Farewell to an era: Professors Deme and Berggren retire

Professor Douglas Berggren and the heroic days

by Heather Whitmore

Professor of philosophy Doug Berggren's arrival in 1964 marked the beginning of New College's venture to integrate radical education and academic excellence. Now, over 35 years later, Berggren's retirement is being met by an avalanche of academic and administrative upheavals on the New College campus, marking a transition from the old regime to the new.

For faculty, the exit of Berggren means losing a critical voice in educational experimentation and quality. For students, life at New College will be difficult to imagine without him elucidating the ins and outs of post-modernism. Yet, with the promise of a new philosophy professor in the fall and Berggren's commitment to remain an academic presence at New College, the post-Berggren years don't appear so bleak. Berggren's retirement announcement at the close of fall 1999 didn't come as surprise to most of the campus. Sitting with crossed legs and both hands firmly gripping a New College mug of coffee, Berggren explained his reasons for leaving New College in a home interview with the Catalyst. "I'm in good health and in good spirits," remarked Berggren in denouncement of the role his instances of ill health over the past five years played in the decision.

Like other retiring professors, Berggren's retirement was spurred in part by a desire to write. "I haven't been able to teach and write at the same time," he explained. Continuing his work in many of fields he currently teaches, Berggren's plans to research and write on topics such as the infamous Janus Paradox, radical education, and notions of tensional thinking or "funky logic." He also plans to pursue issues in continental philosophy provoked by Anglo-American thought and Philosopher Richard Rorty.

Professor Douglas Berggren points to a picture of himself that was taken in the 60's.

Photo taken by Heather Whitmore

But in a thoughtful voice, he expressed something deeper behind his need to leave New College, "Part is to write, and part is the sense of frustration in teaching...you get the students to a certain point and then they go off to graduate school." He went on to compare his time as an undergraduate professor of philosophy to the myth of Sisyphus. With each new class and each graduating class he must begin the same cycle of awakening college minds, like old Sisyphus forever pushing the same stone.

While he is ready to stop teaching, he's not ready to leave New College. "I may sit in on this or that class. I'm going to stay here...Aron and I have thought of having students over to the house. I don't see myself breaking with the college and doing my own thing."

With his creative hand in the development of the contract system and the core structure of the Humanities division, it's difficult to see "Berggren" on page 4

Professor Laszlo Deme: On the side of the angels

by Ryan McCormick Price, Esq.

The road to higher education is never easy, but only for a select few is it paved with explosive antpersonel devices. Such was the case with Dr. Laszlo Deme, New College's own Professor of European History, who will retire at the end of this year. The loss of Professor Deme comes at a time of great turmoil at New College, as faculty members that have carried New College's banner since there was a banner to carry finally choose to ride off into the sunset. The absence of Professors Berggren and Deme, as well as Professor John McDiarmid, Kathy Killon of the Office of Admissions, and other key staff members will be felt sharply by the school next year. New College shall carry on just as it has. For Dr. Laszlo Deme, however, this momentous transition from the educational profession into the world of scholarly research comes as the culmination of a sojourn that began with the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

It is no easy task to persuade Dr. Deme to talk about himself. While he will discourse without the slightest hesitation on any matter of history, politics, or culture one might care to bring before him, he is hesitant to, as he puts it, "foot his own horn." Once told, however, his story is compelling: a tale of dedication, courage, and devotion that has spanned half a century.

Laszlo Deme was born in a small Hungarian village near the Austrian border, where he attended secondary school, the "gymnasium", before going off to the prestigious University of Budapest, where he studied Hungarian comparative literature from 1951 to 1955. After receiving his degree, he taught literature for a year and two months... right up until the Hungarian Revolution. After that, Dr. Deme chose to leave his native land. Under cover of night, he simply walked across the border and into liberty. The crossing wasn't too difficult, says Deme, save for a few small hazards. "There were still a few mines," Deme remembers, "and some border patrols with guard dogs. It was rather adventurous, I suppose," Dr. Deme recalls with a grin.

None of these obstructions were enough to stymie Deme's determination. But where was the young teacher to go? "I had an offer from the University at Bonn," he says, "and that was tempting because I already spoke German. But America offered more freedom, and after living under Communist rule, freedom was... and is... the Supreme Good." So Laszlo Deme set forth and arrived in New York City, where he stayed at the International House while studying English at the American Language Institute of Columbia University. Within a year, Deme had mastered the language sufficiently well enough to enroll in the history program at Columbia University, where he received his master's degree in 1959 and later his doctorate. At this point Deme sought employment "to keep body and soul..."
**News**

**Florida State University purchases the Ringling Museum**

The museum is to relocate to the state capital, Tallahassee

by Michael Sanderson

FSU now owns the Ringling Museum. In a plan hatched and executed by State Senator John McKay, R-Bradenton, the state legislature transferred control of the Ringling, the state art museum of Florida, to Florida State University effective July 1.

The plan came as the Ringling continued to find itself in dire financial straits year after year. Attendance was lagging with no solution in sight, and the legislature had to allocate funds to make up for budget deficit. McKay, an FSU alum, came up with the idea to transfer the museum, which is in his district, to his alma matter.

His clout in the legislature made it happen. McKay is the incoming President of the Senate, and will exert tremendous influence in the next session. In a speech on May 5, he told his fellow legislators how important the change is to him. The amendment passed 114-1.

The plan doesn’t just switch administrations, but creates a “university center for the arts.” Combined with the FSU center for the performing arts, the Asolo, the bill calls for “academic programs in theater, dance, art, art history, and museum management.”

The Ringling Museum already has a master plan, completed in December, but now totally up in the air. It includes an enlarged circus museum, an expansion of the museum to the North, a paring deck in front of the Asolo, a special events pavilion just south of the Ca’d’Zan, and an educational center that would, according to the Herald-Tribune, just into Caples Fine Arts. FSU has committed to finishing the expansion of the circus museum.

How much will stay the same remains to be seen. FSU can develop its properties without needing approval from the governor of cabinet, an open-ended prospect that has spawned strange rumors. Someone suggested that condos could appear on the property.

“This is an exciting development,” McKay said. “For all the work that has been done here, this is a new beginning.” McKay, who said he is working with the Ringling, plans to develop plans for the museum that will include new exhibits, educational programs, and community outreach.

Seven New College students have been hired to work this summer on the asset-mapping project. Partners include the Greater Newtown Community Redevelopment Corporation, the Sarasota branch of the NAACP, the Florida House Institute for Sustainable Development and the Human Services Planning Association.

The asset-mapping project will build on work begun in Dr. Brain’s spring class, Community Action Workshop. Three students from that class will continue with the work during the summer.

All students, faculty and staff are invited to attend a lunch on Friday, May 19, at the Caples Carriage House to learn more about CARI. Food will be provided by Newton’s own Big Daddy’s Barbecue. The faculty grant recipients, the students from the class, the students who will be working on asset-mapping over the summer, and CARI’s community partners will all be present to talk about their projects specifically and the idea of community-based research generally.

**Contribution: Community Action Research Initiative (CARI)**

by Julie Morris, Environmental Studies Coordinator

A new venture emerged out of last spring’s Blueprint process called CARI, the Community Action Research Initiative. Led by Dr. David Brain and Dr. Keith Fitzgerald, CARI strives to link academic work at New College and USF-Sarasota with needs and organizations in the local community.

Professors Brain and Fitzgerald are joined by Environmental Studies Coordinators Julie Morris and Jono Miller, Human Services Planning Association Director Tim Dutton, University of Illinois Professor of Sociology Emeritus Roland Liebert, and Project Coordinator Mandy Odom.

CARI will be the location for collaborative community-based research driven by a dialogue between the University and local citizens. This will allow students to design their education around pragmatic and socially engaged research. CARI will facilitate the integration of community project-oriented learning into the curriculum and encourage student and faculty participation in projects. The overall goal of CARI will be to enhance both local civic culture and the education of our students.

This spring CARI awarded grants to four New College faculty and two USF faculty to develop both new courses and modules for existing courses that use local community projects. CARI received a $14,900 grant from the USF University Community Initiative this month. The grant will fund the North Sarasota Community Asset Mapping Project, set to begin this summer. The geographic focus of the project will be the historically African American community of Newtown. The work will involve identifying and describing the resources of Newtown and working to mobilize the capacities of the community itself. Resource data will be compiled using GIS (Geographic Information System) and made available via the internet, in printed reports, and in community workshops.

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New College put in “most competitive” category by Barron’s

by Max Campbell

New College is still the pick of the litter, this according to Barron’s Profile of American Colleges, a popular college guide which boasts of being the number one choice among American students today. Once again, Barron’s has placed New College in the “Most Competitive” category of college admissions, an honor which our fine establishment has held since time immemorial... which is to say, for as long as our Admissions office can recall.

“My files don’t go back further than 1997,” Assistant Director of Admissions Susan Rothfuss wrote in an e-mail to the Catalyst, “but the 5/1/97 letter from the editor for the ‘Most Competitive’ guide says that New College of USF is ‘once again included.’ So, I’d say we’re safe saying (we were included for) at least four years.”

“The big profile gives each college and university in that guidebook a selectivity rating,” Director of New College Admissions Kathleen Killon explained. “Next year, New College will be listed as ‘Most Selective,’ as we have been for several years now. The really good thing is that New College still has, and hopefully will always have, the ‘Most Selective’ competitiveness rating.” According to Killon, Admissions department has used some of its additional funding this semester to purchase additional copies of Barron’s guide, to be distributed to guidance counselors and interested parents. “We bought lots of copies,” she said, “So we’ll be handing them out for as long as New College keeps its selectivity rating in the big book.”

New College’s inclusion in the “Most Competitive” category places our beloved establishment amongst such august company as Harvard, Yale, and Brown University. The description of this category in last year’s Barron’s guide states that “Even superior students will encounter a great deal of competition for admission to the colleges in this category... In addition, many of these colleges admit only a small percentage of those who apply, usually fewer than one third.” The College Admissions Selectivity as a whole assigns ratings based on a college’s median entrance examination scores, class rank and grade point average, and the percentage of those students admitted for the freshman class of the previous year.

“Barron’s is one of the most widely respected college guides, in my opinion,” Killon said. “Most of the other guidebooks don’t rate you according to selectivity.” Of course, just as different colleges place varying emphasis on the factors which determine which students will be admitted, so too do various guides differ in determining the selectivity of a particular university. “For example,” Killon said, “Peterson’s Guide to Four-year Colleges is also a widely respected and widely read guide, they do indicate the entrance difficulty index, in which New College is listed as ‘Very Difficult,’ but not in the ‘Most Difficult’ category.”

Under Peterson’s ‘Most Difficult’ category, the guide states that “More than 75% of the freshmen were in the top 10% of their high school class and scored over 1310 on the SAT I... about 30% or fewer of the applicants were accepted.” In the ‘Very Difficult’ category, “More than 50% of the freshmen were in the top 10% of their high school class and scored over 1230 on the SAT I... about 60% or fewer applicants were accepted.” Killon opined that “In our evaluation and selection process, we don’t place as much of an emphasis on SAT scores, which could be one reason that we aren’t listed in the ‘Most Difficult’ category in Peterson’s.”

In any case, New College has made an impressive showing in competitiveness, which students here regard as a good thing. “My favorite thing about New College,” second-year Chloe Johnson said, “Is how there’s so many brilliant people here. I have so much respect for the people I meet here. It’s like a more fertile place for all of the elements of your humanity to grow.”

Forth-year Jennifer Shaw and second-year April Wagner readily agreed. “The more I think about it, I really feel that this place engenders creativity and enthusiasm among the students here,” Shaw said. Wagner concluded by observing that “People here are excited about learning, and we can all feed off of that energy. It’s the school that shapes the whole person.”

Catalyst special report: Studying Abroad at New College

New College students who wish to study abroad have a variety of options.

by Darren Guild

Currently there are more than 29 New College students living and studying in far corners of the globe. Name practically anywhere in the word and it is likely there is a university or abroad program one can join there. Studying abroad can be the highlight of a student’s time in college. Just ask Ian Hallet, a fourth year who went to Belize. “It was easily the most enlightening and revealing experience of my life,” he said. There are a number of options for New College students; the hard part is narrowing down the field and finding an affordable program to go through.

New College students have one of two choices: to apply directly to a university somewhere or to apply to one of the hundreds of study abroad programs available. For New College students, the second choice could involve applying to the International Student Exchange Program of the University of South Florida or it could involve applying to programs of a similar nature at other colleges and universities. “One of the main influences [about which choice a student decides to take] is how much it costs,” said Career Development Coordinator Karen Patriarca. The advantage of choosing to apply to the International Student Exchange Program of USF is you pay the same tuition as you would if you were at New College and you have a state scholarship it stays in place. The advantage of going through a potentially more expensive program somewhere else or applying directly to another college or university is the selection you have. USF currently has student exchange programs in England, Scotland, France, Germany, Korea, Sweden, Wales, Israel, Australia, Japan, Russia, and Mexico. Four of the programs in England, Oxford Brooks, Western Sydney, Queen Mary & Westfield, and Middlesex, are on limited availability basis. “What sometimes happens is that we send more students there then they send here or the other way around...then the program has to find a balance,” explained Patriarca about why these particular places are on limited availability.

If you missed the chance to go to one of these limited availability places or want to go to a country USF does not offer an exchange program to, you will have find other opportunities. Patriarca commented many students go abroad through other programs but “often not as affordable.” If you apply directly to another university you have to pay the normal tuition at that university. Depending on where you decide to go and your personal financial relationship with New College, this could end up being a much more expensive option, but it is also possible the university where you apply to could be cheaper than the tuition you pay to New College. This range of prices is a factor in choosing another college or university, connected exchange program or in choosing a private program. Often you will end up paying the tuition of the college or university that you study abroad through. This means if you want to go somewhere that is only available through a $30,000 a year college or university you would most likely have to pay that tuition. One popular private program is called the School for International Training (S.I.T.). SIT offers unique learning opportunities that are often hands on and take place outside of the classroom.

Student reactions to studying abroad are very positive. Hallet went through a program called Global Stewardship Study Program. He lived in thatched roof cabanas in the middle of the Belize rain forest in an environmentally friendly compound that used solar power and natural gas. The program offered courses ranging from sociology to anthropology to biology, to name a few. Since the program was not accredited, Hallet sent his work back to New College for review. Hallet recommended that students go during their second year “so if you come back and want to change your major, like I did, you can.”

Fourth year Caroline LaFleur went to Ireland through a program called College Consortium of International Studies. LaFleur said she “would definitely recommend it, but” she added, “you should go for a year because it takes at least three months to really adjust to the culture and if you’re only there for a semester you’re almost done by then.”
Special Report: An at home interview with Professor Berggren

by Mario Rodriguez

Sunsets framed in the rectangular doors of their sparse, antique yet zen living room were a calming thing for Philosophy Professor Doug Berggren and USF Sarasota Comptroller Barbara Berggren in the early days of New College. From a teaching position at Yale, Professor Berggren became one of 15 full professors and one instructor (Literature Professor Mac Miller) to come to New College in the early sixties.

“We met everyday throughout that whole summer trying to concoct or bring the college into being,” Berggren recalled. These 16 people would be the charter faculty responsible for the inception of New College, which started out as an eleven-month system of trimesters. It took three years to complete, and consisted of a core program in the first year, an area of concentration in the second, and a senior seminar in the third year. Students would specialize in their second year, then converge in seminar fashion and bring their specificity to one text. As it turned out, Berggren felt this setup did not work so well.

"[Students...heard] the rhetoric [and it] was 'come here and proceed in your own way at your own pace.' Their whole first year was pretty much mapped out for them." Still, there were some benefits. "I think the thing that I’ll really look back most fondly on is the team-taught humanities program. The faculty was teaching one another as much as the students." From 1964 to 1975 New College was private, admissions paid for students to fly in from all over the country and handed out handsome fellowships. Things were good. In the late sixties the faculty devised the contract system, which eliminated the required courses.

Before the merger in 1975, when it was not clear whether New College would continue to be a viable entity, Professor Berggren, who had basically been either a student or professor in school all of his life, had a recurring nightmare. "I knew one thing all my life: that I didn’t want to get a degree. I was driving to the college one day and I was listening to the radio and I heard on the radio that the college had merged with the University of South Florida and I said to myself ‘What?...this whole thing had been such a hush hush deal working it out with the legislature I guess that they didn’t want to jinx it. But I still think they could have let the faculty in.”

Berggren said at this point he had to make a pivotal decision. “Many faculty left because they were sure that New College or what they came to do couldn’t happen under the merger, but they were actually very fortunate.” He interviewed with Bates College but decided to stick it out here, and emphasized New College is not a victim of USF.

“However we change, we did it to ourselves,” he said. “USF didn’t impose its will on us. New College students and faculty were allowed to set up their own system.” Perched meditatively in the corner, Professor Berggren referred continually to the “experimental” and “radical” qualities of that system. “The people who are really intellectually committed but cantankerous— they were the ones who made it [at New College]. They could range from nuns to anarchists,” he pointed out. “[New College’s] not really radical in some sense of the term, but strong individualist people who have strong convictions [can] do their own thing,” he later added.

Early in his career, Professor Berggren concerned himself with the interplay of two elements at New College—a tension between what he called being “committed to excellence” and “relevance.” By relevant, Berggren meant experimental, which to him entailed crossing disciplinary lines, knowing one’s discipline rigorously but questioning the fundamentals, perhaps even questioning the relevance of academics altogether.

The importance of academic excellence has always been clear in Berggren’s mind, however. He recalled being excommunicated by Catalyst member Michael Smith at an SASC meeting in 1969 after he nailed manifestos on excellence to trees, clad in a gown and accompanied by a fanfare of trumpets, in the style of Martin Luther. “I started out with ‘sex can be educational, poverty can be educational, an impoverished sex life can be educational, even education can be educational,’” he explained. “If New College didn’t have academic excellence or had not sustained it over the years, there could be no New College.”

“I think I shifted from an over-emphasis on academic excellence to a greater willingness to express the experimental or innovative side of New College,” he admitted, attributing the change to the influence of students.

“I’ve learned far more from students than they’ve learned from me,” he said. “[New College] was meant to show that you could achieve excellence through a much more open, experimental fashion,” Berggren continued. “To achieve real intellectual rigor and academic excellence in a much more open, experimental, uncontrived fashion.”

Has the contract system benefitted this vision of New College? Berggren insisted it has in many ways, giving students intellectual freedom unparalleled in the early days of the school. The price we pay, according to Berggren, is that the interaction between students and faculty, and between students themselves, has never reached the levels it sustained in the first days of the college again. “We haven’t found quite the right mechanism to get faculty and students interacting informally the way they did in those early years, [when they were] sitting down for lunch [together every day in College Hall]. ‘The rise of “subcommunities” at New College, which Berggren could attribute in part to the contract system, detracted from the “the experimental feeling of a whole community. What is needed to ameliorate the situation, he suggested, is an habitual ongoing occasion or place for re-evaluating the nature of a New College education rather than doing this sporadically. For example, it has been suggested in the past to use January for faculty and students to talk about education outside of the classroom.

“The college doesn’t have a sense of itself,” Berggren noted. “We don’t contest enough among the faculty, or among students, for that matter. We get a certain amount of peace or contentment at this college by not contesting what the other person is doing.”

Berggren wants to remain involved with campus academics

FROM “BERGGREN” ON PAGE 1 quantify the ways Berggren has contributed to New College as an institution of radical superior education. In many words, students and faculty alike agree that he is unrivaled and indispensable.

“The word unique takes no modifier...it either is or it ain’t, and he is,” remarked Berggren’s cohort since 1968, Professor of Literature Arthur McArthur ‘Mac’ Miller. He continued to explain how Berggren has exemplified the essence of the college, “by his astonishing examples, by performing what he thought, by being the kind of person that is thought in action.”

“He’s worked very hard to keep students at the center of everything we’re thinking about, and to keep students as the instigators in education and the institution, rather than as people we practice education on,” explained Berggren’s former philosophy student and current fellow philosophy professor, Aron Eddin. A friend and colleague since 1966, Professor of History Lazslo Deme remembers Berggren as a strong arm in the history of the college, “Dr. Berggren was quite vocal about maintaining the academic excellence, rather than turning the place into a sanitarium.”

Receiving a BA in philosophy from Carlton College, moving on to pick up a Fulbright scholarship to receive an MA and Ph.D. in philosophy from Jesus College at Oxford University, Berggren finished his education at Yale with another MA and Ph.D. in philosophy. Berggren recollected that it was in his 2nd year at Oxford that he met his wife Barbara Berggren, Student Government Comptroller, where she was then studying mathematics at St. Anne’s College. “She was the tallest girl I had ever gone out with,” laughed Berggren as he described his attraction to his wife. “We have very different minds so we compliment one another,” he added.

When asked how he would describe the Doug Berggren he met in 1968, Miller replied, “precisely beautiful and dynamic.” According to Miller, Berggren was very popular with the students and would frequently hang out around Hamilton Center talking philosophy. Most of his students found Berggren, “very friendly, yet dauntingly brilliant,” noted Miller.

Deme’s reflections on the Berggren he knew well in the sixties was a bit more somber. “A bright academic— made lot of sense; but, he used to look much like a Yale...I was very much impressed, because you know the climate— but he gradually gave it up.”

In 1964, Berggren left a position as assistant professor at Yale to become a full and founding professor at New College. Over the next several years he worked on developing an aesthetic foundation for the Humanities division.

“I miss the aesthetics of the old New College,” commented Berggren as he
Professor Deme will continue to pursue scholarly research

FROM "DIME" ON PAGE 1

Professor Deme, who remained in the employ of the Times for five years, Dr. Deme admits that he "did not care for it very much, but it was better than a job selling insurance." The job taught young Deme about the real world, although with the perspective of long years, Professor Deme happily admits that he prefers the auspices of academia. The research position, moreover, provided Deme with the opportunity to learn significantly more about his new homeland. "I learned about America in the same way that most European scholars did," says Deme, "I read the Constitution and the Federalist Papers. So America sounded wonderful, although perhaps that was a little naive." Even so, after his 44 years of residency here, Dr. Deme admits that he still thinks the country is "pretty good", and that he indeed made the right choice after leaving his homeland.

Adjusting to life in his marvelous new homeland was no easy task, admits Deme: "It was difficult. I had the mentality of an exile, rather than an immigrant. While an immigrant is full of hopes for a way of life he has come to of his own free will, an exile is full of torn loyalties, and wants to return to his homeland. It is an unhappy frame of mind, and it took me a long time to adjust." Life for Dr. Deme, however, took a momentarily happy turn in 1962, when he attended a fete thrown in New York by the Commander-in-Chief of the Hungarian National Guard, a veteran of the Revolution of '56. There were numerous veteran Hungarian soldiers in attendance, and a handful of young American women. Among these lovely girls, Dr. Deme met the lady who would a few months later become Elaine Deme.

Shortly following his marriage, Dr. Deme ceased his employment at the New York Times and took on a position teaching history at New York State College at Geneseo, where he remained for two years, before receiving word from the Placement Office at Columbia University that there was an opening for a history professor at New College. Dr. Deme, like most other people in 1966, had never heard of New College, but found the description of the radical liberal arts school intriguing, and during his interview, he "was sold on the idea." He was particularly charmed with the state of Florida, which he had heard of previously only as an area noted "for its good climate, and nothing else." Deme chuckled, "provincial prejudices." Thus, Dr. Laszlo Deme arrived at New College as a Professor of European History, intending to stay for three years. He stayed for the next thirty-four.

These early years of New College are known among the elder professors as "the heroic days;" students and teachers were engaged in an exciting new enterprise, creating something that was both an institution of higher learning and a missionary society. "There was an enormous amount of talking," recalls Deme, "and a tremendous amount of nonsense." Nonsense aside, Dr. Deme was tremendously impressed by the spirit of New College, something he says is still present to this day; "The most important feature of this confined community is tolerance, closely followed by benefit of the doubt, and intellectual curiosity." The initial idea for the process of radical education at New College called for the meeting of two first-class minds, that of the student and the professor, in a close, personal environment. The interplay of questions and answers between the teacher and the class would provide for a learning experience on both sides. This was one of the most important aspects of New College. "I hesitate to use the phrase 'Socratic method' to describe it, because that is one of those catchy phrases," says Deme. Unfortunately, according to Dr. Deme, these Socratic meetings of first-class minds often occurred over a vacuum. "A student would be assigned some reading, and would not bother to read it. This would not prevent him from making intelligent commentary." Says Deme with a smile, "This tradition is still present at New College.

The best part of the New College, in Deme's eyes, is the senior thesis. The work which most students do for their theses is equivalent to many a graduate degree work. As Professor Deme says, "In the process of the thesis and the baccalaureate, all the rhetoric about individualized education finally materializes. That is what lends substance to our school's claim on being an 'honor college.'"

Dr. Laszlo Deme was soon appointed as Division Chair of Social Sciences, an important role in those early days when the Social Sciences division was struggling, understaffed and underplanned. Dr. Deme's efforts revitalized and even created a great deal of the division. Says Dr. Douglas Berggren, Professor of Philosophy, "Laszlo Deme's contributions to New College are legendary. Not only did he help create the Social Science Division as we know it today, he has also left his mark on every aspect of the college community." Indeed, it was entirely through Deme's efforts that New College's prestigious history program came into being. Dr. Laszlo Demecke, Professor of American History, remembers being hired by Professor Deme in 1969. "I had answered an American Historical Association ad, and had heard nothing until I received this phone call from a man with a rich Hungarian accent. Before I ever met him, I had envisioned this short man with a little black mustache. When I arrived in Sarasota for my interview, I was introduced to this tall, blonde man of great stature and bearing." After his initial surprise, Dr. Demecke impressed Dr. Deme enough that he was quickly hired, and was furthermore asked if he knew of a medievalist who might be seeking work. As it so happens, Demecke had worked with Dr. Lee Snyder, New College's Professor of Medieval/Renaissance History, in Ohio. Thus Dr. Demecke contacted Dr. Snyder, and with Snyder's "dynamic personality, tremendous enthusiasm and jovial spirit." Snyder was especially delighted to see that Dr. Deme, as Chairman of the Social Sciences, placed special emphasis on building up academic quality. "He had to kind of make a choice between innovation and quality," says Snyder, "and I like to think that we in history are anchored in quality over innovation." Deme remained chairman of the Social Sciences for 13 years, during which he dealt heavily in matters of administration, dealing with drastic shifts in New College policy such as dropping core courses, the temporary abolishment of senior theses, and even the possibility of placing the school's emphasis on therapeutic psychology. Regardless, says Deme, "I'm still here. I survived it all. And I still like New College," he adds with a grin.

Aside from the creation of a solid history program and the steering of the Social Sciences division through its turbulent early years, Dr. Laszlo Deme has also made the notable contribution of running a series of Conferences on Eastern Europe. "These were among the most successful enterprises that New College as an institution ever engaged in," says Dr. Deme, "as they were neither politicized nor esoteric." The conferences attracted scholars from all over the world, who presented papers on the politics, society, culture and history. One notable guest who made a few appearances was the honorable Geza Jeszemszky, Foreign Minister of Hungary, a good friend and fellow scholar to Dr. Deme.

"Deme," as Professor Demecke says, "made history," here at the college. For both fellow professors and students, Deme will leave behind a legacy that will never fade. Dr. Douglas Berggren, a close friend, neighbor, and cohort of Dr. Deme, has this to say of the man he has worked with for 34 years and will be retiring with this year: "What I personally treasure most about Laci is the way in which he embodies, in every aspect of his life, what it means to be an intellectual, as well as a cultivated and compassionate human being." Professor Arthur McCa., "Mac" Miller, Professor of British and American Literature, adds in a scholarly vein, "Professor Deme, continually, brought "grace under fire" to the sodden trenches of our faculty. The immense spread of his knowledge ... not only history, but literature and allied fields as well ... has graced our curriculum."

Indeed, many students remember Dr. Deme not only for his famous courses on 19th century Europe and the Hapsburg Monarchy (a course that, according to Deme, would only receive such a large turnout at New College), but for his remarkably colorful use of language, and for his compassion. Says Joven Carandang, a third-year history major: "He [Deme] makes you feel like you really belong. I was insecure in class about my knowledge of history, but he shushed it away. His guidance helps you grow and write more confidently. He ... makes you happy," J.C. finishes with a laugh. Professor Deme's particular style in the classroom is most certainly one of his many roots. "Historians' roots lay in storytelling," comments Professor Deme, who sings the praises of the Magyars without being a blind nationalist, and holds forth for the value of the side of the angels while giving the cynics ... like myself ... a sideways wink. Historian's roots lay in storytelling, and Deme seems to lay close to these roots."

Professor Laszlo Demecke has contributed 34 years of his life to the service of New College. He has created our prestigious history department, guided generations of students through the complexities of European history, and has been a force for good in this world. Professor Deme alone can provide the words to sum up his time here: "I have devoted well over 30 years of my life to teaching here, and it has become one of the most important parts of my life, right after my wife and my children. Teaching at New College," says Professor Deme, "has been my greatest honor."
Berggren looks back on a career spanning four decades

*From "Berggren" on Page 4*

Berggren was excommunicated from the Catholic Church during the Reformation, only he targeted hippie professors (Berggren, Deme, and Miller) recounted a tale when Berggren has it, Berggren recreated the act of Martin Luther's declaration of separation and pinned it to palm trees in Palm Court.

According to Deme, Berggren wrote a proclamation of academic excellence rejecting all New College students who didn't agree with the academic enterprise and pinned it to palm trees in Palm Court. "It was his vision of a 'basic literacy' in the humanities that helped form 1/3 of the new New College program for the first 101 students."

"In 1968, when I got here, Doug Berggren was shall we say, the keystone of the arch of charter faculty for the Humanities," smiled Miller in reverence of Berggren's accomplishments.

"I think there's always been a tension at New College between excellence and relevance," noted Berggren. "In the early days there was a face off between the student-movement emphasis on relevance, and Berggren's philosophical stance that excellence was the educational goal of New College."

Explained Miller on academic conflicts in the early years. These conflicts were the catalyst of one of Berggren's most famous stunts in the history of New College.

While the story was told with a different mood every time, all three professors (Berggren, Deme, and Miller) recounted a tale when Berggren was "excommunicated" by the students for being an academic heretic. As legend has it, Berggren recreated the act of Martin Luther's declaration of separation from the Catholic Church during the reformation, only he targeted hippie kids in Palm Court.

According to Deme, Berggren wrote a proclamation of academic excellence rejecting all New College students who didn't agree with the academic enterprise and pinned it to palm trees in Palm Court. "He wore an academic gown; I helped him... He couldn't find a hammer in his whole house so I gave him one. We had fun in those days," remembered Deme. He continued to tell how few days later a small group of students dressed as monks carrying candles processed into a faculty meeting to declare Berggren a heretic.

"He was excommunicated by the enemy," laughed Deme.

"The academic excellence became the ethos of the college, rather then behaving like a contra group," concluded Deme on Berggren's influence in maintaining the integrity of New College in the sixties. Both Berggren and Deme remembered the 1960's as a trying, but invigorated, time for the college. "There was something exciting in the air about New College -- it was not just an institution of higher education; it was a missionary society," remarked Deme.

As one of the last remaining figures from the early days, Berggren's retirement is a bit disorienting for faculty and students. In time with the retirement of New College vanguards such as Deme, Nancy Ferraro, Director of Admissions Kathleen Kilion, and Director of Special Project Development James Feeney, Berggren's exit has left faculty and students at a loss. Admiring the sway Berggren's voice has had on the both the philosophy and practice of New College, faculty agree he will be missed.

"Berggren's retirement is a part of the changing of the guard, if you will," began Miller in a reflective tone. "I'm not sure is there is anyone in the faculty to carry on the experimental aspect of New College in such a way to motivate students and professors to think outside the box...I wish there were." "He always kept alive something for the original spirit of New College," remarked Deme. Certain that the school won't fall flat without Berggren, Deme recognized that there will be some changes, "It's not going to be the same, but we will uphold the old standards."

For Edidin, Berggren's resignation means other faculty members might have to pick up the torch. "Since he's been here the longest, the types of things that other professors are responsible for organize themselves around the work of Berggren," explained Edidin. "Faculty will have to be more responsible for trying to keep discussion focused on the central value of the college."

As the post-everything New College mind, from analytic philosophy to structuralism to French existentialism, Berggren has been an enormous influence in the philosophy department. Recalling his philosophical awakening as one of Berggren's students from 1973 to 1977, Edidin mentioned how two classes in his first year opened up his future as a philosophy professor, "Analytic philosophy with Wittgenstein and another class, philosophy of religion...the experience in both of these classes was something like finding the intellectual home I didn't know I had."

"I think that in my case Berggren really solidified my desire to be a philosophy student," explained current Berggren student, third year Philosophy major Caroline Arruda. Having taken seven courses with him over the past three years, Arruda thinks highly of Berggren's teaching style. "He really taught me there are lots of creative ways to interpret problems and thinkers, as opposed to the traditional text books."

Much of the state of the philosophy department is built on Berggren according to Arruda. "I think he really changed the face of New College in the sense that a lot of the things we take for granted are as a result of his work."

She continued, "it's hard to imagine what it's going to be like without him."

Although they'll miss Berggren, both Arruda and Edidin are anticipating a new era in New College philosophy with April Flakne. Flakne, current philosophy professor and Harvard and recent of New School for Social Research graduate in philosophy, has been offered Berggren's position. "We're all looking forward to having her join the faculty in the fall. It could have felt a lot worse to contemplate life without Berggren in the future if we hadn't been so fortunate in the search," commented Edidin.

Arruda was particularly enlivened by the prospect. "I think she's great. I think she'll work really well at New College." To this she added, "I'm really quite excited because I think it's going to be a year that will be distinctly different from the past three years."

It's difficult to sum up a commentary on the retirement of Doug Berggren. Knowing that he will remain living and working only a few blocks away from campus brings comfort for his lost thesis students and friends. It might be best to end with an anecdote from Edidin's days as one of Berggren's students.

"I don't know how many people left at the institution have seen him stand on his head and drink a glass of water," began Edidin as he told of one shenanigan Berggren would pull for students at Florida Philosophy Association meetings during the seventies. An image of Berggren with feet in the air and glass in hand before the great philosophical minds of this state is a pungent and somehow appropriate memory of his impact here at New College. As Edidin concluded, "that was very impressive."
Negativland brings their quirky media collage to Florida

The Catalyst

May 17, 2000

The Clearwater show was their only Florida appearance on their first tour in seven years.

by Kathryn Dow

Why is the phonograph throwing the records in the air? I knew we shouldn’t have fixed it with parts from the toaster.

To say that seeing Negativland live was a religious experience would be an understatement, and demeaning to the band. The multi-media spectacle which was presented to those fortunate enough to attend Saturday’s show at Club More in Clearwater transcended anything imaginable. The band’s True/False 2000 production marks 20 years that these brilliant media pirates have been creating an art form of stealing. But is it really stealing? The experimental-music and art collective known as Negativland has been recording music/audio/collage works since 1980, producing a weekly 3 hour radio show (Over The Edge) since 1981, hosting a World Wide Web site since 1995, and performing live on occasional tours throughout America and Europe.

Their music relies heavily on samples, often put in a satirical context. By arranging the samples in certain ways, and combining them with elements of their own creation, Negativland has created a fairly impressive discography of social commentary and surrealism. Their concert took this to a whole new level. The True/False show was created partially with works from their albums, tied together with new creations. The end result was a collage of music, noise, spoken-word, film, and stage acting that left the audience staring open-mouthed at the stage in the end.

Although it should have been but a small and amusing bit of their musical career, Mark Hosler and his cohorts are probably best known for an unfortunate 1991 legal fracas involving a U2 sample and a Casey Kasem outtake. The band heard the outtake — in which Kasem got frustrated while recording the American Top 40, and ultimately cursed U2, the show itself, and even an innocent little deceased dog by the name of Snuggles. The outtake was so humorous, the band thought, that everyone should hear it. Since U2 was involved in Kasem’s foul-mouthed rant, Negativland thought incorporating elements of “I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For” into their composition would be ideal. Island records, unfortunately disagreed. The record was withdrawn, and the band (which is not one of the more financially successful monoliths in the music industry) was forced to pay Island Records a rather daunting sum of money.

Since that fiasco, they have launched a crusade to reevaluate copyright laws as they apply to art. The band feels that using sections of a pre-existing work to create a new whole should not be considered a violation of copyright, for various reasons which are too complicated to detail here. Basically, they feel that musical collage is akin to forms of art such as Dada and Pop Art, which use pre-existing objects or logos as elements. Thus, unadulterated by Island’s attack on their product and their pocketbooks, they have continued to turn out recordings for nine years since.

Saturday’s show at Club More provided fans with an opportunity to not only see the visual accompaniment to the musical creation they have come to love, but to schmooze a bit with the Negativland entourage itself. The band and crew were all dressed in white jumpsuits with name badges label-
Entertainment

Some insight into multi-media misfits Negativland

by Mario Rodriguez

Where else could you see someone play a projector like a turntable than at a concert given by the group that coined the term 'culturedamming' in 1984, since promulgated by media artists and activists. Negativland, which performed in Clearwater last week, recently finished cutting a CD with Chumbawumba called The ABC's of Anarchy featuring the Teletubbies. In an interview with The Addict, Negativland co-founder Mark Hosler made clear his view that art is prefab and so is culture in today's world. The difference between collaging and ripping someone off, then, is completely reordering the media to say something new, as with alternative operating systems, like Linux. Programmers spend their spare time writing all that free code because they enjoy it, so in their opinion it's okay to pirate it. But if you just change one line of the code and try to sell it as something new, that's just lame.

For Christ's sake, do something interesting with it. Or not for Christ's sake, according to the 'Christianity is Stupid. Give up.'-t-shirts the band sells. Christianity is Stupid is the title of a Negativland song. The band has been prolific over their 20 year career. They are the authors of the book, 'Fair Use: The Story of the Letter U and the Numerals 2,' a recanting of their near-fatal legal bout with Island Records. They recorded the soundtrack to indie film 'The Ad and the Ego,' by Craig Baldwin, and were themselves the subject of Harold Boithem's 1995 feature film 'Sonic Outlaws'. Negativland is currently engaged in their 'True/False 2000 tour.'

Don Joyce's second-floor apartment at the interface between Berkeley and Oakland doubles as a recording studio for Negativland. Miscellaneous junk and magnetic recording tape are strewn about everywhere.

Problems arise when you take on something famous, because you have all of these 'nobody-makes-fun-of-us' people, so vested in their corporate identities that they can't stand to be embarrassed and [who] want to get back at you....' Hosler said their latest album, 1997's 'Dispepsi,' was not an attempt to be sued again, because that is "not fun." This time, Negativland is confident that they are protected by the Fair Use section of copyright laws. They also hope Pepsi execs see the satire as free advertising.

They were not so lucky. Negativland mixed U2's 1987 hit "Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" with bootleg out-takes of Casey Kasem. On the Negativland single of the same name, Kasem can be heard ranting about having to read a request and dedication of the U2 song for a listener's dead dog: "This is bullshit. Nobody cares. These guys are from England and who gives a shit?"

Island Records, which originally had a restraining order put on Negativland's 1991 single, U2 they were afraid fans would mistake it for a new U2 album), have agreed to return the rights to the band provided Casey Kasem gives his signature, promising not to sue anyone but Negativland in the future. Things are looking better these days, especially in light of the unanimous 1994 Supreme Court decision that defended 2 Live Crew's appropriation of Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman." Kasem, however, has yet to allow the re-release of the composition.

What Negativland lacks in traditional musicianship they make up for with industry. The band self-produced and hand-made the jacket art for each of the 15,000 copies of their first record. The band was forged in the cauldron of industry: it began when Hosler quit his paper route at the age of 15. He took the proceeds and rented a bunch of tape decks and equipment, holed up in his room for a few weeks and 'simply began experimenting, with no formal musical training. "I hadn't heard of John Cage or music concrete or any of that. It just sort of made sense," he said.

With the album Dispepsi, which remixes 30 years of old Pepsi adds, Hosler wants listeners to be sick of hearing Pepsi mentioned by the end of their listening experience. He wants to rebel against the idea of saturation in advertising, which he views as the real problem, not brainwashing. Hosler gives people more credit than that.

"You'd think for the amount of air time that advertising occupies and the amount of mental, psychic space it takes up in our brains and everywhere we go in our daily lives," he told The Addict, "[that] it's extraordinarily invisible in regards to how little it's actually discussed.

"I see what is happening to our political process because of the influence of multinatinal corporations because of political action committees and all that," said Hosler. "The influence that the corporate money has there is incredibly disturbing and the influence it's having on how our laws are written and our environmental laws and in our media frame of reference in North America."

So what does Nine Inch Nails have to say about this? "Years ago I got to talk to Trent Reznor," Hosler commented, "and I showed him a bunch of our stuff, you know, I showed him some of the Negativland propaganda, and I said, 'Do you clear all the samples that you use?' And he said, 'No, I only clear the ones you can recognize.' So I said if you mutilate and distort them enough there's no moral or ethical or philosophical reason you have for following the rules? He said, 'No, I just use it and I don't care, it doesn't matter,' and so it's kind of this silly game that everyone's playing. There's no one [observing copyright laws] for any reason that has anything to do with ethics, morality or right or wrong."

"One of the reasons why we've worked the way we have is that I personally would like to live my life and act as if I'm living in the kind of world that I would like to see exist." Hosler insisted. "And in the world I'd like to see real, it's gonna be OK for a small group of grass roots audio artists to mock a gigantic company. To ridicule them. To take their media that we can't ask to see or experience, their commercials and their propaganda, and to take it and chew it up and spit it out and throw it back at them. An that there shouldn't be anything wrong with that."

Hosler sees Negativland's work as a sort of modern day protest music, but instead of 'hating the unions because I hate god,' they've mobilized with some affiliates in a Pepsi-Burma boycott. In fact, Pepsi eventually pulled its saturation campaign out of Burma. Attorney Alan Korn said the band is lucky trademark infringement isn't as expansive as copyright infringement. But the band has done its homework. The name of the album isn't listed on the packaging — fans have to call a number to get the actual name. Hiding the pepsi logo as the yin-yang was also a cool idea. Copyright infringement laws are designed to protect a market, so as long as Negativland isn't bating consumers by sitting under a Pepsi billboard somewhere, selling CD's, they should be okay.

Information from www.negativland.com was used in the creation of this article.