

Process Of Electing New Abbot Is Tedious And Time-Consuming

If you are inclined to think that the election of an abbot is a mere formality, requiring little more than a quick vote and an equally fast acceptance, you have another think coming.

Father Peter N. Stragand, who is serving as apostolic administrator of Belmont Abbey until the new abbot-elect is confirmed by Pope Paul VI, has given **Crossroads** an insight on what happens when an abbot leaves office.

After assuming his post as administrator, the prior contacts the abbot president of the federation, who determines the date and time of the election and presides over it. The federation is a group of twenty Benedictine monasteries around the country which spring from a single "mother house" established by monks who came to the United States from Germany in the 1840's. The abbot of one of these monasteries serves as the federation's president.

All members of the community who have made their final vows are entitled to vote. In Belmont Abbey's case, this included nine monks

who staff Benedictine High School in Richmond, Va.

Any monk who belongs to the federation can be elected. However, the chances of someone from another abbey making it are "practically zero," Father Peter said.

The election process begins in the evening and normally takes up all of the following day. The opening session is devoted to nominations and discussion of nominees, which requires several hours. "There are usually a lot of monks nominated," Father Peter said. "It is a way of honoring a faithful member of the community."

Balloting begins the following morning. No campaigning or speech-making is allowed. Each monk is given a ballot which lists the name of every monk in the community, nominated or not. Names can also be written in.

To be elected, a monk must receive the vote of two-thirds of the community. "This never happens on the first ballot due to the large number of nominees," Father Peter commented.

Typically, two ballots are taken in the morning

session of the second day and two in the afternoon session. By the fourth ballot, someone usually gets the necessary votes to be elected.

When this happens he is asked by the presiding abbot if he will accept. If he does -- one refused early in Belmont Abbey's history -- the only step remaining is confirmation by Pope Paul.

In the case of most abbots, the abbot president can confirm him. But Belmont Abbey is special. It is the smallest diocese in the United States and its abbot not only controls the monastery but the Abbey lands which surround it.

Because he is in charge of territory, he has the status of a bishop -- save that he cannot ordain priests. And because he has this status, the new abbot's selection must be approved by a special congregation of church leaders in Rome.

His name is sent to the apostolic delegate (the Pope's representative) in Washington, who sends it on to Rome. In about three or four weeks, confirmation returns. When the abbot-elect receives the letter of confirmation, he becomes abbot officially.

NEWSREEL

Jack Hanahan, associate professor of Spanish and Geology, spent a busy last two weeks of June.

He attended a meeting of the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies in Denver, Colorado, June 15-22. "I could see the snow-covered front range of the Rockies from my hotel window," Jack reported, "but never managed to get away from the convention."

After a brief visit with friends in Riverhead, Long Island, Jack flew to Portland, Maine for the regional meeting of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies on June 26-29.

While in Denver, he judged a trophy competition involving some of the world's finest mineral displays. "The exhibitors weren't any happier with the scores I gave them than some of my students at Belmont Abbey," Jack said.

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Dr. Bill M. Kirk, director of the Distribution Management Program at Belmont Abbey and George L. Wrenn, Charlotte distribution executive and member of the Abbey board of advisors, spoke at the 1975 Institute for Material Handling Teachers held at Purdue University, June 9-13. The subject of their presentation was "Developing a Material Handling Program with Industry Cooperation -- the Belmont Abbey Experience."

Faculty members from 31 colleges and universities attended the institute, which was directed by Professor Ruddell Reed, Jr. of Purdue's School of Industrial Engineering.

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Richard McClintic, a rising sophomore, and Harold Egan, a rising junior, will be spending the 1975-76 academic year abroad as part of the College's International Education Program. They will be attending the Institute for Foreign Students at the University D' Aix in Provence, France.

McClintic and Egan, both History majors, will leave the United States in mid-October and will remain in France through May of 1976.

During their stay abroad, they will study French History and Civilization, Political Science, Philosophy, and Classical French Literature.

McClintic is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Steven McClintic of 1142 Daleview Drive, McLean, Va. Egan is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Egan of 5 Michaels Lane, Brookville, New York.

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Michael G. Uhrin, a junior biology major, was one of five college students in the United States selected by the Atomic Energy Commission to do research work this summer in Puerto Rico.

The summer study program began on June 5 and will continue through August 9. The entire project is being financed by an undergraduate stipend provided by the AEC. The research is concerned with parasitology, the study of parasite diseases.

Uhrin is staying at the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan, and is working at the Puerto Rican Nuclear Center. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Uhrin of 340 45th Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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Richard J. Donzell, Jr. was recently accepted by the Medical College of Virginia after only three years of undergraduate study in Biology at Belmont Abbey. He will begin study for his graduate degree in Dentistry on August 25th.

"It is quite unusual for a student to be accepted for graduate study after such a short time," said Don Shull, guidance counsellor at Belmont Abbey. "Rick is the first Abbey pre-dental student to receive such an honor."

Donzell was president of the Abbey chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma, the national scholastic honor society for Catholic colleges and universities. He is the son of Captain and Mrs. Richard J. Donzell, Sr. of 1429 Five Hill Trail, Virginia Beach, Va.



Belmont Abbey's Alpha Rho chapter of Phi Kappa Theta fraternity recently received a special blessing from Pope Paul VI in recognition of its charitable work. Father Bradley is shown presenting the blessing to fraternity officers (left to right) Chris Shea and Dan Motuz. The chapter has been the past recipient of several national awards for service to the College and the local community.

CROSSROADS

Published bi-monthly by Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, North Carolina. Second class postage paid at Belmont, N.C. 28012