Class of 1955

Elizabeth Green Appleton
Alan Arkin
Sheila Gallagher Arnaboldi
Jean Fager Arnold
Lawrence Arrick
Martha Haskell Baird
Joyce Orgel Basche
Jane Simpson Bauer
Sibyl Totah Belmont*
Ruth Greenwald Beschloss
Betty Smith Bishop
Sally Teitelbaum Blum
Gertrude Scheff Brown
Margaret Garry Buckley*
Eileen Gates Carrier*
Nancy M. Connable
Martha Dagnall
Alice Glantz Daniel
Beverly Davenport*
Ellen Huddleson de la Torre
Suzanne Thomas Dolloff
Winifred Graham Downsbrugh*
Joan Geiger Doyle
Nancy Wharton Duryea*
Sheila Paperny Ellis
Josephine Brown Emery
Ruth L. Fluhr
Phyllis A. Heywood Franze*
Priscilla Marie Howe Frieswick*
Patricia Peebles Gamble-Hovey
Nancy Silbowitz Garfield-Woodbridge
Sarah Sedgwick Gincchio
Elaine Grossman Gould
Lois Kaufman Grandberg
Ellin Friedman Grossman
Judith Backer Grunberg
Ann Blumgart Gurewich*
Beatrice Appel Halsted
Vernon Hayes*
Helen Burgin Hazen
Lisa Landon Hewett
Jane Monihan Holappa

Ethelyn Blinder Honig
Martha T. Howell
Maryan Forbes Hurtt
Barbara Shivitz Isaacs
Lenore Janis
Barbara Kelly Johnson
Vija Peterson Johnson
Dorothea Booth Katz
Rosemary Frost Khan
Miriam Hermanos Knapp
Ellen Thomas Lacourt
Fern Galane Lenter
Elizabeth Lester
Evelyn Jerome Lindsay
Sandra L. Stewart Little*
Selina F. Little
Terry Monash Littwin*
Vanni Mechau Lowdenslager
Janet Burke Mann
Joan Morris Manning
Barbara Silver Marcus*
Mary Kent Marshall*
Nancy Baird Matthews
Jane Uhler McDonough
Barbara Phillips McMahon
Linda Conner McNulty
James Albert Merrow*
Jane Lowenstein Michaels
Marleen Forsberg Montgomery
Catherine Orloff Morrison
Ann Atkin Moscovitz
Dolly Milbrand Mulcahy
Aldona Kanauka Naudzius
Barbara Neuwirth
Carolyn Scott Nichols*
Lionel Nowak
Roberta Pollock Panter
Helene Rattner Pesin
Sara Gursky Pettit
Pamela Sidenberg Popovich
Linda Schandler Porter
Mary Vallas Posner

Mancia Schwartz Propp
Toby Carr Rafelson
Gloria Haines Root
Carol Rubenstein
Shaila Rubin
Marion Krapowicz Safford
Susan Mack Saril
Pamela Pollard Saxton*
Stephanie Schecht Schottin
Faith Bancroft Schrader
Barbara Goldman Schulman
Donna Bear Scott
Jacqueline Klein Segal
Ann Shaff
Stella Spanoudaki Sichel
Julie Cummings Siff
Ruth Fidel Silverman
Jane Ludvig Simon
Sally Smith*
Nancy Lee Smith
Irene Reik Soffer
Betty Ungerleider Steiner
Barbara Suchman
Latifah (Irene) Ryan Taormina
Ruth Haniman Taran
Margot Hartman Tenney
Diana Van Vlaanderen Tiernan
Janice E. Van Horne
Johanna Bourne Vanderbeek
Burns Brighton Vitzthum*
Judith Rydell Wagner
Grace Bakst Wapner
Ellen Weber
Barbara Schwartz Weihrauch
Evelyn Werblow
Donalda Jones Williams
Elizabeth Bergh Williamson
Sue Ann Moloney Wilson
Jean D. Woodard
Susan Humbert Zuch

*Denotes Deceased
Most vintage photographs courtesy of Bennington College Photography archives unless otherwise noted.
Sheila Gallagher Arnaboldi

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What have been your major interests at Bennington and beyond?
Worked as a reporter on Washington, DC, and New York City newspapers after graduation. Married—children—rich life. Work now as a painter—have entered many juried shows both in CT and FL. Writing some songs on what its like to have an illness. From one of them:

“Does the road wind
Upwards, all the way.
Even in the midst of a
Beautiful day—Bright Blue
Sky and Apricot Clouds—
Does the road wind
Upwards, all the way.”

Ups and downs in life?
Mostly ups—wonderful husband, children, grandchildren, but alas Parkinson’s Disease has entered my life.
Martha Haskell Baird

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What an opportunity to realize the effects of my Bennington experience!

First the opportunities in two Non-Resident Terms: to tour in the 1953 Bennington Dance Group (35 dates in 35 days while traveling more than 2,000 miles) and to teach at Chatham Hall. To have my natural talent as a dancer developed technically, choreographically, and as a performer with a variety of excellent teachers and the invaluable experience of the weekly Dance Workshop that encouraged commentary from all for the dances in progress. The privilege of living in a community with talented and eager students, available and supportive faculty where the attitude was always, “If you have an idea, then go ahead and try it!” I remember a student got up a petition that the food and the dining experience should be improved, which I think everyone signed! Very soon a charming, creative man was hired who greatly improved the food, decorated the dining rooms occasionally, and I think even provided candlelight! That achievement affected me most positively. Little did I know how much I would need to draw from the totality of the college experience for the challenges to come in my future.

I believe my Bennington experience strengthened me to meet and accomplish the following learning, advocacy, and initiatives regarding:

- the bringing up of Laurie, our cerebral-palsied daughter;
- the creation of a form of information that resulted in the design of our beautiful home to meet the needs of our family;
- the removal of architectural barriers in the church, library, schools, and stores;

With Gus Solomons, Jr. in “Image For Two” (all choreographed by me).
• the implementation of Mass. Chapter 766—the education law that gave rights to special needs students;
• the creation of three performing companies: The Dancemakers, Movement Sound Light in Concert, and Arts Crossing;
• the formulation of “Creating out of the Moment”—guidelines to create with others art forms without a preconceived idea;
• the conception of the company Aspire Associates that leads an interactive process of introspection, conversing and movement to discover deepest hearts, desires, and direction for fulfillment, and builds a DreamMaking community.

I want to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation of Becca Stickney. She has been a joy to know, to support, and to be supported by over all these fifty years the only constant connection so warm and responsive, which I consider invaluable. Thank you for all you have given to all of us!
Joan Geiger Doyle

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What have been your major interests at Bennington and beyond?
Dance and Drama. Between sophomore and junior years, I spent a year studying at the Neighbor Playhouse in NYC. After graduation, I taught dramatics and was involved in a little theater and off-Broadway. I started a pre-school and was a real estate salesman. I enjoyed competition in sports and became a physical education teacher and initiated a modern dance program. Traveling is my love so I established Omni Guided Tours and traveled the world.

How did the Bennington experience influence your direction in life?
Bennington and the Non-Resident Terms gave me the confidence to walk this life. When an idea struck me, I did not hesitate to follow through and make a project become a reality. When my community was in need of a museum I formed a committee, raised funds and an historical museum was created.

Ups and downs in life?
Downs—when my parents passed away. Ups—grateful to be alive after a bout with cancer, to have a successful marriage, four healthy children and ten grandchildren.

Family Notes?
Children: Shaun—Professional dancer, choreographer, and director of Ballet South in New Jersey; Dwayne—Masters in Divinity, minister and married a minister; Shivaun—BA degree in recreation management; Darrin—Physical education teacher.

Are there any comments on past, present, or future you wish to make?
I can only wish that all future Bennington graduates throughout the next fifty years will be as happy and fulfilled as I have been.
Since I left Bennington College, my life has been busy and crowded like a Brueghel painting. My first marriage was to the brother of another Bennington student. I met him the weekend after graduation at their parents’ summer home at Fire Island. We were married February 1957 and after a couple of years, I had two sons, Maurice and Joshua.

A group of school, non-resident term experiences turned into an odyssey of jobs. During my non-resident work terms, I had been returning to my job at the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research to help with several volumes that became *An International Directory of Anthropological Institutions* and a second book called *Man’s Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*, which became a college text in anthropology. It was funded by the National Science Foundation and the people I worked with explained that when I had finished working on the team, I would understand all the phases of book development.

At the foundation, I was given the opportunity to check bibliographic references in fourteen languages when I didn’t speak most of them. I worked on the book’s index (about a hundred pages), which was on a short deadline because the grant money was running out. The chapters of the book were written by eminent scientists, anthropologists and archaeologists from around the world, e.g. Charles Darwin, Jr., Father Teilhard de Chardin, Julian Huxley and almost fifty others who were all invited to a conference held at Princeton University where they presented their papers on “Man’s Role in Changing the Face of the Earth,” and engaged in discussions that were taped and included in the book.

I could not attend the actual conference in 1955 because it conflicted with the graduation weekend at Bennington College and my parents wanted to attend. However, as soon as school was out, I was back at the foundation, helping to edit the papers presented and working on the final manuscript: proofreading, indexing, and checking proofs for the final book.

After that marathon, I worked for *Forbes* magazine as picture editor and fact checker. I was hired as a researcher and this job evolved into the picture editor position. My job was to produce photos from their files or from picture agencies of the captains of industry. By this time I was married and expecting my first
child, so I quit my job at Forbes and studied sculpture at the Archipenko Studio in New York.

At the time, I wanted the opportunity to continue working in this medium due to my very positive association with Simon Moselsio who taught sculpture at the college. I also continued to paint, inspired by my teacher, Paul Feeley, who had encouraged my bold painting style that emerged at college. Even though I had majored in literature and continued to write, I also continued to paint and to sculpt. At about that time, my paintings were shown at the Lynn Kottler gallery in the East Sixties in New York City and I remember hauling my paintings around strapped to the back of my son's stroller to galleries until this particular gallery decided to give me a show.

When my oldest son, Maurice, was two, I had a second son, Joshua, and I became Vice President of Information Retrieval Systems, a company founded by my husband. I was able to work at home and look after my small boys who were being cared for by a Haitian nurse. She said she learned English from them, while they spoke French to her because she could only speak French. Thanks to Wallace Fowlie, I was able to converse with her in French! I attribute their good dispositions to her magnificent viewpoint that respect for the “souls of children” is paramount in childrearing.

While home, I founded The Gifted Child Magazine, which was, at the time, the first magazine on the gifted in this country. I was able to work with an editor at home to search out some challenging concepts. At the time, Senator Benton had visited Russia with his young son and observed Russian education and he gave us an article on his visit. This was before Sputnik. We also wrote articles on non-competitive attitudes among Navajo children on the reservations and on the Suzuki musical concepts which are still broadly seen in this country today, but at the time, they were used only in Japan. We also featured an article on Shantiniketan, the school in India founded by Rabindranoth Tagore, the poet.

While tending the family and home, in our business I was searching international markets for customers for small information retrieval systems and the Geniac, which was a miniature computer put together by our customers and which could accomplish certain tasks if they put the proper wiring together according to the handbook supplied with directions for producing a variety of machines. This was a far cry from Apple Computer and the Internet which we have now. But people were really interested in this new medium at the time.
It was a busy time with small children, a business and a magazine to run and many contemporary issues to deal with. We marched with our baby carriages for safer playgrounds, to get rid of the heavy metal swings that regularly hit children in the skull and caused frequent ambulance runs to Riverside Park.

I was writing children’s books and sending them out to publishers who regularly returned them to me. But, the letters of encouragement I received from some editors made me continue to send out my work.

While living in New York, we talked with another Bennington graduate, who was helping African students attend college in the United States. We offered to help as volunteers and that project became a full-time job. After contacting hundreds of East African students, the State Department, the United Nations where Adlai Stevenson was the Ambassador and the U.S. Department of African Affairs, we finally were invited on a radio talk show and we were able to tell the country of the plight of the students in colleges all over the United States.

At this point, a youngster whose father was a vice president of United Press International offered to help us and her father sent a reporter. This went out across the press lines of the country. President Kennedy read the front page of the *Washington Post* which said, “East African Students Starving in the U.S.” Since these students had been part of the Kennedy Airlift, we immediately heard from Arthur Goldberg, then head of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, who sent a representative to meet with us. As a result, three centers were set up for these students and they were allowed to work because until that time, they were not allowed to have jobs in the United States and when their money ran out—they could not do anything.

Later, the Department of African Affairs was able to allocate money for many students to finish their education. They were to be the first generation of students educated abroad who would go back to govern their newly emerging countries. They represented a number of diverse tribes. Some students lived with us that year.

We conducted a marathon job search after that and the American Friends Committee put students up in a hostel they owned in the West 80s as the students appeared in New York City from all the colleges that were closing for the summer. We did find jobs for hundreds and with the help of the radio show, many people offered help to these students.

After meeting many of the students, I wrote my children’s book about the Kamba tribe in Kenya. They made most of the African carvings that

*My son Maurice instructing his little brother Josh on how to drive.*
were sold in the U.S. The book was called *The Tuesday Elephant*, and T. Y. Crowell published it. Another Bennington connection, my editor was Mathilda Welter and she had Tom Feelings do the illustrations. He did a great job and the next year he won the Newbery for *To Be A Slave*, by Julius Lester.

Life moved on swiftly now. We had moved to Princeton and then to Great Neck, Long Island, bringing our two boys, assorted pets and manuscripts, and our business to each new venue. While on Long Island, I acquired a literary agent in New York City who was also the poet James Dickey’s agent. He did sell my children’s books, though, in spite of my beginning status. I read my books for children in libraries, at schools and in bookstores. I taught creative writing to seven to ten year olds at the local library as well as to seven year olds in a second grade public school class in Great Neck.

By now, new projects loomed, the Biafran crisis held the world’s attention. We worked with an English journalist who was flying into war-torn Biafra with medicine and food trying the save the starving millions. She presented at Parliament and pleaded with the Queen to help the starving people of Biafra. She contacted Dr. Albert Schweitzer and other leaders in African countries to get help for millions of children dying of kwashiorkor.

We helped her to contact U.N. representatives and the U.S. Congress. She had been asking Teddy Kennedy for help with President Lyndon Johnson, and finally enough pressure was brought to bear to get relief planes to fly food and medicine into Biafra. No country wanted to interfere in a civil war, but finally, many did send food and medicine into Biafra to save the starving populace. I learned an important lesson at that time, and it was that you could change the world, if you wanted to.

Now it was necessary for me to go to work. I finished my master’s degree in education at Hofstra University and began job hunting. Fortunately, I was hired by the Vice President of the New York Institute of Technology as a research associate. When I got to the university, I was asked to develop curriculum for a campus school for gifted children which was to become a model school for the students who were studying in the School of Education and the School of Special Education. I created the curriculum from preschool to twelfth grade in all required subjects for New York State. This curriculum and the concept for the school were accepted by the New York Board of Regents. My corner of the office was filled with all kinds of textbooks and required subject matter issued by the state. I learned a lot and produced a rather large document.

At this time, my second children’s book called *The Dancing Monkey* was sold to G. P. Putnam and Sons and one of the places I had applied for a job the year before called and asked me to come back. It was the Girl Scouts of the USA. I had spent one summer as a freelance curriculum developer on a grant at Girl Scouts doing a program for them which was later funded by the Office of Child Development. The program was called Education for Parenthood. Apparently, the number of babies born to American teenagers had reached one in ten and this program which was funding all the youth agencies for a total of twelve million dollars was to help with this problem of unwed, teenage parenthood. After that summer stint at the Girl Scouts, I was later hired back to help develop the handbooks which needed newer editions, pronto, and also the Education for Parenthood project was expected to receive funding from Washington, DC.
I was hired to direct the writers on the new handbooks. Having never been a Girl Scout in my youth, this required research in their archives to get a handle on what had been in the past and to look at what girls in the ’70s would be needing.

My children were now in grade school and very self-sufficient. They had seven cats and were proficient in a game called Strato-Matic. In fact, they won the national championship behind the top winner from the University of Chicago, a math major who had graduated. They were now nine and eleven and came in second and third in the country winning a small amount of money and a boom box. They were very pleased, and they made the newspapers because they were so young and had beat out strategists from all over the country in predicting ball game scores for the major teams. I don’t know much about this, but I do remember being dragged to Shea Stadium a lot so they could go to the ball games.

I went to work at the Girl Scouts at this time and never expected to remain there for almost twenty-eight years, but I did, working on many projects, grants and handbooks until I retired in December 2000. While at Girl Scouts, I had more titles than I can remember, but one was Director of Special and Innovative Projects which seemed to be what I always ended up doing.

We introduced a new younger age group called Daisies below the traditional Brownies, we created the Education for Parenthood Project on a grant for three years, we worked on Juvenile Justice projects and publications in a consortium of all the youth agencies representing forty million young people who were members. I directed a program called From Dreams to Reality, a career education program for girls from six to eighteen years. It was funded by the Office of Career Education and I spent a lot of time disseminating it across the U.S. visiting many parts of this country from California to Montana to Texas to Florida and almost everywhere else.

It was a busy time and by now my children were grown and I was divorced. I began to search for inner peace and wanted to learn what had gone wrong. I tried studying eastern religions, I began writing a novel called If I Had $1500 I Would Clean My Karma, and while working at the Girl Scouts those many years, I began many children’s books I never had enough time to really finish—so I put them aside. Now that I have retired from full-time Girl Scout work, I have been able to concentrate on these unfinished manuscripts.

I remarried in 1980 and my husband is a composer and a teacher. When we came to live in Connecticut, I helped fundraise for the Milford Fine Arts Council and now we have a building with a theatre and classrooms, plus they’ve opened an art gallery across town using an old Fire House. The council is housed in an old Metro North train station building which was renovated and restored. I became a member of the
Workshop Poets and along the way, also a member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators and the Author’s Guild.

I look forward to meeting our class in October and recall many fond memories from Bennington College such as being Howard Nemerov’s son’s baby sitter when he was a toddler, to also babysitting for Stanley Edgar Hyman and Shirley Jackson as well as waiting on table and being Margaret DeGray’s part-time secretary. Somewhere along the way, I learned to take dictation and, of course, type. Now with computers it is so much easier. I also worked with Kenneth Burke to index a Dostoevsky novel and right after graduation I worked on my first novel called *Suns of Darkness*.

I came to Bennington College to study writing and continued to write all my life. I was hired as a staff writer at Girl Scouts, and while there worked on fifty-four publications. I am still writing freelance, and currently working on four novels, two volumes of poetry and numerous children’s books.

It was a privilege to be educated at Bennington. When I graduated I never imagined that one day I would fundraise for girls all over the United States. I have been privileged to help others and that has meant a great deal to me.

In my first marriage, I had two sons who make me proud. They, too, view their purpose to make this planet a better place for all people and they have devoted their lives to helping others. My second marriage improved the quality of my life and my husband is a composer currently working on an opera and inspiring many young people as a teacher.

*My sons, Maurice and Joshua, now.*
Ellin Friedman Grossman

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My major interests were always in the visual arts, beginning with high school at the marvelous Music & Art High School in New York City, where I grew up. Although I transferred to Antioch College after my freshman year at Bennington, I remember most vividly my Bennington classes; these included art history with Alexander Dorner, French literature with Wallace Fowlie, and literature with Howard Nemerov. They were stars! Bennington influenced my life by providing me with marvelous teachers.

At Antioch I majored in studio art and graduated in 1955. That was the first of my three higher education graduation ceremonies that I did not attend. In 1955 I chose my wedding ceremony over graduation—to Robert Grossman, whom I had known since high school and who was then in med school at Columbia. By the time I received my MA in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts of NYU, we were in Rochester, NY, where Bob interned, again I skipped the ceremony. And when I received my doctorate in art education from the University of Houston, I was a faculty member at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. I decided to participate in graduation exercises with my own students—the third of my missed ceremonies. Nevertheless, finishing my doctorate (at a time when my three daughters were in high school, middle school and elementary school) was something I wanted to do. It enabled me to pursue a career in higher education—first teaching, and later as Associate Dean Academic Affairs in the School of Human Sciences and Humanities. I retired after 25 years in 1999. I taught art history, art education, museum education, weaving, aesthetics, crafts and other related courses, and mentored many graduate students.

My husband is a neurosurgeon who was Chair of the Department of Neurosurgery at Baylor College of Medicine and Chief, Department of Neurosurgery at The Methodist Hospital for 25 years. He stepped down as Chair of Baylor to assume a new position as Director of the newly formed Neurological Institute of The Methodist Hospital in Houston. Our daughters are Amy Coburn, MD (an ophthalmologist), Kate Rose (BA Swarthmore and master’s degrees in architecture and business from Rice University), and Jennifer Oakley, who is a writer (BS journalism and MA humanities). They and their families all live in Houston, within 10 minutes from our home. We have 8 grandchildren ranging from 9 to 14 years in age; we are all very close and the cousins are all good friends.
We just celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary with a wonderful weekend in Santa Fe, NM. More than 100 of our family, friends and colleagues traveled westward or eastward for dinner at La Fonda Hotel on Saturday night, and brunch at our home the next day. Bringing together family and friends from the various places where we lived, studied and worked was a heartwarming experience. It was festive, fun and sentimental and an opportunity to enjoy beautiful, magical New Mexico. Bob and I have had a wonderful life and still are excited by new prospects. I have done a number of projects for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, over the past few years where I serve on three advisory committees. I am also involved with the Epilepsy Foundation of Southeast Texas, with Chrysalis, a modern dance company which unfortunately is disbanding after many years, and with other community boards.

**Ups and downs in life?**
It’s been more Up than Down, fortunately. It was difficult initially to leave the New York area, which we did for Bob’s career; but in the end, I had marvelous opportunities academically and career-wise; and Houston has been a good setting for our children and grandchildren. I am very much involved in our grandchildren’s lives and that is the most marvelous thing! We are all reading *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, and I have seen every PG and PG-13 movie that came to the screen this summer.

I remember my year at Bennington fondly, and wish continued happiness and good health to all my classmates.
Returning for our 50th reunion was a real high! All of us have lived parallel—though of course very different—lives. In common, we seem to have a confidence born of long lives with more successes than failures and a philosophical attitude towards the latter. Did Bennington contribute to our self-confidence? I would say probably yes.

My personal life since Bennington has consisted of pretty traditional stuff: friends, marriage, children, a move from city to country, a house, dogs, cats, a vegetable garden, and—sigh!—grandchildren. I’ve pursued my work in pretty UNtraditional ways, though, at least according to the way I thought it would go from my youthful perspective at college.

I was, in my own mind (and probably in the minds of my excellent teachers, Paul Feeley, George Holt and Dan Shapiro) expected to continue painting and making woodcuts. (Well, actually I DID continue with the woodcuts—I carved our holiday cards for many years while the children were young.)

Painting as a “career” I abandoned pretty early. At Bennington during the ’50s, an unspoken, but definite message was communicated that “fine” art was superior to anything that might be considered practical or “commercial.” For example, in Herta Moselio’s basic ceramic class we were instructed to make a “tile,” but not anything that could be presumed “useful.” After four years as an abstract expressionist painter, I had a strong need to spend hours simply studying and drawing an onion—or the human body. Immediately after graduation and a summer at Yale Norfolk, I enrolled in the Art Students’ League to study anatomy with Robert Beverly Hale. We drew for five hours a day for eight months! I have loved drawing—primarily the human figure or face—to this day. It is, for me, the equivalent of playing scales or exercises for a musician. Several years ago, I had a show in my home village entitled “Across the Table, selected sketches from eleven years of board & other meetings.” It consisted of more than 60 simple line drawings of mostly recognizable local people done with a fine felt pen on ordinary letter-size paper. I continue drawing every chance I get (and, as I serve on a number of area boards, there’s no lack of opportunity). My other work is still mostly abstract, but my drawing is not.

I have worked as a photographer, graphic designer and textile artist. For ten years I concentrated on dyeing fabrics adapting the traditional Japanese techniques of Shibori. The silk scarves produced by this method
were sold at the Gallery Shop at the Textile Museum in Washington, DC, among other places, but I preferred the works I made from silk pieces patched together and hung from poles.

The most fun I’ve had, though, was curating and designing two Close But Not Art? installations held at Time & Space Limited (TSL) in Hudson NY during October ’98 and ’99 (Close, But Not Art? and Close, But Not Art ll.) The reviewer in the Albany Times Union called the ’98 show “unique and important” and Metroland, an alternative monthly, named it the third of that year’s ten best. These two shows, consisting of collections of ordinary “junk” presented in a manner more appropriate to “art” objects, were my way of investigating the importance of context and the effects of considerations of intrinsic values versus “marketability.” One critic wrote that the gallery space exuded “the quiet reverence one might expect in a holy place.”

I have trained myself to be, I think, a pretty good graphic designer. For example, as the owner of the Blue Plate, an informal restaurant in my local village, I design the menus, cards and ads. I design posters and fliers for local events and organizations. There is something deeply satisfying about using one’s skills for such humble and practical purposes. I don’t see such a big difference. You just have to make the work fit the purpose and not get carried away because you’re an “artist.”

The “discovery” of the computer, about 15 years ago, was responsible for big changes in the way I work. Unlike some of my contemporaries, including several of my dearest friends, I had no problem embracing the new technology. As far as my design work went, I felt totally liberated: a three-year-old’s first adventure with crayons! I continue to be amazed at the possibilities. (Most of my drawing, however, continues to be with a simple pen.)

One of my current involvements includes a challenging project: to construct a small, environmentally sound performance space for music and dance (PS/21) on 100 acres of preserved orchard-farmland which I own near Chatham Village. (Dance is still a strong interest—I regret that I didn’t take advantage of my years at Bennington to pursue it.) The architects are my youngest son and his partner. (The theater designer is the one who worked with Frank Gehry on the Fisher Center at Bard.) The
planning and application process (we were required to do a complete environmental review under NY’s SEQR law) has so far taken six years, but, finally, we have been approved, and will start, next summer, with Phase I, which consists of a large, seasonal tent to be used until funds can be raised for the permanent structure. We have recently opened a resale clothing shop, Rewraps, on Chatham’s Main Street to benefit the project. (This is FUN!!!)

The real joys of my life, though, have more to do with family and friends. My wonderful husband died in 1997 (after 37 years of being together) but left me with our extraordinary sons and their children. My dearest friend, Toby Carr Rafelson, with whom I lived for three-and-a-half years in an upstairs corner room of Canfield House, has remained in my life for 54 years of infrequent but joyous reunions, letters, postcards and rambling cross-country late-night phone conversations. I cannot imagine life without her, and I thank Bennington for having brought us together.

Other Class of ’55 friends that I have enjoyed a continuing relationship with (although we don’t see each other as often as we’d like) are Sue Humbert Zuch, Grace Bakst Wapner and Jenny Van Horne Greenberg.

Through a totally serendipitous occasion, my “twin,” Barbara “Babs” Henkin Rothenberg (listed with the grads of Bennington class of ’54) and I were invited, along with our architect husbands, to the same dinner party about 20 years ago and, as a consequence, our “re-ignited friendship” (as Barbara wrote in the 1954 50th Reunion booklet) has continued to grow and deepen. We discovered that both our personal and work lives contained numerous fascinating and uncanny parallels. (Barbara’s career as an artist, however, has been much more purposeful and focused than mine.) We have even been invited to combine our work in a dual retrospective to be held at the aforementioned TSL Warehouse in September of next year. We are both Gemini women, so the show will probably have a thematic connection to that fact.

I’m not sure I’ve actually answered all those questions we were given. But I do still, after all these years, very much consider myself, for better or worse, a “Bennington Girl.”
Here is a brief account of my years since graduation.

**Career:** After graduating from Bennington as an Art major, I interned in the Art Department of a Boston area private school with the idea of becoming qualified to teach. It wasn’t long before family life intervened, however, so it wasn’t until some years later that I completed the required coursework and became an art teacher in the Walpole (MA) Public School System. The work was fun and rewarding and integrated well with raising kids, but after twelve years of increasing class sizes and budget cutbacks I decided it was time to move on. “On” turned out to be an administrative job in the Arts and Publications Department of Boston University. The following years proved to be interesting beyond my wildest expectations with involvement in the then newly organized Huntington Theatre Company (under University sponsorship), the University Art Gallery, the publications arm of the University and a myriad of other arts oriented projects. Retirement finally came twelve years ago when my husband also retired from his job as a research engineer at Harvard. Now I am immersing myself in the art community of the New Hampshire Seacoast where we moved seven years ago. I paint daily, am affiliated with a small gallery and sell more than enough to cover my art expenses.

**Family:** After being divorced from my first husband and then widowed from my second, I married Nathan Hazen in 1989 and consider myself very fortunate to have found such a wonderful friend and companion. Between us we have six children (a son and two daughters each) and ten grandchildren, all of whom keep us on our toes.

For the most part, the fifty years since graduation have treated me well.

There have been numerous times in my life and career when I have looked back at the independence fostered at Bennington with appreciation and gratitude.
Bennington was an ideal experience for me. I absorbed my studies, the atmosphere of Bennington, the totality of a beautiful, remarkable school, with intensity and delight. Nascent endeavors experienced and expanded there have continued to be focal points of my life.

Upon leaving Bennington—too soon—I pursued modern dance, joining several small companies in New York. I designed costumes for ballets by Tod Bolender, Charles Weidman, and Sophie Maslow, which were commissioned by the Ryder Frankal Company where I also danced. During this time, I studied fashion illustration and began editorial drawing for Vogue, Harper’s Bazaar, Mademoiselle, and others.

Moving to the Midwest after my marriage I continued fashion drawing for Hudson’s Detroit, then began to paint full time. Back in New York, I had one person exhibitions at the Angelaski Gallery on Madison Avenue. Paintings from this time are in the collections of Knox-Albright Gallery, Nelson Rockefeller, Loeb Collection NYU, Diter Rot, etc.

At Dancer-Fitzgerald Advertising, I was a senior agency producer and art director with clients Wheaties, Hardees, Full Service Banks, and more, winning awards, especially for Fresh Air Fund spots, which I also wrote and directed.

As a filmmaker, I produced short films and documentaries, doing everything myself with husband and assistant, then received a Young Film Maker’s Grant from the U.S. Information Agency to make “Fifteen Women.” A close, graphic observation, it was shown worldwide and at film festivals. Like my other documentaries, and those for the Illinois Institute of Technology, no narration was used.

Continuing movie making in Los Angeles, I wrote screenplays, including “Town with the Jitters” based on the works and persona of Ed Ruscha, and shot several scenes from that script, a film noir set in a future L.A. Unfortunately, it was not fully realized.

In 1990, I graduated from Parsons School of Design, having gone back to school again to study drawing and painting. I applied new disciplines to a different means of painting—previous work had been hard edge geometric—further explored on fellowships to VCCA.
My work continues along this trajectory and I enclose a copy of a recent painting. My living space adjoins a beautiful park and also a great pool and gym, where I work out vigorously, swim seriously, and continue the physical involvement learned at Bennington along with my painting and other mental pursuits, echoing lessons learned there long ago.

Untitled (TC2) oil/canvas 46” x 50”, 2005.
Lenore Janis

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A teenage student (and devotee) of Martha Graham, I was drawn to Bennington’s dance and theatre programs and both disciplines remain integral parts of my life. If only I had been a little shorter and had been cast to play some women’s roles at Bennington, I might have stayed the whole four years. Instead I opted for an ill-fated marriage at the end of my sophomore year to an RPI engineer who shouted up the stairs one night at Booth House, “Does anyone want a date?”

Faced with an imminent death threat by my Mom, who said “If you don’t finish college, I will kill you,” I quickly enrolled in Wesleyan (Methodist) College in Marion, Indiana—the town of my new husband’s place of employment. After a semester wearing long-sleeved modest dresses, trying to decipher Edmund Spenser’s Fairie Queen (all the naughty lines blacked out by the school censor) and avoiding the good religious folk who wanted to “save” me, I headed back East to New London, CT—where hubby was hired for a better job and salary at the Electric Boat Company. Connecticut College for Women looked with disdain at my Bennington credits (theatre, dance? You must be joking!) But UConn accepted me wholeheartedly—and with good reason: they were just starting up a serious theatre program and they liked my style. I only lost a half-year in the transition. By January 1956 I had my BA degree and divorce decree.

First job out of college was with a public relations firm. To get the job I had to attend speedwriting school to learn how to take dictation. What a joke! Of course, I was miffed that many of my male colleagues were going straight from school into training programs. But lucky for me, I had a talented woman boss who taught and encouraged me. I later found out that this topnotch executive was making a lower salary than her male colleagues. She confessed to me that it was the only way the company would offer her the job. Hmmmm?

For almost two years I hoped for a promotion, but it became increasingly obvious that company policy was to hire from outside and select only men for executive positions. So I threw in the towel, took a two-month trip to Europe (“if this is Tuesday, it must be Belgium”) and swore to myself that I would marry the first Jewish man I met after disembarking from the boat. And I did. A newly minted dentist, he had dreams of settling in Seattle. I told him: “New York City or bust.” He followed me to Manhattan where I became part of the off-Broadway scene. I developed a touring theatre which turned into a highly acclaimed children’s
theatre and ended up at the 92nd Street Y as the Jewish Heritage Theatre for Children. The Israeli-Arab six-day War put a crimp in the Y’s financing just as my ten-year marriage (two children) was winding down.

My mom said “Get real,” so I packed up the children, left the big city and went to work for the family construction company in Peekskill, NY. By 1980 I had formed my own woman-owned steel erection business and was successfully bidding on government contracts. With so few of us in an industry that stonewalled women, I helped to form a nonprofit association to advance the status of women in construction and allied industries.

In 1986, Mayor Ed Koch appointed me Director of the Bureau of Building Management with the Department of Sanitation. I was back in NYC without a backward glance. In 1994, the Giuliani administration dumped the city government appointees of past administrations and at the tender [age] of 61 I was out pounding the pavement during one of the worst economic downturns. Imagine being interviewed by young executives who looked about 16 years old. I lusted after a job at Lincoln Center, but was disheartened to learn that they had received 400 resumes for the one position. Needless to say, I didn’t get the job. Instead, I went to the board of the nonprofit I’d headed since 1980—which had become a growing all-volunteer organization—and told them I could no longer volunteer my services. They said, “Bring in the money and pay yourself a salary.” You should have seen the fur fly from that day to this. Professional Women in Construction (PWC) is now recognized as the frontrunner in business networking for the industry, has a constituency numbering close to 15,000, plus chapters in NY/NJ and CT and a website that doesn’t stop (www.pwcusa.org).

Oh, I almost forgot about my 30 seconds of marriage to an opera singer (1978?). Sheer boredom drove me into his arms and who could resist a dramatic tenor with a voice to die for? But when he drunkenly fell off the stage at the Paris Opera in full battle regalia as Othello, I beat it down to Santo Domingo for a whirlwind divorce.

How did Bennington shape me? From a sheltered suburban background, I experienced two glorious eye-opening years that instilled in me a can-do attitude—and I made friends-for-life with a diverse group of intelligent, hard working, fun-loving young women—all of us seeking a place in the new world that was about to unfold.

That’s all folks… until the next reunion.
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Major interests at Bennington and beyond?
Literature, French literature, sculpture. I became a sculptor.

Influence of the Bennington experience on my direction?
I was influenced and inspired by outstanding faculty members such as Ben Belitt, Wallace Fowlie, and Simon Moselio. I was taught to believe I could accomplish what I wanted to achieve! Bennington taught me to think and act independently and pursue my goals.

Currently, I share a large studio with six other sculptors at The New York Sculpture Club in Chelsea. When we lived on Boston, my studio was at The Watertown Ironworks, a working ironworks. There I completed some large commissions for the City of Boston. I received commissions to do pieces for industry and private collectors. I received grants for my work and several of my pieces are in New England museums, I sold more than 100 of my works through gallery exhibitions.

Family notes?
The movies of operations in Woody’s Physiology class prepared me well for life as the wife of a surgeon. Shortly after graduation, I married Dr. Robert Knapp. He became the William Blake Professor at the Harvard Medical School and Chief of Gynecological Oncology at the Brigham & Women’s Hospital and the Dana Farber Cancer Center. He is currently Visiting Scholar at Cornell Medical School in New York City. We will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary in November.

We have three children: Louise Iyengar (computer programmer at Yorktown Electronic Publishing), Jennifer Crawford (partner in Blackney Hayes Architects, Philadelphia), and Dr. Michael Knapp (Consultant in Epidemiology and Public Health. His company is Green River Data Analysis, Guilford, VT). They each have families of their own. We have lots of fun with our five grandchildren.
Ups and downs in life?
 Mostly ups. We enjoyed our busy careers, our volunteer work and our family. Now we finally have time to enjoy each other. We take advantage of the cultural activities of New York and, in winter, we love being in our home in Manalapan, Florida. I serve on the board of the Miami City Ballet. We like to travel and go to Paris, France, almost every year.

I feel blessed to have a wonderful life.
Elizabeth “Gay” Lester

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To BC Past Classmates and ’50s Faculty: A Love Letter

I want you all to know, first, that I’m overcoming a sudden and deadly bout of writer’s block in submitting this. At Bennington in the early ’50s, I was always way late with papers and consistently so overdue on my senior project that Claude Frank volunteered himself to type several chapters over one midnight before graduation. Did I ever adequately thank you, Claude, for that act of kindness and sleep deprivation?

Masao (Miyoshi), also a BC student in that era (Kenneth Burke), remembers this well, and also (still) sends his thanks to Claude.

Oh Bennington! Such a struggle to get there, stay there, and get outta there. And, importantly, once there, so heady at the apex. Thin oxygen but breathable for the right consciousness. Being taken seriously, being validated, as the phrase goes. Francis Golffing practicing his Oxford Orals exam technique, making us stand up and argue the epistemological niceties of one of his huge general questions.

Such great theater when it went well. Which was surprisingly often. Then for a time there was Oliver Garceau, putting up with my righteous rightie presentation (today’s neo-con), but also getting it that I was devil’s advocating as I worked through my own political philosophy. What a blast.

Re politics, can someone please tell me, where is that brilliant Reva Brown (’52 grad) who really sparked me politically (left-to-far-left) as we bullshot late into the night (and along the way invented and worked in our sandwich collective. Good carbs and good money for starving students: 15-cent PB&J or Baloney).

Thody (Irene Reik, later Soffer) how annoyed I am I haven’t contacted you all these years. We’ve even worked in the (same) criminal field (you as a DA, I believe; me as a Probation Officer). Nancy S, wonderful chat recently, wonderful memories of the early ’50s at Bennington and for me, of the best NY-Jewish wedding ever. Nancy, can you call up right now some of our not-fit-to-print nicknames of the era?

Anne Schlabach: Now I find out from Cookie Liebling’s notes (’54 reunion book) that you probably live in the Bennington area, not NY, as you and Fred work on the Darwin letters. What a magnificent piece of lifework! Masao has been dipping into the most recent volume and I hope to soon, as we struggle on against
the corruptions of Intelligent Design. (An aside on Mr. Miyoshi, he’s newly retired from UC San Diego and visits NY frequently. Current girlfriend is a recent BC grad and MA who was first there in the late ’60s.) Wallace Fowlie, who left BC for Duke, how he brought 20th-century French writers to life even in English and how he encouraged me, perfectly seriously, to continue in scholarship and then apply, for instance, to Holy Cross in Worcester, MA, to teach. Me, a college teacher, a scholar, in the ’50s? Way before the ’70s and serious feminism. Howard Nemerov, of course, for his incantatory reading of the moderns starting with Yeats. Claude Frank for his piano lessons (esp. Mozart), great ensemble work, and, well, his typing.

Finally, Ben Belitt, my Mr. Bennington. For your 50-plus years tenure.

For your devotion to the College, to poetry and to the students who loved poetry. For your oddly applicable Priest-Prophet dichotomy. We unborn-again kids had some choices as we explored the OT and NT writers—monk, priest, scholar or Christ-prophet-revolutionary. My regret is never having contacted Ben all the years I’ve thought of him to tell him some of this. It’s like the recovering alcoholic who is admonished to take the step, apologize to each person you’ve wronged or injured or neglected. In this case, I failed over so many years to tell Mr. Belitt how vital was his mind and its articulation to my developing consciousness, and still is.

Ben did certainly “teach” his own mind, but really, what else is there? One’s own mind. How fortunate mine found such a template early on.

Fast Forward Facts:
Masao and I were married, left NY in ’63 for Berkeley. Adopted two fabulous kids and had one, also fabulous. All happy, healthy, and reasonably successful. No permanent partners, so no grandkids yet. That’s okay. Maybe they’ll adopt.

P.S. Sorry, my writer’s block broke, like a levee, releasing the floods over the plain. Wish I was there, Oct. 7, with everyone.
Selina Fletcher Little
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Peabody, MA 01960

Name while at Bennington?
I would rather forget it since I have not used it after June 1955.

What have been your major interests at Bennington and beyond?
I am not into blowing my own horn.

How did the Bennington experience influence your direction in life?
My drama major.

Ups and Downs in life?
Plenty.

Family Notes?
None.

Are there any comments on past, present, or future you wish to make?
No.
After 50 years write a two-page term paper covering what you’ve been doing since college? What have I been doing all these years? Marriage, children, grandchildren, moving, gardening, playing tennis, procrastinating, having eye operations, baking birthday cakes, taking classes, painting, taking care of my mother…What does anyone from our era do?….We who want to be artists and good wives and mothers.

Starting back in ’55 I should say that I was so uncool entering Bennington that I walked to breakfast with a friendly smile on my face, maintaining the good posture and moral courage, the relentless enthusiasm that I had perfected in my three high school years. I was giddy at the feast of class offerings and loaded up on more than my share of art, music, literature, psychology, and French, even talking the faculty into creating a course for me out of the drawing studios. This was perhaps the best art class—for me—that I had in my four years, as unlike many of my more sophisticated classmates, I arrived untutored. My Bennington education was exactly what it was purported to be: no didactic core curriculum, no rote learning. This worked very well for my psychology and other courses—splendid teachers, Adelson, Nemerov, and Nowak especially, however I never got the grounding in art that I was looking for, and perhaps I shouldn’t have expected to. In the ’50s Bennington was part of the avant-garde—DeKooning, Pollock, Hoffman—and there I was with my watercolors! So embarrassing. I did well in ceramics. And graphic arts. I did terribly in painting although I thought Paul Feeley was very dynamic. And handsome…I also did terribly in piano, managing to wiggle out of performing the entire year I took lessons. I learned a lot from Paul Boepple. My true art education started after college and, raising children with some wonderful teachers and lots of hard work…This is true for most of my artist friends from the ’50s. Family priorities make it hard for women of any era to be artists, writers, dancers without sacrificing family stability, although for me I was merely following the pattern set before me by my artist mother, whom I revered. My daughter, Kate, is a successful novelist (White Girl), a very good and wise mother, a feminist with never enough time to work—which is her passion. I think it is much harder for her with a career and family priorities in conflict. Obviously I am very proud of her, as I am of our two sons, Rob and Jim, athletes, businessmen, good fathers. They are smart and funny and kind. They are our best friends. (And Rob promised when he was six to take care of me when I start to drool…Could be anytime now….)
There are always “downs” in life, and for me eye trouble and fear of blindness over the years head the list. A rare form of glaucoma starting at age 32 caused many operations and subsequently four cornea transplants which ultimately failed, I’ve had terrific doctors on both coasts and all over the country and have not quite given up regaining some sight in that eye, but meantime I can paint, drive, play tennis, etc., with a perfect excuse for missing the ball or denting a fender. Another “down”: my mother’s Alzheimer’s illness. Our cottage became her nursing home and I was able to take care of her. In a way you could call that an “up.” Chronic migraines have been another problem over the years, but that has lead to an interest in nutrition and alternative medicine. (Tried self-hypnosis, aromatherapy, biofeedback, acupuncture, yoga, foot reflexology, reiki, vitamin therapy.) Currently an anticonvulsant drug is helping. Eureka! But I do pride myself on my many cures of other people—hemorrhoids? Acid reflux? Vertigo? I have a vitamin for you!

With all the discussion of my very lucky life, from birth family to college years and child rearing, the missing piece of luck is surely the most significant. Marrying Jim Manning at age 22 was indeed lucky, for what does a 22-year-old know? So much is luck, and three of my four best friends at Bennington were not as lucky. I get to wake up every morning and see the same smiling, cheerful face, reassuring, argumentative—he’s a Republican!—and through all 50 years he has stood by me through the eye operations, the headaches, the arty friends, and the IBM family dinners. What a delightful, generous, funny guy. Can’t say Bennington prepared me for all of this, but it so enriched me, it surely made me better able to contribute to this remarkable family of mine.
Bennington gave me life when I had lost faith. She reached out Her Arms and took me in just as I was! No required agenda...“Map out your own,” She said. And that’s exactly what I wanted.

Bennington opened my eyes to my own artistry...allowed my soul to breathe, saw my vulnerability, but knew in opening my mind and heart, that I would find my own inner strength.

Paul Boepple’s magnificent introduction to Music Composition...Oh, My, Oh, My! It took me to the stars! All the teachers were wonderfully inspiring: Catharine Osgood Foster, Woodie, who totally understood my inability to go deep into science, Julian DeGray, the scholarly pianist and my mentor, also father substitute. Claude Frank, supreme pianist who knocked everyone’s socks off with Op. 111, Schubert’s Bb, What about Orrea Pernel, George Finckel, Lionel Nowack??? What a great music faculty! And then there was Frost reading his poetry and Varese telling us about his fantastic music. What a rich experience!

Bennington was my guide when my husband and I went to Istanbul to teach at the American College for Girls in Istanbul. We designed the music department and got the girls doing operas and playing baroque music and we were willing learners of Turkish music. Six years later my husband obtained a Fulbright scholarship to go to Oxford University for his PhD, so I got to study voice with Margaret Ritchie (my idol at the time). I forgot to mention that by now we had a little girl three-and-a-half years old, Mandy.

After many challenging life experiences abroad, coming home to Concord, Massachusetts, was truly wonderful. However, divorce was imminent and that offered its own sadness and relief. But guess what. I couldn’t stay out of trouble!!!!!

A few years later, I married again and my second husband, a poet and English teacher, and a composer friend and I teamed together to found a School of the Arts and Humanities.

What were we thinking??????? We were living out our dreams. We started using the Harvard Unitarian Fellowship School building and the church for concerts and poetry readings....We gathered a faculty who were eager to make this a special learning experience. However, in four years we had gotten too big for our britches and we had to close the doors when we had just reached our goal of putting together a complete
and full-time program. It was terrible to admit failure. And we lost our shirts. We had to get real jobs and lead a much less inspiring life. I went into real estate...after all we had children to support (his, mine, ours).

In 1993 we came to South Carolina to live because my husband wanted to retire...my hardest challenge to bear was when he became blind...in three days....All through those dark years I had my music and “Bennington” creative inspiration to get me through along with the Clemson Unitarian Fellowship, where I played many a time. Now I am teaching piano in a whole new way! And my playing is better and better! I am always learning....If I hadn’t gone to Bennington I wouldn’t be the person I am today, I wouldn’t have had the guts to try stuff that most people don’t have the energy or the creative inspiration for. Hope to get something published some day. One of my students wants to come to Bennington!

In conclusion, Bennington has been with me all my life as a beacon, a motivator, an unfailing inspiration to never lose sight of what’s important. I have always looked for a way to transcend “life.” Ken Wilbur, in A Brief History of Everything explains this important creative process within us: “Maybe the evolutionary sequence really is from matter to body to mind to soul to spirit, each transcending and including, each with a greater depth and greater consciousness and wider embrace. And in the highest reaches of evolution, maybe, just maybe, an individual’s consciousness does indeed touch infinity—a total embrace of the entire Kosmos—a Kosmic consciousness that is Spirit awakened to its own true nature.”
Aldona Kanauka Naudzius

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When I came to Bennington, I had many interests: music, languages, international relations, and traveling (the latter I expected to do after graduation). Somehow, I chose to major in social studies, but was permitted to pursue my other interests such as music (piano), German literature, as well as other courses.

After graduation, I attended Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City and pursued a degree in music education, piano emphasis (teaching piano), and received an MA in 1957. Then I began teaching music in New York City’s public schools.

After my marriage to Victor Naudzius, who was a project engineer at the Union Carbide Co. in Chicago, I moved to Illinois and taught music in the public schools of East Chicago, Indiana.

When our daughters, Ingrid and Renata, were small, I was a stay-at-home mom for a while, however, not too long afterward I started teaching on a part-time basis in the Chicago public schools, and took some music courses, including piano, at the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University.

In 1983, I received a Doctor of Education degree in music from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and started teaching music on a full-time basis in the public schools of Chicago, and retired from Taft High School in the summer of 1998.

Now that I am retired, I continue playing piano, and take some lessons at De Paul University, and perform occasionally at local community affairs in Chicago. I also give some private lessons (including my grandchildren), and do some substitute teaching in high schools. All those activities keep me very busy. My teaching career enabled me to travel during summer vacations, and I have traveled to Europe quite extensively, including my native country Lithuania.

My Bennington experience influenced my social, academic, and musical life. I became more broad-minded and more tolerant, and could think and interpret ideas more independently. Since Bennington emphasized general education and the arts, I had enough background to pursue graduate work in music without having majored in it at the undergraduate level. Having to write term papers and a thesis helped me to express my

continued on page 36
The names in this photograph were provided by alumni who attended Reunion Weekend 2005 and by comparison to photographs taken upon entering Bennington College in 1951. We apologize in advance if we have made any errors in identifying people; please contact us if you can identify any of the unknown graduates.
ideas in the English language, because my native tongue was Lithuanian. My thesis advisor, Prof Max Salvadori, was very demanding, and I learned a great deal from him. My music professors, Julian DeGray, Lionel Nowak, and Claude Frank, were very encouraging. I still meet Claude Frank occasionally in Chicago, when he comes to give concerts or master classes. The ability to write was a great asset in writing my doctoral dissertation.

Getting a doctorate was certainly a moral satisfaction (up). A certain disappointment was that I did not promote myself to college teaching because the employment market was very tight, especially in the arts, when I received my doctorate. Another downfall was the death of my husband from a stroke in December 2003.

I have two daughters—Ingrid and Renata. Both of them are graduates of the Business School of Loyola University of Chicago. Ingrid—BBA 1989, MBA 1993; Renata—BBA cum laude 1992, and a CPA (certified public accountant). Both have good positions in business companies in Chicago, are married and have children. Grandchildren—altogether five: four boys, ages 7, 5, and twins 3 years old; one girl, 7 months old.

I do not think I’ll be able to come to the 50th class reunion. I do not have a picture of myself that would be exactly up-to-date, but I am enclosing the most recent one.
Carolyn June Scott Nichols

January 5, 1932 – February 9, 2003

Submitted by her daughter, Penelope E. Nichols

Carolyn Nichols passed away suddenly at her beloved abode, “The Sea Cottage,” shortly after arriving for a three-week vacation. She is a longtime resident of Ashland, Oregon.

Carolyn was an energetic, spirited, and youthful woman throughout her life.

Carolyn strode forth and did what most women of her generation would not do. She drove her new car across the states to college alone, much to the shock of family friends. She continued developing her talents for interior decorating while bringing up her two girls by decorating the houses that her former husband, Bill Nichols, designed and built. Later, she expanded her appreciation for the arts by completing her BA in Art History just about the same time that her youngest daughter, Jennifer, completed her art degree. La Manzanilla was her most daring home building and decorating venture on the Pacific Coast of Mexico.

Carolyn faced and overcame health conditions with such aplomb that few knew how serious her challenges were. Carolyn was born with Tetralogy of Fallot, a heart condition most children did not outlive in her day. At the age of 32, after bearing two girls, she became one of the first open-heart patients for the corrective surgery. She had been in remission from breast cancer for over five years, and lately had dealt unswervingly with the long-term side effects of her heart surgery, arrhythmia. We admire her fortitude.

Traveling was one of Carolyn’s greatest passions. Driving was relaxing for her. She put together camping trips all over the west, across the states, and through Europe with her family. During the recent decades, Carolyn traveled to all continents except Australia and Antarctica, in unique ways. Her other passions included literature, poetry, theatre, and gourmet dinner parties for friends and family, dressing up, classical music, and walks along the ocean.

Carolyn always seemed to live in the right places, just before they became too popular and overrun. Starting her family life in Lake Tahoe, her other residences included Napili, Maui, Carmel Valley, Jacksonville, OR—where she owned and operated a lovely Bed and Breakfast—and then Ashland. The Sea Cottage was her retreat for more than thirty years.
Carolyn is survived by her two daughters, Penelope and Jennifer, her two granddaughters, Elizabeth and Kathryn, her sister, Margie, and a great many friends. We will all miss her boundless generosity, quick wit, and enthusiastic spirit for life.

Should any of her classmates be interested, I am putting together a memory book of my mother. I hope to copy it and share it with her friends. I encourage them to contribute a memory and/or photos of Mom. I can be reached at the address and phone indicated below.

I hope the 50th Reunion is a resounding success!

Sincerely,

Penelope E. Nichols

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At Bennington College I was an Art Major. I studied with Paul Feeley. I still clearly remember my awe of his having been a Marine in WW II, his piercing blue eyes and his fingertips, stained with tobacco.

I was a seventeen year old from a Jewish immigrant ghetto in Brooklyn. Most of my classmates came from private schools. I entered in March as a freshman, after the work/study period. I was totally in the dark.

The only paper I had to write in Honors English in my public high school was about Johnny Tremain. I had no idea who the young modern English poets were, nor had I ever seen a foreign film. Bennington was both a cultural shock for me and an awakening.

The clear guideposts I had disappeared. I was on my own, hopefully to become a “self starter.” My first semester was hell. By the second term I had “caught on.” I realized I was smart but just didn’t have the tools the other students’ had, so I learned them, fast.

Bennington allowed me to think for myself, to question authority, to never be a coward if I believe in something, and to never feel too old to learn something new.
I did everything out of sync. Didn’t marry till I was almost 40 and had a sensational daughter when I was 42. I always spoke to her as if she was an adult and assumed she understood everything I was saying and miraculously, she did. She went to Spence, Stuyvesant and Swarthmore and is now getting a Master’s at Pratt Art Institute in Industrial Design.

Bennington gave me the insight to teach well. I am an Assistant Chair of the Textile/Surface Design Department at the Fashion Institute of Technology and Coordinator of their Fabric Styling Program, which has doubled in size in the 6 years I have been there. I am a demanding teacher who wants creativity, professionalism and excellence. At the same time my students have wide parameters to express themselves. After all, that was the Bennington way. I do not teach in a formulaic fashion. I am grateful Bennington taught me that lesson.

Bennington gave me the strength, by forcing me to cope on my own and not being force fed information, to survive losing two partners to death, to survive an array of corporate bankruptcies, to rewrite my career every 10 years and to constantly learn, learn, learn. Thank you Bennington.
**Linda Schandler Porter**

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**What were your primary interests while attending Bennington?**
Marcell Proust (Fowlie rocked!), Paul Feeley’s Life-Drawing classes, Woody’s Physiology class (I was lousy in science but his enthusiasm was so contagious that I endured and enjoyed it), Modern Dance with Bill Bales and Tish Evans, Town Meetings (Joan Kern’s interruptions were high theater), Lillian Hellman and Kogen’s lectures on their experiences with the Joe McCarthy witch-hunts, Lucien Hanks, Claude Frank, Shirley Jackson, Bob Alvin, etc.

Most of all, my fellow students, who were endlessly fascinating (well, a few were scary), because each was unafraid to be herself; to reach, to seek, to fail sometimes, to work harder, to write, study, eat too many brownies, stay awake all night finishing papers, fall down, get bruised, fall down again, to keep stretching oneself, literally and figuratively, to keep striving, to keep going at all costs, never to give up. It was magnificent training for the rest of my life.

I began in radio at 8, followed by 10 years in the theatre. At Bennington, I was determined to explore other avenues, but was sucked in by the Drama department anyway. After graduation, I got a Master’s degree, taught, became a downhill skier, married, had 3 little boys in under 3 years, chaired a committee which evaluated all of the Title 1 programs in the Los Angeles Unified School District, and then, 19 years ago, went back to work as a character actress in film, television, and theatre in LA. Miraculously I get work. Amazing!

I love my work. I have rarely been upset by the audition process or the inevitable rejections, because I have treated each audition as a chance to dwell in another person’s life. This ability comes directly from my training at Bennington.

I sent our boys to a Summer Hill-type school as long as I could afford it, because I wanted them to experience some of the same joy I felt being at Bennington.

**What ups and downs have you experienced in your life?**

**Downs:** The devastating toll that drug addiction has on the victim and on all members and close friends of the family; going on welfare after separating from my rock-n-roll DJ first husband, because I could not find a job which paid enough to cover day-care; the offenses of the Bush administration (I won’t even go into it.
You all know); the lack of attention to the offenses against the environment; etc.

**Ups:** Meeting and marrying second husband Bruce Porter—we have been together 31 years; rediscovering the strength, resiliency and humor of women; watching my beautiful babies grow into loving, strong men; being cast and directed by Ernest Thompson (“On Golden Pond”) for the premiere and second run of his play “White People Christmas”; and now, working on a wonderful new play by Henry Murray, “Treefall,” an indictment against the wholesale annihilation of trees, and of the devastating side-effects which result.

My family and I are still involved in the unfolding train wreck of the drug addiction of one of our children.

**Do you have any family notes you would like to share?**
Step-daughter Tracey Porter has written 3 books for middle-school-aged children and has a contract for a fourth; step-son James Porter is an independent contractor in the DC area; oldest son Max Perlich, film actor; second son Miles Perlich, an Afro-Cuban Jazz percussionist, DJ and record producer; youngest son Neil Perlich Porter, Spanish-English journalist and publisher in New York; granddaughters ages 5, 7, and 12; grandson age 8; and 2 terrific in-law children.

**Are there any comments you wish to make on the past, present or future?**
I see the shape of the college which meant so much to me, surrounded by a haze of modern, functional buildings, which have unexpected aspects of beauty. Although it is strange to my inward/backward-looking eye, I know that that is not really significant. The only thing truly significant is that the students here today receive the same quality of education that we did, and experience the kind of unceasing exploration which fed our inner lives then (and which continue to enrich them today).

Of course the particulars will be different; nothing remains in stasis. After all, they had goats on campus in the early years. We had no men except the drama “boys” (Hi, dear Alan Arkin); no sports; there must have been a choral group (Oh yes, Paul Boepple); we had informal wind quartets, led with unflagging
patience by the late beloved Gunnar Schonbeck (the world is diminished by the loss of this warm, good person); great classical and modern chamber music in the Carriage Barn; Lionel Nowak, Orrea Pernell (“If you are going to be nervous, Charles, be nervous! If you are going to play, PLAY!!” I’m glad I wasn’t a music major), Julian DeGray (do you remember his “Piano Concerto Pour L’Orange et Noir,” which combined the black keys on the piano with a large orange that he rolled up and down on the ivories?; or the time Howard Nemerov, George Finckel, and, was it DeGray or Ben Belitt went hunting, and through some fluke, actually killed a squirrel, at which point they all burst into tears? It was a more innocent time, folks.).

I believe in Bennington, a place where anything seems possible to attain, where the impact fellow students have on us continues to influence our lives and reverberate in our memories some 50 years later. I am certain that the current students are developing the same intense relationships, experiencing that same competition within themselves to excel, and the training (and discipline) which will inform the rest of their lives.

Thank you, Mary Jo Shelley, for admitting me, dear little Miss Murphy from the Infirmary, Liz Coleman, and always, Becca Stickney, for your kindness, generosity of spirit, and constant presence in our lives.

Love
Linda Porter
October 2005
When I was considering colleges, Bennington was my only choice. Otherwise, I knew I would resist any attempts on my mind. Bennington and its precepts of sustained and independent thinking and action educate me still.

A dance major with knee injuries, also writing poetry, midway through my junior year, family difficulties called me home. I said I would be back; and 13 years later in 1967 I was on campus for one year, a poetry major, writing my senior thesis in a yoga retreat, and graduating in 1969. It was a complicated but greatly exhilarating time. Then an MA at Johns Hopkins in the writing seminars.

In 1970, traveling abroad at last and enthralled, I changed plans and kept going until I reached Borneo. There, out of money, I began a project with Sarawak Museum to collect and work with interpreters to translate oral poetry of the indigenous Dayaks. A Ford Foundation grant then came through. I stayed in the area until 1976, returning to the U.S. with my two museum-published volumes, still wondering how it all came about.

With a few writing grants, I lived in artist colonies, yoga retreats, and temporary corners, editing a smaller version of just the songs and chants, and writing poems of hanging between chasms of all kinds and seeking natural bridges. In 1985, I received an NEA in literary translation and returned to Sarawak to learn how or whether the ancient epics were being transmitted and also to collect more songs. I encountered wrecked Dayak societies, bewildered by deforestation and the political mayhem in force. I came and went, between fellowships in Europe and treks in Sarawak. Not until I saw my research articles critical of the government published in the Museum Journal did I leave in 1989.
Back in the U.S., I went to Ithaca, NY, to archive my papers and sources in Cornell University’s Rare Manuscripts Collections. Gradually, I drew together my storage from NYC, Taos, NM, Berkeley, CA, Singapore, and France. Now I think I’ll stay out in Ithaca. Some things are still in cartons on high shelves.

In 2004, I received a poetry grant from the Saltonstall Foundation and have been visiting Auschwitz and other nightmare terrains during each season last year and this. I’ll be developing these poems for some time.

I live minus much and my personal life is nil; but the good fortune that let me be part of the Bennington Community is intact.
Bennington taught me you can do most things if you try. I've worked in art, music, practiced yoga, traveled, gardened, done house decorating and design.

I had the good fortune to travel to all parts of this wonderful globe. I was married the first time in Perth, Western Australia. There I had the good fortune to travel the whole country even staying with indigenous tribes in Yirkalla in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

More recently, I had the fortune to visit the local Borra tribe on an Amazon tributary in Peru. This happened with only one other couple, so we really learned a lot about how the tribe is trying to survive.

There have been many ups and downs. My first husband died in an airplane crash in Madagascar just three months before our son, Austen H. Schrader, was born. Still, I got back up to fly so life would not be limiting. When my son was three, I took a 10,000 mile trip by car from New York State to Canada, the West Coast and back.

I have now been remarried, to Carl F. Schrader, for twenty-seven years. Each day, I try to find the time to write a poem, seize every moment, get out of the car for a special roadside flower, or to see a special friend or sunset.
Donna Bear Scott

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What have been your major interests at Bennington and beyond?
Children, artwork, survival.

How did the Bennington experience influence your direction in life?
Encouraged survival.

Ups and downs in life?
Too numerous to mention, starting when Dad died.

Family Notes?
Not of interest to Bennington.

Are there any comments on past, present, or future you wish to make?
I’m the last in this family—hope to live a bit longer. Note: Pam Pollard’s gone—she visited us twice in Los Osos. Also, my husband is alive and well. We’ve been married since 1965.
Jane Ludwig Simon

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Two sons—Haverford ’79, oldest son a lawyer (Steven); Harvard ’84, youngest son a Rhodes Scholar (John).

Four grandchildren—2 girls and 2 boys, ages: 8, 7, 6 and 5!

We live in Palm Beach from November until May and in Chestnut Hill the rest of the year.

Life has been wonderful. Memories of Bennington linger. It was a marvelous 4 years! Enclosed is photography of my husband and me taken this week. And classmates please note that like most woman my age—it suddenly turned blonde—must be something in the Palm Beach water supply!
The 54 years have been absolutely great with time lived in Bennington, England, Portugal, San Francisco and now, the Sonoma wine country and central Mexico. Weldon and I have run the collecting gamut from early European prints and furnishings to African sculptural pieces to 20th century American and Mexican paintings.

These recent years, with our professional responsibilities diminished, we have the luxury of enjoying family, friends and travel. I would be so pleased if my classmates would call me in Sonoma or San Miguel.
What have been your major interests at Bennington and beyond?
Number one interest was my son, Lincoln Myerson.
I have stayed very active with the performing arts—as an actress, producer, director, drama teacher (in Jakarta, Indonesia) and now as the exec. director of a performing arts service organization in Texas.
I have also continued to sketch, paint, etc.—when I have the time.
I became active politically back in the ’60s—demonstrating on behalf of civil rights, protesting against the war in Vietnam (despite coming from a strong military family), working on behalf of protecting the environment, etc., etc. And of course, always an advocate on behalf of the arts and support for the arts.

The other overarching commitment in my life has come through a commitment to Subud, an educational/cultural/spiritual association. I would never have pegged myself to become so involved and so committed. That is what took me to Indonesia and ultimately resulted in my name change.

How did the Bennington experience influence your direction in life?
Bennington gave me an abiding courage to follow my own inner promptings, to explore the truth or falsity of what I was feeling, to test that out, to be willing to go down the path of the unexpected, to treat life as a grand adventure. I think the old criteria we had for graduating— “capable of doing sustained and independent work”—has stuck with me for life. I find it a most useful assessment tool, a most inspiring way to “go the distance.”
**Ups and downs in life?**
I’m in my third marriage. I learned from each experience and got better with each experience, and now that I am in my 70s, it seems that my failures were great teachers and led to other successes. I feel comfortable and good about all of it—and am on very good terms with my exes. And of course, Harun, my present husband is wonderful!

**Family Notes?**
See above.

**Are there any comments on past, present, or future you wish to make?**
It’s lovely to be back, to come visit again, to see where so much started. I am so very grateful to have had Nemerov for my counselor when working on my thesis (on Yeats). So grateful to have been invited so early on to enjoy the grand adventure of learning. I think ultimately the active moment of learning is the thing that makes us really happy. It’s when we are really using ourselves, growing, exploring, doing, feeling. Such an aliveness comes from that. It’s why I so love the arts. Always creating and making and learning. I like what Elizabeth Coleman said in something I read—art is about making and making is a good way to learn. Thank you, Bennington.
I arrived at Bennington interested in literature and math—math soon fell by the wayside. Francis Golffing, my first counselor, desperate for a conversational meeting ground, suggested I read poetry, in particular Marianne Moore. A good girl, I did as I was told, found the poems tedious and dry, figured I could do better, tossed off ten poems—my first—in the next week, and put them in his box, neglecting to sign them. A few days later I went to Golffing’s weekly poetry reading in Swann House. To my amazement, I heard one of my poems read—and admired. That night I became a poet. Bennington continued to excavate, encourage and inspire me to honor my talents and dreams. I pray for the courage to continue to do so.

Every decade I explored a new direction. My 20s: marriage within a year of graduation, immersion in my husband’s world, depression, analysis, motherhood (in that order—not uncommon, I’ve come to see). My 30s: started my own life, the theater—acting, singing, producing. My 40s: earned money, co-founder and editor-in-chief of Madison Avenue Magazine, also host of a TV show, “Madison Avenue.” My 50s: a return to the theater as a playwright—many productions in LA, NY and regionally. My 60s: caregiver to my husband of 38 years—Clement Greenberg, the art writer, who died in 1994—and editor of three books based on his papers: “Homemade Esthetics,” “The Harold Letters,” and “Late Writings.”
Last year, at 70, I returned to writing, this time my story that starts as a bewildered tourist in the art world as Clem’s wife and moves through my moments with many of the artists, wives, widows, drunks, and lovers that have peopled my life. I find perspective at 70 to be my greatest creative asset.

**Ups:** Far and away, our daughter Sarah, my son-in-law Matthew, and granddaughters Clementine and Roxanna. And, oh yes, the love I’ve had the good fortune to give and receive in my life.

**Downs:** Only one—the death of our first daughter, Emily, within moments of her birth.

Thank you Bennington for telling me there were choices. A single path may have been simpler, but probably not as exhilarating.

P.S. Whose ritzy car is that? Certainly not mine!
Barbara Schwartz Weihrauch

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What have been your major interests a Bennington and beyond?
Theater, acting, showing Briards, and working with my husband in his law practice.

How did the Bennington experience influence your direction in life?
I have remained interested in theater and acting and have been and am involved with several theater groups both as a member, officer, actor and director. I have also become involved in the world of “show dogs.” (Also theater.) All this was augmented (interrupted) your choice, after a stint in New York, by marriage, three children (all boys), three grandchildren, one German Shepard, and five Briard show dogs. (One being campaigned at the moment.) While basking in the joy of a wonderful anniversary party given by my children, I was looking back over the years thinking of the comments I may have on past, present and future. Enjoy today for yesterday has passed, and tomorrow may never come.

Ups and downs in Life?
I believe my last sentence…says it all.

Are there any comments on past, present, or future you wish to make?
I was very friendly with Sara Gursky at Bennington and never forgot her.
First Row (left to right): Judith Backer Grunberg, Toby Carr Rafelson; Back Row (left to right): Cara Gordon ’60, Miriam Hermanos Knapp, Mancia Schwartz Propp, Carol Rubenstein, Linda Schandler Porter, Sara Gursky Petitt, Ellen Weber, Lenore Janis.
WITHOUT UPDATE

Elizabeth Green Appleton
Jean Fager Arnold
Joyce Orgel Basche

Jane Simpson Bauer
Ruth Greenwald Beschloss
Betty Smith Bishop

Sally Teitelbaum Blum
Gertrude Scheff Brown
Nancy M. Connable
WITHOUT UPDATE

Alice Glantz Daniel
Ellen Huddleson de la Torre
Suzanne Thomas Dolloff
Sheila Paperny Ellis
Josephine Brown Emery
Ruth L. Fluhr
Patricia Peebles Gamble-Hovey, MSW
Sarah Sedgwick Ginocchio
Elaine Grossman Gould
W I T H O U T U P D A T E

Dorothea Booth Katz
Rosemary Frost Khan
Ellen Thomas Lacourt

Fern Galane Lenter
Evelyn Jerome Lindsay
Vanni Mechau Lowdenslager

Janet Burke Mann
Nancy Baird Matthews
Barbara Phillips McMahon
W I T H O U T  U P D A T E

Linda Conner McNulty
Jane Lowenstein Michaels
Marleen Forsberg Montgomery
Ann Atkin Moscovitz
Dolly Milbrand Mulcahy
Lionel Nowak
Roberta Pollock Panter
Helene Rattner Pesin
Pamela Sidenberg Popovich
WITH OUT UPDATE

Dr. Mary Vallas Posner  
Mancia Schwartz Propp  
Gloria Haines Root  
Shaila Rubin  
Marion Krapowicz Safford  
Susan Mack Saril  
Stephanie Schecht Schottin  
Jacqueline Klein Segal  
Ann Shaff
WITHOUT UPDATE

Stella Spanoudaki Sichel
Julie Cummings Siff
Ruth Fidel Silverman
Irene Reik Soffer
Betty Ungerleider Steiner
Barbara Suchman
Ruth Haniman Taran
Margot Hartman Tenney
Diana Van Vlaanderen Tiernan
WITHOUT UPDATE

Johanna Bourne Vanderbeek
Judith Rydell Wagner
Grace Bakst Wapner
Ellen Weber
Donalda Jones Williams
Elizabeth Bergh Williamson
Sue Ann Moloney Wilson
Jean D. Woodard

WITHOUT PHOTO

Alan Arkin
Lawrence Arrick
Martha Dagnall
Catherine Orloff Morrison
Barbara Neuwirth
Toby Carr Rafelson
Barbara Goldman Schulman
Evelyn Werblow
Susan Humbert Zuch
DECEASED

Sibyl Totah Belmont

Margaret Garry Buckley

Beverly Davenport

Winifred Graham Downsbrough

Nancy Wharton Duryea

Phyllis A. Heywood Franze

Priscilla Marie Howe Frieswick

Ann Blumgart Gurewich

Sandra Stewart Little
DECEASED

Terry Monash Littwin
Barbara Silver Marcus
Mary Kent Marshall
Carolyn Scott Nichols
Pamela Pollard Saxton
Sally Smith

BURNS BRIGHTON VITZTHUM

WITHOUT PHOTO

Eileen Gates Carrier
Vernon Hayes
James Albert Merrow