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the bard free press

annandale-on-hudson, ny

december 4, 2006

"next issue in wingdings" since 2000

volume VIII, issue 4

Should Bard Examine its Past?

Questions arise after Brown U report finds founders enslaved
by brenden beck

In letters between Samuel Bard and Dr. John Bard, father and grandfather to the College's founder, John, there was passing reference to "Richard." Richard was a black servant in the Bard family household, though whether Richard was paid or enslaved is unknown. Helene Tieger, Bard's Archivist told the Free Press that beyond this anecdote, very little is known about Bard's historical relationship with slavery.

Not so with Brown University. After three years of intensive study, the school's Committee on Slavery and Justice published an exhaustive 107-page report on the early connections of Brown to the slave trade and its present day legacy last month. The study found extensive connections between Brown's founders, its founding endowment and profit from slave trading. "The Steering Committee was able to identify approximately thirty members of the Brown Corporation who owned or captained slave ships, many of whom were involved in the trade during their years of service to the university," the Committee found.

The report did not ultimately recommend any financial reparations, but rather proposed erecting a monument and a center for continuing research on slavery and justice. It also called for high ethical standards in the school's investments and admissions. Brown is the first American university to initiate such a broad study, though graduate students at Yale and a historian at the University of Pennsylvania independently researched their institutions' links to the slave trade.

Bard has never initiated such a report and does not have plans to. "It would be a good thing to do, but I don't think you'd find much," said President Leon Botstein.

Professor of History

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Students play rugby despite rain and the electrical blackout that struck campus friday. Page 8 for more photos.



Students dig in the Mine, a collaborative art project produced by nine students in the Old Gym this Saturday.

Greening the Campus

SUNY Purchase Conference Addresses Ecological Literacy

by hannah sunshine

On November 16th and 17th, SUNY Purchase was home to an intercollegiate conference entitled "Greening the Campus: Exploring Practices, Curriculum and Management in Higher Education." Members of the audience were called upon to engage the current environmental crisis as a "crisis of the mind" that cannot be ameliorated without a serious reconsideration of priorities. It was continually stressed that institutions of higher education have the potential to be very influential not only in supporting renewable energy and other green technologies (a move which can both save money and serve as a means of self-promotion for any given school) but also in providing students with comprehensive understanding of dynamic environmental systems as well. Keynote speaker David Orr touched on a number of evocative questions about what is at stake in the current curricular formula and what we stand to lose if environmental problems are not addressed on an institutional level.

The event was organized by the Environmental Consortium of Hudson Valley Colleges and Universities, which is composed of 45 schools in the region, including Bard. It provided an opportunity for administrators, faculty, staff, and students from member (and non-member) schools to come together to discuss the various environmental efforts that have taken place on their campuses and the necessary next steps. One of the members of Bard's "team" was Laurie Husted, the school's Environmental Resources Auditor. She asks a question that focuses on the critical points of the conference: "At a time when 95% of the oil used throughout history has been used in the last 70 years, and we are faced with the resulting disaster of climate that this has caused, what is Bard's responsibility to cultivate the ecological literacy of its students to equip them to respond?" In other words, what role must Bard play in addressing the crisis of the mind?

The overriding message of the conference was that as a species we have

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House Passes Animal Terrorism Bill

When protests hurt profits, activists equal terrorists

by lauren kitz

On Monday, November 13th, the House of Representatives passed the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA), a new legislation that broadens the prohibitions on animal activism and harshens the punishment for those who engage in it. Under current legislation, it is already considered terrorism to interfere with animal research organizations, farms, zoos, pet stores, or similar operations, known as "animal enterprises." This new bill also makes it a felony to target third-party organizations that do business with these animal enterprises, such as law firms, investment houses, insurance companies, and pharmaceutical companies.

The AETA, which was passed unanimously by the Senate in September, allows activists to be sentenced for making threats that produce "reasonable fear" of bodily

harm as well as causing "economic damage." This economic aspect has become a contentious issue amongst opponents, as the legislation makes illegal any activity that results in a loss of profits for a business, including "non-violent physical obstruction of an animal enterprise." Under

up to 10 years.

The AETA is an expansion of 1992's Animal Enterprise Protection Act. Six Congressmen in a nearly empty House passed The Act, with Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) casting the only "no" vote. Kucinich commented, "This bill was written to have a



Animal rights protesters like these will be subject to harsher punishments under new law.

this classification, common animal activist activities such as sit-ins may be considered terrorism if they cause the business at which they are protesting to lose profits. Undercover investigations and other non-violent activities may also potentially classify actors as terrorists. Violators may be imprisoned for up to a year for economic damage under \$10,000, and up to five years for verbal threats. If any personnel are injured the sentence could be

chilling effect... on a specific type of protest... We have to be very careful of painting everyone with broad brush of terrorism." Camille Hankins, a representative of the animal activist organization Win Animal Rights, said about the bill, "It's overly broad, overly vague and restricts freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, so no doubt someone will have to be a test case that will go all the way

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Eco-Conference at SUNY Purchase

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reached a critical tipping point; the collective decisions we make have the ability to push toward an unlivable planet or to mitigate the damage that has already been done. As Mr. Orr, chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Oberlin College, put it, "you pay for sustainability whether you get it or not." In his speech, "Green Campuses/Green Minds: Improving the Still 'Unlovely Human Mind'" (complete with Aldo Leopold reference), he stated that the trend toward green building practices and other sustainability movements that have taken place on many college campuses are not useful unless they are a means to the end of greening the mind. We cannot "build our way out" of the environmental problems we have created, so therefore the greater imperative should be to enact curricular transformations that promote environmental literacy. Some of the changes he hopes to see include greater interdisciplinary collaboration and a reinstatement of incentives for professors toward teaching rather than publishing. Mr. Orr's greatest hope is that environmental studies will soon be "a party that everyone has to come to." (Can you envision the clamor for enrollment in an environmental studies class that filled the looming Lab Science requirement?)

With a panel discussion entitled "Integrating Campus Greening into the Campus Culture," the focus of the conference then shifted from the theoretical to the concrete. The panelists were from University of South Carolina, Tufts University, Dalhousie University and AASHE (the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education). Each spoke,

just slightly over his or her allotted time, about successful campus-wide environmental initiatives and the strategies used in their pursuit. The initiatives were of wide-ranging scope and diverse origin; some were organized by students, and some came from higher up. Those of loftier aim included initiatives such as an environmental advisory committee, persuading the Bush administration to sign the Kyoto Protocol, using green technology in new building projects, offering environmentally oriented sections of required courses (i.e., English 101 with an ecological bent), converting shuttles to biodiesel, promoting bike use, and offering students the option to buy wind power for their dorm rooms. On the other end of the scale, USC has made recycling a fundamental aspect of pre-football game tailgating parties, and Tufts had a highly popular "Do it in the Dark" program that involved the distribution of glow-in-the-dark condoms and compact florescent light bulbs.

After the panel discussion there were breakout sessions in which everyone segregated into their respective categories for more specialized lecturing. Some of the information in the students' breakout session was, for all its good intents, less than innovative—we were encouraged to be goal oriented and persistent. There was, however, a representative from the EPA speaking about a student design competition called P3, the 3 Ps being people prosperity, and planet. The EPA is offering 50 \$10,000 grants to groups of students who submit proposals for environmental projects that range from the technical to the educational, and from local to the global. The 50 teams who receive the grant

The Judicial Branch of the Student Government Reports on this Semester's Cases

by anna pycior, SJB chairperson

As of Friday, December 1st, the Student Judiciary Board has discussed four cases this semester. They involved the following violations of the Community Standards of Behavior: Harassment of Fellow Students, Verbal Assault of Staff Members, Property Damage, Theft of Community Property, and Violation Of Community Standards For Substance Sales and Abuse.

The board has carefully considered each case, deeming that the appropriate sanctions be: Formal Apologies to Involved Community Members, Monetary Reparations for Damaged Property, Community Service, Limited Access to Specific Campus Buildings, and Social Probation.

The board would like to make note

of the inappropriate nature of interpersonal harassment. As with all matters addressed in the Student Handbook and Code Of Conduct, violations of personal space, freedom, and safety are taken very seriously by the board.

The Student Judiciary Board is a committee comprised of students, faculty and staff members, and administrators. Information on the committees practices can be found in the Student Handbook and at <http://student.bard.edu/committees/sjb/>. SJB chair Anna Pycior is available at ap491@bard.edu, and during open office hours from 4:30-5:30 every Tuesday in the student government office (located on the 2nd floor of the campus center, across from the Campus Center Office).

are subsequently eligible for a \$75,000 grant awarded to 6 of the participating groups. The deadline for the competition is December 21, and the only requirement is that the members on a given team must hail from at least two different disciplines. Additionally, it was strongly suggested that the proposed project address all 3 of the Ps. For more information visit www.epa.gov/p3.

The conference came to a close with an opportunity for the representatives of each college to regroup and report back about the content of their respective breakout sessions. Ultimately the message of the conference was clear: we are in a crisis situation that cannot be remedied by technological fixes alone. It is the responsibility of institutions of higher education, and everyone associated with them, to address environmental problems through curricular changes, commitment to a conscientious energy policy, and the recognition of individual stewardship. The challenge now is to move beyond the neatly organized conference agenda and address the specificities of Bard College.

Brown Report - continued from front page -

Myra Armstead who studies slavery in the Hudson Valley agreed, "I would be surprised, as a historian, if a search into Bard's history with slavery bore fruit. Bard was not a moneyed place like the endowed Ivy league institutions."

John Bard left very little money to the college he founded and died penniless. He established the school in 1860, 60 years after New York passed its first emancipation law and a year before the Civil War began.

The most recent attempt to study the Bard family's possible ties to slavery was by Susan Hinckley, an area resident with an interest in the history of the Bard region. Last year she studied the letters between Samuel and John Bard and found the uncertain reference to "Richard." She also tagged many other references to slaves and the slave trade in the letters, but never formally compiled her findings and was unreachable for comment.

Despite the Brown report, is looking into Bard's behavior during the days of slavery or subsequent eras of injustice helpful? "There's something about race in America that creates the Bard we have today," said Geneva Foster, Bard's Director of Multicultural Affairs, "but do we need to do a

historical investigation to come up with solutions? Let's get to the work of naming a social problem that our policy and relationships can address."

The Brown report did update the legacy of slavery through reconstruction, the Jim Crow era, and current racial inequality. It called for more vigorous recruitment of "a diverse student body and faculty" to try and remedy the echoes of slavery.

Just as the Brown Committee took issue with Bard's lack of diversity, Bard struggles with its own whiteness. "What does it mean that 80% of Bard's faculty and staff are white?" asks Foster. "Why 80% and how does that matter to people of color?"

There has been an attempt since the establishment of the Office of Multicultural Affairs to begin to grapple with diversity on campus. Ewuare Osayande, an activist, poet, and author has been leading workshops at Bard to address white supremacy over the past year and a half. "Ewuare has addressed the history of slavery as a legal concept in his workshops," Foster said, "as well as addressing the construct of race and the way it controls human life today."

A controversial ad was the catalyst for the Brown study. In 2001, an ad criticizing monetary reparations for the descendants of the enslaved appeared in a Brown student newspaper. The ad said African-Americans should thank Christians for ending slavery. In response to the subsequent fervor Brown President Ruth Simmons charged the Committee with the task of researching Brown's history with slavery.

Bard's own President Botstein is less interested with studying times past. "What should be done is not memorialize the past, but these institutions should open their coffers to African-American and Native Americans to make sure they have an opportunity for education. It is easier to pass judgment on history than on ourselves."

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STAFF

brenden "needs new shoes" beck
owen "needs to play a full 90 minutes" conlow
matt "needs a family" garklavs
mikaela "may ultimately need a kidney transplant" gross
lauren "needs to stop hating" kitz
andy "needs your support" kopas
justin "needs to drink a tall glass of shut the fuck up" leigh
jesse "needs a forever home" malmed
peter "needs a vasectomy" neely
walker "needs much better lighting" schiff
karen "needs to embrace her metal side" soskin
ben "needs to close the deal by valentine's day" seligman
daniel "needs more thanksgiving sponsors" tema
cecca "needs a larger hat" wrobel

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A (Light) Justice for Guatemala

Several activists try legal action against government criminals

by jon leslie

In my September op-ed article, "Why Ríos Montt is Lucky He Never Struck Oil," I argued that the impossibility of prosecution for Guatemala's ex-dictator Ríos Montt, considered ultimately responsible for the greater bulk of atrocities committed during Guatemala's cold civil war, rendered the legal system within Guatemala's current political landscape functionally bankrupt. However, just last month, the Guatemalan judicial system approved arrest warrants for Mejía Victores, Angel Anibal Guevara, Benedicto Lucas García, German Chupina Barahona, Donaldo Alvarez, and Pedro García Arredondo, commonly recognized as penultimate culprits of the military's long campaign of violence, effectively proving my angsty defeatism overly human-righteous and, in a way, plainly wrong.

The case was originally filed in the royal courts of Spain by indigenous rights

activist Rigoberta Menchú for the specific, ostensive charge of burning the Spanish Embassy in 1980. Officially accepted under the universalizing moniker of "Crimes Against Humanity," Spanish Judge Santiago Pedraz on July 7 of this year issued international arrest warrants against eight



Former director of the National Police, Colonel German Lhu-pina Barahona being taken into police custody on Nov. 7th.

former presidents and military officials (including our potential cause célèbre Generalissimo Montt.) On November 6, Guatemalan Judges Morelia Ríos, Isaías Figueroa, and Bélgica Deras Román issued the order for domestic recognition of six of these warrants.

But of course, a quick arithmetic proves that two names are absent from the original roll call. One of these absentees, former president Romeo Lucas García, died this June in Venezuela. Although no warrant for his corporal detention could be issued, many communities, still haunted by the violence committed under his regime, want a formal prosecution of his specter. This postmortem legal process, unconventional as it is, still seems more viable than prosecution of the other name excised from the list. Officially, the Guatemalan tri-judicial council cited a lack of *prima facie* evidence specifically linking Ríos Montt to the 1980 burning of the Spanish embassy, or any of the ensuing violence. But, although the international arrest warrant indicates, "During Ríos Montt's reign, 69% of all executions took place, 41% of rapes and sexual assaults, and 45% of tortures of all the registered cases, as documented in the Commission for Historical Clarification," this is clearly not what's on trial. And of course, there is absolutely no shortage of *prima facie* evidence linking Montt to these universally offensive "crimes against humanity."

Safe to say, his pardoning by the Guatemalan courts only ostensibly

relates to this manipulated technicality in the legal protocol. Rather, Montt's impunity reflects the broader issue of the Guatemalan state's continued weakness and instability. The current pluralistic polity within Guatemala is still heavily influenced by Montt's legacy. The current party in power can't afford to risk sacrificing relations with Montt's party (the FRG - Guatemalan Republican Front), by enforcing international law and seeking out his detainment.

Indeed, this hard power carries directly from Montt's US ties, especially with powerful evangelical circles, who control mammoth, typically elephant lobbies in the capital. And obviously a trend of apathy towards Latin America politics (a *realpolitik* nearly scientifically reflexive to the country's poverty of utilizable capital and oil) catalyzes this ideological doublethink within the U.S.: justice (and democracy) at any cost for the 100,000-plus Kurds gassed under

the Bahti Regime in Iraq, but not so much as a formal statement of support for the same roughly-rounded number of campesinos and students massacred under Montt's Regime in Guatemala.

Although we may miss the ultimate cause célèbre, this trial is not completely void of significance. At least we have tangible legal actions being taken in the direction of justice, as Eduardo de León of the Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation stated: "We must analyze the resolution, but what we see as positive is the fact that universal jurisdiction was accepted...we ask that the errors committed be made right."

And if any of you feel angsty and responsible, you can help correct these errors by writing your senator. Write: "Saddam is being hanged, God Bless Us, but maybe now we can move on to asphyxiating another genocidal maniac. Good news, this one doesn't even cost those morbidly obese numbers of intervention, no 90 billion dollars, 2,000 dead troops, 100,000 dead citizens. All we need to do is assist the legal process by issuing a forceful statement of support and by freezing Montt's assets in US banks. And just imagine the approval rating, the world witnessing the spectacle of yet another genocidal maniac put through the shock, awe, and asphyxiation of justice, to watch another un-democratic, un-American face turn red, white, and then blue?"

Well, something less violently ironic might be more effective or appropriate, but you get the idea.



Britain's Big Ben next to the icon of its new culture of control

Don't Even Think About It

Or rather, don't exhibit a behavioral pattern that suggests it by andy kopas

Imagined societies have been a literary instrument since the days of Plato, often taking the form of utopias dedicated to whatever the author thinks best of human beliefs. The foil of this concept, the dystopia, is just as often used to teach humanity a lesson about the wrong turn they may be about to make. And few dystopias are complete without some sort of police state. Children are taught to narc at the first sign of unwholesome behavior by their parents, surveillance devices are standard in every home, and in the most extreme cases, "thought police" arrest criminals before they commit a crime. While all of these scenarios are frightening most are dismissed as hyperbole, informative but ultimately fictional. Consider the surprise were one of these predictions to become reality.

Well, that may unfortunately be the case for thought police, arguably the most frightening of the visions. British police forces have recently compiled a list of the one hundred most dangerous criminals of the future, the people most likely in the eyes of authorities to commit a violent crime at some point. They created it using evidence from past events, specifically domestic violence, reports from acquaintances, and analysis from criminal psychologists. The uncomfortable question now arises of what to do with the people who made it onto the list.

Suggestions so far have ranged from surveillance, to "management programs," all the way to immediate

arrest. Whether or not these plans are going to be acted upon is still undecided. However, it seems that any outrage to such a list even existing has already morphed into discussion on the possibilities of such a database. One official even went as far as to suggest that inaction on such information would be in and of itself an offense against the public.

Whether or not the predictions of the list are accurate has yet to be determined. No one on the list has committed the crimes they are suspected of, and to most scientists that would constitute a lack of experimental evidence and thus engender some doubt in theory. Yet outside pressure, no doubt both ethical and political, has accelerated this case beyond the realm of doubts as to the accuracy and onto debate over the implications of such results.

There are no doubts that the current era has seen criminal science progressing by leaps and bounds, and much of this progress is rightly heralded as a boon for domestic security. Yet history has repeatedly shown the dire effects of scientific results being commandeered by nonscientists, and here again is that same threat rearing its head. When science and ethics clash, it is hardly right to say that science should always win out. Yet it is just as bad to say that ethics should have analogous dominion. What can be said is that neither should ever yield without fierce debate, the apparent lack of which is in this specific case somewhat unsettling.



CONGRATS, PAUL!

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Joanna's Desire

Charting the course of Newsom's voyage
by charls lannin

Sean Connery started to become the double-0 secret agent, and so he stopped playing James Bond. Joanna Newsom has become the meadowlark and chim-choo-ree and the sparrow, though she continues to tell epic poems dressed like children's stories rich in subliminal nature sex and romantic personified animals, cockles and acorns. Possibly this will go on for hundreds of albums, well beyond Sufjan's last states (Rhode Island? Costa Rica?) and long past the re-emergence and re-downfall of the rock opera and, by then, the iTunes Music Store will present freak-folk opera. Already precious Joanna is the maiden of her imagination's oblivious-to-all-but-the-unicorn genius. Likely sprouted from the soil or spewn from the sun, the artist will end up where she began, reflecting in the hills with the goats upon enchantress trials and discoveries. Newsom's latest album, *Ys*, will be remembered and beloved among Newsom's work of mid-twenties elf-warrior love and loss. It's a story about spelunking monkeys and meteorites of startling beauty, but sensually extreme like Snoop Dogg and Akon's "I Wanna Fuck You." There's an all-star cast here, with Jim O'Rourke producing, Steve Albini engineering, and Van Dyke Parks contributing string arrangements, which are played by a symphony orchestra of ten thousand. Of course this is all put together and sponsored by Good Year and Sparks Malt Energy Liquors.

The orchestra unsettles the listener and it feels like being inside a Shirley Temple film, or a modern science fiction Christmas and then sometimes like Jurassic Park. Yes, Van Dyke Parks' string arrangements inject an irresistible seriousness into the drama and vivid adventures of long-faced Burros and grass-sick horses. One wonders what "Only Skin" would be like without the entire Hobbitown orchestra—immediately the mind considers the possibilities, something like late schizophrenic vocalist and casio ace Wesley Willis writing for the London Philharmonic. "Only Skin" is *Ys*'s Fellowship of the Ring, seventeen minutes of pained love and self-discovery, or a bird and a sexual partner that picked up Joanna and saved her from a city-wide fire. Or it's about a bitter herb that healed the mortal wound of Joanna's lover and brought on an outpouring of the hearts, over the fishing poles and into swimming holes. The song could be about anything you want, just pick any four lines and start drawing pictures. Or have the youngest in your family draw. A few years ago, a bunch of six and seven year-olds were played some Radiohead and told to draw what they heard. The results were at the least on par with the band's regular album artwork. The kids produced some of the finest conceivable images of digital age death and paranoia. The same kids, even if frozen in the age of their Radiohead period, would have definitely contributed something more illuminating than *Ys*' dumb-ass-procured cover art, which would only be justified if it was littered with camouflage sexual organs (it isn't). "Only Skin"—born of a whistle, not a milk thistle, the centerpiece is a masterpiece—features Smog's Bill Callahan with 600 violins and a jaw harp! Most joyous! Suggestions of Joanna's potential for

the 007 complex is instrumentation that makes for an image of the young Vallahan princess in the fields of the John Lennon's fog-machine psychedelic pasture in an "Oh Yoko" promo music video. Will she ever come back?

You may very well have seen pictures of Joanna looking all normal or hipster, or like a freak-folk who can think and speak normal and make records that make money, but find an interview and you find a strange girl birthed in an inappropriate century who can't really pronounce most syllables without making fantastic spitting sounds.

The theatrical accompaniment to what was originally Joanna and her harp evokes the thick and epic arrangements that characterize Van Morrison's *Astral Weeks* or, more recently, the Dirty Projectors' *Slaves Graves & Ballads*. The strings impress upon the listener THIS IS EPIC. SO FUCKING EPIC. and Newsom's lyrics ask WHAT IS DESIRE? She yelps "Desire/Ohh-Ohh-Ohh-Desire/Ohh-Ohh-Ohh-Desire/Desire." Like she's being born and sexually transformogrified and dying all at the same time, Newsom delivers this line with the same unbridled and scary orgasmic passion that she does "Say my name/Say my name" in a clear "word" to her obvious parallel, Beyonce Knowles. That's one of the harder ones to figure out. She's also clearly down with Asia - watch yourself fall in love with the occasional pentatonic back-to-China melody in "Only Skin" over which she croons questions on sassafras and Sisyphus. Asked in an interview if she could be anything other than herself, Joanna said she'd be the Earth. To talk about her explanation would do a disservice to the poetic-compulsive child of the pumpkin patches. Her favorite animal is the seahorse, but she wouldn't want to be a seahorse because they look so sad.

Ys is really something, or not, but it hardly defies irrational explanation. This record is just like visiting Disney World, falling in love with a sweat-loving employee in a dragon suit and fighting with swords to make it back home. The song and story that should be a ride in Orlando's Magic Kingdom is "Monkey & Bear." This is a fairy tale that tickles the secret perversions of hipster Walt Disney enthusiasts, and encapsulates what there is to love or hate in this record. Somewhere in there is a story about the brave, sacrificial love between Monkey and Ursula, the bear. Then there's a scene that seems to have the bear's arms, er, "outside-arms," falling off and disintegrating with the rest of Ursula into glacial and balletic shadows. And then both characters are Bear: "When Bear left Bear/ When Bear stepped clear of Bear." Maybe Joanna Newsom is a sentient love-maker-song-writer invented by O'Rourke, Albini and Parks. Maybe you think she just sounds annoying, like "is it weird I'm listening to Lisa Simpson sing indie folk ballads?" Her entire life has a predecessor in a fantasy anthology of battling dragons and mountains of gold. Maybe *Ys* is, like, new Cosmic Amerikan Musik, man. Note: Blossoms have fallen, and the pollen ruins the plow; Peonies nod in the breeze and while they wetly bow, with; Hydrocephalic listlessness ants mop up-a their brow.

MUSIC REVIEWS



Viva Voce
Get Yr Blood Sucked Out
Barsuk Records

When the first track of Viva Voce's new album starts, it's hard to imagine that the band has only two members. Between the multiple guitar tracks and layered vocals that are infused in every song off *Get Yr Blood Sucked Out*, the group sounds more like a well-oiled machine of five or six players. In actuality, Anita and Kevin Robinson are the sole musicians, with infrequent help from others. The two of them play all the instruments so well, who needs anyone else anyway? Sounds like the White Stripes, right? Almost . . . but not quite. Though both bands' music is definitely in the same classic rock & roll vein, Viva Voce is certainly not trying to copy what the White Stripes have been doing for only one year longer. *Get Yr Blood Sucked Out* is a refreshing sound coming from the rock & roll scene today.

The album begins with "Believer," a pseudo-apocalyptic-acid-rock number that is a proper introduction to the rest of the songs. That said, however, the Robinsons

experiment with many different sounds, from folk to hard rock - often within the same song, as seen in "When Planets Collide." One of the key tracks, "Drown Them Out," evokes the Cranberries, while two tracks later "So Many Miles" recalls the Velvet Underground. To top it off, both of those songs sound vaguely like The Mamas and the Papas. Overall, there is certainly a prevalent influence from 70's rock - you don't see too many bands around today still breaking for a guitar solo that lasts for minutes. For that reason and more, it is not likely that *Get Yr Blood Sucked Out* will be lighting up the radio airwaves, even though there are some incredibly catchy songs like "From the Devil Himself" and "We Do Not Fuck Around." This is unfortunate, since the album deserves to be heard by many.

- perry allen



The Evens
Get Evens
Dischord Records

The new Evens album continues Ian MacKaye's over twenty-year long habit of putting out stellar albums. *Get Evens* is the most introverted record

that MacKaye has ever made, with minimal guitar placing a heavier emphasis on both the drumming and the vocals. Amy Farina's drumming fills out the instrumentation beautifully with unexpected, tasteful playing. Songs like "Cache Is Empty" show that her drumming is at least as important as MacKaye's guitar to the sound of this record. For his part, MacKaye proves his versatility as a singer, moving through widely varied textures, from crooning to yelling, sometimes on the same song.

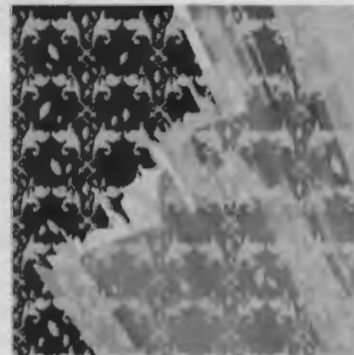
Lyrical, this could be called an election year record, but that's sort of beside the point because MacKaye frequently writes political lyrics. Living in the nation's capitol has always informed his writing, and it's never been clearer than on "Everybody Knows," with "You and yours/and all your wars/have run your last campaign" and "Washington is our city!"

Ok, so this record isn't perfect. It's hard to get engaged with some of the slower songs, such as "All You Find You Keep," although they have a subdued beauty that becomes apparent upon repeated listen. Above all, I would like to hear more of Amy Farina's vocals. Her strong, textured voice is powerful and emotional, and all too often supplanted by MacKaye's.

The vocal harmonies and interplay between the instruments on *Get Evens* are perfectly tight; MacKaye and Farina have mastered musical intimacy. In an interview with *Prefix Magazine*, MacKaye says some people believe "volume equals power, but we don't believe that. . . Sometimes things that are quieter lay it out even more intensely." The intensity of the musicians' hardcore background carries through most of the record, especially "Everybody Knows." The result

is musically beautiful with distinctly punk rock sparseness - a politically, emotionally charged record. This is what happens when hardcore grows up.

- ben seligman



Drop the Lime
We Never Sleep
Tigerbeat6

Luka Venezia '03 (aka Drop the Lime) has been facing a creative dilemma that's common to many electronic musicians: finding a compromise between soul and technique. He initially focused on the latter. After graduating from Bard, he quickly emerged in the New York underground experimental music scene by playing breakcore. This was an emerging genre in late 90's that inherited punk rock aesthetics by embracing speed and complexity over conventional melody and rhythm. Venezia quickly mastered it. His animated live performance reflected the accelerated percussion of his beats, making him one of most notable electronic artists to come out of the states (see freepress.bard.edu/og/index.html for a clip of him performing in the Old Gym that illustrates my point). Drop the Lime's debut LP *This Means Forever*, was received with international acclaim. A few critics even considered it to be the apotheosis of breakcore. But despite his success as an

underground DJ, there was still something uneven about his music. The truth is that Drop the Lime was a traitor. He never fully embraced the breakcore aesthetic of mayhem over melody. On many of the tracks off of *This Means Forever* there was a catchy bass line or vocal track lingering in the background that demanded further attention. What eventually emerged was the soul of his music, a harmonization of seductive vocals and heavy synths with a steady rhythm.

These days Venezia is a more candid musician. Instead of splicing up his beats to be "less mainstream," he'll add a catchy bass-line. At his shows you'll see girls dancing behind him on stage rather than some pony-tailed metal dudes moshing in the front row. This change of pace makes the drastically different feel of Drop the Lime's second LP, *We Never Sleep*, seem all the more appropriate. The album is not as technically audacious as his previous work, but it's still very bold in other respects. While combining various genres of music from techno to jazz, it also tries to capture the lifestyle of late-night clubs in a cohesive theme.

Overall, *We Sleep Forever* collapses under the weight of its own ambition. This is not to say that Luka has lost his touch. Tracks like "E-lock," "Devil's Kicks," and "Bella" prove that Luka still has an arsenal of commanding beats to draw from in years to come. *We Never Sleep* was probably the right direction for Drop the Lime to take at this point in his career, but I think he probably should have slept on it before abandoning most of his past achievements for a greater challenge.

-matthew garklavs

Don't Color Me Derivative

by ben greenblatt

This could have been the biggest band of the early 90s. Awesome Color maintains the droning grunge of their predecessors from the Nirvana era, while manipulating the Stooges' punk sounds of Detroit. At first glimpse, Awesome Color may not look the type of band to produce such uncharacteristically rhythmic noise, but they do.

A crowd witnessed Awesome Color, opening for Icy Demons at SMOG this past Monday night, become one definable entity through a synthesis of shark bass, pouncing drums, an electric guitar, and saccharine, apathetic vocals. From moment the band began with "New Song" through their beguiling Stooges-induced trip "Grown," Awesome Color engaged and deafened its audience with infectious rhythms. The band swallows their influences whole (among them Mudhoney, Comets on Fire, Stooges, and Sonic Youth - their debut LP was produced by Thurston Moore), initially reproducing those other musicians' distinct sounds, and then redirecting and manipulating their influences' works to become

their own.

Each band member plays on different wavelengths, starting sporadic and dismissive, by the end becoming as tight as any neatly wrapped Christmas gift. Allison Busch's drumming was punctual, keeping her eye on the prize the whole time, looking as if she was a feline waiting to pounce on the unsuspecting rodent that was the snare. Michael Troutman's bass established the relentless rhythm, plucking the bass in a ritualistically vigorous manner, looking like a smaller Flea, but crazier. Derek Stanton, playing the guitar like any legendary guitar hero, played without any regard for his other band members, somehow managing to complement the Stooges-like rhythm section with grungy guitar and Howlin'-Wolf-fused-with-Mark-Arm vocals. The band provides Derek free reign with his guitar, letting him jump into the air and provide the net for when he lands, allowing for a unification through rhythm. The band thus becomes one.

Maybe the 90s wasn't ready for them, but they still might become one of the better bands, today.

AT
SMOG,
BLACK
DICE
DEC. 10
AND EXCEPTER

ALSO: Dec. 8--Ron Goldberg Quintet/People
Dec. 9--The Exquisite Tales of Ronald Pelican
Dec. 13--Rusty Santos/Queens
BARD HALL
SMOG

FILM REVIEWS

Babel Doesn't Babble

by evan spigelman

There's not a lot to Alejandro González Iñárritu and Guillermo Arriaga's *Babel*, a masturbatory exercise in despair tailor-made for peddling in front of Oscar voters. And if you've seen *21 Grams*, the pair's previous film, this effort will seem all the more thin and self-aggrandizing. The same internal machine is at work here as was in *21 Grams*, but this time it's more geographically disparate: through happenstance and a near-tragic accident, strangers from all around the world will learn of their connection to one another and realize what a shitty place the world truly is. They will learn about themselves and each other, they will never be the same again, and so on and so forth.

The first of the four plotlines in question involves a Moroccan family who have recently acquired a hunting rifle. Ahmed and Youssef (Said Tarchani and Bouberk Ait El Caid), two of the children in the family, go out to hunt jackals and, trying to

episode with Amelia, a waste if it were not for Barraza, comes off as the most baiting and manipulative of the four and could be done without). Together, the four stories are self-effacing and effectively meaningless. Iñárritu and Arriaga are doing their best to channel Stephen Sodebergh's *Traffic*, but they don't have the sensitivity of that film, nor is their overarching idea as potent.

So what is the point of the film? Connecting the film's protagonists through that doggone rifle that appears in the film's first shots, Iñárritu and Arriaga would like the viewer to reflect how it really is a small world after all, and that every action we make will eventually touch people around the globe, for good or bad. Unfortunately, this comes through with the subtlety of a sledgehammer. The praise *Babel* has received due to its "gritty realism" is a result of DP Rodrigo Prieto's unimaginative cinematography that substitutes grainy film stock and wobbly motion for



Craig Daniel's poker face, eerily similar to his non-poker face.

New Bond Flick Bound To Please

by josh sorell

Finally rid of Pierce Brosnan and the incessant ridiculousness of the last three Bond films (More satellite death rays? Ugh) we can all finally enjoy a more in-depth, intimate James Bond with ridiculousness to a lesser extent. The first thing you will notice about *Casino Royale* is that, unlike the other twenty Bond flicks it does not start with a faraway Bond shooting at the audience, causing blood to drip down the screen. Be patient. Keep watching and you'll be satisfied as you are treated to a time-jumping black and white scene depicting Bond's first two kills as a double-0. The saga of 007 begins. Cue the Bum Bum, BUM-BUM!

Despite a theme song by Chris Cornell that lyrically stumbles (like everything he writes these days) the opening static and gun card montage is pretty and shows a few cool knife fights in silhouette right we get a good look at Daniel Craig: the new James Bond as of 2006. A lot of people dismissed him as a potential Bond because of his short blonde hair, waxy hairless chest and supposedly unmanly demeanor, including a reported incident of losing two teeth during a stunt. Oh if only these people realized how wrong they were.

The first ten minutes after the opening titles are jaw-dropping, hilarious, ridiculous and badass all at the same time. Bond races through a Madagascar construction site

with a heavily scarred bomb maker who apparently has the skill to climb and jump over architecture like Spiderman. I guess director Martin Campbell wanted to include at least a small gratuitous kill count to get the action fans pleased early. The rest of the film weaves in and out of this action-pace, so be prepared not to see anything explode for a while. The biggest chunk of the movie is devoted to Bond's interaction with his associates in the world of spies, lovers and guns.

Judi Dench returns as M, still pissed off and with the brisk swagger of someone half her age ("Christ I miss the Cold War!" she blurts at one point), she repeatedly gives the young Bond the old "wildcard" speech with wit and class. Bond simply smirks from time to time and ruffles his cuffs. Then there are those baby blue eyes tarnished by the cuts and bruises on his jaw. He's not the old model Bond or a younger twist on later attempts at the character. The new Bond is a paradox: a simultaneous love machine and kill machine who tries to figure out the puzzle of being "half monk and half hitman." Craig's Bond captivates the audience with sly, calm banter and tries to play character guessing games with Vesper Lynd (played by relative newcomer Eva Green who tries to mute Bond's tricks and charms with reason and a few tricks of her own). They talk about deceit, love and Bond's seeming death

wish while trying to catch a terrorist-supplying, poker-playing banker with a scar who cries blood. The poker game around which the film revolves is exciting, but not as intense as the fight scenes that chop up the various rounds of the game (blame me for not being a poker fan). Knives, bullets, poisons, tortures chambers and the usual spy movie tools are all there but there's something about this movie that keeps you tied on.

The plot jumps all over the place and it's occasionally hard to keep track of agents, double agents, moles etc. Then again, that's all standard for spy films, too. The real meat is in real attempt to forge an action film with depth. Craig washes off the blood and looks at the mirror with disdain and tries to show the soul of her Majesty's most famous fictitious assassin. "I have no armour left. You've stripped it from me. Whatever is left of me - whatever I am - I'm yours." This confused little soldier is the man who carries the weight of a franchise and a character intrinsically linked to the action and espionage genres. Can Craig rescue our boy from becoming a soulless man in a soulless film? Keep watching and you'll see the moments of agony, fear, rage and intensity that give birth to the super-spy we all know and love.

Score: 4.5/5: It slows down from time to time and some stunts are ludicrous, but when the smoke clears you see something great.



If you're going to see *Babel*, bring a shoulder to cry on.

see if the gun will hit a faraway tour bus, accidentally shoot American tourist Susan (Cate Blanchett). Jump to the bus, where Susan and her husband (Brad Pitt) are rushed to a nearby town. There, they deal with political incompetence and a xenophobic group of fellow westerners. Back at their place in the U.S., their children's nanny, Amelia (Adriana Barraza, who gives one of the two great performances in the film) goes to a wedding in Mexico with the kids, escorted by her nephew Santiago (Gael García Bernal, in what is essentially an extended cameo). Then, for reasons initially unknown, we end up in Japan, following the social and sexual frustration of a deaf-mute girl named Chieko (Rinko Kikuchi, giving the film's other excellent performance).

Some of these plots could've made strong stand-alone films (although the

meaning. It doesn't look bad, but given the screenplay's pithy game of connect-the-dots, one can hardly accuse *Babel* of realism on the merits of its look alone (granted, it is well-acted).

Then there's the film's conceited title: *Babel*. If these characters only reached out to one another and learned to understand another, or "speak the same language," as it were, maybe their lives wouldn't spiral into misfortune. It's a Biblical reference, get it? The film's tagline also helps the viewer to comprehend the internationally-minded soap opera: "Listen". Thus, Iñárritu and Arriaga end their "trilogy" (which includes this film, *21 Grams*, and *Amores Perros*) on a forced note. All the same, while the film might be obvious, it's certainly sellable: Paramount Pictures should be happy come January, when those Oscar voters have their say.

Animal Terrorism Bill

- continued from front page -
up to the Supreme Court."

Supporters of the bill, including Senate sponsors Dianne Feinstein (D-California) and James Inhofe (R-Oklahoma) praised it for providing protection to scientists, researchers, and other personnel against "violent tactics" employed by animal "extremists." The biomedical industry has been the strongest proponent of the bill, and is widely considered to be the driving force behind its passing. Companies cited harassment and intimidation

of individual researchers and labs as reasons for supporting the bill, as well as economic concerns.

Animal activists have responded to the bill by predicting that it will cause more activists to use underground tactics against these companies. Hankins commented, "[The pharmaceutical companies] could've taken a step that will create their worst nightmare. The thing they were afraid of was destruction, damage to labs and vandalism, but this could be the catalyst for a lot of that."

FILM REVIEWS

Kaufman-esque Film Promises Little, Delivers Much

by tom houseman

Finally, proof that Hollywood is, at least, trying. It was starting to feel like Hollywood had given up on being in any way creative and original. Every movie released this summer was a remake of a TV show, inspired by a roller coaster ride, filled with explosions and half-naked supermodels. So finally, after many had given up hope, Hollywood has thrown us a bone in the form of Marc Forster's *Stranger than Fiction*. Made from a screenplay by newcomer Zach Helm, *Stranger than Fiction* is not close to being a perfect film—even very good might be a stretch—but it takes a very clever idea and runs with it well, making it an enjoyable movie that will certainly entertain you and may even make you think, a feat that is increasingly rare in mainstream movies.

Karen Eiffel (Emma Thompson), a novelist famous for killing off her protagonist in every book she writes, doesn't know how to end her book. She can't figure out how to end the life of her main character, Harold Crick, and because of that, she is stalling. But what she doesn't know is that Harold Crick is a real person (played by Will Ferrell, no less) who can hear her narrate his life, although he has no idea who she is. As Harold Crick starts to fall in love with an eccentric baker (Maggie Gyllenhaal) and gets a college professor (Dustin Hoffman) to help him figure out whether the book of his life is a comedy or a tragedy, his and Karen Eiffel's path get dangerously close to crossing.

There are no screenwriters today who can write as well as Charlie Kaufman, the brilliant scribe behind *Being John Malkovich* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, but Zach Helm clearly wants to. His screenplay is very much in the same vein of Kaufman's surreal, self-conscious, meta style. This may be an unfair comparison because Kaufman certainly didn't invent this style, he just does it better than anyone else, but it is clear that Helm's debut screenplay draws on the ideas set out by Kaufman. The main difference is that Helm's script was clearly influenced by Hollywood, as there are far more happy moments than Charlie Kaufman would ever allow into one of his films. Helm's first script shows a lot of promise, and he will hopefully show even better work in the future.

Similarly, Marc Forster's directorial style is eerily reminiscent of what David O. Russell did in his brilliant film *I Heart Huckabees*. Forster inserts several

clever details into the beginning of the film, such as showing the math being done in Harold's head as he counts everything from brush strokes to stairs. This trick was also used by Russell in *Huckabees*, but it works almost as well in *Stranger than Fiction* and keeps the film from dragging in the beginning.

But the real stars of *Stranger than Fiction* are the stars themselves: the three main actors. Will Ferrell has proven that he can be hilariously funny (not that he always is, or even frequently is), but here he takes a much more reserved, toned-down role, similar to what other outrageous comedians Adam Sandler and Jim Carrey did in *Punch Drunk Love* and *Eternal Sunshine*, but Ferrell blows them both away by giving an excellent performance. In fact, Ferrell carries the film, bringing Harold Crick to life and never making him a caricature, as with the type of performances he is best known for. The other two great performances in the film are significantly less surprising; honestly, when do Emma Thompson and Dustin Hoffman not give great performances? Thompson easily takes the most complicated character and makes her delightfully fascinating, the kind of person we would never want to actually meet, just watch as she does ridiculous things like ask people in the emergency room how they got injured. Hoffman is wonderfully funny, and the scene in which he is figuring out what books Harold is not in (a process of elimination) absolutely steals the movie.

The only weak link, surprisingly, is Maggie Gyllenhaal. Gyllenhaal may be suffering from fatigue from having been in too many movies this year, but it just never seemed like she cared about what was going on in the movie, and she had very little chemistry with Ferrell.

Okay, so perhaps saying that Hollywood was trying to be original was a bit of a stretch, considering



Will Ferrell contemplates his next career move over a pastry.

how many sources it borrowed ideas from. But at least they're trying to seem original, which may be the next best thing. And when the movies they steal from are as brilliant as *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* and *I Heart Huckabees*, who's going to complain? Maybe, someday, Hollywood will try something that is actually creative and original. What a glorious day that will be.

RECENT BARD SHOWS



clockwise from top left: Telepathe at SMOG, Matt and Kim at SMOG, The Hand Jobs at SMOG, The Blow at SMOG, Avey Tare and Kria Brekkan at SMOG, Aloha in the MPR

Jumble by jesse malmud

HINTZ: DRUES, THBS, SYMBOIS, ETC.



~~PHASE~~ HAROLD SENT FOR
BEST GENT JEFF "GRAF"
TO "REPRESENT" HIS
HEADIEST PASSAGE // THYME.
THE KEY WORDS, DEAR
READER, THE EGG IN THIS
SCRAMBLE IS:

*PHASE /HAZE
A LING /LANG TERM
-OR-
AN ORDER, AN ACT

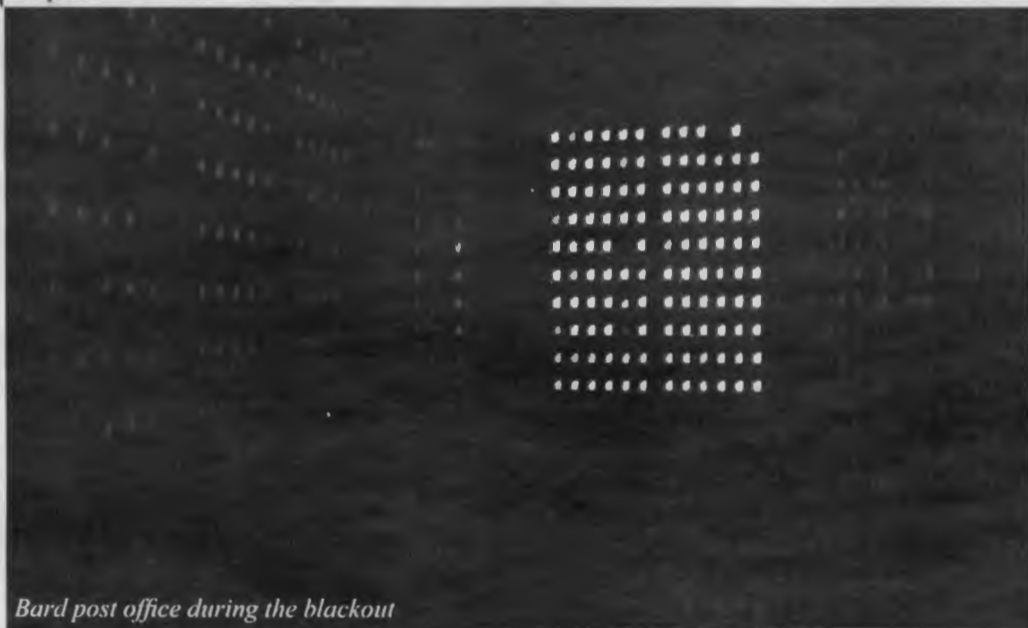
OOOOOO
A
OOOO

OOOOO
TUMON

OOOOO
ODEER

OOOOO
SCIRAG

OOOOO
DICEPE



Bard post office during the blackout

The Dimestore
is FREE!
MAKE LOVE!
PLAY SAFE!
order forms are in the post office.



The Root Cellar potluck perseveres despite blackout

**The Bard Free Press clip-n-save recipe #18
Presto Pasta Pesto**

by foster itter

This pasta dish is fresh and delicious. Capellini and spaghetti are also perfect for this herby sauce. If you don't have a food processor, never fear: a hammer or a glass bottle will do for crushing the walnuts, and you can simply mince the parsley, basil and garlic.

If you do have a food processor, a white bean puree with salt, olive oil, garlic and lemon to taste would be lovely. For more ideas email me at fi721@bard.edu.

Ingredients

- 1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1/2 cup basil leaves
- 2 small garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup toasted walnut pieces
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 3/4 pound linguine

Directions

In a mini food processor, pulse the parsley with the basil and garlic until chopped. Add the walnuts, Parmesan cheese and olive oil and process to a paste. Transfer the pesto to a large bowl, stir in the ricotta and season with salt and pepper.

Cook the linguine in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain the pasta, reserving 1/2 cup of the cooking water. Toss the pasta with the pesto and the reserved cooking water, season with salt and pepper and serve.



Carmen Sandiego stealing plans for SMOG expansion during blackout

The Bard Free Press Classifieds

SEEKING

DIGITAL CAMERA I'm looking for a passable digital camera, so if you're upgrading or whatever, get in touch with me. I'll pay up to \$200 - whatever's reasonable for the camera in question. Annie Sawyer, as287@bard.edu.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR The Bard College Annual fund is seeking and Assistant Director to plan, organize and implement programs to increase participation and gift size for alumni/ae, parents and friends of the College. In addition, this individual with help steward donors and prospects, create and execute mail appeals and run the phoneathon. Contact Matt Soper - soper@bard.edu for details.

PEN PAL Do you believe that the art of correspondence as "pen pals" is a lost art? Just feel like sharing random info about yourself with a complete stranger? Send a letter to PO Box 303.

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MISSED CONNECTIONS

I've been lusting after your frame for months now. I used to always see you leaning

against the wall outside of Kline, dressed to the nines in black and green. Now there's only a stranger, clad in mint-green and wearing your chain. If you haven't been getting out much, I'd just like you to know that I'd ride you all night long . . . if Ben would let me. Love from your friend with the frame pump.

Your nightly Egyptian dances keep us entertained, and you dramatic readings of the course catalog have us on the edge of our seats. Probably, you should come slam your chest against the common room window again soon. Sincerely, the JFK Appreciation Society.

Tactical O.C. - We won't blot without you, though we may not observe the three topping limit.