farm, and am living in a cozy Platinum LEEDS bungalow in downtown Tallahassee. I can now walk to the university, shopping, parks, nightlife, and restaurants. My daughter was married this past year in a zero carbon wedding. (She made her own wedding dress out of recycled materials with an old sleeping bag as her train.) Obviously, my apple fell near this parental tree. I am so proud of her and

her values. I can't believe I am on Medicare now. In my heart, it still feels as if I am a Bennington freshman looking for someone with whom to play frisbee on the Commons lawn."

Continuing her work as a freelance magazine writer, **Francesca Lyman '72** was a recipient of a Fund for Investigative Journalism (FIJ) grant in 2014.

Living in Montclair, NJ, **Philemona Williamson '73** is a painter represented by the June Kelly Gallery in New York City.

Tina Davidson '76 has been named the 2015 Composer Award recipient by the Lancaster Symphony in Lancaster, PA. Of her music, Davidson says, "It's how I connect with the bigger world."

Heidi Ehle '76 is currently assistant director of the Mary B. Martin School of the Arts at East Tennessee State University.

Leslie Johnson Piotrowski '79 recently joined the Board of the Chicago Area Peace Corps Association where she is helping to raise money for the projects of Peace Corps volunteers currently in the field.

80s

Peter M. Susser '81 visited the Xi'an Conservatory and the Beijing Dance Academy in the fall of 2014 to give lectures and teach classes in sight singing, movement, and improvisation to music theatre and music education students. He attended the soundSCAPE Composition and Performance Exchange (Maccagno, Italy, July 2014), where he gave a presenta-

tion on performance skills and the music of Gyorgy Ligeti. His "Five Ballads for Solo Cello," recorded by New York Philharmonic cellist Eric Bartlett, were released by Albany Records in November 2014.

In the Amazon Prime series *Bosch*, **Titus Welliver '84** plays the lead—a melancholy veteran LAPD homicide detective. The series is based on the series of acclaimed novels by Michael Connelly, who says that, "Titus owns the role now. He captures everything that was near and dear to me about Bosch. I've owned him for 25 years, but now he belongs to Titus."

As an actress, she goes by Mercedes Olea, but when she studied drama at Bennington, she was **Mercedes Flores Pascual '88**. She says, "I have two kids: a young girl of 13, Victoria, and a young boy of 12, Federico. After living almost five years in Buenos Aires, Argentina, I have been back in Mexico City for the past two years doing a lot of what I love. Last year I was in three plays, and this year I will be in another three plays. Apart from acting, I work at the National Centre for the Arts and this year we inaugurated a fabulous exhibition with the works of Caravaggio, Leonardo, and Raphael all in high-definition digital reproductions. You can follow me on Facebook."

"Very happy!" reports **Carla Moriarty '89**. She is teaching performing arts at the Dwight-Englewood School in New Jersey.



90s

Currently working as a Lincoln Center Education Teaching Artist, **Jon Kinzel '90** presented *Someone Once Called Me A Sound Man* (2013) at the Chocolate Factory in New York City, which received Best of 2013 in ArtForum. Kinzel also accepted the 2012 Artist Award from the Brooklyn Arts Exchange and completed residencies at New York Live Arts and Gibney Dance (2013–2014).

Kerry Ryer-Parke '90 and **Nathaniel Parke MFA '92** are both teaching at Bennington. Kerry writes, "It feels good to be on campus! I encourage alums from my era to come to the College and see it for themselves."

Hedda Krausz Sjögren '94 will premiere her adaptation of *Svetlana Alexievich* at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm in the near future. She is still working on a documentary film project, *Seven*, with George Washington University's Drama Department and International Women's Institute.

Included in the Union of Maine Visual Artists' journal was Bennington's own **Mildred Kennedy-Stirling '95**.

Recent exhibitions from **Mary Early '97** include group shows at the American University Art Museum and the Asheville Area Arts Council. She was recently awarded an Artist Fellowship by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (DCCA).

Carleen Zimbalatti '98 was featured in the show "Chroma" at the 263 Gallery in Boston. Her work was additionally seen this year in



Publisher and alumnus **Steve Albahari '82** recently donated \$56,000 worth of 21st Century Edition books. Among the collection of books donated to the College's Crossett Library was *The Journal of Contemporary Photography*.

Comprised of six volumes total, *The Journal of Contemporary Photography* features hand-pulled photogravure images from many of the world's most highly respected contemporary photographers and writers, including Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Richard Wilbur; prize-winning novelists Ann Beattie and Robert Olen Butler; poet and critic Dana Gioia; Harvard professors and award-winning historians John Stilgoe and John Stauffer; and Wales' great poet, the late R.S. Thomas, among many others.

According to Albahari, these are not just books but collaborative endeavors that in process become art objects in their own right.

Be sure to check them out the next time you are on campus.

Iorimoto in a show called "Working Knowledge," curated and organized by Robert Otto Epstein and Ryan Dewalt.

Elizabeth Williamson '99 has been named the associate artistic director at Hartford Stage in Hartford, CT. She has been promoted by artistic director Darko Tresnjak from senior dramaturg and director of new play development.

00s

Are you watching ABC's *Secrets & Lies*? Keep your eyes peeled

for Juliette Lewis' sister, Col. Gwen Anderson, played by **Brandi Nicole Wilson '00**.

After almost 10 years of teaching history and social studies in public and charter schools in and around Boston, **Allison Poirot '03 MAT '04** began teaching internationally in the summer of 2013. She is now wrapping up a two-year stint at King's Academy in Madaba, Jordan, and will soon be living and working in Buenos Aires, Argentina, teaching at the Lincoln School. She writes, "While in Jordan, I have ridden camels, learned Afghani jokes, hiked in the desert, started a feminist club, taught improvisational comedy (as well as history and psychology), and learned a lot about



IGHTIESNINETIES THOUSANDS

culture and humility. Follow my blog at alliz.wordpress.com, or look me up online! I'll be needing some contacts in South America."



Carl Linich MFA '04

has been directing a Georgian folk choir in New York City

called Supruli, and another Georgian choir at Bard College, now in its fourth year and slated to become a credit course as part of Bard's new Ethnomusicology program. Linich's vocal trio, Kavkasia, celebrated 20 years together in 2014, with a concert tour in January. They performed at Yale and Princeton, and in New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC. Carl also was commissioned by the Pacific Film Archive at the University of California in Berkeley to create a live choral soundtrack for the 1928 silent film *Eliso* by Nikoloz Shengelaya. The live premiere of the soundtrack took

place at The Museum of Modern Art in New York City on September 23.

Nathan Garton '05 graduated from Oregon Health and Science University as a doctor of emergency room medicine in 2013. He is in residency at University of Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital and has been selected as a chief resident of emergency medicine for the 2015–2016 year. He became engaged to Dr. Dierdre Cavan (anesthesiologist) on New Year's Day, 2015. Dr. Cavan is also serving her residency at University of Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital.

Ryan Biracree '07 and **Sarah Crow Biracree '07** welcomed their daughter, Tabitha Wednesday, into the world this past April; as of this writing, she has already begun to meet her Bennington family. Sarah continues her career as a freelance writer and has recently worked on

marketing campaigns for clients from Virgin founder Richard Branson to Pritzker prize-winning architect Zaha Hadid. Ryan remains an adjunct professor of literature at the College of Mount Saint Vincent and also a taxidermist and proprietor of Black Bears on Bath Salts, an online curiosity shop, with some of his recent work appearing on *Oddities*, *Sleepy Hollow*, and two seasons of *American Horror Story*.

Adam Freed '08 is honored to have been selected for the F. Edward Herbert Armed Forces Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) in Clinical Psychology. The scholarship will provide full tuition, a stipend, and world-class training in a variety of treatment settings.

Jess Cochrane '09 graduated this past winter with dual JD/MPH degrees conferred

(Continued on page 50)

SUSAN P. HUGGINS



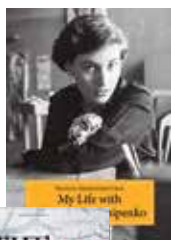
2015 ELIZABETH COLEMAN VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AWARD: VICTORIA SAMMARTINO '99

Victoria Sammartino '99 was the 2015 recipient of the **Dr. Elizabeth Coleman Visionary Leadership Award**. Sammartino, named one of the 25 Most Influential Women in the Bronx, is the founder of Voices UnBroken, a nonprofit dedicated to giving young people in juvenile justice facilities, group homes, residential treatment facilities, jails, and other alternative settings tools and opportunity for creative self-expression. Voices UnBroken has served thousands of young people and become a source of expertise in youth development, community arts, and juvenile justice communities. In her return to campus to speak to students, faculty, and staff, Sammartino acknowledged that her career grew directly out of her work at Bennington and advised students to "Make your thesis good. You can live it out for years afterward." The award comes with a \$5,000 prize established by anonymous donors.



FIVE FULBRIGHTS

Two graduating students, two alumni, and faculty member **Noah Coburn** have been awarded 2015 Fulbright grants. **Kimberly Hart '89** has been awarded a Senior Scholar Research Fellowship for her latest project, *Istanbul Street Cats and Expressions of Human Kindness and Neglect*. She will study the spaces where the cats live and the political and spiritual dimensions of human interest in their welfare. In Mexico City, **Jeff Peer '06** will study a form of literary journalism called the *crónica urbana*, focusing on the decades following the revolution (1920–1950) when Mexico City went through a drastic period of modernization, and the 1970s and '80s, which, following the Tlatelolco Massacre and a series of economic shocks, were years of crisis. **Sheridan Baker '15** will travel to Taiwan to work with English language learners, explore urban sustainability (including rooftop and balcony gardening), and volunteer in retirement homes. **Jaymee Weaver '15** will travel to Ecuador; in collaboration with women in the Andes Mountains and Amazon rainforest, she will create a performance art piece that examines the impact of modernization on their communities and natural environments.



When she was a 19-year-old art student, **Frances Archipenko Gray '57** met the “Picasso of Sculpture,” experimental cubist artist Alexander Archipenko. In Archipenko Gray's new memoir *My Life with Alexander Archipenko* (Hirmer Publishers, October 2014), she recalls gallery openings, conflicts with dealers, and trips to Europe—all of which paint a portrait of a master artist's final years.



Bourne Gaffill Morris '58 has written the first of three novels: *The Red Queen's Run* was published by Henery Press in 2014. The second novel, *The Rise of the Red Queen*, will be published on December 1.

Jane Lipman '60 won the 2013 New Mexico/Arizona Book Award and a 2013 New Mexico Press Women's Award for her first full-length poetry collection, *On the Back Porch of the Moon* (Black Swan Editions, 2012). She has lived in northern New Mexico since 1970 and can be reached at poetryjane@gmail.com.

Susan Pickering DuMond '63 is publishing a 70,000-word memoir in print and ebook formats this summer.

“After the September release of my memoir, *She's Not Herself: A Psychotherapist's Journey Into and Beyond Her Mother's Mental Illness*, I was invited to join the WOW (Women On Writing) blog tour for two months, followed by a successful radio blog tour heard in this country and abroad,” writes **Linda Appleman Shapiro '63**. “Copies of my book may be purchased through Amazon.com, B&N.com, Goodreads, all online book sellers or directly through my publisher, Dream of Things. Please do visit my website, www.applemanshapiro.com, or contact me via email beyondtrauma@gmail.com.”



Laurence Hyman '64 had a one-man show of black-and-white photographs, titled *The Bennington Years*, which was the inaugural exhibition in The Bennington Museum's New Works on Paper Gallery. He has additionally co-edited a new collection of previously unpublished and uncollected writing by his late mother, Shirley Jackson, titled *Let Me Tell You*, due out in August (Random House). Hyman's book, *Just an Ordinary Day*, was re-released in soft cover by Bantam.

Dead Lil' Hustler, the 14th book in the Loon Lake Mystery Series (Tyrus Books) by **Victoria Houston '67** was published in June 2014. *Dead Rapunzel*, #15, was published by Tyrus in June 2015.

Roxana Robinson '68's novel *Sparta* was one of 10 novels short-listed for the 2015 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

Out now from Two Harbors Press is a novel by **Kristina Baer '69**, *Minerva's Fox* (February 2015). Baer talked about the challenges of writing fully imagined characters at the Galaxy Bookshop in Hardwick, VT, and the Redwood Library and Athenaeum in Newport, RI, in May.

Betsy Robinson '73 recently published two books: her novel, *The Last Will & Testament of Zelda McFigg* (Black Lawrence Press) and her edit of her late mother Edna Robinson's novel, *The Trouble with the Truth* (Simon & Schuster/Atria/Infinite Words).

Congratulations to **Ellen Gruber Garvey '75**, whose most recent book, *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 2013) has won four awards, including the Institute for Humanities Research's biennial Transdisciplinary Book Award, for a work that exemplifies transdisciplinary, socially engaged humanities-based scholarship (Arizona State University); and the Society of American Archivists' Waldo Gifford Leland Award, for writing of superior excellence and usefulness in the field of archival history, theory, or practice.

RECENT RELEASES & HONORS



New from **Dr. Andrea Geddes Poole '80** is *Philanthropy and the Construction of Victorian Women's Citizenship: Lady Frederick Cavendish and Miss Emma Cons* (University of Toronto Press, January 2014). *The Journal of British Studies* called it, "a highly enjoyable and absorbing account; its accessible style should lend its appeal to a wide constituency."



Dennis Warren '84 has just released his latest CD, *Quest*, in which he references his relationship with former Bennington music faculty members **Bill Dixon** and **Milford Graves**.



Kevin Alter '85 has published a book through Miami University on his professional work, *Alterstudio Architecture: 6 Houses*—it includes essays by Carlos Jimenez, Wilfried Wang, and John Reynolds. The book is available at Peter Miller Books in Seattle, William Stout Books in San Francisco, Joseph Fox Bookshop in Philadelphia, McNally Jackson Books in New York City, The Brazos Bookstore in Houston, and at Amazon.com.



Matt Ellis '92 has translated *The Devil is a Black Dog: Stories from the Middle East and Beyond* (New Europe Books, December 2015) by Hungarian author Sándor Jászberényi. A Kirkus starred review raved that, "Journalist Jászberényi's stories about war correspondents, combatants and victims ring as true as any nonfiction.... [The Devil is a Black Dog is a] master class in how to tell a war story."

Congratulations to **Rick Sander '92** for recently winning Best Visual Effects for the Chinese blockbuster, *Gone With The Bullets*, at the 2015 Asian Film Awards.



Want to brush up on your philosophy? Check out *The Realistic Empiricism of Mach, James, and Russell* (Cambridge University Press, October 2014) by **Erik C. Banks '93**.



World Gone Water, a novel by **Jaime Clarke MFA '97**, was published in April by Roundabout Press in the U.S. and by Bloomsbury in the U.K.

Keep your eyes peeled this August for *The Oyster War: The True Story of a Small Farm, Big Politics and the Future of Wilderness in America* (Counterpoint Press, August) by **Summer Brennan '01**.



Oona Patrick MFA '01 has been named a 2014 Fellow in Nonfiction Literature from the New York Foundation for the Arts.

Julia Shipley '02 won the 2014 Melissa Lantis Gregory Poetry Prize for her collection, *The Academy of Hay*.

Immigrants against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America, by **Kenyon Zimmer '02**, was published by the University of Illinois Press in June 2015. Zimmer completed a PhD in History at the University of Pittsburgh in 2010.

Ai Kato '14, director of Tower 49 Gallery, worked with **Kate Davis '14** to put on *The Bennington Legacy*, a show that opened on April 29. It presents three Bennington-connected artists, **Isaac Witkin**, **Williard Boepple**, and **James Wolfe**, with the overarching idea that the College was central to their development as artists. The "legacy" is their subsequent influence on other artists through their works and techniques.



The Freedom & Unity TV Awards recently honored **Erika Lygren '16** for her video, "Marching with 400,000." Lygren won second place and her work was celebrated last month in Randolph, VT. Her mini-documentary follows the organization efforts of several students and faculty from Bennington who participated in the historic People's Climate Change March.

Three alumni have been awarded 2015 Guggenheim Fellowships, on the basis of prior achievement and exceptional promise: **Amanda Church '76** (fine arts), **David Lazar '77** (general nonfiction), and **Amy Williams '90** (music).

B (Before alums began their writing, directing, or acting for the 24-hour plays we asked them to share a one-line bio. Here's what they wrote.)

ONELINEONLY

SOFIA ALVAREZ '07 is from Baltimore • **BROOKS ASHMANSKAS '91** pushes more than most on & off B'way. Homosexual • **IAN BELL '91** acts really hard • **CHRIS BOSCIA '87** learned everything he needed to know at Bennington with Nicholas Martin & Leroy Logan. So now he's a chef called the bald vivant • **CHRISTOPHER BOWEN '88** is psyched to be un-bald and blue and maybe get some speaking lines • **TIM DALY '79** has been an over-actor for 30 years. He is a good eater • **PETER DINKLAGE '91** misses Nicky Martin very much • **ANDREW DUFF '12** is a good ol' goofy actor, videographer, and autism advocate • **DOMINIK EISENSCHMIDT '13** German Brooklynite who will marry for green card • **SUSIE FELBER '93** is a working writer and performer for tv, web, radio, etc. • **LEX FRIEDMAN '07** actress, lover, stuffed-monster maker • **ABIGAIL GAMPEL '85** is delighted • **SARAH GANCHER '01** is a playwright who hates 10-minute plays but loves all of you • **JOEL MARSH GARLAND '97** acts appropriately but spells poorly, forgive him • **RACHEL WHITMAN GROVES '96** bio: chameleon • **COLIN HINCKLEY '14** Colin is an actor and aspiring person • **KATHRYN KITT '91** opera singer, marathoner, mother, horseback rider • **ANNABELLE LEMIEUX '11** loves the ocean and acting • **EZRA LOWREY '13** writes songs, acts & sings, and wears paisley • **MADELINE MCDONOUGH MAHER '94** is an actor, writer, vegan, dog-lover, and the anointed sovereign of sighs and groans • **MARION MARKHAM '77** beslubbers Shakespeare under the stars, cooks up cabaret feasts for hundreds, teaches yoga hither, thither & yon, likes crunchy peanut butter • **ERIC MARLIN '13** writes plays about nuns, fire, and looms • **JOHN WILLS MARTIN '88** director, teacher, ex-bacon-playing priest • **SARAH MATUSEK '13** is unspeakably proud to be a Hampshire College grad. Go class of '13 • **LESLEY MCBURNEY '92** actor and CPR instructor: life reflector & protector • **ALLISON MITCHELL '97** has two feet and two sons • **MAE MITCHELL '10** drinks a lot of seltzer • **LORCA PERESS '79** is a fan of, but not related to Federico Garcia. ¡Gracias! • **JULIA PRUD'HOMME '87** actress, cook, hostess, psychology student, and learning how to garden • **JANE COHEN RAY '84** lives 3 blocks from here • **JONATHAN MARC SHERMAN '90** lived in Franklin & McCullough houses • **JULIE TUCKER '89** likes being in bed by 10pm, oh well • **DAN WILCOX '08** jack of all trades, master of none • **BRANDI NICOLE WILSON '00** is a homeless gypsy, and she kinda likes it that way

(Continued from page 47)



by Northeastern University School of Law and Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, where she focused on legal and public health issues at the intersection of drug policy reform and reproductive justice. In 2013, she co-founded Family Law & Cannabis Alliance (FLCA), a resource center located at FLCAlliance.org, providing support for parents and pregnant women facing family court or child protective services due to state-legal or medicinal use of marijuana. She will clerk for the Honorable Justice Peter W. Agnes, Jr. of the Massachusetts Appeals Court beginning in fall 2015.

10s

James Burtis '08 and **Jessie Miglus '10** are very pleased to announce that they were married on August 16, 2014. They currently live in Ithaca, NY, where James is pursuing a PhD at Cornell University.



In May 2015, **Danny Brylow '10** directed an original two-hour adaptation of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* for Skylight Music Theatre in Milwaukee, WI. More info can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/lfwv97r>. Danny also got rid of his Facebook recently, so if you feel like getting in touch with him, you can email him at dbrylow@gmail.com.

Stack, an art piece by **Hamilton Poe '10**, is on exhibition at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR.



Jon Burklund '11, **Anastasia Clarke '10**, **Ilana Stuelpner '11**, and **Niko Tsocanos '11** have been producing theatre and experi-

mental performance in New York City as Boom Bat Gesture Performance Group since early 2012. Last November and December

INSMFASTUDENT NOTES

they produced a series of interdisciplinary performances in Brooklyn, NY, in order to present episodes 6–9 of their ongoing, multimedia variety show *SCREEN EYED BABY ICE*. It was their first time producing the work in a concentrated series, as well as curating other artists they admired in the NYC performing arts community. They plan to continue work on *SEBI* between other productions indefinitely; hopefully forever.



Colin Brant '12 was one of four New England-area filmmakers selected to attend the 2015 Robert Flaherty Film Seminar as a LEF New England Fellow. He spent eight days this June among emerging cinema artists and scholars, taking master classes, showing work, and engaging in discussion.

Holly R. Camisa '13 has accepted a job as the associate director of communications with Arch Street Press.



In August, a two-volume collection of plays titled *The Plays of Jon Lipsky*, edited by **Jonah Lipsky '13** and Bill Barclay, will be officially published. The collection was designed and formatted by **Mac Young '06**. Lipsky and Young grew up in the same town and both studied drama at Bennington. This project marks their most significant collaboration to date, though they did play opposite each other in *Henry IV, Part 1* in the summer of 2013.

Forest Abbott-Lum '15 has received the Princeton in Asia Fellowship.

Kate Foster '15 had her senior thesis published as a book of poems, *Animal Problems* (Electric Cereal, 2015). Alex Dimitrov describes her work as being “like a beautiful animal with an enlarged heart. Here is a writer who is both un-afraid and terrified to live in a body—like all of us.”

Kione Kochi '15 and alumna **Anais Duplan '14** discussed their recent art project in New York in the online journal *The Conversant* as

a three-part conversation: <http://tinyurl.com/n84dkfr>.

Carlos Mendez '15 was a co-author for a study published by the *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment* journal in April. He contributed to an investigation that examined the efficacy of a novel combination of drugs on so-called triple-negative breast cancers. This is Carlos' third co-authored paper.

Jeva Lange '15 was hired as a reporter for *The Week*. She has written for *The Atlantic Wire*, *The Awl*, *The New York Daily News*, *Electric Lit*, *The Rumpus* and elsewhere. She has been awarded scholarships to attend the 29th annual New York Summer Writers Institute Conference at Skidmore College.

Natalie Osborne '15 organized the 365 Women a Year play reading series. The event featured four new plays by Bennington students and alumni and was live streamed on HowlRound TV. Photos, press releases, interviews with the playwrights, and a video of the performance are available at <http://noplays.wordpress.com/previous-productions>.

Naima Starkloff '15 will begin a PhD in Ecology and Evolution at the State University of New York, Albany in the fall.


Devon Walker '15 and **Jessica Pacitto '15** received fellowships to attend the Bucknell Seminar for Younger Poets.

keep us posted

WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. SEND US YOUR NEWS AND UPDATES.

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

1. by email to classnotes@bennington.edu or magazine@bennington.edu
2. online at bennington.edu (click on “For Alumni,” “Connect” then “Class Notes”)
3. by mail to the Office of Institutional Advancement, Bennington College, One College Drive, Bennington, VT 05201-6003

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

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



CLAUDE FRANK

former faculty member

Renowned pianist and former faculty member Claude Frank died on December 27, 2014, at the age of 89. Born in Nuremberg in 1925, Frank fled Nazi Germany with his family in 1937; in 1938, an American consul overheard him playing piano and offered the boy and his family a visa to the United States. On the voyage, Claude saw his wife, Lilian Kallir, for the first time—she was playing piano in Lisbon, also awaiting passage to the US. They married 12 years later.

Claude is widely celebrated for his interpretations of Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, and Schubert. Faculty member Allen Shawn remembers him as “extremely remarkable” and “easily among the most distinguished musicians ever to teach at Bennington.” Claude joined the faculty in 1948 and taught in the music department for nine years. Members of the Bennington community remember his stirring performances—“like hearing Arthur Rubinstein at the Park McCullough House,” says Shawn—as well as his many small kindnesses: a number of alumni from the '50s credit him for typing their theses. Claude also taught at the Yale School of Music, the Curtis Institute, and the Steans Music Institute. He encouraged wide-ranging and interdisciplinary study in all of his classes, often recommending that students read Romantic literature to better understand the music they played and listened to.

Claude performed classical compositions for nearly eight decades, all over the world and frequently as a soloist, sometimes playing more than 70 concerts a year. He and his wife played duets together until her death in 2004; he is survived by their daughter, Pamela, a violinist.

FRANCIS GALVIN

former staff member

Francis J. “Fran” Galvin died on April 9, 2015, at the age of 79. Fran worked in campus safety for more than 35 years, beginning in 1974. He retired in 2012.

Fran is remembered fondly for his optimistic, gregarious demeanor and his sincere concern and care for the Bennington

community. Alumni saw him as a dependable, guiding force—while working at the front desk in the security booth, he was often the first responder when they needed help. “He was firm but fair, consistent and compassionate,” says Campus Safety Director Ken Collamore. “He saw campus through the eyes of a student. When you see campus that way, it creates a connection to the community that you can’t teach.”

This connection was apparent in all of Fran’s gestures, large and small—he regularly played kind-hearted pranks, told jokes to everyone who passed through the booth, and once, he even read bedtime stories to students staging an outdoor protest. His colleagues in campus safety likewise looked to him as a mentor and model. “He not only stayed positive through the years,” says Collamore, “but he also cultivated a positive environment around him. He had a contagious good attitude and humor.”

Fran is survived by his wife, Bernadette, four daughters, six grandchildren, a great-granddaughter, a brother and sister-in-law, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

A scholarship has been established in his name by several alumni. To contribute, visit bennington.edu/galvin-fund.

SUZANNE HELLER HARRIS '41

former trustee

Former trustee Suzanne Heller Harris '41 died on February 22, 2015, at the age of 95. At Bennington she focused in the social sciences, launching her life’s work of exploring and improving the human experience.

Three months after graduating from Bennington, she married Robert Eugene Harris, and the two of them moved to San Francisco. After her husband suffered from a brain hemorrhage in 1973, Suzanne was inspired to start the Family Caregiver Alliance (FCA)—the first caregiving support organization in the country, and a model for all those that came after. More than 180,000 caregivers have received direct support from FCA since its founding in 1977; in 1999, Suzanne was awarded the Rosalynn Carter Caregiving Award for this vital work, and in 2002, she was awarded the Congressional Citation at the 25th anniversary of the FCA.



An active member of the Bennington community since its earliest years, Suzanne served on the Board of Trustees from 1991–1993, was a member of the Alumni Executive Committee, and acted as vice president of the West Coast Alumni Association. In recognition of her outstanding volunteer service to the College, Bennington presented her with the Hudas Schwartz Liff '47 Award in 2000. Suzanne was preceded in death by her husband and is survived by three children and three grandchildren.

ELIZABETH “JILL” (UNDERWOOD) BERTRAND ’65
former trustee

Former trustee Elizabeth “Jill” Underwood Bertrand ’65 died at the age of 71 on May 2, 2015. Jill came to Bennington from New Hampshire in the fall of 1961, part of a long legacy of Bennington students—eight relatives on both sides are alumni, includ-

ing her mother, Suzanne Stockard Underwood ’38. Jill focused on the visual arts as a student and worked in a variety of fields after graduation; she said that she most enjoyed working as an electrical draftsman, designing circuit boards.

In 1986, Jill and her husband Gordon moved to a horse farm in Brookfield, MA, where they bred, raised, and trained prize-winning Morgan horses. Later in life she operated “a sort of B&D (bed and dinner)” nearby, where she invited Bennington alumni to visit and explore local antique shops and flea markets—she only asked that they make a gift to the College in exchange for their stay. Jill generously offered her time and resources both to her local community and to Bennington; she served on the College’s Board of Trustees from 1985 to 1989 and was a member of the Silo Society.

Jill is survived by her husband, Gordon, her sister Joan, her brother William, her aunt Helen, as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins, including Elizabeth Vick ’70 and Tamsen Merrill ’72.

IN MEMORY OF CHRISTINE OSMULSKI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS



A bench will be placed overlooking the admissions office’s most expansive view to commemorate Chrissy’s lasting impact at Bennington.



ALUMNI

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

Louise Friedberg Strouse '36
June 24, 2015

Dorothy Sands Beers '38
January 29, 2015

Dorothy Middleton Brewer '38
January 25, 2015

Reba Marcus Gillman '38
April 1, 2015

Eugenie Rowe Bradford '39, P'67
November 18, 2014

Isabella Perrotta Erickson '40
June 10, 2015

Ruth Annis de Lascoutx '41
February 5, 2015

Vida Ginsberg Deming '41, P'74
March 11, 2015

Lydia Schoepperle Paxson '42
April 12, 2015

Joan Lewisohn Crowell '43
April 18, 2015

Yvonne Roy Porter '43
June 2, 2015

Joan Bayne Williams '44
December 19, 2014

Patricia Schaeffer Knopp '45
March 29, 2015

Emily Dimock Mattingly '45
March 13, 2015

Carol Prange Drake '47
March 15, 2015

Helen Chapman Hucker '47
January 17, 2015

Virginia Irving Steigerwald '47
May 25, 2015

Keating Karig Carrier '48
January 30, 2015

Pamela Solwedel Barrett '49
May 23, 2015

Barbara Corey Mallonee '49
May 29, 2015

Janet F. Rouse '49
December 30, 2014

Phebe Brown Chace '50
March 6, 2015

Jerene Jones Winocour '50
March 23, 2015

Sylvia Sinclair Berking '51
February 7, 2015

Judith Jones '51
April 27, 2015

Patricia Williams Sunstein '51
February 5, 2015

Yvonne Franz Herz '53
June 5, 2015

Magi LaPides Schwartz '59
February 18, 2015

Norma Harper Gorsuch '60
March 8, 2015

Patricia Cronin Adams '64
April 25, 2015

Susanne Snyder Rappaport '66
January 5, 2015

Nathan R. Williams '79
January 30, 2015

Sean Flaherty '89
January 5, 2015

Betty Kronsky MFA '97
February 2, 2015



FACULTY, STAFF, AND TRUSTEES

We remember the following faculty, staff, and trustees who were vital members of the Bennington Community.

Ann Bouplon
Housekeeper
January 3, 2015

Christine Osmulski
Associate Director of Admissions
2005–2015
March 5, 2015

PARENTS AND FRIENDS

The College is sad to learn of the following deaths of parents and friends of the Bennington Community.

Dorothy Beskind P'66,'71
October 28, 2014

Livia Di Maio P'72
October 16, 2014

Stuart H. Bartle P'76
March 26, 2015

John Whitehead P'92
February 8, 2015

Susan Klingler P'12
October 9, 2014

Doris Drucker G'93
October 1, 2014

Pauline Kassier G'14
December 17, 2014

Sheila Caro Girling, friend
February 14, 2015

Miriam Goldstein, partner of alumna
January 1, 2015

Alan Hirschfield, friend
January 15, 2015

Robert J.M. "Bob" Matteson, friend
April 13, 2015

Emily McGregor, friend
April 12, 2015

Josie Rahe, friend
February 22, 2015

Alvin Schlesinger, friend
January 14, 2015

S. Arthur Spiegel, friend
December 31, 2014

JUST RECEIVED

We acknowledge the deaths of the following members of the Bennington Community of which we only recently received notice.

Madi Blach Lanier '43
August 17, 2014

Jacquelin Kohler '45
December 30, 1981

Valerie Anton '73
May 21, 2013

Cathy E. Potler '75
September 21, 2014

Jeannine Delores Walls '94
November 17, 2011

Derrick Hoitsma, Sr. P'77, G'14
June 29, 2010

Sidney Scott P'77
May 7, 2009

Howard Isbill P'81
January 6, 2004

Eleanor Isbill McCoy P'81
February 12, 2014

Kendall Mix G'08
June 3, 2014

Robert Frohnhoefer P'12
June 10, 2011

Judith Dunn, former faculty,
dance, 1968–1977
July 1, 1983

Morton Klass, former faculty,
social sciences, 1959–1964
April 28, 2001

Daniel Shapiro, former faculty,
visual arts, 1947–1957
December 16, 1982

Thomas G. Wicker, former faculty
Visiting writer, Master of Fine Arts
in Writing, June 1996
November 25, 2011

Martin Slobodkin, friend
October 8, 2006

We honor the memory of those who have passed on, and regret that space restrictions do not allow the publication of full obituaries for all. Obituaries appear with the expressed consent of families, unless family contact information is unavailable. This in memoriam list contains members of the Bennington community who died as of June 24, 2015. If you would like more information, please contact us at alumnirelations@bennington.edu.



*In memory of literary critic,
poet and beloved faculty
member, by Crystal Barrick '11*

HAROLD KAPLAN (1916–2015)

Harold Kaplan, distinguished literary critic, poet, and beloved former faculty member, died at the age of 99 on March 7, 2015. Born in 1916 and raised on Chicago's south side, he was the son of Lithuanian immigrants and the youngest of seven children. In the 1930s, after earning a scholarship to the University of Chicago and completing both undergraduate and postgraduate work in English literature, he moved to New York City. There he found inspiration and camaraderie among the writers, poets, and artists of Greenwich Village. In 1942, he enlisted in the military, training pilots in Texas and writing a history of the Army Corps of the Air Force; in 1946, he was discharged as a Captain and got a teaching position at Rutgers University.


In 1949, the allure of Bennington pulled him away—two of his closest friends, alumni of the College, convinced him to visit. He was immediately awestruck by the faculty—Ben Belitt, Stanley Kunitz, Kenneth Burke, Howard Nemerov—and the students in equal measure. In an interview with *Bennington* for his 90th birthday, Harold reflected on this time: “Something creative was going on there. The students were making discoveries. They were seeing things and saying things. It was give-and-take all the time. And I felt almost inflamed by the things that were happening, not just in the classroom, but afterwards when I came to think about them.”

His students echo this feeling of shared excitement, shared enterprise. He is remembered as a dedicated and available mentor, offering guidance within and outside the classroom. His approach balanced openness and flexibility with purpose and clarity. “We were taken seriously,” says Bonnie Costello ’72. “You were responsible for what you said. There was a feeling of exchange. Which is not to say he turned his classroom all the way over, not at all. He had a very clear idea of what he wanted to get across,” and he helped his students get there. “His approach was clear, and it was his own.”

His respect for ideas, language, and rigorous dialogue inspired many of his former students—including Costello and Sharon Cameron ’68—to become literature teachers and professors themselves. They remember his model of quiet dignity, his confidence in them as thinkers and readers. “His teaching and his writing convinced me it was possible to study literature with passion and integrity,” says Cameron.

In 1973, after 24 years at Bennington, Harold left to teach at Northwestern University, where he worked until his retirement in 1986. All throughout his career he wrote and published books of criticism, nonfiction, and poetry, often wrestling with questions of politics and morality, or the troubled relationship between “action and understanding,” as he put it. His oeuvre includes *The Passive Voice: An Approach to Modern Fiction* (1966); *Democratic Humanism and American Literature* (1972); *Power and Order* (1981); *Conscience and Memory* (1994); *Poetry, Politics and Culture* (2006); *Redemptive Memory* (2009); and *A Memoir of Being Human* (2013).

In the literary world Harold was widely known and respected for the care he took to great works. His writing—like his teaching—struck a balance between humility and an authority, gained from deep examination. He was consistently celebrated for his fresh perspective and his “visceral, uncensored insights,” as Cameron articulated in a letter to him, 40 years after she graduated. Reviews of his books from the last 50 years often echoed the same praise: just when we thought we understood certain American novels, poems, writers, or ideals, just when we thought there was nothing left to say about them, Harold Kaplan offers a polished and compelling argument that challenges convention and illuminates truths we have never noticed. His poetry even took on this form of teaching, as Costello recognized in a review of *Redemptive Memory*: “[The poems] reach beyond the individual life, discovering laws of conscience and commitment that might guide another life.”

Harold is survived by his wife Isabelle Ollier Kaplan, who founded and directed Bennington's Center for Languages and Culture, their three children, Anne, Gabriel, and Claire, and eight grandchildren. 

SEAN FLAHERTY
(1966–2015)

Sean Flaherty '89 died from cancer on January 5, 2015, at the age of 49. A writer, he documented his diagnosis and treatments through a series of poems entitled "The Doctor." You can read the series in its entirety at medium.com/@seanflaherty/the-doctor-series-94db34a12d3d

30 July 2014

The Doctor, Part 49

It's beautiful at five o'clock in July
in North Truro
very close to the tip of
the Cape,

the wind does the breathing
for you,
the air,
the silence over the tree-line
a Robin Leach
fantasy,
a caviar dream,

walking around
the street side of
the classic Cape Cod cottage
I overhear
my wife on the phone
saying
we have to consider
the worst,
what if
I lose my best friend,
what if
Tess
loses her father
at the age
he lost his,
what if

—it feels like being at my funeral—

it is a door
I could step through
where I could be
a hopeless sponge

but I stick my chest
out,
keep my
shit
together
with a
life-affirming
smile,

put myself
on the right side of
the numbers,
the estimates,
the studies,

I cry I love you,
soldier
and step backwards
before she sees me,

I cry I love you,
I cry,
afraid of the pain,
I have every intention,
will do
my level best
to go into
every round
throwing
solid punches,
to come out
on top,
to keep fighting
with
all my will,
to be
on my feet
when it's over.



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“TODAY, MANY OF MY DEAR BENNINGTON
COMRADES ARE GONE. INSIDE AND OUT,
WE ALL REFLECT THE MIRRORS OF SURPRISE
AND CHANGE. AGE, THAT ROCK. YET, I
ALWAYS TRY TO LEAVE A LOT OF SPACE FOR
THAT WHIRLING DERVISH, THAT IMP WHO
STRIVES TO MAKE ANYTHING POSSIBLE.”

—Helen Frankenthaler '49