



The Journal of
the New Middle

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Bard College Community

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COUNCIL PASSES "THEFT" LEGISLATION

Something ambiguously referred to as "the library matter" was hastily inserted into the Council Planned Agenda just before the Monday night meeting. Nevertheless, more light and heat was generated over this issue by students and faculty than on any other issue presented. The only silent one turned out to be Mr. Boynton of the Administration.

The issue of theft of library materials was a major one at St. Stephens in 1923, according to Mr. Fessler, and nothing has ever been done about it. However, the recent crisis is precipitated by the theft of new equipment and records, and is alarming a great many outside of the library staff. Furthermore, the issue now involves stealing from the

bookstore, dining commons, and the coffee shop. In summary, here are the arguments presented by the main disputants.

Mr. Helmer: He is against the present dichotomy of punishing some and not others; "it is not ethical". In the Bard Community, the same standards should be observed as in the outside, where one is judged not so much by the intention but by the action. His motion: "That anyone who walks out with a book be considered a thief." As applies to a number of other places, including student dorms, he moved that the penalty for stealing be dismissal of the person for the remainder of the semester. He also suggested that signs be put up in the library to remind people not to forget to sign out books. The fear of dismissal might strike fear, but only fear in the mind of the person meaning to steal, he maintained. We agreed to the amendment providing for a one week amnesty to be granted in which all who have stolen merchandise may return it.

Councilwoman Anita McClan: "we can put up barbed-wire. We can even put up a railing to remind people". Dean Hodgkinson believes the railing in the bookstore stops a good many potential thefts. We should have strict hours and maybe a policeman. "Let's really go to town. Let's turn it into a prison; let the inmates get a chance at certain times to use it."

Councilman Harvey Fleetwood: He felt most people who do not sign out books do so because the two week deadline is too short. "Everybody I know-I don't know, maybe I hang around a bad group-has taken a book without signing." He pointed to the hypocrisy in the system: professors are often guilty of holding a book

for a long period of time; and seniors are allowed to take a book out for the entire semester.

Councilwoman Dev Tarrow: In reply to Mr. Fleetwood: "Mr. Fleetwood, maybe you do run around in a bad crowd. It's a pitiful analogy." Punishment won't do anything in the long run. She believes that there will always be people who will get away with it. "We can't do without rules and we can't do without them." She suggested turning the library into a communal library. This would also mean unlocking every door in the Community. It would be a greater responsibility than ever before.

Mr. Fessler: In the beginning the open door policy in regard to the new equipment worked. After three weeks, it fell apart. The self-instituted, self-discipline disappeared, along with needles, cart-ridges, records. The library was forced to take strong action. He thought the students could demonstrate a change in attitude by a self-initiated room search by the students, under the direction of the House Presidents, to turn up stolen materials. No action was taken on this proposal at the meeting.

In a role call vote, with only Dev Tarrow voting "no", the motion and amendment were voted through. The motion is effective after the one week amnesty period. Dismissal decisions will be adjudicated by the Administration.

The Bard Papers, under the faculty leadership of Mr. Coover, asked for \$450 but was granted \$200 for expansion of the publication. Because of the great response to the project, they thought two issues of 24 pages each could be published. Council cut it to one 32 page publication, to include original music scores, translations, art work, interdivisional work, and a novel in progress, among other things. Council also allotted \$50 to Bruce Leiberman of SDS for a speaker from Antioch. David Mydens was granted \$17 to attend the China Conference at Harvard.

Chairman Edmonds sketchily outlined the results of a three hour meeting of the Constitutional Committee. The proposals are for a new "power structure". 1) An Executive Committee: to be composed of three faculty, two administrative, and two student representatives, and to deal with faculty, administrative, and student proposals. 2) A student government with a President and Vice-President, with the Vice-President running Council meetings. 3) A Judicial Board, to consider all Community violations. 4) The House President's Committee, to function as a court of appeal to the Judicial Board, and to handle many matters

presently considered by the Institutional Committee and the Safety Committee. More work has to be done, however, before any action will be taken on these proposals.

Councilwoman Dev Tarrow read the results of the Community Poll on the Faculty Senate proposals.

The results of 115 ballots:

1) This entire plan is based on the premise of a student population of 600 students for the next five years.

Agreed 92%

2) All students must pass a minimum of nine hours in each Division for graduation.

Agree 42% Disagree 55%

3) Pre-registration:

Agree 89% Disagree 7%

4) Three types of courses:

Seminar/studio 12%

course 20%

lecture 20+

5) Distribution of courses (choice instead of requirement) except Freshman English, Backgrounds, and Common Course.

6) Each department should submit a 2 year plan of course offerings.

Agree 85% Disagree 14%

7) UC and LC courses and lectures should be more sharply defined in content and enrollment. The enrollment of juniors and seniors in LC courses and Freshman and sophomore in UC courses should be kept at a minimum:

Agree 37% Disagree 52%

8) A criterion should be established for the use of the Executive Committee so that two thirds of the courses would be given in the LC.

Agree 32% Disagree 25%

9) If instituted these proposals and their effects should be thoroughly reviewed:

Agree 25%

Elected to the Safety Committee were: Charles Clancy, Douglas Kabat, Alan Koehler, and Glenn Pmerance. Dev Tarrow will serve on the Committee as the Council Representative. No real election took place-they were just installed-since there were four vacancies and four candidates/

Linda Boldt reported that nothing much could be reported from the Total Program Committee. The Freshman Car Poll, she promised, would be out this week.

cc

ERRATA

Once there was a student at Bard who racked her brains and thought very hard and wrote an article in the hopes to retard the controversy over Field Period at Bard.

Happy to see her name in print Her smile soon became a squint

here or in the Observer, will know, Council this semester is attacking problems of class organization, class size, pre-registration, and other questions of academic policy—all of which directly involve faculty members in the decision-making and policy-making processes. It seems a particularly inopportune time for the faculty to begin asking, "where do we fit in?". Obviously, the answer is—practically everywhere !!

The faculty has not solved the problem of bad communication between themselves and the students by quitting one of the prime arenas for that communication to take place. Neither do they set a very good example for the students who are constantly urged to "get committed".

The Editors

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"THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CRAP GAME"

I believe it was Bill Mauldin who used the phrase above in describing the proposed lottery for national Selective Service. His terminology is quite appropriate, and adequately expresses my own revulsion towards such a system. One wonders if the President's advisory committee has been reading too much Shirley Jackson, for this is as much macabre impersonality in this lottery as in hers.

At this point I should make two things clear. First, I am opposed to compulsory national service, military or non-military, on principle. One of my fundamental values is that the state exists to serve the people, and not vice versa. The idea of compelling everyone in a society to become a government hireling for a specified period of time smacks too much of totalitarianism for my taste. Second, I am not a mere apologist for the status quo. Although in the course of this article I defend the present Selective Service system, this does not mean I find it particularly appealing or satisfactory. But at the moment, the only real alternative is the lottery system, and I find that far less appealing.

The major argument for the lottery is that it will be more "democratic" than the present system. The people who advance this opinion must have a different notion of democracy than I do. If democracy means deciding matters of life and death through means of an electronic fishbowl, or treating each member of society as a slit on an IBM card without regard to individual merits or peculiarities, then indeed the lottery is democratic. Using the same line of reasoning, the President of the United States and the

Congress, as well as members of the Supreme Court, should be chosen by lot. This is entirely consistent with the view that a human being is only a number, a warm body, and that one is just as good as another for performing certain functions or duties, since none have special or unique abilities, beliefs, or potentialities.

A lesser argument is that the lottery would make all the losers who happen to be in college leave and join the service. The assumption is that all college students are rich, middle-class (at least), and culturally advantaged, and are getting the privilege of a deferment because they've already had these prior privileges.

This assumption fails to take into account the large number of students receiving scholarships or loans, or working their way through. Also, a fair number of students from culturally disadvantaged families are now getting into college because of these available funds. A lottery system would have no regard for such people, lumping them with the "bourgeoisie", yanking them out of school, and sending them to die on a rice-paddy somewhere. One of the functions of the deferment system is to channel manpower into areas useful to the society, i.e. medicine, college, strategic industries, teaching, etc. The lottery system would fail to perform this function, and would perhaps give rise to severe economic and social dislocations.

Finally, there seem to me to be two considerations which have scarcely been discussed at all recently. First, did the President's committee investigate the cost of maintaining the selective service system (with its 4,000 local boards, secretaries, induction and processing paraphernalia, etc.) with the cost of boosting military pay and benefits sufficiently to make a military career more attractive to young men? In other words, did they try to determine whether it would be economically feasible to eliminate involuntary service, and, if not, why not? Second, it seems that under the present draft law, the President has extremely wide discretionary powers. He can implement most of the proposed changes without ever consulting Congress. I don't know what the rationale for this virtual carte blanche might be, but I think it unwise to vest this much power in one man's hands. Perhaps when the draft law next comes up for renewal, Congress should reclaim some of the powers it has mandated away.

Our society is trying hard enough to turn us into numbers on a punch card. It would be tragic if matters of life and death were to be determined by the whims of an electronic roulette wheel. A human being's life should be worth more than that.

Jeffrey T. Mortimer

BOOKS AND BEHEVENCE

As is the case with most publications, books sent gratis for review in print may be kept by the reviewer. Up till now, this has been the Observer's Policy. The editors have been faithfully obeyed.

Yet, I doubt that Mr. Fessler for one, would object if the Community minded, crusading Observer deemed it a service to the Bard student (of which it is the official publication) to send the books to the library for all to use.

However, the editors should not be pressured by considerations such as: That the newspaper is owned by the Community, or that the Library is always in need of books of merit. On the other hand, Mr. Fleetwood might someday be asked what happens to the books he does not have reviewed. Likely, that question will never come up.

Probably, the Observer's staff has already deemed it a worthy move anyway, so I beg his pardon if I have spoiled the surprise.

Stuart Green

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THEFT ACCORDING TO HOYLE

It has come to our attention that Council, in its almighty wisdom has passed a motion to curb vandalism on this campus. The latest incident in the continuing story of vandalism at Bard is the disappearance of yet another cartridge and stylus from the music room of the library. It is deplorable to think that anyone could be so low as to decide that they need this vital part more than anyone else on this campus. Council was outraged, and rightly. The disappearance of books and periodicals fits into the same category.

However, Council saw fit to make a blanket arrangement for the termination of all stealing. A motion was passed last Monday which read, "Any person caught red-handed in the act of stealing be suspended for the remainder of the term." This motion passed 6-0-1. We would like to now present what we consider a few shortcomings of the afore mentioned edict.

First: by suspending anyone who is "caught red-handed in the act of stealing..." it is implied that people are going to be caught. We maintain that merely threatening to suspend someone is not going to actually catch them. In other words, what is being punished is not stealing, but inefficient stealing. The student response to this will be to develop precision theft.

Second: There seems to be no distinction in types of theft. Should someone walk off with a pencil from the sign-out desk, they are just as liable for suspension as the person who absconds with the entire Encyclopedia Britanica. It is assumed that both are "caught red-handed".

Third, and possibly most important, is the definition of stealing. Webster defines "stealing" as: "Act of one who steals; theft." So, we must tie to the verb "to steal": "To take and carry away feloniously. To appropriate to oneself furtively or secretly; as to steal a kiss."

Now that we have defined the term, let's see what we can fit into this definition. It now seems that if one blatantly and openly walks out of the library with the Encyclopedia Britanica, he cannot be accused of stealing, hence not suspended for the same. On the other hand, if some good Samaritan should furtively pick up a candy wrapper and carry it away, being "caught red-handed" with the item will constitute "stealing" and suspension will follow.

Again, by our definition, we can carry this to ludicrous extremes. Should some poor, forlorn co-ed be drowning her troubles "down the road" and feel the necessity to "steal a kiss", once again she may look forward to suspension.

We contend that the latest edict to pass from the hallowed halls of Council is frivolous and ineffectual. It is conceivable to view this new ruling as a veiled attempt at alleviating many of the problems brought on by Bard's overpopulation; i.e. if all the thieves were suspended Bard's classes would be very VERY small.

There is no way in which the new ruling can be fairly invoked in its present form. We put forward to Council that their present motion be stricken, and in its place something to the effect that anyone who removes materials from the library or bookstore, and does not follow the proscribed procedure for procurement of these articles, would then be liable for punitive measures.

All students who are interested in this problem are urged to attend next week's Council meeting and make their views known.

Bill Bump
Jeffrey Mortimer
Ilene Rosen

Interested Query:

Is the reason the potholes are not being fixed because the B&G men have a pool on which car will be destroyed first by driving through them?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Mr. Mortimer,
The Village Voice and your Miscellany last week seemed to find some mystery or treason in the recent votes of Senators Kennedy and Fulbright for the supplemental military appropriations.

As a one-time politician yourself, I am sure you recognize the problem of tactics: there are many ways for the critics of the terrible blunder in Vietnam to express their opposition-- and a vote on appropriation may seem better to some than to others. Some opponents of the Vietnam disaster will march, some will picket or petition.

A lot of us are waiting until 1968 to vote against the man who betrayed his promises in 1964 and now has the full support of Barry Goldwater-- who says Johnson is just following the old Goldwater program.

Robert J. Koblitz

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