

THE SOPHIAN

SJP Occupies in College Hall in Support of Divestment

BROOKLYN QUALLEN '25 NEWS WRITER In an email to the student body on Mar. 26, the Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility (ACIR), a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees' Investment Committee, announced that they had voted not to recommend

Smith Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)'s request that Smith divest from all military contractors and weapons manufacturers. SJP made this request on Dec. 7, 2023.
"In concluding its review, the ACIR determined that the request did not meet the

threshold for taking action and also found that the endowment's investment in military contractors and weapons manufacturers is negligible and entirely indirect," wrote the ACIR.

continued on page 3



PHOTO BY BROOKLYN QUALLEN '25

2024-25 Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief: Isabel Birge '25

News Editors: Pilar Lu-Heda '26 &
Ciara McAuliffe '26

Features Editor: Olivia Petty '26

Opinions Editor:

Karen Colmán Martínez '26

Arts & Culture Editors: Sophia Haydon-Khan '25
& Georgia Pickard '26

Sports & Wellness Editor:

Hillary Connor '26

Asst. Features Editor:

Arshie Chaudry '27

Asst. Arts & Culture Editor:

Gryffyn May '27

Asst. Sports & Wellness Editor:

Lyda Martin '26

Photo Editor: Ciara McAuliffe '26

Layout Editor: Isabel Birge '25

Crossword & Games Editor:

Poorvi Sarkar '27

Translations Editor: Zéphyr Smith '26

Social Media Manager: Pilar Lu-Heda '26

Music of the World

POORVI SARKAR

'27

CROSSWORD &
GAMES EDITOR

Across

2. ____ "grrrl" genre
of feminist punk
music

4. Along with meat-
balls, this palindromic
band is Sweden's pride
and joy

5. Indian string instru-
ment

6. "Hg" on the pe-
riodic table or rock
legend

7. Recent subject of
documentary on defin-
ing Reggae played by
his nephew

9. Ironically these "bul-
letproof" boy scouts are
caught up in the Korean
draft

Down

1. Canadian folk singer
whose music recently
returned to spotify (to the
pleasure of many Smith-
ies)

2. Musician behind
Bollywood hit, "Slumdog
Millionaire"

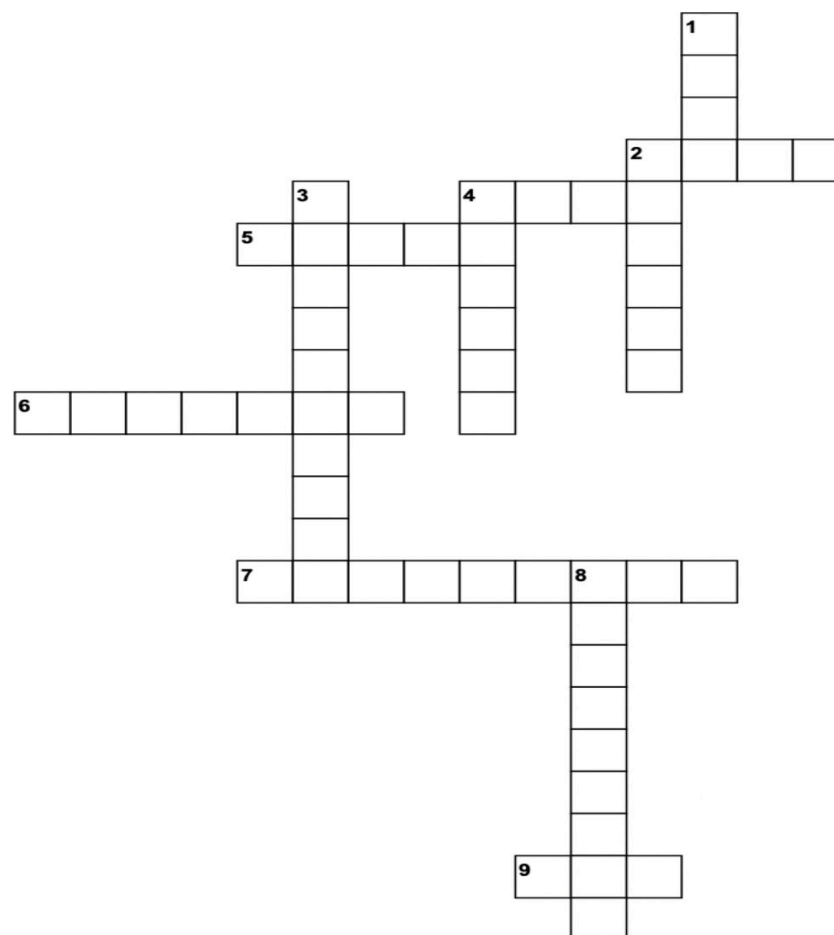
3. Australian wind instru-
ment

4. First woman to be in-
ducted into the rock n' roll

hall of fame

8. Abbr: Alternative name
for this college's founder,
or group featured on Paul
Simon's "Graceland"

Album



Editorial Statement

Dear Readers:

We, the 2024–25 Editorial Board of The Sophian, are proud to present the first print edition of our 78th Volume. Throughout this academic year, we have seen change create waves in our community — change in many forms: anger, tension, excitement and a lack of surety as to what life will be like at Smith College in the coming years. No matter the changes, big or small, that find their way to our campus, I am filled with pride and hope to see members of our student body being steadfast in their beliefs and using their voices in spite of the pressures that are ever seeking to silence them.

The Sophian was established in 1910, over a century ago, and, as such, has seen many changes take hold of our campus and our world.

As a representative of our new Editorial Board, I want to ensure the Smith community that The Sophian continues to be committed to providing our readers with rigorous and accurate reporting on issues that affect us all. Through the hard work and dedication of our editors, writers, translators and photographers, our publication's priority is to help shed light on the issues we see within this educational institution in an ethical and unbiased manner.

I am incredibly proud of the work that The Sophian staff continues to put into every issue. Every member of our staff is integral to this newspaper's functioning. A healthy journalistic tradition is an essential facet of any society, and I am grateful to lead a group of students who are committed to serving this purpose.

With gratitude,

Isabel Birge
Editor-in-Chief

This Issue

Page 3 - SJP Occupies College Hall in Support of Divestment — *continued from page 1*

Pages 4–5 - The Power of Community: On Smith Basketball's Historic Season

Page 5–6 - Bookends: The Marxist Lesbian Bookstore, Music Venue, Event Space We All Needed

Page 7 - Senda Berenson and the Origins of Basketball at Smith College

Page 8 - 'The Snowman': Reliving the Magic of Winters past

SJP Occupies College Hall in Support of Divestment

continued from page 1

The email sparked outrage among students immediately. Students took particular issue with the language used by the ACIR to explain their decision. “I was incredibly disappointed with the email sent by the ACIR. Calling genocide a ‘negligible’ investment is appealing and disgusting and does not align with the values I believed Smith stood for when I started at the institution,” said a student leader.

“Smith can still divest from the genocide. They are completely capable of immediately ending their flow of cash to companies building the technology that is indiscriminately killing the people of Gaza at this very minute. Indeed, they have an enormous moral responsibility to do so,” SJP wrote in their statement, which was published on Instagram. “Smith College, this is not the end of our fight for divestment. Be on the right side of history.”

That same evening, SJP announced plans to hold a walkout, which happened on Mar. 27. Hundreds of students, staff, and faculty met in front of the Campus Center at 11:45 a.m. that Wednesday to protest the ACIR’s recommendation.

“Smith claims to uplift activism only when it is the right kind of activism, when it’s the kind of activism that appeals to an empire like the Board of Trustees,” said one of the organizers to the crowd. “It makes no divergence to the mourning Palestinians whether the bomb that killed them was direct or indirect investment. It makes no difference to us that you are fulfilling the fiduciary responsibility because there is blood on your hands.”

“The only way out is through, and the only way through is together,” said the same organizer. “So we must all fight for a free Palestine, for the free Palestine of our futures, hand in hand against the empire, against Smith College.”

The crowd marched to College Hall following the rally. Students packed into the building carrying Palestinian flags, cardboard signs, and bags of supplies. Protestors were undeterred by the campus safety officers outside the building. The officers did not attempt to stop them. By the time they entered, administrators had largely

already left the building. A sign on President Sarah Willie-LeBreton’s office door that she was “out of office traveling on Smith College business.”

“We tried everything, we wrote petitions that you and alums and staff and faculty have signed. Smith refuses to hear. We wrote letters and proposals and they reject our proposals. We did peaceful protests. We tried and exhausted every way possible to force Smith to divest from death... So we decided to occupy College Hall until Smith divests,” another organizer announced from inside the building. “We are prepared to face the beast that is Smith College’s inhumanity.”

Smith’s response to the protests was not positive. College Hall, which typically closes at 5:00 p.m., was closed at 4:00 p.m. on Mar. 27, instead. The doors were locked by administration, not students, and no one could go in or out. About 50 students remained inside. Protestors were given conduct warnings by campus security and told that they had exhausted their three strikes within minutes — their third warning was given by 4:20 p.m.

Crowds of students remained outside in support of those occupying the building. Attempts to pass supplies to those inside were met with resistance from campus security and other members of administration. Videos show Jim Gray, the Associate Vice President for Facilities and Operations, physically blocking a student from bringing bags in through a window. Gray also attempted to drag the student out of the window and nearly closed the window on their hands. President Willie-LeBreton told protestors on Mar. 30 that the college has called for a review of that incident, but “reject[s] the way that this has been characterized” as an assault.

Students remained outside College Hall through the night, and many more joined the following morning. In addition to the rallies happening multiple times a day, SJP has organized sidewalk teach-ins outside College Hall, inviting professors to speak about history, colonialism and Smith College. One of the professors who spoke focused on the history of anti-war protests

at Smith and beyond. “If we are to dismantle this culture of war, we have to know our roots,” they said.

“This is us, we are here, this is solidarity, this is what it looks like, this is what it feels like,” that professor said to the protestors. “As we stand against genocide, we stand with each other.”

Another professor spoke to The Sophian about how they attended not as a protestor, but as a teacher. “That’s my job: to teach and learn in community with Smith students,” they said. “It’s my job, either in the classroom or in front of College Hall.”

By Mar. 29, the protest showed no signs of abating. President Willie-LeBreton sent an email that afternoon announcing her intention to meet with the protestors on Mar. 30, but did not provide a time that she would arrive.

“It feels like she’s playing a mind game by not telling us,” said a student inside the building. Since President Willie-LeBreton did not commit to full immunity for the protesting students, they chose to remain anonymous.

“Although we are optimistic about the progress we have made and community support we have received, we are resolved to stay in College Hall until divestment,” SJP said on Instagram. “This meeting affirmed that our disruption is necessary to upset business as usual and divest from what President Sarah called ‘the cost of doing business in a capitalist society.’”

Many students have expressed anger at the way that the protestors inside College Hall have been treated. Smith turned off the WiFi service to College Hall on Mar. 27. Students believe that the building’s heat was turned off, as well, though this has not been verified. President Willie-LeBreton also refused to allow students legal observers at their meeting, as “legal observers change the tenor of conversations and we want a genuine conversation.”

One student from inside the building said, “I’ll be here as long as it takes or until they drag me out.”

The Power of Community: On Smith Basketball's Historic Season

HILLARY CONNOR '26 On Mar. 16, 2024, the Smith women's basketball team completed their final game of the season at the NCAA Division III National Tournament in Columbus, Ohio. Although New York University (NYU) defeated Smith 51-41, their journey to the national championship game was still a victory for the program.

After a heartbreaking loss against the future 2023 National Champions, Transylvania University, in the 2023 Final Four, Smith's ap-

pearance as a finalist is the first time a historically women's college has made it to the championship game in NCAA Women's Basketball history. Further, this is the first time in history that a team ranked fourteenth out of the sixty four teams in at the start of the tournament has ever made it to the championship game.

Head Coach Lynn Hersey always intended to make it to the national championship. After defeating Bowdoin College in the Elite Eight, a game where Smith was seen as the underdog to

the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) conference champions, Hersey cut down the nets in the Bowdoin gym surrounded by Smithies who had traveled all the way to Maine to cheer on their team. Speaking to the crowd, she made sure they knew that this was just the beginning.

Smith went on to defeat Wartburg College in the Final Four and give it their all at the national championship, collecting the national runner-up trophy in DIII Women's Basketball.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SMITH PIONEERS

Hannah Martin '27, a first year point guard for Smith, had big shoes to fill after the team lost three out of five starting players from the 2023 season. Despite losing team members who had played a pivotal role in their Final Four showing the previous year, Martin said, "When I was getting recruited, Coach was very adamant about like winning a national championship. She made that clear that that was the goal and that was the expectation."

A few games into the season, Martin found her role as the starting point guard on Smith's team. Martin credited her drive to the enthusiasm of her fellow first years on the team, and said, "The five of us have a huge motor and a huge drive to be really successful and really impactful". Smith's players attributed their success to the unique team culture cultivated by their coaches, where close friendship and a sense of community go hand-in-hand with each players' commitment to high level competition.

Morgan Morrison '23, named the Division III Player of the Year in 2023, transferred to NYU to play her fifth year of eligibility and to pursue a graduate degree in engineering. When the bracket for the national tournament was announced, Smith and NYU were on opposite sides. The only feasible way for Smith to play at NYU was at the national championship.

Jessie Ruffner '24, a senior captain and four-year starting player for Smith, received All-American honors this year and led her team to that very championship game. In response to

the idea of playing against Morrison, Ruffner said, "It was definitely something we had in the back of our mind." NYU was consistently ranked as the top team nationally throughout the season, and had an unbroken winning streak of 31-0.

Smith lost three games early on, and their fourth place ranking by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) during pre-season fell to fourteenth when the bracket was announced. To play against a former teammate now starting on a Goliath of a team would be the matchup of a lifetime. Ruffner said, "I remember

“Having an atmosphere that is extremely supportive and just, like, loving allows the people on the court to do those things. The way you win is when you are a team.”

I walked into the office like the day the bracket came out and I was like, the committee didn't want to put us on the same side, so I guess we are just gonna have to get to the National Championship. And then we did."

Graduate student Sofia Rosa '25 stepped into the paint to match up against Morrison in the championship game. Rosa, who played for Tufts University during undergrad and spent the last year coaching Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) women's basketball team, wasn't

sure what to expect when she came to Smith. In fact, she didn't know she was going to play at all.

Rosa said, "I didn't know that I was going to play again. I mean, I came here to do the coaching program." Rosa used her fifth year of eligibility to start for Smith, and found that the culture of the team was unlike anything she had ever experienced: "What I found when I came here is that people were really accepting and really welcomed me with open arms." Rosa ended up being the leading scorer for Smith in the championship game, making 19 points and 10 rebounds as compared to Morrison's 14 points and 9 rebounds. Although NYU ended up winning the title, what was projected by the polls to be an easy win for the Violets was anything but that.

Each member of the team noted the extremely close relationship of the team, the intentionality of their coaches and the massive support from the greater Smith community with their historic run. Martin said, "Having an atmosphere that is extremely supportive and just, like, loving allows the people on the court to do those things. The way you win is when you are a team."

In a year where Division I Women's Collegiate Basketball has (rightfully) become a sports sensation, Smith's success at the Division III level represents an upwards trajectory for sports, centering women's stories and the power of community in propelling these teams to the very top.

Bookends: The Marxist Lesbian Bookstore, Music Venue, Event Space We All Needed

ROZ BEILE '24
ARTS & CULTURE
WRITER

Radical bookstores are that important. Not just in theory, not just on paper, but in how we materially change the world. Bookends, the lesbian marxist bookstore in Florence, dauntlingly takes on the task of running a bookstore aligned with its values, pushing against the imagined lesbian history of Northampton and working tirelessly to revive the real one.

Walking into Bookends feels like enter-

ing the living room of an eccentric lesbian aunt. A wall of local event posters, a 'take a mask' sign, and staff book recommendations welcome customers on their way in. Mismatched bookshelves of different sizes and styles form the store into a labyrinth, topped off by Palestine Solidarity signs, ivy plants and a stuffed lion. A lesbian flag covers the top of the entrance to their long narrow basement, a remnant of its former life as a bowling alley turned book-

store and music venue. Madden Aleia, one of the owners of the store, eagerly greets me with a recent shipment of Leslie Feinberg's "Stone Butch Blues" in hand, which they sell at exactly \$12.12 (Feinberg's price). Aleia and Ira Beare, another employee of Bookends, usher me to a circle of old armchairs in the middle of the book shelves, where our passionate conversation about the bookstore, queer novels and Northampton lesbian life begins.

On Halloween in 2022, Madden Aleia took the chance buying Bookends in “what I felt [like] was a good deal, but a really bad financial decision.” For the past 30 years, previous owners stocked Bookends with over 40,000 books specializing in journalism and esoterica, along with popular second-hand genres like mystery novels and bestsellers. Aleia slowly added critical marxist theory and feminist studies to the collection, pulling in requests from customers and friends along the way. Luckily, Aleia did not have to buy all the theory and feminist books from scratch. In one particular case, in an inherited box with books about buddhism and childrens stories, Aleia found an ultrarare hardcore gay erotica about sailors called *Sailor for Sale or Rent*. They remarked this as a common experience.

Importantly, Aleia and Bear do not plan to make Bookends a place that only sells or stocks these unique and eccentric books, emphasizing that Bookends exists to fill a gap in the community, the gap of lesbian bookstores, third spaces, and D-I-Y music efforts. They want people to come in and contribute to this effort, monetarily and physically. So, they continue shelving books that fit the neighborhood and retirement home demand like mystery novels and best sellers, while also providing a space where someone can sit down and read a \$2.00 40-year-old lesbian surrealist poetry book for the afternoon.

Much of their inspiration and ethics come from their time at Flywheel Arts Collective in Easthampton, a collective focused on aligning their values with the way they run their events. Bringing these ideas to Bookends, Beare and Aleia weave Flywheel Arts’s commitment to co-operative structures, and intergenerational practices into the fabric of the store. Tangibly, Beare and Madden bring these ideals into how they run and conceptualize events at Bookends. Just like the Collective, they see Bookends as an opportunity to push back against the dying culture of D-I-Y music in Northampton, despite being

their biggest money pit. With experience playing house shows in pre-pandemic Northampton, Beare and Aleia want Bookends to resemble and revive the scrappiness, adaptability and low pressure atmosphere of those house shows.

Their approach to booking shows hold a “certain type of unity and ethic to it,” like bands taking a majority portion of the cover charges or

awful lesbian novel they critiqued with a customer, when a curious nearby customer — who actually attended the book signing of said awful lesbian novel — chimed in. After a rapid back and forth about the book, I understood Beare and Aleia’s earlier claim that customers were “on it and locked in” to be true.

After the interview, Aleia and Beare sent me off with a lesbian portrait book in hand and renewed sense of purpose. Instead of imagining and intellectualizing a lesbian history that we read or observe through social media, Bookends reveals what can happen when lesbians start engaging with current lesbian culture. Aleia points out that “for queer people, and lesbians in particular, when we are so disjointed from our own history, there is so much high pressure and so much weight.” Aleia instead suggests that “if you just ration it down to — I would like to have butch lesbian fashion show. ust do one thing, and it will give you the energy to do another thing, and it will just increase.”

Aleia and Beare wanted to live their lesbian dream of running a bookstore with their friends and partners. Now they are doing just that because they started engaging, learning, and committing to the idea of thriving lesbian community and life. This store is



PHOTO BY ROZ BEILE '24

booking bands from the house show network. This results in a deep community care into Bookends, with infamous local bands donating musical equipment to keep the space going. Additionally, their monthly cover shows consist of their friends coming together and playing cover songs to raise profits specifically for Bookends or the Sexual Minority Archives. Running a lesbian Marxist bookstore comes with its many challenges like homophobic harassment and pink washing. Yet, friends and community members showing their appreciation in those ways are the most meaningful and sustaining moments for them.

This ethic bleeds into the way they interact with customers, “if you recommend us a book, we are so extremely not bullshitting that we will read that book” Beare remarked. I took this as a chance to ask them about any books they read because of customers. Beare and Aleia fell into a rant about an

far from easy to run, with hours of unpaid labor and outside factors stacked against them. Aleia and Beare work tirelessly to keep Bookends afloat, relying on community lesbian history to motivate them to keep going. They stressed that Bookends needs lesbians to make Bookends sustainable, calling for people to move their support from abstract to material in any way they can. Lesbians can create the spaces and experiences we desire, which we can start doing by supporting Bookends. This looks like going to dyke movie nights, attending weekly shows, donating at their Palestinian fundraisers, cheering on butch arm wrestling, cringing at lesbian speed dating or purchasing an obscure lesbian novel. A fulfilling, meaningful and burgeoning lesbian community exists, so go to Bookends and start engaging with it.

Senda Berenson and the Origins of Basketball at Smith College

MAURA PUTZER '26
FEATURES WRITER

While basketball at Smith College thrives today, the sport did not always grace the Smith gymnasium. It was first brought to the college in the early 1890s by Senda Berenson Abbott, Smith's Director of the Gymnasium and Instructor of Physical Culture.

Berenson was born Mar. 19, 1868 as Senda Valvrojenski in Vilna, Lithuania, and moved to Boston when she was seven. Berenson hoped to attend the Boston Conservatory of Music after high school, but her back pain prevented her from practicing her instrument. Her friend convinced her to enter the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics in the fall of 1890. The institution taught the art of Swedish gymnastics, a form of calisthenics that occasionally used some equipment to build bodily strength and grace.

"How I hated that school for the first few months!" Berenson stated in a 1941 article in "The Research Quarterly." "Disliking all sciences, I studied anatomy, physiology and so forth. Gymnastic work did not interest me and the simplest exercises made me ache all over."

Despite Berenson's initial apprehension, her strength grew, and she gained an appreciation for physical fitness. "I had changed an aching body to a free and strong mechanism, ready and eager for whatever might come ... I wanted to work only in physical education so that I might help others as I had been helped."

In 1891, the Alumnae Gymnasium opened at Smith, and President Seelye looked to Smith alum Elizabeth Lawrence to find a new physical education teacher. With that, twenty-four-year-old Berenson was hired to begin at Smith in January of 1892.

Despite the revitalization of the athletic program, physical education at Smith was often ignored. Classes dedicated to fitness were pushed to the end of the day, and Berenson was initially Smith's only athletic instruc-

tor for first-years and sophomores. More concerning, however, was the general disinterest among the student body and the parents who believed that teaching Swedish gymnastics at a historically women's college was inappropriate.

The vast majority of the students also lacked a background in this Swedish gymnastics movement. Nevertheless, Berenson stated that her



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SMITH COLLEGE ARCHIVES

goal was to help "the largest number of students possible on the road to health" through a step-by-step approach that eased students into different gymnastic exercises.

During her first year at Smith, Berenson read a YMCA Training School magazine and learned of a new game called "basketball," invented by James M. Naismith in Springfield, Massachusetts. She decided to institute the game in her classes and eventually held the first women's college basketball game between the classes of 1895 and 1896. Berenson described the cheering and screaming of the whole college at the event as "a high-pitched sound I do believe no one had ever heard before and was deafening."

Though she supported basketball for women, Berenson stated in a speech titled "Athletics for Women" that she did "not believe in intercollegiate or interscholastic games." Intense competition she associated with the "evils of athletics" and only believed in "mild competition" through "inter-class contests." Berenson preferred good sportsmanship, along with the social and team-based aspects of athletics. She emphasized that women should be guided from "hysteria and selfishness to supportive[ness] and unselfishness."

In an article in "Basket Ball for Women," a guide Berenson edited on women's basketball, she stated, "It is a well known fact that women abandon themselves more readily to an impulse than men ... A certain amount of roughness is deemed necessary to bring out manliness in our young men. Surely rough play can have no possible excuse in women."

One rule she instituted forbade stealing a ball from another player's hands, while another called to divide the floor into three equal parts to keep players separated. In 1899, Berenson's rules for women's basketball were published, and in 1901, she became the editor for Spalding's Athletic Library pamphlet Women's Basketball Guide.

Berenson officially left the college after her marriage to Herbert Vaughan Abbott, an English professor at Smith, but continued to serve as the editor of the Women's Basketball Guide, the chairman of the National Women's Basketball Committee and Director of Physical Education at the Mary A. Burnham School for several years. She was posthumously elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1985.

For nearly 130 years, basketball has thrived at Smith College. Berenson's contributions along with those of other women over the past century have transformed the sport and made it into what it is today. Senda Berenson's influence, without a doubt, revolutionized the landscape of athletics at Smith College.

'The Snowman': Reliving the Magic of Winters Past

AMALIA TOMAS '26
CONTRIBUTING
WRITER

Recently, I forced my girlfriend through the ordeal that any number of my friends, partners and casual acquaintances have been subjected to in the past — a showing of the 1982 classic "The Snowman." Based on a picture book of the same name, "The Snowman" is a hand-illustrated silent short film accompanied by an original symphonic score. All aspects which my willing or unwilling viewers have no doubt found riveting. Not to mention that it inflicts more emotional damage than any children's Christmas movie has a right to. Call it my artistic appreciation (or early onset depression) but its bittersweet mood is one of the many reasons it was my favorite film as a child. To this day, I believe "The Snowman" stands out as one of the best pieces of media of all time. As an added bonus, it's readily available in various pirated forms on YouTube. Not that I'm plugging media piracy (I am), or saying that you should engage with pirated media (you should).

The film examines a child's experience of a snowfall. This was something that I, as a kid growing up in New Hampshire, knew in my bones. Before the untold adult horrors of shoveling, snow tires and road closings, a snowfall was a magical thing. It was something to be wished for in the heat of summer. On hot days, my brother and I used to sequester ourselves in the coolness of the basement, close our eyes, and bring winter to life. We would describe to each other the sight of our backyard covered in a heavy snowfall, imagining the ache of the cold air in the back of our throats, until we both stood shivering together in our imaginary winter wonderland.

A snowfall was something to be longed for, and to be lived. When we were younger, that meant tramping through the woods to the great fort created by brambles covered in a thick warming blanket of snow. When we crawled inside the light was heavy, dark and tinged with red. It meant rolling snowmen, snow-caterpillars and, when we were older, snow-women with rather pronounced assets in front and back. For my family, it meant nordic skiing atop the

snow-covered sidewalks when the roads were unreliable and we had places to be, and rows of mittens, hats and upturned boots lining the heaters and windowsills. When I imagine my childhood today, everything, both the sweet and the bitter, lies amid snowdrifts and under crusts of ice.

As I got older, I liked to think that I never completely lost this sense of wonder. I still

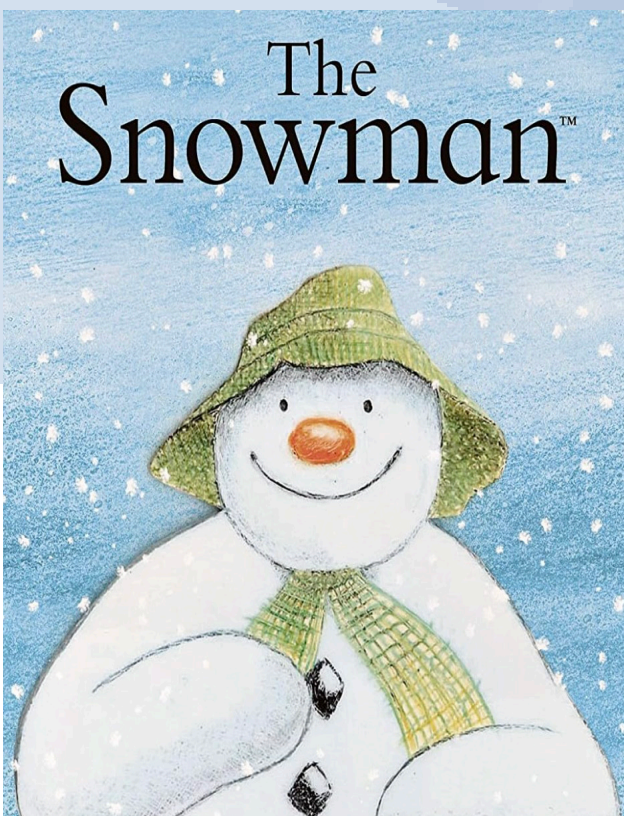


PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB

stopped to study the delicate flakes that caught on my jacket sleeves after I had come inside, watching their intricate shards melt away into droplets of icy water. I took advantage of every blizzard to tack up my pony and go for a ride in the snowy woods. There remained traces of magic in the snowy crust on his mane and the driving sting of ice on my face at a full gallop.

And Smith, when I first came here, had a winter magic of its own: waking up to a quad covered in snow, where later someone will inevitably tramp a phallus onto the blank white canvas; ice skating, boot-sliding or falling on your face on a frozen Paradise Pond; helping the old lesbians on West Street shovel their driveway.

So what does it mean to come through

a Smith College winter without snow? And no, faint dustings and inconsequential sleet don't count. I mean a real snow, one that lasts long enough for you to get sick of it. A winter without hardship, in which your feet never get numb and your heavy coat stays at the back of your closet, births an underwhelming spring. The daffodils and magnolias this year were dull and colorless without the brilliant backdrop of snow to precede them. In years like this, when the seasons blur into each other without distinction or care, I feel the loss not just of the magic of snow, but the great New England relief of knowing that there is always something to look forward to. That when the air is icy it will be warm again, and vice versa. It's the eternal promise that drives New Englanders to keep moving forward. Coming out of a winter without snow, I couldn't help but feel as though I had lost something essential, moved farther away from that childhood wonder of "The Snowman" and one step closer to the dreary, inevitably indistinct existence of adulthood.

But, as so often happens when we give into self-pity, the universe threw me a bone to stop my griping. Thus came the April snowfall. There was a certain sadness with which I watched the magnolia blossoms brown and die, cocooned in ice, and the tender new buds freeze before they even got a chance. But they were a worthy sacrifice for the chance to walk sidewalks white and crisp, to again see Smith blanketed in drifts.

There was something terrible, however, in the warm prickle of the spring sun and the way it made the hillsides shimmer. Something about it made me want to stuff my coat pockets with snow. For as much as "The Snowman" is about the wonderful magic of childhood, it is also about the inevitable impermanence of it all. And as the spring snow melted and the ground retreated back into mud and dirt and grass, I felt the time passing me by. Even now, I can feel it pulling me endlessly further and further away from the snow-capped hills of my childhood, when snowmen could fly and winter lasted forever.