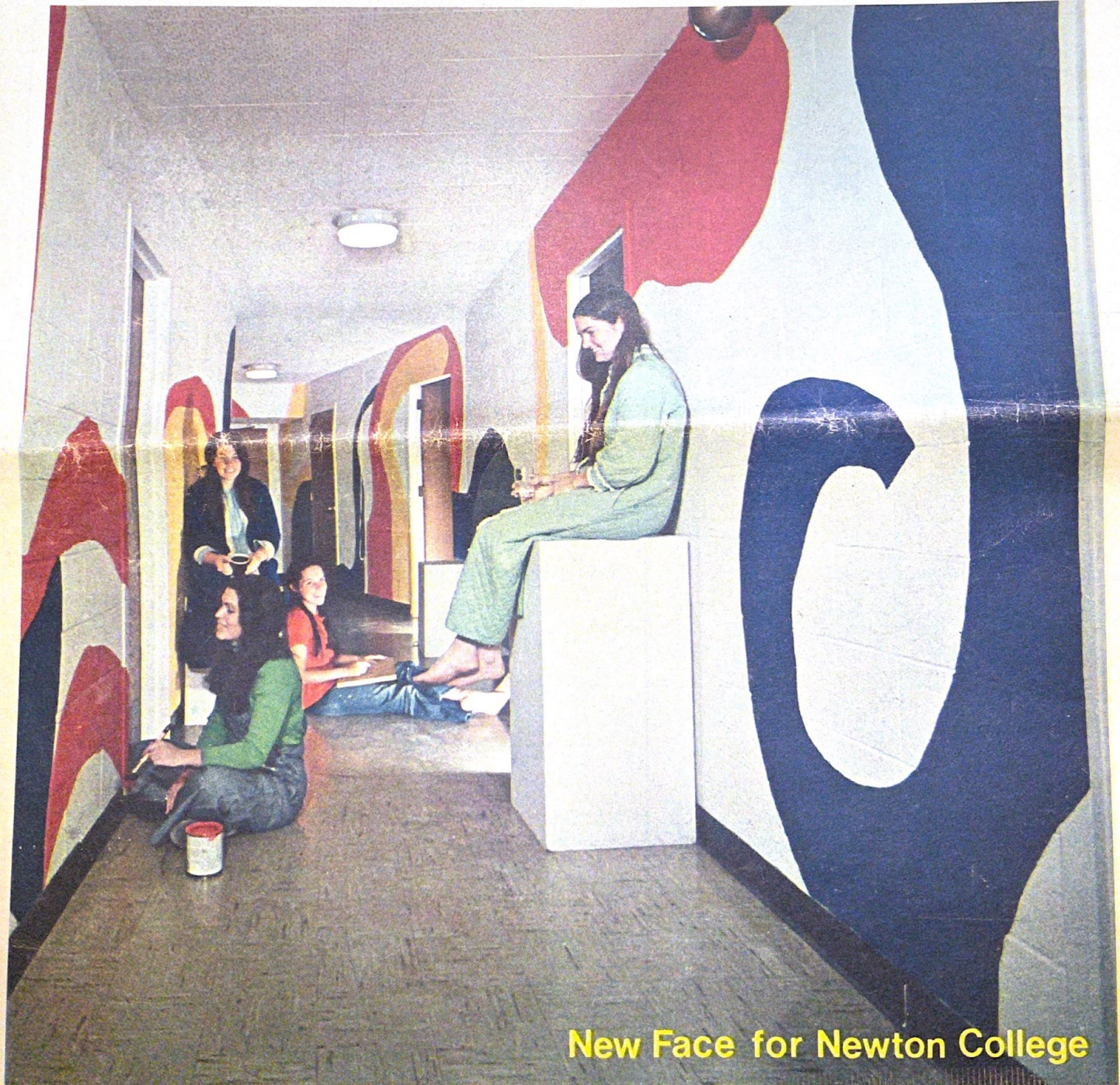


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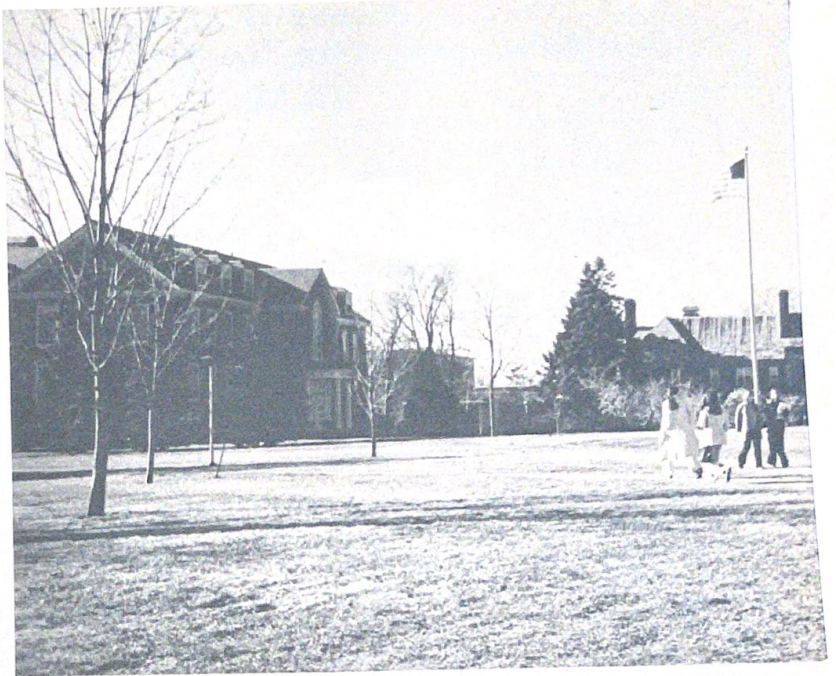
SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 1972, WITH TV WEEK



New Face for Newton College



Sister Patricia Geoghegan (above), art instructor, is known as "Go Go": students speak of her with enthusiasm.



NEWTON COLLEGE

an institution in ferment

By Deckle McLean

The problem in making a statement about Newton College is to make one that is not confining. The college is choosing for a direction but not for a specific goal. The more precise you are about the goal the more confined you become — Ofelia Garcia, R.S.C.J.

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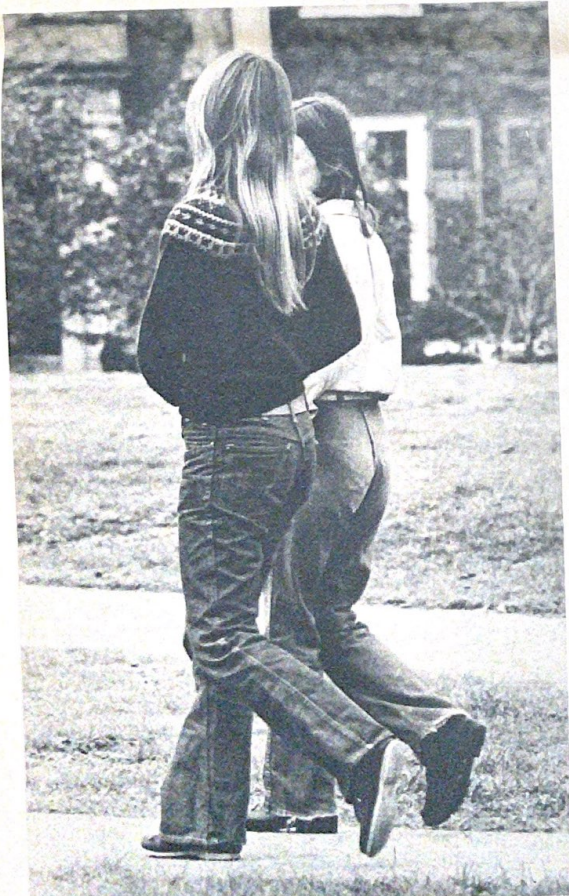
It might be called Boston's forgotten college because most people retain only myths about it, Newton College of the Sacred Heart. Is it a convent school? No. Is it a junior college? No. Is it a good place to shelter daughters from men? Probably not.

"Newton" they call it: "Where do you go to school? I go to Newton. Newton High? No, Newton College. Never heard of it. Newton College of the Sacred Heart. Oh, really! — Newton College is 25 years old. As the women there are quick to point out, it is "a small, private, Catholic, women's college in 1971" meant to be inflected with sobriety as you might "Knights of Columbus in Belfast." It exists by its will to exist, not because the times support it. Its students, faculty and administration are brought to an unusual unity by the pressures on the college. And yet, as one mem-

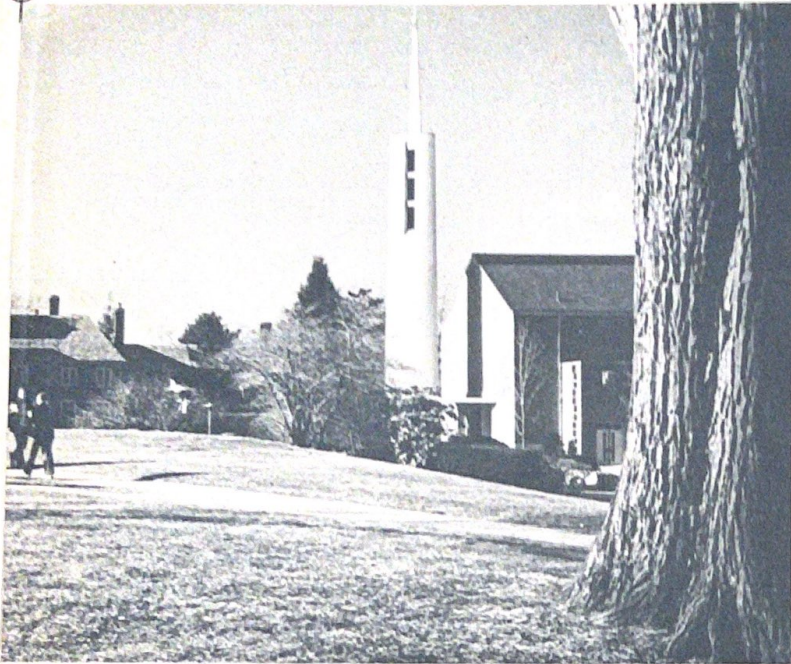
ber of the faculty reminds, the college's weaknesses are also its strengths. "Liberated" from ready financial support, the school is free — driven, actually — to pursue its own definition of higher education, which must at the same time be its own formula for survival. Under the demands of this stern discipline, Newton College has turned more corners in the past few years than many of the most unsettled large universities.

Four years ago, girls entering the school faced a full college career without an elective course. They also had a daily chapel requirement and a series of prescribed religion courses. Now there are no required courses, and no church or religion requirements. The percentage of Catholic students at the school, though still around 90 percent; is declining steadily. Four years ago, the Society of the Sacred Heart was a semi-cloistered order. Under the rule of silence, nuns were permitted to speak only for "business," which as a practical matter meant only in class or, for the administrators, in their offices. And the leading offices of the school had always been held by members of the Society.

Now, the Sacred Heart nuns wear no habits unless they want to. The silence is lifted and they are no longer cloistered. Furthermore, they have turned over administration to laymen: as president, James J. Whalen, from an unlikely big time past as a vice president at Ohio Uni-



Deckle McLean is on the staff of Globe Magazine. The photos are by Paul Connell, also of the Magazine.



This small Catholic women's school has turned more corners in the past few years than many of the most unsettled large universities

versity; and as academic dean since September, John Bremer, already known and watched as a highly effective innovator. And the college, which previously relied on the network of Sacred Heart secondary schools to fill its enrollment, has now begun to recruit, in public schools as well as Catholic ones.

It must be said though, that Newton College is still on the knife edge of its transition, and its ambiguity is felt particularly in its finances. The money that supports the school is conservative money — and that does not mean conservative in any general or political sense. The money is conservative in that it wants to maintain a school for “good Catholic girls,” to preserve Newton College’s image of “these are the kind of girls you marry.” The money is parents, because the school is supported 90 percent by student fees. And it is also alumnae, for many of whom, a faculty member suggested, Newton College has been “a security blanket in a world in which everything else is changing.” But the school envisioned by the money no longer attracts students, — they don’t refer to themselves as girls anymore, but as women — nor does it point the way into a future in which more and more Catholics, caught up in what is variously called the split in the church or the crisis in the faith, are becoming less concerned with comprehensive virginity, than with simply strengthening their daughters for a risky world.

The outline of Newton College’s predicament, then, should be clear. The college has many students who were sent there by parents eager to keep them out of trouble; but the young women themselves are not comfortable with this circumstance. Yet, the college is financially precarious enough to respond to the parents. Meanwhile, the administration knows it must alter the college enough so that other, let’s say, “new” Catholic parents and daughters will consider it an adequate and sufficiently worldly alternative to “secular” schools. And at the same time, the Sacred Heart nuns, according to Sister Mary H. Quinlan, former academic dean, are insisting on another kind of unsheltering, that the only way to convey a sophisticated understanding of the religion is to demand that it be known in terms of the most difficult social issues the students will have to live with. Newton College is a Catholic college and it is no more profoundly Catholic than it is in the shape of its crisis.

□
Julie Callahan, a student:

“If you wonder why you’re Catholic, you can find out here. Furthermore, as they say, sisterhood is powerful; and you can develop woman’s awareness here. And then, the school is small so a certain amount of control over the institution is available. Newton College should survive for these reasons.”



Dean John Bremer:

A conservative in the vanguard of education

John Bremer, who is a veteran of English post-war “open education” reforms, quotes Edmund Burke: “There are no universals.” Burke was talking about politics; but Bremer thinks the same rule applies to learning. He therefore insists that schools must reflect the evolution of local history, which means they must rely on infinite tradition, and the local history with which Bremer works is American history. His standard is the now familiar one of “community” and he regards education’s function to be the creation of “community,” which he defines as “cooperation in the accomplishment of a common task.” And that cooperation, he insists, requires skills that people are not born with, but which may be learned only with difficulty. Doctrine frustrates such learning, he says. And with these various definitions behind him, Bremer prophesies that “the future is the age of education.” Some people advertise themselves so well these days. ▶ 16



A Doctor Shows How to

Bathe Away Aches and Pains And Sleep Soundly Tonight...

by Richard Estrin

A LEADING New York Physician has discovered a way to turn an ordinary tub of hot water into a relaxing, soothing, satisfying Mineral Bath.

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Many who have tried this doctor's discovery give glowing reports of how they now "wash away" much of the agony of knotted muscles and stiff joints right in their own bathtubs — just as though they were bathing at one of the world's famous Mineral Springs. In fact, millions of people who have been travelling to distant Health Spas for pain relief—on the advice of their physicians—may soon be saved this bother and expense.

Thanks to this new triumph in medical chemistry, they may find that they can enjoy the often miraculous benefits of true mineral bathing in the snug comfort of their own homes.

Here's how it all came about

A curious doctor was puzzled by the fact that Medical Science has never been able to tell why certain Natural Springs so often gave quick alleviation of physical suffering. He decided to analyze the water of these Springs and find out what Nature put in them to make them different. He discovered that they were rich in certain carbonates, sulphates, iodides and chlorides of Lithium, Potassium, Magnesium, Iron and other medicinal minerals. Could it be, he asked himself, that the secret lies in these minerals? In order to find the answer, he had a chemist compound them into a water-soluble concentrate which patients suffering from chronic aches and pains could use in their baths.

I was one of the many who tried it. For months I had been annoyed by nagging muscular aches and a twinging pain in my elbow. Even though skeptical, I was eager to test this doctor's new formula. I would have tried anything that offered any hope at all of easing my discomfort.

"It is called BATHERAPY," he told me. "You simply add a handful or two to a tub of moderately hot water, then let yourself soak in it for about 20 minutes. Mind you, this won't cure Arthritis or Rheumatism—because there is no cure yet known

—but it may give you welcome temporary relief from pain."

I'll always remember that first BATHERAPY bath! I had hardly let myself sink into the tub when something wonderful began to happen. A deep, penetrating warmth seemed to course through my body. It was as though the liquid mineral heat was actually massaging my frayed and tortured nerves. In a few minutes an indescribable feeling of relaxation crept over me. I felt as though my whole body were being caressed by the soaking sunshine of Spring. It was an experience I'll never forget — and one that I often repeat!

To share my good fortune, I sent a package of BATHERAPY to a friend. He wrote me:

"I've been in such misery lately that I've been a virtual slave to pain-killing drugs. But no more! Now when my aches get unbearable, I simply get in my tub and let a BATHERAPY bath soak them away! It's like taking a Mineral Bath at one of those European Spas you read about—but I bet even they can't match the blessed, long-lasting relief my own tub now gives me."

Anyone can use it!

Already thousands are enjoying its benefits. Yet BATHERAPY does not help everyone. Unfortunately, there are some people who are constitutionally unable to respond even to Nature's own Mineral Baths. If you, however, are among the millions who suffer from painful aches in joints and muscles—or from the tensions and fatigues of modern living—ask your doctor about BATHERAPY. If he thinks it might help you, by all means try it. The chances are you'll find its soothing, cushioning, pain-softening action will give you a surprising freedom from minor discomforts and a feeling of well-being that may last for quite a little time.

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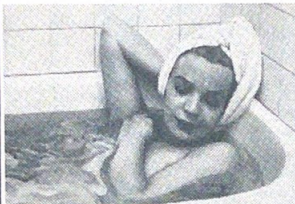
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5 Newton College

Terri Stephen, a student:

"Students tended to back off after the president announced that some parents threatened to withhold payments if parietal hours were eliminated. We decided to use caution; and to find out if it is really true, we sent letters to parents. But we did this by our own choice. What control we have over what happens at the college is benevolent control."

□

Anne Berry, a student:

"The resistance here to changing the academic program is resistance to having someone tell you how it must be done. Students want alternatives. The key issue in the school is not openness but the transition from administrative dictum to student decision. But inevitably openness will come in the change."

"What control we have over what happens at the college is benevolent control"

The trouble with writing about a place like Newton College of the Sacred Heart, a school caught in a survival jam, is that it's like writing about someone brought up on the street in such steady need and hard times that he's had to keep the hustle in the forefront of his attention. Despite how much he might want to be simply friendly or direct with you, he is so much in the habit of need, that he can't help expressing himself through his game, his public relations rap, or his tap-dance and horn-toot.

Despite this caveat, though, it must be said that the defenders of Newton College, confident, as they should be, of the legitimacy of their objective, are extraordinarily sanguine, and do seek to pierce the veil of salesmanship with honesty.

James Whelan, the president, who is a gabby, trim and rather stylish psychologist, has taken up a paradox. To counteract the notion among Catholics that schools like Newton College, though a nice idea, are simply not educationally stimulating, he must make the place less "Catholic". And yet, there is nothing in his plans, or in the program of anyone else at the school, to remove the religious component. The only commitment is to redefining that component, and this is perhaps the most interesting thing about the college. Although one is tempted to describe Newton College as gradually approaching secular status; that is not at all what is happening... What the school is doing is making the religious less distinct or compartmentalized, and including some of what used to be called secular in the new comprehensiveness. In fact, the school shamelessly offers its "moral dimension" as a key article of its sophistication and attractiveness.

5 ◀ **Newton College**

"This is just speculation," says Whelan. "But many kids are upset that grown people don't believe in anything. They want to see people who are committed. They want people as models who will stand up for something. Well, the Order is committed. And even if you disagree, you get the best education possible when you deal with someone who'll take a firm position with you. As for Catholicism, there has perhaps been too much emphasis on externals. But here there is definitely less involvement in dogmatic elements. There is a concern here about religion but people don't necessarily go to church. There should be an examination of Catholicity today, getting inside it. What is the backbone? What is unimportant? And I'd like this place to be a forum for this kind of questioning. We have to be involved in all the hard social issues, because that is ethics in development. Furthermore, there

are differences between Catholics and Protestants. Many people say everybody's Christian together, but there really are some differences. We're finding that out in our ecumenical program: so why not talk about it. Providing theological underpinnings to education is not a bad idea. You can do a hell of a lot more with what you learn, if you start with a philosophy."

Newton College's own philosophy, however, is not patently obvious; and almost in lieu of it, many there refer instead to the "Sacred Heart tradition", which itself takes some defining. The Society is 171 years old and has been in the United States since 1818, its primary business being the education of women. Most of its energy went into girls' secondary schools, like the Sacred Heart Country Day School next door to the college in Newton; but several colleges were also established — another one is Manhattanville College.

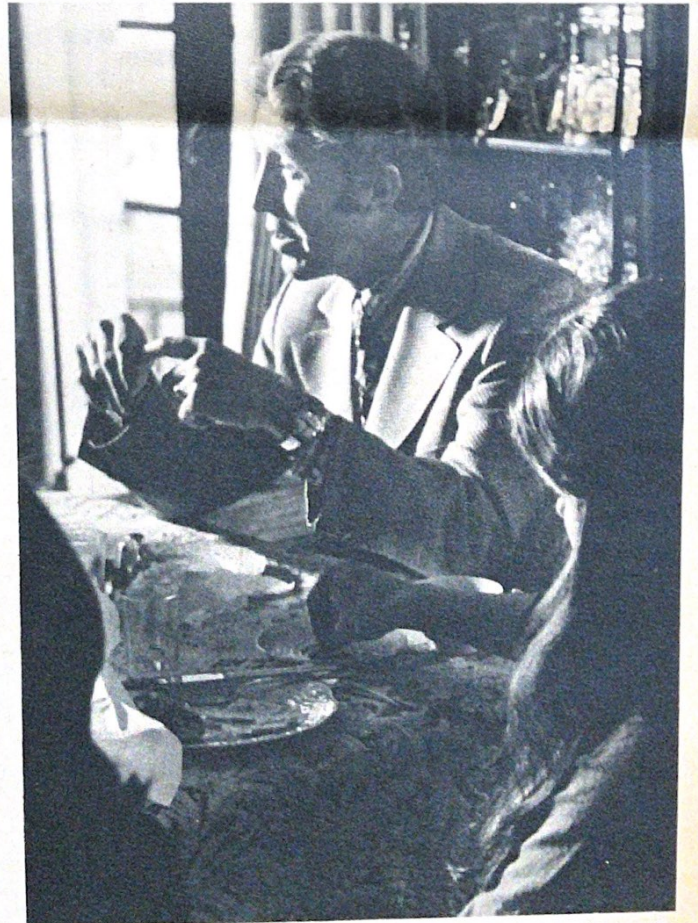
The Order, founded in France, has done much the same in many other countries; and so, there is an international network, which Newton College hopes to exploit for foreign study. Credit for the local college falls very much to the late Cardinal Cushing, who first agitated for it, and then proved to be one of its benefactors. But this reveals little of the tradition.

According to Sister Quinlan, Sacred Heart schools were originally created for the upper classes. "This was so in Europe where there was a real class structure: and in America, where it is more a matter of money, we were educating women in positions of influence. And though much can be said for helping the unfortunate, it is not so wrong to try to reach those who are hard to reach religiously.

"Now, of course, we're trying to reach a broader spectrum of women. But the Society was always concerned to have well

▶ 10

"Many people say everybody's Christian together, but there really are some differences, so why not talk about it"



"Wheaties with Whalen:" students discuss the coming day with their college president.

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8 ◀ Newton College

educated nuns and always wanted to have laymen teaching. There is a tradition of granting freedom and responsibility to the student."

Others see the tradition as one of strong women, or as one proceeding on the principle that women should be offered as subtle an understanding of the body politic as men. And still others, like John Bremer, who is not Catholic, sees the tradition in the Order's evident seriousness about constantly "reinterpreting the world."

The tradition then, like the philosophy, is rather vague, even though it is discussed; and ultimately the people who are invested in Newton College, like those in similar positions elsewhere, run on an inexpressible sense of the school. For example: "It's a gentle place," Graeme Cole, the president's assistant, offers. Or Whelan: "It has attracted a lot of humane people." Perhaps that's all there is to it.

□

But if anything must be taken as a tangible element in the tradition it might as well be the commitment to reinterpreting reality. If the college really does have the commitment as an organization, it has something going for it that is normally found only infrequently, and at that usually in lone individuals, and even then, for only brief periods. Such commitments are not easy to maintain. But even if Newton College doesn't have it, it clearly wants the commitment. And that may be enough.

A clear evidence of the wide embrace of the tradition is the presence of John Bremer on the campus. "I don't think they knew what they were getting when they hired me," says Bremer — as in steamer — who is an Englishman, very much involved in broad reinterpretations of Ameri-

can education. He is best known for his work in Philadelphia as director of the Parkway Program, also called "the school without walls," a lasting experiment in the high school system there. The Parkway Program is a public high school that has no building, but instead meets for classes in museums, insurance companies, architects' offices and elsewhere, using the city as its school. More importantly, though, the program embodies certain principles of education which Bremer is now attempting to re-tailor for Newton College, where he is directing a graduate education program and also "helping the college think through its whole program." His basic doctrine is that no educational doctrine is to be trusted, and that students must devise their own curriculum — "the creation of curriculum is the first element in any curriculum" he says. "The structure teaches more than the substance of the curriculum . . . What we have to do is teach people how to learn. And the best thing for a student is for the teacher to learn in front of him. . . . Unless we change the role assigned to the student, nothing else matters."

Bremer's ideas — vision really — are congruent with those of the students, except in that they come from him and not from them; and form a leading edge to the innovations the Sacred Heart Society and administration have taken upon themselves. — "We're not going to become a college without walls," says Whelan, "but students are certainly going to have a part in making their own curriculum. Some people were apprehensive that John (Bremer) would tend to polarize the school, and he has represented a pressure against resistant faculty. But if you're going to be first rate, you have to have first rate people." — Considering Bremer's presence there and the students own com-

▶ 12

11 ◀ Newton College

mitment to changing the balance of power in the classroom — "the whole key now," said a young woman, "is to make individuals sit down and decide what kind of education they want and can handle." — one can gather the impression that Newton College is suddenly an "advanced" school academically, or in academic method.

That it is advanced, seems strange, however because outside of its academic structures, Newton College reminds one of something else: a placid yesteryear blending into a sublime contemporaneity, where

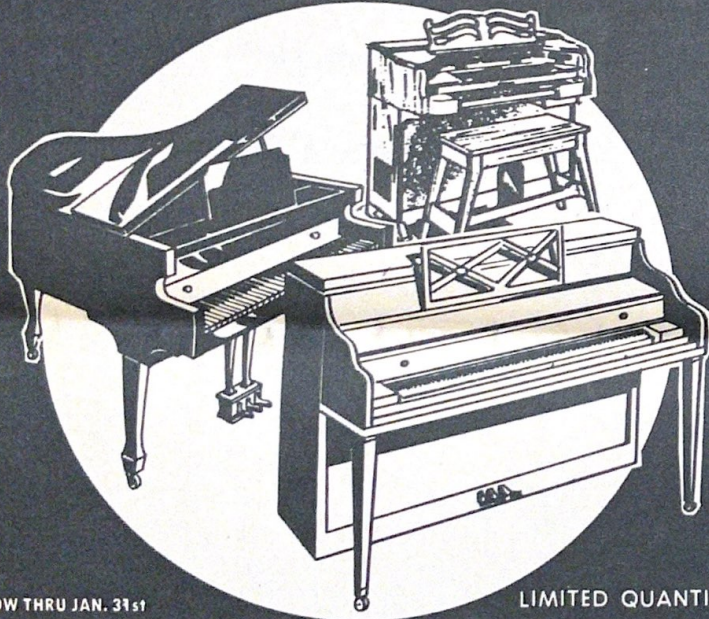
the issues of the day find a non-belligerent expression: a reformer's sweet dream. And some of the students recognize that this never-neverness is in the air. According to one, a danger at Newton College is that "because it's so comfortable, you tend to sit back and forget about the world. Fortunately we're near Boston. That helps." There has never been an SDS chapter at the college, nor one of any of its successor organizations. Instead the NSA, the National Student Association, the student government network, gets all the activity.

And though the women at Newton College speak the language of the women's movement, there is no liberation group there. Instead, students have set up a "women's resource center," which is an information clearinghouse only. Students may, or course, get involved outside the school and some do; but the fact is, there are no extremes or sharp edges on the Newton College campus; nothing that would suggest the kind of uncompromising energy that usually goes into the redirection of institutions.

▶ 14

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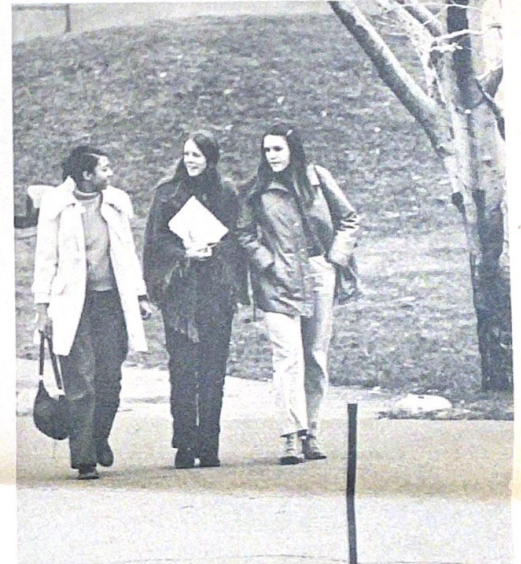
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Late one evening, a bunch of students gathered at "Saint Joe's," a residence house on campus, to jointly celebrate an informal Mass and Kathy Carter's 21st birthday. Rev. Robert Braunreuther, S.J., broke the bread (pumpnickel in this case) and the wine was passed (Kathy is receiving the chalice). In the friendly after-glow of the Mass, the students embraced.



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12 ◀ Newton College

And beyond all this is the other fact: that many of the Newton College students have come up through Sacred Heart secondary schools; and one can imagine that the revolution in their education has been rather hard on them too. It is difficult to shake the image of pinafores from a tradition of private education for upper class Catholic girls, and it is certainly as hard for them as it is for an observer. If it is any measure, they seem to smoke a great deal.

□

And so, coming now upon its 25th birthday, Newton College may be described as recently out of pinafore and habit, with an adventuresomeness and a bold academic intuition, trying to decide

generally which way to go; but of course, at the same time being nowhere if not in transition.

"We're aware that we must be good at something," says Sister Ofelia Garcia, art and humanities chairman, "but we're undecided about what it is. We're searching for it. But whatever it is, it shouldn't be watered down in efforts to please everyone, to the point where those who want it can't find any of it. We have to be unique."

Although from the inside it may appear confusing or maybe just politically unsettled; to the outsider, the options for Newton College's uniqueness seem rather clear. Proceeding from what is already within its grasp, the College might set it-

self up as a place for structural innovation and experimentation. Or it can find its attractiveness on specific course offerings. Sister Garcia, for example, argues that her art department represents a competitive advantage because it is large, strong, serves now as Boston College's art department, and because few similar schools have this strength. Or the college can establish itself as a very particular kind of school, the kind that follows at a respectful distance, and can thereby assure students and parents that it will familiarize them with all the contemporary issues, but safely, from the distance of a slight tardiness that takes away the intensity. Which ever, the survival of the Newton college depends upon the choice. 🌐

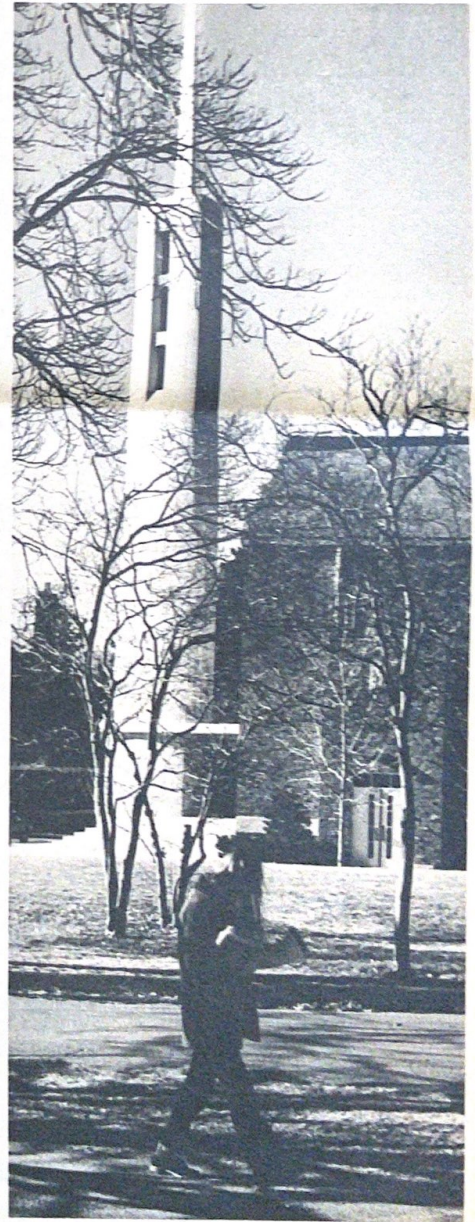
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Dean Bremer and President Whalen.

5 ◀ Bremer

Strangely — or, at least, he may seem strange relative to the pimps of reform one sometimes hears — Bremer describes himself as conservative in philosophy. And also oddly, for a man so deeply engaged in making an American phenomenon of American education, he is British. Seemingly, the latter fact illuminates not only the former, but also a key point in Bremer's ideas. Are not the British given over to tradition and hardly at all inclined to doctrine?

The metaphor is in the English legal system. The British common law was based on few embodiments of principles in written documents, but on cases decided one by one, each judge doing what suited him or what the judge before him had done. Societies are built the same way. Eventually, if the scraps form a coherent way of doing things, you call it a tradition. And the tradition serves as your doctrine.

“The best thing for a student is for the teacher to learn in front of him”

When you want to deal with a problem, you do not consult documents or interpretations of documents or theoretical exegeses of documents, constitutions, manifestoes, ideologies. Instead you read history, and interpretations of history. The difference here, of course, is between conservative and liberal, the conservative shifted toward tradition and history, the liberal toward doctrine and systems of principles.

If a person feels compelled to relinquish tradition he must replace it with

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16 ◀ Bremer

doctrine. If he wearies of available doctrines, he must fall back on tradition. It is in this sense that Bremer is both conservative and British.

He is, however, also such an advocate of new things in educational methods, that his commitments scorn such stagnant notions as the one which holds that liberals progress and conservatives resist. Bremer progresses, but, he would say, in the directions of provoking responsiveness to traditions and of reinterpreting those traditions in terms of present realities. Bremer, one might assume, is more excited by rediscovery than by discovery: finding classic themes in new worlds is what really turns him on and, probably, the more various the disguises in which he can find those themes, the better he knows them and the closer to home he experiences himself. "You can't deny the tradition," he says. "And it is not essentially in books. It is in the structures and values of the society. And you inherit it without knowing how it works on you. It's like mother's milk, but it can be improved upon."

"America has never had an educational system worthy of itself. After pioneering a continent, developing new forms of social and political organization, absorbing countless immigrants and bringing technology into a close relationship with human life, it is nevertheless true that Americans have adopted principles and practices of education belonging to another age and imported from another society." Bremer in the Parkway Program Brochure.

In 1968, after a period as superintendent in one of New York City's decentralized school districts, Bremer — who was born in London and is heavily educated in the old style with graduate degrees from three English universities — went to Philadelphia as original principal of the Parkway Program. Though it is a high school, Parkway has no building: it took its name because most of its classes are held in offices and institutions along the Ben-Franklin Parkway. Early on, the program was thought to be a device to inexpensively solve a severe overcrowding; but Bremer and his staff managed to evolve it into a unique form of education. Or perhaps not so unique at all — Bremer seems to be fond of quoting Dennis Hanks, Abe Lincoln's cousin, on frontier education. In fact, he started his Parkway Program book, *School Without Walls*, with the Hanks quote: "We learned by sight, scent and hearing. We heard all that was said, and talked over the questions heard, wore them slick, greasy and threadbare."

It is Bremer's contention that Hanks was stating an American tradition, and that the Parkway school comes closer to that tradition than most American high schools. Parkway does so, he would say — and to capsulize and therefore distort — because it requires that a "student" choose what he needs to learn, and because it uses the "real" everyday world as its classroom. There are 117 establishments listed as cooperating with the program; they are the places where the students go for instruction and they range from the Address-

sograph-Multigraph Corp., through insurance companies, museums, hospitals, churches, newspapers, broadcasting stations. General Electric is on the list: so is the First Pennsylvania Bank, the Urban League, the Swedenborgian Church and the General Tire Co.

Essentially, what Bremer emphasized in Philadelphia and what he is working into the graduate education program he is directing now at Newton College of the Sacred Heart, is the principle that the most important thing to teach a person is how to manage his own education. "In the immediate future, the people who will make the contribution are the people who have the capacity to learn," Bremer suggests. "Change is too rapid for there to be any importance in merely knowing something."

It is clear that Bremer is quite taken up with the notions of "electronic speed" and seamless informational web. And when he talks on this subject, as when most anyone does, he himself seems to move at electronic speed. It's the kind of discourse you either understand or you don't. Bremer suggests the problem is that the language is not yet adequate to the

Bremer refuses to let anyone "drive him out of the system"

communications. "The language is still noun-centered, but now we're verb centered. There's a built in alienation resulting from the language, the difference between the message of the world and the message as reported." As for schools, he suggests "the structure teaches more than the substance of the curriculum. The ordinary school teaches moral education, which it calls discipline, while what needs to be taught is management skills and cooperation."

"Students may resist a change, because although they may sense the old ways don't work, they feel that the rewards go to those within the system. And rewards do validate what you're doing. It's just that where the old reward was the finished product, the rewards must now be found in the process of doing things."

Following from these propositions is the concept of community—that is, though it doesn't necessarily follow logically, the people who talk about media, information and electronic communication, in fact, inevitably talk also about community. And Bremer, true to form in this respect, pinpoints "community" as the foremost American problem, "the question of the age." "The US has brought people to recognize the task of community, but it is not known whether the United States can do anything about it."

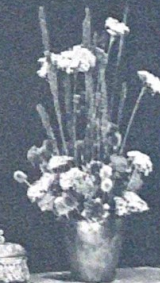
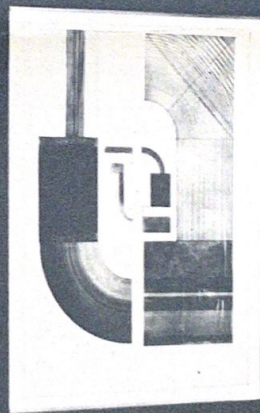


Bremer confers with college staff members.

The sum of ideas of this kind is usually an "alternative education" mentality. It is often found in rather young people, not in men in their 40s like Bremer; and also is associated with communal experiments and store front operations. Certainly it is rarely found in a man who describes himself as conservative. Also it has probably never, until the Parkway Program, been invested in an effective program in the real world. Now, however, in testimony to the viability of that program, similar schools without walls are being tested in other cities, notably the Metropolitan High School in Chicago.

Bremer says one reason he has been able to have effect is that he refuses to let anyone "drive him out of the system," that "the people who work outside are all right, but they don't bear on the situation of 95 percent of the students, the people who have to go through these schools." But really, there is no question of his being outside the system. The Philadelphia school, he says, "was not to revolutionize the larger community but only to live in it." Education, to him, is properly involved in reinterpreting the past for the future. It must operate within traditions. And from his "conservative" viewpoint the American education system's inadequacy is that it does not operate within American traditions nor does it address American challenges. ■

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