

Bryn Mawr College

## Scholarship, Research, and Creative Work at Bryn Mawr College

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Bryn Mawr College News

Bryn Mawr College Publications, Special  
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11-7-1991

### The College News 1991-11-7 Vol.13 No. 4

Students of Bryn Mawr College

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# THE COLLEGE NEWS

VOLUME XIII NUMBER 4

FOUNDED 1914

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

NOVEMBER 7, 1991



Rachel Gold, current head of the Bi-Co AIDS Network, and the woman to be thanked for bring the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt to us.

—photo by Amy Cavalier

## AIDS Quilt to be displayed at Haverford

By Margot Grover

On December 6th, 7th and 8th, the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt will be on display at the Haverford College Fieldhouse. The idea for such a project was conceived back in 1985 by a man named Cleve Jones, and actually started to materialize in February on 1987 when Jones created the first memorial panel of the Quilt honoring the life of Marvin Feldman, his best friend of fourteen years. Jones received an honorary degree from Haverford a few years ago and thus a natural connection was established with the college.

In 1989, Rachel Gold, current head of the Bi-Co AIDS Network, contacted Jones, then working as the first executive director of the Names Project, about summer internships at the project out in San Francisco. That very summer Gold headed west to San Francisco to get what would become her first real taste of what the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was all about. Gold experienced "the Quilt" for the first time herself that summer. As Gold describes her first impressions of the experience, "I just walked around and cried. I was hysterical...there's just this story of incredible loss there." At first Gold herself was apprehensive and failed to realize the positive aspects of the Quilt, beyond a purely intellectual level. It wasn't until she returned to the display as a volunteer that she really began to discover what the project was all about. "You start to see how making the panels is important to people. It's a really important way of working through the grief process...a way to focus the energy of mourning," says Gold.

In the spring of 1990 Gold brought up the idea of having a quilt display at Haverford with Marilou Allen, director of Eighth Dimension. When asked why she initially thought of having a display at Haverford, Gold responded, "It's the community awareness and educational aspect that's really important... It [the Quilt] puts a human face on AIDS." Gold continues, "You can't walk into it [a Quilt display] and be unaffected by it. It's just

too powerful. It's too strong. There's a statistic I read from the Names Project that 71% of people who go to a Quilt display come away from it and do something about AIDS."

Then began the long and tedious task of raising the money for the display, which Gold undertook this past summer. The some nine thousand dollars needed to cover the display fee, from which the Names Project earns its operating money, the shipping charges, publicity and various coordinating fees came mostly from foundations, alumni, students and local companies. Though admission to the display is free, donations are requested and various items such as books about the Quilt and T-shirts are sold at the display. The money from these sales goes to fund the Names Project. And as Gold states, "A lot of times people want that, people don't want to come away from a display empty handed. They want something to hold and remember it by."

The Quilt itself consists of 14,000 panels, each measuring six feet by three feet, the size of a grave. Because of obvious size limitations, not all panels are shown in one display. The Haverford display will consist of 800 panels, which is about one twentieth of the entire Quilt, and will be the biggest display that has occurred thus far in the Philadelphia area. Gold says, "I've heard it described as a beautiful graveyard...in a way it's an art display, you know, it's a piece of folk art."

The Opening Ceremony for the display will begin at 7 pm on December 6th. Cleve Jones himself will be present to speak at the Opening Ceremony. Throughout the three days of the display, names, taken from the master list of AIDS victims represented in the Quilt, will be read aloud as the observers walk around. Cleve Jones will initiate this reading during the Opening Ceremony and from then on anyone who wants to may read. Gold describes this custom as, "[It's] kind of an eerie but neat aspect to it [the display]. The names are sort of ringing around the room, a lot of times people will read the names from the list,

See AIDS Quilt on page 4

## The feminization of math: BMC takes on the challenge

By Miriam Cope

An increase in participation in undergraduate research programs and nationwide competitions has brought about a significant change in Bryn Mawr's Math Department. Over the past few years, students have been applying more frequently to different programs, competing against students from other top universities as well as professors and other distinguished math scholars.

For the past three years, Bryn Mawr's summer math programs have dramatically increased undergraduate participation in research, furthering the desire for participation in other national study programs. On campus, students use computers to conduct summer research and then come back to help other students and professors during the school year. Not only are summer programs a resource for the department at large, but the background acquired helps the student when applying to grad school. A summer spent entrenched in mathematics here makes a student very attractive to graduate schools across the nation.

The application of computers in mathematics is relatively new, and is considerably more common in the hard sciences. Says Rhonda Hughes, of the Bryn Mawr Mathematics Department, "In general, there's been a huge change. Students are doing research all over the country. People used to think that really it wasn't really possible for undergrads to do research in mathematics. With computers, they can work on problems without a lot of background." In addition to Mawr students studying at places like Cal-Tech and Drew, another group of stu-

dents has done a significant job adding to the new developments. Andrea Dedolph, Atiqua Hashem and Deborah Rubino will give a talk at Penn State on their computer project on cycloids. Five other students will be traveling to Baltimore to present a project in January to the American Mathematical Society. Deborah Cousins, Rena Friedman, Eliza Fulton, Abby Kay, and Que Van, together with professors Victor Donnay and Anthony Hughes will present their work on Chaotic Billiards. They are the first group from Bryn Mawr to be accepted to this convention.

Why has it taken so long for this increase in national competitions and projects to occur? Zvezdelina Stankova, the runner up for the prestigious Alice T. Schafer Mathematics Prize for Undergraduate Women, believes, "There hasn't been much done to make it [competitions] popular." And in order to be successful in these competitions, "Students must be trained since their first year. Teachers are willing, but there is no time, and not enough interested students." Fortunately, Bryn Mawr has invested the time necessary to change this by offering its summer programs in math.

This year there are forty majors in the Math Department, including a few Haverford students. From the class of '93, there are twenty four majors, the largest representation ever from one class. Concludes Hughes, "Math is a better major now and people are enjoying themselves. The students are very interested in graduate work and making a splash nationally." We congratulate them on their accomplishments, and look forward to the continuing success of Bryn Mawr's Math Department.

## BMC easy target for intruders

By Sara Rubin

On the evening of Wednesday, October 30, between fifteen and twenty males were running around campus, throwing eggs and yelling insults at Bryn Mawr students.

According to a sophomore who was attacked as she was walking from the Campus Center to Thomas, she saw a group of guys running and laughing. She assumed that they were the Haverford rugby or track team going on a team run until one of them saw her and said, "Look, there's one." They changed their course towards her and she realized that she did not recognize any of them. They surrounded her and began to throw eggs at her. She was completely shocked that something like this could be happening in the middle of campus at 8:15pm with no one around to stop these guys. She yelled out, "What the fuck?" Someone mimicked her, then called her a "fat whore," and after several minutes they ran away. She immediately went into Thomas and called Public Safety, told them what happened, and said that the guys were heading towards Rhoads. As

she came out of Thomas she saw a Public Safety car driving slowly towards Rhoads but then she heard the guys again near Pembroke Arch. She ran over to the Arch and saw two other students who had obviously been hit with eggs as well. They told her that the guys were heading towards Haffner, and the sophomore called Public Safety again. According to the sophomore, Public Safety was not very responsive. She told the dispatcher that the guys would probably be heading to the train station or just off-campus and that they should hurry to catch them.

After she had gotten back to her dorm and taken a shower the sophomore called Public Safety to see what had happened. They told her that their last phone caller told them that the guys were heading towards Haffner. The sophomore asked if they had gone to Haffner, and the dispatcher said no, but they had driven by Perry House to check around there.

When I first heard this story, I thought that it was kind of funny, funny that something like this could be happening on the middle of campus in the early evening. But then I started thinking more

See Public Safety on page 8



reclaiming the past, recording the present:  
Asian American experiences in the U.S.  
see centerspread on pages 6 & 7



## And now for some sound advice ...

I'm feeling clueless about my future... The only things that I'm sure about are that I want to go back home and that I don't want to get stuck working a 9-5 office job. At the suggestion of the Career Development Center, I wrote letters to alumni, who are living in San Francisco and doing things unrelated to academia, and asked them for advice. Here's one of the responses that I got back. It's reprinted here in full.

10-28-91

Dear Lena,

Hello! Nice to hear from you. Makes me feel successful and in control of myself, that someone in the womb of Bryn Mawr might ask me for advice. So I'll tell about the life I've dug out for myself here.

First off, there's a crucial bit of reality that I wish someone had imparted to me in my undergrad years. What one studies in college need not have anything to do with one's pursuit of employment. Some folks are bent on a particular field of study and they might happily find work therein, but one need not feel confined to a particular area simply because one majored in it. Opportunities abound for anyone with a quick mind and a liberal arts education and truthfully, Lena, you have no idea what you might find. Keep an open mind, if you like. I majored in History and for some peculiar reason all my cloistered professors asked if I was going into teaching! Pshaw! I just love history and I think it gives one an important perspective in interpreting current events.

Well, I'm just a florist, the last thing I ever thought I'd do. It is *not* my career, I'm actually a professional musician and the business just supports my music habit. Like you I've always hankered after running my own show. After stumbling bewildered through the job market, a friend turned me on to this simple plan of delivering roses exclusively. I knew *nothing* about roses except that people are in the habit of sending them. My particular

business, Roses On Request, which I've been running for four years, is *very* small and low key. It's just me, and a couple of friends when I need them, and my truck. I run it out of my home, a big plus for me, with an answering service, a yellow page ad, and some personal promotion with the aid of business cards, and my VISA/AMEX imprinter. I am not into pulling down the mega bucks or expanding into storefronts with employees. Lee Iacocca would be horrified, but I like my freedom and fixing my own hours. And truth be told, I don't work terribly hard. Some days are hellish, but often I'm taking care of my music bookings in between answering rose orders. I play in about 3 bands plus record and write my own stuff. So I can take off for Los Angeles or tours when I need to. On the downside, I have no benefits, which I'll have to straighten out as I get creaky. I take satisfaction in knowing that if I need to expand and start pulling in serious cash, I have the mechanisms in place to do so, should I wish to put in 70 hrs. a week. Yeech. I'm basically lazy and self-indulgent. Anyways, nothing is sure but death and taxes and in this recession, I'm glad I'm not overextended and am basically debt-free.

OK, so are you crushed and disappointed that this BMC graduate doesn't run an investment consulting firm with a downtown address and a passel of employees with dental plans? Heck, those are the people I make *my* money off of! I've taken no business courses (abandoned a start at an MBA in favor of starting Roses On Request), have no business plan or five year goals, and just a once-a-year tax consultant. I figured out everything on my own and have made *plenty* of mistakes. I went to the Small Business Administration w/ my wee plan-let and they told me it wouldn't work. I don't know where I got the guts to do it anyway, and let me tell you, I was scared—less about starting this. I sold

See Bread and roses on page 4



Jessica Heard and Rebecca Snyder, coordinators of Bryn Mawr's new and improved Women's Center. —photo by Aude Soichet

## Women's Resource Center: fostering the Power of Estrogen

By Jessica Heard and Rebecca Snyder

Remember the Women's Center? It's gone. Zip. No more. Instead, that funky space in the second floor of the Campus Center is being used for strange yet wonderful experiments in the genetic mutation of squid. Read about it in Weekly World News next week.

That was a lie. Actually, the Women's Center is in the process of being overhauled and re-vamped for an ultra-fine, exciting new era of existence. Under the auspices of Jessica Heard and Rebecca Snyder, the coordinators, that kool korner has a New Name: the Women's Resource Center. This New Name embodies the True Purpose of the Center—we act as a resource center for anyone who wants to learn more about women and our ideas, issues and attitudes. Way cool. The Resource Center may not have everything that you're looking for in terms of materials, but we sure as heck can point you in the proper directions—a karmic message if you will. The Center is staffed by a charming group of lovely individuals—come check it out, girlfriend. Just focus your specs on the staff schedule placed for your admiration on the Center door.

Besides having a comfy, cozy space to hang out, sleep, or just stare meaninglessly into space and drool in (my favorite), the Women's Resource Center is sponsoring a variety of new and excitingly different after-school specials.

## SPIT IV: Why aren't tabloids out of business?

By Nadine Allaf

Have you ever wondered why the "National Enquirer" and other such reputable news sources are still in business?

Imagine (as Lennon would say) a person, who I will call Pat and who I will leave genderless (hint, hint SNL fans), eagerly awaiting every new issue of one of these reputable journals. On the day that they arrive, Pat rushes to the nearest supermarket all the while hoping that they have not been sold out. That evening, Pat invites a bevy of friends with the same passion for the magazine (scary thought), and they engage in deep and meaningful discussions over that issue's latest revelations and discoveries. "Alien and Housewife fall in love; NOW she is carrying its child." Do you realize the implications for the future of pre-natal medicine? Or, looking ahead, the future

For those movie buffs out there, we are proclaiming to the world a brand spanking new Film Series. Movies about or by women—that's our game. Films are shown on a monthly basis at 7:00 in the Campus Center Main Lounge. The next film will be on Thursday, Nov. 7—that's tonight, baby, so set your timers.

Another fabulous thingie coming up is the New Women's Discussion Group. We will be meeting on a weekly basis to discuss whatever we want. Each week, one woman will be chosen, marked out if you will, to lead discussion on a topic of her choice for the following week. That way, everyone gets to be self-absorbed and talk about whatever's on her mind. This should open up communication on a larger scale than bathroom conversations about issues that concern women now.

Next on our agenda is a Return to the Kitchen Day with a Bake Sale on Nov. 15. Since we all like food in a major way, especially sweet stuff, a bake sale seemed like a capital idea to raise some quick cash for comfier furniture for our little CC Pad.

And yeah, we do have staff stuff. If you want to be involved with the excellent people who orchestrate the Women's Resource Center, we meet bi-weekly on Thursdays at 8:00 in the Pad. That means the next Ultra-Fine meeting is on November 14. Be there or be a zombie, okay? So. Come up to the really cool place to be on campus—hang out, drink Apple Tea, and experience the Power of Estrogen.

of day-care?

Leaving the consumer side, let me focus on the producer side. Why in the world would anybody want to write for these "magazines?" Imagine, for John's sake yet one more time, that you see the following entry in the BMC alumni magazine:

CLASS OF '94 NEWS

Nadine Allaf, after writing for the College News for several years, has moved on to bigger and better things in the wide world of journalism. She is currently a staff writer at the "National Enquirer". AAAH! That is my reaction.

My only explanation for anyone writing for these magazines is as follows: Annie Wilks, from Stephen King's book/movie *Misery*, is holding the entire staff hostage. She has broken their ankles and strapped them to their beds with a type-writer. Ouch!

## THE COLLEGE NEWS

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lena and stella

Our next deadline is Friday, Nov. 15. Letters and articles, should be left in front of our Denbigh office or put in our mailbox c1716 by 5:00pm. All submissions should be on a Mac disk. We will accept articles written by women and letters from men. All opinions expressed in articles and letters are those of the authors only and are not representative of the opinions of the Ed board.

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:** The College News is a feminist newsjournal which serves as a source of information and self-expression for the Bryn Mawr community. Recognizing that feminism is a collective process, we attempt to explore issues of interest to all women, both as members of this college and of the larger world community. Through this continuing dialogue, we seek to promote communication and understanding and to foster self-confidence and independence in expression.



## Teaching as a creative process: Becky BIRTHA speaks her mind

Becky BIRTHA, who has very warm brown eyes, an extremely gentle manner, and is a Libra, is currently a part time instructor in the Bryn Mawr English Department. She is teaching a section of freshman English and will be teaching a poetry writing class at Haverford next semester. Fellow Libra NADYA QAMAR CHISHTY-MUJAHID, who is the resident astrologer of The College News, interviewed her last week. Here is the result:

N: Why did you decide to come to Bryn Mawr?

A: Well, I decided to come to Bryn Mawr as part of a larger decision, which was the decision to try teaching as a career—as a way to make a living. And up to this point—for the past ten years or so—I have been trying to focus on making my writing my major career. My work was work that really was not a career for me; I worked for about ten years doing library work in a private corporate law firm in Center City, Philadelphia. And that was work that I knew I could do then go home and leave it there, and focus on

my writing while I was at home. And this is an approach that I think a lot of writers, and artists, and dancers, and creative people take—of trying to find some way that you can pay the bills, and which still leaves you intact enough to be able to get your creative work done. Unfortunately, writing—particularly the kind of writing that is not easy to make a living out of. And I think that's true even for people who are writing more mainstream material—there are very few writers in this country who are able to support themselves through their writing. And most writers do teach—that seems to be a common path that they choose.

N: So how do you like teaching—how do you find it?

B: I find it exhilarating and exhausting. I actually like the teaching part of it a great deal, and I especially like teaching at Bryn Mawr. I'm teaching in two different places this semester—I don't know if  
*See Becky BIRTHA on page 4*



## Larry Vees: a tradition in the making?

By Pam Silvestri and Juli Parrish, Traditions Mistresses

If you have flu, cramps, migraines, ear fungus, mono, corns, runny nose, severe depression or acne, swinging your lit lantern in great big circles while standing on one foot in the Cloisters fountain can only worsen your condition. The Traditions Mistresses suggest a perusal of the infirmary's worthwhile and informative pamphlets and/or a visit to the very helpful and well-stocked Cold Clinic.

This week's Traditions column comes to you courtesy of a strange and compelling urge to tidy up the Traditions files. We've been inspired by a man we've never met, a man whose promotion pamphlet in our Trivia file shocked and amazed us. Some of you may remember the zany and spectacular performance at May Day two years ago, that marvellous day when Bryn Mawr was first touched by... the Amazing Larry Vee.

This guy is truly amazing. We swear. Listen to this: "No Performing Space Too Small. Show complete with tall pogo and unicycle can by done in tiny clubs, homes or even apartments with seven foot ten inch ceilings." (sic)

Mandy Jones '91 and Margot Hipwell '91, Traditions Mistresses our freshman year, brought The Amazing Larry Vee right here to this very campus. Mandy

heard that the greatest since toilet enthusiast ciled him into Day scheduled much time money was trying to get The hour when the jugtraordinaire perform. Margot, Trotter '92 random children watched as The Amazing Larry Vee handed his tape recorder to Margot and proceeded to do his act while hurling insults at the "audience." Tracy fondly recalls being forced to stay for the entire performance and laugh at his "stupid" jokes. Whenever we asked Mandy to tell us the story of the Amazing Larry Vee, she would simply shake her head. The people say: "For sheer originality, Larry Vee stood head and shoulders above the rest."—Bryant Gumbel, ex-host of ex-NBC TV show 'Games People Play.' "An excellent manipulator of anything imaginable...an incredible juggler!"—Harry Blackstone, reknowned magician "He acted like he was on drugs. And his revoltingly hairy chest was covered by this neon pink tank top with sequins spelling Larry Vee. He was just so horrible—he looked like Joe Cocker but had no class and less talent."—Kelly Gray, Residence Council Co-Head, who saw Larry at the Screw Your Roommate Dance at Haverford. "He was the grossest person on earth." "A very clever act"—reknowned comedy author Sid Lorraine.

We hope the many readers of our column have learned from the dramatic retelling of this authentic piece of Bryn Mawr history. We have. And we want him back. May 3, 1992.

Do you want to see the Amazing Larry Vee, live and in person on Merion Green? Drop by or stop us anytime to share your support for Larry Vee, and we'll keep you posted in future columns on the status of his possible May Day performance. Veeva la Larry!

## Tales of phone sex in Frisco

By Lena Kopelow

Throughout my Senior year in high school I spent my weekends working as a telephone receptionist for a phone-sex business. I suspect that after this article is printed I'll be the object of some contemptuous glares: How could you contribute to the proliferation of a business that profits directly from sexism? Well, let me make it clear that this article is not a repentance. This first hand experience taught me more about sexism than I ever would have discovered within the confines of my high school.

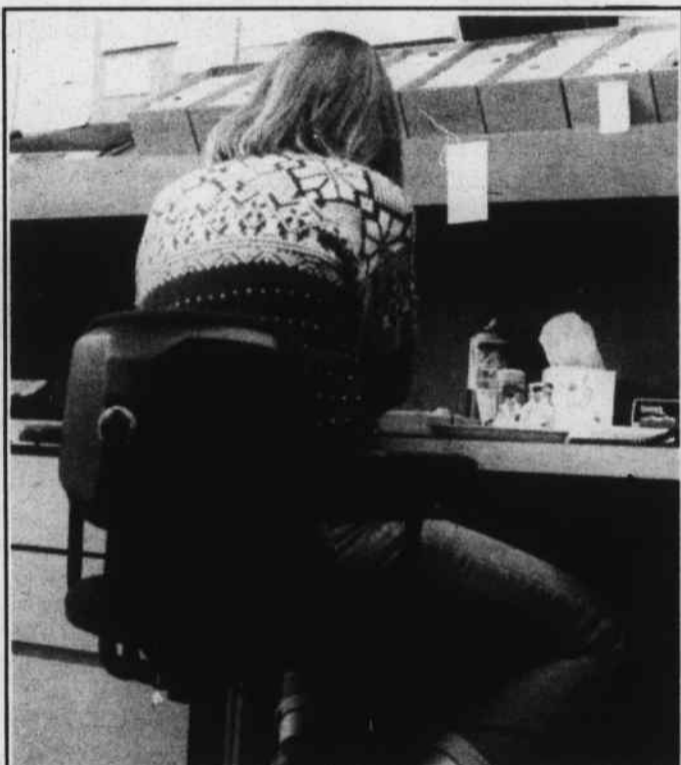
I had no qualms about applying for the job because from my eighteen-year-old perspective, I could see nothing but advantages: the pay was great, two of my close friends worked there, and the office came with cable-TV, a microwave, and an espresso machine. Luckily for me, my mother considered me old enough to make my own decisions and didn't object when I was hired. However, she often told me that she considered the job detrimental to my psyche.

To an extent, my mother was right. My official title, "order-taker," fairly accurately summed up the amount of verbal abuse that I put up with at that job. The customers who called were responding to the somewhat misleading pornomagazine ads, one of which for example showed panting, naked "Cindy" on all fours saying "call-me." We had more than our fair share of idiots who mistook me for "Cindy,"

having assumed that "Cindy" had nothing better to do than to nakedly loll about our office answering telephones. I explained to these rearing and ready to-go jerks that in fact I was not "Cindy," quoted our rates, asked for their credit-card numbers, billing addresses, and phone numbers and assured them that after I'd verified all this information one of the "girls" would call them back collect. I frequently got calls from new customers who, undaunted by my matter of fact speech and no doubt under the assumption that no matter what, women really want it, continued to bombard me with obscenities. It was like getting paid to get obscene phone calls all day.

The phone-sex office had its humorous moments as well. Sometimes when one of my male co-workers answered the

phone, the customer, startled at hearing a man instead of "Cindy's" sultry voice, would panic and start to yell "faggot! faggot!" over and over. Since business was booming, we never hesitated to give annoying customers the abuse that they deserved; we'd hurl insults right back at them, correct their grammar, or put them on the speaker phone and be as condescending as we possibly could: "Why are you homophobic? Are you repressed? Is your sex life really so pathetic that you've resorted to calling our service?"



Portrait of an underground operator. (Note the can of Lysol—employees were required to keep the phones well sanitized...For fear of dirt???) —photo courtesy of Lena Kopelow

Our pool of customers was diverse. We had regulars who called everyday, one customer who called from Iceland once a month, men who called from hotel rooms, and occasionally couples or women. The prices were steep: \$17.50 for five minutes, \$20 for ten, and \$23 for fifteen. They asked for everything from transsexuals to sheep and of course, we humored them.

The "fantasy-makers" who did the calls were primarily women who needed extra money. There was even one psychology student who did calls as part her research for a project at school. There were also a few male "fantasy-makers" who filled requests for gay men and the more infrequent requests for heterosexual men. One of our male "fantasy-makers" was actually a transsexual, whose persona,

"Jo-Jo", was extremely popular. It never ceased to amuse us that her fans would have died of shock if they'd found out that "she was a he." The "fantasy-makers" earned \$4 per call, \$5 during peak hours, and an extra dollar for requests. They worked out of their homes, and went on and off call at their leisure. We kept a chart in the office which listed each fantasy-maker, her pseudonyms: "Brandy," "Candy," or your favorite cliché prostitute name, and what kind of calls she refused to do, such as rape or animal calls.

The thing that amazed me most about phone sex was the fact that the whole thing was a complete farce. Let's face it: technically you can't have sex on the phone. Phone-sex lingo made the whole fantasy even more complete. You could request light, medium, or heavy domination, a submissive woman, a transvestite, a transsexual ("will that be pre-operation or post-op?"), a "she-male" (hermaphrodite to you and me, "of course they have those in San Francisco"), cross-dressing (telling a man to put on women's clothing), "Golden showers" (some men wanted to be peed on. I really don't understand where the appeal was in that one. The fantasy-makers often just pointed a squirt gun at the toilet if they didn't have "to go" just then.)

I still haven't decided how I feel about these services. On one hand, they perpetuate sexism (a blond with large breasts was a fairly standard request; as one customer always said "the bigger, the better") but on the other hand they function as an outlet for men to safely act out their often very demented fantasies without actually harming anyone. Interestingly enough, the business was owned by a woman. Still more ironically, I paid for a large portion of my first semester at Bryn Mawr with money that I saved from this job.

I was reminded of this whole experience because recently I received a number of crank calls from a man whom I suspect was masturbating on the phone. It makes me very angry to think that this man calls people randomly for free phone-sex. He's letting his fantasies infiltrate reality at other people's expense. Maybe if he called phone-sex businesses instead, we would all be spared this harassment.





### AIDS Quilt

cont. from page 1

and then add on their own names, people they know."

Following the initial reading is the special Unfolding Ceremony which is supposed to be an incredible experience in itself. Says Gold, "It's a beautiful thing to see. It's like all the sun from a room that's got nothing, is just full of color and names." The display will continue through Sunday and the Closing Ceremony will be held from 3 to 4 pm. Inevitably people bring new panels to the display and these are accepted during the Closing Ceremony, during which the entire display is dedicated to those people represented by the new panels.

The experience, for both observers and volunteers, offers something powerfully enlightening about AIDS and people. The Quilt helps people to realize that AIDS is not as distant and vague as it often seems, but rather a community issue that involves everyone. As Gold says, "People will come away from this feeling that they've really experienced something, and I can't guarantee that with every volunteer job, but I can with this one." If you would like to get involved in the display and didn't get a chance to sign up as a volunteer early on, call Eighth Dimension at 896-1183.

## Earning her bread on roses

continued from page 2

encyclopedias for a year (Bryn Mawr gave me no job hunting skills—I took the first opportunity that came along in my desperate fear of RENT) and the skills I learned in that sales position helped me structure my initial promotional campaign. I'm still apprehensive when I make sales appointments, but I realize the vast majority of people could never dare to take such chances, as they loll secure and submissive behind their desks, and the fact that I have the guts to push my enterprise lifts me off the ground. I have mixed feelings about my Bryn Mawr education. I'm glad to have flexible and functional vocabulary, confidence in my writing ability, and wide exposure to different studies, but sometimes I feel my vision is limited by four years of traditional academia. Bryn Mawr defines life in distinct categories and expects you to fall into one of them like a pinball. The real possibilities of life absolutely defy categorization, unless you're hell-bent on being a Wall Street Hound or an archaeologist. I've spent the past 10 yrs. trying to undo the rigid code of behavior as defined by a traditional education. If you want a structured existence, if you want to climb the ladder and waddle in the steps of predecessors and buy a home

in the suburbs and drive a BMW and have a pension plan, a Bryn Mawr education is an important tool and looks good on a... a... resu.. RESUME. (I HATE that word.) But if you want to explore life, rather than imitate it, appreciate your education for its enabling you to think, query, and investigate. Sometimes I wish I'd gone to St. Johns. I like to think a liberal arts education trains and flexes and exercises the mind, rather than mold it. Lena, I don't know what you're after in terms of an education, but I'm enjoying this opportunity to vindicate my particular divergence from the mainstream. I've never had the chance to reflect and advise like this, so I hope you make it through this letter. As far as the Bay area goes for a budding entrepreneur, I doubt you could pick a better place. I heard a survey on the news today saying that the Bay area has one of the highest median incomes in the U.S., that the folks out here are well-educated, affluent, and very likely to spend their significant disposable income. There is a thriving, evolving business community here, a thousand different tastes to cater to, and a diverse population to satisfy. They say it's expensive to live here, but I've managed on my meager income for

9 years to keep a roof over my head. I wouldn't live in any other place, except maybe Seattle. Now I'm a person who had no idea what I wanted to do after college—journalism, chemistry, teaching? And here I am, a florist of all things, and an ever-improving musician. I've always played music, but Bryn Mawr never gave me the idea that it was an acceptable occupation for a well-educated young lady. But after putting enough distance between me and my graduation, after swallowing some major hunks of life, I realized that it's ok for me to follow my heart. Well, I've enjoyed getting all of this off my chest and I'd like you to pass this letter around to any school mates in the throes of paralytic confusion. Send it to the paper.

San Francisco is the land of opportunity. I'd be happy to talk to you about any specific questions you have! So what's your career anyway?

Your fellow Mawrter and friend,  
Julia Allstatt '82  
Supreme Goddess,  
Roses On Request

P.S. Do yourself a favor and listen to "All Things Considered" on public radio (try WHYY) Say Hi to the gymnastics coach Ms. Castner!



# Apathy: as American as Apple pie

By Nadine Allaf

For a while now, I have been puzzled by the fact that not too many Americans, especially younger Americans, vote. I come from Lebanon, a country with an electoral system, but it has been in war for so long, that no elections can be held. In other countries too, political opinions cannot be expressed freely through legitimate channels, namely voting. Yet here, in the country whose people value democracy and endeavor to spread and ensure its survival around the world, there are problems with the numbers of people who vote. Quite a paradox I would say.

### ONLY AN OPINION

While inquiring as to why people fail to vote, I was told that some people are just too lazy and apathetic. How hard is voting? If one turns on any radio or television channel, one hears something about the elections and/or the candidates. If one flips through the newspaper one sees at least one article on the elections and/or the candidates. Well, maybe people just do not listen or watch any news programs; and perhaps, they just do not read the newspapers. We all do that at one point or another, but the truth is, the world does not revolve around us and our problems. There are many events taking place nationally and internationally. The thought that one person's vote has an effect on who will be making policy for one's state and country is empowering. Of course some people will think that one vote will not make a difference. True, only one vote may (with the emphasis on may) not, but a combination of "one" votes does; a democracy is run according to the wishes of the people

as a whole and not one person. I hear women around here gripe about abortion laws; well vote for candidates supporting *pro-choice*. The way things are going now, it seems to me, is that the people who do vote together on one issue are getting what they want and those who do not vote just complain.

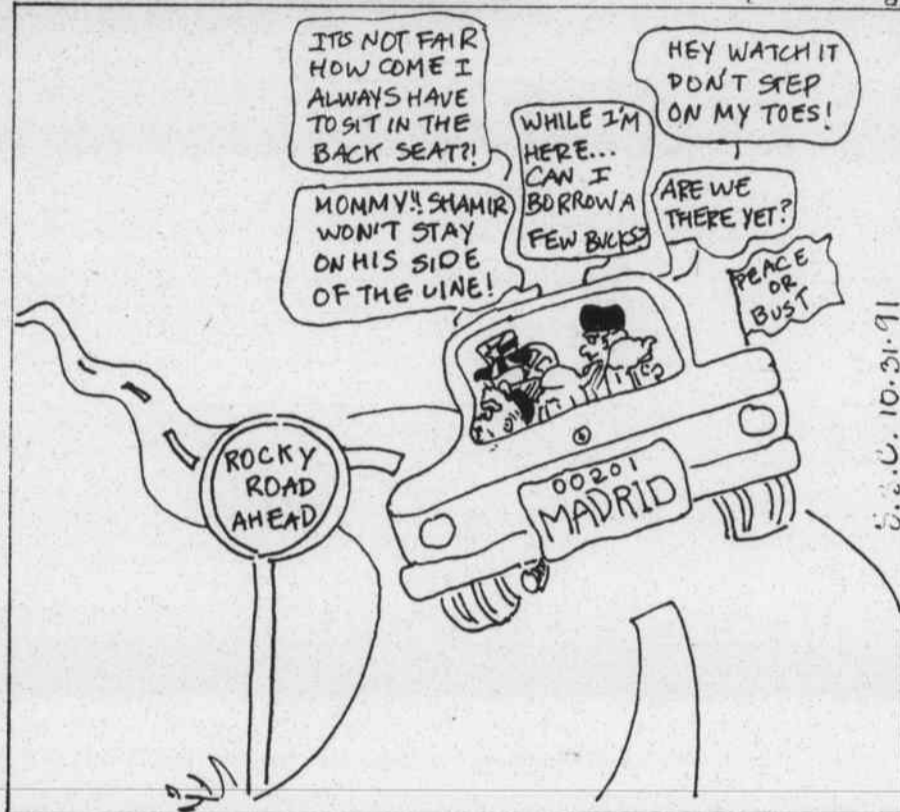
I think that voting is a privilege that people have begun to take for granted. I

realize that in democratic countries voting is considered a right. However, when so many of the world's governmental systems are not democratic, voting is definitely a privilege. It is a privilege that should be utilized.

I realize that there are reasons other than apathy for not voting, but I have chosen to concentrate only on voter apathy.

## BLUE STOCKING

by Sona Chong



## Becky BIRTHA on BMC continued from page 3

things other than literature. I'm really excited by the students here and by hearing about them and their lives. And the part that is exhausting is the paperwork—going over student papers and really trying to give them the kind of feedback and attention that I think they deserve.

N: Did you have any preconceived notions about Bryn Mawr and its "feminist environment"? Did you choose Bryn Mawr for some specific reason and has it

lived up to your expectations?

BB: I didn't think that much about choosing. When I made the decision to go back to college, I could say that I did and didn't choose the places that I ended up at. As background I want to say that after I got my Master's degree (I have a Master's in Fine Arts and Creative Writing) I taught at Temple University, but not for very long. And I felt overwhelmed by teaching—I didn't see how I was going to balance it out with writing. That's when I sort of decided to go on with just having a job and not much of a career. So when I made this decision to return to teaching and try to use it as a way to

See Becky BIRTHA on page 5



# An afternoon spent with Becky Birtha

continued from page four

support myself, I wrote to different colleges in the area — not to all of them, [laughs] but to most of them, ranging from county community colleges up to Penn., Bryn Mawr, Temple, LaSalle, whatever. And Penn. and Bryn Mawr were the places that responded first and most definitely. They also had the most appealing offers. And there is a real discrepancy [laughs] — I don't know if this needs to go in the paper or not, but there is a real discrepancy in the pay scales at the different schools for doing the same kind of work. Well, actually this probably does need to go in the paper, because I think a lot of students don't realize that there is a situation with part-time instructors — I'm a part-time instructor — where many universities hire part-time people particularly to teach courses like Freshman English, but they also do it in the medical schools and everywhere else. And they hire part-time people at a much lower rate of pay than full professors get paid. And so there are people that I've met in my travels who are really struggling to make a living going from one college to another, and teaching up to five and six sections of maybe a Freshman English course, and between all of that making enough money to support themselves. Bryn Mawr has a different approach concerning part-time people, and they really made it clear to me that they try to have people who really want to be part-time, and are making a conscious choice to do that, rather than people who would prefer to be in a salaried position. But that's a little known fact about universities, and about people who may have the same credentials as others who get higher salaries. So your question was sort of how I ended up choosing Bryn Mawr, and whether it met my expectations or was different. I think that the Bryn Mawr community has been different from what I expected. And now that think about it, I don't really know what I expected. I think the major difference is the diversity of the community here; I just wasn't prepared for this to be such a diverse community. And I'm talking about diversity in terms of ethnic, and cultural, and racial backgrounds, and also nationality. I'm not sure that it's as diverse in terms of class as it might be, but I've seen some diversity in that area too. But I didn't expect that at Bryn Mawr. I guess I expected ... you know, it's one of those Seven Sisters colleges, people that I will encounter will be the traditional students that you'd expect from old traditional families [laughs] that go off to Bryn Mawr ... So when I first came into my class I was really delighted to see so many different colours [laughs] and I looked at the class and said, "Now, I'm not going to call the roll, because I'm not going to embarrass myself by mispronouncing all of your names [laughs]. So I want to go around the room and I want each of you to tell me what your name is, and how it is pronounced." And we did actually spend some time at the beginning of the class with each student talking about her name and where it came from, and either why she was given that name or — in her particular culture — where that name came from and what it signified. And for me it's just been de-

lightful to have the experience of sitting down twice a week in a roomful of young women, from all different places and all different cultural backgrounds, and talking about literature, and also talking about what it's like being from these different backgrounds. And I've tried to talk about myself some as well. And I've tried to select literature that's on the subject of diversity, and different cultural backgrounds. Although what's interesting was that I titled my course *Transition to Womanhood: A Multicultural Perspective*. And all the works were by American writers — though I guess I would say that there are some Caribbean and Canadian — it's mainly an American view. And I realized after I did that, and after I met my class, that what seemed multicultural to me at the time that I was putting the course together isn't nearly as diverse as it could be. I think that in order to be truly multicultural you need an international perspective. So I was thinking that if I teach the same course again, I would change the title to *Transition to Womanhood: An American Perspective*, because I think that would be an important statement to make, that even though it is an American perspective, we're getting Native American, we're getting Caribbean, African-Caribbean, African-American, Jewish, whatever — you know, all these different approaches that are all part of an American perspective. That's really what's been very special about the community here. I asked my students, "Are all of your classes like this, or did you just channel into my class?" [laughs]. I know that my section was not described in the little bulletin that most of them got because I wasn't appointed until fairly late. And when I asked my students this, they said, "Oh, it's not just this class, all of our classes are like this", and I think that this diversity is a step in the right direction. What I hope to see (though I haven't really met much of the faculty yet), is the faculty moving to reflect the same kind of diversity that the student body does.

N: You spoke of teaching as being somewhat exhausting. Do you feel that sometimes you have to summon up more energy than before to put into your writing? Are you currently writing?

BB: Well, there are a couple of things that have affected my writing. One of them is teaching, and the other one is that in the past year I've become a mother. And I'm a single parent by adoption, so my little girl was already a toddler when she came home, and well on her way to the two-year-old stage of deciding that she ought to be in charge of everything [laughs]. So between those two pursuits my writing is really not getting the attention that it used to, and I'm not actively working on writing right now. I think my plan, like that of many people who teach is probably to write during the summer periods and not to expect myself to get much writing done during the year. I also think that as I continue teaching, I'll be repeating the same courses — I won't be making them up for the first time — so I think the teaching is going to become easier to integrate into my life. But mostly what

I've written recently has been poems, and they're fairly short. And one of the things that I'm currently working on is a series of some very short poems called "The Truth About Motherhood" [laughs]. They are the kind of poem that you can jot down after a long day of motherhood. And I work in my head all the time, and I have pieces of fiction and short stories that I'm working on in my head, and I do have a sense in my mind of what the next book will be. And I have characters in my head that I carry around with me and try to develop through my thought-processes.

N: Are you more comfortable writing short stories rather than longer fiction — or do you have no preference, as such?

BB: Oh! I'd simply love to write longer fiction. I haven't written a novel that's been published yet. I've actually worked on two novels that I've taken as far as, maybe, the second revision, and never completed. One of them is probably just a first novel, and if I look back on it I may decide that it's really not worth continuing on [laughs]. But the second novel is one that I would really like to go back and resurrect, even though I know my writing has matured since I started writing it. But to write a long work of fiction really does take time and attention. I think that you have to give it the same amount of your life that you would give to a lover [laughs]! And so you somehow have to have that time and attention free to give to it. So I'm mostly thinking in terms of short stories although I really do want to write novels, to be a novelist is definitely a goal in my life. I also want to write for children, and that's one of the projects that's really on the top for me right now. And I will probably start working on it as soon as I come into some free time. I've written a number of manuscripts for picture books, and I really would like to send those out — I have lots of ideas for children's books and I'd like to get to work on those.

N: You will be teaching a poetry writing class at Haverford next semester. Is that going to be your first attempt at teaching poetry writing, or have you'd one it before? Are you excited about it?

BB: I'm excited about it. It will be my first

experience of a formal poetry writing class in the university setting. And my experience with poetry in classes and workshops up to this point has mostly as a participant. I've been a participant in a number of workshops that didn't have a teacher or a leader, so that everyone took responsibility for leading the class, and in some cases, we took turns. One person might take the responsibility for being the facilitator of a poetry group. So I feel that I've had some leadership experience with poetry workshops, but I've never actually taught a class, and it was exciting to me thinking about what I want to include. I realized after I turned in the course description that there was far more in the course description than could actually happen in one semester of a poetry workshop. But I think it was good to get it all down anyway so that people thinking about taking the class may realize that those are the ideas from which we will be drawing upon for the course, even though we won't necessarily do all that I've outlined. But I want to look at the students' work, of course, and I think that should be the main emphasis — reading students' work, both new work and revisions. And I'm hoping to look at some poetry, I really think you can't write poetry unless you're reading poetry. And I think often that that's a mistake that young poets make, that they don't read literature and don't come in contact with poets, and don't go to poetry readings to hear other poets. I think poetry is a language, and in order to be fluent in it, you really have to hear it as well as speak it [laughs].

N: Do you feel that at some point your teaching and your interactions with your students, could become as important to you as your writing? Or do you feel that you are basically just a writer at heart and will always be so?

BB: I think at this point, I am more of a writer than a teacher, and I think I'm here not so much because of my devotion to teaching as because of my devotion to writing, and because I see teaching as a kind of work that I think can be supportive of my writing. And to say that doesn't mean that I don't really value the teaching, I think that the kind of teaching that

See Becky Birtha on page 8

SISTER  
WE LOVE  
YOU



# EXPAND YOUR UNDERSTANDING

## Why Implement Curricular Diversity?

By Lonnie Lin and Lan N. Van '92

We would deceive ourselves if we tried to write of the Asian experience in America. If you hope to learn a *fragment* of the history of our people, you will have to contact us for a reading list, a very long reading list. And no, *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Woman Warrior* from English 015 are not all there is. We will not write of our own past struggles nor of our hopes and dreams for the distant future. We will tell you, though, a few thoughts of two frustrated Asian American students, who search and search for traces of their peoples' one hundred and fifty year-old history while at this institution called Bryn Mawr College.

As seniors we still find ourselves battling the same frustrations we experienced as freshmen over three years ago. Often times, we would find ourselves in a situation where our gut reaction says that it is racist or prejudiced, but we cannot articulate why. We feel uncomfortable and belittled because we cannot respond. For example, an assumption is made about our origins ("Are you an immigrant?"), or we come across more subtle forms of prejudice ("Well, all Asians are smart students anyway"), or we feel like our individual experiences are speaking for an entire ethnic group or race, or we are put into a position where we are asked to educate others about our histories.

Part of finding the vocabulary we need to articulate our thoughts is to see our experiences as part of American history. But we do not see our peoples' history reflected in our education. High school history texts summarize in one paragraph the Chinese American experience as builders of the Trans-Continental Railroad. What we did not learn is that some of these railroad workers were led into a tunnel and dynamited to their deaths when their bosses did not want to pay them. The internment of over 100,000 Japanese Americans following the bombing of Pearl Harbor was summarized in two sentences. What we did not learn is that these people were resettled and dispersed, such that their population would not, in the words of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, "discombobulate" American society.

Our college education does little to expand

our knowledge. When we look at the curriculum, we do not find courses to help us contextualize our experiences. The very first and only course to deal with the experiences of Asians in America was offered for the first time last year. As a small liberal arts college, it is Bryn Mawr's responsibility to provide this aspect of our education. Bryn Mawr heightens our awareness of issues concerning class, gender and sexuality, but it fails to address how these issues are inseparable from ethnicity and race. As Asian American women, we seek to implement a Diversity

Requirement. We do not want to focus only on Asian experiences in America, but also to learn how our experiences are inherently connected to other visible ethnic minorities in the United States, such as African Americans, Chicanas/Latinas, and Native Americans.

Since we are graduating in May, we will not directly benefit from our work. But we also realize that what little we have is a direct consequence of the struggle of those before us. As such, we hope that our efforts will enable others after us to find a voice.

According to 1980 census data, these were the characteristics of the Asian American population:

Percentage of those Foreign-Born			
Chinese	63.3%	Korean	81.9%
Japanese	28.4%	Asian-Indian	70.4%
Filipino	64.7%	Vietnamese	90.5%
MEDIAN Family Income			
Chinese	\$22,599	Korean	\$20,459
Japanese	\$27,354	Asian-Ind.	\$24,993
Filipino	\$23,687	Vietnamese	\$12,840
Families in Poverty			
Chinese	11%	Korean	13%
Japanese	4%	Asian-Ind.	7%
Filipino	6%	Vietnamese	35%
High School Graduates (women %; men %)			
Chinese	67%; 75%	Korean	70%; 90%
Japanese	80%; 84%	Asian-Ind.	72%; 87%
Filipino	75%; 73%	Vietnamese	54%; 71%
Labor Force Participation (women %; men %)			
Chinese	58%; 74%	Korean	55%; 78%
Japanese	59%; 79%	Asian-Ind.	47%; 84%
Filipino	68%; 78%	Vietnamese	49%; 65%
Households Headed by Women			
Chinese	11.1%	Korean	13.5%
Japanese	14.2%	Asian-Ind.	8.7%
Filipino	14.8%	Vietnamese	17.0%

Any discrepancies between what you thought and what was presented by the government?  
Guesses about what might have changed/stayed the same between then and now?

## Identify this woman: Ms. HELEN ZIA

By Susan Shin

As part of the celebration of 1991-92's Asian Awareness Month, Bryn Mawr's Asian Students' Association has invited Helen Zia to give a presentation on Asian American Women and Advocacy. "Who is Helen Zia?" one might ask? Admittedly, hers is a name that is none too familiar to most people in the U.S.— even though she has been a national civil rights advocate for more than twenty years and is on the editorial staff of a world-renowned feminist magazine. Nonetheless, news of her and the causes with which she works for are virtually unknown, even within the Asian American population.

Helen Zia is, in fact, a second-generation Chinese American, a social and civil rights advocate, and the Executive Managing Editor of *Ms.* magazine. For those of us who remain as of yet clueless about our futures, it is interesting to note that Ms. Zia has at one time or another made her living as a con-

struction worker, an auto-assembly person, and a hospital technician. Not only is she now known in relation to the aforementioned fields, but she is also recognized as a leading feminist journalist. In the March/April 1991 issue of *Ms.*, Zia contributed a revealing and shocking article on women who are active in hate groups, such as the KKK and Neo-Nazi organizations. In addition, Zia helped to found American Citizens for Justice, a national organization established to fight hate crimes (particularly those that are racially and ethnically-motivated), as well as to politically mobilize victims of these crimes and their family members, concerned citizens, community leaders, etc.

Though Ms. Zia will be focusing upon Asian Americans and activism within the Asian American community for her lecture, she will be free to talk about and answer questions about other things as well. So don't forget the time and date. Come hear and meet this multi-faceted woman.



## A personal invitation to understanding

By Heasun Choung '92

Lately there has been a disturbing rise in apathy on our campus. As a senior and a student, I can understand the pressures that many of us face with work and that the thought of spending time to go to lectures seems laughable. Yet, I can't help but feel that we are missing opportunities that may never happen again when we leave this community. We have before us a whole range of events to attend where we can share ideas, learn some hard realities about life, etc. I can't say that I attend every single event that happens on campus myself, but it seems so right that as Mawrers, we should extend our search for knowledge beyond the classroom unlike other schools.

It is frustrating to try and organize a speaker

to come to... because the L.A. Law to care. The first last reason, This seems sored by A... People a see that it is pertain to t... Nothing co... sponsor the nity in mind... thoughts a... So for those for a formal... Awareness... this mantle

## Calendar of events

To the faculty, staff, and students of the tri-co community:

The Asian Students Association of Bryn Mawr College events scheduled for November, Asian Awareness Month. We seek to expand the understanding of what it "means" to us. It is our goal to make learning a reciprocal process; as we reach out to other communities, we hope that together, we can engage in productive dialogue. This is an important chance for students, faculty, and staff to come together to discuss important issues in the Asian-American community, advocacy, and inclusion/exclusion in the academe. We see these issues as they deal with homophobia, racism, and sexism at individual and structural levels.

Thank you for your attention.

### EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER:

- \*\* November 4th, 8 pm, Campus Ctr. 210 : Fernando Chang, Commissioner for Refugees (a favorite on the ASA list of guest speakers) and civil rights activist V.K. Aruna will guest-speak on Asian American communities. Very informal.
- \*\* November 5th, 7 pm, Campus Ctr. 210 : ASA Film Series: *Asian American Family Struggles* to maintain their farm and relationships.
- \*\* November 6th, 9 pm, CC 105 : ASA meeting. ALL welcome.
- \*\* November 8th, 8 pm, Campus Ctr. Main Lounge : Helen Zia, author, magazine and social justice advocate, will speak on Asian American community. Reception to follow.
- \*\* November 12th, 7 pm, CC 210 : ASA Film Series. *Tongues Untied* by Martin Riggs about African American gay men. This film will be an insightful documentary that cuts across lines of gender, race, and class.
- \*\* November 13th, 7 pm, Chase 104 at Haverford : Judge Ida Cheung, judge appointed to the Phila. Court of Common Pleas. Sponsored by ASA.
- \*\* November 15th, 7 pm, Denbigh Living room : HILARITEA. Comedy, and merriment with karaoke (The Singing Machine).
- \*\* November 19th, 7 pm, CC 210 : ASA Film Series. *Film Titled*.
- \*\* November 22nd, 4 pm, TBA: Meena Alexander, a scholar, poet, and social justice advocate, will speak on the issues of displacement and formations of ethnic identity through her prose. Sponsored by South Asian Women.
- \*\* November 20th, 9 pm, CC 105 : ASA meeting.
- \*\* November 24th, 8:30 pm, CC Main Lounge : Culture Night! Dance, a one-act play, and more.

Also, SAW will be screening two films, dates to be announced. One is a released film about the division between India and Pakistan and written by a South Asian woman, showing the horrors of political prisoner.





# DING— THIS MEANS YOU!



tion to expand  
ding

ne to our campus to speak to us and find  
only a handful of students show up  
se the rest were too busy, waiting for  
aw to come on television, or just don't  
The first two reasons aren't bad, but the  
reason, not caring, is probably the worst.  
seems particularly true for events spon-  
by ASA.

ople automatically assume when they  
at it is sponsored by ASA that it doesn't  
in to them and that they don't belong  
ing could be further from the truth. We  
or these events with the entire commu-  
n mind. We want to share ourselves, our  
ghts and culture with the community.  
those of you who appear to be waiting  
ormal invitation, November is our Asian  
eness month and we urge you to drop  
antle of apathy and come to our events.

f events

unity:

wr College invites you to join us in the  
month. As the Bryn Mawr College ASA,  
ans" to be Asian or Asian-American. It  
we reach out to our college and home  
productive dialogue. This month is an  
me together over such issues as gay and  
advocacy and Asian-American women,  
ese issues as relevant to every human  
exism — issues that must be dealt with

Chang-Muy, Counsel to the U.N. High  
guest speakers), and filmmaker, writer  
k on gay and lesbian issues in Asian-

a Series. *Hot Desert Winds*, a Japanese  
d relationships during the Depression.  
welcome.

n Zia, executive managing editor of *Ms.*  
Asian American Women and Advocacy.

ngues *Untied*. The controversial film by  
film was chosen because it is an "angrily  
nder, race, and sexual orientation.

la Chen, first Chinese-American female  
s. Sponsored by the Haverford College

TEA. Come join us for movies, refresh-  
achine).

film TBA.

scholar, author, and poet, will address  
ity through a reading of her poetry and

ight! Featuring musical performances,

e announced. They are: *Henna*, a newly  
Pakistan; and *Closetland*, a film directed  
errors faced by a woman who was held

## Lotus Blossoms and Other Bogus Exotica: Asian Women in Film

By Susan Shin '93

In the U.S., the dominant culture has held and continues to hold certain roles and assumptions for people of color concerning their "native character." These views have been as harmful to men as to women of color. This article, however, will focus upon the status of women in the U.S. and how the mass medium of motion pictures has created and/or perpetuated stereotypes about them; specifically, stereotypes about Asian-American women.

Since the appearance of the first Asian female immigrants in America, the dominant society's focus upon them has been on their sexuality. White Americans began to classify the first groups of female Asian immigrants into two categories: either the young Chinese prostitute or the picture/war bride. These two clearly divergent images are indicative of the most common stereotypes of Asian women in America and, for that matter, in the rest of the world: "the whore" or "the passive and faithful wife." These two images were the two dominant characterizations in films produced by white filmmakers.

Asian females, whether or not they acted around a white-centered storyline, have generally been portrayed as exotic, mysterious sex objects or passive, pampering "lotus blossoms." Given that the conception of an Asian-AMERICAN woman has appeared only recently in film [usually in noteworthy Asian-American independent endeavors], films from the past 70 years have depicted anomalous "Asian" women. Many of the films in which Asian women have appeared have been centered around wars in Asia, relationships with white men, and pure fantasy movies. Examples of such films are *South Pacific* and *Sayonara*, which are set at about the time of World War II and the Korean War respectively, *The World of Suzie Wong*, a film about a Hong Kong prostitute's relationship with a white gentleman, and *Thief of Bagdad*, a silent film (1924) in which a white male hero was involved in a dangerous conflict against a female Mongol spy. Although there is variation in these storylines, all of the films have one thing in common: all of the Asian female characters fit into one of the two categories of "Asian women."

Historically, Asian women have been perceived by American society as being naturally more subservient, yet coy and attractive BECAUSE of their passivity. This stereotype created by mass media upon immigration accounts for depictions of women who unconditionally pamper their white lovers and women who are purely exotic entertainment for groups of American men. These images are claimed to have been based upon American soldiers' encounters with Asian women during the wars in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. These claims reflect how historical events shape the media's perception of "foreigners" both inside and outside of the U.S. Also, by setting these women against the main storylines about the heroism of U.S. soldiers, the films place them in the background and use them to emphasize the bravery and masculinity of specifically white G.I.'s.

In films such as *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960), Asian women were portrayed as the typical hooker with a heart of gold. This American-made film was set in Hong Kong, and depicted the Asian woman as sexually knowing, exotic, subservient, and thus, desirable to a white male. The film set new trends in the portrayal of Asian women in this medium, as well as in mainstream culture; it helped to create a DEMAND for Asian women among white males—particularly in the mail order bride industry—because these women were perceived as easier to control, helpless in interracial relationships, and dif-

ferent from other women in purely sexual terms. Because of this, society expected certain behavior and personal characteristics from Asian women in America, i.e. passivity, submissiveness, etc.

The first real film centered around Asian-American communities was *Flower Drum Song* (1961), which was [surprise!] also produced by white executives. The purpose of this film was to depict a "typical" Chinatown community in the U.S. This was filmed during a time of reform of U.S. immigration laws concerning Asians. Again, this film portrayed Asian-Americans as content with their environment, non-hostile, hardworking, and perpetually cheerful; hence the model minority image. The two lead Asian female characters were depicted as 1: coy, feminine, girlish, and 2: steadfast, loyal to her future Chinese-American husband; again, reflecting the only two popular images of Asian women.

Following the Vietnam War, American films portrayed Asian and Asian-American women as either wartime prostitutes (*The Deer Hunter*, 1978) or war brides. In recent years, films have attempted to demonstrate the extent to which Asian-American women have emerged in mainstream society through

See *Asian women in film* on page 8



## Just another day...

Last Tuesday, while walking past the bank, I came up next to an elderly (white-haired) Caucasian man on the sidewalk, in his 60's or 70's would be my guess. "Fucking..." he mumbled. With one step I was ahead of him. I heard more mumbling behind me, the specifics came into focus: "Fucking Chinese cunt, why don't you go back..." So, he's been talking about me this whole time. At first, I had ignored him, thinking he may have been some senile senior who went around talking to himself. Soon it was only too clear that it was my presence that had triggered this man's action. I turned around, looked him in the eye and said, "Excuse me?!"

He saw me staring at his face. For the moment, he was quiet. I walked on, but soon after the tirade continued, droning behind me. "Go back to the land of the Rising Sun!...@!#!?@!#!?"

Each time I run into situations like this it stuns me that it happened at all...at the same time it doesn't surprise me that it does. But you never get used to it, and all the education

## "Ancient Chinese Secrets"

(yeah right)

By Lan Ngoc Van '92

An excerpt from one of my *Breaking Silence* journals.

20 October 1990. A Sophomore by the name of Lucia Flores and I went to the Gateway Program College Fair in Harlem today. We took the R5 to 30th Street Station in Philly, the Amtrak to Penn Station in NY, and then a yellow cab to City College where the fair was held. I couldn't believe BMC would send two inexperienced undergrads to a fair in Harlem alone—neither of us had ever seen Penn Station until today. It was embarrassing—we could not find our way out of the station. There were exit signs everywhere we looked. First we didn't know which one to take. Then all the ones we chose were locked with chains. Two college students! And I am getting a BMC degree in less than two years?

The taxi ride to and from 30th and 138th streets allowed me to see some of the business districts of Manhattan. Saw a woman kicking a bum at 30th. An old man with

and forethought in the world never seems to prepare you for that stinging moment.

Throughout the rest of the day I wonder what else should have been said to this guy. After all, it was morning, in town, and because of his age I didn't feel physically threatened to go back and confront him. In between torturing myself with this question, I and others tell myself that it wouldn't have done any good, because this man wouldn't be ready to listen to me as a person anyway. To him, I was a total stranger who did not belong here (in Bryn Mawr, or in this country where I was born, or anywhere?).

I am reminded of a poem by Rosario Morales. It starts, "I am what I am and I am U.S. American / I haven't wanted to say it because if I did you'd take away the Puerto Rican but now I say go to hell / I am what I am and you can't take it away with all the words and sneers at your command" and ends, "I am what I am / Take it or leave me alone."

— Julie Cho

uncombed, snowy beard and some hair, walking suicidally at rush hour among yellow cabs and buses, with outstretched hands, asking for money. A demonstration at some square where a huge crowd of people protested against US troops in the Middle East—police cars lingered nearby, ready for any riots to occur. I saw many things today, but one thing sticks out most vividly in my memory. It bothered me then and it still does. It's a laundromat on Broad Street at around 70th street. Above the glass door there's a huge sign that reads:

CHINESE LAUNDROMAT  
DRY CLEANING AND FOLDING

The store's glass window to the right of the door reads:

WONG'S

What bugs me are the words "CHINESE LAUNDROMAT." I can understand that a  
See "Ancient Chinese secrets" on page 8



## Growing up on poetry continued from page 5

I'm doing... You know people have said "Why is she teaching a freshman English course?"... I find really exciting. I like the students a lot. And I feel that the kinds of things that we are doing, reading the kind of work that we are reading, and having the kinds of discussions that we are, is really useful to me as a writer, both in terms of the fact that I'm meeting all these characters, but also that I'm thinking of literature—that I'm thinking about writing, looking at how the authors did things, looking at how the students do things. Even from a freshman English paper, there are insights for me, about how writing works, and how things can be said more concisely and clearly, and how a major point can be put across. Generally I find that the experience of being on a college campus, meeting students, meeting with other faculty (when I occasionally get a chance to do that) makes me hope that it'll continue to be supportive to me as a writer. If nothing else, I think that just the fact of being seen as a writer is supportive to a writer. I don't know how to explain this, except that when I went to graduate school, I went to a residency program that was a low residency program. You lived at home, and continued with your own life, when you worked and paid the bills, and twice a year you went off to Vermont College, where you spent two weeks just being a writer and going to intensive classes and workshops, meeting with advisors, talking to the students, and giving meetings. And everyone in the program saw me as a writer—they didn't know much about my life except what I chose to tell them. They didn't see me as an overworked law librarian, or a partner in a relationship, or a messy housekeeper or anything. They just related to me as a writer.

N: Did that bother you?

BB: That was wonderful. I think that's what every writer needs—to have people relate to you and take you seriously as a writer, and talk with you that way. And I think that in some ways the experience of being at a college can approximate that to some extent. And even here at Bryn Mawr, I need people who know I'm

a writer, and who've read my work or want to read my work, or whose roommates have read my work. And it helps—it helps me to focus on what my goals are.

N: Were you interested in reading before you started writing? Were you an avid reader, and did you start writing because you wanted to write for an audience, or did you write for your personal satisfaction?

BB: That's an interesting question. I



Becky Bertha—writer, poet, mother... and latest addition to the Bryn Mawr English Department.  
—photo by Aude Soichet

started writing as a child and I think it very definitely grew out of reading. Although, if you ask my mother, she'll probably tell you that I started to write before I could read. My mother loves literature, and loves poetry in particular. So when I was a very small child, she read poetry to me a lot. And—well she read everything—but she particularly read some of the black poets... She read Langston Hughes and James Weldon Johnson. And so my first experience, my first memory, of actually writing something that was considered a poem was saying lines out loud and having my mother write them down, and then read them out to me and tell me "That is a poem." That happened before I was old enough to write. I think most children

say poetic things out loud—I just don't think that they have their mothers taking notes [laughs]. But I guess I say all that to say that I was encouraged very early to write—writing was seen as something to be valued very highly. Then as a little girl, I read a lot—I read a lot of children's novels, mostly fiction... I don't really remember ever seriously reading non-fiction as a child. And I wrote. I wrote stories, and I would try to write stories like the books I was reading. When I was a little girl I was always in middle of writing novels. And they have chapters and characters, and I'd draw pictures of the characters. And it was really a way to play—a way to entertain myself as a kid. Even as a child I always had a sense of audience. It's really clear to me if I go back and read the things that I wrote that there was an awareness of an audience being there. If I read my diary for instance—I've kept a diary or a journal from the time that I was three years old... so it's now been years and years [laughs]—if I go back and look at it I'd see that I would explain things in the diary. You know I might say "Karen my cousin came over this afternoon." It's clear that I knew that Karen was my cousin, I didn't need to say that for myself, and so I think that there was always this awareness of the audience. And I think, right now, there's writing that I do for an audience and there's writing that I do for myself. I do still keep a journal—it's largely for myself, and much of it is not the kind of writing that was publishable. Unless there was someone who was unusually interested in my life [laughs]. I use my writing as a way to get in touch with my feelings, and to work out problems, and to get some perspective on my life. And that kind of journal writing is very different from writing fiction.

N: Thank you very much for your time, Ms. Bertha.



## Public safety cont. from page 1

about it and realized that this is not something to be dismissed with an, "Oh boys will be boys on the night before Halloween." First, these guys could have been doing a lot worse than throwing eggs and yelling at students (although that is certainly pretty shitty). Second, why the hell couldn't Public Safety catch them if they were on campus for at least ten or fifteen minutes. If Public Safety couldn't catch a huge pack of screaming guys—which does not exactly blend into our campus—how can they prevent us from a lone rapist, or say, a naked jogger? Until Public Safety can stop assholes like this, Bryn Mawr is going to be the campus of choice for stupid Novan frat boys (or their brainless equivalents at Penn, etc.) to come and harass students.

Director of Public Safety Steven Heath decided not to comment on this when I called, but there will be a follow-up with his response in the next issue.

## Asian women in film continued from page 7

education, hard work, the women's movement, and other connections by portraying them with careers and most often, a white male love interest. However, history has not seemed to affect much in the sense that although Asian female characters are depicted in non-traditional careers in films such as *Year of the Dragon* (1986), the same stereotypes are still incorporated within the depictions. In *Year of the Dragon*, the Asian-American female is a T.V. anchorwoman involved with a white male law enforcement agent. Her heritage is not seen as a positive element to her (as Chinese gang warfare is the ONLY other portrayal of Asian-American life), and the character remains helpless and silent to her lover's barrage of racial slurs directed violently towards her. Her silence can be seen as indicative of the way in which Asian-Americans, and Asian-American women in particular, are perceived by the dominant society: silent, racially inferior, and accepting of discrimination toward them.

The roles of Asian women in films of the past and today reflect how the dominant U.S. culture mass-categorizes Asian people. They also show that because Asian women are commonly perceived as submissive and silent, opportunities for jobs of power and influence become even more scarce to them. In addition, violence directed toward Asian-American women can become more common

as a result of the assumption that the crimes will remain unreported and unprosecuted. The silence and relative invisibility of the Asian American population within the U.S. political power structure does not help to stop or even reduce racially-motivated crime. These are some of the ways in which stereotypical images of Asian women in films affect the daily experiences and status of Asian women in America.

This article is not necessarily meant to discount non-independently produced American films that DO portray Asian women realistically (however few there are), nor is it even meant to serve as a demand for all to carefully scrutinize every film that involves people of Asian heritage within the storyline. Rather, it is the reaction of one Asian-American whose immediate response is to sit and squirm upon viewing such characterizations of Asian people in film after film. In this light, the portrayals of Asian women and men in film and other mass media are NO different from barrages of racial slurs, violent physical attacks, nation-bashing, and other forms of intimidation that I've experienced personally. Such characterizations, regardless of degree or intent, can always be utilized to perpetuate and assert verbal and physical power for the purpose of informing a particular group of people of their "place."



## "Ancient Chinese secrets"? continued from page 7

restaurant is called Chinese Restaurant because it serves Chinese food; a Korean Restaurant, Korean food; a Thai Restaurant, Thai food, etc., etc. But a Chinese Laundromat? What does that suppose to mean? Am I to believe that there is something "Chinese" in the way these people dry clean a suit? Wait, wait... Don't tell me... I know the answer! They use "ancient Chinese secrets" to wash clothes! Click. A light bulb in my brain just brightens ten folds.

If the owner of the laundromat is trying to catch Chinese customers, he could have used "WONG'S LAUNDROMAT." That last name will even attract a blind Chinese person. I'm exaggerating. The point I'm trying to make is that there are enough stereotypes about Asian ethnic

groups without any help from us. The general American public (including some Asian-Americans) already stereotyped Koreans as produce stand owners and Chinese as laundromat operators. We don't need to help perpetuate these associations. I don't see anything negative about these businesses at all. It just irks me when people generalize (especially when I sometimes do it myself, but that's another story). Some will think that I'm blowing things out of proportion. Think what they will—they're entitled to their own opinions.

I told my ex-roommate of this laundromat and she said that there are "KOREAN LAUNDROMATS" all over New York City. How depressing! And stupid!



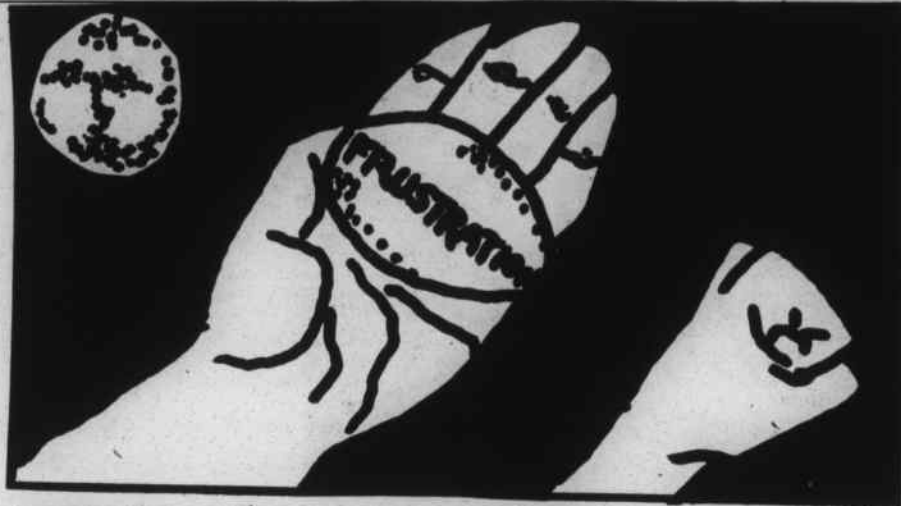
# Bryn Mawr community lends her feet to Philly's fight against AIDS



On Sunday, October 27, a group of students, faculty, and staff representing Bryn Mawr joined thousands of others on the fifth annual AIDS Walk. The \$1200 raised by the Bryn Mawr contingent through pledges and contributions will be donated in support of AIDS organizations in the Delaware Valley. Photos courtesy of Kathleen Carroll.







# Dick-or-Treat..

By Edie Lederman

A band of youths dressed in sombre black was the last thing I expected to see in an affluent Bryn Mawr neighborhood. It was Halloween, so the black was not so unusual; it was their protective huddling and suspicious white bag. It was obvious they were not trick-or-treaters. It was also obvious that they were a day late—mischief night was 24 hours ago.

Trick-or-treating is not the most illustrious activity for a college student, but it's harmless and a steady source of chocolate for the coming weeks. So, as if it might be, I was willing to risk embarrassment for a last chance at innocent fun. My friend was along for the same reason.

We certainly were having a good enough time, that was, until the boys in black arrived on the scene.

My friend and I were both aware of the potential problem, and without much need for communication we stuck to the far side of the street. It wasn't far enough. The boys spread across the street in a throng and proceeded to serenade us with their own Halloween chant—"Trick-or-treat, lick my meat."

We kept walking.

They proceeded along the road and asked us if these houses were giving out "good" candy.

We kept walking.

Our silence provoked them, and they threatened to "egg" us if we did not answer them.

We kept walking.

Within 5 seconds of the threat, an egg smashed me square in the back. Before we even had time to turn around they had taken to their heels. The mystery of the white bag was mystery no more.

We kept walking.

My friend was all for returning to the

college, gathering a band of Mawrtys, and going on a little man hunt. Surprisingly, I wasn't angry in the least bit, but I wasn't up for any more trick-or-treating either. I didn't want to knock on anymore doors, I just wanted to wash the egg out of my hair and crawl into bed.

The whole incident echoes such an inherent response inbred in men. "The woman has not done as I say, therefore she must be bludgeoned until she acquiesces." I did not answer the man, therefore I had overstepped my bounds as a woman. And why shouldn't I have answered him

after such a tantalizing offer of fellatio? He hurled the egg with all his might. How dare I turn my back to him when he is speaking to me? That egg was a symbol of all his frustration in being defied, and like the egg, it had less than a superficial effect on me. My silence was the barrier, and it merely splattered and slid off. After the deed was done they ran away like dogs who soiled the floor out of spite but were too embarrassed to admit their own mess. When the frustrated husband beats on his wife because she had "disobeyed" him, he doesn't tell the cops that he was teaching her how to behave—he tells them she accidentally fell down the stairs.

Who do they think they're fooling? We kept walking down that street, and as dampened as our spirits were, we were not going to chase them down and pounce on them. It would only prove that we cared enough about who they are to even get angry. You're not going to walk all over us—'cause we're just going to walk away.

zit? Don't worry—the big red zit on your nose isn't that apparent," whispered my friend. Gee thanks, I muttered to myself. I didn't even point out the location but like hell, she didn't notice it. When I came back to my room, a couple of friends dropped by to console me. What a coincidence—all of them had bottles of Oxy-10 which conveniently they forgot and left in my room. As if this crisis was not enough to drain a person, my sister had come over to visit me and the first thing she said was that Bush could have saved millions of bucks by investing in my oily nose instead of waging a war in the Gulf. Please help me get over this dark period in my life.

—Oxy 10's Mistake

Dear Oxy,

May I call you Oxy? EVERYONE has been on both sides of the mortification scenario. Some days you live through it, others you don't. In your case, everyone

See Ms. Hank on page 12



## Ms. Hank

Dear Ms. Hank,

I have a serious problem. My face has exploded into a massive pepperoni pizza. There I was, brushing my teeth as usual when my eyes just happened to look up at the mirror. A hideous figure standing before me stared at me. At this point, I was still groggy until the horrible realization hit me that this was my own reflection in the mirror. Aaughh! This scream erupted from my throat. I panicked at this point. I threw a towel over my head until I realized I couldn't wrap myself up like a mummy. I tried on a dozen scarfs but to my dismay, nothing worked. Late for class, I casually sauntered into the room. The professor was about to make a wise crack when his gaze fell on my face and his mouth hung agape. Yes, no sounds came from his lips. I sat next to my two close friends where I whispered to them about my zit problem. My friends were quick to respond that they hadn't noticed anything. "What

# personals

Wanted: A name for a tattoo. Distinguishing features include: bright pink pallor, ability to fly, holds little yellow flower in snout. Very friendly-looking. Please help to give him/her an identity. Submit suggestions to box C-1179.

To the purple-legged Eastie with the smile lovely enough to giftbox... I hope you won't cringe when you read this. —Well-head-over-heels

hey you in blue you've got the nicest wrinkles 'round your eyes. j.

herr butz get a grip on yourself and you may get a grip on something a little sweeter, namely one ganoosh (but she'd be angry if she knew i'd told you).

THIS GIRLFRIEND SAYS NO KISS FOR DEVILS AND I MEAN IT.

Hey! You wit da intoinal organs! To the C.O.C.s: you are the baddest, raddest, coolest, sweetest, smartest, prettiest, sexiest, most caring bubs in the world. I love you all more than vegepuzzies! Hang in there! the Q.O.S. in 209

## Party policy means party, but party responsibly

By Debbie Murphy

So there I was. Walking across Merion Green on that starry Friday night, anticipating the evening of fun and frolic I was about to have. It had been a long week; a couple of soccer games, clueless labs, and even, here and there, some work. But, hah, it was Friday, and I was going to go do some guiltless socializing at the party my friend had invited me to, have a few beers, dance, maybe hit a movie, head over to the Ford, who knows?

So there I was, walking briskly across the Green, ready to go out and play, when a well-coiffed party-bound group of passers-by says "Dude, I heard they got five kegs in ..... living room—let's go."

Cringe. The anticipation of those few coveted beers sinks as I think—five kegs? Alcohol Party Policy violation waiting to happen. And I'm on the Honor Board. Ugh. It is at this point that an Honor Board member is torn between two very powerful forces—the need to support the Code and sing the wonders of the Alcohol policy, and that Friday night desire to have the well-deserved beer and dance to Toto.

If I go, will I see something I don't want to? Will I have to, god-forbid, confront someone? Or, worst of all, will I walk into the room and hear "Hey yo, Murph's here! Have a beer!...oh no, wait, can you? I mean you're on the Honor Board..."

The Code and Alcohol-Party policies are very important to me. I like to think that I take them seriously and that I use them. But I do always get stuck in this dilemma; to what extent do they change my social life and how I act when I'm at a party, especially as a Board member? Although being on the Board is not the be-all-and-end-all of my existence, I have a responsibility to that position, and how does that affect my Friday night?

The way I see it, the Alcohol and Party policies are there to help me and everyone else have parties, and we all have to work together to make them work. That means going to the party, having a good time, and being responsible for myself. The Code only works if we use it, therefore the Party policy only works if we party.

So, I go to the party. The having a good time part is usually not a problem—after three years here I've become very creative. But the being responsible part is for me as a Board member, where I wonder.

Well, I don't feel that I'm about to give up my party-going social life to avoid a sticky situation. But if I'm there, and I see what I suspect is a violation, then what do I do? On this point, I don't think I, as

a Board member, have any more responsibility than the next Mawrter. We all have equal say in the Code, and we all equally uphold it. Just because I'm on the Board, doesn't mean I'm more obligated to confront than I was before I was elected. In fact, if anything, I think that Board members should swing to the other extreme, because for the Board to come off as the "party police" would not be cool—I wince at even putting "Board" and "police" in the same sentence.

So if I don't want to confront because of the "policing" connotation that action would carry, what do I do? To be silent and not say anything would be even more irresponsible. Even though we are not obliged to confront, if I don't check in with the person I believe might be violating the Code, then I am estranging myself from the community and its Code, and then the community breaks down.

If I saw something at a party I thought was out of whack with the Code and its policies, I would probably say to the person or persons "Hey, partying in the halls is not cool, guys. Don't you think you should move that into your room or the living room?" or "Hey hostess, I noticed some guests wandering the halls with alcohol—maybe you want to put a bouncer at the other door?" Hopefully, I'll get the "Gee Murph, I hear ya. I think I'll do something about that." Of course there is the possibility that I will get the "Whatever Murph" response, but luckily that hasn't happened yet. If it does, I will do something about it, but of course, confrontation's confidential and we all have the right to deal with that issue in our own private way.

So, in short Mawrters, we should all definitely party. Responsibly. The Alcohol and Party policies are only about ten pages long; if you haven't read them please do, both as a hostess and guest. The new notification forms are very neat; they come in wet and dry forms which can be picked up from your Dorm President. The Code and policies can be found in your nifty Student Handbook, which this year has a green spiral and another great picture of a Mawrter who graduated sometime in the 70's on the cover (note: the Code and policies are in separate places, so you may have to look to find them).

So read the policies, good luck in all your work, and please, don't forget to use the party policy by having lots of good parties. If you have any questions, or invites you need to get rid of, feel free to contact me, or any of the other Board members: Nikki Spencer, Karen Zatz, Sujatha Ayyagari, Claire Caesar, Susan Rubin, Paige Boyle, and Wren Nessle.



# ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Foskett takes photography beyond the camera

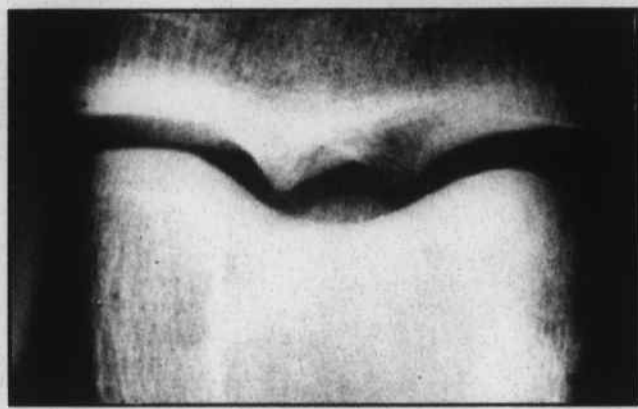
By Rebecca DeRoo

By invitation of the Gallery Committee, Maggie Foskett '42 returned to campus October 24-25 to mount an exhibition of her professional photographs. Foskett makes images like you've never seen before. She creates photographs without a camera.

Her exhibition, *Genesis*, features close-up organic forms, with subject matter ranging from x-rays to onions skins. Yet her works surpass literal readings of her materials, creating expressive and sometimes abstract images. In my favorite works, *Inner Landscapes Nos. 1 and 2*, bones are luminous and ephemeral, conveying a sense of movement.

Foskett's photographic printing process involves several steps. She does not use negatives to create her images, but rather assembles various objects in the

darkroom. First, she maneuvers materials, placing them on glass plates and magnifying them with the enlarger. Second, she gauges printing exposure to bring out certain colors in the photographic image. Finally, Foskett places objects on top of the photographic paper during printing (as in *Man Ray's Rayographs*).



Because Foskett uses natural materials which change during printing, no two works are alike. She works in complete

darkness, allowing possibility for the unexpected. Foskett demonstrates that photography is more than an easily-reproducible documentation of actual events; indeed, her works surpass use of the camera. She states:

I suppose *Genesis* represents my personal rebellion against automatic focus photography... I wanted to show that photography is more than the click of a

shutter. I like the concentration required in the darkroom, and its controlled yet unprogrammed range of discovery, where nothing is ever *déjà vu*.

Foskett will return to Bryn Mawr this June for her 50th reunion with the Class of 1942. At the opening of her exhibition, Foskett explained that as a student, she had come to Bryn Mawr from Brazil. Raised in a Latin-American environment, where at that time the role of the woman was fixed, Foskett valued her independence at Bryn Mawr. Although she was an English major, she feels that the structured scholastics at Bryn Mawr also contributed to her accomplishment in photography. She explains: "You have to learn to master what you study. Later on, if something else appeals to you, that

discipline will come naturally."

Having previously done work as a writer, created metalwork assemblages, and designed stained glass, Foskett became interested in the creative aspects of photography after her children were grown. In 1978, she attended a workshop with Ansel Adams, and since then she has taken classes with Marie Cosindas and Olivia Parker at the Maine Photographic Workshop, Rockport. Foskett exhibits widely, including shows at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center and Juried exhibitions at the Philadelphia Print Club's Annual International. Her exhibition at Bryn Mawr's Centennial Campus Center is not to be missed. (Through Sunday, November 10; daily 12-5pm.)



Photographer Maggie Foskett '42, whose work is currently being exhibited in the Campus Center. photo by the artist

## Idaho: it's not just for potatoes

By Megan Susman

The title for *My Own Private Idaho* comes from a B-52's song, where it refers to a person off in his own little world. The world inhabited by Mike, the main character of the movie, is one that merits escapism.

The movie is about two male prostitutes and their drifting lives. Doesn't sound like your typical Hollywood movie. Director Gus Van Sant had to wait until he made big with *Drugstore Cowboy* until he could get the funding to do this film.

In the beginning, the film seems disjointed and incoherent, but things soon settle down to the normal narrative pace. Mike, played by River Phoenix, is a narcoleptic male hustler—shy, lonely, searching for his mother, indeed, for any affection. He joins with Scott (Keanu Reeves), the son of the mayor of Portland, who will come into a large inheritance on his 21st birthday, a week away when the film starts.

The pair look for Mike's mother, following her trail to Italy, where Scott falls in love with a comely Italian peasant girl and abandons Mike. When Mike returns to America, he finds Scott has abandoned his previous life and joined the Portland elite.

Like *Drugstore Cowboy*, this movie deals with the seamier side of life. In the midst of the grimy setting, Mike is a sweet innocent trying to come to terms with his rootlessness. His "own private Idaho" is his vanished mother, home movie clips of her playing in his mind as he slips into a narcoleptic fit. He falls in love with Scott, even though Scott claims "two men can't love each other." But Mike believes that he can love someone "even if they're not paying him to," and the scene where he declares his love to Scott is one of the film's most moving.

River Phoenix is fantastic in this role. He always chooses good films to showcase his enormous talent, and this is his

best role yet. He gives a heartaching performance that made me want to reach into the screen and hug the desolate, despairing Mike.

Scott, on the other hand, is anything but innocent. He is a conniving person who uses others, then deserts them. He takes up with the male prostitutes to annoy his father. Although he acknowledges the prostitutes' mentor, Bob (William Rickert), as the man he considers his real father, he is mockingly cruel to the man. And his abandonment of Mike is completely callous.

As for Keanu Reeves' acting, first the good news: he is not in his Bill (or is it Ted?) mode. Now the bad news. With that bouncy goofiness gone, he has virtually no personality. Sorry to all you Keanu fans, but he was wooden, and at his worst when spouting the Shakespearean lines Scott so often resorted to. (There is supposed to be some sort of parallel here with *Henry IV*, with Scott as Prince Hal and Bob as Falstaff, but since I never read the play, I'm not really qualified to discuss that. Still, Bob looked pretty Elizabethan.)

The Johns provide some moments of comedy, especially Hans (Udo Kier). Others are equally eccentric, however; let me just say you'll never scrub sinks the same way again.

The movie is gorgeously shot, with beautiful landscapes. The music is quite diverse and very interesting. The whole film has a poetic feel to it, as though you were watching an epic poem unfold before your eyes. The sex scenes are treated very uniquely. They are shown in a series of still life tableaux of intertangled bodies, de-eroticizing the sex.

*Idaho* is a beautiful movie. The best word I can think of to sum it up is heartaching. It is a moving, poetic film which showcases two of the hottest new talents around, Gus Van Sant and River Phoenix.

3.9 out of 4.0

## Lady Oracle

THE SAGITTARIUS MAWRTYR AND HER RELATIONSHIPS WITH:

**Aries** This is an extremely lively partnership. Both signs are very vivacious and good-natured. Sagittarians are a soothing influence on Ariens, believe it or not. It is hard to imagine the hyper Sagittarius Mawrtyr being a soothing influence on any one, but she has a very, very gentle, soft side to her nature.

**Taurus** Taureans baffle Sagittarians. The Sagittarius Mawrtyr simply cannot understand why anyone who isn't dropping dead from fatigue would prefer to lounge around at home, rather than take emotional and physical roller-coaster rides with. In spite of all her coaxing, nothing short of fire alarms gets the home-loving Taurean out of the house!

**Gemini** Geminis have sharp wits (which Sagittarians appreciate)—and sharper tongues (which make Sagittarians uncomfortable). Sagittarius Mawrtyrs put up with the almost merciless teasing of Geminis, mainly because they hate being told that they can't take a joke. But I would caution Geminis against pushing the tolerance of a Sagittarius Mawrtyr. When her temper explodes all over a relationship (and all over the

Gemini) it's not a pretty sight!

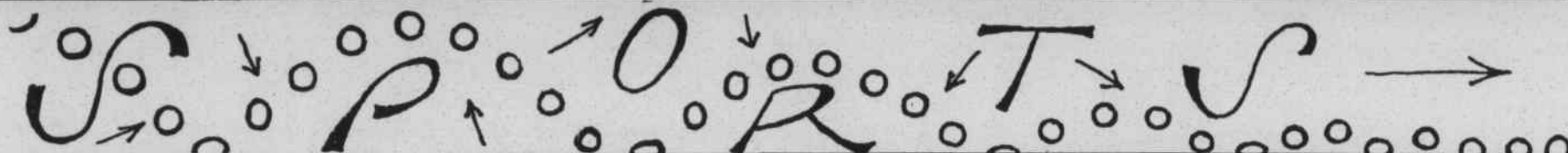
**Cancer** Cancerians take many things—including life—a lot more seriously than the Sagittarius Mawrtyr does. Frankly speaking, the happy-go-lucky attitude of many Sagittarians drives Cancerians bonkers! The fretfulness of Cancer, and the lack of responsibility of Sagittarians create too many communication gaps for this association to be truly successful.

**Leo** The queen-size Leo ego doesn't really bother the Sagittarius Mawrtyr—she accepts it as one of the undeniable facts of life. These two get along extremely well together. The enthusiastic nature of the Sagittarian and the exuberance of the Leo provide a good foundation for this relationship.

**Virgo** This starts out as an intriguing association, and, interestingly enough, it can go two ways. Either the Sagittarius Mawrtyr gets on the nerves of the Virgoan (which is quite common) or else the Virgoan gets on the nerves of the Sagittarius Mawrtyr (which is extremely rare). Nevertheless, the association teaches both signs the lessons of

See *Lady Oracle* on page 12





# Accolades to those tireless Bryn Mawr athletes

By Vicky Maxon

## Cross country

Seven members of the Bryn Mawr College cross country team ran in a meet November 2 at Franklin and Marshall. The host team, ranked 17th in the nation, also invited Rutgers and Swarthmore to run in the Red Rose Invitational, where every finisher received a rose. The F&M invitational was very cross-country, with woods and marshy areas, and the windy weather and below-optimal conditions did not make for a great race in general, according to junior Jen Morse. The overwhelming sentiment expressed by the runners was that the team, complete with new coach, started the season off very positively, and have continued to do well overall, but now are understandably showing signs of fatigue because of the long season. This Saturday was Bryn Mawr's last seasonal meet; regionals will be held in Allentown in two weeks, for which the top nine BMC runners will train.

## Rugby

The Bryn Mawr-Haverford Women's Rugby team's loss to Shippensburg last week, their first defeat of the season, meant that the Horn Toads would not be travelling to the EPRU finals in Baton Rouge as their region's champions. An emergency meeting was called by the team's administrators to decide whether to play the rest of this season's schedule or to renege on their previous commitments and attempt to best Dartmouth on the way to a wildcard spot in the tournament. After the situation was made clear to all the players, the decision was reached to stay with the schedule originally planned; the feeling voiced by administrators and coaches was that though the

system did not live up to its agreement did not mean that the team must do the same. Going for the tournament spot would have meant raising funds for the trip to Louisiana itself, besides excessive responsibility on the part of the players themselves to find a referee and a pitch on which to play Dartmouth, etc. This week the Bi-College team travelled three hours to Bucknell, and with a mixture of A-side and inexperienced B-side players, lost 8-4.

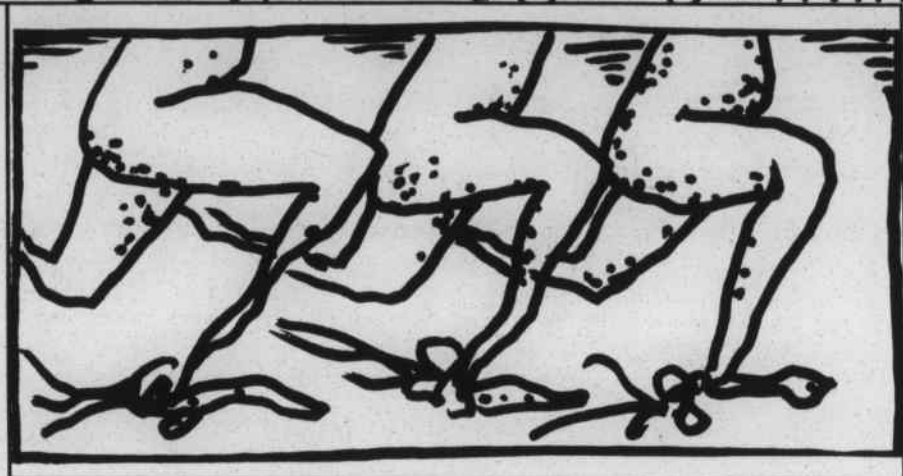
## Soccer

Ending the year with a 7-9 record, the Bryn Mawr soccer girls lost to Notre Dame of Maryland two days after defeating Beaver College in an away game. As you may have noticed, the season was not slow-paced, often with three games scheduled per week, but the team persevered and, according to one player, played more as a team than ever before in her three years here:

"We were a better team than our record shows."

## Field Hockey

In their last game of the season, the Bryn Mawr field hockey team lost 2-1 to Swarthmore, a team they defeated 2-0 in the Seven Sisters Tournament earlier this year. According to senior captain Becky Koh, this game had obvious parallels to the 5-8-4 season: "Offensively we were very strong this year; every game we pounded the goal and had good crosses, but we couldn't seem to put it in." Though the team had lost six players from the previous season, a number of good freshmen players filled in those spots and "strongly contributed to a really good season." Hopefully the team will do the same next year, after losing seniors Koh, Horning, and Fruchtman.



# Lady Oracle cont. from page 11

gentleness, patience, and tolerance, and so they are both better off because of this relationship.

**Libra** Librans like Sagittarians. It's as simple as that—and it stays simple. No matter how many times these two signs quarrel, they are usually ready to make up. And if they don't make up, it's because the Libran was too lazy to make the effort. But that doesn't change the fact that these signs are, by and large, very fond of each other.

**Scorpio** Sagittarian Mawrtyr's have a lot of respect for most Scorpios, even for those whom they aren't particularly close to. Scorpios, in turn, are appreciative of the Sagittarius Mawrtyr's passion for truth. The relationship is one based on honesty, and is usually one that is beneficial to both parties.

**Sagittarius** As long as these two don't exhaust each other, they get along very well together. At any rate, the interactions between two Sagittarians are quite capable of exhausting all their friends, enemies, and well-wishers—in short, everyone around them. This is hardly surprising when one con-

siders the Sagittarian philosophy of life being a big (and exhausting) party!

**Capricorn** Capricorns are a lot more tolerant of Sagittarians than one would expect them to be—seeing as Capricorns are stern, disciplined, "no-nonsense" people. Sagittarius Mawrtyr's have as much respect for Capricorns as they do for Scorpios. Moreover, Sagittarians learn a lot from this association.

**Aquarius** The bouncy Sagittarius Mawrtyr and the even-tempered Aquarian get along fabulously. Both these signs are gregarious and fun-loving. Neither of them is particularly possessive. They give each other a lot of space—this is the secret of the "good health" of their relationship.

**Pisces** The outspokenness of the Sagittarius Mawrtyr disturbs the tactful Piscean. However, the Piscean (like most people) finds it very difficult to resist the generous, good-hearted Sagittarian. And the relationship is never boring as both signs are very creative and interesting people.

by Nadya ChishtyMujahid

# Ms. Hank cont. from page 10

lived through it with you. We know you've been working hard cause those zits are due to a caffeine OD. Ma and Pa would be proud at the trauma you go through just to preserve your academic career. And even your social life hasn't plummeted cause when you start your Retin-A treatments, no one will know it was you who the professor gaped at. As for your sister, tell her that Exxon is still recruiting.

To another day on Mother Earth, Ms. Hank

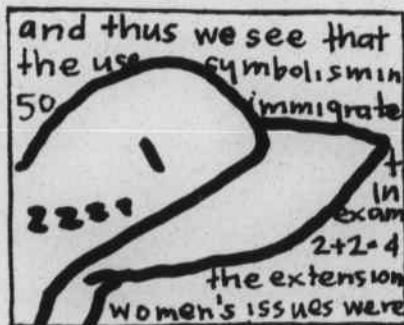
Dear Ms. Hank,

Day after day, I sit in class waiting for the dark cloud to fall on my head. I'm in terrible danger of flunking all my courses and squandering my parents' lifesavings which they've invested in my education. What am I supposed to do when all my soporific professors drone on for hours and hours about nonsense? Gosh, my professors put me to sleep faster than Sudafed Drowsiness tablets. In their

monotone voices, they expound on the theories of the philosophers. With each word they utter, my head drops to the desk until I am no longer conscious of where I am. To avoid this from happening every day, I go on a caffeine high where I gulp down twelve cups of coffee. On top of this, I revive with Vivarin but to no avail; my eyelids close no matter how much I fight them. I wouldn't complain about this if the professors wouldn't make such a big deal in class. They usually ask a fellow student to tell me to keep my snoring down. I cannot imagine such audacity and rudeness from the professors. I demand that some action be taken against professors who shatter the beautiful reveries that come about. I think they should change their jobs to curing insomniacs. What do you think?

— Sleepy

Dear Sleepy, Socrates invested in Hemlock, subsequently saving you and hundreds of others from possibly more days of close comatose encounters. Even Plato looks like he's ready to hit the sack at that fatal moment, as interpreted in David's "The Death of Socrates." Fortunate or not, your profs aren't on their deathbeds. But you'd think that in their own moments of glory, such as they are, they'd emulate Socrates who did not tell someone to elbow old Plato back to reality. I think profs should be pleased, rather, that you have taken the time to act just as our great thinkers did. It's time for them to learn a lesson as well. Pleasant dreams.



# Dykes To Watch Out For

