

Connecticut College

Digital Commons @ Connecticut College

Spark

Student Publications

5-9-1980

The Spark, Volume 4 Issue 1

Connecticut College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/studentpubs_spark

Recommended Citation

Connecticut College, "The Spark, Volume 4 Issue 1" (1980). *Spark*. 19.
https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/studentpubs_spark/19

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spark by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. For more information, please contact bpancier@conncoll.edu.
The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

THE SPARK

Volume IV Issue 1 Friday, May 9, 1980

A PLEA TO THE CONSCIENCE

Robert Landau

This essay is not about the draft or nuclear energy. It is concerned with awareness and experience, with interest and activism, and with thought and growth. Moreover, it is a means for reflection and self-evaluation.

Our world has entered a dangerously critical period. The international realm is in a state of grave disarray. The super-powers continue to augment their nuclear stockpiles at a deadly rate. Instability in the Third World nations is increasing the probability of a military confrontation. At home, the harsh effects of inflation plague our nation. Our energy resources are rapidly depleting and alternatives have yet to be proved viable and safe. The list of ills goes on. The point is that there exists very serious problems which confront our nation.

So what's new? These problems have existed for years. They have precipitated the much talked about and predicted "grave and severe" consequences. We still attend college as usual. We still drive our cars and eat well-balanced meals. Basically, our lives remain comfortable and unchanged despite the cries for peace and conservation. Why heed the latest desperate pleas if it hasn't made any difference in the past?

Wrong! The fact is that conditions have changed and time is rapidly running out. The current problems are no longer removed and their solutions cease to lie in rhetoric. Failure to derive solutions will be felt by even the most sheltered and privileged sectors of society: Conn. College is one example.

Let us wake up and face the music. A nuclear power plant three miles down the road has already had several

'minor' accidents. Shall we wait for that one major accident that ends in disaster? Males 18 to 20 years old will most likely have to register for military service this summer. The draft will inevitably follow. It is difficult to ignore the ominous looking Trident nuclear submarine hulking across the river. This war machine is capable of killing thousands of lives in an instant. What is it that we are preparing for if it's not war? The horrors of war are very real, especially to those of us of college age.

So what can be done and what are the solutions? The first step is awareness. Read the newspaper and literature handouts, attend lectures, workshops and symposiums. Think and discuss these critical issues with your peers. One does not necessarily have to be anti-this or anti-that. But educate yourself. Become aware and then commit yourself to whatever side you believe in. To jump on a fashionable bandwagon is just as ignorant as not having the time to read literature or sign a petition.



It is popular to refer to our generation as the "me generation." Think about it for a minute before you disregard it as a worthless cliché. What things motivate us and consume our energy? Exams and papers, or perhaps a sports team or a social event. They are all activities which are important to you but really affect no one but you. Granted they are part of the college experience, but they are in no way complete or comprehensive.

Never again in our lives will we have as much leisure time as we do now. We are comfortable and privileged. We are not working eight hour days to support a family. We do not have to maintain a house or devote time to raising children. How much time does college really demand, a few hours of classes and homework each day? How is the rest of the time spent? Are you involved in an activity in which the goals and aims go beyond those of beating the next team or arranging the next party? Are they activities of which the implications are of worth and importance to others outside your self-interest? Do these activities strive for changes in policy? Do they have positive social value?

Were your reasons for not attending the different symposiums and lectures really all that important? It's painfully ironic to hear students express their disinterest or lack of concern for issues like nuclear power and the draft while others here have been arrested for their moral commitments. One does not have to be the great crusader or renegade, but evaluate what you have done this past year concerning your own awareness and commitments. Recognize your guilt and feel shame for your apathy and selfishness.

continued on page 5

Anger: a displaced element

We have seen a great deal of anger on this campus in the last two years. There has been anger towards faculty members because the quality of teaching is not up to par with the amount one is paying, and there has been anger towards the administration because it seems so removed and unconcerned with our existence. Their only concern seems to be how to save a buck. But this anger is being channeled in the wrong direction. Instead of attempting to improve the system, the energy is being displaced. Destruction, alcoholism, and apathy are its outlets.

We hear students complain and yet when we ask them, "Have you done anything to solve the problem?" their reply is usually, "I can't do anything. No one will listen to me." Well, we are all paying a "pretty penny" to attend this institution. Sitting back waiting until the four years are over is neither productive nor satisfying when one finally graduates. We want THE SPARK to be an outlet that will bring the issues on campus and on the national and world level to the students and maybe even provide a basis for change. If one feels that a problem needs addressing, then voicing concern can be the first step towards correcting it.

Connecticut College does not have a newspaper, an embarrassing situation for all of us. We have taken the initiative to re-organize THE SPARK to provide the college community with a place to channel its anger through opinionated articles of any sort. Creative works have always been accepted, and will always be welcome on these pages. THE SPARK hopes to be actively generating news and thoughts for the coming year..

LETTERS

Dear SPARK,

Now that space movies such as Star Trek and The Black Hole (a modern remake of the Philadelphia Story) are riding a crest of popularity, I think that it is an appropriate time to relate to you another space story—a Connecticut College graduate's ascent to law school. Right off the bat, things were different; people didn't have red eyes, life was not discussed in terms of being plush, harsh or intense, and get this, some people put academics above partying. Let me repeat that: SOME PEOPLE PUT ACADEMICS ABOVE PARTYING. It was quite a revelation. There are people out there (i. e., in the real world) who spend more hours a day working than listening to Grateful Dead tapes. It wasn't long before I realized that law school was doing some destructive things to my life style; for example, my alcohol tolerance level, which I had built up over four years of hard work, was destroyed. Maybe that was because I was spending more time in the library than I used to spend at The Dutch.

As a result, my library tolerance level has increased; I can spend up to four hours in a library without tossing my cookies. Another strange habit that people have in law school is that they do reading assignments. At first I couldn't understand this oddity, but it was explained to me—People go to law school to learn the law. Wow! I never would have thought of that myself. Nobody is here to find him/herself and nobody is here to experience life.

I don't want you to get the wrong impression. Law school does have its positive aspects. When issues of world wide importance are upon us, we can watch them unfold on a large screen color TV in the student lounge. For example, when the Pittsburgh Pirates disposed of the Baltimore Orioles, the champions of the inferior American League, we saw Willie Stargell's heroic feats larger than life. Every sunday last fall we watched the Pittsburgh Steelers prove that they are the greatest team in the history of football. In

addition, we get season tickets to Pitt Panther football for three dollars. Watch out, they'll be national champs next

THE SPARK

Volume IV/Issue I

Editor-In-Chief

Lucía Núñez

Contributors

Jean Shapin
Terry Greene
Ellen Hennick
Buddy Harris
Pam Gray
Kathy Bonn

Trustees

Robert Landau
Josh Lyons
Bruce Liebman

Illustrations

Allison Horton
David Brownlee

THE SPARK welcomes and encourages letters from its readers on any and all subjects which are relevant to the College, or on articles or letters which have appeared within this journal. Letters should be sent to THE SPARK

Box 977
Connecticut College
New London, Ct 06320

THE SPARK is a student-run journal and editorial newspaper dedicated to presenting student and faculty opinion on campus and non-campus related subjects.

year, they have a freshman quarterback named Danny Marino.....never mind, you just wouldn't understand. My fellow students have a sports sophistication far above the average Conn. College student. They realize that the true city of champions is 600 miles away from Boston and 500 miles away from New York.

continued on page 5

SGA: AN EVALUATION

Bruce Liebman

An evaluation of the Student Government Association for 1979-'80 depends on what the standard criterion is for judging any "government." While there has been much disagreement about SGA's role for the past few years, it is probably instructive to compare what SGA has done this year with the purpose of any government, namely to insure that certain rights are protected. The simple criterion that THE SPARK has traditionally employed measures how well SGA has protected the right of students to be represented fairly and with a forceful voice to the administration. Thus, THE SPARK applauded last year's SGA for taking unified action on the infirmary issue, and criticized its hesitancy on the room entering controversy. Although SGA has been quite active this year, concern should be focused not on how much was accomplished, but on how well it dealt with the more important issues, such as the proposed skating rink overpass, the tuition increases, and the energy conservation measures the Residence Department urged on everyone. In 1979-'80, it was not quite style over substance, but rather like misdirected action taking the place of substance.

The accomplishments of SGA this year can be divided into two categories. One is functional, the other is political. On the functional side, SGA tightened restrictions on the number of Coast Guard cadets allowed to attend parties, funded clubs such as Students for Safe Energy, Committee Against Registration and the Draft, the Investment Club, the Golf Club, continued to support the Big Brother/Big Sister program, formed the Ad Hoc Dorm Discussion groups, changed the vote of confidence procedure for house councils, voted to allow Abbey residents full dining room privileges on campus, and finally, SGA dropped its old name of "Student Org." None of these actions appears especially outstanding or different than those adopted in past years,

save for the commendable effort to publicize its work and try to get more students involved. The newsletter, the Mini-Convention, and the "ask President Ames" type of forums, while typically given little attention, do show more imagination and enthusiasm than in the past.

The second part of SGA's accomplishments this year illustrated its misconception as to its proper role. This aforementioned political role of SGA included the adoption of an anti-draft resolution, and the placing on the spring election ballot a referendum proposing student funding of the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group." Not surprisingly, this referendum passed. To be fair, these actions do not mean that SGA is actually looking for causes to support and then conferring on these favored people "official" approval. SGA does fund the Young Democrats and the Young Republicans, and this does not indicate an endorsement of either group's political views. SGA has the money, so students must go to them to get funded. But between the skillful presentations certain political groups perform in order to get funded, and SGA then granting these groups club status, one can not help escape the feeling that actions are taken mainly because SGA has judged these causes trendy enough to deserve support. Imagine if you will, SGA unanimously urging 1) nuclear power, 2) reinstatement of the draft, and 3) Ronald Reagan for President. The outrage which would have been directed at SGA in such a bizarre case would be justified, since many students would claim that SGA does not speak for them.

What is distorted in these political cases is basic procedure. Theoretically, SGA, like any government, should lead the student body on a variety of issues, but the process employed by SGA in these cases reveals a misunderstanding as to its proper role in a college context. In the anti-nuclear power resolution, students were told afterwards by their house presidents what the proposed resolution would say. Ideally, house presidents should

see if a consensus exists on an issue, and then present their findings to the assembly. What credibility does SGA have in passing political resolutions in the name of the "student body" when so few students participated in the Mini-Convention? No doubt, SGA members will respond that the majority of house presidents supported various resolutions and merely wanted to enlist the support of any students who agreed with these statements. Perhaps in the absence of real issues to confront, secondary ones are found.

In addition to misguided actions, the problem of disinterested and inexperienced house presidents re-appeared; during the anti-draft proposal most of the members seemed thoroughly bored and quickly moved to vote on the issue. During the presentation of the Health Services Committee report on the infirmary, it actually had to be explained to some of the members what had transpired the previous spring when the administration planned to cut back some of the infirmary's services.

The notion that SGA ignored matters of substance is not completely true. The end of the year has seen a renewed effort to institute fair and just policies to deal with two of this school's major concerns, increasing vandalism and the setting off of fire extinguishers. In a related vein, establishing and increasing the scope of the alcohol awareness committee could do more to improve the quality of life here than any number of political resolutions.

It is unclear whether any SGA input and/or demands for a skating rink overpass would have speeded up the timetable for such a construction. Similarly, it is unlikely that SGA mobilization could have prevented tuition increases. However, the lack of student involvement or leadership by SGA on these issues makes one question SGA's long-run effectiveness. Given the national mood for belt-tightening, is it not possible that SGA could have recommended a freeze on the formation of new clubs and perhaps even recommended a uniform reduction in club money in order to

continued on page 5

TRIDENT: IS IT NECESSARY ?

Terry Greene
Jean Shapin

The strong opposition to the Trident submarines is due to many terrifying facts. According to the Trident Conversion Campaign, each Trident submarine will be able to carry 24 missiles. Each missile can carry 17 maneuverable warheads, each of which can be sent to a different target with an accuracy of 90 feet. The missiles use a special computer guidance system called MARV (maneuvering re-entry vehicle), which are presently being developed. Thus, a single Trident submarine will be able to destroy 408 cities or other targets with a blast five times the strength that levelled Hiroshima. The Navy plans to build 30 Trident submarines by 1992.

The potential accuracy and power of the Trident II missiles with MARV systems are intended to provide the U.S. with a first strike capability. This power will enable the U.S. to destroy the Soviet Union's missile silos and thereby eliminate its military capability. This first strike policy is not in accordance with our present policy of deterrence, which supposedly prevents a Soviet attack with an assured U.S. retaliation. With first strike capability there is no need to hit the silos in retaliation as they will already be empty.

The Trident/MARV program will give the U.S. the option of initiating a nuclear confrontation. The Soviets, who have been typically five years behind the U.S. in the arms race, will probably have their own MARV system in the 1990's. This development will lead to an 'explosively' unstable situation, in which it would be to the advantage of both countries to launch its own missiles first in order to prevent retaliation. Once the Soviets develop MARV, both countries will live with the fear that they will be obliterated by the other.

Besides the inherently dangerous nature of the Trident program, it is far exceeding its projected budget. In 1978 the U.S. lost 120 billion dollars to military spending, while the entire world spent 400 billion on arms. About 8.8 billion has been spent to date on the Trident program with no submarines yet completed and only two started. The program is, at this point, running 50% over its original budget. The first submarine is estimated at 12 billion dollars without including the cost of missiles or its nuclear reactor. Carter's policy of increasing the military budget and cutting social services to reduce inflation should be seriously questioned in light of the above facts. The military is known to be a highly inflationary sector of the economy without producing as many exportable goods as civilian businesses. As well as material resources, the military drains our intellectual resources; one half of the world's scientists work on military research and development.

Construction of the second Trident submarine, the MICHIGAN, was celebrated Saturday, April 26 by dignitaries and Electric Boat workers while others mourned its christening by protesting outside the gates of E.B. The protesters questioned the Trident's necessity and its implications for the arms race. They also recognize the hazardous conditions that exist at E.B. The company has one of the worst safety records in the country and this fact was emphasized by the death of one worker and hospitalization of eight others due to asbestos poisoning the Friday before the protest. Representatives from the community, the management, and a labor conversion committee hope to retrain workers, and to convert facilities for other uses. Those who joined the protest recognize the Trident's financial, personal, and world-wide implications and are determined not to remain silent while the world places its priorities on destruction.

NEWSLETTERS

-from Safe Energy

Ellen Hennick

At the outset of this academic year, many concerned Connecticut College students packed into Oliva Hall to hear the stories of the "A Bomb Kid"-John Phillips, a recent Princeton graduate. He spoke of his experiences and how he had reconstructed with little difficulty an atomic bomb. Many energy-conscious listeners, shocked at the ease with which this task was undertaken, proceeded to hold a brief organizational meeting after the lecture. Thus was the beginning of Conn Students for Safe Energy. Enthusiasm subsided, yet there still existed a strong core of concerned students. During the first semester the group spent a great deal of time in organizing, obtaining members, and circulating petitions against nuclear power. Many films were shown with the purpose of informing the college community.

During the second semester, the group has established a table in Cro three times a week to sell bumper stickers, T-shirts, books, and buttons. At the table, students have been answering questions about nuclear power. The major task of Conn Students for Safe Energy was concentrated towards the events commemorating the first anniversary of the accident at Three Mile Island.

The first event, an informative symposium centering on issues surrounding Three Mile Island, unfortunately attracted only forty people. There were six speakers, three in favor of nuclear power, and three opposed to it.

The highlight and best-attended event of the week, and perhaps of the past decade here was Ralph Nader's lecture on March 27. The following morning a small group of dedicated students awakened at 5:00 AM to watch the balloon releasing at the Millstone complex. Five hundred balloons were released, and each had a post card attached to it asking that the card be returned to the school. The purpose of the balloon rel-

continued on next page

continued from page four

easing was to see how far fallout from nuclear radiation would travel in the event of an accident. The releasing received state-wide newspaper and TV coverage. Ten postcards were received from various places in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Next year the group plans to release one thousand balloons in the hopes of a better response.

Other goals for next year include improvements of evacuation plans for the area, especially the area surrounding the college. The group also hopes to have meetings with organizations of similar outlook, petition against the transporting of waste, plan more teach-ins. As an ultimate goal, the group would like to work to stop the construction of Millstone III..

-from CARD

"The Committee Against Registration and the Draft (CARD) has been formed to oppose the growing drive in Congress and parts of the Executive Branch aimed at re-activating the Selective Service System through compulsory registration and classification, and beginning draft inductions either through the Military Selective Service Act or a compulsory national service program." These are the principles of national CARD as stated by the national CARD newsletter. At Connecticut College, there exists a chapter of this organization whose purposes lie in carrying through these principles.

The first organizational meeting of CARD took place in the fall with a small turnout. After President Carter's state of the union address in January, new concern for the draft issue arose. Following this address, both pro-draft and anti-draft students gathered in K.B. livingroom to discuss registration and the draft. The initial steps which the group took were to set up informational booths and circulate petitions which collected over eight hundred signatures..

The main focus of CARD's efforts this year was the organization of a Draft Information Week. The week began with a benefit coffee house attended by approximately three hundred people. On Wednesday afternoon, there was a faculty symposium at which the speakers were Constance Cole of the Government department, Donald Peppard of the Economics department, and Bruce Kirmse of the History department. On Thursday and Friday afternoons, the group brought in speakers from outside the college; among them were John Bach from Hartford and David Landau, a Washington lobbyist and vice-president of national CARD.

The week culminated with a sparsely attended, but spirited rally. The many speakers included Dean Alice Johnson, President Oakes Ames, Alison Oldhem, and Amby Barefoot. Music was provided by Charlie King.

A small core of dedicated workers remain in the group to continue the goals through next year. In anticipation of the legislation passing through Congress, CARD's goals will change to include counseling and advising of conscientious objectors and those not wishing to register for the draft.

Plea

continued from page one

If you have been active and committed to a well reasoned position, then good for you; continue to grow. Convey to others how stimulating, gratifying, and rewarding activism can be. If you find this essay offensive or distasteful, then at least in a positive light, you took time out from your incredibly busy day to read this article and to react. Maybe this article has come across in somewhat a self-righteous and dogmatic manner. Perhaps that is what it takes. Time is running short on our selfish and sheltered worlds. This is a desperate plea to the conscience: become aware and become experienced. Get interested and active. Think and grow..

Letters

continued from page two

If you're going to Law School next year, don't freak out. Listen to Mr. Frasure. He gives good advice. I can remember him saying, "Don't do it unless it's what you really want to do." You'll be prepared; there are two of us Conn. Alumna in the first year class of Pitt Law School and we're surviving. At least I'm sure the other guy is. The work load is tough; it pushes you to your limits but it doesn't exceed them. You take in a hell of a lot that you never thought of before. The Socratic method of teaching takes some getting used to, but soon you learn the system and you can sleep in class without extraordinary fear. People are no smarter, they just know their shit. Hey, if it doesn't appeal to you, you can always be an insurance salesman.

Dave Rosenberg
Conn. '79

SGA

continued from page three
supplement the really vital services on campus?

Recently, some have expressed the view of: "Gee, wasn't it good that SGA and the administration got along so well this year," as indicative of the fine job Mike Litchman and the executive board did. If such an opinion purports to lend approval to SGA this year, it is actually faint praise indeed, because it indirectly suggests that last year's SGA somehow erred in creating discord between itself and the administration. This is analogous to the idea that dissent is bad for a democracy.

A more important view, that SGA could actively urge measures such as the ones enumerated above concerning finances, thus demonstrates student willingness to become responsibly involved in serious policy questions, and it also presupposes the idea that a student government exists to actively represent the concerns of students. In the absence of attitudes which would lead to what Ralph Nader called "good public citizenship," what we are left with is minimal representation and trivial activity substituting for real content..

AN UNEXPECTED RETURN

Buddy Harris

Jeff returned to college on Sunday evening. It was cold out. The air was clear. He was used to the city air. The air in the country was clear. It was clearly the air that welcomed him back to college. He inhaled. It felt good. He liked it when it felt good. He didn't like to feel bad. Not many people did, Jeff thought.

His best friend greeted him back. He had grown a beard. Jeff couldn't grow a beard yet. He was jealous. Jealously, he said hello.

"Hello," said Mitch.
"How was vacation?"
"Good," said Jeff.
"That's good," said

Mitch.
"And yours?" said Jeff.
"Bad," Mitch said bitterly.

"That's too bad," said Jeff.

Mitch was jealous of Jeff. Jeff was no longer jealous of Mitch. Then they both went to their rooms. Jeff and Mitch were no longer best friends.

Chapter two

It was a cool morning. As Jeff awoke he felt cool. He looked out his window. He saw New London. He pulled down the shade. He went back to sleep. Later, he woke up. He had missed all his classes. Manuel Orantes was giving a lecture on bullfighting. He decided to go.

Chapter three

He entered the lecture hall. It was stuffy inside. The heat was on too high. Jeff sat down. He sat next to a girl. She was gorgeous. Jeff's heart beat faster. It became hotter in the lecture hall. The girl's name was Betty.

"Should be a good lecture," said Jeff.

"Yes," said Betty.

"Should be a really good lecture," Jeff said.

"Yes indeed," Betty said.

"What's your name," said Jeff.

"Betty, and yours?"

Betty said.

"Jeff," said Jeff.

(with all due respect to Ernest Hemingway)

"Nice meeting you," Betty said.

"Yes, nice meeting you," Jeff said.

The lecture began. Manuel was talking. Jeff wasn't listening. Betty was listening. Jeff was thinking about Betty. It would feel good, he thought. He liked it to feel good. He didn't like it to feel bad. Not many people did, he thought, though he often wondered.

"Bullfighting has been very, very good to me," Manuel said.

The lecture was over. The audience was allowed to ask questions.

"Don't you play tennis?" someone asked. Manuel blushed. He left the stage. Now the lecture was really over.

Chapter four

Jeff asked Betty to go fishing. They caught two large tuna grinders. They were toasted. Later they felt sick. They vomited together. It was disgusting.

Chapter five

The semester was over. It was a hot May day. It was 89 degrees. 36 Celsius? Jeff packed his car. He didn't say goodbye to Mitch. Betty left without saying goodbye. Jeff was pissed. That summer he grew a beard.

House In Order

He swept his wood floors clean

not knowing but knowing

why, scrubbed his curtains faint

from white sea-sun and salt

air. A slight old man on a slight

old chair smiling shyly

at his perilous stance-

he'll die next week, alone

though he doesn't know,

but why after curtains are hung

does he sweep the floors, again

and drag his lamp where he's always wanted,

water his plants so the soil seeps over,

pluck briars from Calico's fur,

sit to a warm dinner ignored.

Candle's flame steals him up they lean

to soft winds but a chime reminds

the room a nearer life, He rose

slow, shoving the cat towards his bed, kept

the flame and his clothes on till sun.

Jennifer Johnston