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# NY Congressman Packs Blue Room in Bard Visit

**Rep. Maurice Hinchey discusses justice-system, environmental issues**

## BRYAN GUNDERSON

Congressman Maurice Hinchey made an appearance at Bard last Thursday to discuss issues ranging from the sanctions against Iraq to local environmental laws. Bard Political Studies Professor Joseph Luders had worked fervently to get Congressman Maurice Hinchey to give a talk at Bard. Though Luders was worried that few Bard students would turn out, students and professors packed the Blue Room of the Campus Center last Thursday to meet the Congressman.

Hinchey, representative for the 26th Congressional District of New York State, left the students feeling that he was an honest politician with big ideas. Despite being moderately evasive, his message was clear and can be summed up in one of his opening remarks, "I think the Democratic Party is very much alive and will contest very aggressively [in the upcoming elections]."

After his opening remarks he began to go back in history and cover different administrations, their shortcomings, and glory. He began talking about the early 90's by saying that "there was no way to advance the social agenda, so long as there was this huge and growing debt."

The success of the resolution was not seen until after the '94 election, when Republicans took control of the Congress and "the political picture changed dramatically." What the country had on its hands was a "conservative revolution", which "was not conservative at all in the classical sense, the word 'conservative' is a term of art . . . I don't mean to say that these people are conservatives" but nevertheless they began to vigorously advance a right wing political agenda.

After saying that he was intent on stressing the importance of the upcoming elections. He said, "When American people began to get a much cleaner impression of the Republicans . . . to some extent its downhill for them ever since, this election will determine the majority of the house."

This right wing movement has grown during "all the problems of the Clinton administration." He said that the whole impeachment issue was "payback for Nixon" and "the political objective" of the Republican Party. "Ultimately they failed and Clinton has had a very successful four years in office. We have the strongest peacetime economy in the history of the country. We have had a strong, solid, continuing growth. We have record levels of job creation." All of which Hinchey said is "historically important."

The discussion switched to deficits when Hinchey brought up the difference between the Democratic and Republican parties. "Nixon tried to [eliminate the deficit] by importing federal funds, by the time Reagan came into office they were intent on getting a new scheme." The Republican idea at the time, which they managed to carry out quite well, was "Deficits so social programs can't be enacted-budget deficits as far as the eye can see." The Clinton administration killed those deficits.

Hinchey was adamant on bashing

Republicans for their extravagant defense expenditure. He said, "We can now have an intelligent debate. Republicans are willing to spend everything on defense programs." They have what they call a "two-frontier theory," that is to say that they want to have enough troops and weapons to fight a two front war, i.e.: Asia and the Middle East. Clinton and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, propose a spending budget every year for the military, and every year "Congress always increases this budget."

Hinchey then brought up domestic policies like health care, claiming that the Republican majority whip believes, "everyone should be able to take care of themselves."

This discussion switched to a local arena, when Hinchey began to speak about the environment. He said, "Not only does the federal government have a responsibility to clean up the Hudson River, but also to make sure people have clean air . . . we now have a global responsibility." He notes that this environmental issue is not all that important to many politicians; "there are members of the appropriations committee who want the phrase 'global warming' out of the bill. They don't even want global warming to be discussed."

Congressman Hinchey then took questions from students that ranged from the prison system, to Columbia, to drugs, to Cuba. The first question came from Jordan Bane, who asked what Hinchey thought on the "third war" being fought against black and Latinos trying to imprison them for seemingly nominal offenses.

Hinchey said that "it's a very important issue for two reasons: it deprives people of freedom and services, and with regard to low level drug offenses and non-violent offenses, we do have too many people in prison, we do create that kind of environment." The overwhelming population of blacks and Latinos in prison is something that in Hinchey's opinion "need[s] to be changed." He recommended that mandatory sentences be discontinued because they detract from the judiciary process.

In response to a follow up question about



Rap Session: Students discuss concerns with Rep. Hinchey.

the police brutality in D.C., he said, "The tendency of authority in this country today is to overreact." Which is the reason that the police have become fearful, and are no longer a body to keep the peace.

Eben Kaplan, who was interested in the U.S.'s current situation in Columbia, asked the next question. Hinchey had a lot to say on the matter: "The nature of this aid is almost exclusively military. In its essence-[The U.S. has] got a drug problem. [Columbia] wants to help [us] solve [our] cocaine problem. If [we] give [them] money and equipment, [Columbia] will get rid of the FARC." This is not the right answer in a "country that is highly stratified. It is almost as bad as this country. One percent of the people own all of the wealth. People are trying to develop a more liberal government."

This whole involvement in Columbia is all about fixing a drug problem, but "the foolishness of the American government is that we can't solve the drug problem by dealing only with the supply side . . . As long as somebody wants something, someone is going to supply it."

When asked about the decriminalization of drugs, and taxing them heavily to eliminate the brunt of the black market he had little substantial to say, and wiggled his way out by taking another question from professor Steve Collatella on Cuba, where he proclaimed to be an adamant supporter of "normalizing relations with Cuba."



Check me one time: Congressman Maurice Hinchey as he spoke to Bard Students about Environmental Law and the Iraqi sanctions.

## Questions of Discrimination in the Workplace

*continued from page 1...*

Much has been tied into this case that some regard as separate from the original complaint. Part of the dilemma concerning these issues is discerning what is to be thought of as relevant to Dube's stance. Dube commented that his complaint is not only a response to the given situation, but also a product of tensions he has felt since August of 1996. However,

**...Dube feels he was overlooked in the granting of this position for reasons pertaining to his original complaint [of racial discrimination].**

Brudvig, taking into account Dube's sentiments, feels that the past occurrences are more symptomatic of miscommunication than underlying ill will. Brudvig furthered such thoughts by adding, "The solution to such problems lies in training employees to deal with and speak about issues of race and sex."

It was only last January that Max again felt openly at odds with Security. It was at this time that the rotation for the position of charge-of-shift at security was taking place. The charge-of-shift is a position that places one as the head guard for the given shift and invests decision-making capabilities to that person. Apparently, Dube feels he was overlooked in the granting of this position for reasons pertaining to his original complaint.

The response given to this claim is that it was because of a misunderstanding of Dube's scheduling for vacation time that he was not given the full position. To add more weight to Dube's position, his supporters have noted that he is an employee with a seven year standing and that the position of charge-of-shift was given to someone that had only been employed for three months. Of this, Brudvig commented, "The Charge of shift is

a management prerogative, not a question of longevity." He went on to express that all members of staff are to rotate through this position in order to create a more productive work environment. Regardless of this, Dube still feels

he has been dealt with insensitively due to his race. When offered to share the position of charge-of-shift with another employee, Dube then fully resigned any charge-of-shift responsibilities.

It is difficult to piece together what has actually taken place in the given situations. Moreover, it is even harder to faithfully link these given situations together. The administration contends the controversy over charge-of-shift is only subsequent to the matter at hand. Bob Brock, Dube's employer, com-

mented that he felt that these occurrences have nothing to do with Dube's relation to security, but rather Dube's relation to the school, and that his problem, "He has nothing to do with his day-to-day interactions." Dube alluded to feelings that Brock had played a part in the past situations and commented, "Brock could have acted to help solve this problem earlier."

Despite the apparent confusion circling these individuals, Dube does feel that the procedures are taking the right direction. He also noted that he feels the situation will end positively. Jim Brudvig also seemed positive of these matters and commented of the given situations, "Both problems [the two situations] can be given a similar remedy. If we can get at a common root we can eliminate this problem." Legally, the dispute is to end soon, for the investigator is due to file a recommendation. If the matter is not to be settled by the date given it will be recommended for higher investigation.

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## Prof. Kelly reads from unfinished work

### RYAN WHEELER

Robert Kelly, the Bard professor known principally to students for his prolific poetry career, appeared in Olin on May 1 to give a reading from his most recent narrative fiction. While Kelly's poetry overshadows his fiction in quantity, he shirks the weighted notion that he is essentially a poet, instead considering himself a writer of various sorts.

The reading, long scheduled for this date, was only recently supplied with its material. After an introduction by event organizer and fellow professor Bradford Morrow, Kelly read the first chapter from a nascent untitled novel, his first narrative work in the better part of a year. That he should begin work on a novel two weeks before the reading was, for Kelly, wholly unexpected: he had intended to read a number of older stories. Kelly was well-received, reading for an audience that sat and stood against the walls of Olin 104 when all seats were filled.

The chapter, presently the first of four written in what will become a full-length novel, framed the beginnings of an alien-abduction story, complete with many of the "tropes and delights" of such tales, as Kelly noted. Balanced with the basic narrative was Kelly's discursive poetic sense, lending voice shift and elaborate language to what would otherwise threaten to be a weary cliché. Kelly closed with a brief outline of the story's further plot, so as not to leave the audience "in the lurch", and was met with sonorous applause.

# Smolny College: Russian Liberal Arts Haven, Bard Joint-Venture

*...continued from page 1*

has only recently shed its Soviet oppression.

But freedom and democracy are new ideals, and this is perhaps why Smolny College may fit well into the new Russia. "There is something about the liberal arts that is actually related to what democracy does," explained Susan Gillespie. "By educating citizens who are able to look at issues from a variety of perspectives, think critically, they are open to be more creative. This is important ... as a contribution to a democratic society."

Gillespie feels that a liberal arts education builds tolerance, and allows students to see issues from different perspectives. "The liberal arts should be transferable, not as an American system of education," continued Gillespie, "but as a system of education that helps Americans be more democratic."

Bard's involvement in Smolny College is also unusual. "Smolny is fundamentally a cooperative effort," said Becker. "It's not implanting a Western university in Russia, and it's not simply giving aide to currently existing universities. It's creating something



courtesy of Susan Gillespie

**City on the Hill:** Smolny College brings an American-style liberal arts program to St. Petersburg, Russia. Pictured: The hallowed halls of academia at Smolny College.

unique that fits into Bard."

The joint venture exists in all levels of college life, from the structure of administration to the content and style of the curriculum. Patterned after Bard's programs, students will participate in an orientation program similar to L & T, first-year seminar, and moderation. All students will also complete a senior pro-

ject to graduate.

Bard and Smolny will continue to work together, not only as a necessarily-consulted model for future Russian liberal arts colleges, but also in their own bond as educational institutions. Already, professors from both Bard and Smolny have visited their sister school's campuses, among them Prof. Garry Hagberg of Bard's Philosophy department.

"I was very impressed with the professors I met there," said Hagberg. "They are on a hunt for great faculty...and as far as I can tell, they have every reason to be very optimistic."

During his twelve-day visit to Smolny, Hagberg met with the student body for a question-and-answer session. "They asked a lot of questions about what it's like at Bard...one young woman asked at the end of the session, 'can you tell me what Bard students are like because we really want to be just like them.' They were also interested to know to what extent Bard students know about them."

Jonathon Becker echoed Hagberg's praise for the students at Smolny. "The students there have a real thirst for knowledge."

In the future, Bard hopes to continue to foster exchange and dialogue between the two schools, both among students and faculty. Though they are still being formed, there are plans to create courses taught by both Bard and Smolny faculty, and a general increase in the exchange of ideas, students and technology.

## Metro North in Tivoli postponed indefinitely



LESLEY PFENING

## Professor denied, controversy ensuing

*continued from page 1...*

input is a core aspect of that evaluation. And the opinion of the students in one case is compared with the opinion of students in another...although student input is crucial, it doesn't mean that we follow [it] each time."

Senior Anu Kumar, EPC chairman, contends that although student evaluations are collected, students do not retain their influence throughout the whole process. "The FE and the FERC completely lack the initiative to send a completed document, or even inform us when a recommendation has been made", she said. "Once we hand in our report, they stop informing us about what's happening."

A typical description of Tracie Stewart from one of her students highlights the personal connection Stewart tries to foster. First-year Elley Strehl said, "She cares a lot about her students, she knows what she's talking about, and she knows her subject very well. She's a best friend and a mother." Strehl is a student, advisee, and research assistant of Stewart's.

Yet the chances for rehire look dim for Stewart. Reliable sources say that the Faculty Evaluation Review Committee (FERC) have unanimously voted against rehiring her. The Free Press tried to confirm the vote with Dean Stuart Levine, but he denied comment, saying, "I'm not in a position to tell you the outcome. The final outcome has not been achieved yet. The recommendation had been made from the FERC to the President and he has not made a decision yet."

The FERC consists of five senior faculty members in each department. This year's FERC, which makes recommendations for all professors up for tenure or contract renewal, consists of Alan Cote, Franz Kempf, Michael Tibbets, Bruce Chilton, and Richard Gordon.

However, Dean Levine did say that the FERC "came to a different conclusion than the students came to, but there is no indication that they ignored the students response."

Melanie Brooks, one of the two students in the EPC Social Studies division, felt that the students' evaluation of Stewart was way above average. "I haven't heard a negative opinion against her from the students. The fact they [the FERC] rejected both us and the FEs is really suspicious."

In the past, President Botstein's decision to rehire has not had to be made until June 30th, well over a month after most Bard students leave campus. Due to confidentiality and legal reasons, Bard students have no access to faculty files, and the decision of the

FERC is not made public. Only members of the EPC can look at faculty files. Botstein has not yet seen the recommendation of the FERC.

Levine said the late decision has "nothing to do with [students being gone for the semester]. [Botstein] uses that time to gather information and make up his mind. Gathering the information can take some considerable time."

While many students see the rehiring process as tied in red tape, Levine contends that time is necessary to make the best decision. "President Botstein will meet with the FERC and they will review together the recommendation of the FEC and the FERC...He will spend a considerable amount of time with Tracie Stewart. It will not be a frivolous conclusion."

Botstein said that "when people's jobs are at stake it takes a lot of deliberation. I talk to faculty and many students on many cases. Very important things have to be taken into consideration, most importantly to the fairness of the candidate. I have to meet with the faculty committee, which has not yet happened, and come up with the best decision I can." He concluded that, "The most important thing is that Tracie Stewart gets an absolutely fair hearing."

But Stewart's issue is more complicated than it seems. Parties close to the situation report that last summer, Stewart submitted a letter asking faculty members not to ask invasive questions of students during moderation, and not to make comments that can be considered as sexual harassment. The letter is part of Stewart's faculty file. Dean Levine denies seeing this letter, saying, "I've heard rumors to that effect but I have seen nothing."

Levine further explained his position and said, "I am aware of some contention between Tracie Stewart and her colleagues. Not having been there to see what the environment was like it would be hard for me to judge whether there was hostility or not."

Levine expressed that he did not yet know enough about the situation to make a conclusion. "What is being maintained here is that this is a hostile place for women; whether that's true or not I don't know...I don't believe that any of these people have deliberately made the environment hostile. I never asked any of them whether they felt the environment was hostile to them, and I don't recall any woman saying it was."

Botstein, not yet having read the file, said, "I have no direct knowledge of it. My relationship with Tracie Stewart has always been very cordial and very positive."

Bracht said "I don't perceive that they are

being hostile toward students, but it reflects poorly on them if they don't give a female a permanent job." Bracht feels it makes the senior professors look bad "if they can be friendly to us as students, but don't treat females as potential equals."

Misharra Hefler, a sophomore planning on moderating into psyche because of Stewart, said, "my friends in the psychology department feel most comfortable and welcomed by [Tracie Stewart and David Lopez]."

Other parts of faculty files usually include letters urging or condemning the rehiring of a professor and evaluation sheets. Many Bard students have written letters on Tracie's behalf.

Jackie LaDuke, first-year, wrote in her letter to the FERC that, "Besides being a great professor and having a vast amount of skills in her field, Professor Stewart also has a love for the students...I feel that without Professor Stewart, the Psychology Department would be lacking in strength."

Hefler said Stewart "pulls you in. You don't realize how much you are retaining because it's so enjoyable. There is so much active participation of the students; it's unlike any other class I've ever been in. She doesn't take over the classroom. It's the only true seminar style class I've ever had."

Another first-year, Rebecca Chernoff, also wrote a letter highly in favor of Stewart. She said, "She's honestly one of the best teachers I had in my life. I took two classes with her. I felt that she wasn't just lecturing and feeding information to me. She was making me part of the learning process."

Levine feels writing a letter for her file is the best way to influence Botstein's opinion. "I think those students should state their view and President Botstein will look at it." Referring to the petition, Levine said, "I find it hard to believe that it's more than half of the student body [who] have had direct contact with her."

However Strehl disagrees about the petition. "The rest of the students who had the situation explained to them felt they would like to see that kind of professor stay at Bard."

Stewart received her Ph.D. from Purdue University, and has published articles in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology and the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, among others. At Bard she has worked on controversial research projects with the results not yet published. Stewart is one of eight faculty members up for review. "It's not a popularity contest," Botstein said. "It's an evaluation of teaching and teaching quality."

The Amtrak from Rhinecliff is so expensive. The Metro North from Poughkeepsie is so far. But what if the cheaper Metro North line was a mere shuttle ride away, in Tivoli?

While most Bard students agree having a train in Tivoli would be convenient, members of the Tivoli community are not so sure they want Metro North invading their village. Mayor Mark Marlinaro says that the project has been put on hold, mostly because of people of Northern Dutchess have put forth several important questions and concerns about the issue.

He stressed that this was not just a decision that would affect Tivoli but instead all of Northern Dutchess County. A Metro North commuter train station in Tivoli would triple the traffic in the village and the surrounding area. Marlinaro does not think the current roads and parking areas could handle this increase.

Tivoli is at the edge of Metro North's jurisdiction, as a result the station would not merely be a train stop but a rail yard as well. The station/rail yard would be more of a presence than in Rhinecliff, which is only one stop in Amtrak's web of destinations. The station would encourage rapid residential development, which the village has been planning for, but both the residents and the mayor do not want the Mass Transit Authority determining that course.

Marlinaro emphasized that, "the Metro North expansion has benefits that it cannot maintain," and that Tivoli, "has to respect democracy." Tivoli is viewed by many, according to Marlinaro, as a model for a working democracy, and the addition of the train station may alter that dynamic rapidly. "Metro North should respect the village and the time frame for development we have already established," he said.

Eight months ago, a town meeting was held on the subject, with many Bard students in attendance. While there were a few supporters of the expansion, most were opposed to the idea. The community of Tivoli and surrounding villages voiced concerns about the train station. Many felt that the LOOP bus keeps them from feeling isolated without being intrusive, and that having a train station would cause far more harm than good.

Since the town meeting Marlinaro has not heard from Metro North. They responded that the project had been put on hold and gave no definite date for when they might want to continue negotiations.

# Bard Radio, WXBC, goes FM (for real)

DAVE HASSINGER

Bard College radio has plans next year to adapt to a low frequency spot on the FM dial. Its 10-watt output will be multiplied ten times and station planners will change its current AM bandwidth. This will cause some growing pains, but WXBC staffers are optimistic:

"It's possible with enough support from students to juice-up the station's wattage, but we're going to need all the help we can get." WXBC is asking for support from alumni, administration, and students because construction required to transmit its programming over the new FCC-monitored bandwidth will run a \$7,500 dollar minimum, including expenses for licensing, equipment, and relocation.

Currently, the station has a weak broadcast radius, too small to warrant federal regulation. But its low output and inconvenient

location in Manor's basement make it difficult for students to listen on main campus. In order to reach the bulk of Bard students (on and off campus), WXBC has decided to renovate the 56-year-old station. Included in the restructuring is WXBC's bid for an FCC license, plans for a radio transmitter perch on the roof of Stevenson, and specifications for a home that is more soundproof, climate-controlled, and spacious.

**"It's possible with enough support from students to juice-up the station's wattage, but we're going to need all the help we can get."**

radius that will definitely cover Tivoli and Red Hook.

"I certainly think the growing pains are worth it," remarked Barrytown student Kimberly Ness, "there's enough of a musical community here on campus to warrant the development of a student-led station."

After the middle of next year WXBC hopes to have taken the most important steps toward extending and amplifying Bard's "musical community" over its new bandwidth.

"By then, when we're awarded the license, everyone is going to become very active taking apart and transforming the station." According to WXBC media director Matt Hayes and technician Caleb Cliff, the station's best case scenario also includes an expanded music library, drama programming, and room for in-studio performances.

Currently Bard radio broadcasts on 540 AM. General Manager Chris Pappas gave a few suggestions on how to pick up the right frequency. "If you're using a boombox, the little pull-out antenna doesn't do anything," he said. "Put the whole radio next to the window. You should also shut off your computer monitor. That makes a huge difference."

Best reception can be heard by going to the basement of Manor, where the station is based.

Currently Bard radio broadcasts from 8PM to 2AM every night, with music, sketch comedy, drama, and talk shows, with much more to come.



On with the show: FCC certification and an FM signal means a louder, nastier WXBC. Pictured is a sketch comedy radio show, "Lemer Colony", one of many student run programs on Bard's own radio station.

## Mayday protests, global action for labor rights

*Bard students travel to NYC to be part of a global movement reflecting diverse ideologies*

*continued from page 1...* o n foot, on scooters, in electric vehicles, on motorcycles and on horseback as well as a great many undercover surrounded the demonstrators who, as they walked, waved flags, displayed puppets and sang and chanted.

The procession continued over the Brooklyn Bridge with police and demonstrators maintaining a calm atmosphere.

People gathered at an abandoned plot of land, cornered in between warehouse buildings and the water with the underbelly of the bridge high above. Drumming and singing blended with the thunder of the trains overhead and a large banner reading "FREE THE EARTH" hung from bridge scaffolding just across the water. A maypole was erected and the holiday was celebrated in strange style in one of New York's many vacant lots.

Food was prepared while trash was collected and the soil prepared for planting in hopes that the dormant area could be converted into a community garden. There has been conflict all year over public garden space as Giuliani's recent development of the city's unbuilt spaces has stepped up. There have been several scuffles between community activists and the NYPD over garden space and development.

Over a hundred police hovered around the lot's only entrance armed with pepper spray (though it seemed that things would not escalate to that level) while paddy wagons lined the street. Around seven o'clock demonstrators struck a deal with the police, giving people until nine to clear out in small groups or there would be arrests.



Jacob Gordon  
The Men in Blue: Standing guard at New York City May Day protests.

May Day has a number of symbolic meanings for people. It began as a pagan holiday that ushered the spirits of winter out and the kinder, warmer spirits of springtime in. People gathered to rejoice and celebrate. Outlawed in this form by the Puritan movement in England in the 1640's, May Day became a much more tame event. The holiday reemerged in 1886 as American and Canadian workers pushed for an eight-hour workday by staging large-scale strikes on May first. The day was seen as fitting as it was said that workers would take the day off for the holiday with or without permission from employers. The day gained a dark shade as police fired at demonstrating workers in Chicago killing six.

The next day, at a protest against police brutality, a bomb went off killing eight police officers. The explosion resulted in the apprehension and eventual execution of four anarchist trade unionists. Many see the executions as an attack on the mobilization of workers and anarchists. Three years later, the International Working Men's Association in Paris marked May first as an international working class holiday to honor those who had died and suffered in the struggle for worker's rights and specifically those involved with the events in Chicago.

Community organizers hope that such celebrations will bring community members together and that they can reclaim the elements of neighborhood cohesion that they feel they have lost. Global minded activists are concerned with raising awareness about the environment and issues involving corporate globalization. Labor activists see the day as a symbol of the struggle of workers around the world, both Unions and those not documented.

Mayday protests around the globe created tensions between groups with different ideologies. In Germany, neo-nazis and labor unions clashed sporadically. They have some of the same goals, just different approaches. The neo-nazis are anti-union protectionists and labor unions are looking for the rights of workers, especially in their own country. Because Germany has such high unemployment, both factions are concerned about that issue. Fresh nationalists in France were also active, and anarchists in London were very visible.

And all the groups present claim solidarity with each other's initiative. However, it is clear that it is difficult to congregate anymore



Jacob Gordon  
Taking to the Streets: May-Day protestors marched in New York City Monday in support of undocumented workers.

without making city law enforcement officials wary. Certain sights are beginning to become rather common: gas masks, pepper spray, heavy-duty plastic handcuffs. And

police don't quite seem to know what to expect yet from what appears to be an emerging base of activists.

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R E D H O O K

# Room draw finds many students homeless

**BRIDGET HANNAH**

Beginning on May 1, students again converged on the Stevenson Gymnasium for that very strange but, as Residence Life's Allison Bennett says, "very Bardish", spring ritual; room draw. The question - especially for those freshmen IIs threatened with imminent homelessness - is of course: why do we do this to ourselves? The idea of having the entire student body pore over architectural plans of residences and convene, mediated by a painfully random number, to choose their specific room out of the 500 or so available, appears at times ridiculously archaic. However, in true Bard fashion, few students would consider sacrificing this stressful, involved and highly individualized decision-making process just to make things easier.

While students do not necessarily seem excited about the prospect, which one sophomore described as "a lot of hassle," most, except perhaps for those freshman at the end of the line, wouldn't have it any other way. "I think it's okay," commented a student, "it makes sense, and it's not that hard. I'd rather be able to choose." While one student did suggest the possibility that a random computerized system, such as those used at other schools, might make things easier, as Bennett pointed out, housing at Bard, like the student population, is not homogenous. "The problem," she said, "is that the quality of the housing varies so much - but luckily what people want to live in varies so much as well."

Although there is certainly an obvi-

ous quality gradient - that huge single in Manor versus the notorious 8' by 8' next to the kitchen in Sands - many of the decisions at room draw will be completely subjective. "Some people love Tewksbury; some people couldn't stand it" said Bennett - "I don't like the idea of taking away what little control student have over where they live." And even if you do end up on the waiting list, the big fear the first time around, it is highly unlikely that you won't have a placement by August 1. Last year, by that date, 80 of the 88 students on the list had been placed, and the rest had made other arrangements.

The organization of room draw, by credit status and by lottery, seems to be the only fair way to structure the process. In addition to rewarding academic success and encouraging students to complete their incompletes, it ensures that room choice, if sometimes disappointing, is "not personal, not bureaucratic, and not 'cliquish'" says Bennett. Other students and Res. Life staff echoed that it is the "fairest" way. In any case, it avoids what one RD (no longer at the college) had supposedly been advocating: that is to have specific rooms be purchased, i.e. students who pay more get better rooms - an idea which seems morally and politically unappealing.

Student comments on the process of "room change" - which occurs after rooms have been assigned and is done personally by the Residence Life staff - seem to validate the importance of the lottery room draw. Although 71 or the 91 room changes requested at room

draw last spring did happen, a student who asked not to be named expressed the frustration room draw is designed to avoid, saying that "once it becomes a room change, it's all about who you know."

When it comes down to it though, as Bennett commented, there are "only so many ways you can allocate space." Although there is that "stressful possibility" for first years that they aren't going to get a room, as long as you show up the only real worry is that you aren't going to get exactly what you wanted - which would be even more likely without room draw. But do show up: even if you are a Senior II, if you don't go or arrange a proxy you'll be on the secondary waiting list - behind every last freshman. As for the process itself, that noisy wait on the bleachers under the fluorescent lights, administrators have been working with students to try to create a less stressful environment. Among the improvements will be silent movies, refreshments, dimmer lighting and walkie-talkies so that facilitators won't have to yell across the room.

Residence Life is still taking suggestions about how to make things more relaxed. In addition, to show their honest sympathy for those First-years, this year, Res. Life will be offering a secret "prize" at the end of the night to all the unfortunates who do end up on the waiting list. And the list is long, for many freshman were forced on the waiting list for the doubles available next year.

## News Briefs

VINCENT VALDMANIS

### Monteverdi comes to Bard

Bard's Theater Program will perform Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* at the Avery Center for the Arts from Saturday, May 6th through Wednesday, May 10th. According to director Jeffrey Sichel, students will "Not only sing, but really act." Three other operas directed by Sichel, *Pelleas and Melisande*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Magic Flute*, were sold out, and Sichel had offers to restage *Pelleas* off Broadway in Manhattan (he declined, saying he didn't want "students prematurely exposed to a commercial venture.") Operatic Bard students are such a draw that half the available reservations for *L'Orfeo* are already sold. All performances are at 8:00 p.m. except on Sunday, May 7th, when a matinee at 2:00 p.m. will be the only show. Call 758-8622 for more information.

### Harvard Archaeologist to Speak on Recent Discovery of Oldest Deep-Water Shipwrecks

Dr. Lawrence Stager, Dorot Professor of Archaeology of Israel at Harvard University, will give a lecture on the discovery of two ancient Phoenician cargo ships found on the ocean floor thirty miles off the coast of Israel. Dr. Stager and Robert Ballard, the oceanographer who discovered the Titanic, found the oldest known deep-water shipwrecks last June. The lecture will be at 2:00 p.m. at the Jerome Levy Economics Institute on Wednesday, May 3rd. A reception will follow.



### Da Capo Chamber Players to Perform works by Dvorak and Five Contemporary Composers

The Da Capo Chamber Players, a Naumburg Award-winning chamber ensemble, will perform works of Dvorak and five contemporary composers including Richard Teitelbaum, associate professor of music at Bard. Teitelbaum composed "Music for Flute" while studying composition with the late Mel Powell at Yale University in the early 1960s. Da Capo is widely acclaimed for its free-thinking approach to innovative classical music and will be honored with commissioned works by Martin Bresnick as part of Chamber Music America's Musical Celebration of the Millennium. The performance will be on Sunday, May 7th, at 4:00 p.m. in Olin Hall.

### ROSMARIE WALDROP

#### ANOTHER LANGUAGE

Selected Poems



### Final Reading in John Ashbery Poetry Series

The John Ashbery Poetry Series will conclude on Friday, May 5th, with readings by contemporary poets Rosmarie Waldrop and Keith Waldrop. Both have published numerous books of poetry and edit the Burning Deck Press. The reading will be at 3:30 p.m. in Olin 102.

### Spring Thesis Exhibitions Open at Center for Curatorial Studies

The second installment of the Spring Thesis exhibitions opened this Sunday, April 30th, at the Center for Curatorial Studies. There are six exhibitions in this particular series. Each show is curated by a graduating student at the CCS. Jennifer Crowe's show, "Protocol Prone," deals with aspects of artistic and curatorial practice specifically as they relate to issues of commerce. "Distinctions," curated by Sofia Hernandez Chong Cuy, explores group interactions and the formation of social and collective identity. Mercedes Vicente is curating a show entitled "This Is What It Is," which collects the drawings of many conceptual artists including Sol LeWitt and Fred Sandback. Tunel Mosaka's exhibition, "Translations," displays a series of works by artists including Candice Breitz, Julie Mehretu, and Moshekwa Lang, that delve into problems with identity and cultural difference. Finally, "Nostalgia," Ji Seon Kim's project, explores the psyche of immigrants. The shows will be on display until May 29, 2000.

# 6 year old Cuban raises few eyebrows at Bard

**VINCENT VALDMANIS**

He's been on the cover of Time magazine twice in a row. In the wake of his seizure by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the mayor of Miami fired the City Manager and the city's police chief resigned. In his name, thousands protested and hundreds were arrested.

Quite possibly the most famous six year old on Earth, Elian Gonzalez has been at the center of a fervent tug-of-war between his extended family in Miami and the United States government. Protests in Miami on April 22nd (the day Elian was seized by the INS) were passionate, with demonstrators holding signs reading "Reno: Which 'experts' on child psychology did you consult? Satan!" and "Send Chelsea to Castro."

Cuban-Americans in Miami are vehemently opposed to sending Elian back, but the rest of America, including Attorney General Janet Reno, thinks Elian belongs with his father in Cuba. An April 24th poll by ABC found 76% of Americans think Elian's father should have permanent custody of the boy (Al Gore, by the way, recently changed his stance in favor of the Cuban-American's view).

This is an issue that has Bard students in agreement with the mainstream. Informal interviews found unanimous support for sending Elian back. Said a student during dinner at Kline: "Make [Elian] a U.S. citizen, send him back to Cuba, let him live with his dad. He turns 18, he says, 'Yo man, Cuba sucks, communism sucks, I hate it here. I hate eating the same food every goddamn day, and I want to vote, and I want to hang out with the Batista Miami Beach Cubans and make a lot of money and be in a Republican special interest group' -

cool man, send him back to the U.S. But right now, his father loves him, his father isn't using him as a political tool, his dad came over here, he was very discreet, and basically he was the only one who comported himself with any sort of dignity in this whole ordeal, so give [Elian] to his pop."

John Lecount, also a first year, agreed. "I think that if his father loves Cuba and loves his son and wants to live there, he has every right to live in Cuba and take his son there. I think Elian's family in Florida handled the entire situation very poorly."

"I think they could have taken him out in a calmer way," said first year Dylaina Young, referring to how INS agents armed with submachine guns stormed the Miami house where Elian was staying. "But I think he should be with his father."

"I love the little guy. Send him back to Cuba," said another student, echoing the sentiment of everyone interviewed. "If it was any other country they would have sent [Elian] back," observed Leah Perloff. "I think they didn't care about his interests, I think it was all political games; it's ridiculous for the [family in Miami] to think that [the INS raid on the Miami house] wouldn't happen."

Frenchman Alexis Gambis felt the whole media circus surrounding the Elian case has been somewhat ridiculous. "This reminds me a little about the whole story of Clinton and Monica Lewinsky," said Gambis. "They make a whole issue out of something that isn't really a big deal."

"Who gives a shit," said a passing student.

Harton Maliki, a PIE student from Zimbabwe, pointed out the preferential treatment Cuban refugees get under U.S. immigration law.

Views of Cuba among Bard students also seem to be in sync with America's changing opinion of the Caribbean country. "If only we didn't have the fucking embargo on Cuba, it would be a great country," said Aaron Catz, a 10 year resident of Miami. "Unfortunately, the United States has an [outdated] policy." Congressman Maurice Hinckley, in his talk with Bard students last Thursday, agreed about the embargo. "It makes us look ridiculous to thoughtful people around the world," he said, and slowly the U.S. government is recognizing this.

Most Bard students seemed concerned more with moderation and other work than the politics of the Elian case.

Despite two officials in Miami's city government finding themselves unemployed, there have been some positive results for at least one party in the protracted custody battle. After faltering last year and showing signs of weakness, Castro has used the Elian case to strengthen his leadership and unify the country, while also improving relations with the U.S.

For the majority of Americans, the debate has been whether Elian should live with his father or his extended family, not if he should grow up in a communist country or in the "land of the free." Cuban-Americans have found little support for their efforts to keep Elian from a government they see as autocratic and corrupt. In post-Cold War America, it seems Americans are willing to forget the anti-communist message the country espoused for so long and see the Elian case as any other custody dispute. First year Ben Merrill summed up popular sentiment: "The kid really belongs with his father."

# Bard Under Botstein: Institution of Higher Racism?

**Student Coalition on Race and Ethnicity Studies voices anger at possible campus-wide discrimination**

## MARCOS TEJEDA

Over the past twenty-three years of Leon Botstein's presidency at Bard, the college has slipped further and further away from a fundamental goal of a liberal arts school: to foster a free and open environment for intellectual exchange. With power concentrated in the hands of Botstein and a few well-paid loyalists, the overwhelming sentiment among a significant segment of faculty, students, and alumni is that Bard has virtually become a totalitarian institution with a progressive façade -- but the façade is crumbling.

We, members of SCORES, have become increasingly aware of Bard's true colors. It does not take long for Bard students to realize that this self-professed "progressive" "liberal arts" college is a "racial dictatorship".<sup>1</sup> The factual role of the administration has been unveiled to many students; administrators, such as Nicole Woods, Dean of Multicultural Affairs, has wittingly acted as an informant. Immediately after a Student of Color for Racial Justice meeting, Nicole Woods relayed information which she promised not to reveal to her supervisor.

Botstein's small circle of spies and snitches in the faculty and administration is meticulously organized in a 19th century southern slave plantation schema of a sexist and racist hierarchy: white males, white females, black females, and black males.

Most recently, the performance of the head of Bard College Safety and Security, Bob Brock,<sup>2</sup> has revealed how deeply structured racism is at the college. On March 17, 2000, Bard Safety and Security officer Max Dube, in cooperation with the EEOC, filed a racial discrimination complaint against the college. Bard's vice president of administration, Jim Brudvig, actions have been questionable, as he has refused to meet with the B&G and Safety and Security union representative, Ken Kellenbenz, to discuss Max Dube's grievances.

In keeping with the spirit of white chauvinism and solidarity, the FEC -- a group of all-white faculty members that in a mafia-like fashion decides who does and does not get tenure and/or rehired -- has denied tenure to many deserving professors of color.

While Gloria Chun met all the credentials for tenure, this all-white oligarchy denied her tenure.<sup>3</sup> At the same time the FEC granted tenure to one of their white colleagues, Karen Sullivan. Likewise, Benjamin LaFarge, a tenured professor and an FEC member, has published no books.

In the fall of 1999, the Student Coalition On Race and Ethnicity Studies (SCORES) invited the FEC to publicly discuss their tenure practices, but the FEC has not been forthcoming. The FEC members who denied tenure to Gloria Chun need to be held accountable. We are asking that students boycott the classes of these professors.

While formally granting tenure to Chun, Botstein nevertheless supported the FEC. Professor Chun refuses to talk with us; however, we are aware that Professor Chun was intending to file a racial discrimination lawsuit against the college for damaging her academic career. SCORES is also convinced that Botstein, in order to save his and his college's reputation, worked some deal

to have Gloria Chun "resign." However, Botstein has made no comment.

One may wonder how and why a generally progressive board of liberal trustees continues to support Botstein's presidency.

Perhaps they simply don't know what is really going on behind closed doors and have been lulled into complacency by Botstein's rhetoric. Botstein has become a talking head for the establishment, even taking his message to the Oprah Winfrey Show.

Botstein has attempted to disguise his institutions many problems by writing about educating Jefferson's children. Nevertheless, Botstein seems to share many similarities with the 3rd president of the U.S., who envisioned America to be "a sanctuary" where immigrants from Europe would establish a new society for themselves and their progeny.<sup>4</sup>

Botstein has been more successful in implementing this kind of racial sanctuary than Jefferson. For example, Botstein has guaranteed a permanent chair for Professor David Kettler who has mixed student support. In many instances professorship at Bard is not necessarily grounded on "merit" but on chauvinism.

One may ask why President Botstein has not been able to retain brilliant professors of color, such as Sara

Willie, Michele Frank, Gloria Chun, and Lourdes Alvarez,<sup>5</sup> while at the same time securing jobs for many lackluster white professors. Perhaps he exhorts the same passions that Thomas Jefferson did: "In general their [blacks, and in this case other people of color] existence appears to participate more of sensation than reflection... [In] memory they are equal to whites, in reason much inferior [and] in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous."<sup>6</sup>

Also like Jefferson, in admission and recruitment Botstein seems to be committed to his white children. Outside the HEOP program, a federal and state program for economically disadvantaged students regardless of race, the college has not increased the number of domestic students of color at Bard College, despite the growing student body population.

In his twenty-three years as president, Botstein has failed in a singular fashion to build diverse faculty, losing quality scholars of color faster than he can hire them. When confronted about the lack of diversity in the faculty Botstein attempts to divert attention from racial inequality by co-opting prominent black intellectuals. He has skillfully used "figures in black" such as Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Professor Chinua Achebe as badges of racial "political correctness."

Botstein's trumpeting of high-profile

black scholars does nothing to hide the basic fact that he has consistently failed to hire, promote, and keep faculty of color. Despite Botstein's lip service to progressive causes and his selling Bard as a liberal institution of higher learning, the school has one of the whitest faculties in the country. The word is out from New York to Los Angeles that Botstein is a fraud.

Bard's faculty diversity is so bad that the administration refused to relinquish their

faculty of color statistic for the December 3rd, 1999 *Poughkeepsie Journal* front-page article, "College diversity progress slow." Both Vassar College and Marist College provided their numbers. Faculties of color from around the

country know about Bard's hiring record of faculty of color. The spring 2000 MES search produced no more than ten applicants and two lackluster interviews.

Bard College has only ten domestic professors of color<sup>7</sup> who comprise 0.04 percent of the faculty. Of the ten domestic professors of color, 67 percent are African American women. This statistic raises many questions about race and gender. For example, the African American sociologist Patricia Hill Collins states:

*"Mammy remains so fundamental to perceptions of Black women in serving or helping professions that, to keep their jobs, many Black women must give command performances rivaling that of Hattie McDaniel in Gone with the Wind. Even Black women professionals find ourselves doing 'mammy work' in our jobs, work which we care for everyone else, often at the expense of our own careers or personal well-being."<sup>8</sup>*

Social scientists such as Collins assert that white elite institutions use black women to maintain a "minority" presence in their work force. These institutions' preference for women of color over men of color is based on the assertion that the women would be more submissive to racial violence in the workplace.

Many sociologists consider this hiring practice, which is exclusionary to black males and hyper-exploitative to black females, as a remnant of the American slavery era. As a result of the myth of the black male's pathology and violent sexuality, slaveholders feared having black men in their households.

Max Dube's experience with Safety and Security validates the longevity of this imagining of the black man in the American psyche. Perhaps the white male administrators, who attempted to safeguard Bob Brock's employment, view Max Dube as a black incubus who cannot be trusted to watch over the student body.

Maybe these male administrators believe, as slaveholders did, that the brutish black male would rape their white daughters once the sun goes down. No other reason exists besides old-time racist discrimination to justify Max Dube's demotion.

Within less than three months of the

demotion, a white Bard College Safety and Security officer, George Walczak, was placed in a position where he oversees Max Dube. Despite Dube's exemplary work record throughout his five years at Bard College, George Walczak is now Max Dube's superior.<sup>9</sup>

In the same racist fashion, Bob Brock has fired two work-study student dispatchers who are men of color, while ignoring the consistent transgressions of their white counterparts. White male chauvinism and white supremacy is entrenched in all working sectors of Bard College.

We students must pose a strong and persistent resistance against the administration and faculty's racist actions. The faculty and administration have been successful in declaring "open season" on people of color at Bard. In addition, they have ably removed inspirational professors of color from Bard. However, in the words of Marcus Garvey: "You can kill the lion, but what do you do with the cubs?"

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Omi and Winant, *Racial Formations in the U.S. 1960-90*.

<sup>2</sup>Bob Brock was a former INS agent.

<sup>3</sup>Gloria Chun had a history of strong student support, in addition to outstanding local and national community service. She has written a book published by Rutgers University Press titled *Of Orphans and Warriors: Inventing Chinese American Culture & Identity* (1999). Gloria Chun is currently working on a soon-to-be published Asian American biography. Fall 1999 FEC files on Gloria Chun's tenure are at the Reserve Desk at the Stevenson Library under the professor name "Scores."

<sup>4</sup>Takaki, Ronald. *Strangers from a Different Shore*, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup>Suspiciously, Professor Alvarez has been absent this semester. She is currently being reviewed for tenure. Professor Alvarez has taught at Bard for seven years.

<sup>6</sup>Omi and Winant, p. 64.

<sup>7</sup>The term "domestic professor of color" purposely discounts international professors of color and visiting Bard and Levy Scholars. The "importation" of international scholars of color and the replacement of visiting professors of color have been used by the administration and faculty to maintain a "colored" presence amidst Bard's alabaster landscape with the aim to coerce students into believing Bard is committed to racial equality.

<sup>8</sup>Collins, Patricia Hill, *Fighting Word*.

<sup>9</sup>Max Dube is one of the most trusted security guards among students at Bard College. Max Dube has many a letter of appreciation in his file; one is by Professor Chinua Achebe to Leon Botstein. The letter expresses Professor Achebe's gratitude to officer Dube for assisting him in his wheelchair when the other white officers on shift refused to touch the fallen Nigerian Nobel Prize winner.

Responses to any piece in the Opinions section are welcome. Send your thoughts to us by Campus Mail, P.O. Box 71, or via the internet at bardfreepress@hushmail.com

All opinions expressed in the Opinions Section of the Bard Free Press are those of the author alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Staff or the paper.

## the bard free press

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news editors... Rafi Rom  
Vincent Valdmanis

a&e editors... Jonah Weiner  
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opinions editor... Bryan Gunderson  
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# From the Dean of Students Office

During discussions with student government, it became very clear that a more effective mode of communication was necessary between administration and the student body. A Dean's report or update in the student newspaper seemed like one method that could better increase communication. Therefore, I have requested a small spot in each newspaper to review the various programs that I have developed or am currently working on. As always, my door is open - stop by the Basement of Ludlow Hall or call the office at x7454.

- I called a meeting with the Student Judiciary Board for Sunday, April 16 to discuss concerns raised to me in a meeting with Student Government. In a letter to the *Bard Observer* last week, Emily Liechty, Chair, outlined suggestions for policy and increased communication made by the board during that meeting.

- I called a meeting with the Student Life Committee to discuss the proposed floor plans for potential residence halls. I received Residence Life feedback, Peer Counselor feedback, and SLC feedback, which I have forwarded to the architect. Additionally, we will be organizing tabling and/or a forum for general student review of the proposed plans.

- Student Government and Stuart Levine (Dean of College) called a meeting with Jonathan Becker (Dean of Studies), Mary Backlund (Vice President of Student Affairs), Nicole Woods (Associate Dean/Director of Multicultural Affairs), John Kelly (Associate Dean/Director of First Year Students), Allison Bennett (Director of Residence Life), and Allen Josey (Director of Campus Center/Student Activities) to discuss the concerns that they have raised over the last two weeks.

Proposed suggestions were made and we have agreed to continue meeting to discuss the implementation of various ideas.

Student government will most likely outline the results of this meeting.

- In the Fall, the Dean of Students Office, in conjunction with the Student Government, will be conducting a campus-wide Student Life Survey.

- Joseph Luders (Political Studies), Jonathan Becker (Dean of Studies), Rafi Rom (*Free Press*) and I are organizing a political speakers series for next semester to compliment the progress of the general elections. We will be calling for student, faculty and staff input over the next few weeks.

- I met with the grants office to discuss funding possibilities for student services programming.

- I have created open door hours in my office, effective immediately. Monday evenings from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. I will be available for discussion, questions or concerns. I will announce open doors hours at the beginning of every semester.

- I have called a Safety, Alcohol and Drug Committee together to review education and policy. The committee includes key members of the staff and student body. The committee has been charged with the following responsibilities: 1) To discuss the current policy and disciplinary structure and make recommendations to the Dean of Students regarding clarifying policy and enforcement; 2) Develop strategies to educate students, faculty and staff on the impact that safety, alcohol and drugs have on Bard's community and individual members, especially as it relates to the academic life; 3) To address specific concerns or situations that may develop within the community. My hope is that the committee will act as a resource for the whole community.

Thank you,  
Erin Cannan, Dean of Students

## Boy Scouts Don't like Homosexuals; Neither does the Supreme Court

JOSHUA MILLER

When assistant scoutmaster James Dale revealed his homosexuality in a New Jersey newspaper interview, the Boy Scouts of America took it as an infringement on their freedom of expression, a direct attack on their moral rectitude. Dale, it is certain, thought he was just pointing out the fact that he prefers men to women, but this claim resulted in Dale's dismissal from the Boy Scouts. One of the key points in this debate, which was heard by the Supreme Court on Thursday, is the question of just what such a statement of sexual preference means: can admitting to one's sexual preferences be considered an act of advocacy?

As a student of philosophy, I happen to think that this debate would benefit from the distinction between constative and performative utterances. A constative utterance is a statement of fact: "Snow is white" is the classic example. Performative utterances, on the other hand, actually do something; they perform an act. "I now pronounce you man and wife" (or man and husband, in Vermont at least) is an act of speech that does something more than state that two people are married. It joins them in the bounds of matrimony. So,

### The status of Mr. Dale's "I am a homosexual" is really the ultimate question in this case.

on the one hand we have constative statements of fact, and on the other we have performative speech acts, with the emphasis on act. Easy, right?

But the distinctions can get a little slippery. The status of Mr. Dale's "I am a homosexual" is really the ultimate question in this case. The Boy Scouts feel that having a homosexual in a position of leadership stands in the way

of their freedom speech. After all, the "moral code" requires that scouts remain "morally straight" and "clean"-guidelines

that the Boy Scouts claim exclude homosexuality. As such, they see his statement "I am a homosexual" as, performative, tainting their message and infringing on their right to free and unfettered expression.

Mr. Dale's lawyer, Evan Wolfson, claims that the Boy Scouts are engaged in "identity-based discrimination, the equation of a human being with an assumed message. A human being is not speech, other than 'I am who I am.'" For Wolfson, clearly, a statement such as "I am a homosexual" is a constative

and nothing else, equivalent to "I am Jewish" or "I am a vegetarian." The Boy Scouts can continue to express their homophobic and bigoted views freely, but, according to New Jersey state law, they may not discriminate on the basis of sexual preference.

Nonetheless, it seems probable that the Boy Scouts should and will win the day, especially since the Supreme Court is loathe to hear similar cases based on gender, religion, or race.

The best thing about the distinction between performative and constative is when it breaks down, as it almost always does. Here its limits indicate something about the way free expression and discrimination work together; it becomes difficult not to acknowledge the power that words have, even if they are ostensibly only descriptions of opinions. "I am an anti-Semite" seems to be a pretty close parallel, and thankfully, those who make such claims do not have a constitutional right to admittance in Jewish organizations. In my opinion, getting homosexuals admitted into organizations like the Boy Scouts is not a job for the courts, but for the parents of boys in that organization. Really, though, why would anyone want to work for a fascist organization that functions as pre-school for the military in the first place?

## Student Government's Bad Reputation is Unfounded

VINCENT VALDMANIS

When I came to Bard I expected to find a very influential and organized student government. Coming from a town smaller than Bard where even highly suspicious locals participate in local government to get things done, I figured this campus, with so many opinionated students, would be involved in every last administrative detail. I imagined something along the lines of what Marlboro College has, a hippie-esque, rule-by-consensus, democratic system. Leon could say what he wanted, but our voices would be the ones that mattered.

During L&T, however, I didn't hear much about student government, unless someone was bitching that Bard is generally a school of all bark and no bite. Then there was the budget forum, which made me decide that consulting planetary alignment might be an equally democratic way of allotting money (I've since changed my mind about that, by the way). As the semester wore on, everyone seemed to be complaining about Bard's lack of activism. I, with my starry-eyed freshman daydreams, was disappointed. I was pessimistic about student influence on campus and fell into a pattern of complaining about one thing or another over a meal at Kline. Why can't we have more flexible meal plans? I wondered. Why am I forking out big bucks to live in a tree house with crappy plumbing? Does anyone care?

But my cynicism was unjustified, unsubstantiated, and unfair. If you share my former skepticism of student government, listen up. Not only does our system grant students obscene levels of power that other schools could only hope for, we've also got tireless, capable, enthusiastic people representing us in front of the Administration. Think the meal plan sucks? The Student Life Committee and Food Subcommittee are on top of it. Hate Bob Brock? The Administration can count on student government input. Hiring, firing, expelling, planning; almost all of it is done in accord with student government.

The Central Committee, a board of six people at the head of student government instead of one president, recently invited me to one of their meetings with the Administration. In preparation they debated agenda items and plotted strategy into the wee hours of the morning. Everything from the future of Albee Social to the EPC was discussed. That afternoon the Central Committee addressed the Administration in a thoughtful and sometimes emotional manner. The Central Committee's point (which you may have picked up on if you've been reading

the *Observer* and *Free Press*) was its concern over the fracturing of the Bard community, both in spirit (was this what I felt last semester?) and in physical layout (the transfer of living space away from main campus is an example).

The Central Committee overwhelmingly succeeded in erasing my misgivings about student government at Bard and had an equally effective impact on the Administration (Stuart Levine wants to have such a meeting at least every month). Administrators seemed engaged and hungry for student opinion, even if they didn't always agree with it. Take a look at Erin Cannan's update and notice the involvement of student government.

## The Writing on the Wall

MIKE MARLIN

Many of you, I'm sure, are already thinking: "What kind of a loser would go around to all the bathrooms and copy down the writing on the walls?" Well, my inquisitive Bardians, let me explain. Firstly, if you have never been to any of the guys' bathrooms on campus, then you are truly missing out. The messages on the walls are not just graffiti...they are practically poetry. Their substance deserves recognition, and whether the toilet notations are critical or praiseworthy, they deserve acknowledgment. Secondly, this is Bard. What the hell else is there to do?

To tell the truth...I go to the bathroom a lot. No matter what building I enter, I will not exit until I have fully facilitated the lavatory. And no matter where I am, the walls above the urinals and in the stalls hardly ever fail me. There is always something to read that will throw my emotions into full swing. They make me smile, frown, and even laugh uncontrollably...at which point the guy next to me becomes a little uncomfortable. (Apparently his urinal has no such message.)

I used to think that such graffiti was merely an act of immaturity. The writing on the walls would actually invoke anger as I could see layer after layer of paint attempting to conceal this misplaced expression. I thought: Is this why I pay 30 grand a year? So endless amounts of time and effort can be spent in trying to cover up the vandalism where I am meant to relieve my bodily functions? Is this why I receive a letter from Leon in my mailbox telling me that next year's tuition will be 3.7 percent higher? Every week there would be a new layer of paint. And every week the messages would return: MIKE MAHAN HAS GINGIVITIS. Every damn public bathroom on this campus: MIKE MAHAN HAS GINGIVITIS! "Who the hell is Mike Mahan?" I would ask. And why the hell

Next year tuition will increase more than three percent due in large part to the growth on campus. Parking lots are being paved, buildings are being planned, professors are being hired, the student body is changing; now is the time to turn pessimism into something productive. Five of the six Central Committee members are graduating in less than a month. They exist to amplify your voice on this campus, a function that's even more crucial now that significant permanent changes are planned all over campus. Go to the next forum and see what it's all about. Speak up. Vote.

would anyone care that he has gingivitis?

Then I realized I was an idiot.

I have now come to love and fully appreciate this beautiful graffiti. Entering Bard's bathrooms has become not only a ritual for me, but also an adventure. At the end of every class, after dinner, before checking my mail...the Men's Room awaits me, and my eagerness to see a new message above the urinal is immeasurable. I now understand that it is almost completely necessary that these messages exist, because, truthfully, the bathrooms are not very exciting without them...and I'm sure anyone can relate to that. "MIKE MAHAN, HELP US FIND THE WAY," a Kline stall pleads.

Lavatory literature doesn't serve only as creative expression; it also acts as a form of communication between students...an intimate, yet thoughtful communication that this school is beginning to lack. These walls act as bulletin boards that allow us to speak our minds on issues like religion: "God said to Abraham 'Kill me a son,'" stated another Kline stall. "There is a God down there," pointed out a Campus Center urinal. Politics: "Anarchy: Don't slave like an idiot," advised an Olin urinal. "Anarchist fool. This is Bard. Do you see anyone slaving here? I will eat your soul," another answered. And of course, love: "Jessica, you're tits are good," complimented the Kline stall. "She's not just another woman...she's a man!" raved another Olin urinal.

So perhaps we can preserve these messages in a fashion that doesn't put a hole in Bard's wallet. Perhaps marker boards or small chalkboards could be installed in each bathroom to allow students to freely continue expressing themselves. No matter what the outcome, these messages need to stay; they are what keep me moving throughout the day. Relieving one's self in the bathrooms at Bard is not a chore...it's enchantment.

# Economic Boom for Whom? The Dividing Line in America

**MICHAEL CHAMEIDES**

What does it mean when the prison industry is the fastest growing industry during an economic boom? What does it mean when U.S. policy elites praise the economy at a time when people are working more hours for less money and less benefits? Mainstream economists, Republicans and Democrats, and corporations want to convince us that the economy is great and thereby trick us into buying into a system of oppression where the rich feed off the world's poor.

The increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Stock Market Index, and employment rate are pointed to as proof of a healthy economy. Yet, these indicators point to an increase in wealth of the world's richest people rather than a benefit to all people of the United States.

The GDP measures the volume of transactions. It does not take into account depletion of natural resources, non-monetary transactions, national debt, or income distribution. Alternatively, an increase in the depletion of natural resources, family breakup, disease, and crime all lead to an increased GDP, because they lead to an

increase in monetary transactions. If one leaves his/her self-sufficient organic commune and hires a divorce lawyer, goes to strip clubs, gets a psychiatrist and a prescription of Prozac, crashes the car, and gets a job at McDonalds, GDP would measure the change has a huge economic success as the monetary transactions went from zero to thousands.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a measure of the stock price of 2,600 stocks. These prices are based on the perception of profits and potential profits, not the standard of living of the average American. Stock prices go up when a company lays off workers, has a monopoly, refuses to clean up a toxic waste site, or at news of other aggressive acts that increase profit. Profit is maximized when corporations charge the most for their goods, spend the least producing and distributing them, pay people the least possible sum, and spend the least on environmental protections.

In line with GDP and the Dow Jones Industrial Average, the unemployment rate does not measure people's standard of living. The unemployment rate measures the percentage of people who are actively searching for a job. It does not count people

who are underemployed, underpaid, overworked, or bored on the job. A family of five could be made up of a day laborer who worked for one day in the last month and earned \$20, another person who has a college education and works 20 hours a day at a minimum wage job with no benefits, another who is so disenchanted that he or she has given up looking for work, and two kids who are still in school. Even though this family may live in absolute poverty, they would be measured as 0% unemployed. According to statistics, this family is doing great: "100% employment!"

When economists and politicians say the economy is doing great, they are referring to a rich persons's economy. They mean the U.S. is getting closer to the capitalist's utopian model of oppression, where everything costs money, corporations are making huge profits, and the people become statistical cogs for the benefit of a ruling class. When people refer to the GDP, Dow Jones Industrial Average, and the unemployment rate as evidence of a good economy, they are either ignorant or conscious representatives of an oppressive elite that preys on the people of the world.

## Protestors mobilize against Republicans

*This years Republican National Convention in Philly, PA will be met with discontent***KEN MACLEISH**

When the delegates to the 2000 Republican National Convention arrive in Philadelphia on July 30, they will be greeted by thousands of progressive protesters committed to making the people's voice heard in the city that is the birthplace of American democracy. Protests, marches, workshops, teach-ins and direct action are all being planned by a loose coalition of groups whose concerns range from healthcare to the death penalty to economic human rights to racial equality.

Like the massive protests that accompanied the WTO and IMF/World Bank summits over the past six months, there is no central authority responsible for coordinating the Convention protests. A broad range of radical and progressive organizations will be represented, including the umbrella group Unity 2000, the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, and the International Action Center and the Philadelphia Direct Action Group.

But all who plan to gather there-from senior citizens worried about social security to anti-capitalist radicals -are united in their belief in a democracy that serves the needs of the people and rather than those of political and corporate interests.

For many progressives, the Republican Party in 2000 embodies the problems that plague American politics today. For one thing, it is this convention that will establish George W. Bush's candidacy for the Whitehouse. Bush is the well-connected top spender in a presidential campaign that has been as much about corporate money as politics.

During his time a governor of Texas, more people have been executed in that state than in all the rest of the United States combined, and by a justice system that the American Bar Association has singled out for special condemnation.

Bush also seems to have inherited the war hawk gene from his father, former President George Bush: he has indicated an intention to increase defense spending at a time when U.S. policy abroad makes many Americans increasingly uneasy, especially as welfare, Medicaid and Social Security go under the budgetary knife at home.

"But why protest?", some skeptics may wonder. The Republicans are only one of two parties, and if these protesters are so opposed

to them, why don't they just vote for the Democrats, the traditional party of progressive liberals? The answer is that the protests represent not just progressive opposition to the Republicans, but a discontent with the two-party system in general.

"The Republicans are the worse of the two parties," said student activist Michael Chameides, who is helping to organize interested Bard students for the Convention protests. "But we have a problem with the basic two-party system. Both parties represent elite corporate interests and conservative centrist politics." Massive demonstrations are also planned for the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, and many of the same organizations and interests will be represented there as

well.

What can demonstrators hope to accomplish at these protests? Their presence will put a vocal and public face on the people who politicians of both parties take for granted. They will show politicians that the stagnation of American participatory democracy in the form of dwindling voter turnout over the past few decades is

the product of a virulent discontent rather than a blissfully ignorant apathy. The protests will revive and give voice to the revolutionary spirit of 1776 in 2000.

Readers who are interested in joining the Convention protests should contact the author at km234@bard.edu or extension 4369.

## For many progressives, the Republican Party in 2000 embodies the problems that plague American politics today.

**LYNNE PURVIS**

Guatemala is a rather poor country, with over 60% of its inhabitants traditional Mayan Indians, and the majority of its population, whether Mayan or Ladino, farming peasants. Like many Latin American countries, the government in the last several decades has been through tremendous turmoil - political coups, one of the bloodiest civil wars the world has known, hurricanes, earthquakes, just to mention the most obvious troubles. In this decade, civilian government was restored, and Peace Accords between the military and the indigenous guerrilla forces were signed, so Guatemala is on its way back to peace, but of course in their path lay many obstacles.

One is that the economy is still very weak, and most of the population is chained to farming and other hard labor. The community of Hierba Buena, a tiny farming village in the Guatemalan mountains (in the department of Zacapa) is a microcosm of the Guatemalan situation. This settlement of ten households (around 70-80 people) on the mountainside has no telephones, has a faulty water supply, and only about a year and a

half ago got electricity. There is a one-room school for the village only reaching 6th grade. The people spend most of their year planting and tending to their black bean, corn, and sugar cane crops, all without any tools or machines besides machetes, pickaxes, and hoes. The crops are mainly for subsistence and what the families do sell brings them little money. They are so constantly in debt and without necessities, that most families send their sons to the United States (legally or illegally) to find work to support their families back home.

Looking for a way out of poverty, in 1992, the community created an organic coffee cooperative to help its members grow and sell organic coffee and then set up a community fund for education and health care. Coffee sells at much higher prices than beans with less backbreaking work. Yet the cooperative still presents a huge challenge: start-up costs are high; the villagers need

## Bard students speak out against sexual assault

**GREG JOHNSON**

There are many kinds of Speak Outs because there are a lot of things that need to be spoken out against. Bard's Annual Speak Out is for women and men to speak out against Sexual Assault, although anyone who wishes to speak out against related issues, such as rape, incest, relationship abuse, emotional abuse, etc are welcome too. Things that typically shared are poetry, personal accounts, songs, the accounts of others, and a whole lot of emotion.

In the past Bard's Annual Speak Out has been low key. Until last year it occurred in the basement of the Chapel under candlelight. It was more intimate and a handful of people would share poetry and sometimes their experiences with sexual assault. Now the Speak Out occurs on the lawn adjacent to the terrace in front of Kline during dinner, in full view of passer-bys and the majority of the Bard community. The idea behind a Speak Out is for voices that have been silenced in the past to be heard. We felt that to keep these voices literally underground defeated what we are trying to accomplish, namely to make people aware that this happens at Bard.

After moving the Speak Out above ground last year the number of speakers and people who attended increased radically. There were more people who wanted to speak than there was time for and people sat on the ground for lack of chairs. I think that shows that survivors of these horrific crimes want to be heard and are not ashamed of what happened. For centuries, victims of sex crimes have been ignored, laughed at, declared insane. At the Speak Out we declare that rape and sexual assault happens here and at the same time raise awareness and sensitivity to these issues. The Speak Out sets the statistics aside and shows you the humanity, the raw emotion, the people affected by sexual assault and related violence in our community.

The Speak Out this year is on Thursday May 4th starting at 5:30 pm outside of Kline. To be guaranteed a time to speak, contact Ali at ext. 4600. I would encourage anyone who isn't sure if they want to speak to come and watch. And I would encourage everyone to come and support his or her friends. Afterwards we will march across campus to Take Back Bard-we're gonna make our voices heard!

## Bard Students Raise Money and Awareness for Guatemala

**Benefit for coffee communities:**  
**Student Center**  
**Multi Purpose Room**  
**May 3, 7:30PM**

training on organic farming and administration of a business -- only a few people in the community have even reached 9th grade; plus they must give up their standard bean harvest to work the coffee fields when they won't see money from the coffee for at least three years.

Bard-Aid, with the help of LASO, will be putting on a benefit for Hierba Buena: ¡De Guatemala con Sabor! is a dinner and talk with poetry performances and marimba/ranchera music to be held at the Bard College Multi-Purpose Room on May

3 at 7:30 p.m. I will be speaking of my experience of spending two months living with them, picking coffee, and helping organize the cooperative, for which they still need a lot of start-up money. Entrance to the event is free, the dinner is \$3, and Bard-Aid will be raffling various prizes to raise money for Hierba Buena.

# Gamelan Fundraiser Delights Crowds, Saves Orphans

Balinese Cultural Events raise money for the Bina Harapan Orphanage and entertain students.

**ANDREW NEWMAN**

Over the past two semesters, few who pass by Olin Hall in the evening have failed to notice the surreal and soothing sounds of the Balinese gamelan orchestra emanating from within the building. That same music, and the presence of one of Indonesia's premier dalang, or puppet masters, drew more than three hundred students and community members to a two night Balinese cultural exposition last week. The event raised an excess of \$1500 for children at the Bina Harapan orphanage, in Bogor, Indonesia.

On April 27, Fulbright scholar in residence Ni Ketut Suryatini led the Hudson Valley and Bard Gamelan ensembles in a performance that fully packed the seats and aisles of Olin Hall.

Suryatini is among the first female graduates of STSI, Indonesia's preeminent college for the performing arts. She is an accomplished composer, playwright, singer, and dancer who came to Bard after completing five international arts tours in Japan, Europe, and Canada. She also comes from a family of specialists in Balinese music and dance and is the sister of I Wayan Suweca, the founder of the first gamelan ensemble in the United States.

photos by Rafi Rom



## Spring Quartet Serenades Bard with Music, Charm

**Daniel Lichtblau**

This coming fall, the Bard College faculty will be joined by the four members of the Colorado String Quartet to mark the beginning of an ongoing partnership. Each member of the Colorado String Quartet (violinists Julie Rosenfeld and Deborah Redding, Violist Marka Gustavsson, and Cellist Diane



A Quartet of Sirens: The Colorado String Quartet will join the Bard faculty in another cross-organization partnership.

Chaplin) will conduct private music lessons as well as seminar classes on a broad range of musical topics.

The quartet has major label recordings of the works of Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, and some contemporary composers. In addition to their recordings, the internationally renowned Colorado String Quartet has in the past won the Naumburg Chamber

Music Award as well as the first prize in the Banff international string quartet competition in 1983.

Robert Martin, Associate Dean of Bard and Co-artistic Director of the Bard Music Festival said, "This residency presents an extraordinary opportunity for our students to work with

some of the nation's finest chamber performers." The members of the quartet are equally excited to be coming to Bard.

This will not be the first of such residencies for the Colorado String Quartet. In the past, they have held residencies at the Oberlin College Conservatory, Philadelphia's New College of Music, and the Banff Centre in Canada. In addition, the members have conducted master classes at the Eastman School of Music, Northwestern University, Indiana University, and the Cleveland School of Music.

This newly formed partnership is sure to be of great value to the Colorado String Quartet as well as to the Bard students who will be able to study and take classes with them.



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Thursday's performance began with a ceremonial procession, which was followed by several dances performed to the music of the gamelan orchestra. The ensembles played a style of twentieth-century Balinese music known as gamelan gong kebyar, consisting mainly of variable pitch percussion instruments. Gamelan ensembles are traditionally composed of twenty to thirty musicians, who play metallophones, gongs, drums, and flutes. There were also demonstrations of traditional Balinese games set to the music.

On Friday night, a benefit was held in the Chapel of the Holy Innocents for the orphans of Bina Harapan featuring the shadow puppetry of I Nyoman Sumandi, one Indonesia's most esteemed performers. Shadow puppet theater, called Wayang Cullit, is regarded as the pinnacle artistic expression in Indonesia. Dalang such as Sumandi are respected as both artists and spiritual leaders in Indonesia, and must be well versed in

music, dance, and the complicated Dalang theatrical techniques to gain proficiency. Sumandi performed his piece in both English and Indonesian.

His performance was preceded by a masked dance, called a topang, which he also performed. Ni Ketut Suryatini performed a piece as well.

One of the night's highlights came when she pulled the Indonesian Consul from the crowd who surprised and amused the audience with his dancing skills. Three other dances were performed as well.

A feast, and a raffle of Balinese art were also held which drew the crux of the



The Beats Continue: Bard Students gleefully participate in the Balinese celebration.

donations for the orphanage. The Bina Harapan orphanage currently houses twenty eight children, who range in age from eight to nineteen years, with the majority between ten and twelve years. Most children are there because their parents could not afford shelter, food, clothing, or schooling for them. Others have lost one or both parents or are the victims of abandonment or separation. They are mostly from the town of Bogor and the capital Jakarta.

Bard Senior Emmanuel Laumonier, who has worked closely with the Bina Harapan orphans for five years, was the dri-

ving force behind organizing the fundraiser. He was elated by the event's success, saying that "The money we raised will put many kids through school for a long time."

In a country where the mean annual income is far outpaced by the cost of a year's education at Bard, and where \$3 U.S. can pay for the schooling of a child for a full year, the \$1500 raised Friday night will have a strong impact on the lives of many children.



# When Art and Activism Collide

Dai Sil Kim-Gibson Brings the Controversial *Silence Broken* to Bard

JONAH WEINER

Documentary filmmaker Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, in a discussion in the Language Center following the screening of her most recent effort, *Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women*, told those gathered that in conceiving the film she decided there would be "no objectivity"--I'm mad as hell and this is the way it's going to be." A look at the exploitation hundreds of thousands of teenage Korean girls suffered at the hands of the Japanese military during the Second World War, *Silence Broken* makes this point clear enough on its own, really. Expressly intended to make an impact on non-Korean viewers ("battles like this are won in the court of public opinion," said Kim-Gibson at one point), the hour-plus film went so far as to dramatize, in English, the stories of those survivors with whom Kim-Gibson spoke.

It was only revealed in 1991, when witness after witness began to come forth, that during World War II the Japanese army had forced Korean girls into prostitution--to become so-called "comfort women"--to accommodate its officers. According to Kim-Gibson and those interviewed an estimated two hundred thousand girls were taken from schools and elsewhere, told they would be working in factories to help with the war effort, and were from there brought to numerous military camps and turned into virtual "sex slaves." Violations of human rights were many, to say the least, as Kim-Gibson's on-camera survivors told of genital mutilation to prevent pregnancy, dirty shacks with blankets spread on their floors for copulation, debilitating malnutrition, and physical abuse.

The Japanese government, according to Kim-Gibson, although it has recently come under much fire from the world community, has refused to make an apology admitting legal responsibility for the comfort women system. In *Silence Broken* Fujioka Nobukatsu, a professor from Tokyo University, speaks to Kim-Gibson about how culpable he feels Japan to be. Nobukatsu refutes the charge that these women were even forced into prostitution, contending instead that the government received a staggering amount of applications for the "lucrative" positions on the front line. One of the Korean survivors scoffs at such a suggestion: "What money?" she asks Kim-Gibson. "Nowhere to run, nowhere to buy--there was no one to give money to."

Compounding this debate, a professor from Chuo University who is interviewed on screen tells Kim-Gibson that evidence that might make substantive the claims of the

Korean women is less than forthcoming. *Silence Broken* tells us, in fact, that most of the documents of the Japanese army were burned for fear of court-martials. Regardless, in the face of the survivors' wrenching testimony it is hard to accept the claim of Nobukatsu and the Japanese government that no women were forced into their roles as comfort women.

In a few words delivered just before *Silence Broken* was shown, Dai Sil Kim-Gibson spoke a bit about the incorporation of dramatizations in the film, telling the audience that in the editing process "I faced a lot of difficulties, because the compelling stories that I learned from the women I interviewed--it was hard to find visual images that corresponded in intensity to their compelling stories...so I took a bit of dramatic license. There are dramatizations." Later Kim-Gibson commented that her decision to use dramatizations of the survivors' testimony came from her desire to "humanize" their stories and "to give a voice to all two hundred thousand women" who suffered as comfort women.

Unfortunately the dramatized segments--constituting a good majority of the film--do not complement the testimony so much as push it off the stage and, ultimately, undermine its integrity. By imposing on to the film her own rather simplistic creative interpretation of what happened to these women (reliably beautiful Korean girls cry at the brutish hands of ugly Japanese officers who are no more than cardboard villains, reminiscent of those caricatures that filled America's own anti-Japanese propaganda of the forties) Kim-Gibson effectively blunts the intensity of her interviewees' accounts. Interesting that she felt compelled to "humanize" what was already undeniably human, undeniably powerful. Perhaps the word "popularize" is a bit more accurate. In rolling the sentimentalized and amateurish dramatizations that she did while testimony played over the soundtrack, Kim-Gibson committed the filmic equivalent of, let's say, making a documentary on teen

drug abuse and using clips from "a very special episode" of 90210.

That Kim-Gibson was fearful of attempting to be "objective" with *Silence Broken* can be understood, though. As she said herself in the discussion following the screening, attempts at objectivity can run the risk of rendering their subjects no more human than statistics. But as a documentary filmmaker, to avoid propagandistic exploitation of your subject and nonetheless maintain its emotion and humanity is essential, though it requires a lot of skill. While Dai Sil Kim-Gibson could hardly be accused of being exploitative, her passion (about what is unquestionably an enraging matter) dulled the effectiveness of *Silence Broken*, taking something very serious and dramatizing it in an almost offensive, manipulative way.

An edited version of *Silence Broken* is planned to air on PBS, May 18th, 2000 at 10 pm EST. The event with Mrs. Kim-Gibson was made possible by BRAVE and the Asian-American Students Organization at Bard.



**Break it down like this:** Filmmaker Dai Sil Kim-Gibson speaks to the audience after the screening

**It was only revealed in 1991... that during World War II the Japanese army had forced Korean girls into prostitution--to become so-called "comfort women"--to accommodate its officers.**



**Telling Their Story:** Song Shin Do, one of the survivors interviewed in the film



**Comfort Women:** A still from one of the dramatized sequences in Kim-Gibson's *Silence Broken*.

## Senior Project Shows: Photography on Campus

JR VALENZUELA

On display in various places on campus is the first round of senior project presentations in photography; works form each of these shows will be a part of this year's Words and Images publication.

In Woods Studio main gallery, Suzanne Helpert's exhibition of color photography centers around abstraction of lights and light forms. Careful manipulation of depth of field has allowed her to guide the viewer through nebulous, out of focus strings and areas of light until the focus comes to a section of recognizable but hard-to-place texture. In other images, there is no obvious focal point, and instead geometric forms and interiors take on a similarly nebulous quality. The power of this juxtaposition of visual coherency and ambiguity is impressive.

In the lighting studio of Woods is Alex Dezen's *Flags and Heads and Poles*. The photographs are large digital prints from color negatives that show, quite literally, flags,

heads and poles. Rather than just a catalog of these subjects, his approach is at once straightforward and very

**The strength of [Dezen's] work lies in its ability to raise the question of how the artist feels he is interacting with these people, scenes, or objects...**

personal. The heads are almost always shown from behind, as if Dezen notices something about them, or wants to speak to the person, but it still is not clear if the moment has passed and that this image was all he was left with, or if their hair whipping in the wind or an arm obscuring the facial features was what he wanted from the beginning. The strength of the work lies in its ability to raise the question of how the artist feels he is interacting with these people, scenes, or objects, and to what extent these relationships can create or add to a sense of personal identity.

In the first floor study room in the student center is *Key Lime Pie*, the work of Hyla Skopitz. The presentation begins with a series of Polaroid snapshots that act as a sort of compression stage for the viewer. The color prints that follow are approximately the same size as the Polaroids. In these pictures of interiors, windows, staircases, people, she successfully carries over some of the compositional nonchalance that generally comes with instant photography. But since they were done with a large format camera, the level of detail in line and texture, as well as the reading of the light, gives so much more information than would be possible with a Polaroid. The end result is that the photographs get beyond preciousness, and instead demand to be engaged, to be concentrated upon.

Finally, and most visibly, is Dixie Mannello's work in the main hallway of the Campus Center, which consists of color digital prints of night scenes at and around Bard. They range from the walls of a meat warehouse to the baseball field near the gym. The prints are nothing short of stunning in terms of the rendering of light and shadow, revealing so much more than is often the case in night photography. These vacuous, uninhabited spaces are alive with color, but the distance between the subject and the camera is relaxed overall. That is to say that there is a kind of subdued clarity, where the viewer is truly drawn into these scenes but can stand back and explore the emotive possibilities that the images present.



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# American Psycho gets Crazy on the Silver Screen

**The Novel that Shocked a Nation of Readers Is Adapted for the Screen**

CHRISTINE CIOFFARI  
ELIZABETH LORENZ

When Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho* first hit bookstores in 1991, shocked readers criticized its brutally graphic, over-the-top violence. Most critics failed to look beyond the face value of the carnage, unfairly accusing Ellis of misogyny, since most of the violence was directed at women. This aspect of the story and its transition to film becomes more interesting when it is noted that a woman,

Mary Harron (*I Shot Andy Warhol*), directed it. Harron's film adaptation leaves one wondering if this type of criticism led readers to misunderstand much more important elements of the book. In other words, the critics missed the point. *American Psycho*, the book, is not without its flaws. However, Harron lowers the volume of the sexual vio-



Cold Hearted: *American Psycho* star Christian Bale gives a brilliant performance.



Thinking Crazy Thoughts: Reese Witherspoon thinks long and hard about Americans, psychos, the story of the universe

lence, usually through insinuation rather than explicit depiction. Sexual violence in film today is rarely controversial and hardly ever shocking. Harron, by avoiding this trope, ensures that the audience has the opportunity to see something that is new.

Once thought unfilmable (even to Oliver Stone, who intended to cast Leonardo DiCaprio in the lead), *American Psycho* passed through the hands of four different screenwriters who tried to adapt it and failed. Harron and Guinevere Turner manage to trans-

form what could easily have become fodder for a cheap slasher film into one of the most innovative black comedies in recent years. The film version of *American Psycho* is a sharp-witted satire of male vanity and Wall Street in the 80's, both hilarious and disturbing at the same time. What loose plot the film does have chronicles the daily life and nightly homicides of young Wall Street executive Patrick Bateman, played flawlessly by Christian Bale. Anyone who's seen *Velvet Goldmine* or *All the Little Animals* knows that Bale is no stranger to brilliant performance, but unfortunately few people have. Bale—who danced into our lives a decade ago as *Newsies*'s lovable Jack Kelly—has here not the role of a turn-of-the-century newspaper strike on his mind, but rather murderous impulses lurking behind a gleamingly exfoliated face. Bale masks his Britishness with a perfect American accent, giving what is bound to be one of the most stunning perfor-

mances of this year.

At the end of the film, the audience is left with two distinct possibilities: one, that Patrick Bateman is a prolific serial killer having slain "twenty...I don't know, maybe forty" people, or two, that Patrick Bateman is one imaginative, albeit deranged, unhappy man. The movie's surreal final murderous sequence reveals the transhistorical possibility that what Mary Harron is showing us is not the reality of Patrick Bateman's life. However, its alternative—that he is indeed a psycho killer—is equally possible. Because both of these are equally plausible, neither is really plausible. Supporting this is the fact that the movie supplies concrete evidence for either hypothesis.

If you're going to see this film (and do), anticipate a brilliant voice-over in addition to hysterical monologues on the state of pop music accompanying the most significant killings. Patrick Bateman kills Paul Allen in the apartment with the axe. Jared Leto's Allen fuels some of the most engagingly humorous revelations about Patrick's obsessive nature. These include his daily ablutions/exercise regimen ("If my eyes are puffy, I'll wear an ice-pack

while I do my crunches. I'm up to a thousand now,") and perhaps one of the film's most memorable scenes, in which Bateman breaks into a cold sweat at the sight of a co-worker's more stylish business card. Just to stress: this

really is a very funny film. In another scene that should be mentioned, Bateman attempts to break up with his self-absorbed socialite fiancée (Reese Witherspoon): "Your friends are my friends,

and my friends are your friends. It just wouldn't work out." "I've thought about that. You can have them."

The fact that Bateman is not a hateful character, and even becomes sympathetic, is a tribute to both the screenwriting and Bale's complex and brilliant performance.

**...Bale [Gives] what is bound to be one of the most stunning performances of the year...**



You About to Die! Christian Bale (right) aims his lethal Psycho-Ray at an unsuspecting victim in *American Psycho*.

## Take the World Apart and Figure Out how it Works

**On Stage with Boise Idaho's Built to Spill--the new Live Album Reviewed**

JONAH WEINER

If you'd heard nothing but the eight sprawling tracks on their 1997 *Perfect From Now On* LP, it would be natural to wonder whether Built to Spill's success with long, winding, and layered songs wasn't, to a large degree, dependent on production. You might wonder whether their drawn-out, eight-minute-plus endeavors wouldn't fall flat without the help of studio work. *Live*, their most recent release, flies in the face of that doubt, letting us know that Built to Spill's live act must be as powerful as anything they've released on record.

More than any other album of theirs (except *Ultimate Alternative Wavers*, maybe), *Perfect From Now On* reflected just how much Built to Spill could pull off extended digressions. Jams are everywhere on *Live*--most notably on the 20-minute cover of Neil Young's "Cortez the Killer"--while the more compact rock bursts that characterized 1999's *Keep it Like a Secret* are kept to a minimum ("The Plan" is the only song



**...Built to Spill's live act must be as powerful as anything they've released on record...**

taken from that album, in fact). Besides seizing heavily on *Perfect From Now On* ("Randy Described Eternity," "Stop the Show," "I Would Hurt a Fly," make up a third of the total track list), *Live* also includes "Car" from *There's Nothing Wrong With Love*, a cover of the Halo Benders' "Virginia Reel Around the Fountain," and a cover of Love As Laughter's "Singing Sores Make Perfect Swords."

While "Randy Described Eternity" and "Virginia Reel Around the Fountain" are a bit strained on *Live* (this version of "Virginia" reminds us that what made the Halo Benders work so well was Calvin Johnson's voice running next to Martsch's), other tracks surpass the energy of their studio-recorded counterparts. The one that comes first to mind is *Live*'s version of "Stop the Show,"

without question one of the album's high points. *Live*'s "I Would Hurt a Fly" is also striking, its guitar riffs howling with as much, if not more, intensity as they do on the original version, the song tightly sustained nonetheless.

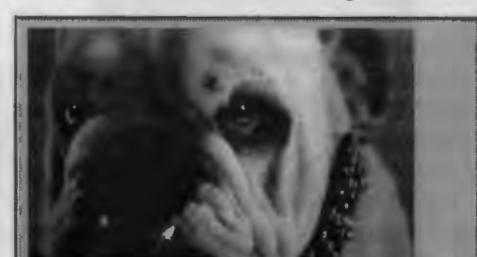


Keeping it Real...Secret Style: Built to Spill proves fat record contracts don't necessarily have to ruin you. Pictured above are band members Brett Nelson (left) and Doug Martsch.



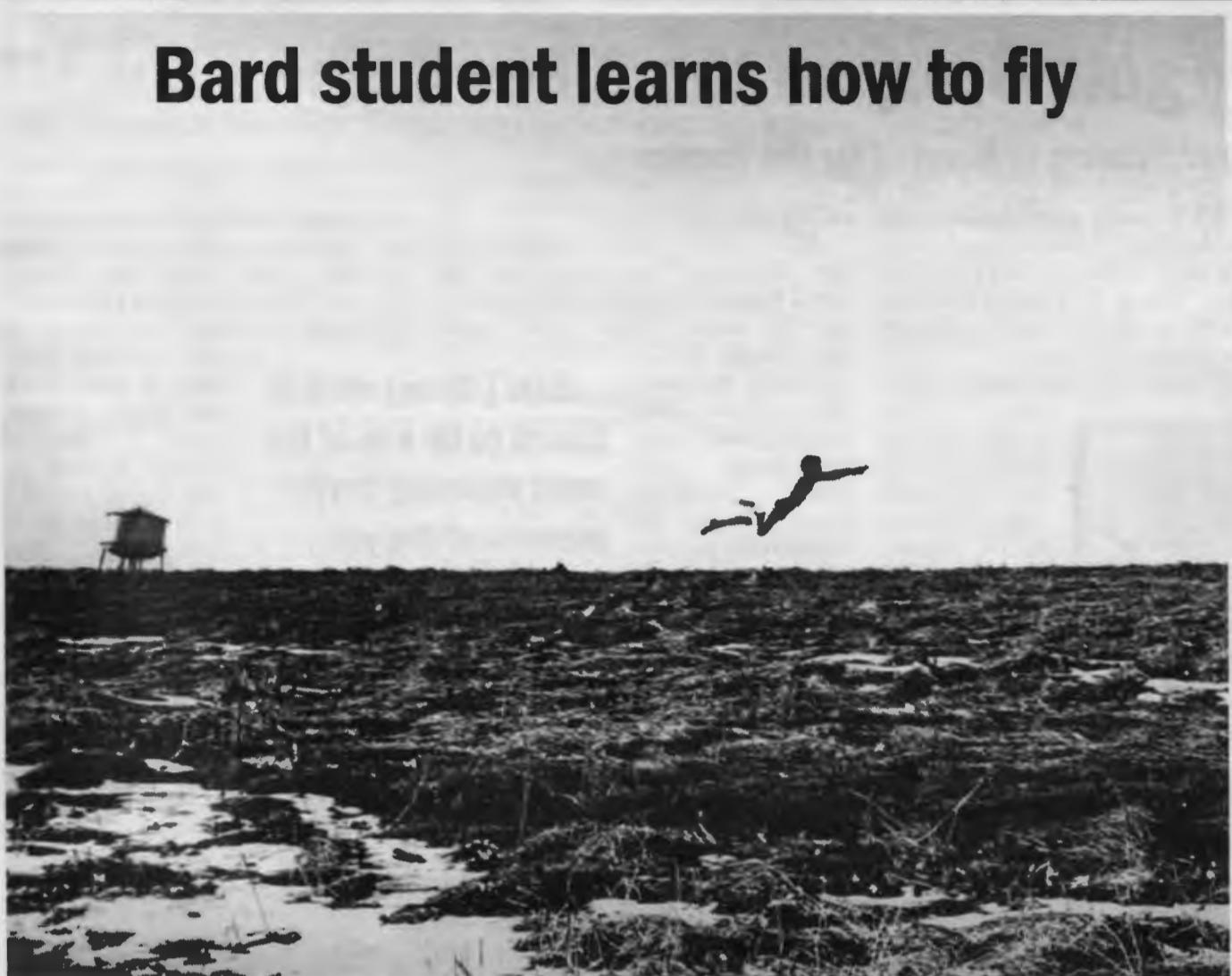
In general the Built to Spill songs on *Live* remain extremely faithful to their originals (I can't speak for the Love as Laughter and Neil Young tracks). But this is no reason to pass the album up. *Live* is not some throwaway live album tossed together to sell a few records but an important addition to Built to Spill's discography. It lives and breathes on its own, functioning as a powerful and often moving organic whole.

*Live* was released late last month on Warner Bros. Records. A US tour was launched to promote the album.



hey, are you angry about something? Student Life Committee: email, ideas, problems, questions to: studentlife@bard.edu we're trying to make it all better...

# Bard student learns how to fly



KATE WOLF  
Photos: DANIEL GORDON

You must excuse the tabloid-esque sensationalism of this story. Despite this, it is all real. No 2-cent cut and paste tricks have been used to match up Daniel's head to someone else's body. Nor has there been any digital tinkering. The computer has not created or altered any of the images herein. You must also acknowledge the amount of cynicism you are harboring at this very moment.

Perhaps it is jealousy. You have dreamt of flight as well. You too have longed to step out of your car and rise above the restrictions of gravity, the smog and the traffic, the ho-hum

expectancy of everyday physics. You can. Daniel Gordon is only mortal. He has achieved flight without magic, simply with hard work. Just an hour or two a day of practice, and commercial transportation will be left behind forever. It all depends on how you get there, so take your life into your own hands and learn to soar above the code of disbelief that discourages you from sticking out your wings and taking flight.



Above: Flying over Hudson River. March 20.  
Below: Graceful in Red Hook, March 6.

Me flying over the mills mansion.  
Above: detail of the photograph, note the excellent flying stance



Sequence of Training: First account of mental and physical properties brought together



Sequence of Training: First account of mental and physical properties brought together  
Across: Graceful in Red Hook  
Below: Fellow flyers

