

# THE TRICORN

NEWSLETTER published jointly by the BOSTON •  
LONG ISLAND • PHILADELPHIA GREAT BOYS COUNCILS

February, 1988

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## COLBY 1988: REASON, LOVE, OR FAITH?

How do we come to know?

How do we come to be wise?

Is it reason, love, faith, or some combination of them that illumines our path?

This summer we'll be searching our minds, our hearts, and our souls at Colby, as we consider the words of our chosen authors. A sampling of their ideas:

From Heisenberg's *Physics and Philosophy*:

... This again emphasizes a subjective element in the description of atomic events, since the measuring device has been constructed by the observer, and we have to remember what we observe is not nature in itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning. Our scientific work in physics consists in asking questions about nature in the language that we possess and trying to get an answer from experiment by the means that are at our disposal. In this way quantum theory reminds us, as Bohr has put it, of the old wisdom that when searching for harmony in life one must never forget that in the drama of existence we are ourselves both players and spectators.

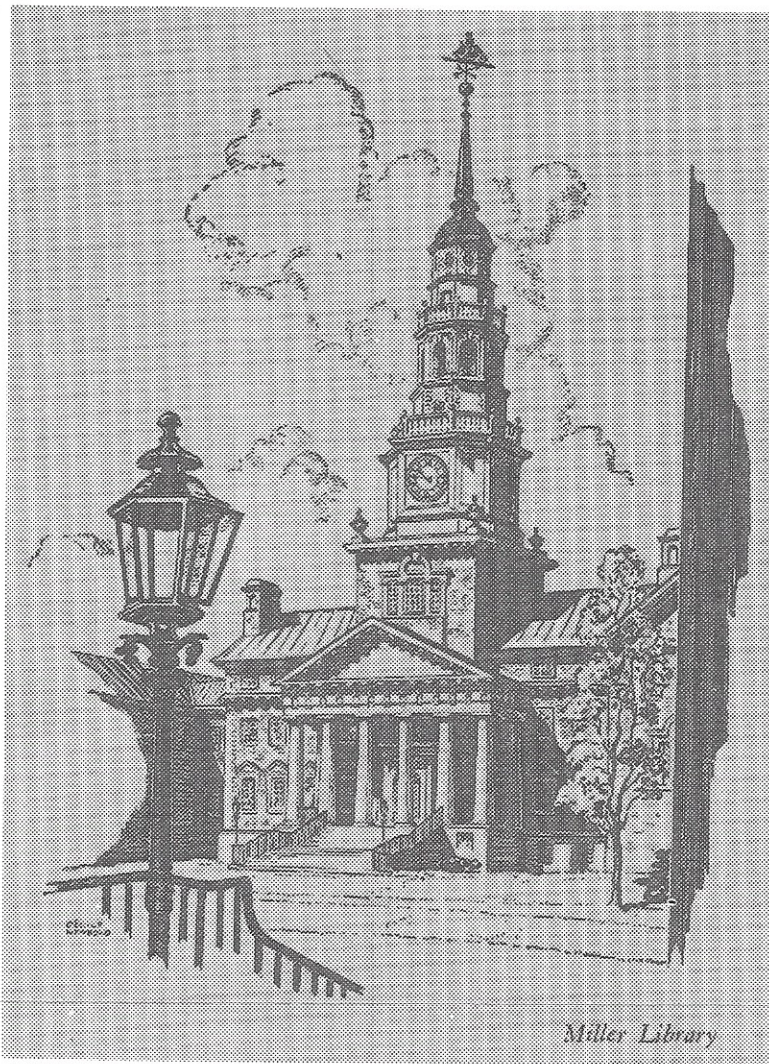
From Plato's *Symposium*:

... it is only when he discerns beauty itself through what makes it visible that a man will be quickened with the true, and not the seeming, virtue — for it is virtue's self that quickens him, not virtue's semblance. And when he has brought forth and reared this perfect virtue, he shall be called the friend of god, and if it is given to man to put on immortality, it shall be given to him... every man of us should worship the god of love, and this is why I cultivate and worship all the elements of Love myself, and bid others to do the same. And all my life I shall pay the power and the might of Love such homage as I can.

From Tillich's *Dynamics of Faith*:

... Reason is the presupposition of faith, and faith is the fulfillment of reason. Faith as the state of ultimate concern is reason in ecstasy. There is no conflict between the nature of faith and the nature of reason; they are within each other.

(continued on page 8)



COLBY COLLEGE CAMPUS

Our week at Colby melts away the walls often built around ourselves in the pell-mell competitive world in which we live. At Colby, it's safe to be open, laughter is always WITH never AT! Ideas are eagerly shared and appreciated. The insights of others into the books discussed affords an exciting personal growth experience augmented by repeated participation year by year.

**SIDELIGHTS:**

Swimming, boating, tennis, golf, summer theaters, warm hospitality of a staff who look forward to our return, and a clambake.

**APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION**

Mail to: Colby Summer Institute Committee  
 c/o Mr. I. S. Wachs Tel: 1-215-496-0420  
 21 South 12 Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19107

with a leader   
 1/We prefer a group  
 without a leader

Enclosed herewith is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for registrations of the following persons at Colby Institute.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name Please Print Last Name  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City State Zip Code

*Join Us In the Hills of  
 Maine in August!*

**1988 GREAT BOOKS  
 SUMMER INSTITUTE**

**WHERE AND WHEN:**

Colby College, Waterville, Maine — August 7-13

**THEME: REASON, LOVE OR FAITH?**

**READINGS:**

- Heisenberg — Physics and Philosophy
- Plato — Symposium
- Tillich — Dynamics of Faith
- Dostoyevsky — The Brothers Karamazov

*".... A man who possesses neither beauty nor goodness nor intelligence is perfectly well satisfied with himself and no one who does not believe he lacks a thing desires what he does not believe he lacks."*

PLATO — Symposium

**COST:**

\$300 which includes room, board and readings. Books, travel information and schedule of events will be sent upon receipt of deposit.

**ELIGIBILITY:**

Any adult who desires to spend a relaxing week, which includes the reading and discussion of books.

**CANCELLATIONS:**

Your deposit will be refunded, less \$50, if you cancel before July 1, 1988.

**CHILDREN:**

Families with children between 4 and 14 are welcome. A reduced fee for room, board and supervised morning activities for children will be quoted on request. Contact Ginny Thurston, P.O. Box 299, Harvard, MA. 01451; 617-456-3505.

Deposit of \$150.00 required for each participant; balance may be paid at any time prior to or at registration at the College. Make checks payable to Colby Summer Institute Committee.

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## LONG ISLAND NEWS

### WE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES...

THE LONG ISLAND COUNCIL, in keeping with the Bicentennial Celebration, discussed the Constitution of the United States at its Annual Meeting in November. Copies of the Constitution, in booklet form, were sent to members for reading prior to the meeting. The booklets are available, FREE, from the Commission of the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, 736 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20503, 202/USA-1787.

### ONE-DAY INSTITUTE

**The Theme:** EMPIRE and EGO

**The Readings:** *Burmese Days* – George Orwell

“After all, natives were natives – interesting, no doubt, but finally only a ‘subject’ people, an inferior people with black faces. His attitude was a little *too* tolerant . . . He had forgotten that most people can be at ease in a foreign country only when they are disparaging the inhabitants.”

*A Bend in the River* – V.S. Naipaul

“There it was all going up in smoke. My rage wasn’t only with Africans. It was also with our community and our civilization, which gave us energy but in every other way left us at the mercy of others. How do you rage against a thing like that?”

**The Place:** The Chelsea Manor House on the Muttontown Preserve, Muttontown, L.I. (Norman architecture, moat, woodland blending of formal topiary gardens and naturalistic landscapes.)

**The Date:** Sunday, June 5, 1988

**The Cost:** \$19.00, which includes readings and travelling directions, coffee at registration, lunch and post-discussion refreshments.

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**Mail to:** Long Island Great Books Council, P.O. Box 821, Port Washington, NY 11050. (Please send before April 1, 1988)

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places at the Long Island Institute at \$19.00 each, enclosed.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## NEWS FROM BOSTON

Let's see, what did we read last fall? Right. It was Gore Vidal's *Burr* and an Archibald MacLeish poem called "America Was Promises." The institute was an invigorating one-day look at the meaning of America, to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of the Constitution. The day was held again this year at Tufts University, a beautiful place to be, this campus on a hill, on a crisp fall day.

### A Changing of the Guard

The Boston Council has elected a new chairwoman: Mary Vallier, who's been around Great Books for a long time and who brings to the job her well-earned reputation for organization and energy. We're all looking forward to big things. Mary replaces Eleanor Jensen, who held the post for three years? Four? Your correspondent doesn't remember that, but she remembers Eleanor's efficient administration, quiet confidence, and unfailing good humor. Eleanor will be missed.

### A Winter Event

Greater Boston Great Bookers (GB squares?) will attend *A View From the Bridge* by Arthur Miller, presented by the New Repertory Theatre in Newton. The play will be followed by a discussion with the cast. The date is March 13 at 2:00 P.M. Anyone interested in attending should write or call Diana Pieters, P.O. Box 362, Harvard, MA 01451; (617) 456-8630.

### The Spring Weekend

And then there's the Spring Weekend, which, it is more realistic to suppose, many of you out there in readerland will actually attend. The theme is "Perhaps Love." The committee of Peggy and Paul Mahoney, Carol Batchelder, Marilyn Muller, and Ginny and Bill Thurston has been reading voraciously all fall and has come up with a selection of works on romantic love that sounds really rewarding. An essay called "On Love," by A.R. Orage is a "Zen kind of thing," says Ginny. Poetic and well-written, it contains three definitions of love. *We*, by Robert Johnson, is an exposition of romantic love using the Tristan and Isolde myth as an example. The ideas presented are intriguing and controversial. And finally, there is Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, in which the kinds of love discussed in the other books are exemplified. This novel is one of the "musts" of both black literature and women's literature, and it's a good read.

The dates are April 8-10; the place is again Plymouth, Massachusetts. The cost, which includes the usual everything, is \$185.00 per person, double occupancy, and an \$85.00 deposit is required. Make it out to Spring Institute Committee, and send the check to Virginia Thurston, P.O. Box 299, Harvard, MA 01451. See y'all there.

As I write, it's pouring down rain on a warm December Friday, just short of the solstice. May you all have happy holidays, of whatever persuasion — Christian, Jewish, Druid — and may we meet again soon.

Ann Levison

### Politicians as Readers

Joseph Brodsky, the most recent winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, said "There would be less grief in the world if leaders were chosen on the basis of what they read rather than their political programs." The poet said further, "There is no doubt in my mind that literature fosters in a man, knowingly and unwittingly, a sense of uniqueness, of individuality . . . thus turning him from a social animal into a perceptible 'I.' We can condemn the material suppression of literature — the persecution of writers, acts of censorship, the burning of books — but we are powerless when it comes to the worst violation, that of not reading books."

## PHILADELPHIA NEWS

### Advanced Leader Training Course

Great Books members are people who choose to learn and to grow all their lives. Our fine discussion leaders join Great Books for the same reason as the rest of us. To strengthen the program and to offer a growth experience to you leaders, old and new, we offer a one-day Advanced Leader Training Course from time to time. On Sunday, April 17, small groups of leaders will meet at 3 locations: center city, northern suburbs, and western suburbs. Advance preparation for practice leading sessions will be required. After each mini-discussion, you will have the opportunity of talking with other leaders about "what helped and what hindered" as you pursued your goals.

The \$10.00 registration fee will cover printing and mailing costs for the material sent to you when you call Coordinator Barbara Duno (527-1632) to sign up. The deadline for registration is March 10, and we ask that only those committed to attending reserve places. The workshop will be from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., but come at 10:30 for coffee and other stimulation.

### Leader Training 1988

We need you! The Great Books Program depends on trained leaders to continue to be viable. If you enjoy participating, leader training may be for you. Please contact Barbara Duno (527-1632) if you are interested. We can accommodate only a limited number of applicants, so let us know soon.

The sessions will take place on two Sundays, February 21 and 28, at the home of Sibyl Cohen, 1812 Penn Center House, 1900 J.F.K. Blvd. They will be scheduled from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The fee for the course is \$35.00, with scholarships available.

## DOUBLE IMAGE: PHILADELPHIA'S 29TH ANNUAL SPRING SEMINAR

**WHO IS MADWOMAN IN THE ATTIC?  
WHAT DROVE HER INSANE??  
HOW DID HER STORY START???**

Jean Rhys, a writers' writer if there ever was one, intrigued with Charlotte Bronte's characters in *Jane Eyre*, appropriated them for her own *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The two novels, written in two different centuries, together form a stunning double image of the first Mrs. Rochester.

At the Annual Spring Seminar on Sunday, May 22, we'll discuss this composite picture. We'll convene at 10:00 a.m. for coffee, come together for lunch between the A.M. and P.M. discussions, and reconvene one final time for punch and cookies at 4:00 p.m. The \$20.00 fee includes everything. For further information, call Ruth Allen, 673-3718.

The place: Germantown Academy, on Morris Road, in Fort Washington, PA.

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Please enclose check for \$20.00 per person, payable to: Philadelphia GB Council.  
Mail to: Harold Moll, 7657 Wyndale Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19151.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ registrations @ \$20.00 each.

## Philadelphia's 10th Annual Spring Theatre Festival

On Sunday, March 13, Great Bookers and their friends are invited to reconvene in Princeton, N.J., for another delightful day of theatre, talking, walking, eating, museum viewing, and anything else that suits their fancy. The play at 2:00 p.m. at the McCarter Theatre will be *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, by Don Nigro. No, the subject is *not* W. Shakespeare's mysterious lover; it's S. Freud's famous patient, Dora. We'll have erotic fantasies, Strauss waltzes, and psychological sensations, not in equal measure.

Tickets, at below box office prices, are \$17.00 and \$19.00 (for front rows). Refreshments and post-play discussion will be at East Pyne Hall, as usual. For those wishing transportation, a "wine-and-cheese bus" will leave center city at 10:30 a.m., \$12.00 round trip. Call Max Klayman at 679-6369 to reserve a bus seat. For play tickets, send checks, payable to Philadelphia GB Council, to Sylvia Perelman, 8214 Marion Rd., Elkins Park, PA 19117 (635-1470).

## Philadelphia General Membership Meeting

**Date:** March 6, 1988, 2:00 P.M.

**Place:** Barbara Duno's, 607 Foxfield Road, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010, 527-1632

All GB members are invited to meet officers and board members, and join in post-meeting socializing. Do come!

## The Fall Institute: Glances Backward and Forward

The Philadelphia Fall Institute in the Poconos examined last October what faith can do for man. With help from Soren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* we explored ever deeper meanings of the Abraham and Isaac story. Par Lagerkvist's *Barabbas* led us into the soul of a man, born in hate and violence, who yearned for something greater than himself and, perhaps, found it on the day he died. John Steinbeck's *To a God Unknown*, a book more relevant to our time than that of its origin some fifty years ago, dealt with the mystical nature of the relationship between man and the land.

We're already hard at work on the books for next year. Under the working title of "The American Dream," we hope to look at America through its literature. See you in the Poconos!

## WILMINGTON NEWS

### Tenth Annual Spring Seminar in Wilmington

The Great Books Council of Delaware is holding its tenth Spring Seminar on March 19, 1988, at Archmere Academy on Philadelphia Pike in Wilmington. The theme of the day is HELL. Dante's great poem, *The Inferno*, traces the progress of a soul through hell to purgatory. The new translation by American poet John Ciardi makes the work marvellously accessible to modern sensibilities. The companion piece for the seminar, written six centuries later, is Malcolm Lowry's modern classic, *Under the Volcano*. Lowry's Consul, stationed in a Mexican town during the rampant spread of international fascism, retreats from a hellish world to an interior hell of his own. A third choice, private happiness through the giving and accepting of love, is an intermittent temptation to the Consul.

The schedule for the day starts at 9:30 a.m. with registration and refreshments, includes the two discussions, separated by lunch, and concludes with more refreshments from 3:15-4:00 p.m. The \$20.00 charge is all-inclusive. To register, please send check by March 1 to Cyra Gross, 101 Delview Drive, Wilmington, DE 19810. Checks should be payable to Great Books Council of Delaware.

### Purple Prose

Prof. Scott Rice of San Jose State University has an interesting avocation. As founder and judge of the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, he receives entries from more than 10,000 hopeful writers of dreadful prose. Contestants send Rice the most appalling opening sentences they can devise, and then pray that they've outdone, in awfulness, all other submissions.

This year's grand prize winner: "The notes blatted skyward as the sun rose over the Canada geese, feathered rumps mooning the day, webbed appendages frantically pedaling unseen bicycles in their search for sustenance, driven by cruel nature's maxim, ya wanna eat, ya gotta work, and at last I knew Pittsburgh."

The top prize winner in the "purple prose" category: "The sun rose slowly, like a fiery furball coughed up uneasily onto a sky-blue carpet by a giant unseen cat."

Just one more: "Caramba! Madre de dios!" shouted Capitan Don Lardo. "I tried to order some fettucine from Luigi's in Vera Cruz and this accursed idiota of an orderly brings me the head of Alfredo Garcia."

### One Man's Crito

Said Crito to Socrates: "Everything's jake;  
A guard that I know is a guy on the take,  
So get your belongings - tonight is the break,  
And we'll hop on a slow boat to Crete."

Socrates smiled and responded: "Dear Crito,  
You haven't the brains of a senile mosquito,  
And Crete is the last place on earth I would flee to,  
Assuming I had this case beat."

Looking somewhat aghast, Crito cried: "What's this noise?  
Just think of your wife and your three lovely boys;  
You'll be with your greatest of treasures and joys;  
This is something that you will admit."

"I'll admit not a thing," said the great Socrates.  
"Like Youngman I feel you should take my wife . . . please!  
And as for the kids, they can ship overseas;  
I don't mind the hemlock a bit!"

Howard Rowe

To the Editor, The Tricorn:

I note with interest that the Niagara area is hosting an Institute at which both *Miracle at Philadelphia* and the *Federalist Papers* are on the agenda. Having attended discussion series on both these volumes, and stimulated by the very instructive Iran-Contra and Bork nomination episodes, I have prevailed on the Jeanes Library Great Books Group to adopt (for about ten sessions) the Bicentennial Papers of the Committee on the Constitutional System (1985). These bear the title "Reforming American Government," edited by Donald L. Robinson, and published by the Westview Press, 5500 Central Ave., Boulder, CO 80301, at \$13.95.

The Committee, with 200 members, included present and former members of both houses of Congress, Cabinet and White House staff, governors, party officials, college presidents, journalists, lawyers, and labor, business, and financial leaders. They met from 1982-85 to examine the political system and to search for ways to improve its performance. The 40 or more papers (327 pages) consider proposals ranging from changes in party rules to structural amendments in the constitution itself. However, "the committee is not committed to all, some, or any of these possibilities." It sought only to promote discussion of crucial issues of governancē.

I recommend this volume as discussion material for readers of The Tricorn.

Aaron Bechtel

## COLBY REMEMBERED

As always, Colby was one of the best weeks of the fifty-two. At our first Summer Institute, we were introduced to Great Books by Moore and Ayer and their metaphysics. After that, any reading had to be better. And for nineteen years, it has been. One of the joys of Great Books, though, is reading something we would never choose. I can't imagine myself running joyfully out of the library with Plato's *Republic*, even if it were called *Democrat*. Or even a novel like *The Magic Mountain*. Three years ago, while reading Mann's novel to prepare for Colby while on jury duty, I was almost charged with contempt of court when I fell asleep.

While we were glad this past summer not to have to wade through meta or any other kind of physics, we were not entirely comfortable with the pleasant reading provided. Two novels that could be read in bed, or in the shower, if you didn't turn on the water. Incidentally, we have an ultra modern bathroom with a special seat for reading. But our reading chore was not as unexact as we had thought. When Clara suggested that *The House by the Medlar Tree* was as simple as a Harlequin romance, I told her to list the townspeople in alphabetical order. The other readings offered various satisfactions. Even Murdoch wasn't bad, if you included the unassigned pages. He doesn't make sociology, anthropology, or psychology come alive, but we had the same difficulty with my late grandfather.

Perhaps it is hypocritical for me to reject easy reading. After all, I never seek hardships, and still take a plane instead of a rowboat to cross the Atlantic. Does easier reading bring more people to Great Books? Can a book be "great," with universality, if it is simply written? Does an author have an obligation to write on my level of understanding? Does reading a book that has to be reread a few times make me a better reader and participant, or is it an exercise like Double Crostics or Trivial Pursuit? (Did you know which medal Col. North didn't wear because it fell into the shredder?) Could we have read *Howard's End* to its end without going all the way to Waterville? Is it worthwhile to read a book that we would never read unless we were preparing for a discussion? Here I am asking questions, and I didn't even read an easy book.

Irving M. Rosenwasser

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(continued from page 1)

From Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*:

... To transform the world, to recreate it afresh, men must turn into another path psychologically. Until you have become really, in actual fact, a brother to everyone, brotherhood will not come to pass. No sort of scientific teaching, no kind of common interest, will ever teach men to share property and privileges with equal consideration for all . . . men have ceased to understand that the true security is to be found in social solidarity rather than in isolated individual effort. But this terrible individualism must inevitably have an end, and all will suddenly understand how unnaturally they are separated from one another. It will be the spirit of the time, and people will marvel that they have sat so long in darkness without seeing the light.

A physicist, a philosopher, a theologian supply us with thoughts to consider, to deliberate. Then one of the world's masters of literature furnishes words to arouse, to astound, to enkindle us. Reserve your place for this ultimate Great Books experience at Colby College August 7-13.

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Great Books  
14 Bay Second St.  
Islip, NY 11751