AND WE’LL SEND OUR DAUGHTERS TO BOWDoin IN THE FALL:

THE WOMEN OF ’75

By Emily Weyrauch

ORient STAFF

On September 28, 1970, a notice from the Dean of Students was posted in Bowdoin Bulletin around campus. It announced a resolution that the Governing Boards—Boards of Trustees and Overseers—of Bowdoin College agreed to do the following:

“...that the Bowdoin College undertake a program for the admission of 60 women into the college, starting leading to the Baccalaureate degree (over a period of four years), substantially as set forth in the report of September 28, 1970 prepared by President Howell. “This was kind of a closed world and I couldn’t see it. I grew up in Maine, and I never even knew what a women’s college was until Bowdoin accepted me,” said Tawana Cook Purnell, who was one of the nine female applicants accepted early decision for the first time four years co-ed enrollment at Bowdoin, in a phone interview with the Orient. “It was like having a door open to see something that a woman my age would have never been able to see before.”

In that fall of 1971, 60 women would enter Bowdoin as freshmen. Of them, there were legacies, all two of them were from the Northeast. Of them, there were private school students and nine were women of color.

“1970 was a turning point for my family. It was the first time my mom was in the same room as me as a senior and a junior. That was a big deal for black women in those times. The next year, she moved to Harford, Connecticut, which was a women’s college that started admitting men.”

While this timeline represents the years that college boards announced that they were going coeducational, it is an incomplete list of the women’s colleges that started to go coed at around the same time.

WHEN COLLEGES WENT COED

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1883 Middlebury
1963 Colgate
1966 Wesleyan
1967 Colby
1968 Yale, Lafayette
1970 Bowdoin, Lehigh
1971 Dartmouth, Holy Cross
1972 Kenyon
1974 Amherst
1976 Hamilton

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Dr. Patricia “Barney” Geller ’75, one of 65 women who matriculated at Bowdoin as part of the first four-year coeducational class in the fall of 1971, said she was a “hootie” who went to Bowdoin because she heard it was “really liberal back then.” Geller recalls that Bowdoin felt like a “golf club for boys” when she first set foot on campus.

“I was so not a fraternity kind of girl,” she said in a phone interview with the Orient. However, by the spring of her first year, Geller would end up becoming one of the first women in the U.S. to become chapter president of a nationally affiliated fraternity.

According to Geller, many of the nine fraternities at Bowdoin offered women the status of “eating members,” which meant that they could eat in the fraternity, but could not attend meetings or vote. Geller moved her dining plan over to Psi Upsilon (now Quinby House), a fraternity that she found to be especially welcoming to women.

Psi Upsilon was unique at Bowdoin in its treatment of women—it was the only national fraternity that allowed women to pledge and be initiated. In the 70s, women’s status at fraternities was ambiguous, and the Bowdoin Women’s Association, which Geller co-founded, published yearly guides for women explaining in detail what type of membership was possible at each fraternity.

A statement from Geller in 1996 about the fraternity system at Bowdoin, fraternities could be divided into three categories by the late 70s: local fraternities that granted women full membership (housing, voting, offices), national fraternities that gave women these rights in the local chapters but not in the national organizations, and nation-wide fraternities where women were only social members.

Geller began working in the fraternity's kitchen washing dishes as a campus job. From there, she became a social member and then a full voting member. She moved into the house and was the only woman living there at the time. Professor of Government Allen Springer wrote in his September 1984 report on the status of women in Bowdoin fraternities that the decisions to allow women as members of some of the fraternities during the initial years of coeducation was met with some alumni resistance. However, others were more supportive—often for reasons other than social inclusivity.

“Some [howe], already facing financial pressures caused by declining fraternity populations and escalating costs, saw women as a needed source of new members,” wrote Springer.

While election proceedings were happening during the spring of her first year, Geller was working downstairs in the kitchen.

“Someone came down and said forget the dishes, we just elected you president,” said Geller.

“I think they kind of wanted to make a statement: we want a full-time woman, we want to show the school that we welcome women and support women’s leadership,” she said. “I went upstairs and held the meeting.”

The next day two men were coming from the national chapter. I think they were freaked out, but they went with it,” said Geller. “I’m sure there were phone calls to their attorneys, but they went with it.”

Geller ended up serving two terms as president of Psi Upsilon, where she made lifelong friends.

“I felt that I had a home away from home within a larger school,” said Geller. “There used to be houses full of people and dogs, you had dinner with 60 to 90 people who all knew you... and there was a sense of coming home.”

She said that other fraternity members referred to her as “Mama Psi U,” due to her tendency to call out the men out for making messes and being crude.

“They could be pigs, but I could call them on it,” said Geller.

As president, Geller spearheaded some changes in the fraternity, including making rush more inclusive for women and changing the fraternity’s hazing rituals.

“T’ll like to say we changed the world, but we didn’t,” said Geller, who had a passion for social justice before college and while at Bowdoin. “We were a fraternity.”

Geller stressed the heavy drinking and party culture of Bowdoin during this era.

“The president [of Bowdoin] at that time [Roger Howell] would come to fraternity parties and put in the house,” said Geller. “It was the wild west.”

Geller said sexism existed within the fraternity and in Bowdoin as a whole, and manifested in a variety of ways.

In August of 1984, 48 percent of fraternity members and 37 percent of independent students said they felt they were afraid for reasons other than alcohol, and women students felt uncomfortable, according to a report on the status of women in fraternities submitted to the Student Life Committee by Dean of Students Roberta Tansman Jacobson and Associate Professor of Sociology Liliane Hoegg.

“In terms of harassment, the piece you don’t get is that there was no language for that then,” said Geller. “There was a lot of date rape but they didn’t even call it date rape.”

More than 10 years after Geller graduated, the 1986 New England Association of Schools and Colleges Accreditation Report for Bowdoin wrote that “the widespread feeling among women students is that much of the problem of reported student-student sexual harassment is attributable to activities which take place in some of the fraternities.”

The report continued. “Even— if possible—more worrisome, is the suggestion that much of what happens—including allegations of general harassment, victimization and acquaintance rape—is not reported, since it involves as victims women who are members of the fraternities and whose sense of loyalty to the group makes it difficult for them to reveal to outsiders problems they consider internal.”

“Even when you’re with people you love, they’re also capable of... being disrespectful,” said Geller.

In 1987, President Leroy Creason gave a talk to members of fraternities in the Chapel in which he said that the fraternity system is “a system that guarantees women second-class citizenship to those fraternities whose national organizations do not recognize women.”

Then, in an April 1988 report (known as the Henry Report) by the Committee to Review Fraternities, Bowdoin recommended that fraternities should be coed by 1991.

“Almost all reported cases of alcohol abuse and sexual harassment occur in fraternity houses,” reported the 130 page document, which had 53 recommendations on improving fraternities.

However, the Henry Report did not specify any action to be taken against houses that failed to admit both men and women by 1991.

Finally, in February 1992, President Robert Edwards proposed measures to expel any student who refused to comply with the coeducation policy in all fraternities, aiming to close the “loophole” of the Henry Report.

Although many students protested these measures, citing a violation of their freedom of assembly and an overly “politically correct” campus atmosphere, the Orient’s Editorial Board endorsed the abolition of single-sex Greek houses in a February 14 editorial, writing that “single-sex fraternities nonetheless represent an institutionalization of discrimination on the basis of sex. This is one of their defining characteristics.”

It was only May 27 of that year, after an initial rejection of Edwards’ full proposal in March, when the Governing boards finalized a permanent ban on single-sex fraternities—they would have to halt further initiatives by July 1, 1992 and disbanded by July 5, 1993.

“The final decision was in no way easily reached or broadly supported,” wrote Michael Golden ’94 in a September 11, 1992 Orient article. In fact, President Edwards’ administration received many passionate letters from former students and parents in response to this ban on single-sex fraternities. Four wrote in favor of the policy, 78 wrote against it and six wrote asking for more information.

Six months after being established through a report issued by Bowdoin Re-accreditation Committee on Residential Life, the Commission on Residential Life released a report in March 1997 that the Board of Trustees approved unanimously. This report, the Commission recommended phasing out all fraternities during the next four years, and also envisioned the creation of a house system and some construction projects and renovations.

“People had tears in their eyes when we voted on this Saturday morning, not because they didn’t think it was the right thing, but because of the recognition that Bowdoin had outgrown these institutions was a substantially sad one,” said George Calvin MacKenziet ’67 as reported in a March 7, 1997 Orient article by Zak Burke ’98.

“I had so much more fun there... something really got lost when they got rid of fraternities,” said Geller, whose son Sam Packard graduated in 2012. “I don’t think my son got that I had that sense of community.”

“I’m a feminist,” said Geller. “I don’t like... the overdrinking or the abuse of women—but that stuff still goes on.”

When they went in there and cleaned up all the houses, they made it like it’s an other dormitory,” said Geller. “Bowdoin has yet to figure out a way to recreate that sense of community.”

This is the second article in a series about the experiences of women from the first four-year coeducational class at the College. The next article will be about the Bowdoin information and healthcare for women.
The issue of inadequate health services for women began to emerge over the first few years of coeducation. Students wrote to the Orient that they were frustrated with the level of care provided by the infirmary. One student wrote, "I thought the infirmary was run by someone who had studied medicine for only a year," referring to the infirmary being staffed by physicians who did not have a full medical career. Another student wrote, "I believe that the infirmary is not the place for women." This sentiment was echoed by many students who felt that the infirmary was not equipped to handle their medical needs.

Administrators of the College had been aware that Health Services needed to accommodate women at the advent of coeducation but did not anticipate the specific needs of women. A 1970 plan presented to the Governing Board entitled "Coeducation: A 1970 Report on Implementation," a follow-up to the Pierce Report of 1969, the document that marked a significant shift in the College's attitudes toward education. The plan, written by Chairman of the Committee on Coeducation Edward J. Geary, suggested few structural changes for health care for the first two years of coeducational classes.

"It is expected that there would not be more than one or two female patients at any one time and that it would be far less expensive to put them in one of the local hospitals than to use the third floor of the infirmary, with a full complement of nurses," wrote Geary.

A November 9, 1970 report to the staff from Dean of Students Paul Nyhus emphasized a need for Counseling Services to address "the problems they encounter in relation to dating, contraceptives, abortions, etc." Nyhus continued, "It would appear that there is more traffic in this area than can be handled by one female faculty member as an addition to full-time teaching load." However, it would be several years until Bowdoin addressed these problems.

Women on campus were confused about the availability of birth control through the infirmary, according to a December 3, 1971 Orient story reported by Jo Dondis, an exchange student from Sarah Lawrence College. Women voiced complaints about the infirmary and the relegation of women to the third floor. Nyhus responded to the complaints at the meeting.

"Concerning the use of the infirmary, it is run by the doctors," said Nyhus. "In this case the coeds should talk directly to the doctors." The Ad Hoc Committee on Coeducation in 1972 reported that the infirmary and Counseling Services were "inadequate and not what the women expected to be provided this year."

"The infirmary problem seems most critical. Apparently women students are not able to obtain even routine examinations of a gynecological sort," continued the Ad Hoc Committee's report.

For the short-term, the College had decided to pay for women's referrals instead of making changes at the infirmary. On May 15, 1972, the end of the first year with a full coeducational class, Spiritual Advisor wrote a letter on May 15, 1972 to Dean of the College, Roy Grasse about the situation of women at the College, mentioning the fact that the infirmary was not friendly to women and that there was only one counselor on staff.

"Your concern about Counseling and Health Services are also shared by others," wrote Grasse in a May 19 response letter. "Next year the policy of the infirmary will be modified, and a part-time woman counselor will be added to the counseling staff."

Then, that fall, Jane Boyden, a part-time counselor, was added to staff, as reported in an October 9, 1972 Orient article. The 1972-73 academic year also saw the creation of an educational series on sex, an apparent continuation of lectures from the previous year that had been received poorly by students. An editorial cartoon in the Orient (from September 4, 1971) mocked the previous year's lecturer on family planning, depicting him as a sly rabbit smoking a cigarette and surrounded by baby rabbits.

"The first lecture in the series (given by the same physician mocked in the Orient the past year) was about contraception. Other lectures included a lesson about pregnancy, an open question and answer session and a panel with religious leaders and one feminist professor discussing morality and birth control. Orient reporter Evelyn Miller '73 described the pregnancy film shown during one lecture as "a piece of propaganda concerned with convincing woman-kind of the joys of pregnancy and childbirth" in an October 9, 1972 article.

Over time, the infirmary became more clear about the services it provided. An October 12, 1973 Orient article by Ellyn Bloomfield '76 titled "Infirmary Adjusts to Coeds, Uro Gynecological Services" said that women could receive routine gynecological examinations at the infirmary, as well as venereal disease examinations and birth control prescriptions. The infirmary could also be used to give referrals to local gynecologists.

In May 1974, a group of women wrote a proposal on gynecological services asking for a part-time gynecologist. "The infirmary is used to handling male-oriented medical problems -- there have been cases of misdiagnosis of vaginal infection and other related complications ... Many students sense that the infirmary is reluctant deal particularly with birth control and related concerns because of their own traditional or moral values," they wrote.

"Most coeducational colleges recognize the need for such care not only for birth control but also for matters of general health. Due to the lack of this service the Bowdoin Women have created an unnecessary burden on the Brunswick Family Planning Center."

This should not be regarded as an extra service, but rather as a normal health facility provided by a coeducational college," continued the proposal.

A letter from "Concerned Black Women" supported the proposal. If Bowdoin is to continue admitting women to this institution the necessary changes in the medical facility must be provided to meet the growing demands," they wrote.

As the Bowdoin Women's Association (BWA) -- started by Geller and Liza Graves '76 in 1972 to build community and draw attention to women's issues -- gained a larger presence on campus, it created programs in the gaps of what the College provided.

BWA organized a birth control clinic, a breast cancer self-examination lesson, a talk about birth control as a shared responsibility, a speaker about sexual assault and a women's career day in the 1975-76 school year.

Finally, for the 1977-78 school year, six years after the first coed class matriculated, Bowdoin hired a part-time nurse practitioner, Mary Lape, to give gynecological exams and advice on birth control. This was more than two years after the Bowdoin women's group initially sent a formal request for a gynecologist.

Now, the health center is staffed by mostly women and offers routine gynecological exams, STI screening, vaginitis diagnosis and treatment, counseling and prescriptions for birth control, emergency contraception, pregnancy counseling and evaluation of other gynecological problems. The counseling staff now includes both men and women, several of whom draw from feminist psychology in their practice.

"It took some time for the College to get those things in order," said Interim Dean for Academic Affairs Jim Scanlon, whose 2012 gender and women's studies class created a website to commemorate 40 years of coeducation.

"We had to fight for practically everything," said Geller.

Isabelle Halii '20 contributed to this report.
PART FOUR: COMPETING AGAINST TRADITION
THE WOMEN OF '75

BY EMILY WEYRAUCH AND ISABELLE HALLE

Orient Staff

Exploring activism in Brunswick and beyond: our places as political spaces

Our sense of place may be seen as inherently connected to our physical location, but at the same time, we are connected to innumerable places at any location, but at the same time, we are inherently connected to our physical place. From coast to coast, the US has not been a safe place for an incredible number of its citizens. There has been some time since we have had a major political leader who normalizes vitriolic language and has built a campaign on the exclusion and hatred of groups of people, but racism—and classism, sexism, ableism, and xenophobia—are American realities and have been American realities for centuries without national history. To overlook this history in the face of new political concerns is to overlook the generations of people who have been fighting and waiting and struggling.

In our Brunswick microcosm, within the first week following the election, I heard stories about aggressive harassment against Hillary Clinton bumper stickers, conflicts between students and town residents and schoolchildren yelling racist slurs out of school bus windows. But in the United States macrocosm, these instances are neither new nor ever one-off.

During my three and a half years at Bowdoin, I have connected to and reconciled my sense of place within the historical and present political context of physical and emotional safety in Brunswick.

We become not just Bowdoin students or New Yorkers but residents of the US. We become aware not just of the people within our communities but the people living in the remarkably different communities from this small town on the Atlantic to across the country on the Pacific.

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A presidential election radically shifts our sense of place from the micro to the macro: we become not just Bowdoin students or New Yorkers but residents of the US. We become aware not just of the people within our communities but the people living in the remarkably different communities from this small town on the Atlantic to across the country on the Pacific.

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By Jae Yeun Cheoul

Are you freezing, dear Reader? Do you have the sniffles, have small ice blocks instead of tea, forget the last time the temperature was above freezing (actu- ally, remember—I was early October) and almost die on a regular basis from slipping on black ice on a busy street? Do you also not feel inclined to an accout- pout of beer, as perfect as it usually is?

Here is the tale of how I stayed in and made mulled beer, because I felt too cold to drink normal beer. In the toasty parts of Moscow, you can find numerous little stalls that offer trad- tional Christmas drinks or mulled wine; sweet, hot, festive—it’s really pretty nice. But do not despair—wine is not the only hot beverage option. I learned that Pe-

The women coming into Bowdoin in the Class of 1975, the first coeducational four-year class, were met with sparse representation in the classroom with respect to their peers, faculty and studies.

In the 1970s, women were only two women [out of 50] or 60 kids,” said Amy Paulman ’75 in a phone interview with the Orient.

“The first few years, it felt like both the faculty and our student body members and the students were extremely visible—a sort of fishbowl effect,” said Helen Ca
ty ’75, a German professor who arrived at Bowdoin in 1972.

By the time the first coeducational class graduated, there were nine female faculty members at the College.

“All of my professors [except one] were male,” said Patricia Pope ’75, who trans-
formed her gender identity.

Arrived at Bowdoin in 1972.

“Four of the professors were a bit leery,” said Deborah Burke ’75 in a phone interview with the Orient.

“I had a professor where all of the ex-
amples were always ‘he’ and ‘him’,” said

Christa Cornell ’75. “In my Biology 101 class, there were ve-
sionary in the ways of teaching and learning, thinking and knowing.”

A women’s studies program was not

founded until 1980 despite a demo-
nstrated institutional desire for a pro-
duced in the 1980s. However, Cornell said that she also had

positive experiences with professors.

“Professor [John] Remenaruk was one of my favorite professors, in government, and I think he really opened my eyes in a lot of ways,” said Cornell.

She said, “It was very, very open to changing the system and how to get things for all.”

Several women of the Class of 1975 int-

erviewed for this series said that the clas-
describe themselves as not being well com-

ing to President Roger Howell wrote “the goal

of women’s studies courses on an “ad hoc” basis, according to a Women’s Studies Program

report in the December 2012 Orient said, “We look forward to the continuing and growing body of diverse

The Women’s Resource Center (WRC) was proposed by the Bow-
down —a class on German literature with three women students—was one of the

deadlock, and urged the WRC to

aid faculty in developing women’s stud-
ies courses and in redesigning courses to include a gender component.

Part of the 1999 proposal for a major in women’s studies stated “a Women’s Stud-
ies major will confirm Bowdoin’s commit-
tment to coeducation.”

Over time, the name of the major has changed. In 2005, the department became the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies, and last year it became Gender Sexuality and Women’s Studies, to encom-

pass the former Department of Gay and Lesbian Studies.

Overall, the academic study of women and gender has become more centered into the department and less focused in the WRC. In 2009, the women’s studies fac-
culty members voted to remove its offices from the WRC to the Bodey-Johnson house.

Cafferty said in the early years of coedu-
cation at Bowdoin, “women faculty [were] pecking out in the wilderness.”

“Ther e’s a sense of normality now, at least from my ancient perspective, com-
pared to the beginning,” she said.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Tonight’s Soundtrack: “Parking, Lisp, Roxyanne, and Thyme by Simon & Gar-

funkel—not the right space, but it doesn’t cause their visions are on fire.

Tonight’s Toast: A Foreign the Undergradu-

ate Hall of a beer bar summed it up

pretty well.—To Heaven there is no beer, that’s why we are down here! I’m not

sure about the name existence of heavenly beer, since I’ve never been there, but I do believe in drinking in the movement. Here is to beer in 2017.

Conclusions on mulled beer:

Appearance:

Smell:

Taste:

Overall:

No, I knew there was no beer, that’s why we are down here! I’m not

sure about the name existence of heavenly beer, since I’ve never been there, but I do believe in drinking in the movement. Here is to beer in 2017.

Tapped Out: mulled beers two centuries overdue for a wintry comeback

BY EMILY WEYRAUCH

ORIENT STAFF

features

PART FIVE: STUDYING AND BEING STUDIED THE WOMEN OF ’75

by BY JAE YEUN CHEOUL

Are you freezing, dear Reader? Do you have the sniffles, have small ice blocks instead of tea, forget the last time the temperature was above freezing (actu- ally, remember—I was early October) and almost die on a regular basis from slipping on black ice on a busy street? Do you also not feel inclined to an acco- 

out of the beer—

leaving the drink more like tepid soda. But even so, and with the less-than-stel-

lar beer I used, I preferred this mulled beer to the mulled one that I’ve had, which so far have been sickly, sticky sweet. I do think that every beer can’t be made as mulled beer, for example, an already distinct-tasting IPA or a light, clean-tasting lager both seem like a di-

saurous combo with spices and honey. But with a beer that is already not very carbonated and tastes malty, fruity or creamy—perhaps mulled beer could make a comeback in 2017 from its long hiatus since the 1800s.

So, in conclusion, I would recom-

mend this to others. It might not be your cup of mulled beverage, but I think it’s worth a try. At any rate, it’s a good way to procrastinate on your schoolwork and drink a nice-sounding, warm thing to
drink in your hands after a cold day (or while dealing with estranged family members). Whether accompanied by beer or not, I hope you try it through finals and have a wonderful winter break; I’ll see you on the other side, on the same continent (hopefully).