

Bard College
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BARD COMMENT

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BARD COMMENT

88 Obstacles to Academic Progress

Editorial-

"A wrong-doer is often a man who has left something undone."

--Marcus Aurelius

After all, twenty students are only about 9% of the student body; and if they leave well--Bard can carry on. And besides, it'll be much quieter without all those pianos.

To achieve this goal all that's necessary would be to continue on the same path of indifference to basic academic--and speciaically musical--needs of our community, as the Administration seems to display at present.

The execrable handling of the piano situation has led several of the piano students to state that if the status quo is continued, they could find no alternative to leaving Bard. The shortage of adequate pianos--of which both are in the same room so that only one may be used at a time--is not merely a major blow to our music program, but its end as a meaningful entity. The collapse of the grandiose plan for conversion of the Sands estate barn, by subtle stroke of inscrutable logic, has facilitated the Administrative abdication of responsibility in this matter.

This lack exists not only in the music department, where it is crucial and subject to immediate action, but also in many other phases of academic life, for instance in the art library and science labs.

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Kaufman's Tilted Windmill

- notes from a conversation with John Kaufman
- and Chan McIvor of the Kappa House Committee

Essentially, according to the students interviewed, Kappa House should become a meeting place, where "in a new atmosphere...students will be able to forget themselves," "It's a chance to change the scene." Is it then that pure change is valuable? There is certainly need, it is felt, "to escape the tension of the upper campus", to "lose one's self in a new atmosphere." Queries brought forth no elucidation as to the nature of this tension; but later in the evening, when John was asked about the possibility that the Kappa House development might cut seriously into the studying time of many students, he stated that "lots of students start to crack up from too much studying; they become introverts."

The present solution to this redoubtable problem--which, he wants it known, is not totally new--took form while John was working with the language program on campus. "John's idea became a sort of bee in his bonnet about it," alliterates Chan, "and he talked to the Administration...Mrs. Bourne had been in favor of it for a long time." The fact that John not only "pressed for speed...in accomplishment" with the Administration, but got it, is one of the many amazing facts about the project.

When asked how much the Slater System was making on special food nights, John said that they were not making any. Has the Slater System suddenly gone altruistic? Not precisely, he said, but the profit is insignificant compared to the overhead. All profits

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Opprobrium

That it was an inevitable consequence of an opprobrious direction affairs had taken since the inception of the mystical revelation apparent to no one simultaneously, effecting inordinate ontological interpretations which comprehend no change preferring not to; however in retrospect unseemingly indignantly convenient apologies wring a dismal responsibility incurring catastrophic concessions, repudiating traditional conceptions of motivation, frightening no one--who can say save the day gone the sun.

-Bartleby Philler



Seduction of a Crow

An old crow, unable to fly, fell in with a group of rabbits who were nice enough but nothing spectacular. The crow should have known better but, because he couldn't fly and be a real crow, he preferred the phony insouciance of rodents. He thought that a taste for lettuce and easy virtue would change everything, but he forgot how conspicuous one can be with useless wings.

Moral? Keep off the poison Ivy.

-Don Fleet

New Trends in Taste

Whereas the mainstreams are deep and murky, generalizations may be made on the basis of such mirrors of taste in formation as the Hegeman bulletin board. Here gather the book connoisseurs to inform us of the latest current of thought; here we find the mournful proof that modern youth is abandoning faith in intelligence and becoming degenerate. Here Arthur Marcus sells Love in the Western World to eager students, while Judith Goode (Albee 22) tries desperately to get rid of her polo coat. Other discarded garments include Jack Hirschfeld's White Collar in brand-new condition, and his Casuals of the Sea (for summer wear). In addition, he offers an Amazing Marriage under leather covers. May Asher is selling her Age of Innocence (not to mention her Sons and Lovers), Ry Greene will do business about The Making of Societies for 10 cents. Here ambulatory trends are indicated by A walker in the City taking a Walk on the Wild Side by the Mainstream of Mathematics; if he prefers, Alan Leventhal will sell tickets for a Visit to a Small Planet (he can take along Ed Golden's International Stamp Album), or A.T.C. a journey of pilgrimage to Knute Rockne's birthplace. Going begging are Morals (Ry Greene), Ethics (Arthur Marcus), Christianity and Existentialism (Curtis Daniell), Logic (Arthur Marcus). Thus we see modern youth in decadence and escapism. O Tempora, O Mores!

-John Jay Anthony

Bertien Jacobs' Mid-Way Review

Bertien Jacobs, in an exhibition of woodcuts, drawings and water-colors, displays a refreshingly light and sensitive quality.

Well-composed and colorful, her prints combine a sensitivity of line with an understanding of the problems of space. The print of the old man is an intricate balance of color, form and line. Skillfully cut, the print retains the spontaneity to be found in the preliminary drawings.

Bertien, in this interesting exhibit, displays her knowledge of the media, together with a style that is both rich and delightfully free.

-R.G.S.

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A Hungry Artist

During the past few weeks, the interest in fasting has markedly increased among the masses. As a result, a few professionals have decided to exhibit their strength in the art of fasting. Their only satisfaction is in the food for their soul. They themselves, of course, do not feel any effects, but the general public is very enthusiastic as to the strength of these true artists.

One particular artist has raised himself in the esteem of his colleagues, and most particularly in the esteem of the crowds. He has perfected his art above and beyond any of the others, for occasionally they succumb to a palatable meal. He is an old veteran at this special brand of creativity, having remained here the longest period of time essential to promotion, and now he glories completely in it. In fact, he revels so entirely that he is quite unconscious of the fact that most of his contemporaries have dropped his staunch stand as being old-fashioned. He still arrives punctually at every meal and orders with a rather pained ascetic smile his usual cup of black coffee, and remains during the entire meal to acquire the compliments his fortitude requires. His worst moments are when because of the week's dreadful culinary endowments upon the masses, everyone succumbs to his usual pose. He is then only a voice in a million crying out his feat. Naturally his dramatic effect is lost upon all, and his emaciated form must retire gracefully to an ugly silence.

After four years it has become the custom to indoctrinate every new arrival to our society by showing him the spiritual rewards he attains if he too abstains from the culinary experiments set before him. The first year, naturally, our artist was used as the primary example of one who had attained the final goal. Each succeeding year, however, strangely enough, he has had a falling off of his ardent followers. The trend of newcomers seemed to turn in another direction. They seemed to accept everything (except for, of course, a few cases) with perfect candor. The artist was no longer pampered for his spiritual efforts, for even his old admirers grew bored with him. Not knowing what else to do, in a final desperate attempt, he devised a clever plan.

He decided to import several leopards from a nearby settlement of a similar crowd of individuals. These leopards, he was sure, would clarify to his crowd the need for at least one "artist" to remain predominant among them. At the appointed moment these leopards arrived in fine sleek buses, and were allowed to descend upon the hallowed eating grounds. They made fine growling noises, and frightened everybody with their ferocity. Our artist ensconced himself immediately within the presence of these fine animals and devoutly ordered his cup of coffee. But they, to his dismay, made no complimentary remark, but only wolfed down all set before them, and regarded all the beautiful white damsels our artist had set around them in order to entice them to visit with his group.

His final attempt at salvation having failed miserably, our friend retired to a prostrate position with the final enigmatic words, "If I had found the food I liked, I should have made no fuss and stuffed myself like you or anyone else."

-Toni Ratensky

"Est-ce L'Homme?"

Ending at long last two months of unsatisfied curiosity, Mr. Andrews Wanning presented his talk, scheduled last semester, on "Custom and Convention in Literature."

Starting from the rather irreproachable premise that man is the combined product of his culture and of a certain amount of originality, Mr. Wanning treated with charm and humor that difference in style of Elizabethan and Restoration authors which sprang from differences in the values and social conventions of the day.

The Elizabethan time was one of much individuality, with no standard literary

style. The speaker illustrated this lack of a set convention by presenting numerous different spellings of a single word as used by a single author in one work. A large number of new words, incorporated from other languages, were used by the authors of the day to strengthen the effectiveness of their style and, as Mr. Wanning pointed out, these words were vital ones, dealing with concepts we could not do without in the English language today.

The Restoration, however, enamored of Rationality, and influenced by (sometimes mistaken) notions of etymology, standardized spelling and established a highly convention-

from Kappa House go to the community.

John has worked devotedly on the project, doing much of the physical labor himself and sinking fifty dollars of his own into it, mostly in the last three days before its opening (indeed, with such enthusiasm that the jukebox was operating for a day or two before permission was received to run it). "I got wonderful support from faculty and administration," he says, "Of course, this" --the present setup-- "is only the beginning." Among plans under foot (or, perhaps, over head?) he cites: meeting rooms; better food than other facilities at lower cost, on an all-day basis; quiet study hall with classical music (why must there be music in a quiet study hall? It helps, says John, to drown out the noise from downstairs); and a general re-furnishing (in the course of which a large empty room upstairs will become a dance practice room) which will be the principal expenditure of the \$4500 appropriated by Council.

At present there are a study facility and a television room (half an hour of antenna adjustment produced one station, in Schenectady) open on the second floor, both being totally unpopulated when visited on two consecutive nights. On the other hand, the chess set is extensively used.

What do its users think of Kappa House? Several people there expressed opinions. A member of the Kappa House Committee stated (not precisely, but a college newspaper may have young impressionable readers) that "the people down here tonight -- they're a bunch of runny-nosed dastards, the kind that belong in a fraternity." A girl standing next to the band thought it nice but too noisy; the boy next to her thought it a very good idea, "having a place to go every night of the week."

A member of the Fire Department was asked for his opinion of Kappa House and felt that it was "all right"; and did the writer have change of a dollar for the jukebox? To the strains (sic) of the resulting music, one could observe "the sunless pleasures of the weary."

-Ernest Singer

Editorial Board

David Robison

Ernest Singer

Avron Soyer

Contributors:

John Jay Anthony

Paula Cohen

Don Fleet

Ry Greene

Don Parker

Bartleby Philler

Toni Ratensky

R. G. S.

Francis Zuckerman

88 Obstacles, cont.

A meeting of the Trustees, at which money for at least the one piano immediately imperative for the creative survival of the music department could be set aside, takes place in New York on Friday, March 15. The piano shortage must be brought to its attention.

The student community has been asked to make sacrifices for the academic life of Bard. If our living in a community has any meaning at all, it is that we have a vital interest in its development. If it is so that the welfare of the institution has priority over the inconveniences of individuals, though only within strict limits, then the academic essence of Bard comes before more superficial considerations. Even accepting the administration's contention that the present financial circumstances are straightened, nevertheless, we see that money has been found for several projects, not as essential to Bard's academic life as the pianos, which are capable of injuring the life of Bard College at its source. Furthermore the Trustees were willing to spend \$1500 for the Sands project--this sum now would purchase one second-hand piano of good quality as a stop-gap measure--and the need has grown with the mid-term expansion of the department.

The indifference shown by the Administration towards basic academic needs emphasises that if Bard wishes to leave Footprints in the Sands of Time*, these must not be allowed to erode away through negligence.

*Case, Convocation Speeches, 195?-1956

Longfellow, A Psalm of Life, Boston, 187?

Field Period: A Study

People come and go, but institutions are the buttressed ideals of human experience and they remain. And if these masterpieces of Man's contrivance, larger than himself, tend to be immovable and resist change, it is because people with all their good points lack these qualities and must seek them in the collective enterprise of the race. Without the direction afforded by institutions it is certain the human drama would resemble an insubstantial pageant of butterflies.

This appraisal of Man and his self-imposed restrictions lends itself particularly well to a persuasive argument which concerns Bard and affects us all. While it must be admitted that the college owns some embarrassments of a more or less scandalous nature, failings known to all to exist in the music department, the art library, the restaurant businesses, interfraternal affairs and so forth, still no one can confess shame with regard to the really vital organs of Bard. The reference here is of course to our institutions. Bard has, and indeed is known throughout the academic world to possess, some of the most vigorous and original institutions of any college of its kind. Perhaps the least controversial of them is yet the one which best captures the flavor of all. Field Period is typical and therefore useful to anyone wishing to examine Bard through the study of one of the college's more successful programs.

What is the purpose of the Field Period?

The purpose of the Field Period is to introduce young adults, fresh from wherever students come, to the opportunities which exist in the outside world; this at a time when they would normally expect to spend all and not just part of their lives acquainted with only those pleasant simplicities furnished by the academic routine. In other words while the refinements of scholarship are themselves a necessary phase in the development of the potential leaders of society, it has been recognized by progressive educators that what was formerly neglected in the consideration of student needs is in reality indispensable. This revalued commodity is nothing rarer or more elusive than life itself! On contact the full meaning behind the philosophy of Field Period is staggering in its elemental force: Life! Living! The Sixth Avenue Subway! Here

is a concept so simple and so beautiful and compelling that to grasp it is like the realization that one has been wearing one's eyeglasses all the while one has been searching for them. Certain cynics have assured us that a more complete lesson can be taken from the above analogy by assuming the eyeglasses are equipped with opaque lenses.

Somebody has said that behind Field Period is an ideal. That this is true can be seen from the relatively few cases of dissatisfied students who are relatively unhappy each year as a result of their expected unsucccess. But all take heart from the annual examples of conspicuous achievements. It seems almost silly to mention some of these rewarding adventures; we all know of them, and we applaud the ingenuity which made them possible. In spite of the obvious difficulties one imaginative political science major managed to spend a profitable Field Period as the chief lieutenant to an ambitious Latin-American army colonel in the latter's abortive attempt to seize the presidency of one of the smaller republics to the South. Though this student's services were entirely voluntary, and he even had to supply his own weapons and ammunition, still our adventurer declares that his five weeks of field work were the most exciting of his life. There was a little misunderstanding on his return to college because certain formalities of a clerical nature were necessarily omitted, and not all of the time away from college was spent on the job. But in this instance an exception to the rule was allowed owing to the unfortunate outcome and abbreviated length of the work. Other and almost equally brilliant experiences were harvested during this past Field Period. V.A., a sociology major in her sophomore year, passed an enlightening period in an occupation which has been traditionally misunderstood by society. Her job provided her with rich and varied opportunities for studying behavior patterns in urban populations. She directed particular emphasis to the situation of underprivileged young men in their relations to a world growing increasingly complex and yet simpler and more elementary.

These selections from the file of the more determined students illustrate clearly the accent on individuality which the institution of Field Period nourishes. They say nothing of the not to be sneezed at incidental economic benefits to the college which happily result as well. Not wishing to slavishly follow other more conventional colleges in their endeavor to insure a minimum of profit to all at the expense of individual brilliance, Bard remains

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"Est-ce L'Homme?", cont.

alized literary style, emphasizing clearness of expression.

The number of foreign words decreased as this practice was considered affected and, as the speaker demonstrated in a scene from a comedy of the day, the new words were for the most part non-vital terms defining certain social nuances. Mr. Wanning pointed out that a highly conventionalized style has its advantages in that it renders deviation from the norm more meaningful and weighty. While a bizarre spelling in Elizabethan times (if this were possible) would not particularly strike the reader's eye or sensibilities, a distortion in a modern work will start the public free-associating at random. Likewise, slight differences in tone would be more noticeable where a "polite" standard was set.

While Mr. Wanning is, as I have said, a thoroughly charming and diverting speaker, one could not help but regret that he chose to devote the bulk of the evening to following the intricacies of spelling change, rather than speaking about the changes in theme - or enlarging upon a highly interesting issue he did touch: the problem of whether the author should aim for a maximum of communication with the reader by adhering to the language conventions of the day, or strive for the fullest expression of his personal vision while running the risk that this will not "get across." Mr. Wanning advised prospective authors not to strive for originality of expression as an end in itself unless the insight to be expressed is so original that it demands a new form. In the question and answer period, Mr. Wanning spoke of Faulkner as one whose form is necessary in conveying the author's message. He mentioned, in particular, Faulkner's practice of using page-long sentences to give the reader the impression that many thoughts are passing through the character's mind, compelling him, simultaneously. Mr. Wanning also passed a brief judgement on Joyce, who, he feels, does not express anything new in his works, but successfully exploits the rich potentialities of the language, as an end in itself.

-Frances Zuckerman

Field Period, cont.

grimly attached to the theory that the spectacular accomplishments of the few will incite the many who are moderately clever and even the hopeless to the attainment of the impossible. EX UNO DISCE OMNES, or TO THE HAPPY FEW.

- Don Fleet

Art Appreciation...

To the person who borrowed two paintings of mine: my deepest thanks for the compliment; however, your appreciation does nothing to improve or supplement my field period credit. Beyond a point of credit, there is a question of respect -- respect for my work, and your respect. Vainly hoping that your self-respect would bring action, I waited several days before going to school officials with no results. Mrs. Bourne now knows the situation, and if the paintings are returned in the next few days, no action will be taken against the borrower. If they are not returned, appropriate measures will be taken.

The paintings were taken some time between registration night and the following Friday. The Hungarians had left - they cannot be blamed. One painting was 20" by 20" and the other was 14" by 20"; the latter was on a homemade stretcher and the first was removed from its stretchers when it was taken. Both were snowscapes. If anyone has any information, please see Mrs. Bourne or myself. I will appreciate any help... particularly return of my paintings.

-Ry Greene

Grub

Beginning Tuesday, March 19, a new after-midnight snack concession similar to that of the Davis' last semester, will be run by Steve Weiss and Don Parker.

The route will be as follows:

Mansion.....	12:10
Hopson.....	12:25
Fairbairn.....	12:30
Seymour.....	12:35
South Hoffman.....	12:45
McVicker.....	12:50
Potter.....	12:55
South Barracks.....	1:30
Du-D.....	1:35
Du-B.....	1:40
Du-A.....	1:45

The concession will be operating Sunday through Thursday nights.

-Don Parker