

1981

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Students of Bryn Mawr College

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# COLLEGE NEWS

## Bryn Mawr's earlier summer school

Bryn Mawr's new Summer Science Program, on the verge of its second year, is the first summer school held on this campus in over forty years. It has a predecessor, however. Back in the early history of the College, for seventeen summers this campus bustled with the studies and struggles of a very different sort of summer school: the Bryn Mawr Summer School for Women Workers in Industry.

The brainchild of M. Carey Thomas, the School was the first workers summer school of many to be sponsored by American colleges. According to the original Statement of Purpose, the school intended "to offer young women of character and ability a fuller education in order that they may widen their influence in the industrial world, help in the coming social reconstruction, and increase the happiness and usefulness of their own lives."

The Summer School opened in 1921 with 82 women workers, ages 18-35. Financed by donations from Bryn Mawr students, trade union organizations, and other sources, the School was opened free of charge to the poverty-stricken young women, who could never have afforded even a small tuition. The first director was the capable Hilda Worthington Smith, BMC class of '10, who was then Dean of the College.

Curriculum offerings of the first year included English, history, science, hygiene, music appreciation, economics, and women in the labor movement. In later years the emphasis shifted toward economics and labor relations. The concern was always over how to make the scant eight weeks as relevant as possible to the workers. Many of them came in with no more than an elementary school education, and for most of them there would be no second summer at the School.

The students, starved for education, were frantically eager to learn. Many were risking their jobs by taking time off for education. Director Hilda Smith recounts in her autobiography an instance of their motivation:

One day ... when an ill-advised instructor had cut his class, protesting students rushed to the Summer School office, all demanding indignantly that they be given time to make up that lost hour of work. This incident contrasted strangely with similar episodes in college classes where, in the absence of the professor, the students

watched the clock until the magic moment when they could legally escape (pp. 127-128).

Often, though, the workers reacted with bewilderment to the unfamiliar new concepts they were learning, particularly in science classes. "Well, I tell you," declared one, "I'm no mammal!"

Accustomed to a narrow existence of hard work and wretched living conditions, many students were diffident at first in their new surroundings. Smith recalls a student who fearfully declined an invitation to "come to tea":

Later ... she confessed that she had read about 'teas' in the society columns of papers, but thought good clothes and good manners were always required and she feared she could not qualify for the party. When she discovered, later, students and faculty in shorts and knickerbockers chatting comfortably together while they consumed quarts of ice tea, her confidence was restored and she joined the others (pp. 119-120).

Not only in teas but in larger matters, the Summer School reflected the values of its parent College. Florence Hemley Schneider writes in *Patterns of Workers' Education: The Story of the Bryn Mawr Summer School (1941)*:

Trade unions and other groups have stated that workers' education for women is artificial and does not mirror accurately the life situations the workers must face. With the exception of the Bryn Mawr institution, therefore, the resident summer schools became coeducational (pp. 89-90).

The Summer School for Women Workers in Industry convened at Bryn Mawr for the last time in 1938. The next summer, due to tensions generated by the growing Labor Movement, the Summer School moved to New York to become the Hudson Shore Labor School for Women Workers in Industry.

No doubt the Summer School at Bryn Mawr helped to fulfill M. Carey Thomas's dream, "the coming of equal opportunity for the manual workers of the world." It also brought new meaning to the lives of many struggling women laborers. Said one, "Here I have found a place for myself. I feel I am not just a part of a piece of machinery."

--Betay Duren

## COMMENCEMENT

Commencement exercises for the class of 1981 will be held on Merion Green at 2:00 pm on Sunday, May 17. Judianne Densen-Gerber '56, doctor, lawyer, and founder of the Odyssey Institute, a drug rehabilitation center in New York, will speak.

Garden party will take place on Saturday, May 16 at 3:30 pm on the lawn in front of Wyndham.

## Security: one year later

Mr. Vincent DeCerchio, Director of College Security, summed up this past year at Bryn Mawr, saying, "Our first year has been an extremely busy one, more busy than I had ever anticipated." Although he feels that many things have been accomplished this year, he realizes that much lies ahead of him.

In the past, DeCerchio and the Security Office have had to handle the transportation needs of the College. While the Blue and Social buses have to run, Security must also take care of transportation for special events, and runs to the train station and the infirmary. The campus shuttle is an addition to the services provided to the College, and DeCerchio stated that it "works well." Students who need to get to Brecon or Glenmede can call Security from 7:30 to 12:15 every night on the hour to get the shuttle to pick them up. Other new arrangements include a "hostel" type of service for students stranded on campus. An escort service has become available to take students back to their own campus after the last Blue Bus has run at 1:30 a.m.

New officers have joined the security staff, so that now three security people patrol the 4 p.m. to midnight shift. There are eight security officers and three bus drivers. Ideally, bus transportation services would not be considered part of Security's duties, according to DeCerchio. The security officers must finish a three week training program and follow instruction in procedures for handling any type of security problem.

Mr. DeCerchio felt that

students must also learn to be aware of security problems and their responsibilities towards them. To this end, the office of security has held a security-awareness poster contest, has distributed "lock your door and take your key" stickers, and DeCerchio has met with students at hall meetings to talk about security problems and the measures that they may take in dealing with them. During this coming summer, Mr. DeCerchio plans to write a student manual about security.

Ninety-eight percent of the construction problems that concerned Security have been solved. The spring and summer, however, pose additional challenges. The warmer weather and relaxed atmosphere mean more visitors strolling into the campus, students leaving lower-floor windows open and hall doors unattended, and a myriad of other difficulties. Student attitude has been and can be quite a problem for security. Mr. DeCerchio said that he can't understand why some students dislike the security department, and have an unrealistic and resentful view to security needs. He emphasized the need to lock doors and the near-refusal on the part of some students to do so. Others seem unsympathetic and impatient. Mr. DeCerchio gave an example of this, saying that students are often unwilling to wait for security to let them in when they have forgotten their keys, even while the security van is making an infirmary run.

Despite problems, Mr. DeCerchio has many positive feelings about the work being

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## Decisions are made on renovation work

Lively renovations work will overrun the campus this summer. The projects include Pew Grant work, spot renovations, and the drafting of plans for the new gymnasium.

Pew Grant funds this summer will go to energy conservation measures and an underground fireline. The Board of Trustees has decided definitely not to renovate any whole residence hall this summer. They plan to save approximately \$400,000 of this summer's \$1.5 million for full-scale renovations of Pembroke West in the summer of '82.

Spot renovations will be financed out of the College's regular maintenance funds rather than Pew funds. A major project is the bathrooms in Pembroke West. Fixtures will

be replaced and a new ceiling installed; the estimated cost is \$40,000 to \$50,000. The Merion bathrooms are also scheduled for improvements next summer, the exact extent of which has not yet been determined.

Ten to twelve student rooms in the basement of Rhoads will be renovated, according to Director of Physical Plant John Kelch. "They'll be small ones, but they'll be attractive," he said.

President McPherson advocates a plan to turn part of the Denbigh attic, currently used for storage, into student rooms this summer. Kelch said he is now working on getting cost proposals to submit to the administration. He expects a final decision within a week. The work would be simple, explained Hall Service Supervisor Dave Louie, because windows, doors, insulation lights, and even firealarms and sprinklers already exist in the attic. Only partitioning and plaster would be required.

Regular maintenance funds will also finance renovations of the Erdman and Haffner kitchens.

Plans for the new gymnasium are well underway. The possible sites have been reduced to three: the current hockey field, the old power house, and the Robin Hood Dell. A special meeting of the Board of Trustees in late June will examine design plans for each site, and construction may begin as early as October. Donald MacPherson, director of the Building Improvement Project, said that the starting date for construction "depends on the result of the survey [of the three sites] and a

## A FAREWELL

For all of you who have wondered whom to lynch, The College Muse admits that, for two years, she has intermittently inspired, expired, and otherwise driven to distraction Elizabeth M. Patton.

I wish to acknowledge here my gratitude for the support of my friends, to the major poets for NOT rising from their graves (although, for all I know, they may be turning in them), to the editors, past and present, of the College News for putting up with my Writer's Block (which I hereby bequeath to the Copy Center). I wish also to express my contempt for the State of Pennsylvania, which has revoked my Poetic License (writing while under the influence of T.S. Eliot, with subsequent Insult and Quotery against a Security Officer).

It's been a truly cosmic experience writing for you all. I can do no better than urge you, in the words of Dr. Demento, to

"STAY DEMENTED!!!"

--Papagena, Erasmus, or EMP

Board decision, probably in October." The date of completion is even more nebulous. According to President McPherson, funds for the new gym will probably have to be borrowed against the anticipated revenue from the Centennial Campaign, which will climax in 1985.

--Betsy Duren



## Life in the real world — an alumna speaks...

Yes, Virginia, there is a real world out there, and how it can exist in the same universe as Bryn Mawr without one of the two imploding into a black hole is something many recent alumnae find it difficult to understand. (The answer, of course, is very simple: one of the two already is a black hole. We won't say which.) To avoid culture shock as much as possible, all graduating seniors not going to grad school really should be taken off somewhere and deprogrammed; failing that, you may wish to sit down with a sustaining cup of tea and these Guidelines to the Real World.

**Rule #1.** It's true -- unless you can find an oil sheik who's willing to fit you into his harem, you are probably going to be forced to obtain gainful employment. Still, don't panic. Other Bryn Mawr graduates have done it. I even know a Latin major who has a job now. And remember, there is a silver lining: you will never have to spend another all-nighter with your honors paper. The real world is coed and has other things to offer.

**Rule #2.** Plans to save rent by living in a cardboard box in the park are really not practical. You're going to have to find an apartment, too, unless you can persuade your parents to give you your room back (if they replaced it with an indoor tennis court freshman year, you're in trouble, true). Yes, the apartment situation in New York, San Francisco, and every other city with anything at all to offer is indeed tight, but as you stand in line waiting to be the sixtieth person to view a renovated doghouse without indoor plumbing, it is calming to remember that most beloved litany of all alumnae: "You graduated from Bryn Mawr. You can do anything." Eventually you will indeed find an apartment, and the long delay will only make

Security done on campus. He meets regularly with the SGA president and the fire marshals. The students are invited to come in and discuss any questions concerning Security that they have. All reports of security-related matters are open to inspection. Mr. DeCerchio stated, on various issues, that Brecon, although an outlying hall, posed no special security risks. With regard to fire safety, DeCerchio said that he was working on a new system for fire emergency procedures, based on a survey of procedures at other colleges. Finally, Mr. DeCerchio stressed patience and responsibility as key factors in the quality of security at Bryn Mawr. He has many plans for the future, and hopes that the efforts of both security staff and students will complement each other in making security at Bryn Mawr effective.

--Ellen Medearis

you appreciate it the more. The peeling plaster and the total lack of hot water ought to remind you pleasantly of college days, anyway, especially if you lived in pre-renovation Radnor or post-renovation Denbigh.

**Rule #3.** There is no doubt that you can cook better than the Bryn Mawr Food Service. This is a great comfort. Of course, you may not be able to afford food for a while, but what's another six months of subsisting solely on Pepperidge Farm Goldfish? You've probably done it for four years anyway and you can always console yourself with the thought that you might get into the food section of The Guinness Book of World Records.

**Rule #4.** There is no consolation for the tragedy of having a job which requires you to wear nylon stockings to work Every Single Day, Even During August, so don't waste your time looking for one when you could be writing the Great American Novel.

**Rule #5.** People in the real world really do: wear polyester pantsuits, tell you to "Have a nice day," watch Fantasy Island, and wish they knew Donny Osmond. There, there. You can survive even this shock. Doing it with Valium is not perhaps the best way, but it's perfectly acceptable to clench your teeth and silently review the words to "Sophias."

**Rule #6.** Maybe grad school was the best idea after all?

--Claudia Nelson '80

## College News

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## COLLEGE MUSE

Behold her, writing at her desk,  
You solitary poetaster!  
Talking, distraught, to herself,  
Go back before you pass her!  
Alone she writes and writes again,  
And cracks in two her leaking pen;  
O Reader! see her o'erscrawled pad  
Cover'd with rhymes and meters bad.

No bird of prey did ever screech  
Less welcome notes to weary concepts  
O students in some swaying perch,  
Perusing words of Dr. Johnson:  
Poems so foolish ne'er were read  
And freshmen papers wrote on them,

Breaking sombre, solemn quiet  
In Eng. lit Into noise and riot.

Did no one tell me why she writes?  
Perhaps the twisted iambs  
Come from old, unhappy, far-out things,  
Or dreams from some long snooze:  
Or is it from some humbler kink,  
Broken pipes beneath the sink?  
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain  
Like writer's cramp, may come again?

Whate'er the theme, the poet wrote,  
Secretive and paranoid;  
At one rhyme all the critics snote  
And Verbal Icons she destroyed;--

I listened motionless and small;  
And, as I left her darkened hall,  
The laughter in my heart I bore,  
Though I knew there was no more.