Moderation is a gateway drug for existential crises, and this semester, as I inched towards the pearly gates of upper college studies in Literature, I had a lovely thought-spiral about the utility of focusing my energy for the next two years on the theoretical discussion of books and words. In my efforts to justify my intended course of study, I stumbled across a recent article in the New Yorker called “The End of the English Major.” Who could resist that level of melodrama? I sat at my computer and plodded through grim news about the plummeting humanities enrollment rates in colleges nationwide.

Nathan Heller, author of the February article, makes a pretty compelling argument for his doom-laced headline. In the last decade, colleges and universities across the United States have experienced massive decreases in their numbers of graduated humanities majors, with overall enrollment in the subject down by 17%. The trend is such that many schools have seen their English and history programs cut in half, and some have even considered eliminating these departments altogether.

Any reader clued into the cultural zeitgeist can likely intuit some of the causes, as English and other subjects in the humanities are frequently the target of skepticism. What’re you gonna do with a degree in reading and writing? Continued on Page 2

Sexual Assault at Bard

We ask you: how can we create a safer campus to live and learn on?

According to the National Sexual Assault Resource Center “More than 90% of sexual assault victims at college campuses do not report the assault.” However, over the last several years, issues of harassment, assault and violence have come to the fore. The Bard campus is regarded as relatively safe for students, but recent instances of sexual harassment and assault have placed the danger of walking alone at night in the public eye.

At 10:15 p.m. on March 7th, 2023, Bard students, faculty and staff received an email from the Director of Safety and Security, Peter Verdesi, issuing a “Timely Warning.” In his email, Verdesi reported the assault of a student by an unidentified man outside of Kline around 7:10 p.m. that same evening. News of the incident circulated throughout the Bard community via text and email, alerting the campus of a case of “Inappropriate Touching.” Two weeks later, on the night of March 27th another assault of a similar nature occurred. In response, Verdesi and his team implemented extra security procedures, including the installation of 6 additional security cameras around campus.

Continued on Page 4

The uncertain fate of a non-utilitarian major

Sophie Foley

Moderation is a gateway drug for existential crises, and this semester, as I inched towards the pearly gates of upper college studies in Literature, I had a lovely thought-spiral about the utility of focusing my energy for the next two years on the theoretical discussion of books and words. In my efforts to justify my intended course of study, I stumbled across a recent article in the New Yorker called “The End of the English Major.” Who could resist that level of melodrama? I sat at my computer and plodded through grim news about the plummeting humanities enrollment rates in colleges nationwide.

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The Bard Observer

LITERATURES

THE UNCERTAIN FATE OF A NON-UTILITARIAN MAJOR

SOPHIE FOLEY  CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We are familiar with the death sentence this question points to: there is no money, no hope of employment, no practical use in our preoccupation with language, for all its beauty and mystery. Right?

O n the whole, the numbers at Bard show that even students who attend a college in the woods are not exempt from such concerns. Èric Trudel, professor of Literature and director of Bard's French Studies program, told me that when he first came to Bard twenty years ago, the Literature program was moderating around 35-40 students each year. "This year we have about 26 moderating." Though lower, this number is well improved from two years ago. 2021, when the number of seniors graduating with degrees in Literature was 17. "It seems like we're picking up," Trudel said. "Fingers crossed!"

Matt Mutter, Chair of the Division of Languages and Literature, echoed this hope in an email: "One happier piece of news is that our Lit moderations are up considerably this year... Unclear, of course, whether this is merely an anomalous year, and we are still below our pre-2016 norm, which was 35-40 per year. But at one point we had as few as 12 or 13.

So maybe the nail isn't quite in the coffin.

In fact, there are even some signs of life. Heller, in his piece, briefly mentions that interest in the study of creative writing has increased parallel to the nationwide struggle of English departments, and this reflects this trend as well. "We moderated 56 students this year," Dr. Mutsu Mengetsu, director of Bard's Written Arts program, told me with some degree of amazement. Given the frequent collaboration between and crossover of the Written Arts and Literature departments, one might be inclined to view this number as an antidote to the (scholarly, but also humanistic) fear that comes in considering the downturn of literary studies.

At Bard, the boundary between Written Arts and Literature is famously indistinguishable—Jona Roth was sitting in a college in the woods, and we are still below our pre-2016 norm, which was 35-40 per year. But at one point we had as few as 12 or 13."

The good news about Written Arts rates may, or may not, ease concerns about the total attrition of literary studies that Heller's article seemed to suggest, but the question of utility remains. However, in response to the problem of practical value—or what usable skills this degree will offer a graduate—members of the Bard Literature department seem largely unfazed.

"I think the question [of the use of a Literature degree in regards to future careers] is partly misguided," Trudel told me. "The liberal arts education, what Bard produces, is not a professional education. It's not supposed to be something that determines your life—it is supposed to be something that opens up paths for you to imagine your life and awaken interest."

Naturally, questions of class, wealth, race, and privilege are wrapped up in any discussion of career preparedness. The theoretical nature of a liberal arts education can, in many cases, stand for the luxury of not having to worry about getting a job. However, I would argue that inaccessibility to the opportunity to imagine is not inherent to the literature major itself. The culprit, rather, is the "creative one alongside it. And students respond to that because it gives you the creative one alongside it. And students respond to that because it gives you the
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The Bard Observer
What is WXBC?

Last year, WXBC, Bard’s student-run radio station, celebrated 75 years since its founding with a birthday party in Ward Manor. Many of the attendees of this momentous occasion might not have known its history. In fact, there are still members of the Bard community who seem not to know that the station exists at all.

The story of WXBC begins in 1947. After returning from their service in World War II, a group of GIs, veterans from their service in World War II, a group of GIs, from their service in World War II, a group of GIs, helped create the Bard Radio Association to provide Bard students with a system of building. The carrier current method was easier to engineer and did not require the expenses or maintenance of an FM or AM license from the FCC. However, the carrier current method only allowed for the station to be received from the source of the broadcast. This was one of the factors that led to the decision to switch to broadcasting on the web in 2008. Prior to this WXBC was simulating, that is broadcasting online through Mixlr. The site lets users interact with DJs with a comment feature. By broadcasting on the internet, WXBC can reach an audience outside the walls of Manor and the roads of Annandale-on-Hudson. As a student-run radio station, WXBC operates during the academic year 7 days a week from 6am to 2am. The station is proud to have diverse programming brought to you by all members of the Bard community. Those interested in joining WXBC in the fall should visit our website, wxbc.bard.edu, or follow us on Instagram @wxbcbard.

Today WXBC only broadcasts on the internet, but it was not always this way. For most of its history, WXBC would broadcast using the carrier current method, where the antenna was the electrical system of a building. The carrier current method was easier to engineer and did not require the expenses or maintenance of an FM or AM license from the FCC. However, the carrier current method only allowed for the station to be received 300 feet from the source of the broadcast. This was one of the factors that led to the decision to switch to broadcasting on the web in 2008. Prior to this WXBC was simulating, that is broadcasting on the web and through the carrier current system.

Since the fall of 2021, WXBC has been broadcasting online through Mixlr. The site lets users interact with DJs with a comment feature. By broadcasting on the internet, WXBC can reach an audience outside the walls of Manor and the roads of Annandale-on-Hudson. As a student-run radio station, WXBC operates during the academic year 7 days a week from 6am to 2am. The station is proud to have diverse programming brought to you by all members of the Bard community. Those interested in joining WXBC in the fall should visit our website, wxbc.bard.edu, or follow us on Instagram @wxbcbard.
"This campus is exceedingly safe," Verdesi assured the Observer in our recent meeting with him to discuss the issue of safety and security on Bard’s campus. Despite this claim, the campus is open, meaning anyone can enter and exit unpatrolled.

Paige Labbe, a student and co-facilitator for BRAVE and the Sexual Assault Support Group, stated, "I feel better that the person has been caught. I feel a little bit safer on the campus, but a part of me is still scared and worried, because of how easy it was for him to do these things and get away with it. I’m just nervous that this will happen again."

Bard has had to grapple with sexual assault as a public issue on campus before, albeit in a very different context. On April 20th, 2021, Dumaine Williams, Vice President Dean of the Early College and Bard alum, received notice that a short list titled "Bard Abusers" was being circulated among students on social media.

The list contained the names of accused perpetrators of sexual assault at Bard. Williams claimed that the college’s social media policy at the time prevented the school from intervening, or trying to take down the list. Instead, Williams and his colleagues primarily worked with the students named on the list, as this was the only actionable information available to them. Williams recalled...
that "Some of the students wanted advice from us on how they could respond," but were discour- aged from posting any admission of innocence or explanation on social media.  

What differed in the case of the list was that the alleged perpetrators sought help from the administration, not the alleged victims, which limited the investigation and subsequent response of the school. When asked how this situation contrasted with the usual operations of Title IX, Dumain recalled, "I think one of the challenges here was not necessarily knowing who were the victims of some of these incidents. So it wasn't clear, right, this started with a list of the abusers so it was 'this person did some- thing' and like usually in Title IX cases we start with the person who has been hurt, the person who has been violated in some way based on our policies and then we work from there. This was very much the opposite." In other words, the Title IX process doesn’t function in reverse. It would require that the adminis- tration seek out and for- ce someone to identify themselves as having been abused. 

We interviewed Jacob Testa, the Deputy Coordi- nator of Title IX and Lauren Gretina, the Title IX Coordinator, at the Title IX office in Sottery Hall. Mr. Testa claimed that Title IX faced intense criti- cism for their lack of response to the list's pu- blication of sexual misconduct. 

Unfortunately, the normal operations of the Title IX office were also impeded by Covid-19 restric- tions. They could not run in-person events and learn. 

B with the publication of Verdesi's "Timely Warnings" made accusations of sexual assault public, and raise the same ques- tions: how do we keep each other safe from assault on campus? What does it mean for the community when sexual assault becomes a public affair, and how should we react to that information? 

In coming issues of The Observer, we will continue to report on this essential concern, and propose measures to make Bard a safer place to live, work, and learn.

THE POINT IS FOR VICTIMS TO CONTROL THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE PROCESS, AS WELL AS FOR PROPORTIONAL RESPONSE TO BE TAKEN DEPENDING ON THE DEGREE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT. 

Jeffrey Epstein and Bard

A Suppliant Outsider

In coming issues of The Observer, we will continue to report on this essential concern, and propose measures to make Bard a safer place to live, work, and learn.

JEFFREY EPSTEIN AND BARD

A Suppliant Outsider in the Townhouse

SAGE RUDOLF

"A guy sent us money, and we followed up," President Robert B. Andrews explained in an article published on May 9, 2020. "It's a simple story." The guy in question was Jeffrey Epstein, the convicted sex offender, and the money, $75,000, was sent to Bard's high school programs in New York City in 2011. The Times had first reported on Epstein's gift in 2019, and a Wall Street Journal article published last month offered more detail, returning the issue to popular attention—and to the attention of the Bard community. To learn more about Epstein's connection to Bard, The Ob- server met with Botstein in his office. He told us that prior to the donations, he had never met or even heard of Epstein. Botstein's research on the faceless donor revealed Epstein's status as a convicted sex offender, but the full extent of his crimes was not yet known. It was only after the donations were given, in two separate payments, that Botstein visited Epstein's multimillionaire New York City townhouse for the first time. As Botstein told us, "I was a suppliant outsider." 

Botstein's first visit to the townhouse in 2012 was unwar- nable. He called the man "odd and arrogant" in a way that Botstein suggested only the truly wealthy, the 1%, can be. While Epstein did not initially agree to more donations, he did not flat out reject the possibility, either; Botstein perma- nently trav- eling to Epstein's townhouse about two dozen more times over the next four years to solicit more donations in meetings which he told us "didn't last half an hour." 

As a private school, Bard is only able to function with the pa- tronage of wealthy donors. This need for donors, not unique to Bard, was even more pronounced in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, which left Bard with $30 million shortfall to be filled by fundraising each year. Donors usually contribute to colleges because the school's name resonates with their philanthropic efforts. While Botstein said that Epstein expressed interest in increasing his donations, the milestone left two minutes into two Fisher Center perfor- mances after landing his helicopter in Bard's Yard in 2012 and 2016. According to Botstein, Epstein gave the money in exchange for a child of one of his employees was enrolled in a Bard high school. "It made up that he had no connection that aligned with our mission," Botstein said. Efforts to secure Epstein as a symmetrical ongoing patron failed. 

Botstein assured that he would not accept money from Epstein today. He was "a truly evil man," Botstein told the New York Times. Botstein left us with the impression that this experience with Epstein was a symptom of a larger pro- blem: how the desperation for philanthropic support can bechan institutions of higher learning at the mercy of bad characters.
In early March, the Red Hook Catch published the news of Bard’s plans to build four new dorms in the field behind Robbins. The residence halls will be three stories high, with a total of 294 new rooms to better accommodate the entirety of Bard’s student population. Many students live off-campus in Troy or Red Hook, but are now struggling to do so given the recent lack of affordable housing in town. The shortage of rooms has been a problem since the pandemic, and many students were temporarily put up in the Kingston Best Western at the beginning of the fall semester. The issue is one of image, too: the March article from the Catch reports that the promise of on-campus housing for all four years is something Bard must provide its prospective students in order to remain competitive.

Apparently, the construction on these sparkling new dorms won’t be done until 2025, and in the meantime, we thought it’d be fun to review the comedy of errors that is regularly Residence Life at Bard College. Without further ado, here are select portraits of our frequently absurd, frequently horrifying places of residence.

SPRUCE
A double-wide trailer, not a dorm.

NEW ROBBINS
Holiday Inn with a daemonic presence. Self-controlled AC is dope, though. 3rd-floor bathroom sink filled with hairs, possibly pubic

SOUTH HALL
Chic checkerboard kitchen tiling? Check. Your own back porch to chain-smoke on? Check. 2-minute walk to Kline and the library? Check. Air you can cut a knife with? Check.

RESNICK K
Splendid, dahhhling! BUT: don’t even think about keeping those blinds open if your room faces McCausland (mine does). The fresmen in that dorm seem to have routine soirees that revolve around staring into your room. If you’re going to be letting it all hang out in Resnick K, just know you have an audience.

RESNICK L
After taking a shit next to 5 other people in elementary-school-style stalls for months on end, a suite bathroom is the road to recovery.

**DORM REVIEWS**

**EMMA DAXSON**

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**Oracle of Delphi**

Is texting a form of courtship or romantic communication? Like sending letters was in the heyday of the post office?

Texting is probably the most valid form of chivalric courtship today—that does not mean that it is sexy. While neither shameless, nor titillating, it can still be an intimate form of communication. Though it has not reached the intimacy of the love letter, nor is it destined to, text-exchange has become the modern equivalent of the courtship dance. Demonstrate virility and vigor, but also caution! Make your modus operandi not overindulging in texts—less is always, invariably, more.

How to avoid overcommunication in relationships?

It is necessary and difficult to keep things to yourself. Oversharing is the crutch that keeps the cripple weak. Once the glamor and mystery of the relationship dissolve, you’re left with those nagging anxieties, those miniscule details that become the steady thorn in your side—what to do but ask? A fatal mistake. It is exactly because the other person is terrifyingly complicated that love is miraculous, and the petty anxieties, the little disturbing thoughts that idle around all our brains are laid to waste when we try to share them completely with our lover. The more you and your partner dissect each other’s psyches, the worse things will get. The allure of frankness is the source of illness in any relationship.

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**Am I an idiot for liking Robert Bly’s book Iron John, A Book About Men?**

This book is the start of a journey. The hurt Robert Bly seeks to heal is only the beginning... But be wary of the mix of German folklore and Freudian psychoanalysis; as you read do not lose your critical capacity. Poets are not always great philosophers... I locked eyes with a girl a few days ago, how should I propose?

The temptation to give oneself completely to another is understandable—who cares about the world when you’ve found the one, right? I assure you, there’s not a bigger romantic at Bard than me, but make sure you know the person before you rush into things! Learn how they eat, breathe, smell, scheme and cackle before you propose.

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Lydia Tár, the labyrinthine main character of Todd Field’s new film, does not cede to anyone’s will but her own. “You cannot start without me; I start the clock,” Tár explains in an interview at the beginning of the movie. With an impressive career in conducting and an unmatchable talent, this rigid attitude goes unchecked for most of Tár’s life. Although Tár’s “clock” is meant to describe her relationship to an orchestra, the viewer comes to understand that this mindset bleeds into everything she does. It ends up not only destroying her career, but, by the end of the film, her entire life.

The viewer can’t turn away. Tár does evil and incorrigible things. Yet she keeps you hanging on. Tár is not so abrasive as it is intoxicating. It will drain the life out of you but keep you wanting more all the same.

A scene that pulls back the curtain on Tár’s complex character happens at the very end of the movie. Tár has been sequestered somewhere in South East Asia to begin working on a project very much out of the public eye. A rebranding, some may call it. In Tár fashion, still managing her particular tastes and routines in this far-off corner of the world, she arrives at her hotel and asks the concierge where to get a massage nearby. Upon arriving at the place, she is asked to take a step over to the “fishbowl,” a room full of young women kneeling in white kimonos, and take her pick. Tár is flabbergasted, mouth hanging open, a look of confusion and disgust on her face. But isn’t this what she wants? Isn’t this what she has been doing all along: picking and choosing women like pieces in a chess game? The realization hits Tár like a truck and in the next scene, we see her running away and vomiting in the street.

Does a guilty conscience compensate for a character’s heinousness? This is a question that the film asks us to consider. There is no simple resolution to Tár’s turbulent existence. A viewer hoping to see everything tied up at the end will be disappointed. Tár is all too human despite her inhumane tendencies. She is completely frustrating yet brilliant. The film deserves all the praise it gets, regardless of hashtags.

Illustration by Stella Scanlon

EMMA PAXSON

PORTRAIT OF A LADY ON FIRE:
Lydia Tár

Tár, the young girl and the outcome is fatal. The lengths that Tár goes to in order to punish Krista are disturbing; the girl, once an aspiring conductor with a promising future, ends up barred from any and all job opportunities in the world of classical music—a world that Tár appears to own and control.

Do things happen in the film that make Tár an unlikeable and even immoral character? Yes. Are these the most important things about the film? No. We don’t have to sympathize with Tár to be interested in her story. Evil or not, Tár is a character so dynamic and unique that we, like everyone around her in the film, thrive by her presence. At every turn, Tár does the unexpected.

I’ve read four different reviews of Tár, (including ones from the New York Times, and the New Yorker), all of which use popular buzzwords: “cancel culture,” “Tar-Mopo,” “growing,” “destructive compulsiveness.” It is never clearly stated or shown what happened between Krista and Tár. Rather, we learn that Tár believes Krista had “wronged” her using various lawyers and publicists who have to deal with the fallout of her actions. Tár viciously rips into the young girl and the outcome is fatal. The lengths that Tár goes to in order to punish Krista is disturbing; the girl, once an aspiring conductor with a bright future, ends up barred from any and all job opportunities in the world of classical music—a world that Tár appears to own and control.

The viewer’s cry is, “I was shocked that for chips and salsa, guac, and two entrees (and no drinks or dessert) I paid $70 at Santa Fe last night! I mean, the food was fine, but that’s insane for dinner for two that was tacos and chips, right?” One disgruntled student sighs about choosing women like pieces in a chess game? The realization hits Tár like a truck and in the next scene, we see her running away and vomiting in the street.

Marginalia by Achi Tsitsishvili

Tivoli is not so abrasive as it is intoxicating. It will drain the life out of you but keep you wanting more all the same.

STELLA SCANLON

TIVOLI ALIMENTARI

Tivoli’s growing gourmet food scene employs Bard students, but at the sacrifice of a reasonable cost of living. Post-COVID, the rapid gentrification of Tivoli has caused rising rents and the disappearance of affordable restaurants that once catered to the Bard student population. Today, a regular coffee at All That Java and Tivoli General Store does not cost less than $3, and made-to-order coffees range from $3.50- $5.50 at both cafés. Prices vary at The Corner ($12- $40 dinner menu, not including market priced meat/sea food dishes); GioBatta ($9-14, in-house listed at $17). But, largely, students are limited to the delicious affordability of Osaka ($3.50-$52), and Broadway Pizza (around $5.50 per slice, $20 for a large pizza).

Broadway Pizza (around $3.50 per slice, $20
The Bard Observer

SOPHIE FOLEY

THE ENDURING BLUES OF BOYGENIUS

When boygenius—the supergroup composed of Lucy Dacus, Julien Baker, and Phoebe Bridgers, some of the most notable indie darlings of our current moment—released their debut album, the record, on March 31st, all manner of people went wild. The release hit number four on the Billboard 200 within a week, was named a New York Times Critic’s Pick, and received an 8.2 on Pitchfork (its rating adorned with those attractive red "Best New Music" arrows). And while I’ve spent many of my days kneeling at the altars of these women and their music, this time around I had trouble joining the reverent masses.

Luckily, Bard has a high population of contrarians, and I was able to locate some other people who were not so hot on the new album. Though Bardians frequently toe the line between honesty and cruelty, I find a sharp tongue to be integral to the album over the weekend. “Kind of… in the background. It wasn’t a great record.”

Boygenius. “I was super excited,” said my friend, Adrianne Lenker. Another Bard student I spoke with, Marissa, found a lot of similarities in the themes Lenker’s songs revolve around and those of the boygenius members: all are queer, female, and unafraid of getting deep. “But I feel like… I received a review from told me their favorite part of the album… is too easy, and too pleasurable.”

If she believes that’s how empathy works, I’m afraid she’s been misinformed. If not, it seems the line has aimed for edginess but landed in sentimentality.

There’s that we’ll call the Big Thief Problem. Big Thief is another current indie rock superpower, led by the lovely, almost moody-like figure of Adrianne Lenker. Another Bard student who had to be cajoled into listening, “it would’ve been a great conclusion, but then I realized it was someone else.” And this similar pondering brought up? At the end of the show, Wozzeck sits on a table, staring down at its surface. He paves at the wood and we hear the sound of splashing water—Narcissus? The beginnings of art? No. The beginning of the Alan Berg opera, Wozzeck, at the Fisher Center.

SEBASTIAN KAPLAN

Stroman’s intelligently sparse production of Wozzeck makes for a nasty experience: nudity, handstands, cigarettes. Sterile stage design. Occasional flourishes of jazz age music. Wozzeck screaming at us, “Why are you looking at me?” Our first glimpse: a couple opens the door. Diplomatic and pensive, dressed in a white lab coat and with his hair slicked back, Pro- fessor Thomas Bartscherer enters in black boots, rattling the floor with his pounding footsteps. Preparing us for the horror to come, he says, “Witness the man—Wozzeck, the murderer.”

A sheet is pulled, revealing Stroman as the beat down Wozzeck. His face contorts, contorted in a tall cage. The character and his biography are annihilated within half an hour; shaved, starved, and turned into a ragdoll.

In one of the show’s most defiant moments, the couple hold each other and dance to swing mu-
sic, in front of the deflated, defeated Wozzeck—an allusion to Pasolini’s epic meditation on sex-
uality, Sali. The dancers refuse to acknowledge what the audience can’t help but stare at, and we wonder if any humanity is left in the caged rag-doll.

It is about sex; it is about kink—why not ‘fess up? At the end of the show, Wozzeck sits on a table, staring down at its surface. He paves at the wood and we hear the sound of splashing water—Narcissus? The beginnings of art? No! The unfeeling couple brings out a TV and plays videos of a baby.

For the audience reflecting, and the actors working, Wozzeck’s personhood is off-stage, unseen and irrelevant. All we have is his physical body, in constant agony: Wozzeck doing a handstand for 6 minutes; Wozzeck being pulled around. Watching this performance, a feat of incredible endurance and pain, we become aware of our- selves as an audience of numb voyeurs, complicit in the objectification of Wozzeck.
OBITUARIES

Fredrick Hammond, Irma Brandeis Scholar and Conductor

Frederick Hammond, 25-year Bard professor of Romantic Culture and History of Music, passed away on March 3rd, 2023. In President Botstein’s In Memoriam letter, he wrote about the late Professor Hammond, “Fred was the renowned biographer of composer and virtuoso Girolamo Frescobaldi, and he was knighted by the Italian government for his extraordinary work on behalf of Italian culture.” He was a performer, an avid reader of poetry, and a great lover of music.

In an interview Professor Karen Sullivan read praises of Fred as a professor from a former student, “He always knew things about things.” He would stand in Olin’s cavernous auditorium, lecturing to a class of about twenty. Fred seemed to have little need of notes for his long lectures: his speech punctuated when he would take off his glasses, and rub the lenses slowly, determinedly. At times, he would demonstrate a phrase on the keyboard. He talked with an immense depth of knowledge, and rather shyly.

“Fred welcomed me into the Bard community,” Professor James Bagwell of Music History at Bard, close colleague of Professor Hammond’s, said on a phone call. Bagwell describes him as a man of uncommon and quiet kindness. “He had a way of doing unadvertised kindnesses, which are really the best kind.”

As both a skilled musician and musicologist, Fred was a unique figure at Bard, bringing together the merits of both the academic college, and the conservatory. Fred was a dedicated and loving member of the Bard community, and he will be missed by all.

The memorial service for Frederick Hammond was held at the Chapel of the Holy Innocents on Saturday, April 29 at 2:00 pm. Followed by his burial that afternoon, in the Bard College Cemetery.

Li-Hua Ying, Senior Faculty of Chinese Language and Literature

Professor Li-Hua Ying joined the Bard community as a Professor of Chinese Language and Literature in 1990, and taught here for 30 years. She sadly passed away after a number of battles with cancer over a long time on January 19, 2023. Li-Hua played a pivotal role in the development of the Asian Studies department, known by her associates and colleagues as the department’s “very backbone.”

A cherry tree has been planted on the west side of the Olin Language Center in her honor. A circle of white flowers have been laid around the trunk.

Gretchen Farrell, Former Dean of Campus Safety and Operations

Gretchen Farrell (formally Perry) passed away of natural causes on July 11th, 2022. She served Bard College first as Director of Residence Life, then the Dean of Campus Life, and finally as the Dean of Campus Safety and Operations. She changed careers in 2016 to become the Senior Family Consultant for KidsPeace New York, supporting children, their families, and mentoring colleagues.

Donations can be made in her honor to Kidspeace Foster Care & Community Programs (Kingston, NY); St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital; or to a local animal rescue organization.
**Letter from the Editor(s)**

It's been 15 years since the last issue of *The Bard Observer* graced Annandale-on-Hudson. Local print newspapers are hard to sustain, and have been dropping like flies nationwide for the last decade. We wanted to try our hands at resurrection. A newspaper is a useful tool: if successful, it can bring a community into focus, clarify and connect the seemingly disparate and vague. This is our attempt at a kind of synthesis, which one can be hard-pressed to find at a school with so many social and academic nooks and crannies. In reinstating *The Observer*, we hope to provide Bard with a forum through which to understand itself and the outside world—a forum for illumination and celebration.

Certainly, this is a complex task to take on. Journalism is a finicky endeavour, inevitably an uphill battle of muckraking. Our predecessor and founder of the original Bard Observer wrote in his first issue, a solitary venture, 

"I have tried to get other people to write for this newspaper, in order to cut down the quantity of editorializing, and to get a greater number of opinions. I offer my humblest apologies for having failed to do so—a failure which has forced me to write most of the material myself." (*The Bard Observer*, Vol. 1., No.1, April 24, 1956.)

We sincerely sympathize with the difficult task of organizing Bard students. Unlike our lone founder, however, we are grateful to have collected a group of dedicated students who have been willing to sacrifice long, sleepless nights to the publication of this issue. As any worthy project does, *The Observer* has consumed us, an idea whose manifestation was inevitable yet against all odds. It has been an honor and a pleasure.

If you, dear reader, find yourself compelled, we encourage you to join, write in, or reach out.

For the purposes of a more democratic, local, and interrogative investigation of current events, at *The Bard Observer*, we hold true to our name. Collectively, we will look—through binoculars and magnifying glass; through windows and walls—with our own eyes in a search for the truth, and report back to you.

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**SUMMER HOROSCOPES**

**ARIES**
You've earned it! Rest and relaxation isn't just something you want, it's something that your mind and body need. Drink expensive wine, but steer clear of love this summer.

**TAURUS**
You need to buy a bunch of those glow-in-the-dark shoes, 'cause baby, it's time to shine! Look deep within yourself and face the fears that keep you up at night—it's now or never, the world is yours for the taking.

**GEMINI**
A test of nerves is upon you: a betrayal in love or friendship—maybe both! It's up to you to show how wise and forgiving you've become while isolated at Bard.

**CANCER**
I hear you screaming: Who am I? What am I? Where am I? But don't worry, listen to "I'll Be Your Mirror" by The Velvet Underground—even if you don't believe it, your friends will help you see how amazing you are.

**LEO**
Saddle your horses, Leo, of course you're going to be at the center of attention. Risk, romance, forget time and space. Find a new way to tie your shoelaces.

**VIRGO**
Hoy baby, looking fine as always. Keep that energy going but don't get too uptight! It may be time to start writing again. Go talk to Neil Gaiman.

**LIBRA**
Hold on tight, you're in for a lot! Shared resources, taboos, and treasure are all coming your way. So get ready for a summer of big change.

**SCORPIO**
After two years of life-changing eclipses, your life is finally out of the spotlight—no more demons dragging you to the underworld. Get comfortable with the new you this summer by listening to the Meddle album by Pink Floyd.

**SAGITTARIUS**
Paint a fresco. You may find yourself getting unexpected recognition for it. Also, you may find a summer love... or two?

**CAPRICORN**
We all miss our moms, so don't think you're too old to give yours a call. Tell her a secret, but don't show her your new tattoo.

**AQUARIUS**
Learning to socialize is the theme for your summer. Shadow-puppetry is your new party trick. Nothing lasts forever, nothing stays the same.

**PISCES**
Get out of your head, and into your body with extreme exercise. Manifest your soulmate, reject modernity, and keep rocking in the free world.

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**Tivoli Bread and Baking**

**THURSDAY** 7a-noon
**FRIDAY** 7a-noon
**SATURDAY** 7a-3p
**SUNDAY** 7a-3p
Announcing our Fall 2023 Conference

**FRIENDSHIP & POLITICS**

**OCTOBER 12 & 13**

In politics and in friendships, we weave common ties while establishing our differences. In an increasingly fragmented and lonely world, both are in crisis. How can we nurture the intimate and public friendships that allow us to flourish?

**Keynote Speakers include:**
- Marissa Franco
- Angel Adams Parham
- Daniel Mendelsohn
- Jill Frank
- Niobe Way
- Wyatt Mason

Learn more here: [link]

Volunteer with us!
Email Exec. Director Christine Stanton: cstanton@bard.edu

“I have never in my life ‘loved’ any people or collective...I indeed love ‘only’ my friends.”

—Hannah Arendt
to Gershom Scholem, 1963