

# Quadrille

January 67

VOL. I. NO. 3

Bennington College  
Bennington, Vermont

## Julian Bond at Bennington

*Ed. Note: Bennington College hosted a symposium the weekend of Dec. 2 on aspects of the Civil Rights Movement. The symposium consisted of speeches, panels and workshops, and was attended by a cross-section of civil rights activists.*

*The first evening Julian Bond spoke on the recent history of the movement. The 26-year-old Bond was at that time fighting a legal battle which would permit him his seat in the Georgia legislature as a duly elected member. Two days later the Supreme Court found in his favor.*

*Bond discussed attitudinal changes in the movement since 1960. He chronicled the turn, in 1960, from what had been an exclusively legal and professional content to direct action executed by young people. Excerpts from his talk are printed below.*

"It became apparent that hamburgers were not the final solution to the problems that Negroes faced, because it did no good to eat a hamburger in a public restaurant if you couldn't pay for it, and that the ability to use a toilet in a bus station in Memphis is not going to make life beautiful for all Negroes in Mississippi if they can't afford the price of a bus ticket from Jackson to Memphis.

"The simple ability to register and vote would be the final breakthrough to a better life for black people in the South. But the ability to register and vote was meaningless if there were no choices to be made on election day. In addition to being able physically to register to vote, Negroes in the South needed to be able to make alternative choices, and that was part of the job of the Civil Rights Movement. Part of giving the Negroes that choice began in the development of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964.

"Lowndes County is a Black Belt County. Negroes are 81% of the population of Lowndes County, but until 1965 they were no percent of the registered voters. The Negro did not vote in the county for 50 years until 1965.

"Now even though white people were only 19% of the population in Lowndes County, 113% of the eligible white people were registered to vote. After the Voting Rights Bill passed and it became physically possible for Negroes in Alabama and in Lowndes County to register to vote they began to do so in larger and larger numbers. Once having begun to catch up, the Negroes in Lowndes County began to think about how they would use their votes to make their lives a little better.

"Negroes in Lowndes County wondered what Negroes in other parts of the South had done, once they achieved the right to vote, to improve their situation. The first place they looked was a place closest to home—Macon County, Alabama, the home of Tuskegee Institute. In Macon County Negroes are only 76% of the population, but after

a great many years of litigation, and vigorous voter registration work, they have a slight majority of voters registered in the county.

"Once Negroes in Macon County got a slight majority they were faced with several different choices of how to use their votes, and finally adopted a theory of 'parity politics,' which provides that groups which are a certain percentage of the population are entitled to that percentage of representation in the government.

"But Negroes in Macon County thought that if they elected 76% of the elected officials it would frighten the



white people in Macon County and the surrounding counties. So they decided to adopt a theory they called 'parity politics minus' which says that even if you are 76% of the population you shouldn't elect 76% of the representation because you'll irritate your friends, even though they are not your friends right now.

"So instead of exercising their political will in equal proportion to their numerical strength they settled for electing only one or two people to public office. A great many of them are now convinced they made a very bad mistake and wish they had done it the other way.

"They suggested to Negroes in Lowndes County, anyway, that they elect 10% the first year, 20% four years later, 40% eight years later, and so on, until the people in the white community got used to the fact that the Negroes had desires and wishes too.

"Negroes in Lowndes County have a sixth grade education, as opposed to a fourth grade education in Mississippi (Alabama is a little more liberal, as you can see) but they're not stupid by any means. They thought a great deal about parity politics and finally rejected it because they said they felt it was un-American. They felt it went against a



basic American principle of government which suggests that government runs by democratic policy, and the majority rules. They decided that since they were 81% of the population in the county they wanted to have 100% of all the elected offices in Lowndes County. Now that is a frightening proposal to a great many people of both races, but at any rate that is what they decided. Having made that decision they had to decide how to go about winning 100% of all the elected offices in Lowndes County.

"They were told they should find out which of the two political parties was closest to their desires and wishes, join it, work with it, become a part of it and try to get that party to do the sorts of things they wanted it to.

"But when they thought about Republicans in Alabama they had to think about the people they could see and hear every day, and the man who, at that time, was Mr. Republican in Alabama was Congressman James Martin. Mr. Martin is like a great many other Southern Republicans and Northern Republicans too, I imagine, in that he's a segregationist, a bigot and a racist, and Negroes in Lowndes County associate his brand of Republicanism with that of the former Presidential nominee of the Republican Party, Barry Goldwater, and they say about him what they used to say about Goldwater—that in their hearts they know he's white.

"And when they thought about Democrats they had to think about those Democrats who lived and breathed and ate and slept in the State of Alabama, and the top Democrat then was the incumbent Governor George C. Wallace. This was before the May Democratic Primary in which Mrs. Wallace won the nomination. They realized that she probably would win the nomination, and a victory for her would mean that most Democrats in the state think exactly the way she does, and she, in fact, thinks exactly the way her husband does—sort of the Ma and Pa Kettle of politics. So the Negroes in Lowndes County decided they didn't want to associate themselves with that sort of Democratic Party politics, and rejected it with another political slogan, 'Bedfellows Make Strange Politics.'

"Once having rejected both parties, the only avenue left open to them was the formation of a third party. In Alabama it's fairly easy to form a third party. The state law requires that a group of two or more people should meet on the first Tuesday in May on or about the county courthouse and nominate from their number candidates for public office, and if those candidates receive 20% or more of the vote on election day, their organization will be recognized by the state as a bonafide political party and will have all the rights and privileges that other parties do.

"So on the first Tuesday in May of this year, when most other people were going to the polls to cast their votes for Mrs. Wallace, about 1,800 Lowndes County Negroes met on or about the county courthouse. They wouldn't let them meet in the county courthouse, so they met in a church nearby, and nominated from their number a group of men and women to run for certain elective offices. Throughout most of the summer they continued trying

to get people registered to vote and the candidates who had announced and qualified to run for office began to campaign.

"People criticized them for having the black panther as their symbol, and said it was 'sort of a cute thing, makes a nice picture on a poster, but don't you think it was the wrong thing to do? It's calculated to suggest some sort of hidden, very strange and probably very vicious militancy which rests just beneath the surface in Lowndes County and suggests that you're not the decent, free-loving Americans that you want us to think you are. Why could you not,' these people said, 'have chosen a more innocuous symbol, like a rabbit, or a giraffe, or something like that?'

"Negroes in Lowndes County replied, 'Well, we chose the black panther for a couple of reasons: the panther represents to us the sort of politics we want to engage in; it's aggressive and outgoing and tries to get the sorts of things it wants. Secondly,' they said, 'we chose the black panther because we've never seen a white panther.'

"The election was a few weeks ago and all of the candidates of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization lost. It was a loss not entirely unexpected in Lowndes County, and therefore has not set back the development of the organization.

"Having lost the election, Negroes in Lowndes County are continuing to build for the elections that will come up two and four years from now. They also are continuing to talk about what they had expected those people who were running for public office to do for them. They didn't want to do what Negroes often do in some parts of the South where Negroes have been elected to public office—just to say that because Negroes have been elected the objective is accomplished.

"What is interesting is not that they won or lost the election—although it would have been much nicer for them to win—it is the way they looked at what their party and their nominees would do, and the way they decided how they ought to use politics to represent them. The question was not just having Negro representation but having representation that was going to *do* something for them. They used the following example as the sort of thing they wanted their people to do for them:

"In Lowndes County there is a factory called Dan River Mills. It makes men's underwear, shirts and women's blouses. Dan River Mills began as an industrial plant in Connecticut and when labor unions there began suggesting they ought to allow the workers to be unionized and ought to pay minimum wages, the factory moved from there to Danville, Virginia. Later the same thing happened there, and the factory moved to Lowndes County.

"Lowndes County is like a lot of southern counties—it is very hungry for industry. It bends over backwards to make plants like Dan River Mills feel at home. They built an industrial shell for them (a big building in which all they had to do was move their equipment and plug it in to get into operation); they dredged out the river so they could ship produce from Lowndes County down to



Mobile; they built an additional spur of the Alabama-Tennessee Railroad up to the front door so they could ship raw materials from all over the county. And in addition to doing those things for them they said, 'we're so eager to have you here that we're not going to require you to pay the usual taxes that industries pay in Lowndes County for ten years, until you get yourselves on your feet.'

"Negroes in Lowndes County are very disturbed about that. They think there are two reasons why they don't get the services from the county that they ought to: the first is that they are black, and the second is that, even if they were white, they wouldn't get it because the county doesn't have the money to give them. So they felt one of the reasons they didn't have the money was because of plants like Dan River Mills that move in, live off the community, and don't give anything back.

"They said, 'After the election we'll send the Negro tax assessor out to Dan River Mills and (let's assume the plant is worth a hundred thousand dollars) he'll inspect it and he'll say, 'I'll assess this plant at 50% of its value, you owe us \$50,000 in taxes. Here's a stamped envelope, with the address of the tax collector's office on it. Just put your check in and drop it in the mail.' If the check didn't come in a week or two, they'd send the Negro tax collector out and he'd demand payment on the check and if it wasn't forthcoming, they'd send the Negro sheriff out and he'd padlock the plant or seize the plant for the county.

"Now people who heard that story said, 'That's a good story to tell when you're making a speech or when you're explaining what you're doing—it sounds good, it sounds very nice, but it's not very realistic. First, because if you threaten to tax that plant at 50% of its value they're going to pack up and move out of the county and you're going to lose the income that the factory brings into Lowndes County.'

"The Negroes replied, 'Well, we don't care if the factory should move tomorrow, should burn up tomorrow, we're not getting any of the income from it because they don't hire Negroes at the factory.' Then the critics said, 'That's true, but it shows how naïve you are about economics and the way money flows in this country. Even though none of you are actually employed at the factory a lot of

you work as maids and yard boys, at \$2.50 and \$3.00 a day, for white people who do work at the factory. If the factory leaves, these people are going to come home, take care of their own children and yards, and you'll lose those jobs you have now which, admittedly, are not much, but they're better than doing nothing.'

"Negroes in Lowndes County said, 'That's true, you are right, you've got us there, but here's what we'll do: Instead of assessing the plant at 50% of its value we'll tell them we'll assess it at 100% of its value unless they agree to adopt an equal employment policy, and when they do we'll just tax them whatever the regular rate is.'

"The social system in this country as it is organized, is incapable of solving, through the normal channels, the urgent problems presented to it by history. The social system, as it is organized, is part of the problem and cannot be appealed to or relied upon as an independent arbitrator in power conflicts of which it is a part. White Americans, generally speaking, lack the will and courage and the intelligence to grant Negroes their equal rights. They have to be forced to do it by pressure.

"People don't discriminate for the fun of it; the function of prejudice is to defend social, economic, political or psychological interests. Appeals made to the fair play of prejudiced people are like prayers said in the wind. Conflict and struggle are necessary for social change. The rights and lives of real human beings are at stake and these rights are neither violable or negotiable.

"Since Negroes are a minority in most parts of this country they must make alliances. But these alliances must be based on their ability to promote racial goals. In general, the so-called alliances between Negroes and elements of the white community do not serve the interests of Negroes, they're not genuine alliances. They are ad hoc arrangements to use the Negro vote to elect certain white politicians. Negroes must initiate and support massive programs of civic and political education. They must initiate issues as well as react to them.

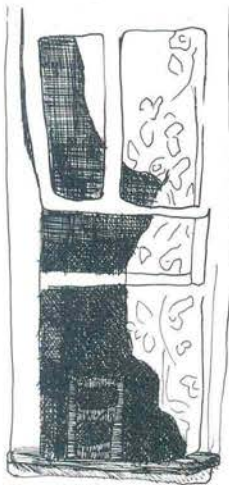
"Negroes must not forget race consciousness as long as they are the victims of racism, because if the issue is forgotten by Negroes the social order will continue to sanctify the established system which excludes Negroes from free and equal participation and consideration."

## Constitutional Council Statement

Late in the spring term of 1966 the Student Constituency voted to extend hours for men in student rooms from 11:00 P.M. to 1:00 A.M. on Friday nights and from 11:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M. on Saturday nights. The vote was 123 for and 19 against.

The Faculty Constituency was informed about this student action at its meeting on September 14, 1966. It decided not to take a position in this matter on the ground that it was not of sufficient concern to the faculty. The Administration, as a constituency claiming competence and responsibility in this matter, voted on October 10 to reject the changes voted by the Student Constituency.

*Continued on page 8*





## Editorial Note

*Quadrille* will be published at Bennington College six times a year—in October, November, December, April, May and June. It is designed to reflect the views and opinions of students, faculty, administration, alumnae, trustees, parents of students, and friends of the College. It will be distributed to all the constituencies, and is intended primarily as a monthly paper in which members of the Greater College Community may expound, publicly, on topical issues.

The editors of *Quadrille* invite articles, statements, opinion and comment, letters to the editors, photographs and graphics, and reviews from members of all the constituencies.

### STAFF

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—All other photographs by Laurence J. Hyman

—Drawings by Danielle DeMers



## Letters To The Editors

### To The Editor:

At first glance I was going to condemn *Quadrille*, for a number of reasons: I do not like the paper; I loved the old *Bennington Bulletin* (\*); The etching was poor; at first glance I was decidedly unimpressed.

Then I really began to read this publication. So far I have only two suggestions: Send a copy to everyone who has ever had anything to do with Bennington; sell subscriptions.

Whoever J.S.B. is, she is perfectly right. What Bennington must regain if it has really lost it, is the "touch of madness" that transforms the common into something extraordinary.

I sympathize with Kathleen Norris. I am appalled that she is having the same problems I had in 1956. Is there no justice? Kinks like this should have been ironed out by now. They are decidedly not creative. I can read about laser beams, for example, without being interested in physics. On my own, if I am interested, I will learn more than if it were required of me.

Keep me anxious.

—Jean Segal Fain '56  
Barrington, Rhode Island

(\*) ed. note: *Quadrille* does not replace the *Bennington Bulletin*. The *Bennington Review* has grown out of the *Bulletin* and will be sent to all constituencies twice a year.

### To The Editor:

It's a lucky accident that the contents of the first issue of *Quadrille* were divulged to this individual, for based

upon its appearance, *Quadrille* could understandably land up in the wastebaskets of all its recipients. It bears an unmistakable resemblance to those inexpressibly dreary high school publications that pour off the presses of nearly every small town in America—those bastions of utterly incontrovertible convention and blandness.

Those newsheets are typically stuffed with meaningless verbiage concerning sock-hops and such; they burble on ineffectually about the physical attributes of the senior class, and hold elections to determine which classmate causes the faculty the most annoyance.

Andrea Dworkin's two incisive reviews of on-campus events and Martine Cherau's account of the new student housing have succeeded in saving *Quadrille* from a similar fate. The remaining journalistic fare contained in *Quadrille* was, however, only adequate—for a reasonably self-respecting small town high school publication, that is.

—Bay Hallowell Judson '65  
Oberlin, Ohio

### To The Editor:

I am delighted with *Quadrille*. I hope it will be an opportunity for us to keep in closer touch with College events.

—Carol Robinson '58  
New York City

### To The Editor:

I am impressed with *Quadrille* and its fund of information. The new houses appear to be magnificent.

—Liz Partridge Durant '59  
Hingham, Massachusetts



To The Editor:

Bravo! First, for *Quadrille*—an excellent idea fulfilling a definite need. Secondly, for Barbara Gates' letter on the College's refusal to invite poets such as Olson and Creeley to read. Many of these poets have become household words in some circles. Must we wait the hundred years it took the world to accept Whitman and Emily Dickinson? We think we are being progressive until someone tries to wake us up to the fact that we are making the same mistakes all over again.

—Sarah Magee '69  
Clarksville, Tennessee

To the Editor:

This week five Bennington students presented the community with a challenging galley which raised pertinent questions about the value of the Bennington experience. In reading the galley, I sensed that these girls had hit precisely upon certain points which I had considered individually or taken lightly, but had never really grouped into a serious comment on Bennington, as these students were able to do.

The question, for example, of why so many of us say we would never come here if it were not for the NRT, of why many of us have the need "just to get out of this place" on weekends, have a great deal to do with the physical isolation of Bennington, but also reveal a great deal about the psychological frustration people feel just being here in a situation that is unreal in many ways.

I find myself telling people that Bennington is a great place, the only college I would really want to attend, largely because of the fact that students are treated as adults. I also find myself saying, however, that fourteen weeks is all I can take and sometimes when I am in the middle of it, even that seems like too much.

There are many fine people at Bennington, and the isolation of the college can lead to intense work that makes Bennington a very exciting place. But I think we must all recognize the essential "unreality" of the Bennington situation.

The Bennington experience, while it often leads to great intellectual development, also often develops distorted views of sex, liquor, and drugs. Many people here feel they must consciously work at "maintaining a perspective" on the real world while they are at Bennington.

There were many questions asked by the writers of the galley. I have simply attempted to present a personal response to a number of them. I wish to thank the writers of the galley and I hope that the members of the community will take their suggestion, and consider the issues presented over the winter. Perhaps there can be a community meeting, or series of meetings to deal with these issues in the Spring.

—Kathleen Norris

*ed. note: the galley in question is printed below.*

#### GALLEY

Recently many people have been discussing the prob-

lems of community apathy, drugs, pregnancy, finances, and transferring. Perhaps during the tensions of paper week is the most appropriate time to re-examine some of the basic principles of the Bennington system which create these problems. Here are some of the questions which we feel should be raised:

Must Bennington cost so much, not just in dollars but in academic pressures and tensions? Is a Bennington degree worth its costs?

Since at least half of the girls who come feel that it's not worth the problems it creates and transfer out, does the system complete the job it sets out to do? Do we believe in our system?

One statement from the college catalogue pertains directly to the phenomenon of "paper week" and ties in many other campus problems under discussion. "There is no marked separation between the student's academic work and her extra-curricular activities." (p. 12) Are there any extra-curricular activities at the College, or merely co-curricular activities? If there are no real extra-curricular activities carried on by the College, isn't a very important part of the student's life ignored or left without adequate outlet while on campus?

Is the misuse of drugs, sex, cigarettes, liquor, the snack bar a product of the need to escape our own system? Is NRT used as a form of escape when it's called "learning by doing"? Should we have to escape from our community?

Does commitment to the Bennington College Community mean giving up a normal social life?

Does the amount of academic work add to the physical isolation by making students feel they have too much work to leave? Should we feel guilty for going to a lecture, leaving for the weekend, taking a walk, reading an unrequired book? Is student apathy or student guilt the problem on our campus?

Does Bennington give "significant weight to the emotional, moral, and aesthetic factors in personal growth" (College catalogue, p. 4) or can it really minister only to intellectual needs? Is the idea of educating the whole person really in practice at this school; is the practice to alternately gorge one half and starve the other?

What kind of woman does this system produce and set out into the world?

Another discrepancy between theory and practice which occurs within our institution and its relation to the rest of society is the comment-grade system. Why does the catalogue say there is no "mechanical marking system" (p. 9) when we *are* being graded? If the grades are for entrance into graduate school, why doesn't Bennington stand behind its ideals and reputation and present only comments? Wouldn't this strengthen both the comment system and the curriculum?

Why doesn't Bennington just give grades and face within the system the reality which must be dealt with outside the system? If grades are for transferring, are we not only sacrificing the educational ideal but also building its fail-



ure into the practical system? Yet aren't most possibilities of transferring defeated by Bennington's unique educational system?

Do we believe in our system, and are we willing to make it work?

Are the exorbitant finances inherent in the educational ideal or products of the present system? Wouldn't high tuition be more justifiable if expenses aside from tuition such as transportation and off-campus activities were not so absolutely necessary?

If a greater percentage of students remained to graduate, wouldn't there be more students with a greater community commitment; wouldn't there be more alumnae willing to help support the college?

Do we flip out *en masse* during paper week because we are afraid we are not fulfilling the Bennington ideal?

Doesn't the system fail us in many outstanding respects which cannot be blamed on personal deficiencies?

Are we willing to improve the system so that the ideals need not be thrown away?

—Margaret Parker, Judy Zenge, Sylvia Fishbach,  
Carol Gerbracht, and Janis Beaver

#### GALLEY

Sophisticated Literary Cows unite!

We must assume that the letter written by the drama division to the editor of *Quadrille* is only another attempt to get a response from a complacent college community. We must make this assumption because the letter is so shocking, so irresponsible, so offensive and destructive—but beyond that, it is so contradictory to the educational process—that we cannot admit the possibility that it may really reflect the actual view of this division. It is distressing that the members of this division have so little understanding of the learning process.

Any educational objective which denies the validity of criticism is antithetical to education. We would be interested to know what educational objectives can legitimately be equated with the suppression of criticism.

We would like to believe, unlike the authors of this article, that the readers of *Quadrille* are sophisticated enough to accept student criticism for what it is.

A criticism by a "grossly inexperienced" student is certainly as valid as the interpretation of a grossly inexperienced director.

"Grossly inexperienced" may well mean "different perspective" in this context. And is not a different perspective of value to the educational process? Is not the suppression of such criticism more harmful than any effects its public presentation may have? Suppression has never been in the interest of education.

The problem runs still deeper.

Obviously, traditional literary criticism is not equipped to deal with a theatre which is "a poetry of gesture, of scenic image, and of sub-textual rhythms as much as it is a poetry of language." But modern criticism is as modern as the modern theatre.

If "only a practicing theatre artist (who could not at all be objective) could practice such criticism of the *mise-en-scene*," then it follows logically that only professional actors are qualified to act, and only professional directors are qualified to direct.

If the drama division persists in its denial of criticism, it must be prepared to present its sub-textual productions to a void.

The theatre-goer cannot be expected to take into account months of preparation, however intense. He is presented with the reality of the performance, and it is this reality which he must learn to evaluate.

A published opinion is no more representative than a private point of view, and it is inherently no more significant than any other single opinion.

Is not criticism a creative endeavor? And does it not stimulate further creative development?

Obviously and unfortunately the lively arts are not coordinated in this system.

An educational policy which denies the validity of criticism cannot at the same time support the ideals of experimentation.

This policy is an ironic and saddening affirmation of intellectual absolutism.

—Barbara Fisher, Polly Notkins

*Karen Manulis shares the sentiments expressed above but prefers not to sign at this time because she is actively involved in an intellectual endeavor.*

#### GALLEY

DEAR CONTENTED UNITED SOPHISTICATED  
LITERARY COWS . . . . HARK!!!

One of the major dilemmas facing the contemporary theatre in America is that *there is no modern criticism modern enough for it*. Current critical standards have proved inadequate in dealing with new forms. I suspect that the same problem exists in music and the visual arts. There are, at present, no effective critical yardsticks to apply to inter-media, events, games, happenings, film-theatre, or action-image theatre. A "new criticism" must be evolved. Note the imminent colloquiums at Columbia and N.Y.U. by critics themselves who are alarmed at the inadequacy of criticism of the performing arts.

In light of the above, it is presumptuous for a public-relations oriented medium to publish "practice" criticism disseminated to an outside public.

The Drama Division statement published in *Quadrille* as a "Letter to the Editor?" suggested that student criticism not be suppressed, but that it be aired in its natural forum. One might work toward the development of a new criticism in the classroom or express more personal opinions in a Galley.

—PG, Local Absolutist Bully

## Faculty Notes

Kenneth Burke, who taught at Bennington from 1943 until 1961, has been elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is one of 50 representa-



tives chosen from the Academy's parent body, the National Institute of Arts and Letters and will occupy Woodrow Wilson's old chair, Number 37.

A composition by Vivian Fine, "Chamber Concerto for Cello and Six Instruments" was given its premiere performance last month at Bennington College. George Finckel was soloist and Henry Brant conducted. The piece was repeated at Windham College.

Frank Baker, tenor, and Henry Brant, piano, presented a concert consisting entirely of songs by Charles Ives in November at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York. It was the first offering in a comprehensive project in which they hope to perform and record the entire extant literature of approximately 125 songs by Ives.

Henry Brant's spatial oratorio, "December" (the first American work to win the Prix Italia, in 1954), was performed at Macalester College in St. Paul this month in its new revised version. The text is by Patricia Brant. It was conducted by Thomas Nee and performed by the Macalester College chorus and members of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. Concerts of Brant orchestral and chamber music under the direction of the composer are planned for 1968 in the Minneapolis Tyrone Guthrie Theatre.

## Francis Ponge Interviewed

*Ed. Note: Francis Ponge is a highly regarded French poet concerned in his work with the recreation of ordinary objects. He read from his works at Bennington last month, and while on campus he consented to be interviewed. The text of the interview, conducted by Denise Bordett, Barbara Gates and Georges Guy, follows.*

*Ponge's writings include Douze Petits Écrits, Le Parti Pris Des Choses, Proèmes, Le Grand Recueil (I Methodes, II Lyres, III Pièces), Pour un Malherbe.*

*Why do you not like to call your texts "poems"?*

I suppose that it is because poetry, as it is habitually conceived, is a kind of song. In my texts, unfortunately, there is no song—you will see how I read them—like an article, an essay. They are not poems in the habitual sense.

*If your works are essentially neither descriptive nor metaphoric, how would you characterize them?*

There are descriptions and metaphors in my texts. They are not *only* that, but it is there. I have not a will *not* to describe—I do describe, as rapidly as possible, in order to make myself understood.

*But your goal is not a description?*

Description is useful sometimes, but my goal is rather to give my profound idea of a thing, an idea which I've had since childhood, which I give as sincerely as I can, even if the idea is childish or puerile.

*Did these ideas usually originate in your childhood?*

Yes. They are ideas, notions, by which I have been impregnated for a long time. There are of course successive changes, but they are interior to the poem. When I was four years old, I had an idea of the goat, for example—which was modified probably when I was seventeen because I had seen other goats. It happens very naturally. One day I felt like saying my profound liking for the goat, my profound idea of it. I know which goats touched me most. I could tell you in which stable I saw them.

*When did you begin to write poems about objects?*

In an old collection (*Douze petits écrits*), there is a text dedicated to Chaplin. In this text there is a fly which could be in *Le Parti pris des choses*. It was in about 1926 or '27 that I decided to occupy myself with things.

*The article of Miss Blosson Douthat says that your works imply that man has a point of view, from which he can never escape, and that, man being imperfect, his point of view is contestable at every step. Do you agree? Would you describe yourself as a humanist writer, at least in these terms?*

Yes, contestable, of course.—There are writers who pretend to be ab-humanist, for example, that's the theory of my friend Audiberti. But I am a man, I can't be anything else, and these are the ideas and sensations of a man which I give. But to say that my work has a humanist import—



philosophers may say so, I can't. They have convinced me that there is a philosophical import in my work, but I won't put it there. I did study philosophy, but I forgot it completely, very quickly.

*Then you refuse to speak about the human import of your work?*

No. If I write, it's for communication; thus, I think, it's written at the interior of language, therefore at the interior of humanity. But I don't want it to have a philosophical meaning, absolutely not. Bernard Greethuysen sent me some students from the University of Berlin, where he was teaching at the time, before Hitler. I remember it very well. It was a rainy day. When I opened the door, they said to me, "It isn't raining ideas, it's raining DROPS!" Phenomenologues!

*When we read your texts, we always see that in pointing at the object, you are pointing at man.*

Yes, it's a man's eye and hand, it's in language, it's human. I am trying to arrive at a notion at once complex, dense, and also as simple as possible. I am aiming at something which resembles the phenomenological reduction of Husserl. But that is absolutely not my will. My will is only to arrive at the *difference*, the essence of a thing, at what makes it unique. The effect of my rigor and desire is to give the difference of the thing. I eliminate everything which is not its specialty, its particularity. Thus, maybe I am creating a verbal object.

*Sartre says that you prefer to call your work a cosmogony rather than a cosmology. Why?*

I can't say, I don't use a philosophical vocabulary. That



is something with which I reproached Valéry—for using philosophical terminology in his poems—they seem to me like still lifes, or pieces by Rameau. I don't want to talk only of painting. They have accused me of being too much for the eye, but that's not quite correct. There are other organs, other senses than sight which appear in my texts.

Each object appears to me to be a character. It is a complex of qualities which resembles a character, which is very different from the habitual character of humanity. There is in no matter what object a complex of qualities which could be a model for man. An ashtray could be equivalent to the hero of a novel. The qualities are varied to make an interesting unity.

*Are you more interested in making your reader see things in a new way, or in making him experience language in a new way?*

It's the same thing. That is, I don't try to make him see things in a new way; I try to say them as I see them. I make the reservation, however, that it's not just seeing them, it's all the sensations that come from the object. I don't want it to be new, as much as I want it to be *my* vision. Too bad if it's old, that's all right with me—but it must be authentically mine. It transpires in my wording. If I am interested in things, it is in order to transform language into a pure medium. Because language is a sincere evil in relation to ideas, I have to put it in a medium where it is free alone. Thus I take off from objects and not ideas. It is above all a matter of language. The full title of my book is *Le Partie prise des choses compte tenu des mots*.

*When you begin to write about a thing, do you see right away all that you want to say, or does the work develop by itself? Once you begin, it seems that the description transforms itself.*

The complete idea exists before I write; it commands even the beginning. In the first sentence I know exactly what I will do. I am reminded of what Braque, who is very close to my sensitivity once said: He told me that when he began a painting, it was behind the white canvas. He had to do it, of course. The canvas was like a dust which hid the painting. I have to take off the dust with little brushes, paintbrushes with colors, but the picture is behind. I know perfectly well about a thing which I have not yet written—an ashtray perhaps,—I know, I have a profound idea, dense and complete, of the ashtray. And I have to let out only the words which accord with my profound idea. That's it, and of course it's difficult. But it doesn't take off from the first sentence. Sartre said, rightly and wrongly at the same time, that sometimes in each verse or paragraph everything is there already. That I stop and begin again, perhaps is true. Anyway, from the first word, the thing is there.

If I could say it in one word, I would. I can't say it in one word. It's impossible, unless it's the name of the thing. Often in a text I speak of the name of the thing. I use it, sometimes not till the last word of the text because I am making a paraphrase. I hope there is a sensitivity to color, to form, to everything, in my texts . . . because *I am* sensitive.

*Constitutional Council, cont'd from page 3*

Faced with this dispute, and in accordance with the Bennington College Community Constitution, a community meeting was held on October 24 to discuss the issue, and subsequently the dispute was submitted to the Constitutional Council for adjudication. In considering the dispute, the Constitutional Council sought to establish the competence of the constituencies involved and the reasonableness of their action under the Constitution.

#### *Constituency Competence*

We are confronted here with two constituencies—the Students and the Administration—claiming competence in the matter of men visitors in student rooms.

The Constitution assigns no exclusive competence to either constituency, and in fact neither constituency claims such exclusive competence. Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution states:

*"Each house shall hold frequent meetings of all its members in order: (a) To legislate on house business, such as quiet hours, house dues, and check-up duty; (b) To deliberate on matters of general college policy, such as men in the rooms, library hours, or traffic regulations, whenever requested by the Legislative Council or by members of the house; (c) To vote, by secret ballot, on matters of general college policy after they have been discussed in house meetings; (d) To direct new students each Fall Term."*

The above language conveys a definite distinction between the degree of competence exercised by the Student Constituency in various matters. There seems to be exclusive competence in matters involving "house business," and the houses are given the power to "legislate" in such matters, presumably without the concurrence of other houses or constituencies. However, "men in rooms" is mentioned specifically as a matter of *general college policy*, thus indicating competence shared with other constituencies.

To say that competence is shared is not necessarily to infer that it is shared equally in all matters. In the problem at hand, it is clear that the Administration has an interest and concern. The welfare and security of the students, and behavior affecting such welfare and security, are matters involving the concern, interest, and responsibility of the Administration. It is equally clear that the question of men in rooms is of great concern to the students. But the concern to the students is of such a social, personal, and immediate nature as to make it substantially greater than that of the Administration. We therefore hold that although both constituencies have constitutional competence in this matter, the competence of the students is paramount and should be respected as long as it is exercised reasonably and responsibly.

#### *Reasonableness of Action*

Although the timing of the student vote, coming as it did near the end of the term, may be subjected to some criticism, it did not violate any standards of constitutionality or reasonableness. While it might be argued that additional time would have afforded a greater opportunity to



discuss the merits of the proposed change more thoroughly, we conclude that meaningful discussion could and did take place within the time available. The vote was therefore a reasonable act exercised by the student constituency. Furthermore, on the substantive issue we hold that the change voted by the student constituency is not an unreasonable extension of the parietal rules of the College.

The reasonableness of the action taken by the Administration in voting down the proposal is subject to some question. The Administration offered two grounds for its decision:

*"(1) The circumstances of the voting by the Student Constituency last spring did not permit the Administration to ascertain how fully the interests and rights of all students had been taken into account and given the opportunity to be expressed.*

*"(2) The proposed changes in the hours for men in rooms do not, in the judgment of the Administration, provide adequate protection of the interests and needs of students not entertaining male guests. Even though these students may be in a minority, the Administration considers it a responsibility of the College to recognize and make provision for their interests and rights.*

On the first ground, we fail to follow the Administration's reasoning, unless it claims the right to supervise elections of other constituencies. In the absence of any such claim or any clear indication of irregularity in the student vote, this argument cannot stand.

On the second ground, we fail to see the germaneness of the issue of minority interests. There are adequate instruments of student government and administrative channels available to protect the interests of minorities—house government, judicial committee, student personnel office. We hold, therefore, that this argument lacks sufficient validity to justify the over-ruling of the student vote.

The action of the student constituency is hereby upheld.

—Leslie Berg, Barbara Fisher, Lionel Nowak,  
Joseph Parry, Harry Pearson, Stanley Pike,  
and Leonard Rowe

#### DISSENT

Although all the members of the Constitutional Council associate themselves with most of the foregoing statement, not all of them can accept either the form or the conclusion of its argument. During the Council's hearings, representatives of each of the two constituencies argued that a special position or special interest gave it paramount if not conclusive jurisdiction over the hours during which men may be entertained in student rooms. There is no constitutional sanction for either claim when it is so stated as to exclude the other. Each constituency has a legitimate interest in the hours during which men may be in rooms, the Administration because of its responsibility for providing facilities and conditions of working and living that serve the College's purposes and objectives, the Student Constituency because of its theoretical and practical responsibility to govern itself.

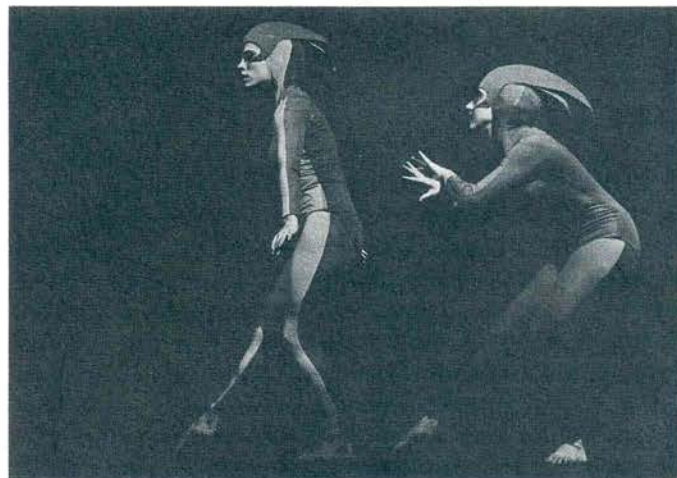
Under these circumstances, the Council cannot under-

take to choose between the actions of the two constituencies in terms of their constitutional power to act. Instead it is required to evaluate the actions themselves. Noting that the action of the Student Constituency was entirely proper in itself, we hold that the action of the Administration in restricting hours by vetoing the student enactment was also a reasonable exercise of its powers. One constituency may have behaved more reasonably than the other, but there is no warrant for holding that the action of either was arbitrary and unreasonable. Hence we hold that the action of the Administration was a proper constitutional act.

In so holding, we take note of the fact that spokesmen for the Administration apparently expressed a willingness to accept a revision of hours that came to within thirty minutes of the times the Student Constituency adopted. Such a circumstance suggests that the Administration might accept, or the Council approve, an extension of hours that promised to protect the academic and emotional interests of all students. The Council agreed unanimously, however, that such alternative measures must be initiated by one of the constituencies concerned. —Susan Paris, Rush Welter

## Review of Dance Workshop — November 22-24

The program was elegant in terms of its refinement; there was nothing superfluous within the tightness of its content. At the same time, the tightness provided little feeling of a "Dance Workshop", and more that of a professional performance. The level of professionalism, within any of the performing arts, has the quality and pitch of understatement. As a result, the Workshop was understated, refined beyond the "working" realm into the aura of performance. There was tremendous variety within the understatement; there was simplicity, ingenuousness, pre-



tense, alienation, soliloquy, abstraction, passion, and cartoon-strip humor. There was little else to feel, after it was over, except, perhaps, the wish to have had more room to feel what the dancing had meant.

It was a wonderfully feminine program, or so I found the choreographers pervaded by that Issue in their images and translations of image into movement. The program



distributed itself admirably; the intensities were appropriately placed within their controlled structure, and every so often I could smile with the delight of having felt something—perhaps great.

#### *Three Women: Anne Bell Yeo*

Here the choreographer managed to stand away from her composition, both spatially and psychologically, to diffuse her concept of “woman” into three aspects. The three could have been “three women” or “three of woman”; the point is irrelevant, but what is relevant is that the study was beautifully structured and gave the proper illusion of having more than one possibility of interpretation. This is good; this means that the choreographer’s conceptualization has not taken precedence over the communication of possibility.

They could have been Eve, or Anne, or even Contemporary in the Pucci-like modernity of their culottes. It didn’t really matter.

The content of the study was universal enough to be grasped in its multiple dimensions of intent and understanding. As a psychological study alone it demonstrated remarkable sensitivity into the quietly explosive patterns of the mind.

The music (Bartok) was one of the most fortunate selections on the program, in terms of how it threaded movement into the understatement that is woman’s grace.

#### *One Morning: Wendy Perron*

A wonderfully singular study, with all the awkward grace of a young girl awakening to her potential womanhood—part joy, part terror, part restraint. The theme has been done again and again, and yet this study had a depth to it—as if the ingenuousness had been “gone through” and was being watched from a distance of greater maturity.

The dancer-choreographer was not as young as she seemed, and that is what gave *One Morning* its own small intensity. It was amateur, and self-indulgent, and exquisitely performed.

#### *Under Swan’s Wing: Reuben James Edinger*

This piece didn’t work because it was pretentious, because it was afraid to state directly what it was and attempted to convey meaning through an exploitation of birds. They moved beautifully together—the Swan and the Rapist—though the Swan appeared to be the stronger of the two. Laurie Freedman gave a stunning performance of a study that was difficult to take seriously. I was not impressed with the idea, or the symbolism, or the music, which was poorly composed and recorded.

I watched this dance in the making, and I watched it attempt to be less bird-like, more human. It never got there, because it didn’t want to. There is something safe about using pretense, or symbolism to excess: it is a shield.

#### *Fragments and Ruins: Wendy Summit*

I persist in thinking this composition should be called

something out of Pilgrim’s Progress. I found the sense of allegory too paramount; I felt imposed upon by the force to feel something I could not feel on such a cataclysmic scale. I began to feel the agony of not understanding the terror of vertigo after the war, after the catastrophe, the storm, the explosive alienation. I began to envision the audience’s reception as not-being-able-to-help. Perhaps this was the choreographer’s intent: to stretch us beyond our complacency in the horror of trying to feel what Europe must have felt after World War II.

I watched this dance develop; I watched the choreographer attempt real tendencies toward compassion, to contrast her alienation. She succeeded somewhat, and I realized the dance had struck deeply into the realm of the unknown, with not quite enough maturity to simply make a statement.

The dance was too long; so was the sustained horror.

#### *Yo Canto: Reuben James Edinger*

The strength of soliloquy is that there is no one else to worry about, spatially or emotionally. *Yo Canto*—I sing—and it was simply that, without pretense, or abstraction, or elaboration. It was honest, and physical, and beautifully confined to a diagonal space-pattern, like a line tightly



snapped across stage. I felt the narcissism of purple—a massively intense involvement in one’s own foot-physicality (which could be extended *ad absurdum* into psychology); the progression into the alienation of mind and body, marked by the resistance of negation; the return to narcissism with all the victory, and the despair of having surrendered. It was a strong study, a beautifully concise execution of masculine impulse into movement without the pretense of excessive symbolism.

#### *The Seventh Box: Susanne Rappaport*

This was one of the most successfully executed and designed “abstractions” I have experienced. Six orange boxes were distributed among the dancers (four women and two men) and a seventh box, a green one, was visibly large



enough to entomb the end of the composition in an attitude of conformity. The theme could have been identity, or sexuality, or both—or simply something “central” in personality due to the vast preoccupation with “it” on-stage. There are various ways of approaching it, coping with it in its intensity, it is even possible not to know what it is. Linda Wilder was the Woman-Child, poignantly sad in her lack of knowledge. She embraced the top box, and then, with the vengeance of singularity, threw it down, negating that self-violence into destruction, upset the fortress of the other boxes. The others exploited whatever it was they had. The grown men literally threw it around in the air. The women treasured it, with sensual sanctity. However, all ended, huddled in the sameness of the seventh box. The music, by Lionel Nowak, was beautifully taped—tried into the whole strangeness of indeed knowing what this dance was about. It was crystal.

#### *Song of Aeolis: Laurie Freedman*

This was passionate, and open, physical, and even majestically carried by the music (Hovhannes). It was *dégagé*. The dancers could have been Daphne and Chloe, or Pan fluting his goat-song, frolicking with his nymph in the blatancy of late spring. Their hands were marvelous, with all the expression of ritual, and offering, and the chalice, awaiting the Eucharist in a communion of spirit and body. One criticism: the lighting obscured the sunlight of noon. twelve o'clock needs nothing to be theatrical material.

#### *Pin Feathers: Martha Armstrong*

We could laugh at all these hen-women undermining themselves in the typical feminine fashion. I thought of a cartoon-strip, where the Roles take priority over Identity, and, after all, this is the only way we can laugh at ourselves. All those wonderful Birds bobbed so beautifully as A Group; even the Runt had to persist in returning to her peers. Facial expression was carefully executed (especially in the faces of the Nightingale and the Runt) and posture contributed to the general laughter that was as much out of relief as it was out of delight. We didn't have to think, and I truly respected the thinking of the choreographer to be sensitive to our needs. Pin-feathers, pin-heads, pin-anything, really. The music was ideal.

#### *Harmonica Breakdown: Jane Dudley*

A masterpiece—Wittman dancing Dudley, with all the dimension of Everywoman breaking harmonicas and time in a control of tears and laughter. One was struck by the return to the diagonal; the straightness of focus; the persistence of commitment simply because the line is there; the breaking of sound in a hand-clasp that hurt deeply inside; the elegance of being above and below it all; the liquidness of restraint; the despair of Age; the potential of Youth; the harmonica breaking again and again in the collapse of tears with Age, laughter with Youth. Suddenly, we as women knew, and the men simply awed.

—Susan Bryant

## Alumnae Association Projects

The New York Regional Group of the Alumnae Association is planning its third annual Ski Weekend, on the Bennington campus February 10-13, 1967. Activities for the weekend will be skiing, skating, swimming at nearby slopes; cinema, cocktail party, discotheque; and TV for children on campus.

Costs for room and board (five meals) remain at \$30 per adult and \$20 per child 12 years and under. The cost of transportation, skiing, equipment rental, instruction, and lunches will be additional.

Last year's Weekend was attended by 203 people (134 adults, 69 children). 36 alumnae attended with their families and friends.

The College and the Regional Council of Greater New York (Alumnae Association) will co-sponsor a series of lectures this winter at the Martin Foundation, 26 West 56th Street, New York. *Calendar of Lectures:*

January 9—Edward J. Bloustein, President, Bennington College, “Contemporary Trends in Law and The Problems of Privacy”.

January 19—Leonard Rowe, member of Social Science faculty, “Contemporary Trends in U.S. Foreign Policy.”

January 30—James Tenney, B.A., Bennington, 1958, Visiting Professor of Electrical Engineering, Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, “Contemporary Trends in Electronic Music.”

February 9—Vincent Longo, member of Visual Arts faculty, “Contemporary Trends in the Visual Arts.”

February 20—Christopher Koch, member of Literature faculty, “Contemporary Trends in Communications.”

The lectures are open to the public at a fee of \$1.00 per lecture or \$4.00 for the series. Maximum seating capacity is 70, so reservations should be made at the New York Office (Martin Foundation Building).

## Alumnae Class Notes

'37—Esther Williamson Ballou has had a set of songs commissioned by Kindler Foundation, entitled “5-4-3”.

The songs set e.e.cummings' poetry to music.

'40—Married: Marjorie de Greeff Jacobi to Edward Sands Litchfield in November.

Married: Hope Duveneck Mattila to Dr. Russell Dudley Williams in September.

'42—Carol Channing appeared Dec. 11 on television's “Wonderful World of Burlesque.”

Joan Leonard Caryl has been appointed instructor in Fine Arts at Georgetown University (Washington, D.C.). She is preparing for her own sculpture and poetry show in May (“Monuments to Good People”) and is working on a Kennedy bust, commissioned by a Panamanian Peace Corps village.

'43—Janet Briggs Glover showed paintings and monotypes in November at the Gallery 9 Upstairs, Chatham, N. J.

Jean Short Aldrich has been appointed instructor in Art at Hobart and William Smith Colleges where she has served as a part-time instructor since 1963.



- '44—Phyllis Carton Shapiro will exhibit paintings and collages at the Paideia Gallery (Los Angeles) Jan. 9-Feb. 5.
- '47—Rosalyn Long Udow was elected to the Great Neck (N. Y.) Board of Education.
- '52—Married: Joan Maggin to Morton D. Weiner in November. Mr. Weiner is the Executive Vice-President of Avnet, Inc.
- '54—Lynn Beller Pitofsky appeared in the December production of "Come Blow Your Horn" in Mamaroneck, New York.
- '56—Married: Carrie *McLeod* Weyer to John C. Howson in November.  
Mary Lou Peters Rosenthal and husband have moved to Oakland, California where Mr. Rosenthal is a Neighborhood Organization Specialist for the Poverty Program.  
Ruth Ring Harvie conducted the Brunswick Chamber Singers (November) at the Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College.
- '57—Born: Jane Ellen, third child, third girl, to Marjorie Hirsch Goldstein, in October.  
Born: Julia Joy, fourth child, third daughter, to Stephanie Brown Carleton in August.  
Constance Golub Gorfinkle was the chairman of the 400th anniversary celebration of the Women's Auxiliary of Beth Israel Hospital (Boston) which was held at the Statler Hilton in November.  
Sandra Hochman Levy, who recently returned from an eight-month stay in Hong Kong, was honored in November by P.E.N. at a party in the Teakwood Room of the Hotel Pierre, N.Y.C. She also gave a reading from her work in a joint program with James Dickey at the YMHA Poetry Center, N. Y.  
W. Leonard Taffs (M.A.) is now Assistant Professor, Music Department of New York State University, Brockport, New York.
- '58—Treva Silverman is now a television comedy writer for "The Monkees", "That Girl", "F Troop", and "Captain Nice."
- '59—Born: Holly Brackett to Sarah Southern Pease in November.  
Ellen Lapidus exhibited paintings and drawings at the Flatbush Unitarian-Universalist Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., in November.  
Carole Lewis Rupert exhibited paintings and drawings at the New York Bank for Savings last month.  
Alice Nelson sang in a benefit performance of "Aida"

at Carnegie Hall in November.

Barrie Rabinowitz Cassileth is working toward her Ph.D at the University of Louisville (Ky.) while her husband, Peter, a hematologist, is in the army at Fort Knox.

- '60—Married: Nancy Cooperstein to Jordan Charney in November. Both are producers of "Viet Rock", now showing in New York.  
Born: Kurt David, fourth child, second son, to Ann Daskow Seligsohn.  
Born: Laurie Carolyn, second child, first daughter to Amy Miller Levine.  
Patricia Flagg Morriss was one of "Six Young Painters" showing at the Athena Gallery, New Haven in December.
- '62—Engaged: Sylvia Pool to Peter R. Sperling.  
Born: Ethan Alexander, first child, first son, to Ellen Jacobowitz Stein.  
Marilyn Goffstein Schaaf has written and illustrated a second book, entitled *Sleepy People* (published by Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, \$1.95).  
Patricia Johanson exhibited at the Stable Gallery, New York, in September.
- '63—Engaged: Betty Aberlin to Dr. Penn Lupovitch of Pittsburgh.  
Sandra Greer (née Perlmutter) is editing at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (N. Y.)
- '64—Sarah Scattergood has returned from a two year service in the Peace Corps.
- '65—Married: Abbie Goldstein to Andrew Stephen Arato in August.  
Married: Stephanie Stouffer to Lawrence Alan Kahn in November.  
Born: Blake Jacobs, first child, a son, to Ruth Jacobs Rubin in September.  
Kathryn Posin appeared in November at the Harper Theatre (Hyde Park, Ill.) as one of five members of the modern dance group, Lotte Gosler's Pantomime Circus.  
Patricia Thomas is a partner and designer at "Noose", a new Boston tie firm.
- '66—Paul Aaron (né Fink) is employed as the Production Assistant to the Artistic Director of the Center Theatre Group of the new Performing Arts Center in Los Angeles.
- '68—Married: Deborah Thompson to John Lamont Powell. Mr. Powell is a student at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

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