

The Hilltop



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Minimester: Little Study, Lots of Snow

By REX BEST

Whether it was planning a contemporary wedding or searching for truth in Indian thought and meditation, minimester courses took on all forms and descriptions this year. For three weeks, MHCer's were given a chance to take courses of specific interest to them. Many found courses within their major appealing, while some decided to go outside their field and do something entirely out of their element. Thus, one could find music students one flight up in Fine Arts taking beginning painting instead of in the traditional practice rooms, while political science majors graced the dance floor learning mountain clogging. Some even managed to get outside of the classroom to take trips: business majors traveled to area firms and plants for evaluation and study of management techniques; curious historians hitched a ride with Dr. Harley Jolley along the east coast to view national parks and places of interest; organ maintenance students got a chance to see different church organs in the area during their course.

Probably as exciting to some, however, was the fact that most courses only met for two or three hours a day. The rest of the time was left for individual study for the courses, or if things worked out right, some free time for rest and relaxation. Most found time to hit the hills around campus with their trays or sleds since daily snows became as much a feature of minimester as did the short cafeteria lines. And, with the extremely cold temperatures, Mars Hill students experienced some cold dorm rooms, chilly lunches and dinners in the cafeteria, and lukewarm visits to the college union. The constant search for a little heat was a somewhat unique characteristic of the 1977 minimester that had not been experienced in previous ones.

Students varied in their comments about minimester. Most seemed to like the courses they had chosen while a small few found their courses, instructors, or both — boring.

Travels Enrich Teaching

By JONATHAN RIDDLE

Wanderlust is a word that, perhaps better than any one, describes Bob Abbott's lifetime of academic pursuits. Such a desire to travel has meant that, instead of laboring away in the musty libraries of academia, this assistant professor of German and Spanish has preferred to go to the world for his education.

Born in Norfolk, Virginia, Abbott, interestingly enough, entered the Marines after high school, if only for a short while. His first college years were spent at Old Dominion, but before long he left to study at the Sorbonne, a division of the University of Paris. After returning to the United States, Abbott attended New York University, obtaining a BA in English Literature in 1952. He had put himself through school, but his father wanted to send him to law school at Washington and Lee. After three semesters, however, his father died, and he was forced to drop out. In 1955 he returned to NYU, taking a United Nations program of study (including history, economics, and sociology), through which he received his Masters degree.

It just so happened that Abbott wanted to travel again, so he took out a world atlas, looking at underdeveloped countries in particular. His interests led him to make inquiries to several countries about the possibility of gaining employ-



Bob Abbott's face shows much of the enthusiasm he feels for his students and his teaching. (Photo by Sam Tunstall)

ment, finally deciding on a job in Quito, Ecuador. There he had several responsibilities, including teaching Spanish and American children English and Spanish respectively, lecturing at night on Anglo-American literature, and taking private lessons in French, Italian, and Latin. He enjoyed the two years there very much — the people, the activities, and the environment. As an added bonus he was

able to write a collection of short stories during his stay.

He returned to the United States once more in 1957, teaching for a year at Deep Creek High School in Norfolk, Virginia. There he led classes in French and Spanish.

Wanderlust got hold of him once more, though, for he then made several trips to Europe, studying with a wide range of teachers at different schools. Enjoying Germany and France the most, Abbott attended a translator school in Munich. Periods of further travel throughout Europe and America were interrupted only by teaching stays at Virginia Beach, Princeton, New Jersey, and Buffalo, New York and by a 1959 adventure of opening a language center of his own in Virginia Beach.

In 1968 Abbott came to Mars Hill College to teach, staying for three years. He left in 1971 to take a trip to Europe, remained unemployed for two more years, then returned in 1974. What drew him back and what keeps him here? He likes the town of Mars Hill, the college (of course), and probably most important the continual contact with students for whom he has a high regard. To occupy the free time he has from teaching, Herr Abbott likes to read, talk to people, write, cook, and walk. Pay special attention to that last one for wanderlust is one of Bob Abbott's favorite feelings, one for which students can be truly thankful.

Webb Assumes SGA Presidency

Three and one half years of involvement in aspects of Student Government came to an end January 21 with the resignation of SGA President Patti Mills. The move, which took most people by surprise, was anticipated by the former president late in the fall semester when she discovered that she would be eligible to graduate at the end of minimester. According to Ms. Mills, "This resignation comes with regret and yet an optimistic eye for the growth of your Student Government and its future." She continues: "Let me say thank you for the trust and support you have given me in the past. I ask for your continued support through your prayers as I leave my college home and attempt to begin my life's vocation. I will always be proud to say I had the opportunity to serve as your President and will continue to be concerned for your betterment at Mars Hill College."

Patti Mills entered Mars Hill as a freshman in 1973, soon to be distinguished by being elected class vice-president. The next year she moved up one notch, running unopposed for president of the

sophomore class. Junior year saw her running, and, as usual, getting elected as SGA vice-president. It would be only a matter of time before she was running for President as "the students' candidate" . . . unopposed, of course. Obviously, her political career at Mars Hill has been a successful one primarily because of her continued dedication to the solution of student-oriented problems and her contagious enthusiasm.

The "changing of the guard" brings a new person to the president's chair, Vice-president Steve Webb. A transfer student last year from LBW Junior College in Alabama, where he was senator and later president of student government, Mr. Webb was elected last April as vice-president. Because he and President Mills worked together so closely, the programs Webb hopes to implement correspond to those for which the former president worked. They range from forming an association of student governments of the seven North Carolina Baptist colleges to working out any kinks in the Student Book Exchange. Additional goals include obtaining academic credit for stu-

dent leaders, working with Judicial Council to determine a more direct means of dealing with students who steal books, and continuing seminars for those involved in the various aspects of student government.

When asked about his conception of student government as opposed to Ms. Mills, Webb replied that their ideas were not all that dissimilar. According to the new president the philosophy of student government varies with the institution; especially, when it comes to private colleges, the attitude of administrators is paramount, a condition which Webb states is neither good nor bad. At the same time, however, "the scope of student government is limited to the vision of its leaders." Webb hopes to instill in other elected officers the same vision he has, providing them with a working philosophy of student government that will enable them to better serve students. Getting on with the business of effective student government has always been a challenge for SGA presidents. Steve Webb as his predecessor seems to accept it with enthusiasm.