

summer 2014

BENNINGTON

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CONVENTION



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ON THE COVER
A design collaboration between faculty member **Jon Isherwood** and sculpture technician **John Umphlett MFA '99**, the Bennington medallion draws on a wide range of 3D processes and is crafted from pliable, contemporary materials. Full of color, dimension, and movable parts the medallion casts and carries light and responds to the individual it adorns. While every medallion is said to be one of a kind, the Bennington medallion stands in striking distinction—a singular object that calls on Bennington's values of collaboration, invention, and beauty.

PHOTO BY BRIEE DELLA ROCCA

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the inquiry

Somebody proposes to coax music
out of a flower pot, a copper pipe, a fire extinguisher.

He hammers truck springs into a glockenspiel,
creates a drum from a downed Cessna's fuel tank.

Weaving his way across the thawing campus,
past first resurrections of earliest lilac,
he reimagines music as a goldfinch
whose undulations perforate the hemlocks.

Or, somebody is trying to hear silence
perforate the edges of a poem
she gathers out of noise in her ruled notebook.

She spends one nighttime pacing her square dorm room.
She'll spend a lifetime capturing one silence.

And in the studio, the student sculpture
tilts drunk with color, chance, and superstition,
and each new drawing has the chance to change us,
and each new drawing is a sutured wound,
and each new drawing is a holy rite
that somebody keeps trying to make sense of.

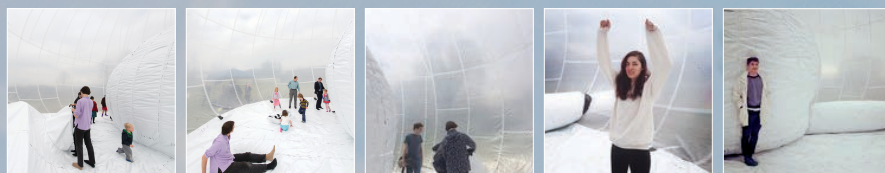
In the pale moon of light a desk lamp throws
over the papers of a visiting philosopher,
a question wakes up like a freshly born
mammal. Stretches its limbs into new
possibilities, demanding our nurture
like any new creature. How does one learn
to approach it with tenderness?

Our enterprise is to attend the birth
of inquiry, and what comes after.

We start each day by gathering to listen
for the warm breathing of the youngest thing,
and take our omens from the flight of birds.

*A poem by faculty member Michael Dumanis
for Bennington's tenth president, Mariko Silver.*

SUMMER 2014



Members of the Field Research of Closed Cells class—led by sculpture technician **John Umphlett MFA '99** and visiting technologist **Guy Snover '06**—developed the Inflatable Space, erected during inauguration weekend. The experimental, transportable, transitory structure arose from studies of form, membrane properties, and dialogue, which aimed to design a new, unknown environment.

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B (*President Mariko Silver speaks to Bennington's past and looks to its future in her inaugural address*)

SHOW THE WORLD A NEW

After thanking presenters, Bennington College **President Mariko Silver** greeted a crowd of 600 alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the College—and another 100 viewers online. The full text, as prepared for delivery, follows:

Every Bennington education begins with a question. My Bennington education did.

My question is: Why? Why Bennington? Why now?

In 1932, with the eyes of educators everywhere upon them, Bennington College's founders invited the first faculty and students to join in what they called a higher education laboratory. A place where education is driven by the paired interests and mutually reinforcing engagements of teacher and student. Where humanities, social sciences, science, and arts are intimately intertwined.

Teachers here are practitioners working at the very edge of new ideas. Students are researchers, collaborators, and scouts in uncharted territories, learning by doing, learning by making—every moment, every day. Faculty, students, and staff don't come to Bennington to get something. They come here to do something—to make something.

Peter Drucker came here to learn, through teaching, what he needed in order to develop the theories that informed and inspired modern management.

Later he said of Bennington, "I was given freedom to teach whatever subjects I thought I needed learning in: political theory and American government, American history and economic history, philosophy and religion." Bennington, he said, was where he felt most truly at home.

Alumna **Megan Marshall '75** who two weeks ago won a Pulitzer Prize for her biography *Margaret Fuller: A New American Life*, first discovered the subject of that biography in a class here with poet and faculty member **Stephen Sandy**.

Donna Tartt '86, who won this year's Pulitzer Prize in fiction for her novel *The Goldfinch*, began her first novel at Bennington.

Yes, that's two Bennington alumnae Pulitzers this year.

This work takes more than inspiration; it takes persistence, it takes perseverance, it takes the kind of drive that can only come from inside. This drive does not come from the desire only to please others, or to tick all the right boxes so that you can get a degree. Thriving within this community takes self-discipline and individual initiative.

At the core of Bennington's philosophy are two fairly simple ideas: That the student be at the center of his or her education, and that the College be at the center of the conversations shaping our world. The linkages between these two ideas are, in Bennington-speak, "our work."

Of course, we talk about all of this as work, and it is. But somehow, time and time again, I've been told that it doesn't feel like work.

One alumnus explains, "I have never for a minute felt I was doing work. Everything I've done here has been an expression of who I am. This is the kind of work people long to have."

I see this every day now at the College, as Bennington students form connections and discover intersections—new to them and even new to the world. They build their lives around their work and they do this in the best ways. They do it in the way we all seek to live our lives—where work and life are seamlessly, and pleasurably, intertwined.

You love your work and it feeds you, so you talk about it over dinner, in the houses, late into the night. You talk about it when you return to campus every winter after seven weeks working out in the world—in Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Brooklyn or Alaska, whether it's your first Field Work Term or your fourth.

The College's job is to kindle a spark. To help our students use it to illuminate our world in ways replete with wonder and grace, wisdom, and beauty.

Profoundly...personally...our efforts revolve around a search for perspective—the sweet-spot that locates a body, a mind, a concept. A place, this place, that allows us to stand within the swirl of ideas and actually build a deeper understanding.

Alumnus **Mark Edmundson**, class of **1974**, once described what happens here as the "archetypal Bennington project of becoming ever more insistently and

complexly who you are."

This archetypal Bennington project is to my mind the highest form of higher education. Our interwoven world requires something that is not quite captured in the words "interdisciplinary education." It requires an approach that transcends disciplines.

The intensity of the work takes real rigor, the demands of the questions and problems we face require new frameworks.

Rigor unbound by convention.

For my part, I came to Bennington because I believe deeply in this institution's design and purpose. I am here to help lead this institution forward, to be sure.

But among the many ideas that Bennington has infused in me, I know that leadership depends first and foremost upon listening and learning.

I have spent my life listening and learning—studying institutional design: colonial institutions, international development organizations, technologically mediated communities, multinational corporations, governments, and, yes, colleges and universities.

How do institutions come to be as they are, how do they succeed, and how do they remain resonant?

In my own exploration, I have traveled to some 50 countries—not nearly enough. I have worked in state and federal government, for nonprofits, intergovernmental organizations, companies, colleges and universities, and with groups of all sizes. I do not pretend to know the answers to my questions, or even all of the questions.

But I do feel, through my research, my professional experience, and my deepest intuition, that Bennington is doing something that is far bigger than this "pocket utopia."

I sensed it from my first interview, when I was asked by the Board, "What of yourself do you see in Bennington and Bennington in you?"

The expectation (almost a demand) that one's relationship with this community be deeply symbiotic—for me, but also for everyone who touches this place—this idea grabbed hold of me. It is a place where you give as much as you receive. Education here is a reciprocal affair.

In today's national conversation about higher education, we talk a lot about how you get in, how you make the right student-college match, how you pay for it. We talk about what happens after you graduate.

And these are important issues, to be sure.

At the same time, we should be engaging in a deeper conversation about what happens while you are with us. How we support, encourage, call forth the best, most surprising work from our students. How we help them uncover the path they will want to follow when they leave. How we help them become not just leaders but stewards—of

their own lives, of their communities, of the planet, and of our future.

We no longer live in a world of single careers, life-long employment—of "company men" and corporate pensions.

Our world requires us to make (and remake) new rules, and new roles—constantly. And, we wouldn't want it any other way. It is how Bennington College has been engaging our students to approach life for more than 80 years.

This world is made for a Bennington education and a Bennington education is made for this world.

Life has never been lockstep or linear, but we human beings created institutions to try to make it so—life plans, secure lifelong employment, predictable social environments, stable hierarchies.

Humans are ever seeking to capture the complexity of the world and bind it into little boxes. In this world of boxes we find so-called "modern man." And modernity is now struggling, slogging through complexity that cannot be boxed up.

Maybe this is not such a bad thing. I would argue that the lives so many have long tried to live—all boxed up—

to the share employed full time—college graduates are outperforming those with less education. Moreover, when today's young adults are compared with previous generations, the disparity in economic outcomes between college graduates and those with a high school diploma or less formal schooling has never been greater.¹

But this is not the whole story. Education must be a creative process, not a consumer product. And education—especially at Bennington—is very much about the individual and his experience, her process—the path, or as we call it, The Plan.

And yet, education is—and must be—about something bigger, too. It is about what kind of world we want to make.

Higher education institutions in the United States are a lynchpin for societal formation and a vital point of intervention, and we have the most envied higher education "system" in the world.

And yet, the reason it is so valuable and valued is because, in fact, it is not a system; it's an ecosystem, drawing its strength at least in part from its institutional diversity.

Meanwhile, today's national conversation about educa-

“Our obligation is about generating new ways to conceptualize the world and new ways to participate in it, new ways to imagine, to shape, and to make it.”

have not brought our global community to our best selves.

A mentor of mine has often said that if we think the world today is perfect—just as we want it to be—then we should absolutely continue to replicate the dominant institutions and ways of the past.

But if we want change, if we want progress, if we want fundamental shifts and improvements in the human experience—and the state of the planet as well—then we need to require our institutions to advance and even to break course and take on new, as yet never realized or even yet unimagined, directions—new boxes, or maybe no boxes.

We face this challenge at a time when there is an unprecedented questioning in the public conversation about the value of college.

But, the evidence is clear. We know that on virtually every measure of economic well-being and career attainment—from personal earnings, to job satisfaction,

tion flattens that notion, and we run the great risk of driving to someone's idea of "better" and "worse" versions of a single kind of institution rather than embracing and enhancing the great landscape of possibility and human endeavor.

Whom we "let in" to these hallowed halls (libraries, classrooms, and studios) is an issue of great consequence, since these decisions—like it or not—do help determine who gets to lead, whose ideas get noticed (or funded), and who holds power. Our obligations, therefore, are immense.

But it is about even more than those who go to college and what they gain; about more than the social mobility of those with the opportunity to attend college—though that is a lot. It is more than the transmission of existing knowledge, as well.

Our obligation, at its best, is about generating, together between teacher and student, new ways of knowing, thinking, and doing—new ways of seeing, listening, and

¹The Pew Research Center, "The Rising Costs of Not Going to College." February 11, 2014

“Because today, more than ever before, the world needs institutions that match its creative restlessness.”

being. Our obligation is about new ways to conceptualize the world and new ways to participate in it, new ways to imagine, to shape, and to make it.

This is why I came to Bennington.

The ideas that constitute a college—its culture, its practices, its institutional design, its history—are even more important, therefore, than they may first seem (and they seem quite important already). We must live our values.

Now, we must ask of Bennington College what we ask of our students every day: Develop your voice—maybe even to a roar—sing out, speak up, dance, show us what you are made of, show us who you are.

And we must ask this of each other, of ourselves.

- We must become increasingly interconnected with all of our communities—from the Town of Bennington and Village of North Bennington, to New York City, Los Angeles, and everywhere in between, and abroad—for our students and faculty from Senegal to Sri Lanka, from Nigeria to Norway, from Pakistan and Paris to India, Australia, and beyond.
- We will build on the partnerships we have, and forge new ones just beyond the gates (with the wonderful museums, schools, and communities right in our neighborhood) and around the globe. Now, more than ever, we must bring Bennington to the world and the world to Bennington.
- We will nurture and connect as ever more of a community. Alumni already work together across industries and across the years, just ask **Peter Dinklage '91** (or read about it in *Esquire*). But, it is time for the College to engage alumni more broadly and directly. And, we need those who understand the power of this place to be with us in shaping its future: as collaborators, as thought partners, and as supporters.

- We will be more accessible. If we believe in this work, we must increase access to the Bennington way of problem-solving and generating new ideas. No student who is ready for Bennington, who is ripe for Bennington, who needs Bennington, should be left at the gate for lack of funds.
- We will find or create technological platforms that support the rich, individual, and ever-changing nature of our work and the work of our faculty and students. Alumnus **David Zicarelli '83** developed MAX, one of the most widely used electronic music programming languages in the world with his heart set on recapturing a single sound he heard as a student in this very room. Just last week, he returned to hear today's students create their own auditory experiences with the tools Bennington inspired.
- And, as always, let's remember that this work is hard, and we need to be kind, generous, and supportive of ourselves and our community. Progress demands patience equal to passion.

This is Bennington becoming ever more insistently and complexly who we are.

Which brings me back to my question:

Why?

Why Bennington?

Why now?

Because today, more than ever before, the world needs institutions that match its creative restlessness; that embrace the complexity and diversity of our planet; and that are focused not on the final shape of what the institution wants to be, but on the hope for the way the future can be.

And this has been true from our noble beginning—as expressed in our own traditional commencement statement:

Bennington regards education as a sensual and ethical, no less than an intellectual, process. It seeks to liberate and nurture the individuality, the creative intelligence, and the ethical and aesthetic sensibility of its students to the end that their richly varied natural endowments will be directed toward self-fulfillment and toward constructive social purposes.

Fifty-three words. 366 characters. Together they capture the ideals and expanse of what we do here.

We know who we are. We know why we are here. Now it's time to show the world anew. **B**

THE COAST-TO-COAST CONVERSATION

Leading up to inauguration weekend, President Silver traveled coast-to-coast and met more than 700 alumni, parents, and friends of the College. During her inaugural capstone conversation, she described the alumni tour as her own Field Work Term. “I was listening to alumni, having conversations. And now I'm bringing it back, because Field Work Term is not just about the experience itself, it is also about how you bring it into the experience of this community.”



President Silver with Seattle alumni, parents, and friends of the College. The event was held at the Winston Wächter Fine Art Gallery.



Speaking with parents at the art studio of Jo Ann Rothschild '71 in Boston in March.



Hosted by **Mary Early '97**, Washington, D.C. alums spoke about their hope for Bennington's future with President Silver at the Hemphill Fine Arts Gallery in February.



In conversation with San Francisco alumnae.



More than 200 alumni, parents, and friends braved deep snow to give a warm welcome to Bennington's new president at the Matthew Marks Gallery, hosted by **Matthew Marks '85** and **Jack Bankowsky '81**.



President Silver speaking with **Rachel Schatz '89**, host of the Chicago event held at the historic Standard Club in February.



Remarking on her greatest surprise coming into the Bennington community, President Silver described the community's warm embrace.



Host **Tracy Katsky Boomer '91** welcomed President Silver, alumni, and guests into her Los Angeles home in March.



In April, President Silver spent time at Lizland—the gallery of host **Liz Mamorsky's '60** San Francisco home.



At Davis Street Tavern in Portland, President Silver takes a tour of personal Bennington histories.



“The future of Bennington is not just my work,” President Silver explained to Bennington area alumni. “The success of our ideas depends on the community. The core of that is for Bennington to be ever ahead of its time.”



Bennington Modernism Gallery—featuring work by former faculty members **Pat Adams**, **Sir Anthony Caro**, **Paul Feeley**, **Jules Olitski**, and alumna **Helen Frankenthaler '49**—opened at the Bennington Museum, kicking off inauguration weekend. President Silver announced an ongoing collaboration with the College and the museum that will continue to expand the exhibited work. To see all photos, visit: tinyurl.com/benningtonmodernism



"Name another college that for its size has contributed more to the arts, the sciences, and the social sciences while at the same time never losing a single game of football—you cannot."
—Adam Falk, president of Williams College



"As a proud alumna today, I meet you in the presence of those who believe in you. For you are embarked on a great vocation, already started—not only since you arrived in our beautiful state, but before, in all the ways you have prepared yourself to be the steward, educator, leader, and chosen representative of this important institution," said **Ellen McCulloch-Lovell '69**, president of Marlboro College.



Laura Callanan and **James Houghton P'17**, founding artistic director of the Tony Award-winning Signature Theatre in New York and director of the drama division at the Juilliard School, discussed Surprise Social Entrepreneurship. Houghton: "I want the audience and performers to breathe the same air"



Dancer **Monique Jenkinson '92** spoke about making work that moves outside and between recognizable genres.



Jamie Bennett, executive director of ArtPlace America, in conversation with alumna **Judy Grunberg '55**, founder of PS21 in Chatham, New York; Matthew Perry, cofounder of Vermont Arts Exchange; and faculty member **Dina Janis**, artistic director/executive director of the Dorset Theatre Festival. **Judy Grunberg '55** summed the conversation this way: "The arts bring people back to communities."



Laurie Leshin, member of the Mars Curiosity Rover team and president-elect of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and faculty member and composer/percussionist **Susie Ibarra**, whose latest work is inspired by first explorations in space, gave a visual, musical, and scientific journey of exploration for life in the universe.



The weekend ended with a pancake breakfast fundraiser for North Bennington firefighters. Two special performances by the Bennington Children's Chorus under the direction of **Kerry Ryer-Parke '90** and production support by **Deborah Teller '76**.

SVEN BIRKERTS—director of Bennington’s Master of Fine Arts Writing program—is perhaps best known for *The Gutenberg Elegies*, a critical exam of the future of reading in the digital age. He’s made something of a name for himself as literature’s favorite analogue advocate. So it was a surprise to many to find @svenbirkerts on Twitter this year.


His following has steadily grown as users discover Birkerts’ real-time dialogue with the medium, and digital world itself. @svenbirkerts is funny, vulnerable, smart, ironically cutting, authentic—qualities that speak broadly to literary and digital types. Here’s a taste, but follow him for the full dish.



Beware the subject line that reads: **QUICK QUESTION.** ● one wants to release one’s personality into this small space—like setting a pig loose in the back of a station wagon—but decorum prevails. ● questionnaire: when someone younger draws a blank at a reference you’ve made, what do you register first—their ignorance or your age? ● The writing mind needs a Zamboni that can roll out between sessions to make smooth all that you’ve hacked up trying to get the words right. ● Digital DSM sub-category, the deja-tweet: Did I already say this? Or did somebody else? Does it matter? If it doesn’t, then what? Oh God— ● screen-reading literature is reading with a condom... ● The problem here has all to do with nomenclature: google, selfie, twitter—how not to go through life feeling about 6 years old? ●

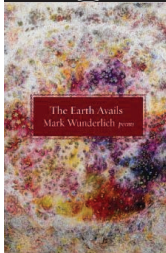
**WHEN DID WE
ACQUIRE THE
CAPACITY—OR
DESIRE—TO
“UN” THINGS?**

**BEFORE THIS.
DID WE JUST
LET THE
THOUGHT
GO BY?**

The more people you follow the more you think everyone in the world is doing something except you. ● bit of a message in a bottle aspect to all this—the desert island conveniently stocked with empty bottles, writing implements, and corks... ● Twitter just told me that they could not authenticate me—well, that’s the last straw. What do I need to do to be authentic? And do I care? ● I still haven’t figured out what a hashtag is—it sounds like a stoner party-game. ● At moment of death: your collected tweets will stream in sequence before your eyes—and then you will be favorited and, if lucky, retweeted ● 140 small characters: just enough to start a flea circus! ● Composing a tweet sometimes feels like walking past all the lockers on the way to homeroom—like ‘does this shirt look stupid?’ (yes) ● When the urge to tweet builds up like this, I start thinking I should get a social life. ● the Dalai Lama has 8.42 million followers—yes, that is an M not a K—! ● That “one new tweet” designation is like the handle on a slot-machine, how can you not pull it. Maybe THIS will be the one! ● problem with going off-line out of principle is that you have to spend so much time cravenly apologizing for your silence when you return. ● Unable to here, I realize how much I have come to depend on italics. I, who used to tell students that italics were discount language. ● I love having to beat whatever I’ve tried to say back to 140—the little pincers searching out the inevitable flab. Sport for the anal type ● until you sit alone in a room for hours with the gun of constraint pressed to temple, you’ve no idea how much you can say about the avocado ● if God had wanted us to do this he would have given us more thumbs. ● not tweeting is sometimes like suppressing a belch—hard—but one feels vaguely virtuous for having held it—though obviously not this time ● if life were like twitter, we would bow down to ‘delete’ ● Before this, did we just let the thought go by? There was passing notes in class. This misses the thrill of the teacher’s shadow on the desk ● land line rings and there’s a split second when you think ‘what’s that?’ ● afternoon tweets like those little towns you glimpse from the Interstate as you’re nudging up past 80...and you think: someone lives there ● the feeling, as tweets scroll in, that there is some great THERE that everyone’s part of, but really it’s just many other versions of ‘here’ ● retweet—the smallest measurable increment on the graph of one’s self-esteem. ● When did we acquire the capacity—or desire—to “un” things? Unfollow. Probably In Eden, now that I think of it—oh, to un-eat that apple... ● twitter: everyone’s fantasy of what publishing could be like, only without the royalties (like there were ever royalties...)... 

B (Recently published works
by Bennington alumni
and faculty)

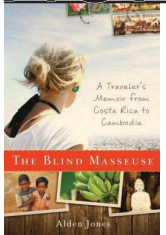
POETRY



Mark Wunderlich, faculty member
The Earth Avails
(Graywolf Press, February 2014)

“There’s a strange and...compelling mix of poise and exposure running through these lines....Wunderlich has imagined a way to make the unmistakable ambition of his writing align with his wish for a more humble image of human life.” —*Slate*

NONFICTION



Alden Jones MFA '01
The Blind Masseuse:
A Traveler's Memoir from Costa Rica to Cambodia
(University of Wisconsin, November 2013)

“...the secret foundation of the book is memoir—it’s much more about a young woman growing into herself than about the places she’s seen...”

—*Publishers Weekly*
Jones’ novel was named Top 10 Travel Book of the Season by *Publishers Weekly* and a *Huffington Post* Best Book of the Year.

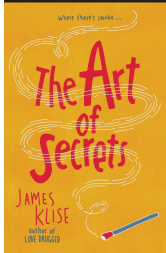


Wendy Perron '69
Through the Eyes of a Dancer: Selected Writings
(Wesleyan Press, September 2013)

“Her pieces took me on a journey...of a woman...simultaneously knowing and questioning.”

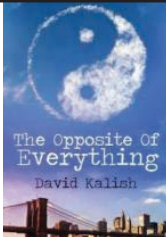
—*The Huffington Post*

FICTION



James Klise MFA '06
The Art of Secrets
(Algonquin Books, 2014)

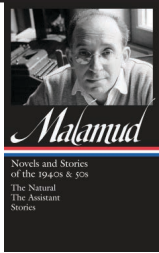
“...that rare book that will be passed around by teens as well as teachers...”
—*Booklist*, starred review



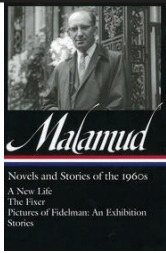
David Kalish MFA '06
The Opposite of Everything
(WiDo Publishing, March 2014)

“...oddball characters mix in a clash of cultures between native New Yorkers and the immigrants who infuse the city, and the book’s central character, with new life...”

—*The New York Times*

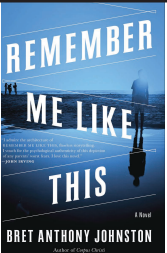


BERNARD MALAMUD:
Novels and Stories of the 1940s and 50s
Edited by Philip Davis
(The Library of America, February 2014)



BERNARD MALAMUD: *Novels and Stories of the 1960s*
Edited by Philip Davis
(The Library of America, February 2014)

“His stories know suffering, loneliness, lust, confinement, defeat; and even when they are lighter, they tremble with subterranean fragility.” —*The New York Times* review of former faculty member Bernard Malamud’s stories.



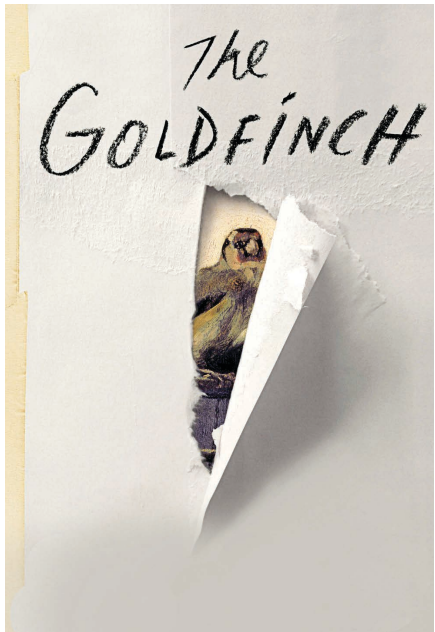
Bret Anthony Johnston, MFA(W) faculty member
Remember Me Like This
(Random House, May 2014)

“...riveting, with the elements of suspense neatly folded into an elegant series of interlocking arcs....There is nowhere you want to stop.” —*Esquire*

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, title of your book, and publisher and publishing date information. Or mail books directly to:

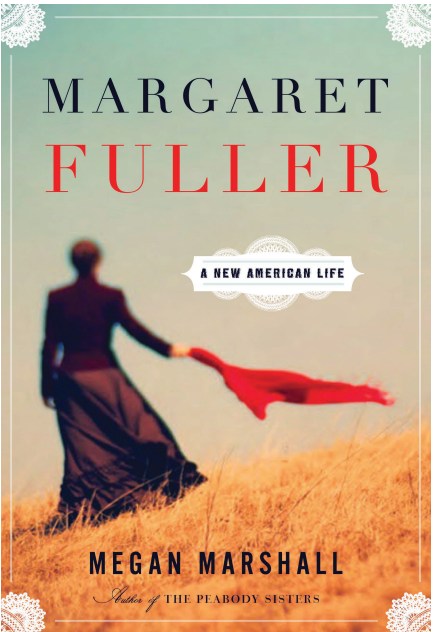
Bennington College
Office of Communications
One College Drive
Bennington, Vermont 05201 **B**

THE 2014 PULITZERS



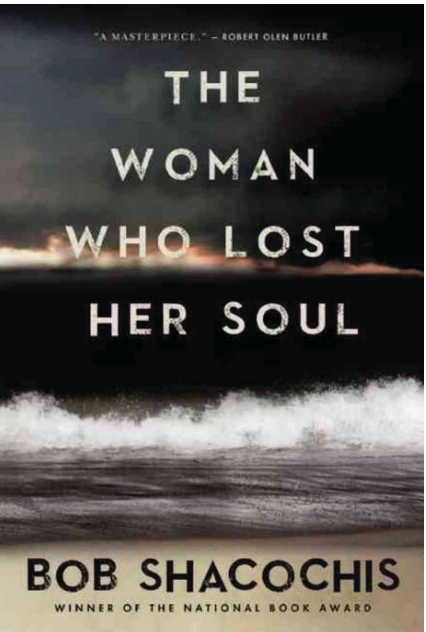
Donna Tartt '86
won the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction for
The Goldfinch (Little, Brown)

“a beautifully written coming-of-age novel with exquisitely drawn characters that follows a grieving boy’s entanglement with a small famous painting that has eluded destruction, a book that stimulates the mind and touches the heart.”



Megan Marshall '75
won the Pulitzer Prize in Biography for
Margaret Fuller: A New American Life
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

“a richly researched book that tells the remarkable story of a 19th century author, journalist, critic and pioneering advocate of women’s rights who died in a shipwreck.”



MFA(W) Writer-in-Residence **Bob Shacochis**
was one of three finalists for the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction for his acclaimed novel,
The Woman Who Lost Her Soul
(Atlantic Monthly Press)

“A novel spanning 50 years and three continents that explores the murky world of American foreign policy before 9/11, using provocative themes to raise difficult moral questions.”

—Pulitzer committee

read. write. BE READ.

Two decades of mastering the craft of reading and writing great literature at Bennington.

Like most success stories, Bennington College's Master of Fine Arts in Writing program began with a good idea, well-matched partners, minimal funding, and a lot of energy. The energy was sourced from the idea itself: to create a low-residency graduate program in writing that would respect the craft of reading as much as it would the craft of writing. This was a pedagogy that already had roots in Bennington's undergraduate writing program with its long legacy of teachers who wrote as well as taught great literature.

So it was no surprise when, some 20 years ago, **Liam Rector**—poet, arts administrator, and soon-to-be founder of the Writing Seminars—pitched his idea for a low-residency graduate writing program to then president **Elizabeth Coleman**. “At the time,” Coleman recalls, “Bennington didn't have any room to fund its own programs, never mind a new one. But it was a good idea. It would take the best of Bennington's undergraduate writing program and use the low-residency format to punctuate the year, to add rather than subtract from a writer's life. It was a risk, sure, anything at that time was a risk. But, it was worth it.” And, she says, smiling, “It was success from the moment it began.”

Success was more than meeting full enrollment, more than bringing some of the country's outstanding writers and critics to the table to teach and lecture; it was the less tangible but more infectious quality to those who experienced it: the vibe. “I taught a few summers at Bennington before the Writing Seminars got started and I caught the bug,” director of the program **Sven Birkerts** explains. “I couldn't, and still can not, un-associate the campus environment from my fantasies of the contemplative writerly life.” From the start, everything about Bennington—the place, its people, and its pedagogy—has been the perfect complement to the ambitions of the program. “The program began in a deeply arts-friendly host and location, and it has made a great historical, temperamental, cultural, natural, and environmental fit.”

Since its founding, nearly a thousand students have come to Bennington to apprentice themselves to the country's most distinguished poets, novelists, and non-fiction writers. Students range from twentysomethings to retirees, from aspirants to published authors. Alumni have published nearly six hundred books and received

literary accolades ranging from *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* notable books of the year, inclusion in national lists of promising young fiction writers and poets, residencies at prestigious artists' colonies like Yaddo and MacDowell, a recent Rona Jaffe Foundation award and an O. Henry Prize. They've written bestsellers, served as poet laureates, taught at colleges and universities, founded literary journals and even other writing programs.

But what drives everyone at Bennington, says Birkerts, is less about the milestones of success than about the commitment to the creative process. “Not in the vein of ‘come here and improve your work,’ though you will; and not in the vein, either, of ‘we can get you published,’ though of course many of our graduates have gone on to find great success in those arenas. The passion has to do more with

The passion has to do more with a drive toward expression and self-investigation, with a conviction that the meaning is as much in the process—the deep immersion in language—as in the achieved end of reaching a reader.

a drive toward expression and self-investigation, with a conviction that the meaning is as much in the process—the deep immersion in language—as in the achieved end of reaching a reader. Our faculty are, every one, passionate in just this way, and this is manifest in their teaching and evidenced in their remarkable staying power,” he says. “The collective expression of these desires and values creates a culture, a community.”

At ten-day writing seminar residencies each January and June, faculty and distinguished visiting writers are approachable—whether in the dining halls or on the paths. The daily 8:30 am to 8:30 pm run of lectures, readings,



and workshops draws students and teachers together. The typical barriers between student and teacher, says **Nicole Hardy MFA '04**, are lowered. Beginning this June, the spirit of interaction will continue with the introduction of undergraduate writing fellowships that provide Bennington's most serious undergraduate writing students the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the program and take advantage of the focused strengths the seminars provide—among the most notable, the close working relationship with faculty writers.

Suzanne Koven MFA '12—a *Boston Globe* columnist whose essays, book reviews, and interviews have appeared on the *New Yorker* website and in *The New England Journal of Medicine*—still draws on guidance from

It gave my reading purpose, improved my critical skills, and opened me to new work.

her first instructor, nonfiction writer and novelist **Susan Cheever**. Koven had been trained as a physician to avoid mistakes, but Cheever advised that literary writing required risking “as many mistakes as possible.”

“Obviously, I don’t always achieve what I want to achieve,” Koven says. “But every single sentence, every single word I write, I find myself asking myself—‘does that really mean what you’re trying to say? Is it sloppy or clichéd? Could you do better? Could you go deeper?’”

Winner of a 2015 Stegner Fellowship at Stanford University, **Brian Tierney MFA '13** says his teachers pushed him in similar ways. “It is not about being right or perfect; it is about sitting down to write, every day, despite that imperfection and with the desire to push beyond it toward something that shimmers and lasts.”

He recalls poet, novelist, and faculty member **April Bernard**’s observation “that I was writing around the real, felt thing, that I needed to ‘charge into the realm of the self’ in order to hit the nerve, and in that way, to write poetry.” In a chat on the Commons veranda, poet and faculty member **Major Jackson** advised Tierney to “challenge himself toward compression.”

Although everyone comes to write, **Ian Williams MFA '09** says “the joy of entering literature” through books and discussion was transformative. “It gave my reading purpose, improved my critical skills, and opened me to new work.”

The graduate program is naturally deeply focused on training readers and writers the craft of letters, and the approach is a reflection of Bennington’s undergraduate experience. “One of the things that I hear the most often from the graduates is how the program has not only made them better writers but changed them and the way they see the world,” Dean of the College, **Isabel Roche** says. “Just as in the Bennington undergraduate experience, this is due in no small part to close faculty mentorship. There is a deep seriousness of purpose, a shared belief in the value of both the work and the experience of making it, which creates room for the new to emerge.”

The program fosters lasting writing relationships. Hardy started a Seattle writing group with other alums, and she credits a Bennington classmate with encouraging her to write an essay for *The New York Times* that eventually morphed into her memoir, *Confessions of a Latter-Day Virgin*.

Wendy Button MFA '96 says the late novelist, short story master and MFA Associate Faculty member **Barry Hannah** called in 2009 to commiserate when her name hit national news amid a scandal involving her former boss, one-time presidential candidate and North Carolina Senator John Edwards. He said, “Start writing.... You will have material for the rest of your life,” and, she says, “He was right.”

Graduates say the mix of residencies and months of solitary writing has a profound impact, as intended. “It changed not only what I write about but the courage with which I write,” says **Jen Hinst-White '02, MFA '12**. “I entered the program as a last-ditch effort to rekindle my passion for writing.”

In her first term, guided by novelist and faculty member **Alice Mattison**, Hinst-White recalls, “I started to fall in love with writers whose fiction asked big questions about life and managed to do it honestly, skillfully, and without sentimentality. And I started to care about stories again.”

Faculty members’ work and writing lives are equally fed by the program and the residencies, the uniqueness of each new class, and the fierce commitment to supporting the writing lives of everyone in the Bennington community. Novelist and short story writer **Jill McCorkle**, a member of the core faculty since the beginning, calls Bennington her intellectual oasis. “I always leave a residency with my head crammed full of things I want to read and ideas generated during residency. Most important, I leave wanting nothing more than to retreat back into my own writing life knowing I have this strong community I will see again in six months. I think it has this effect on everyone.”

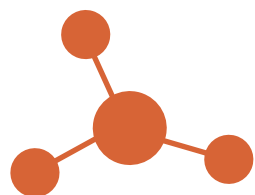
Bennington’s Master of Fine Arts in Writing program hosted a 20th anniversary celebration—reuniting all classes on campus and taking in the vast writing accomplishments during an all-class and faculty gathering that took place on June 27-29, 2014.

a proposition, a whisper of possibility—a small aperture or window opening up in the edifice of the everyday, the edifice of the status quo and of the taken-for-granted.

UTOPIA

—Excerpted from the Inaugural Challenge by **Jonathan Lethem '86**
Read the entire Challenge online at bennington.edu/inaugural-challenge

B (The two-stroke power of science and art by Alex Dery Snider and Heather Kirn Lanier)



STEAM ENGINE



The strength of the U.S. economy and the improvements in Americans' quality of life since World War II has been largely attributed to advancements in science and technology, from lasers used in surgeries, CD players, and supermarkets, to the internet. We carry in our pockets cell phones with more computing power than the machines that put men on the moon. However, the international economic landscape is shifting, and the United States must compete globally in a way it has not had to in decades past. Policymakers, business leaders, and educators alike cite the importance of maintaining our edge in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields as a key factor in our national economic competitiveness. The National Academies report, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," put it bluntly: "Without high-quality, knowledge-intensive jobs and the innovative enterprises that lead to discovery and new technology, our economy will suffer and our people will face a lower standard of living."

But, in addition to technical know-how, innovation needs creativity—a quality often associated with the arts. While the STEM fields and the arts are valued in their own rights, many people are now wondering if there is a greater advantage to be found in combining them.

Babette Allina '81 is on the forefront of this way of thinking. As executive director, government relations and external affairs for the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), she devotes the bulk of her time to an initiative called "STEAM," an acronym RISD coined to represent the integration of the arts in the STEM fields.

"The mantra here," says Allina, "is the disciplines together are stronger than apart. Particularly if you're looking for creativity in the workforce and problem solving."

"I believe art and design are poised to transform our economy in the 21st century like science and technology did in the last century," said former RISD President John Maeda at a 2013 STEM-to-STEAM congressional briefing. Maeda cited the MP3 player as a classic example of a technology that wasn't desirable until Apple humanized it. With the iPod, design made technology interesting.

Maeda has described Allina as "the architect of all of the STEAM work in the country," and says Allina is the reason that STEAM has hit lawmakers from

Congress to the State Department, and culture makers that include the National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities.

Allina's work a decade earlier helped sharpen her focus on STEAM. As director of government relations for College of the Environment and Life Sciences at the University of Rhode Island, Allina was assembling a large National Science Foundation grant for the state. "But as a Bennington alum who did politics and painting," she says, "and was responsible for how you develop research in the state that has one of the best art and design schools in the country, I included [RISD] in the science grant."

The NSF advised Allina to take RISD out. But Allina believed in the imperative of an interdisciplinary approach: art deserved a place at the table of innovation. She tried again, this time giving RISD a lead spot on the grant along with the University of Rhode Island and Brown University. The grant was accepted, garnering the state twenty million dollars over five years. "So we went from the NSF balking at including an art school," Allina says, "to [RISD] being the only art and design school" to lead this type of grant.

RISD took note and recruited Allina shortly thereafter.

Allina and her team emphasize that STEAM is not a departure from STEM—it is a partnership. The two fields must work together to better prepare the nation's workforce for a future in which creativity is one of the only known necessities.

Recent data corroborates the value of creativity in the workforce. In a 2010 IBM survey of over 1,500 CEOs, the single most crucial factor selected for a company's future success was creativity. And a 2012 Adobe study

"The mantra here is the disciplines together are stronger than apart. Particularly if you're looking for creativity in the workforce and problem solving."

found that 78 percent of recent college graduates see creativity as important to their current field.

Jay Schunter '11 is one of those graduates. He studied music at Bennington and believes that experience gives him an advantage in his current work: a graduate mechanical engineering program at Boston University. "I think studying music [and] the arts taught me to see an idea or a solution to a problem as a whole, rather than just these isolated parts," he said. "You need to get from point A to point B and realistically, there could be many ways to do that. Making that decision is where you get to exercise your creativity and that is when the thing becomes your own."

Fulbright award winner **Ben Underwood '13** sees a parallel in his experience studying music and his role as CEO of Fuel City, which is cultivating the emerging industry of anaerobic digesters. These convert organic waste into renewable energy and fertilizer. Ben finds that the primary barrier for the adoption of the technology is a lack of connections between the right people. He sees his path, "not only in the sense of a business—but as an artistic pursuit. It's fundamentally about finding ways for diverse voices to add to a common expression. My senior concert used sound waves. The media I'm interested in now are metal and concrete."

While there is likely to be an increase in the number of STEM jobs in the U.S. in the coming years, a major barrier is that U.S. students are not performing up to their potential, especially compared with their international counterparts. The STEM Education Coalition projects that while STEM jobs in the U.S. will grow significantly over the next six years, the majority of high school seniors are not ready for college-level science and math.

"I think studying music [and] the arts taught me to see an idea or a solution to a problem as a whole, rather than in isolated parts."

Bringing arts into education may help. “Strong exposure to the arts has been able to provide a level of engagement beyond what you get in the absence of it,” Allina says. “So in schools where kids aren’t reading, they’re cutting art. And what we’re saying is, ‘No-no-no, put in *more* art. Bring them in *that* way.’”

A 2012 National Endowment for the Arts report, “The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Four Longitudinal Studies,” found a powerful correlation between students’ arts exposure and their academic success. Students who had arts-rich experiences in school not only had higher GPAs—they were more likely to complete a calculus course, graduate, and aspire to college.

As STEAM has gathered momentum, it is getting a closer, more critical look, as policymakers and others seek to find out exactly how and when integration of the arts enhances STEM learning and innovation outcomes. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, in a 2013 review of recent empirical research, found some evidence for the impact of arts education on skills outside of the arts—such as that students who study the visual arts are stronger in geometrical reasoning, and that dance instruction improves visual-spatial skills.

But pursuing art for pleasure may be promising enough. In 2008, researchers found that the more successful a scientist was, the more likely he or she was to engage in the arts. Nobel laureates were the most likely to engage in arts and crafts avocations, followed by Royal Society and National Academy of Sciences members,




Babette Allina '81.
Change happens incrementally.

ADAM MASTON

both of which serve as scientific advisors to their governments. Royal Society and National Academy members were more likely to participate in the arts than Sigma Xi members, which represented scientists in general, and the U.S. public.

Allina sees the throughline of creativity in being successful in art, science, policy work, and nearly everything else. “Having a personal experience as a policy person and as an artist is a gift to be able to tie the parts of life together. And I really like the idea of encouraging Bennington grads particularly... that creatives have all opportunities open to them, and that they shouldn’t limit their thinking to known or expected career paths.”

Follow STEAM initiatives by visiting this link at RISD. <http://map.stemtosteam.org/> 

Maeda has described Allina as “the architect of all of the STEAM work in the country.”

JUST 3 WORDS

or less
on Bennington

USE YOUR MIND. –Louise Strouse Friedberg '36

ASKS THE QUESTIONS. –John Wilcox P'08, P'14

A BRAIN INCUBATOR. –Carolyn Heimbürger Gannon '67

IN THE WOODS. –Scott Neagle '05

A SERIOUS PLACE. –Nick Stevens '77

AMORPHOUS EXPERIENCE. –Sherri Rosenberg '82

ANNABEL DAVIS GOFF. –David Archer '08

LIVING LIFE FULLY. –Amanda Spooner Frank '92

THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES. –Margot Hoerrner '91

THE GREAT FACULTY. –Susan Chase '80

FREEDOM TO EXCEL. –Judith Wilson-Pates '74

FREEDOM TO FAIL. –Gregory Noveck '91

OUTSIDE THE LINES. –Abby DuBow-Casden '59

DO IT YOURSELF. –Penn Genthner '05

ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL. –Sharon Parnes '70

HARD TO LEAVE. –Mike Goldin '14

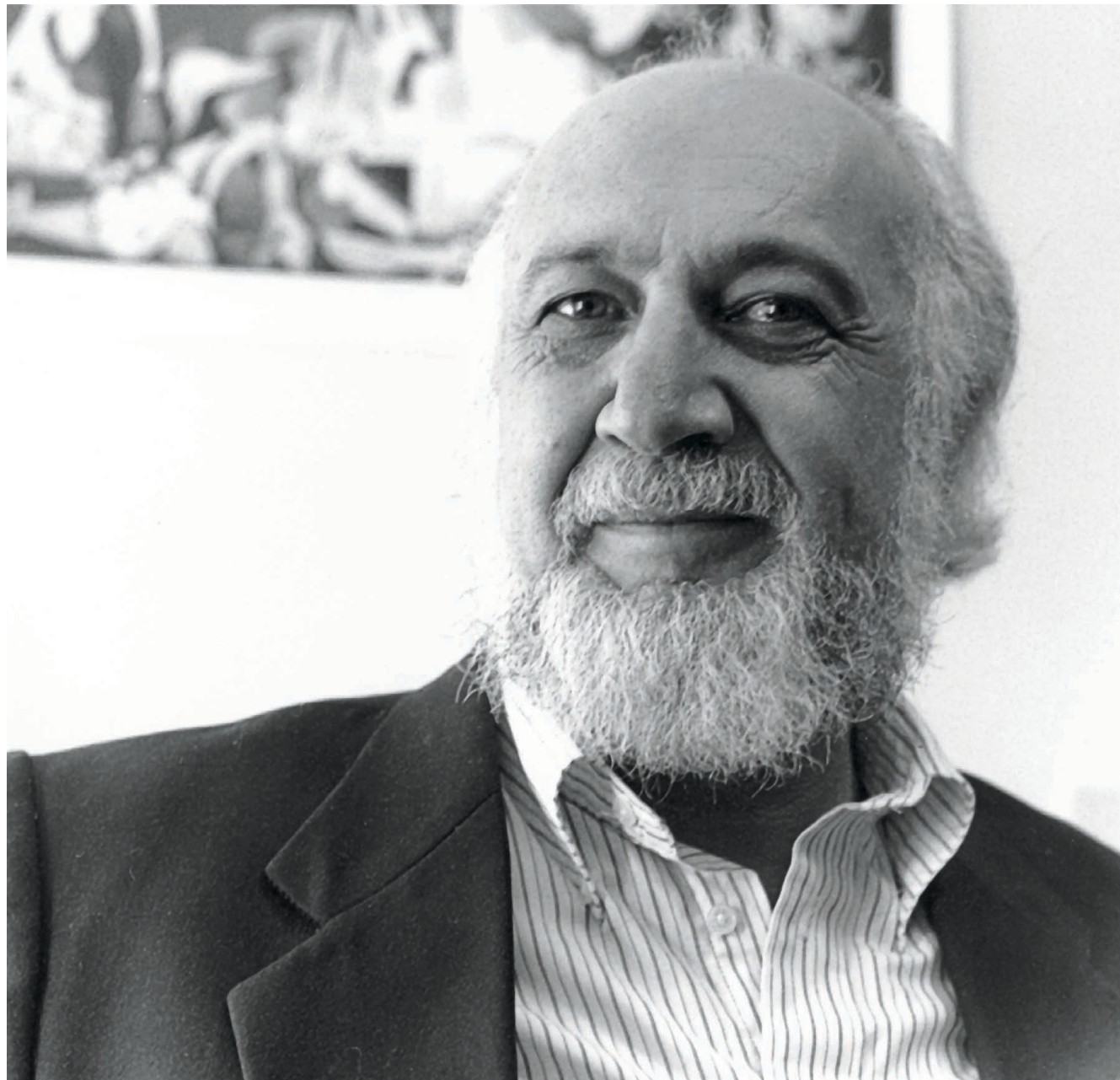
CONSTANTLY IN MOTION. –Suzanne Brundage '08

PLAYGROUND FOR CREATIVITY. –Aaron Sylvan '93

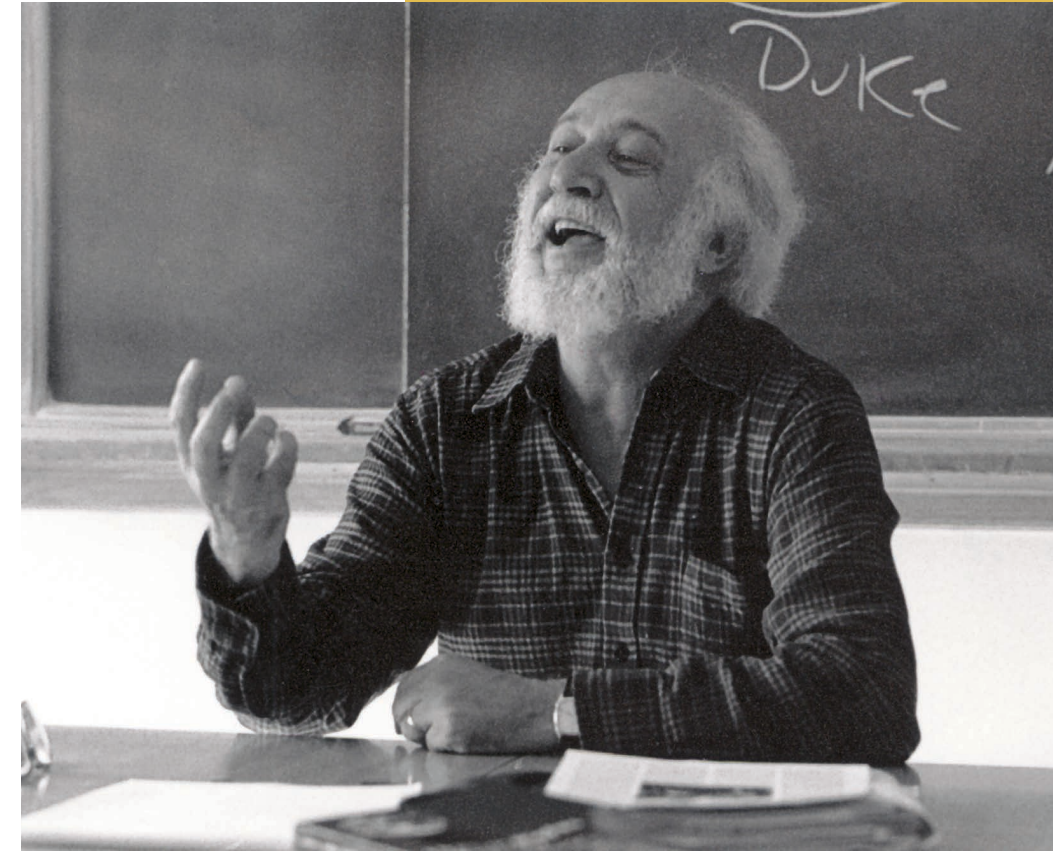
MAKES YOU THINK. –Ellen Count '59

NEED MORE WORDS. –James Bolenbaugh '05

MAJORING IN MANSOUR



BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES



JONATHAN BARBER

Retiring faculty member Mansour Farhang teaching international relations at Bennington.

Kevin Green '13 keeps notes from Mansour Farhang's classes on Iranian politics and rattles off favorite lessons from the former Iranian diplomat. **Peter J. Hoffman '91** aspires to emulate his Bennington mentor's curiosity and rigor as he teaches international affairs. Even before his first class at the College, **Jonah Lipsky '06** says he decided to take an alum's advice to "major in Mansour." And Farhang's admonitions still echo daily for **Catherine McGath '10** as she pursues a master's degree in public policy analysis and management.

"I hear Mansour pushing me to think critically about how to get the things done that I want to see happen," says McGath. "He encouraged me to deeply understand the context of every issue in order to take a rigorous, holistic approach to problem solving. Mansour has undoubtedly played a significant role in making me the kind of thinker and actor I am today."

The senior faculty member retired this spring after thirty years at Bennington. Since 2006, he has held the Catherine Osgood Foster Chair for Distinguished Teaching.

Yet it takes a fair amount of negotiation to get Farhang to talk about himself. He is uncomfortable when a conversation turns to former students' descriptions of his influence in their pursuit of passions from academia

to art, from politics to public policy. When convinced to recount his journey to Bennington, he declares his happiness that younger relatives are within earshot and thus can hear details of his story for the first time.

He describes himself as an eternal student, his life's work as a constant process of rethinking, his sacred text the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. "When you teach a subject that involves modern history, the policy in the middle east region, and the whole human rights discourse, one has to learn continuously," he says in a phone conversation. "Oftentimes I ended up sharing my confusion and uncertainty."

"I could not relate to the designation of a 'political scientist' because intricacies of political life do not lend themselves to the application of scientific methods," he later adds in an email. "Yet, I never stopped trying to make the case in class or in lecture halls that there is sense to be made in human affairs. That is to say, perceptions and actions in matters political are not always random, unique, or idiosyncratic. They can also reveal patterns, regularities, correlations, causalities and re-occurrences. And I routinely claimed that such findings can contribute to rational and realistic thinking in apprehending challenges facing the society."

He describes himself as an eternal student, his life's work as a constant process of rethinking, his sacred text the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Farhang traces his lifelong devotion to human rights, fascination with politics and foreign policy and love of teaching to his activism as a high school student in Tehran. After the 1953 overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh by pro-royalist forces backed by U.S. and British spy agencies, Farhang joined a group of students in distributing documents detailing Mosaddegh's defense in his secret prison trial. Caught with fifty copies, Farhang refused to reveal where he got them. He ended up being held in juvenile detention for nearly three months.

Farhang was soon conscripted into the Iranian army. He jumped at an offer to teach and was assigned a class of twenty-four soldiers. It was a daunting assignment for a 19 year old to teach Persian to a group of conscripts that included nine illiterate people and five Kurdish or Turkish speakers. Farhang says he drew inspiration from his mother, who had taught herself to read and write after marrying his businessman father. By the end of his Army class, every one of his soldier-students could read and write in Persian, and several went on to university. "That's how I came to love this job," Farhang says.

Though he won a military prize for teaching and was eager to study abroad, it took several years to convince authorities to give him an exit visa. He finally made it to California in 1959, and from his first comparative government class, became fascinated with the Declaration of Human Rights. He earned a PhD in political science at Claremont Graduate School and was drawn once more into activism. He joined Amnesty International and the American anti-war movement. By the end of the 60s, he also had married, divorced, and become a single parent. He speaks with pride about one son becoming a banker and the other a public policy professor at the University of California at Berkeley.

In 1979, Farhang took a sabbatical and returned to Iran to witness the revolution that followed the fall of the Shah. After the takeover of the American Embassy

and detention of embassy staff, Farhang began working with associates on a negotiation plan. He met with the Ayatollah Khomeini and received his promise to support mediation for the hostages' release. Farhang then agreed to serve as Iranian Ambassador to the UN to guide diplomatic efforts. He left his tenured university post in California, relinquished U.S. citizenship and spent four months in New York as Iranian envoy before realizing that Khomeini had reneged. Farhang resigned his ambassadorship in protest, returned to Iran, and was forced underground. He eventually escaped across the Turkish border on foot, and he was invited in 1981 to a temporary teaching post at Princeton University.

In 1983, Bennington invited Farhang to be a visiting instructor. Within a month of arriving in Vermont, he recalls, he hoped to be asked to stay. He says Bennington is the only academic institution where he felt completely at home.

"I loved the idea that we could teach whatever we wanted within our field, and students were not required to take a course—people were completely free to choose," he says. "It was so different from places where you have to play a game within certain constructs, to please other people."

During his time at the college, Farhang served on the advisory board of Human Rights Watch and served as a Middle East commentator for the BBC and Radio France International. He also made frequent appearances on national media ranging from CBS' *60 Minutes* to the *PBS NewsHour*, ABC's *Nightline*, and *Democracy Now!* He wrote dozens of academic journal articles and regularly contributed opinion pieces to *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

In the process, students and faculty alike have come to admire his contributions to the intellectual life of the College. **Isabel Roche**, dean of the College, says his deep engagement, inside and outside classrooms, is an embodiment of Bennington's educational model. "And even more directly the importance of knowing who you are and what you believe in," she adds. "He has shown us all what it means to make a life as a teacher and a scholar, and has done it with great generosity and humility."

Elizabeth Coleman, former president of the College and director of the Center for the Advancement of Public Action, cites Mansour's gift for opening up complex subjects and his insistence to any suggestion that special knowledge was required to join in serious discussion.

"You might have people say you can't possibly talk about what's going on in Iran, if you don't immerse yourself in the culture of Iran and Islam. And these are ways of shutting people down as well as ensuring you are responsible to the subject," she says. "But Mansour would always

say, 'If you want to understand what's going on in Iran, you have to understand power. And one of the ways that power is used is religion. And we all understand that. So what he would do at that moment is invite you into the conversation, to use what you had.'"

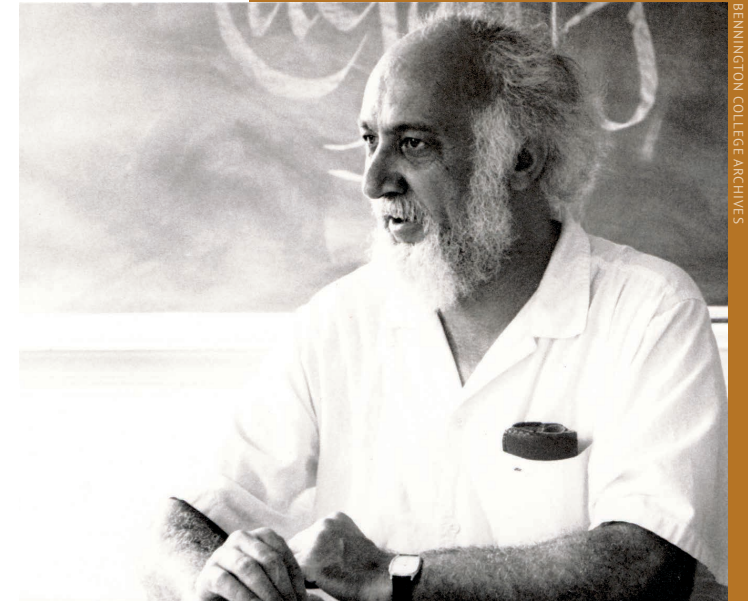
She recalls watching him captivate parents at an alumni weekend gathering by telling how his dream of becoming a teacher sustained him through dangerous days as a teenager in the Iranian military. In the midst of running and fighting and trying to stay alive, he told the parents, he kept himself going by thinking about how he might one day use such experiences in a classroom. Coleman says it was classic Mansour, transmuting something terrifying into a teaching moment. His commitment reached "an order of thinking and magnitude that is unimaginable," she adds. "I think of myself as a teacher, in so much that it is my craft, but he was the master."

Farhang's students say he inspired them not only to think deeply about global events but also to develop personal visions for engaging with the world beyond Bennington. **Jeff Peer '06** said that led to his work in a 2006 congressional race in Illinois and in Iowa for the 2008 Obama campaign before he entered a PhD program in comparative literature. **Lila Cutter '15** credits Farhang for her continuing inquiry into how literature can affect social change.

"It takes a pretty unique professor to allow a student to do their final political science course thesis on Alan Ginsberg's 'Howl,'" she says. "Mansour was trusting enough to let me explore what excited me, offering resources, counter-views, discussion, and support, every step of the way."

Hoffman recalls Farhang helping him convince his parents to let him travel to Nicaragua to pursue an interest in the Sandinista revolution for his undergraduate thesis. Hoffman adds that his appreciation of Farhang has grown since he began teaching, first at Bryn Mawr and now at The New School. "To have someone of his stature is quite rare, someone who has had a scholarly as well as a diplomatic career all rolled into one, teaching introductory classes, teaching advanced classes, and mentoring students."

Lipsky says Farhang was one of the most generous and open minds he encountered at Bennington. "The brilliance of Mansour is that he balanced the messy, confusing, and often horrible world of political phenomena with a deeply spiritual, creative, intellectually excited, and compassionate mindset," Lipsky says. "This insight



BENNINGTON COLLEGE ARCHIVES

In the midst of running and fighting and trying to stay alive, he kept himself going by thinking about how he might one day use the experience in a classroom.

remains essential to me because it unifies two deep currents that run in my life—the interest in deep intellectual experiences and the interest in enthusiastic, emotional and creative experiences." **B**

The College will honor Mansour Farhang's rich and lasting contributions to the field of international relations on Saturday, October 4, 2014, when alumni and invited guests will come together, with Mansour, to talk about the intellectual imprint and importance of Mansour's work on their own.

B (Discussions with Malamud
by Jonathan Lethem '86)

NANCY RICA SCHIFF



WALKING WITH MALAMUD

Marking the occasion of former faculty member Bernard Malamud's inclusion in The Library of America, Jonathan Lethem '86 reflects on his encounters with Malamud at Bennington.

“**H**e takes a walk across the Commons lawn once a semester, and if you happen to be there when it occurs, you can talk to him for the duration of the walk.” So went the joke that was floated on the subject of **Bernard Malamud**’s official presence at Bennington, by the time I arrived there, in 1982. The idea being that Malamud clung to some emeritus position at the school, by a thread, but you shouldn’t expect much of him, maybe not even a glimpse. The joke encoded a sophomoric cynicism about the institution’s, and Malamud’s, past greatness. In fact, despite two relatively fresh National Book Awards and a Pulitzer, and his maybe-presence in the vicinity, I didn’t know any of us, among the aspiring writers at Bennington then (some you’ve heard of since), who were reading Malamud. I wasn’t. He was out of fashion just then. So the implications of his fame were a puzzle I wasn’t equipped to solve. Yet I knew enough to be interested—to desire that walk across the lawn, if the chance came.

It did. An announcement, in the casual Bennington manner—perhaps a last-minute notice pinned to the mailroom bulletin board?—that Malamud would be talking informally after dinner in the living room of one of the old dorms. I think it was McCullough. I attended, with fifteen or twenty others, and ended up sitting more or less at his feet. I asked no questions, and I don’t recall exactly what he said. Not because it was unmemorable, but because for me, by now, the wisdom he dispensed in his ruminative, painstaking remarks has become confused with that from the many interviews with him that I’ve subsequently read. Malamud had a number of essential precepts, and had worked his thinking about writing, and thinking about his life, into aphoristic form.

My second encounter was a bit more personal. It was during the Summer Writing Seminars. I wasn’t

enrolled, but since I lived in North Bennington that summer, I “audited” all the readings—George Garrett, John Ashbery, Mary Robison, and others. I was living in Welling Town House then, trying to write my first novel, and all the readings and talks held a mysterious power over me. Malamud read several short pieces—brief biographical sketches of historical figures in the arts that were crucial to him. If I recall correctly, one of these was Mahler. He spoke humbly of the difficulties he’d had with these pieces, and with his writing generally as his age advanced. It was a dignified, wintry, and somewhat sad performance.

At the party afterwards, at **Stephen Sandy**’s home in the Orchard, I got Malamud to myself, briefly. I regret to say I asked about the then-recent Robert Redford film of *The Natural*, and he spoke in a tolerant way of the differences between the two mediums, but also of his dislike of the film’s happy ending. I simply hadn’t read enough of his work at that point—I may, in fact, have only read the story “The Jewbird” in an anthology—to ask any of the dozen questions I’d now wish to engage him with. Despite my callowness, he was patient with me.

It was only later, years after his person imprinted itself on me, that Malamud became one of my favorite writers. As it happens it was his “campus novel,” *A New Life*, that was my entrée into his essential genius. That book doesn’t portray Bennington, but instead his life preceding Bennington, in the mountain west. You can glimpse Malamud’s New England life, however, in a later novel, *Dubin’s Lives*. For *The Salon Guide To Contem-*

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porary Fiction, in 1998, I wrote entries on three writers: Philip K. Dick, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Malamud. The first two were in print and fashionable at the time, while Malamud was still in decline; I had to make the case for his inclusion in the book. Reading his entire shelf, end to end, was persuasive. I’d love to believe I had some tiny contribution to make to the long-term prospect for his present revival, and inclusion in The Library of America—where he belongs. In any event, lucky me Malamud was still taking his walk across Commons lawn in 1982. **B**

Jonathan Lethem '86 is a writer whose work has won the National Book Critics Circle Award and earned him a MacArthur “Genius” Award. His first book was *Gun, With Occasional Music*, and was published in 1994, combining elements of detective fiction and science fiction. Since then Lethem has published eight other novels—including the highly acclaimed *Motherless Brooklyn*—and a variety of other work including non-fiction, essays, and short stories. He was named Disney Professor of Writing at Pomona College in 2010.

Bernard Malamud became a part of Bennington in 1961, when he joined the faculty as a teacher of creative writing. The author of eight novels and sixty-five short stories, Malamud is often recognized with Saul Bellow and Philip Roth as a prominent Jewish author of the twentieth century. His novel *The Natural* (1952) was adapted into a 1984 film starring Robert Redford, and 1966’s *The Fixer* won both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Malamud, a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, died in Manhattan in 1986.



BRIEF DELLA ROCCA

REWRITING THE SATs

“In fact, researchers have settled on what they believe is the magic number for true expertise: ten thousand hours.”
—Malcolm Gladwell

I have my ten thousand hours in taking tests.

It’s not that at some point I counted all the tests I’ve taken, summed up every minute I ever spent bubbling answers on scantrons, and finally reached a quota. No, the principle described by the above quote, from Malcolm Gladwell’s book *Outliers*, is simple: it is only by investing the time and energy to practice something thoroughly and repeatedly that a person can get really good at it. This is applicable to learning any skill, manual or mental.

Over the course of thirteen years in Texas (public) schools, I have answered more multiple-choice questions than I have had schoolmates. One of my few concrete memories from the year I spent in kindergarten—along with making a “learning poster” about the plesiosaurus and watching as each of the Painted Lady caterpillars we had been taking care of spun a dusty chrysalis around itself—is taking my first standardized test. (It was the Stanford.) We had quizzes at the end of the week, tests at the end of the unit, big tests at the middle of the term, really big standardized tests at the end of the year. By the time I took the practice PSAT for the first time in my freshman year of high school, I was an old hand at taking tests. I knew how to identify problems that looked tricky, and come back to them once I’d earned the bulk of the points from questions that could be answered more quickly; I knew how to nap, leaning forward on my desk, when I was done early and didn’t have a book with me; I knew how to keep scores concealed from classmates, how to grimace a little when asked about a test without actually saying anything.

The PSAT, however, began to hint that tests could have an even greater significance than I was used to giving them. Geometry tests determined whether or not I passed the class. TAKS tests determined whether or not I passed the ninth grade. The PSAT’s big brother, the SAT, lurking not too far around the corner, determined whether or not I went to college. This was a genuinely scary idea for me and my ilk—all tests had teeth, but this one had wings and talons, too. It would be wrong to say that I avidly tore through test-prep material, studying diligently with the sole goal of bringing my score as close to 2400 as I possibly could, but it would be further from the truth to say my attitude toward the SAT was ever nonchalant. My scores on practice PSATs were almost—but not quite—promising, so before I took the PSAT in my junior year to try and qualify for a National Merit Scholarship, I enrolled in a Princeton Review prep

...all tests had teeth, but this one had wings and talons, too.

course. For four days, over two consecutive weekends, I went and sat with other uncertain students, answering multiple-choice questions and then analyzing the correct way to have done so. Nothing of what we learned was content. No revolutionary new concepts were introduced, no vocabulary words or mathematical theorems were reevaluated; rather, we reviewed the test’s structure, the ways in which questions were worded, the most efficient order

in which to answer all of the questions about each prose passage. In keeping with the idea of earning expertise through hours, we took two practice SATs for the course, one on our own time and the other in class.

Just after I took the PSAT for real, in October of my junior year, I went to my first College Board conference. I was part of the Advisory Panel on Student Concerns, now the Advisory Panel on Student Opportunities (APSO). APSO comprises sixteen students, from the junior year of high school to the second year out of high school, who hail from all six of the College Board's membership regions and have education experiences that are particularly interesting and relevant to the Board; we serve as a focus group to provide real students' feedback in response to any of various projects within the College Board. I was from the Southwestern region, and attended a public high school where nearly all of the classes were pre-AP and AP—the exams for which were funded by our district. I had a unique perspective to offer and, indeed, I was surprised to find that both the teachers attending the conference and the College Board professionals who had small-group sessions with APSO seemed to value our experiences and opinions; oftentimes they even took detailed notes.

I was being initiated into some of the College Board's inner workings, and the view was fascinating. I began to

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see the fallacy in the conception expressed (only somewhat jokingly) by some of my classmates that the College Board was a monster which fed on their money and conspired as best it could to destroy their dreams. In one conference I'd learned that APSO's structure actually mimics the College Board's in many ways: the Board is a non-profit made up of unpaid delegates—educators, primarily high school counselors and college admissions reps—from its member institutions who are elected by region into any of a number of committees. They volunteer their time and experiences trying to improve College Board products and services with the goal, in effect, of making their own jobs easier and more effective. Their goals, I realized, were more or less aligned with my own.

This epiphany did not in itself prepare me for the test, but it did begin to palliate my fears that the SAT, perhaps the most important test of my life, was also “out to get me”—an impressive feat given the fact that my high school was preparing to administer the test to my class the coming January.

When that January day came at last for me to take the SAT, the stars aligned. It was dusky-dark and rainy all day long, but by early afternoon the test was over, and I felt inexplicably *good* about it. I'd been expecting for months that I would get a sufficiently high-ish score—I had, after all, been trained since childhood for this ordeal—but somehow in my gut I sensed that I had performed exceptionally well in this one administration of this particular test. I tried to minimize my reliance on what instinct was telling me. I didn't want to build myself up just to fall that much harder when our scores were reported in March.

I was right, though. Elephants could sense when a tsunami was approaching and move into the mountains, monarch butterflies could navigate a journey over thousands of miles that had not been traveled by any insects since their great-great-grandparents, and I could smell the three-day-old tracks of test results through gusting wind and driving snow. I had, indeed, performed marvelously, and to what end? My peers were frustrated with me and with themselves; I was caught on a tightrope tied between the pillars of pride and mortification. I was not going to be taking the test again, while some of them were going to have to retake it in order to, hopefully, bring their scores up, fearing that otherwise their colleges of choice would reject their applications after nothing more than a cursory glance at their test results. I was taken aback. I had scored higher than several of the students who regularly helped me stay caught up in our pre-calculus and computer science courses, higher than had many of my senior role

models who were just then starting to receive admissions decisions. I had to process a lot of conflicting information, and suddenly my value as measured by the test was no longer my most pressing question—the test's value as a means of measurement was.

I was grateful, certainly, to have a solid score on a test that seemed to matter so much, but by the beginning of my senior year I started to realize, with alarm, that testing was probably my single best-developed skill. I had begun applying to colleges with a remarkably unclear idea of what I wanted from any of them; there were no careers or majors in taking tests, and I was less and less certain that I'd have been interested if there were. It was in October 2012, during this mid-adolescence crisis, that

I attended my third APSO meeting and met David Coleman, the new, incoming president of the College Board. Coleman, who had studied at Yale, Oxford, and Cambridge, and who had already spent a good deal of his life working to improve education in the U.S., including work on the Common Core, stated bluntly that his biggest goals included making the SAT less “tricky” in its format—more relevant to core skills already being taught in schools nationwide rather than expensive prep courses—as well as making SAT and AP tests and score reports more widely available to all students with fee waivers wherever possible, restructuring the College Board itself, and finding ways to make it clear that the test-maker was not the villainous entity that some of my classmates envisioned. The year after I first met him (and saw his brightly patterned socks), he was listed by *Time* as one of the 100 most influential people in the world for 2013.

Coleman soon made good on his promise to reorganize the Board, something which APSO's constituents noticed even in our infrequent conference visits, and not long after he announced the re-working of the SAT. The changes mentioned seemed congruent with the vision he had already shared; they included cutting out sections in which students must choose the best of a list of arcane, florid vocabulary words (knowledge of which is neither deemed exigent in high school nor saliently sought-after by colleges) and wording questions in ways that would not require decipherment in addition to content knowledge. This latter complaint is especially relevant to math questions: instead of “It takes twelve minutes to cut a log into four pieces; how long would it take to cut an identical log into six pieces instead?” one could simply give an equation to be solved—if, that is, that algebra is what's being tested, and not the ability to pull numbers from a word problem. And just this year, Coleman announced that the College Board and Khan Academy will join forces to provide online prep courses for the revised SAT—free of charge—and that fee waivers will be available to more student than ever before.

It is clear that Coleman understands students, colleges, and the College Board are all butting their respective heads against different facets of the same problem. It's extremely tough to reconcile the sheer volume of students applying to institutions of higher learning with the necessity of seeing each person in that multitude as



Will Larsen '17 with board chairman Alan Kornberg '74, Bahar Baharloo '14, and former faculty member Danny Michaelson.

an individual, with a complex collection of assets. There is no single, simple way of representing a student's level of qualification that can be applied uniformly and fairly to many millions of people each year—that's why (most) colleges ask applicants to submit resumés, supplemental essays, and interviews instead of just numbered grades and test scores. My experiences during the college application process itself are, I think, a large part of what led me to Bennington: I realized while answering question after question about myself and my hopes for the future that I'd like to try to rack up ten thousand hours in areas other than taking tests, to become an expert at creating my own works.

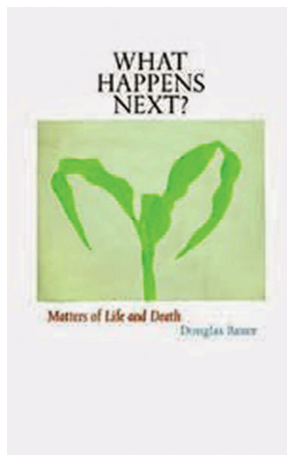
Even if we acknowledge that the SAT and other comparable assessments should not be (and hopefully are not) admissions trump cards, but should instead be restricted to measuring candidates' proficiency in certain fairly standard academic areas, these tests are bound by matters of efficiency and scale to an inevitable degree of simplicity. Nonetheless, students—all students, regardless of what neighborhood they come from or what their parents do for a living—should be able to use the SAT to prove competency in one area without having to demonstrate expertise in the entirely separate specialization of test-taking, and with stakes as high as college entrance, the test should measure the knowledge that colleges truly need to know about, knowledge that truly prepared students will have gained already. 🍋

Will Larsen is about to enter his second year at Bennington. Born and raised in Houston, Texas, Will is studying everything he can get his hands on, though he's focusing primarily on writing, drama, and music, in that order. He hopes to produce a finished work of some sort over the summer.

B (News and work of faculty members)

On April 27, **David Anderegg** presented a paper, “Psychoanalysis and Culture Wars: Is it Wise to Pathologize Conservatives?” at the spring meeting of Division 39 (the Division of Psychoanalysis) of the American Psychological Association in New York City. He also continues his work on the Editorial Board of *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, the journal of Division 39.

Barry Bartlett’s new sculpture work will be exhibited as a solo show at the John Davis Gallery (Hudson, NY) for a month-long show in August. Bartlett’s work uses ceramic tokens to reframe the hobby industry’s depictions of our shared experience. In March, Bartlett participated in a group show, “Off Center: Mavericks, Misfits & Heretics” (Milwaukee, WI) as part of a DeLind Gallery of Fine Art show of “six highly important ceramic artists” at the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts 48th Annual Conference. This winter, Bartlett’s work was also included in a group show “Narrative of Fire” at ArtWorks! (New Bedford, MA). Curated by Seth Rainville and Chris Gustin, the show exhibited works of contemporary wood fired ceramics.



Doug Bauer won the 2014 PEN New England Award for nonfiction for his latest book, *What Happens Next? Matters of Life and Death*. Bauer’s poignant collection of essays weaves the stories of his own and his parents’ lives, the meals they ate, the work and rewards and regrets that defined them, and the inevitable betrayal by their bodies as they aged.

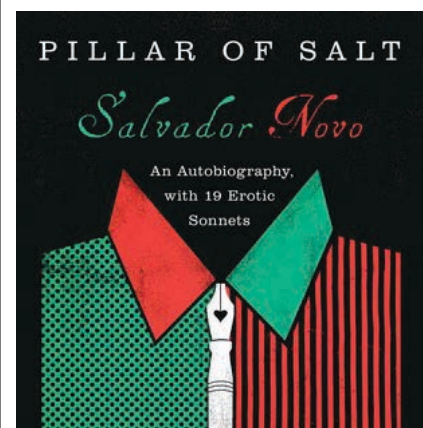


Noah Coburn co-authored an op-ed with Ronald Neumann published in *The Washington Post* in March. Coburn traveled to Afghanistan as a member of a team of Afghan researchers monitoring Afghanistan’s presidential elections this April. Conducting research for the British think tank Chatham House, Coburn, a political anthropologist and author of *Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan*, tracked voters and candidates in the weeks leading up to the April 5 elections, monitored voting stations on election day, and interviewed voters about their experience at the polls. He recorded his observations on his Afghan Elections blog. Coburn spoke on “The Legacy of U.S. Intervention” at Skidmore College and as part of Inauguration Weekend in April. He also spoke at Chatham House in London, USIP in Washington, DC, and at the University of Indiana.

Following a spring 2014 course, **Annabel Davis-Goff** has organized a conference to take place this fall at CAPA, “Incarceration in America.” Davis-Goff has selected a range of participants from across the political spectrum, academics, foundations, former and current public servants, providers, journalists, and advocates will present on subjects including: Race and Incarceration, Incarceration and Public Health, Community (juvenile detention, children of incarcerated parents, etc.), Collateral Consequences, Alternatives to Incarceration and Re-entry, and A Vision of the Future. Bill Keller, former executive editor of

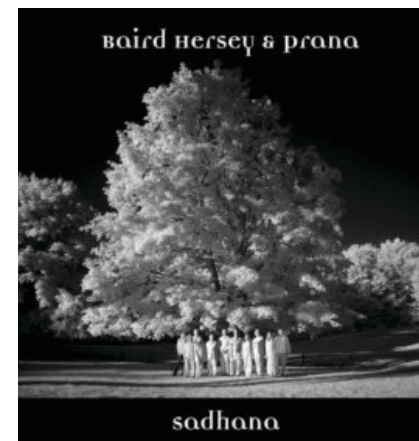
The New York Times and founder of The Marshall Project, will deliver the keynote address for this conference.

Sara Harris has two upcoming publications. “The Monster Within and Without: Spanish Comics, Monstrosity, Religion, and Alterity,” will appear as a book chapter in *Representing Multiculturalism in Comics and Graphic Novels*, forthcoming from Routledge / Taylor and Francis. “Trauma and *Tebeos*: Representation of Memory in Recent Spanish Comics” will appear in *European Culture* (Eds. Enrique Banús, Maró Kazamiaki, and Martí Bofill Sala. Published by the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya.). Harris is also serving on the jury for the Butze-Vargas Prizes for Mexican Comics. These prizes are through the Academia de Animación y Arte Secuencial.



Marguerite Feitlowitz’s translation of Salvador Novo’s *Pillar of Salt: An Autobiography with 19 Erotic Sonnets* was published in April (University of Texas Press). Feitlowitz guest co-edited the spring 2014 issue of *REVIEW: Latin American Literature & Arts*. In May she moderated a Presidential Panel at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Conference, “Democracia y Memoria: Enlaces en la literatura.” Feitlowitz spoke at Boston University in April in honor of the Argentine poet Juan Gelman. Her recent reviews appeared in *The Los Angeles Review of Books* on *La vida doble: A Novel*, by Arturo Fontaine and on *Cruel Modernity*, by Jean Franco, in *The Americas: A Quarterly Review of Latin American History*.

In January, **Jonathan Kline** exhibited recent work in photography at the Tenri Cultural Institute (New York, NY).



Julie Last is a member of Prana, a nine-voice overtone choir, whose latest album *Sadhana* was released in January. The album includes guest appearances by world-renowned Kirtan master Krishna Das, as well as Subash Chandran on Indian percussion.

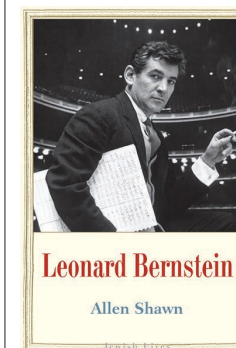
The Boston Globe’s Bibliophiles column featured an interview with **Ann Pibal** in January, where Pibal discussed her reading list and book collection.

Sue Rees designed a two channel video piece for the production of *Much Ado About Nothing* for the Hudson Valley Educational Touring Program, directed by Chris Edwards. This production tours to high schools in the greater New York area. Rees is currently working on set and props for *Othello*, also directed by Chris Edwards and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* directed by Eric Tucker for the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival in Cold Spring, NY. Working with John Kilgore, Rees is putting sound and sound effects to the animation *The Alphabetical Adventures of Zelda Zingaro*. The book *Three Plays* by Perungattur P. Rajagopal, which she designed the book cover for, was published in March 2014 by Kalachuvadu Publications.

In May, **Eileen Scully** earned a masters degree in Mediation and Applied Conflict Studies through the Woodbury Institute at Champlain College. Inspired by

questions that surfaced during last year’s “Water Dialogue” at CAPA, Scully was interested in more closely examining whether land-use and historic preservation disputes could be mediated.

Two ballets choreographed by former New York City Ballet dancer Antonia Franceschi to music by **Allen Shawn** had recent performances. In January, Shawn performed his second Jazz Prelude onstage for her piece “jazz” given by the New York Ballet Theatre, and in April “Kinderscenen,” set to Shawn’s twelve-movement “Childhood Scenes,” was given by Ballet NY at the Ailey Center, performed by pianist Yoshiko Sato “with incisive energy” (*The New York Times*). In February, Shawn’s “Five Poems



of Georg Trakl” was given its premiere at Williams College by baritone Keith Kibler and pianist Elizabeth Wright, and on April 1, his “Wind Quintet No. 3” was premiered by the

Avanti Wind Quintet at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. On May 18, the Sage City Symphony performed Shawn’s 1999 Cello Concerto, with cello soloist Maxine Neuman. Shawn’s biography of Leonard Bernstein will be published by the “Jewish Lives” Series of Yale University Press in September 2014.

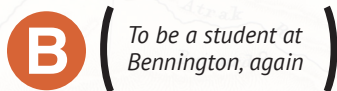
In the past year, MFA faculty member **Peter Trachtenberg** has published a review of Hilton Als’ *White Girls* in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* and an essay, “Tomorrow and Tomorrow,” in *The Kenyon Review Online*. His more recent essays appeared in the *L.A. Review of Books* and *Puerto del Sol*.

In February, **Mark Wunderlich** published his most recent collection of poetry *The Earth Avails* (Graywolf Press). In his review of Wunderlich’s highly acclaimed recent collection of poems for *Slate*, Jonathan Farmer wrote, “Wunderlich has



“**Liz Deschenes** is one of the quiet giants of post-conceptual photography,” *The New York Times* wrote in a recent review of her work this May. They continued, “‘Photography’ in her hands becomes immanently material, with images, stereoscopes and other devices structuring our experience as concretely as the architectural spaces in which they are displayed.” Deschenes exhibited as part of a group show at the Mary S. Byrd Gallery in Augusta, GA this winter and is currently developing a new body of work in preparation for her Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, MN) solo exhibition opening in November 2014.

imagined a way to make the unmistakable ambition of his writing align with his wish for a more humble image of human life.” Traveling on an extensive book tour, Wunderlich has given readings in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Iowa City, New York City, and Cambridge, MA among dozens of other cities. **B**



You may be a world away or just down the road, but you can experience what it's like to be a Bennington student again online. The College is offering two online course in the coming year that focus on the cultures of Afghanistan and Japan, respectively.

portraying conflict: 35 YEARS OF INSTABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN

This class will survey the way in which we analyze but also talk about and represent the past decades of conflict in Afghanistan. Anthropology faculty member **Noah Coburn** will guide students through a typical Bennington approach by looking at both how Afghanistan is understood through academic analysis and how ethnographic approaches, literature, film, art, and policy all come together to shape our understanding of this complex political landscape. Topics will include the insurgency, the challenges of development, the role of women and youth in Afghanistan's future, and elections. Student materials will draw from policy pieces, Khalid Hosseini's *And the Mountains Echoed*, Sebastian Junger's *Restrepo*, as well as art by both Afghan and international artists. The course concludes by asking how these pieces might come together to help us better understand the legacy of conflict in Afghanistan.



Portraying Conflict will run for seven weeks beginning the week of September 8 and ending the week of October 20, 2014. In late October, all participants will be invited to an end-of-course dinner and lecture in New York City with Coburn.

Weekly readings, videos, online discussions, and podcast lectures will allow participants to meet and interact with one another virtually, share ideas, and explore using multiple media. **Materials:** There may be several book purchases and film rentals to supplement the course. **Cost:** \$90; course materials, travel and accommodations to the optional New York City gathering are not included.

A faculty member at Bennington College since fall 2012, **Noah Coburn** is a political anthropologist who focuses on local politics, violence and intervention in Afghanistan and Central Asia. His book *Bazaar Politics: Pottery and Power in an Afghan Market Town* (2011) was the first full-length ethnographic study from Afghanistan since the Soviet invasion. More recently, his book *Derailing Democracy in Afghanistan* (2014) focused on the role of elections in reshaping the Afghan political landscape, and in 2014, he served as an observer in and around Kabul for the think tank Chatham House during the Afghan presidential and provincial council elections. **B**

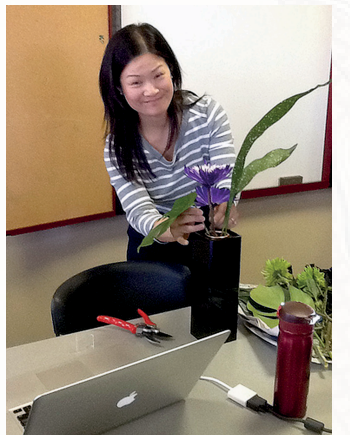
understanding japanese culture and aesthetics THROUGH IKEBANA

Japanese faculty member **Ikuko Yoshida** will explore the Japanese sense of beauty and the relationship between humankind and nature through the examination and practice of Ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement. Ikebana was derived from a Buddhist ritual of offering flowers to the deceased and became an art form that encapsulates Japanese aesthetics by the end of the fifteenth century.

In order to fully understand the art of Ikebana, one must learn not only the technique of arranging flowers, but also the philosophy and the representation behind it. Students will examine Japanese aesthetics and culture in literature (Haiku), history, and linguistics while also exploring the perception of nature in society. After investigating the history and philosophy of Ikebana, students will apply their knowledge in practice, learning to arrange flowers using various shapes of containers, in various spaces, and for various occasions.

At the end of the course, students will be invited to campus to participate in an Ikebana exhibition.

Understanding Japanese Culture and Aesthetics through Ikebana will run for seven weeks beginning in the spring of 2015. The first part of the course will focus on theory; in the second half of the class students will put into practice the characteristics of Japanese aesthetics. All participants will be invited to campus for the exhibition. **Materials:** The participants will need vases; *kenzan*, a device used to stand flowers in the container (otherwise, use of a floral foam/green sponge is fine); Ikebana scissors, or gardening scissors to cut flowers and branches. **Cost:** \$90; course materials, travel, and accommodations to the optional campus gathering are not included.



With particular interests in the areas of linguistics, second-language acquisition, rhetorical thinking, Japanese aesthetics, and Japanese literature, **Ikuko Yoshida** joined the Bennington faculty of the Isabelle Kaplan Center for Languages and Cultures in 1998. Her Bennington course, *What do Japanese students learn about WWII?*, was selected as one of the top ten courses by the Educational Policy Improvement Center. She holds a BA from Kanazawa Gakuin University, Ishikawa, Japan, and an MA from Saint Michael's College in Burlington, Vermont, where she graduated with distinction. She is a certified Ikebana instructor of the Ichiyo School of Ikebana in Japan. **B**

For more details on these online classes or to register,
email alumnirelations@bennington.edu
or call the Office of Alumni Relations at 802-440-4363.

FORTIES FIFTIES SIXTIES SEVENTIES

40s

Margaret Shackelford Toms '46 writes: "I am 91 now and think of Bennington often and how much it meant to me. Bennington was one of the highlights of my life. I have three wonderful sons and five grandchildren. Sad to say I lost my husband Bate in 2010."

Ella Russell Torrey '47 gave a talk in November to women business students at Drexel University. She says: "I have more work at 88 than a few years ago! Look forward to meeting the new president and thanks for the excellent write up on **Kayo Oliver [Parker] '47**."

50s

After graduating, **J. Carol Davis Goodman '51** raised four children—two of them attending Bennington, one teaching at Bennington. She continues to write short stories, many of which were published in literary journals and have won prizes and grants. Her novels *Never Lie Down*, *Why Do Men Die On Me*, and the latest, a novel about Vermont, *The Logans in Flood Brook*, are available. "My husband Theodore died two years ago," Goodman writes. "Bennington changed my life because of the teachers I had. **Howard Nemerov** and **Paul Feeley**, for example. I still paint and exhibit."

Helene Fox Metzenberg '54 is enjoying life in southern California. "I help with my autistic grandson. He is 19, and in special ed classes in high school. He is big and strong and loves to run, and swim and play ball. I'm working hard to get him to look both ways when we cross the street."

"I love class notes, but have little to brag about," **Joan Morris Manning '55** writes. "I'm still painting and showing my work. More significant: my daughter Kate Manning, has published her second novel *My Notorious Life* to considerable success. My daughter-in-law,



Thank you to **Andrea Kanner Halbfinger '62** for her submission of a 5x7 to the show during the 2013 All-Class Reunion. We regret her piece was not included in the article about the event in the last issue of Bennington.

Kim, has her own rock and roll band in Westport (Voodoo Carnival) and is famous locally! My family is happy, healthy, and doing well. Also, I'm so impressed with the recent edition of Bennington's publication and new president! So well done!"

Jo Ann Marcus Gardner '56's book *Seeds of Transcendence: Understanding the Hebrew Bible Through Plants* was published in April by Decalogue Press. Beginning in the '80s and continuing through 2006, Gardner and her husband took several trips to "The Holy Land," to research, observe, and photograph the flora. In addition to her recent book, Gardner gives talks about the topic.

Muse On Madison, a novel by **Bunny Willa Katz Shulman '56**, was published in October, 2013.

Ruth Bleyberg Smith '56 writes: "My darling husband and best friend Bill passed away in October. We were married in August, 57 years ago just after I graduated from Bennington."

"My husband, Nick, unfortunately died two years ago," **June Allan Carter '59** writes. "Aside from enjoying my children and grandchildren and friends, I take pleasure in my garden experiments, and do a great deal of thinking... I am indebted to graduate **Jane Mengel Allen '43**, for helping open my mind."

Barrie Rabinowitz Cassileth '59 writes: "My latest books are *Herb-Drug Interactions in Oncology 2010* (Chinese edition 2013), *The Complete Guide to Complementary Therapies in Cancer Care 2011* (Chinese edition 2013), and, *Survivorship: Living Well During and After Cancer* (2014)."

60s

Jane Lipman '60's first full-length poetry collection, *On the Back Porch of the Moon* (Black Swan Editions, 2012) won the 2013 New Mexico-Arizona Book Award for Poetry and a 2013 award from New Mexico Press Women. The book can be ordered at poetryjane@gmail.com.

Beverly May Vail '60 writes: "My husband, a Williams graduate, and I spent the winter in New York at 108 East 91st Street. Our two daughters live in Brooklyn with their children. We see them frequently and enjoy, travel together, enjoying trips to China and Kenya with the two oldest girls. I welcome news of other NY alumni. 212-831-7134."

Kathleen Earthrowl '62 is president of Sensory Art. Her work can be found and explored at www.kathleenearthrowl.com.

Harriet Joseph Ottenheimer '62 and her husband Martin returned to the Comoro Islands to attend a family wedding and bring copies of their research materials. They were granted official citizenship in recognition of their 40 years of ethnographic research and documentation in the islands. The original research notes, photographs, recordings, and documents have been transferred to Indiana University's Archives of Traditional Music and Wells Library. During the summer, Harriet was advanced to National Judge status by US Sailing. Both she and Martin are now US Sailing Certified National Judges and they judge regional, national and international events. Harriet's linguistic anthropology textbook continues to sell well, and she has embarked on writing a series of murder mysteries. Both of them are also on their Florida condominium's Board of Governors. They write, "We had a great time at the All-Class Reunion in September."

"Retirement is wonderful," **Ann Harvey Mendershausen '64** writes. "Still messing with clay (thank-you Stanley!) and was pleased to win a first in a recent Sierra show. We have two young grandchildren living in Seattle so we are spending more time in the north west. We have even acquired a cabin on Guemes Island and plan to spend summers there."

After 14 years **Gael Rockwell Minton '64** continues to farm. Her husband Ty produces and sells ceramic art. Their children and three grandchildren 6, 4, and 1 are thriving in Wyoming and Maine.

Rima Gittlin Faber '65 quit performing to focus her energies on dance education. She received her doctorate in education in 1997.

She chairs a dance task force at the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. Rima is teaching, co-authoring a book, and will be featured in *Dance Teacher* magazine. She writes, "I give **Lou Carini** great gratitude for embarking me on this journey during his psychology courses at Bennington."

Mary Kelley '65 moved to Somerville, MA last year. She says, "It's a great city full of artists, students and real people. Working on some good projects."

Brenda Kydd '69 writes: "Enjoying retirement. On two boards: my Homeowner's Association and a non-profit, A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project, for formerly incarcerated women to make a transition to a productive and fulfilled lifestyle. Just started a jewelry business selling what I make."

Sherry Stodola Rapport '69 writes: "I moved to beautiful Bend in central Oregon three years ago, where I live in a wonderful cohousing community. People here inspire each other to do great things!"

70s

Christopher Johnstone '71 published *Land-scape Paintings of New Zealand* in October. He has been a fundraising manager at the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra for the last six years.

In 2013 Judith Di Maio '72 was invested into the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (FAIA). Only 122 architects nationwide were selected for national achievement and contribution to the profession.

Gale Brewer '73 was recently elected Manhattan borough president.

Bel Broadley '74 writes: "I am officially retired and loving it. Taking time for creative writing and singing harmonies with my musical husband. Active. Always active with biking, hiking, gardening, and birdwatching."

Mitchell Kriegman '74 writes: "My novel *Being Audrey Hepburn* has been listed for hardcover pre-order on Amazon."

Virlana Tkacz '74, the artistic director of Yara Arts Group, a resident company at La MaMa Experimental Theatre in New York, created "Fire Water Night" with her company in June. In September her production of "Capt. John Smith Goes to Ukraine" played in Lviv and Kiev, Ukraine and in October she created a new performance "Underground Dreams" for Izolyatsia in Donetsk, Ukraine. This December her production of "Midwinter Night" will perform at the Harbourfront Center in Toronto. Photos: www.brama.com/yara.

Margaret Fuller: A New American Life, a biography by **Megan Marshall '75**, won the Pulitzer Prize in biography and was selected by Dwight Garner of *The New York Times* as one of the 10 best books of the year.

Steven Smolinsky '75 is now the president of Benari, LTD. He is also project faculty and region manager of Africa and South America with Wharton's Global Consulting Practicum. Steve serves as a resource person for the United Nations as well.

Beth Kaminstein '76 recently participated in an exhibition at Cross MacKenzie Gallery in Washington, DC (owned and operated by two Bennington alumni, **Rebecca Cross '78** and **Max MacKenzie '76**). Beth's ceramic work was exhibited alongside a selection of prints by **Helen Frankenthaler '49**. The show aimed to highlight the aesthetic links between Kaminstein's ceramics and Frankenthaler's prints. Both artists tended towards color palettes strongly influenced by nature. A review of the show states, "Frankenthaler's 'Weeping Crabapple' is an abstraction that draws on Japan's Edo-period prints, with a

hint of cherry blossoms in a pink-on-pink area. Kaminstein's 'Islamorada Series: Black Onyx' features metallic swipes." She offers congratulations to all alumni involved with the show. "What a wonderful convergence of Bennington creativity!"

Amy Sawelson Landes '76 is a full-time freelance writer and consultant in the food, produce, and agriculture industries. "Check out my blog: tastebuz.com to see other interesting projects."

Max MacKenzie '76 is leading a photography workshop this July as part of the Amalfi Coast Music & Arts Festival, in Maiori, Italy, including photo-expeditions to Amalfi, Ravello, Positano, and Sorrento.

Stephen Smith '76 is music director for three orchestras in the greater New York City area: the Orchestra at Shelter Rock, Senior Pops Orchestra of Long Island, and Danbury Community Orchestra.

A vacation to Bali a few years ago has turned into a passionate mission for **Phyllis Kaplan '77** to introduce land conservation along the lines of the Vermont Land Trust and economic equality to Bali. Recently, Kaplan created Sawah Bali, which is a non-profit focused on conserving Bali's rice paddies and cultivating new markets for farmers. Learn more at www.sawahbali.org.

Marion Markham '77 debuted "Tin Pan Alley Time Tour" at the Metropolitan Room in New York City to a sold out crowd.

Mary Meriam '78 had her first full-length collection of poems, *Conjuring My Leafy Muse*, published by Headmistress Press in November, 2013.

Dion Birney '79 married his partner Todd Olson in August after 20 years together. **Laura Shelton Bassin '81** was a witness.

Jed Donovan '79 published his memoir, *Road Army Flunkies and Colorado Junkies* in November 2013.

Laurie Moss '79 writes: "Fall of Loss: 18-year-old daughter goes off to college, 20-year-old cat passes away, then 15 days later, 89-year-old mother dies. Moral of the story: Savor the moments and cherish the ones you love. Also, grief is a tough taskmaster."

Lorca Peress '79 is happy to report that she has been invited to serve on the "Puerto Rican Creative Network" for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Regional Office in NYC. The Network is made up of cultural arts ambassadors who will advise and engage U.S. Puerto Ricans in the arts, reinvigorate Puerto Rican culture in the US, and explore issues that impact the country as a whole. She is also serving her third and final year as co-president of the League of Professional Theatre Women (www.theatrewomen.org), an advocacy organization to increase visibility and create gender parity for women in theatre. Lorca is still artistic director of MultiStages, a multicultural and multidisciplinary theatre company in NYC, and recently received the Collaboration Award Honorable Mention from Women in Arts and Media Coalition for a new play she directed for MultiStages. She is in her 13th year as a teacher at the NYU Strasberg Studio, and keeps in touch with many Bennington friends and several former faculty members. She can be reached at lorcaperess@theatrewomen.org.

Amy L. Spound '79 writes: "So much time has passed and I have been completely out of touch. For sometime now I have been teaching 8th grade students with emotional disabilities at a public school in Massachusetts. For even longer I have been singing with Tanglewood Festival Chorus / BSO and cherish every moment I get to sing at Symphony Hall of Tanglewood. Finally, I live in Sudbury, MA with my adored significant other Neil. Would love to hear from 'lost' classmates."

80s

Susan Scher Chase '80 went back to Paris for a week in April with the online alumni class, Americans in Paris, taught by faculty member **Stephen Shapiro**. "Paris, skating, and dance are still in my blood after all these years!" she reports. "My next career move is to teach French again."

Shelley Hall NiTuama '81 writes: "I'm happily divorced and living in Annapolis with my thirteen-year-old twin daughters. I am completing my fourth year as the Program Specialist in Literature and Language in

the EDSITEment Project at the National Endowment for the Humanities. I develop content resources for the agency's website for the K-12 community of educators. My dream job! I get to collaborate with some of the most gifted teachers and scholars in the country creating applications to support teachers nationwide. Pleased to report Bennington's investment 30+ years ago paid off!"

Ellen Kanner '83's book, *Feeding the Hungry Ghost: Life, Faith, and What to Eat for Dinner* (New World Library, February 2013) was awarded 2013 Book of the Year by VegNews.

Daniel Long '84 is a professor of photography at Manchester Community College outside of Hartford, CT. In 2013 he had solo shows at 100 Pearl Street Gallery in Hartford, and the Putnam Gallery at the Dublin School, Dublin, NH, as well as a three-person show at Krauss Gallery at the Moses Brown School in Providence, RI. He curated a show for the Windsor Art Center, "New Construction," in January. He writes, "I have an upcoming solo show at Governors Academy in Byfield, MA, April 23-June 8, 2014. My web address: www.danielmosherlong.com. A classmate of mine, **Jeff Curto MFA '83**, was the chair of the 50th Anniversary National Society for Photographic Education Conference in Chicago, IL. Fun was had by all!"

Monica D. Church '87 writes: "I will be traveling in the spring: 50th anniversary, around the world voyage with the University of Virginia's Semester at Sea program. My husband, Robert K. Brigham will be teaching history, politics, and international relations. I will make photographs, collages, blogging, and homeschooling my 13-year-old daughter."

Carla Klein Moriarty '89 writes: "I loved seeing everyone at the reunion. I never fell in love with anyone at Bennington but was in lust a lot. Lust for the place continues, and I am madly in love with the school that so made me who I am today!"

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS RECEIVES VISIONARY LEADERSHIP AWARD



In a ceremony held at Bennington College, curator **Holly Block '80** was awarded the inaugural Dr. Elizabeth Coleman Visionary Leadership Award. This newly established annual award recognizes a distinguished Bennington alumna/us, faculty or staff member, or an individual from the larger Bennington community whose innovative and inspirational leadership has advanced civic and cultural life and improved the lives of others. Block is the executive director of The Bronx Museum of the Arts and recently served as the co-commissioner of the United States Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale. Under her leadership the museum has not only earned international acclaim but become an engine for community revitalization.

Block's emphasis on community outreach, education, and international connections has been a theme throughout her career. Before joining the Bronx Museum, she served as executive director of Art in General, a leading arts organization in lower Manhattan dedicated to commissioning and presenting contemporary art. During her 18 years at Art in General, Block exhibited and presented the work of more than 4,000 artists, and established herself as a dynamic force in the contemporary art world.

Established by the parents of a Bennington alumna from the Class of 2000 in honor of Bennington's ninth president, the \$5,000 award has no restrictions on how it may be used. Candidates are nominated by members of the Bennington College community and selected by a committee of faculty and staff. To nominate a Bennington community member or for deadlines and additional information please visit bennington.edu/visionaryleadershipaward.

B

EIGHTIESNINETIESTHOUSANDS

90s

Rebecca Rodriguez Pujals-Jones '90 completed her MFA with a photography concentration last summer from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. Her website is pujalsjones.com.

Patrick Gordon '91 writes: "I am a physician in Iowa, married, with two wonderful children."

Peter J. Hoffman '91 aspires to emulate his Bennington mentor's curiosity and rigor as he teaches international affairs at The New School.

After more than 20 years in western Canada, **Frank Bertil Ostlinger '91** returned to the northeast to marry his wife, Yvonne. Now living in northern New Jersey, he's applying for permanent residence and a green card. "I would love to hear from friends at frank.ostlinger@gmail.com."

Owen Harvey '96, was part of the representative team from Miller-Howard Investments of Woodstock, NY, which rang the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange on Friday, January 10, 2014. Miller-Howard was given this honor to highlight an ETN based on their new MLP Fundamental Index, which Owen worked on from the quantitative side.

Dave Hertz '96 writes: "I'm leaving the United States and immigrating to Israel in May. I'll be living in Haifa which is the largest city in northern Israel and the third largest city in the country after the capital city of Jerusalem and the economic hub of Tel Aviv. Check out my website at www.972.tel as I'd be interested in hearing from alumni who also live there or will be visiting."

The Broadway revival of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* opened with a high-powered cast this spring that included James Franco, Chris O'Dowd, Leighton Meester, and Joel Marsh Garland '97. Garland will also make

a recurring appearance in the second season of *Orange Is The New Black*.

00s

Melody Zilber Hoffman '02 recently gave birth to her fourth child.

Coworker.org—a social change start-up co-founded by **Jess Kutch '03** in 2013—received a grant from the New Media Ventures Innovation Fund. The grant will go toward developing coworker.org's toolset for workplace organizing.

Kryssy Wright '03 just received a Bessie Award for her work with Third Rail Projects on "Then She Fell."

Ben Hall '04 was selected for the James Beard Foundation Boot Camp for Policy and Change working with 14 other chefs nationwide on food-based advocacy and activism. Hall was also selected to cook at the Beard House with fellow Boot Camp alumni and attended the JBF Food Conference on scholarship in October. Hall and business partner, **Jason Murphy '09**, who lives in Harlem and is finishing his MFA at Columbia, have also been selected for Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program in Detroit. The pair have also opened Topsoil, a vegan and vegetarian restaurant at MOCAD, Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. Hall was featured in the Dec/Jan issue of *Modern Painters* as an artist to watch in 2014.

Luke Mogelson '05 penned the November 17 *New York Times Magazine* cover story about Afghan and Iranian migrants attempting to reach Australia from Indonesia by boat. Mogelson and a photographer embedded themselves on the dangerous 200-mile

voyage across the Indian Ocean, which has claimed the lives of more than 1,000 refugees. His short story "To the Lake" was published in the spring issue of *The Paris Review*. Mogelson, a freelance journalist and recipient of Stanford University's prestigious Stegner Fellowship, is a frequent contributor to *The New York Times Magazine* and has been published in *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, *The New Republic*, and *The Nation*, among others.

Sarah Jey Whitehead '05, MAT '06 successfully defended her doctoral dissertation in February, and will graduate in May with a PhD in Foreign Language Education from the University of Texas at Austin. She plans to stay in Austin, and is hoping to make more connections with Bennington grads there.

Jonathan Leiss '06, MAT '07 and his wife Megan are in their first year as market farmers. Spring Forth Farm (www.springforth-farmnc.com), in Hurdle Mills, NC, specializes in cut flowers for daily bouquets, weddings, and events. Members of the Bennington community passing through central NC are invited for a visit and a cup of tea.

Real Estate, the acclaimed indie rock band featuring **Alex Bleeker '08** on bass, performed their song "Talking Backwards" on the April 9 episode of *Late Show with David Letterman*.

THE JUMP ON MADISON AVENUE



The late and former faculty member **Stanley Edgar Hyman** is the airborne subject of a Berluti billboard in New York City. The photographer, Philippe Halsman, requested the active shot for part of a series with leaping subjects, but estimated that Hyman would not be able to jump very high. His first shot captured only Hyman's feet. Hyman's leap became the inspiration for the Berluti billboard on Madison Avenue. Check out the full recount of the story at *Tablet Magazine* (tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/150266/stanley-edgar-hyman), as told by his son **Laurence Jackson Hyman '64**.

B

Kaley McMahon '08 wrote lyrics for the musical *Twisted*, which enjoyed a sold-out run in Chicago. The case recording charted on iTunes, and the video of the show received more than 150,000 views on YouTube in the first year.

Dan Wilcox '08 writes: "After nearly four years of making theater in Paris, London, and Edinburgh and having the chance to perform and tour with Rhum and Clay Theatre Co, I'll be making a more permanent move back to NYC in early 2014 to continue my work in the theatre and start a few new projects in journalism. Always looking to get in touch

with Bennington grads in these fields, get in touch! wilcox.daniel@gmail.com."

Jacob Bielecki '09 recently completed a Master's degree in City Design and Social Science (with distinction) at the London School of Economics and Political Science, in London, UK.

10s

Sara Lewis '10 writes: "I am living in Manhattan as a private piano teacher with 25 students in the Upper East Side. Also perform as a singer/songwriter regularly downtown. Released 1st album 'Birds Without Cages' after a successful Kickstarter campaign in April 2012. Most recently was a music director on Star Island in NH, a religious retreat center."

Emma Peterson '10 will graduate with a Master's in Divinity from Yale Divinity School this May. Her three-year master's degree, empha-

sizing feminist theologies and pastoral crisis-care, enables her to pursue work as a hospital chaplain. Peterson will begin her nine-month chaplaincy residency at Yale-New Haven Hospital in August. She writes, "In other news, I married my longtime partner-in-love Michale Meehan one year ago this June. The wedding brought many Bennington alumni, including the fondly nicknamed 'Bennington Women,' together as a whole for the first time since 2009."

Helen Rose Patterson '11 is a Mississippi Organizer at Gulf Restoration Network. "I work to unite and empower Mississippians to fight for a healthy future for their coast and communities. I get to enjoy life in New Orleans and all it has to offer."

Josh Gulotta '11 writes: "Here's a little log of things I've done over the past year: Occupy Avenue A, Red Shirt Entertainment/Nuyoricana Poet's Cafe, rooftop reading series; Tim and Tuna in Town, Fullstop Collective, Communal Spaces garden festival; On Tipping, with Dan-

SENIOR CLASS GIFT BREAKS RECORDS

The Class of 2014 raised a record-breaking \$15,435.39 for their senior class gift this year, with 51% of the class participating (another record). A total of 259 donors contributed to the class gift, including current students, faculty, staff, and parents. The senior class chose to provide support for Crossett Library, FWT grants, and scholarship support for two members of the Class of 2018. They also designated a portion of the funds raised toward dedicating a memorial bench in honor of their classmate **Emily Kassier '14**. Emily died at the end of the 2011 academic year; she was a bright presence on campus and a close friend of many, especially to those who lived in Paris-Borden with her.

iel Brian Jones, The Farm (Alice Tolan-Mee's theatre company), The Farm Show Festival; Metropolitan Playhouse, East Village Chronicles Festival. There's also my next project, Revival, which premiered as part of the Fertile Ground festival this winter. Some other Bennington kids will be in this—**Andrew Fridae '12**, **Bronwyn Maloney '13**, and **Bahar Baharloo '14**."

Abigail Neale '13 continues work as an installation artist and English teacher in Thailand.

Molly Griffin McKenna '13 lives outside of Portland, ME and works as the co-manager of Apple Acres Farm. She is an officer of the North Atlantic Arts Alliance and Ossipee Valley Music Festival, and also plays in several bands in the Portland area.

Seth Katz '13 is now enrolled in the MFA program (Creative Writing-Fiction) at Sarah Lawrence College.

MFA(w)

Jaime Clarke MFA '97's new novel, *Vernon Downs*, about an apprentice writer obsessed with a famous writer, was published in April. The title character is based on **Bret Easton Ellis '86**.

Diane Cameron MFA '99's new book of essays, *Looking for Signs: Essays and Columns*, was printed by The Troy Book Makers in 2013.

Publishers Weekly has named *The Blind Masseuse: A Traveler's Memoir from Costa Rica to Cambodia* by **Alden Jones MFA '01** a "Top Ten"

travel book of the season. Published by the University of Wisconsin Press in November, 2013, *The Blind Masseuse* is both an eloquent memoir of the author's journeys through Central America, Southeast Asia, and Egypt and a thought-provoking exploration of the role travelers play as outsiders in cultures they inhabit temporarily. Jones is a faculty member at Emerson College's department of writing. She was recently named the latest New American Fiction prize winner. Her short stories and travel essays have appeared in numerous publications including *The Iowa Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *The Best American Travel Writing*.

James Klise '06 has published *The Art of Secrets* (Algonquin Books, 2014), his second novel for young readers. His first novel, *Love*

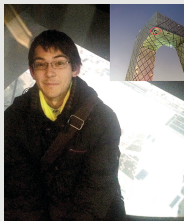
Drugged, received an ALA Stonewall Honor and was named to the ALA's Rainbow List of recommended books for LGBTQ young people. He lives in Chicago, IL. To visit his book page, go to <http://www.algonquinyoungreaders.com/book/the-art-of-secrets/>.

Jan Pendleton MFA '13 writes: "I just got taken on by the Curtis Brown agency. My collection of stories is titled *Rescue*. Let's hope a publisher rescues me."

MFA

Carleen Zimbalatti MFA '98 writes: "My work was in the group show I curated for the Bennington Center for the Arts, Overlap and was included in the exhibition, All Over or Nothing, at Parallel Space, in Brooklyn, NY. This year, you can see my work in February, at Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, in March, a solo exhibition, Plane Division, at the SEABA Gallery in Burlington, VT and in June, in a group show, I curated as a fundraiser for the SEABA Gallery, Beyond Measure. The exhibition features ten distinguished Vermont and NYC artists including Altoon Sultan, Don Voisine, and Dartmouth professors Gerald Auten, Enrico Riley, and Karoline Kawiaka."

TWO ALUMNI WIN FULBRIGHTS TO CHINA



Forest Purnell '14 and **Benjamin Underwood '13** have been awarded prestigious Fulbright grants to pursue research projects in China over the upcoming academic year. Purnell, who graduated this winter, plans to examine Chinese culture-makers in Beijing, while Underwood will be supporting and learning from an emerging renewable energy industry in the city of Kunming. While interning for the state television channel, China Central TV, Purnell began to think about how his colleagues and other creative people in China are balancing multiple demands: from the market and the state, urban and rural. While artists working overseas have become the face of contemporary Chinese culture, "it is the cultural agents who choose to work within a space of productive friction between state and market whose effects are felt in the way people live," he wrote. Purnell will conduct a series of

video interviews, which will bring worldwide audiences face-to-face with current Chinese culture-makers: from industrial designers to architects, television producers to online developers. He will examine how these creative designers navigate state and market demands, and what the world can learn from them.



Underwood spent the 2012 spring semester studying in Kathmandu, Nepal, where he noticed the presence of garbage in daily life. This contrasted sharply with the day-to-day experience in America, where garbage is bagged and removed from view. However, Underwood grew up near Yellowstone National Park and knew that "nature wastes nothing." While in Nepal, he came across anaerobic digestion (AD) technology, which converts organic waste—including food scraps, lawn cuttings and manure—into two valuable by-products: biogas, a gaseous fuel; and slurry, a high-quality fertilizer. In Nepal, biogas can be used to displace demand for wood and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as cooking fuels, a solution to the growing problems of deforestation and dependence on fossil fuel imports. Underwood sees an opportunity more broadly. The AD waste-to-energy industry inherently links the drive for profit to environmental and social benefits: the more waste businesses treat, the more renewable energy and organic fertilizer they can sell and the more demand for fossil fuels they can displace. The Fuel City website states, "We envision AD diverting 50 percent of the USA's urban waste and supplying five percent of our national natural gas demand by 2040." With his Fulbright, Ben will be going to Kunming, China, to immerse himself in the booming local AD industry, as a means to both support the businesses he will study and to learn lessons about scalability that he will bring back to his work at Fuel City. "I'm drawn to the paradox of the least-desirable material becoming a tool for social advancement," said Ben. "If you risk association with unclean materials and places, you can get money, for example, to send your children to school. It's rags to riches, literally."

keep us posted

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You can submit your Class Note in one of three easy ways:

1. by email to classnotes@bennington.edu
2. online at bennington.edu (click on "For Alumni," then "Class Notes")
3. by mail to the Office of External Relations, 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.

B

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 External Relations (800-598-2979) if we have omitted your class note in error. Thank you.



VIRGINIA TISHMAN MEYERSON '46

It is with great regret that we issue a correction to the obituary of Virginia Tishman Meyerson '46, beloved alumna, trustee, and longtime supporter of the College. Mrs. Meyerson died on January 26, 2013, not January 26, 2012, as we erroneously printed in the summer 2013 issue.

Former trustee Virginia Tishman Meyerson '46 died on January 26, 2013, at the age of 89. At Bennington she studied architecture, city planning, literature, and art, and she spent her senior Non-Resident Term at the architecture firm Harrison, Abramovitz, and Wiggins, which invited her back after graduation. There she researched projects and publications and assisted with the plans for the Life offices in the Time-Life building in New York. As an alumna, she represented the Alumni Association on the College's board of trustees, an appointment that would extend to an 11-year trusteeship. Mrs. Meyerson also served as Bennington's ambassador at the inaugurations of the presidents of New York University and Florida Atlantic University. She supported a number of charitable organizations beyond Bennington, including the Red Cross, the Boca Raton Community Hospital, and the Boca Raton Museum of Art, where she created and led the docent program. She also chaired the board for the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America—Florida Gold Coast Chapter. Mrs. Meyerson was interested in environmentally sustainable land use and was a steward for Shelburne Farms in Shelburne, Vermont. Her imprint can be found on the Bennington campus: The architecture studio was dedicated in her honor in 1983; and Tishman Lecture Hall was named for her father, David Tishman, who also served as a trustee of the College. Mrs. Meyerson is survived by two daughters, Deane R. Stepansky (Paul) and Alison Rand; two grandsons, Michael Stepansky (Jane Kohuth) and Jonathan Stepansky (Sy Mano); two stepsons, Richard Meyerson and Bruce Meyerson; stepdaughter Lynn Funk; and four step-grandchildren. Mrs. Meyerson was predeceased by her son, David Rand, Jr., and her husband, George Meyerson.

RUTH DEWING EWING '37, P'74

Ruth Dewing Ewing '37 died on February 19, 2014, at the age of 98. She was a member of Bennington's second graduating class and concentrated in social science and social welfare. Ewing was an active member of the Bennington community. She served as a trustee from 1979 to 1995 and served on the honorary 75th Anniversary Committee in 2007. After Ruth's husband, James Ewing, was discharged from the Navy, the couple purchased Keene, New Hampshire's *Sentinel* newspaper in 1954. They went on to serve on the board of the MacDowell Colony, an artists' retreat in Peterborough and the board of Cheshire Medical Center. The Ewings were also involved, since its founding in 1984, in the International Center for Journalists. There, Ruth was a steadfast supporter of the ICFJ's environmental journalism department. In 1980, Ewing received the annual community service award of the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce. Her contributions to the community included years of service as President of the Board of Directors of the Monadnock Family Service. Starting in 1997, the College has held an annual Ruth Dewing Ewing Social Science Lecture. Ruth is predeceased by her husband, and is survived by her son, Thomas Ewing '74, and two daughters, Carolyn Colebo and Joan Tsultrim, as well as nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

NUALA O'DONNELL PELL '46

Nuala O'Donnell Pell '46 died at the age of 89 on April 13, 2014. Mrs. Pell, a gifted pianist and the wife of the late Senator Claiborne Pell, whom she married in 1944, proved with her husband to be committed to the betterment of her community and the country. The socially conscientious Mrs. Pell was a prominent and outspoken advocate for education and the arts, serving as a trustee of Roger Williams University, Salve Regina University, The Preservation Society of Newport County, the Potter League for Animals, the John A. Hartford Foundation, and the Redwood Library, as well as numerous other statewide nonprofit organizations. Mrs. Pell received honorary degrees from Salve Regina University and the University of Rhode Island. Mrs. Pell additionally served as a representative for the Christie, Manson and Woods International auction house and on the board of the Newport Music Festival. She is survived by her brother, two children, five grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

MARY HAMMOND STORER '46

A trustee of the College since 1986 and a life trustee since 1995, Mary Hammond Storer '46 died on December 3, 2013. She was 91. She transferred to Bennington from Pasadena Junior College in 1942 to study literature. At Bennington, Storer was a member of the Senior Division for Literature. She was a major supporter of the Bennington College community and its mission. A member of the Silo Society, and a stalwart philanthropic supporter of the College. She served on the board of the Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage, CA, where she later became an honorary trustee. She was also a board member of the Living Desert Zoological and Botanical Gardens in Palm Desert, CA, and the president of the Mary H. Storer Foundation, where her daughter Katherine H. Manning is a director. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Katherine and Fred M. Manning, III three grandsons; Adam (Sarah), Blake (Kristen), and Peter (Stephanie) and three great-grandchildren (Kaia, Quinn, and Hadley).

NICHOLAS MARTIN, FORMER FACULTY

Distinguished theatre director and former faculty member Nicholas Martin died on April 30, 2014 at the age of 75. Mr. Martin was an actor for most of his life, and he only turned to directing when he was in his early 40s. He joined the Bennington faculty to teach theater in the late 1970s and inspired a younger generation of directors and actors. Martin served as the artistic director of the Huntington Theater Company in Boston from 2000 to 2008 and at the Williamstown Theater Festival from 2008 to 2010. In 1999, he won the Obie Award for best direction for his production of the dark comedy *Betty's Summer Vacation* at Playwrights Horizons, a non-profit Off-Broadway theater. Last year, he earned a Tony Award nomination for best direction for his Broadway production of Christopher Durang's *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*. *Vanya* was nominated for six Tonys and won the award for best play. Mr. Martin had been scheduled to direct this play again in the 2015 production at the Boston's Huntington Theatre Company. The company's managing director Michael Maso said the production will go forward. "We will honor him with that production in some way," he says.



LYMAN KIPP, FORMER FACULTY

Internationally renowned minimalist sculptor Lyman Kipp, former faculty member, died on March 30, 2014. He was 85. Kipp studied at the Pratt Institute and Cranbrook Art Academy, and taught at Bennington from 1960 to 1963, before he chaired the Art Departments at Hunter College and Lehman College and served as a visiting artist at Dartmouth College. He became an important figure in the development of the Primary Structure style, which came to prominence in the 1960s. Kipp's sculptures focused on bronze castings and geometric forms in primary colors. Later, his large scale colorful work of steel and aluminum was exhibited in galleries across the U.S. and abroad, and it was included in the collections of museums such as the Smithsonian and the Whitney Museum of American Art. He received fellowships and awards from the Guggenheim Foundation and Fulbright. He is survived by four children and seven grandchildren.

JOSEPH MCGINNISS, FORMER FACULTY

Acclaimed journalist and bestselling author Joe McGinniss, a Bennington faculty member in the 1980s, died on March 10, 2014. He was 71 years old. Mr. McGinniss first came to prominence in 1969 with the release of his first book, *The Selling of the President 1968*, which made him the youngest living author to have a No. 1 nonfiction bestseller. The book examined the candidacy of Richard Nixon from the advertisement-like perspective of its inner workings, to which he was given an inside view. His other works, often similarly controversial, included 1983's *Fatal Vision*, an account of McGinniss's journalistic interactions with former green beret Dr. Jeffrey MacDonald, who was accused of murdering his wife and two daughters, and 2011's *The Rogue: Searching for the Real Sarah Palin*. McGinniss is survived by his wife, Nancy Doherty.

DEBORAH WADSWORTH, FORMER CHAIR OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A trustee of the College since 1998, and chairwoman of the board from 2000 to 2011, Deborah Wadsworth died on December 24, 2013. While not an alumna herself, the public policy expert and education advocate was fiercely committed to Bennington. Prior to her retirement, Deborah Wadsworth was the president of Public Agenda, an organization that works to help citizens better understand critical policy issues and the nation's leaders better understand the public's point of view. Throughout her career she spoke and wrote widely on how citizens think about issues ranging from abortion and education to crime, national security, and welfare. She served as a consultant to the Mathematical Sciences Education Board of the National Research Council, the New American Schools Development Corporation, and the Public Education Network. In addition to Bennington, she served on the boards of Public Agenda and the Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, and was chairwoman of the board of the Educational Development Center, an international organization working in more than 50 countries serving youngsters through education and health care initiatives worldwide. Wadsworth held degrees from Wellesley College and Columbia University. She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank W. Wadsworth, and is survived by several grown children and growing grandchildren.



ALUMNI

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

Atossa Herring French '36 <i>December 19, 2013</i>	Joyce Fondren Elbrecht '48 <i>January 25, 2014</i>	Patricia Nichols Norvell '64 <i>October 12, 2013</i>
Alice Phillips Bowen '40 <i>November 25, 2013</i>	Nancy Webster Grady '48 <i>May 4, 2014</i>	Derwin H. Stevens MA '65 <i>October 21, 2013</i>
Rosamond Hamlin Groves '42 <i>March 7, 2014</i>	Barbara Bowles Coolidge '50 <i>February 11, 2014</i>	Diane Clemmons '68 <i>April 3, 2014</i>
Elsa Woodbridge Kistler '42 <i>December 24, 2013</i>	Nina Carpenter Masek '50 <i>January 20, 2014</i>	Pauline Adoue Scanlon '69 <i>October 31, 2013</i>
Suzanne Sigourney Leonard '42 <i>December 19, 2013</i>	Sue Rayner Warburg '52 <i>April 25, 2014</i>	Katherine Bailey Plimpton '80 <i>November 5, 2013</i>
Eleanor Trumbull Lowell '44 <i>January 9, 2014</i>	Ellen Huddleson de la Torre '55 <i>March 18, 2014</i>	Charlotte Lemann MFA '99 <i>February 28, 2014</i>
Carol Johnston McGrew '45 <i>April 18, 2013</i>	Louise Valentine McCoy '56 <i>January 7, 2014</i>	Christopher Conroy '12 <i>May 10, 2014</i>
Sally Igoe Cole '46 <i>March 9, 2014</i>	W. Leonard Taffs MA '57 <i>December 5, 2013</i>	Megan Renehan MFA '13 <i>January 7, 2014</i>
Janet Loper Nelson '47, P'68 <i>December 9, 2013</i>	Margaret Fairlie-Kennedy '59 <i>December 7, 2013</i>	Rebecca Scott '13 <i>November 13, 2013</i>
Mary Harrigan Sheedy '47, P'68 <i>February 2, 2014</i>	Mary Stewart Laird '63 <i>January 13, 2014</i>	

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

Edward Apgar, mathematics faculty, 1965-67 <i>March 31, 2014</i>
Eli Dawson, maintenance staff <i>November 1, 2013</i>
Kay LaRoche, health services staff, 1985-2013 <i>November 2, 2013</i>
Reinhard Mayer, German faculty, 1973-94 <i>December 24, 2013</i>

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

Kenneth Campbell P'75 <i>November 8, 2013</i>
Sage Fuller Cowles P'84 <i>November 21, 2013</i>
Lawrence Powers, friend <i>February 7, 2014</i>
Bryan P. Warren, friend <i>June 8, 2013</i>
Peggy C. Worthington, friend <i>November 16, 2013</i>

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

Elizabeth Wellington Puleston '39 <i>April 28, 2009</i>
Nancy Victor Millard '41 <i>November 22, 2008</i>
Omar Shapli P'87, former faculty <i>December 29, 2010</i>
Roderick Gander, friend <i>September 24, 2007</i>
Harvey Kevorkian, friend <i>October 20, 2010</i>

We honor the memory of those who have passed on, but regret that space restrictions do not allow the publication of full obituaries. This in memoriam list contains members of the Bennington Community who died as of May 20, 2014. If you would like more information, please contact us at alumnirelations@bennington.edu.

UTOPIA ISN'T A SOLUTION.
It is a means to find a solution.
It is pushing the envelope as far as it can
go to learn something in the process.

—Carlos Torres '14



Carlos and several other students discuss their Plan Process in an audio piece, "Cross-Sections."
 Listen to all of their insights by visiting tinyurl.com/theplanonsoundcloud



"Our Bennington" was created for the inauguration of Bennington's 10th President Mariko Silver. The project was a walking and digital tour of twelve moments that served as a window into the many extraordinary experiences that have shaped Bennington College. Inaugural guests—which included more than 600 students, faculty, alumni, guests, and friends of the College—shared their engagement with the tour using Instagram. These images are what they shared back to the community.

Created by students **Sam Leigh '14** and **Haley McGough '15**, library public services coordinator **Laura Payne**, faculty member **Robert Ransick** and director of library and information services **Oceana Wilson**.

Visit: our.bennington.edu



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PEOPLE DO NOT COME HERE TO
GET
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THEY COME HERE TO
DO
SOMETHING,
TO MAKE
SOMETHING.

—President Mariko Silver