THOUGHTS ON A NUNNIAN GRAND TOUR

BY TA’S NEW PRESIDENT—DENIS CLARK
DS69 CB72 TA73

Probably many of you reading this will be surprised to find that I’m the new TA President, if you hadn’t heard already. For those who may not have met me, my Nunnian dates are DS69 CB72 TA73. I’m an engineer at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory in Idaho Falls, where I do research in process control, mostly for welding processes. Like many Westerners over the years, I had felt some of the isolating tendency of living away from the East Coast, and had gradually faded out of the Association picture over several years. I was drawn back in by a need for Custodians a couple of years ago, however. Although not a job I’d considered serving in earlier in my TA career, in the course of attending the quarterly meetings I got to know some of the younger TA members and rediscovered, through the informal flow of TA and House news via the Custodians, a lot more about the present-day Association.

TA has, by design, a weak presidency, and a strong orientation towards making important decisions only at Convention. Thus, in some sense, a geographically isolated person such as myself can fit the job nearly as well as someone nearer the Association’s demographic center. I’m finding the most rewarding thing about being TA president is that, in trying to bridge these gaps and bring people into the common effort, there’s a chance to talk at some length with many people I otherwise wouldn’t, and, in some cases, (partly because I’d taken a low profile for my middle Telluride years), had never really known. This fall, in particular, I’ve had occasion to travel on several errands for the Association. I’d like to take this opportunity to mention some of my impressions from this travel in the context of the ongoing TA programs it supports.

Cornell Branch

In October, I visited Telluride House for my fall visit, which was to include a discussion of the Purpose and Plan of Telluride Association. After two or three years of problematic Branches, to which, because I was dealing more directly with the financial side of the Association, I had not paid special attention, I was not sure what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised to find a smallish (20), youngish, but very friendly and curious House, that is consciously making progress towards the kind of Nunnian community that few Houses actually become.

I happened to visit the weekend of Autumn Preferment Committee (APC), where TASPers from the ’96 summer programs are offered House preferment, and sat in on the meeting for a couple of hours. Some of the discussions about the candidates, and about the proper criteria for preferment, were very sophisticated, and I was especially impressed by the facility with which housemembers could firmly disagree on principles, while retaining a basic personal respect and a sensitivity to others’ strong feelings.

I also attended a housemeeting on Sunday evening. House President Joe Arias (SP93 CB94) gave an excellent speech setting out his views on the purpose of the House and the direction it was headed, and ought to head. There is a consciousness, generally shared, that although House social and political life is sound (especially compared with
The Michigan Branch effort drew my Telluride travels as president because a substantial part of my business travel is to the Detroit area. In the second week of October, I joined MBIC Chair Tom Hawks (SB85 CB85 TA97), Dave Porter (SP02 CB85 TA97) who has also recently arrived at UM as a new faculty member in the Comp. Science Dept., and Tom and I also spent the second week of October in Detroit. In particular, during the Telluride Convention in June, and which needed to be clarified and addressed from an institutional standpoint. The spring meeting of the Trustees of Deep Springs (TDS), originally scheduled for May, had been postponed until June. TA was represented at that meeting by Vice President Carol Owen-Lewis, who had a very enjoyable visit, and helped develop a more detailed picture of what the situation had been during the visiting program.

But a TDS meeting is not the ideal time to discuss TA-DS relations, since the Trustees and the student body have other business to conduct. Carol and I hoped to make a joint trip, focusing on talking with the student body, later in the summer, but schedules clashed. So I stopped off at Deep Springs in mid-September on my way to Detroit (not exactly on the way, but the air fare via Las Vegas was actually cheaper than a direct flight), and tried to meet as many students as possible, talk to them about the visiting program, and to keep the TDS Association and Carol informed. I returned again for the TDS meeting the first weekend in October, the special topic of which was the presentation of the final design for the new student residence. Construction is expected to commence soon, and looking forward to that project lent a very positive air to the gathering.

But the visiting program was the most-current topic in DS-TA relations, and occupied most of my time, mainly in finding out what community members and Trustees had to say about it. You may have seen the movie Rushmore, in which the same momentous events are seen through various eyes, and the concept of a single truth becomes suspect. Though I felt the Deep Springs situation at times to be quite similar, gradually, making the rounds at Deep Springs, and eventually talking with two of the CISTA visitors on my later trip to Ithaca, a time line emerged, and some of the basic tensions and misunderstandings became a little clearer.

People familiar with Deep Springs won’t find it strange that, as a Deep Springer, I was particularly welcome at Deep Springs, which instantly felt very much at home. It’s not hard to understand why this is so. The basic social recipe for the Deep Springs experience has remained the same since its founding, and, physically, it changes remarkably little from decade to decade. From the mountains on the horizon to the surrounding desert, down to the individual sun-drenched fence posts, boards, and rocks around the ranch, all the senses instantly connect a returning Deep Springer to the present day. But it’s also not hard to understand the obverse: that various non-alumni find this bond—which is inherentlv

[News in Brief]

1996 Kenyon TASP® Home on the Web—Kenyon 1996 TASP® (“Art and Authority in the Modern World”) have created a web site on their summer experiences. The address is http://www.kenyon.edu/projects/telluride/welcome.htm.


Ohlinger scrap book donated—Merle Ohlinger, widow of TA alumnus Earl Ohlinger CB32 TASS, stopped by to deliver a scrapbook of photos and other material, including Earl’s architectural studies and blueprints for several buildings Earl designed for Deep Springs, which were never built.

Days of Yore—From the Cornell Daily Sun, May 31 1939: “Alpha Chi Rho, defending champions, entered the finals of the intramural softball tournament yesterday by trouncing hitherto undefeated Telluride, 15-9. For Telluride, Collingwood pitched and Austin Ripplinger caught...”
NUNNIAN GRAND TOUR CONTINUED

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I had never been to the Lucien

have passed on. In addition to the

letters, papers, and other records, and

photographs, there are of course many

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is reading

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lates as 'The Cult of Benzaint and Popular Belief'. Benzaint is one of the

Seven Lucky Gods' of Japanese folk

lore, and is the only female deity among them. As an avato of Sarasvati, the

Hindu goddess of music and wisdom, she

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cians who worship her!"

Hugh De Ferranti, CB29, is reading

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Martha Case, SP95, is reading A

Spy in the House of Love by Anais Nin

and If on a Winter's Night a Traveler by Italo Calvino. "If you really want to

treat yourself, these are both delicious reads..."

Susiee Won, CB95, reports that she is

reading Foucault's The History of Sexuality. "It's really good and

everyone reads Foucault. I couldn't be left out of the rush..."

Gonda Von Steen, CB96, is currently

reading Nicolas Gogee's Elemen. "The book is already several years old, but

re-reading it is worth it in its current relevance to what is happening in

former Yugoslavia."

Zach Herold, DS94, CB96, reports that "this semester I'm trying to stay off

English and work on other disciplines—Chinno, Yoruba, kungfu, and

observational geology." He's cur

rently reading Zhuang Zi in Classical Chinese.

Shawn Cole, CB96, is reading Dino

Elightly by Rainer Maria Rilke, calling it a "wondrous and meaningful coment

ion on human existence."

Eliana Mer, CB96, is heavily into the

Russian playwrights for her Russian Literature class, including Chekov, Gogol,

Pushkin, and Turgenev. For fun she is polishing up on her Shakespeare,

slowly moving through the sonnets.

Stark Kros, SP95, is reading Charles

Bukowski's Factotum, which he argues contains some of the best anti-

heroes in modern literature.

Tim Mistia, SP95 (and one of those

three ex-Soviet pre-med freshmen in

the House this term), reports that he is reading the Biology 105 Survival Manual

by M. D. "The book reflects the importance of this book."

TA Associates! Do you have a book you

just can't put down? Care to share it with fellow Telluriders? Write or email

me with a one sentence blurb, to
tellurida@cornell.edu, and we'll share

it in future issues of the Newsletter.

CBTA ELECTS OFFICERS

The following have been elected Branch

officers for the full 1996 term: Joe

Arias, President; Suzanne Wren,

Vice-President; Dorele Perera, third

Adviser; and Bogu Poltrinari, fourth

Adviser.
Summer Programs are well under way. Here is

Amatokwu, University of Illinois at Chicago and Dolores Perera, Cornell University.

This seminar will explore a wide range of important political issues affecting African-Americans. Students will learn about and discuss the United States political system, political issues affecting African-Americans. Students will include urban development, especially issues of racial inequality; (4) municipal budgeting processes and their impact on social welfare issues; (5) urban rioting and civil unrest, and the policy themes addressed by the seminar will look at and discuss what has remained constant... and why? This course will examine the centrality of dissent in the formation of American social and political life across six eras of national experience: 1670-1700; 1740-1790; 1830-1860; 1860-1910; 1920-1940; and 1960-1990. Important connections and comparisons can be observed when a variety of dissenting voices, usually treated separately, are examined together.

KENYON


For centuries in the West philosophy and religion, together and apart, functioned as sources for transcendent meaning. But today many think, along with Nietzsche, that "God is dead," that belief in a supreme being is rationally untenable. And many philosophers, in agreement with Wittgenstein, view the question, "Does life have any meaning?" as naive. Western culture, therefore, appears to be in a crisis: we need to give meaning to life, but our sources of meaning seem to have dried up. In this course we will ask a series of interconnected and urgent questions: what exactly is the purported crisis of meaning that confronts us? What are the factors that have given rise to this crisis? Is faith in God (or in a transcendental domain of value and truth) no longer possible? Can human life survive and flourish without faith in God or belief in transcendental meaning? What are some of the strategies for hope and renewal that have been devised? Are they viable?

ST. JOHN'S (ANNAPOLIS)

Language and Literature. Tutors John Verdi and Irena Dathey, St. John's College. Factota: Lydia Polgreen and Christian Van Vaast, St. John's College.

This seminar will discuss classical and modern texts in language and linguistics, as well as mostly short works of great literature. We shall attempt to understand how a study of language can be conducted at all, and what some thinkers of the western tradition have had to say about the nature of language. We will include Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Descartes, Locke, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Foucault, as well as works by James Austin, Shakespeare, and some more recent authors in a variety of languages. We hope that as the summer progresses we shall all become increasingly aware of our conscious and unconscious beliefs and prejudices about language and its influence on us as readers and thinkers.

TASS COMMITTEE NEWS

TASS Comm at Telluride House in October and selected tutors for 1997's TASS-African-Americans in the Political System: A Historical and Political Analysis. The seminar will be co-taught by Professors Yvette Alex-Assensoh and Akwasi Addo-Baffour of Indiana University and tutored by Dolores Perera and John Amatokwu.

In the spring, the committee will meet to make final participant selections. Between now and then, there's plenty to do! We are looking for a few good men and women to give informational presentations in high schools, recruit and recommend potential applicants (siblings, younger friends, neighbors, etc.), read TASSications, and interview finalists. We're especially interested in hearing from those of you who have participated in TASS either as students or tutors, or who have had previous experience. Of course, even if you’re just excited about the potential of TASS and aren’t sure what you can offer, we'd love to hear from you. Email jscott@is5.nyu.edu, or call (212) 235-0026. St. John's-1996 TASS Committee Chair Erica Gan

Benjamin Lytal
Elizabeth Tulis

St. John’s-1996 Brian Lucero
Catherine Osborne
Andrew Rabbi

SUMMER PROGRAM SURVEY OF COLLEGE CHOICES

1996-97 TASS Committee Chair Elizabeth Tulis
1940s

CHARLES LEM, FB48 CB50, and Janet Kottke Lem celebrate their marriage at their new home in Madison, WI on August 25, 1996.

JACOB SHEINKMAN, CB48 at their new home in Madison, WI on CHARLES LEM, PB48 functions held in honor of the establishment of the Jack Sheinkman Chair of Collective Bargaining at Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

1950s

STEPHEN BIRDLEBOUGH, DS53 CB55, was appointed chief counsel of the California State Assembly's Judi- catory Committee by GOP Chairman Bill Morrow following the Republican takeover of the Assembly last fall. The LA Daily Journal reports that Birdlebough "earned a reputation as an intelligent, no-nonsense lobbyist who researched and knew his issues well." Birdlebough, a 1960 graduate of Stanford Law School, worked for the Judicial Council from 1974-94. Since then he worked for the Sacramento Mediation Center and as a legislative advocate for the Friends Committee on Legislation. Regarding his most recent post Birdlebough comments, "so far, the job has proved fast-paced and enjoyable."

ARNOLD HENDERSON, SP65 CB66 TQ64, writes, "I've been taking my interest in the environment to younger audiences by editing the eight-volume Grelier Library of Environ- mental Concepts and Issues, meant for middle school libraries. It's been a hopeful project for me. My own middle school surely taught nothing of the environment, but coming gen- erations of Telluriders' kids may grow up both knowing and caring."

1960s

ROBERT GAY, DS60 BB63, and Monique Mynlieff happily an- nounce the birth of their son, Castle Lee Gay, in Seattle, on July 10, 1996. At roughly the same time, Robert finished work with a design team on the 15-Year Master Plan for Deep Springs College and, following the 7/18 approval July 13, is starting architectural work, with Peter O'Connor, on the New Student Residence for Deep Springs. He is also completing drawings for a round straw- bale house in Idaho.

MARTIN PEARLMAN, SP62 CB63 TA67 is working on a series of record- ings with his orchestra and chorus, Boston Baroque, on the Telarc label. Their most recent CD, Mozart's Re- quiem in a new completion, has been selling extremely well worldwide. The Brandenburg Concertos has just been re-released as a boxed set, and Purcell's Dido & Aeneas is due out in November. He made a Kennedy Center debut last year, conducting the Washington Opera in twelve performances of Handel's Semele, and recently toured in the Mid- west conducting Boston Baroque with the Mark Morris Dance Company.

PATRICIA BUCKLEY ESBEE, SP64, writes "I have been teaching at the University of Illinois since 1973. My field is Chinese history of the Song Dynasty (960-1276), and my most re- cent book is The Cambridge Illustrated History of China (1996)."

PHOTOS: (left) "Deep Springs in Winter" circa 1932, from the collection of Earl Ohlinger; (right) view of Uris Library and Clock Tower, Cornell University, 1996.
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