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# the bard free press

annandale-on-hudson, ny

february 12, 2007

"unafraid to say 'vagina'" since 2000

volume VIII, issue 5

## BPI Holds Third Com- mencement, 16 Graduate

*Ceremony a sign of  
New York's changing  
punitive attitudes*  
by brenden beck

Last Saturday, Eastern Correctional Facility in Napanoch, NY was home to the commencement ceremonies of the third Bard Prison Initiative graduation. On the surface, the proceedings could have been mistaken for any other commencement. Families came from hundreds of miles, mortarboards were thrown, a brass quartet played "Pomp and Circumstance." The form was the same with a respected Columbia history professor, Barbara Fields, who gave a heartfelt keynote address, and a state assemblyman, Jeffrion Aubry, who received an honorary degree.

For all the conventions, however, there were many different things about the graduation in Eastern's auditorium. Bard College President Leon Botstein described one such distinction in his charge to the graduates. "Normally, I'm supposed to tell you to 'go out and change the world,' but if I did that it would be cruel because you can't go out."

The sixteen men who received their associate's degrees will still be confined in Eastern, the maximum security prison where they took their classes, or another New York State prison until they're released. This hasn't stopped them from pursuing the same academic interests as the 1,575 of us on the Annandale campus.

It's not easy to follow the college path for those incarcerated, says Travis Darshan '07, a degree recipient and commencement speaker. "An eight by ten cell has broken men down because they start to think eight by ten thoughts. It has been our education at Bard that has transformed us from inmates of a prison to students of the world."

This ceremony was made historically unique by the attendance of and speech by the Commissioner of the Department of Correctional Services, Brian Fischer, who was appointed only

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The Bard Prison Initiative grads applaud after a dignitary's speech and before receiving their degrees. photo © karl rabe

## California Videographer Becomes Longest Incarcerated Journalist in U.S. History

by lauren kitz



On Tuesday, February 7, videographer Josh Wolf became the longest incarcerated journalist in U.S. history, having spent 169 days in federal prison. Wolf entered Dublin, California's Federal Detention Facility on August 1, 2006 under charges of civil contempt for refusing to turn over video he had shot to a U.S. district court, and for resisting a subpoena to testify before the same court about

the video's material.

The video contained footage of a San Francisco protest against the G8 summit in July of 2005. Wolf, 24, was shooting when the protest turned violent and protesters began to break store windows and battle with the police. One police officer was clubbed on the head while attempting to make an arrest, and, according to the police, protesters set fire to one of their vehicles. It was in the investigation of these two incidents that a federal grand jury ordered Wolf to turn over video of the protest and testify as to the events he witnessed. Wolf refused, citing his first amendment right as a journalist to withhold unpublished footage, and explicitly stating that he did not want to set a precedent for other journalists covering protests. Nor did he want his

videotoincriminate protesters; this is especially relevant in the case of the alleged vehicle arson, the validity of which has been much disputed. Neither Wolf's footage nor any witness accounts corroborate the arson accusation, and even police reports from that day mention only fireworks in the streets, and the shooting of a bottle rocket, but no flames. The damage report on the squad car, furthermore, mentions no burn damage, only a broken tail light.

Wolf was granted bail and released from prison on August 31, but still maintained that he would not hand over his material to the court. As a gesture of good faith Wolf offered to show U.S. Judge William Alsup the footage in camera while keeping it in his possession, but Alsup refused. Wolf was subsequently denied bail on September 18 and returned to prison on September 22.

Although California has shield laws protecting journalists from compelled disclosure of unpublished material and confidential sources, these protections do not apply under federal law. The case became federal when San Francisco police called upon the FBI and anti-terrorism squad to help

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## Bringing Back New Orleans

*What you can do to help*  
by stephen tremaine

It's hard to tell whether or not New Orleans is still alive. One could make a compelling argument that it's been dead for nearly a year now, doubled-over and stiff in the Gulf like a dead person unnoticed on the street.

That argument would go something like this: a year ago, the local government put to rest any notion that certain flooded areas of New Orleans would be turned back into swampland and that the city would return three or four neighborhoods smaller. Original city-wide plans designating neighborhoods like the lower 9th ward, Broadmoor, and others as future parks and greenspace were left on the shelf. As a result, anybody can rebuild in any neighborhood they want to across the entire city. Today, returning New Orleanians are coming back vastly spread out; many of these families represent the only functioning household on their block.

The problem is this: to provide water, electricity, telephone, sewerage, roads, police, etc. to that one house, the city has to pay to power the whole block - and yet City Hall (broke four times over from the cost of rebuilding their own facilities) only gets tax revenues from the one house. Into this impossible formula, consider the costs of re-opening and operating schools and social services. And new, multi-billion dollar levees to protect each of the city's 73 neighborhoods.

That leaves desperate needs like affordable public housing and hospitals unaccounted for.

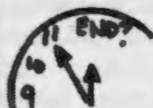
The storm left the government of New Orleans with two clear options: allow the entire city to be repopulated at the will of the market or select certain heavily-damaged neighborhoods for demolition. There are clear arguments against the latter (for example, peoples' hard-earned private property shouldn't be messed with). Both options, however, seen realistically, are frightening.

Among other urgent remedies, it would take a sizable contribution from the White House to pull the city out of this macabre financial situation. And yet the President, as though offering final proof of the irreparable goneness of New Orleans, did not mention the city once in his recent State of the Union Address. Not even an epigram.

Meanwhile, New Orleanians watch, huddled in their

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## ...a dark cloud makes the whole sky night

Enigmatic scientists predict sooner apocalypse  
by andy kopas

Eschatology is probably not a word that many people immediately recognize, but it is nevertheless one that most would claim to be familiar with. It is a word describing the aspects of theology and philosophy pertaining to the end of days, humanity's final judgement, or more colloquially, doomsday. The idea has a lengthy history, with the Zoroastrians fully developing the first known eschatology by the year 500 BCE, complete with "...a dark cloud that makes the whole sky night," a final judgement, and redemption for all the sinners after three days of punishment. And for as long as humanity has believed in doomsday, they have attempted, and apparently failed, to figure out just when it would be.

Luckily, the 1940s and '50s brought answers to many domestic and societal questions and needs, including efficient appliances so cooking wouldn't be so hard, stylish and fast cars to make travel faster, more comfortable, and to give these new rock and roll singers something to croon about, and even an answer to this nagging question of just when doomsday was going to come upon the world. In 1947 The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists became a full-fledged magazine and unveiled the Doomsday Clock, already set at 7 minutes to midnight. Citing the all-around danger of the recently unveiled nuclear weapons, the Bulletin gave the world 7 minutes until doomsday, with the hope that this would prompt world leaders to consider the consequences such technology could have if used on a large scale.

The Bulletin, and thus its clock, is run by a board of collaborators consisting of scientists, lawyers, publishers and businesspeople, and is currently chaired by Cathryn Cronin Cranston, executive vice president of Mansueto Ventures and former publisher of Harvard Business Review. Since 1947, the board, though its members may have changed over the years, has managed the minute

hands of the clock (it doesn't have a second hand, doomsday isn't that easy to predict even in this age of advanced technology) in response to current events in science, geopolitics and anything else that may correlate with the coming of the end. Throughout the

whole of the sixty years that the clock has been "ticking" the Bulletin has maintained that the greatest threat to humanity is posed by nuclear weapons. However, other threats have come and gone, including political instability, anti-ballistic weapons programs, and most recently and notably, global warming.

Not meant to be taken literally, the Board has never spoken on the meaning of the times they affix to the clock face past their relative distances to one and other and the message those differences convey. The clock has been as close as two minutes to midnight in 1953, directly after the US and USSR tested their unimaginably destructive hydrogen bombs within nine months of each other, and as far as seventeen minutes in 1991, after the official end of the Cold War, the apparent embrace of arms reductions, and the end of the concept of mutually assured destruction.

Since then the clock has inched back towards midnight with the failure of the US to follow through on many disarmament promises, the refusal of certain countries to maintain their allegiance to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the acquisition of nuclear arms, most notably by India and Pakistan. In 2002 it was moved back to its original seven minutes, and just around a month ago it was moved forward again, this time to five minutes until midnight. The



causes of this move were fairly wide-ranging, and the complete statement can be read on the Bulletin's website, thebulletin.org. America and Russia still have thousands of nuclear weapons aimed at each other and ready to fire, North Korea has announced it possesses nuclear weapons and fears of North Korea not only using them, but making them available to terrorist organizations, abound.

Some new players have come on the scene as well. Climate change was cited as the number two candidate for doomsday, as it is all but fact that humanity has single-handedly caused the levels of greenhouse gases, especially carbon-dioxide, to reach the highest in known history. Also noted was the emergence of several new and potentially dangerous technologies, including nanotech and genetic manipulation. While these do hold the potential for great good, the board wanted it known that their capacity for destruction was just as great. The burden is on all to make sure, through whatever means available, that these technologies are not only not misused, but that steps are taken to reduce the threat posed by nuclear arsenals as well as improve the state of the environment. The task is enormous, and the Bulletin aptly chose to end their statement by reminding all that "The clock is ticking," but it should be added that time has not yet run out.

## BPI Graduation cont'd

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three weeks prior by the new Governor Eliot Spitzer. "A commissioner has never attended a graduation, that was remarkable," says Daniel Karpowitz, Academic and Policy Director of the Bard Prison Initiative. "He's the head of the largest bureaucracy in New York State and his presence was a sign of the changing climate in the state."

"It is critical that our society supports programs of higher education inside and out," said Fischer in his speech. Such language represents a stark departure from the rhetoric of the previous state administration and the prevailing national orthodoxy regarding college in prisons.

In the two decades before BPI was founded in 1999, education programs in prisons were being universally cut. In 1995, then New York Governor George Pataki cut the last funding for colleges in New York prisons. It was under these circumstances that Bard grad Max Kenner '01 started BPI, a situation that led honorary degree recipient Assemblyman Aubry to liken BPI to the nineteenth-century network of slave travel north. "You graduates are the product of a new underground railroad because we've turned away from the rehabilitative potential of correctional facilities." Such an overtly negative characterization of current penal policy "was a big step," says Kenner, "because we chose to avoid political confrontation in the past."

Sylvan Bennett '07 echoed the call for a change in policy in his speech. "I recall how I felt in 1995 when state funding for higher education was cut, two semesters into my program." Bennett sees hope in the changing attitudes towards college in prison and its potential to generate more programs like BPI.

This change represents one of the goals of BPI for Kenner. "BPI was founded for two reasons," he said. One, to be a great college program and two, to serve as a model for

college programs everywhere. We feel we've accomplished number two."

In addition to the speeches from the various notables, four graduates addressed the crowd. Many talked about the transformative college experience. "In Bard we found a space where we could productively disagree," said Salih Israil '07. "We learned the benefit of contradiction and a new vocabulary emerged."

Dorell Smallwood '07 spoke of the admissions process. "I was incarcerated when I was 16 and by this time they'd begun to remove college programs from prison. Nine years later, when I applied to Bard I made a promise to them because a promise was all I had to offer. Today, I kept my promise."

President Botstein's charge was characteristically epic, and he didn't hesitate to indict those who he thought lacked the gifts of the day's graduates. "Most students take their privilege to learn for granted, so they don't learn," he said. "Transformation is the premise of equality on which democracy is based. . . you [the graduates] teach us transformation is possible and teach us democracy is possible."

Some of the President's comments about American apathy and consumption, which he characterized with symbols such as reality television and malls, may have embittered some at the ceremony not affiliated with the college.

"Bard has a certain social position in the community. It's an expensive college with lots of cultural capital," said Karpowitz. "Comments like Botstein's caused friction with some people."

On the whole, the proceedings were steeped with talk of, in the words of Professor Fields, "humans willing to apply their knowledge to the problems of the world without the promise of payoff and indeed knowing they will only meet more questions." And the symbolic importance of the sixteen graduates was continually underscored. "You are instruments of change, I will tout your accomplishments," Assemblyman Aubry said. "There are millions of people behind you whose lives will be changed because of your work."

As for the future of BPI, there's more of the same. The next graduation will be in June of 2008 and there, Bard will hand out its first bachelor's degrees to students who are incarcerated. "BPI is a radical way of saying everyone should have access to higher education," said Kenner. The Initiative is not to tackle "everyone" at once, however. "We're interested in improving the education for those 100 or so students already enrolled in BPI programs, not expanding," said Kenner. "We're excited about improving access for those 100."

## THE BARD FREE PRESS

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## Guantanamo Defense Lawyer Speaks in Weis Theatre

*Gives compelling speech regarding detention practices*

by jon leslie

Sabin Willet, pro bono defense lawyer for a group of inmates at Guantanamo Bay, spoke in Weis theatre on Wednesday, February 9th. The event, organized by the newly formed Amnesty International chapter at Bard, was well-attended by students and professors, and well-catered, with giant Subway subs and soda for all. Willet, an unsurprisingly compelling orator, recounted his legalistic misadventures with his advocacy of—in neo-con parlance—“vicious terrorists,” or, according to the liberal [read: corporate] media, “terror accused” clients. But nobody, he insists, has seriously accused his clients, three Uighur men, coming from a small ‘dissident’ minority in Western China, of terrorism. Their incarceration is rather the result of an unholy alliance between China and the US. China had been trying to convince the US that these dissident Uighurs were international terrorists for years, but as internal documents explicitly stated to the contrary, they had no chance of success until the US needed a reason to believe what they and everyone else knew to be false. When the US needed China, trying as it was in early 2001 to foment support, tacit or active, for a multilateral Operation Iraqi Freedom, President Hu Jintao flew to Crawford, Texas and a deal was struck. The US would, crudely put, bash these Uighurs, so long as China stayed on the sidelines as Bush and Powell had their venerable ‘Stevenson moment’ with the “incontrovertible evidences” of WMD in Iraq.

So last March when Willet’s law firm submitted a habeas corpus petition for two of the clients, Adel and Abu Bakker, they were hardly shocked to learn that had already been internally cleared of their ostensive charges. After a court hearing, which only came from the petition, they were released and sent to Albania, still far from their home in China, because they might be tortured, and this time by communists. However, their companion, Albdunaissair, was moved only to solitary confinement, still considered, for some undisclosed reason, an enemy combatant. He, a supremely gentle human being, according to Willet, is completely disoriented, and has finally in desperation taken to trusting his lawyer.

But the Orwellian plight of the Uighur people is the rule and not the exception for inmates at Guantanamo, and perhaps the most startling moment in Willet’s speech was the recitation of the statistics for the illegally detained in this illegally occupied region of Cuba: of the 450 detainees, only 11 have been charged; none have been convicted; but 45% are deemed potentially violent; only 5% are officially deemed enemy

combatants (i.e. taken from or associated with any battlefield), all of whom are not and have never been associated with 9/11.

If the last connection could be made, perhaps the Republicans, Joe Lieberman, those ‘hard on terrorism,’ etc. could honestly convince themselves that the Geneva Conventions really ought not to apply, though they would still be wrong, if naught for the empirical happenstance that psychological torture has repeatedly proven ineffective. The 5% taken some 10,000 miles from the battlefield on which they fought are POWs and under Geneva Conventions are subject to the



Willet (center), speaks with Jon Ryle (left) and Ian Baruma (right)

same treatment as American soldiers, which would allow them access to books, movies, musical instruments, and at least, freedom of movement. They are held only so that they cannot, as it were, defect captivity and rejoin the enemy. In more reticent moments, Condoleezza Rice has suggested that this category applies to all Guantanamo detainees but, needless to say, has never followed it to its ethical conclusion. Alternatively, if the potentially ‘violent’ detainees, some 45%, are war criminals, then they must be charged, tried, and convicted, preferably at The Hague or some other international court. But, as we all know, all of these unlucky Muslims, even the clear majority that are uncontroversially nonviolent noncombatants, are hanging in a legal limbo, not owning any rights except a bedsheet, a Qu’ran, and mere existence.

So there must be a damn-near apocalyptic reason to undo centuries of respectable Western law, which since the 12th century has rested upon the right to formal judgment, or habeas corpus. A sweet action-movie style justification is scripted by “pointy-headed intellectual,” Harvard professor Alan Dershowitz, as Willet related, “the Ticking Time-Bomb Scenario: There’s a bomb somewhere; we don’t know where”, [perhaps on a school bus full of children]; “the enemy could know where.” Isn’t holding the enemy combatants as long and inhumanely as possible the only responsible alternative?

Willet suggested the fact that “normally brilliant people such as Dershowitz” are devising these kinds of justifications is what allows the madness at Guantanamo to continue.

Though anyone who has heard the ardent Zionist open his mouth might take issue with Willet’s qualification of his Harvard colleague, certainly, those in power would never get away with torture without a level of consent from an increasingly paranoid populace, processing their own history on the HBO-show 24 or through the equally spine-wrenching narratives on CNN or Fox News. Though, in the vaguest of senses, there is always a bomb ticking, any

bystander who learns an iota of, for example, the Sardinistas who fought for popular sovereignty in Nicaragua against the US in the first war on terror, or the Uighur dissidents in China, even if our intensely ticking paranoia made them at first resemble Soviet communists or islamo-fascists, would be forced to object. If Keanu Reeves’s character in *Speed* frivolously plowed through schools and hospitals just to keep the bus above 55 miles/h, the high concept film would be objectionable even to the most riveted audience.

There’s an old Roman adage: in times of war, all laws are silent. A ‘war crime’ was a misnomer for the Romans, which allowed them to conquer much of the Western world without an ethical pause. In the same vein, the Western powers respected each other’s rights to lawlessness until after the Second World War, when it had become clear that belligerence too required legal fetters, if we really fancied, as Ghandi put it, the “good idea” that is Western civilization. The Geneva conventions are just this good idea. And although international law is quiet in this country, it is now becoming increasingly audible through powerful agents such as Willet and Senator Leahy, from Vermont, who is pushing legislation to reinstate habeas corpus for all detainees. And Willet would “love it” if each one of us began making noise, through, he suggested, repeated email, to push this legislation forward.



## Book Exchange Loves, Book Exchange Lives

by the book exchange

We don’t usually get the chance to address the campus as a whole, but we at the Book Exchange thought we’d take this opportunity to express to the community our basic purpose and what we’re all about.

The Book Exchange is simply a way to keep books circulating within the community while leaving cash out of the picture. Students exchange used books that they no longer need for ones that they do. This means that books required for classes are available to those who may not be able to access or afford the necessary materials. But whether or not books are affordable to students, it benefits the student body to have this shared opportunity. Purchasing new books can be very costly, and we provide an easy way to avoid that monetary stress.

The basic financial advantages of the Book Exchange are obvious. However, we would also like to suggest that the Book Exchange is an important demonstration of how students can work together for mutual benefit. This organization is run entirely by volunteers. Members of the Book Exchange do not gain personal profit from our participation. This is not a TLS project and we’re not earning any credits

here.

The Book Exchange is a living, breathing example of the way in which people can act collectively for mutual aid. By participating in this project, we put our trust in each other, which we believe makes the community stronger, more cohesive, and more vital. The project continues to thrive because people generally share and appreciate these convictions. It would be difficult for the Book Exchange to succeed without the genuine commitment that people have to its aims.

We’re always trying to think of ways to improve the way that the Book Exchange operates. Right now we’re discussing plans to move permanently into a space of our own, where we could better organize our book selection. This would make finding books much easier. In addition to more efficient exchanging, we really hope to make the Book Exchange a place for community and fun as well. We might even serve you tea and muffins!

If you’re interested in becoming a Book Exchange volunteer, we’d love to hear from you (email Abbie at [aw928@bard.edu](mailto:aw928@bard.edu)). Thanks for your attention and for your continued participation in our shared endeavor.

## Journalist cont’d

*- continued from front page -*  
quell the protest.

On February 9, protestors rallied on the steps of San Francisco’s city hall and demanded Wolf’s immediate release. The protest was facilitated by The Free Josh Wolf Coalition and a number of prominent organizations, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Lawyer’s Guild, and Reporters without Borders. Julian Davis of the Coalition was one of many to speak that day,

stating “We are calling on federal prosecutors to stop prosecuting journalists and attempts to use them as investigative agents of law enforcement.”

The Society of Professional Journalists named Wolf the 2006 Journalist of the Year, “for upholding the principles of free and independent press,” said Vice-President Pueng Vongs. “Mr. Wolf’s personal sacrifice and a sacrifice that other journalists will face ensure that the public continues to receive information, unfiltered by their government.”





## Second Dispatch From Texas

by leah finnegan

The last time I wrote, it was September and I was in awe of the largesse of the Lone Star and its state university. I was living alone in Texas in close proximity to stores like CVS and Urban Outfitters, and I was finally ready to live life in the manner where one is compelled to toss her beret in the air. Unfortunately, my enchantment abruptly and mysteriously receded into a condition of violent anger before I could start jotting down notes in the ethnographical notebook for my Senior Project. I have never been so angry in my life than the November I spent in Texas. I threw books against walls, cut my fingernails too short, and sat in class imagining my peers' heads exploding. My time at University of Texas had swiftly (and frighteningly) become the high school experience I never had. I sung the ballad of the dark-haired, misunderstood bespectacled girl in the corner who rocks back in forth in her chair and eats her hands. For lack of better activities I indulged in seeing a college therapist, who told me I was full of grief after making sure I had never been sexually abused by my father. "Grief over what?" I asked incredulously, since I was clearly over my grandfather's death of seven years ago. "Bard," she said.

Turns out she was exactly right, in the way only a mildly-educated university therapist can be. I left Bard hastily, ready to escape the things I hated about it (sorry Kline: shit sucks). But I didn't pay enough mind to the things I didn't realize I would lose—the important things that Texas lacks achingly. For example: a valuable education. In any case, at the dawn of this new semester, I feel my unexpected mourning period has lapsed and perhaps now I can finally begin to see things clearly. Life is starting to coalesce: the guttural groans of a V12 Ford F150 have become white noise, as have the dependable, four a.m. Pi Psi party hoots each Wednesday; Intro to Nutrition seems totally easy. It's a different world! A different life. I apologize to Geoff Sanborn for not being able to post any progress on my Senior Project and also to Cesar, my note-buddy from Introduction to Math who was the undeserving target of my mental despondency. As they say in Texas, you live and learn! But they also say arm-wire instead of armoire.

P.S.! If you're itchin' for more dispatchin' check out my well-respected blog: [www.asidreflucks.blogspot.com](http://www.asidreflucks.blogspot.com)

## Blogflash: Bard Students Are Shy!!! :\*(

by julie shore

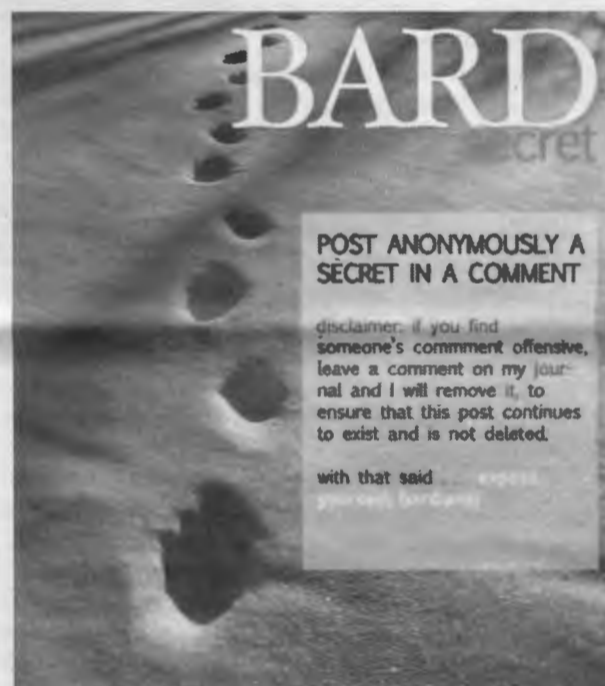
You may have noticed as you walk around campus, minding your own business (presumably), that secrets have been taped onto various surfaces everywhere. This project may have been inspired by the website [postsecret.com](http://postsecret.com), which some people visit as a regular part of their Sunday routine to read the weekly posts. Or the less aesthetic website, which can be found at [grouphug.us.com](http://grouphug.us.com). Both of these sites have been around for years and continue to be popular in internet land. However, now Bard has its own version. It can be found at [www.community.livejournal.com/bardcollege/](http://www.community.livejournal.com/bardcollege/). These are precisely the secrets that have been appearing on campus.

Some of them I would argue don't count as secrets; they read more like observations about weather conditions or snooty complaints about the difficulty of Bard College life. Here are a few examples, "Why isn't it fucking snowing?" and, "I think I might hate Bard but I'm too lazy to transfer." Even though these secrets aren't very juicy the more honest ones, my personal favorite, "I talk about how much I hate hipsters but whenever I go home I act like one to my friends" redeem the drearier ones.

Secrets make going through the day more interesting. Wondering about who has what secrets is a way to develop compassion. Who has what

pierced? Who is afraid of balloons? Who wants to do something perverse with extension cords? Who cries when they shower? Who left the used condom in the locked reserve room of the library? Many people confuse the sharing of secrets for intimacy. Secrets may be endearing qualities that make it easier to appreciate those you love but they are not the foundations of a relationship. This is a difficult concept for many people. Yet it is a revealing one. It seems secrets are meant to be shared, as rules are meant to be broken.

It seems though that with websites like [postsecret.com](http://postsecret.com) and [grouphug.us.com](http://grouphug.us.com) secrets are very much in vogue. I went to a lecture given by Frank Warren the founder of the PostSecret project at UCLA over intersession and was quiet impressed by the turnout. There is something compelling even addictive about secrets. Frank Warren has been named "the most trusted man in America," to loosely quote his lecture. He is a charming man who receives hundreds of secrets a day. From these he chooses about twenty to post every Sunday. He tries to put them in dialogue with each other. Often he will post peoples responses to keep the conversation active. In addition to the blog he also has published three editions of the secrets that didn't make the Sunday cut. These books have sold



famously. I noticed some students in Kline perusing one copy over dinner.

So, that's the secret scoop. Hopefully Ben Stevens won't blush too much. As for my secret, I wrote this article naked.

# VEGAN ARGENTINIAN FOOD



BY CHEF GUEVARA

at the root cellar

monday - thursday 11:30-3pm

## The Bard Free Press clip-n-save recipe #6 Spaghetti Carbonara

by foster itter

Spaghetti carbonara cannot be outdone: its cheap, easy, and delicious. The ingredients are probably all waiting for you in your cupboard, so all you need to do now is put a pot of water up to boil.

NOTE: If you don't eat bacon, use some tasty frozen peas instead.

This recipe would be perfectly complimented by a great big salad with arugula and spinach. You make the dressing.

TOTAL TIME: 20 MIN

SERVES: 4

### Ingredients

1 pound spaghetti  
2 large egg yolks  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
6 ounces bacon, diced  
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (3

ounces), plus more for serving  
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg  
Freshly ground pepper

### Directions

1. In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the spaghetti until just al dente. Drain, reserving 1/2 cup of the pasta cooking water.

2. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk the egg yolks and cream. In a large, deep skillet, heat the oil. Add the bacon and cook over moderately high heat, stirring, until crisp, 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until golden, 1 minute.

3. Add spaghetti to skillet. Cook over low heat, tossing. Slowly add the reserved pasta cooking water and beaten egg yolks. Toss with a creamy sauce, about 1 minute. Add 1 cup of Parmesan and nutmeg; season with pepper. Transfer to bowls and serve, passing extra Parmesan.

# MUSIC REVIEWS



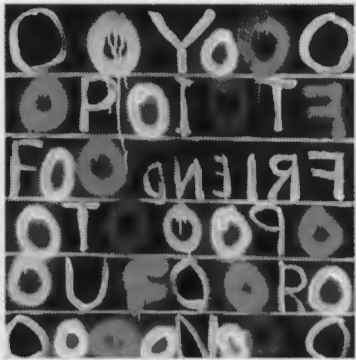
Kevin Devine  
*Put Your Ghost to Rest*  
Capitol Records

Native to one of New York's finest boroughs, Kevin Devine reverts to his roots in the opening song of his major label debut album *Put Your Ghost to Rest* with "Brooklyn Boy." His lyrical honesty reveals a life of "dead end friends" and cocaine addiction, as well as the type of loneliness that results in self-reflection and self-degradation. Continuing the theme of addiction and fair-weather friends in "Me and My Friends" Devine sings "We do our drugs 'til we're lit up / tell ourselves that this is love / but it's never added up / and it will never be enough," acknowledging his own weakness and the fallacy of friendships built only around nights of getting zonked. But his lyrics aren't all about his personal life; in "The Burning City Smoking," Devine confesses his overall distaste with his country and the state of the world: "And those of us who make our mark use someone else's blood. / Our western stain won't wash away, it won't vanish in the flood."

Devine's lyrics undoubtedly have the power to captivate his audience, comprising of poetic techniques such as alliteration, rhymes, near-rhymes, and measured rhythms that change just in time to keep to the beat and the songs interesting. The more up-beat tracks, such as "Trouble" are perhaps not as intense as such songs on preceding albums, but they definitely warrant an intense head-bopping and hip-waving session. His softer, heart-wrenching tracks, such as "Heaven Bound and Glory Be," are beautifully melodic, artistically tainted by Devine's often raspy and vulnerable voice.

Although Devine's lyrics on *Put Your Ghost to Rest* tend towards sadness, nostalgia, and bitterness, they possess an element of hope never expressed in preceding albums. Assuring his fans, his friends and family, perhaps even himself of his content and, do I daresay, happiness in "Just Stay," Devine sings "I sing like this, it sounds worse than it is. I'm okay, okay."

- nicole halpern



Deerhoof  
*Friend Opportunity*  
Kill Rock Stars

Deerhoof's latest release succeeds not only because they've managed to craft a nearly perfect album, but because they've managed to do so whilst traversing that most treacherous bridge from "cute and weird and sometimes loud" to "cute and wickedly poppy and ass-full of killer riffs." No small task. As if this feat was not enough, they've managed to do all this while maintaining the sound and character they've cultivated throughout their career. Disarmingly simple hooks driven by frenetic drumming and Satomi Matsuzaki's childlike cooing still make up the majority of Deerhoof's arsenal, despite the loss of one of their guitarists, though they have condensed and streamlined their diverse sonic palette to concentrate on crafting perfectly crafted pop-rock.

-patrick reilly



Lifetime  
*Lifetime*  
Decaydance Records

It's been 10 years since Lifetime last released any new material, and with their first album off of Decaydance Records it's hard to tell that any time has passed at all. Lifetime's distinct blend of melodic hardcore and pop punk picks up exactly where it left off with *Jersey's Best Dancers* (1997), and it is safe to say that if this was still the nineties then *Lifetime* would be considered their best work to date. However, it's not the nineties any more and the time that has passed makes all the difference in the world. In the ten years that have passed, we have gotten a chance to really see what Lifetime's main men, Ari Katz and Dan Yemin, can do outside of this band. Ari has proven himself to be a talented writer in the now defunct act Zero Zero, and Dan has proven time and time again in Kid Dynamite,

Paint it Black, and Armalite, that he is one of the best musical and lyrical writers in modern punk rock. Having said that, *Lifetime* seems like a step down for both of these gentlemen and the rest of the band as well. That is not to say that this is at all a bad CD; it's a great deal of fun and will definitely rank high on anyone's list of enjoyable punk rock from the last five years. It's just that I was expecting something a little more exciting and challenging than what Lifetime chose to deliver.

-alex houston

## RECENT BARD SHOW



Clockwise from above: The Tall Turds and Bard Alum Tim Abondello, The Tall Turds, party promoters, Boy-friends and Girl-friends





# FILM REVIEWS

## Mel Gibson's *Apocalypto*: Back to the Altar for Another Human Sacrifice

by joy baglio

*Apocalypto* is a glimpse: It is a snapshot of the doomed Mayan civilization through the eyes of its victims.

The plot is simple, but the film is too reliant on action sequences. It does keep one engrossed in the movie though, at least until the point when it becomes clear that protagonist Jaguar Paw must survive in order for the frail and simple plot to achieve anything. The characters, although stereotyped and embellished by Hollywood, are complex in a very wordless way; their complexities are conveyed through facial expressions and subtle movements rather than dialogue.

Although the film is bloodthirsty, it does offer a glimpse into a completely different world, and it is certainly engrossing and wholly sensory. It is a different time that bewitches and entralls in a very broad, sweeping, and dynamic manner.

Among the numerous criticisms it has received, the movie has been accused of historical inaccuracies by anthropologists and archeologists, as well being accused of racism by Native Americans. The Maya are depicted as bloodthirsty savages, with no true advances except that of architecture. In reality, the Aztecs were more likely to use human sacrifices than the Maya, although the Maya did have a ritual in which prisoners were killed by having their arms and legs held while a priest cut open the chest with a sacrificial flint knife. However, historians argue that the Maya were

much more peaceful than they are depicted by Gibson. Another inaccuracy concerns the sun god Kukulcan, who is portrayed more like the bloodthirsty Aztec god Quetzalcoatl, who demanded human sacrifices.

Mel Gibson filmed *Apocalypto* mainly in Catemaco and Paso de Ovejas in Mexico, and the dialogue is solely in the Yucatek Maya language, in the same way that Gibson uses Aramaic and Latin in *The Passion of the Christ*. The cast features mainly unknown actors from Mexico and the Yucatan, along with some Native Americans from the United States and Canada. Many of the cast members are native speakers of the Mayan dialect used in the movie.

The movie can be seen as a political allegory about civilizations in decline. As Gibson himself has said: "The precursors to a civilization that's going under are the same, time and time again..." Indeed the word "Apocalypto" means "a new beginning" in Greek, and it echoes the last line of Jaguar Paw as he heads off into the jungle to "seek a new beginning." On the Mayan calendar, the day that is defined as the Apocalypse in the year 2012 is also described as a "change of direction" or an "unveiling."

The movie is immensely entertaining, though the glimpse it offers of Mayan civilization is a stereotypical view of life in the tropical forests, where nature is either verdant and lush or devastated by civilization.



Would American audiences care to see a truer glimpse of such societies, or is this action-packed blood bath the only thing that really captivates? Maybe Gibson is trying to portray American society instead of that of the Maya. Maybe this historically-twisted, blood-soaked look at a past empire is just a little glimpse into our own desire for action and violence.

## Flannel PJs: You're Better Off Sleeping Through This One

by nicole halpern



In a speech he delivered prior to the showing of his second film, *Flannel Pajamas*, at the Cinema Arts Centre in Huntington, New York, Jeff Lipsky revealed that his film's plot is extracted from "real-life, personal experiences." He spoke with a passion that was, unfortunately, unmatched by the film's characters, whose chemistry is severely lacking throughout the entire movie.

*Flannel Pajamas* exposes the dysfunctional relationship between the manipulative Manhattanite, Stuart (Justin Kirk), and the unstable Montana native, Nicole (Julianne Nicholson). They meet on a blind date organized by their therapist, and are peculiarly accompanied by Stuart's imbecilic brother, Jordan (Jamie Harrold) and Nicole's wanton best friend, Tess (Chelsea Altman). These characters' placement in the opening scene is utterly distracting; they are introduced, but fail to uphold their intended significance.

As the film progresses, Stuart and Nicole become even more unlikable. They marry despite the fact that he is an unscrupulous, patronizing schmuck and she is under-confident, selfish, and immature. Their marriage takes a fatal turn as they begin to argue about Stuart's apprehension towards having a child. Their arguments are even less interesting than their conversations because both Nicole and Stuart seem perpetually indifferent towards each other.

This film attempts to extract a plot from the wide-range emotions of real-life experiences, but the plot and its characters are underdeveloped and poorly written. Lipsky's promise of the most honest portrayal of a challenging relationship is not fulfilled. Instead, he gives us characters with unwarranted personalities, confusing behaviors, empty conversations, and that nauseous feeling in the pit of your stomach that you tend to get once you realize you just blew ten bucks on a Friday night on such an awful flick.

## Movie Shorts: Cinema Has Never Been So Flaccid and/or Chode-like

by leah finnegan

### *Volver*

Penelope Cruz is hot, although I was disappointed to learn that her pretty regular-looking ass in the movie was such a big deal of a prosthetic that *Newsweek* had a whole article about it. I had a bigger prosthetic ass when I played Aunt Abby in my high school production of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Hey, at least my husband didn't cheat on me with my daughter OOPS I ruined the movie. Don't worry, that wasn't even the big, flamboyant Almodovarian twist of the film. If you want to know the

real twist, watch *Chinatown*. Or drink day-old sangria—way better than *Volver*, which like most of Almo's recent work, is simply Sirk gone bad, and in Spanish!

### *Notes on a Scandal*

It's sad when you watch a movie and realize you closely identify with an old, lesbian, haggard, Talbots-shopping Judi Dench. This was a good movie, though; it was a bit *About a Boy* mixed with *The Graduate* and sprinkled with *The Queen*. I never watch movies for actors, but Dame Judi and her little cat Cate Blanchett make this

worth seeing. The film also raises the pertinent and provoking question: how exactly does a movie house cast the role of an obese, twelve-year-old autistic boy?

### *Epic Movie*

I only saw this because I was at the mall at 9 am (bender at the mall, you know how it is) and nothing was open except AMC theaters and I couldn't believe there was actually a 9:10 am showing of a movie and it was this movie. Needless to say it was a painful, painful experience.

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# The Coast of Utopia: Tom Stoppard's Epic Three-Part Production Washes Ashore in NYC

by matt garklavs

Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia* is an epic nine-hour play about the figureheads of the Russian intelligentsia. It's divided into three parts: *Voyage*, *Shipwreck*, and *Salvage*. The play has been a tremendous success critically and financially, and deservedly so. Its cast is superb, the stage production is impressive, the story is intellectually engaging, and the dialogue is witty.

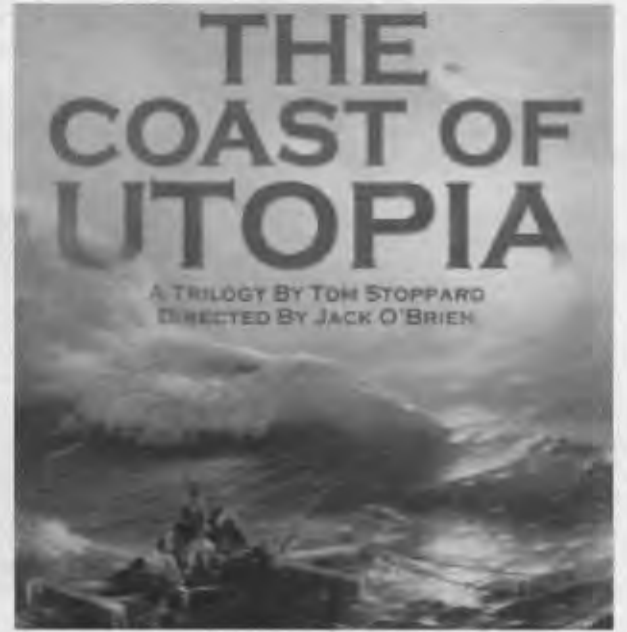
But this still doesn't explain its popularity. Perhaps what really makes *Utopia* so appealing in this day and age is that it reminds us of a time when intellectuals were still revered in society and influential in politics. In Tsarist Russia there was a "heightened significance of art" in society that fostered philosophical thought and creativity. This is what initially inspired Mr. Stoppard to write the play. So how different would the world be if intellectuals controlled it?

Well, probably not much. The greatest thinkers in history were human after all. *Utopia* may glorify intellectuals for devoting their lives to ideas, but it also reminds us of the impossibility of innocence. Some characters, like Mikhail Bakunin

(Ethan Hawke) were very hypocritical. Like many romantic thinkers, Bakunin started off with good intentions. He philosophized about morality and justice but ultimately became a malicious political radical. Other characters, like Alexander Herzen (Brian F. O'Byrne) and Vissarion Belinsky (Billy Crudup) are also tragic, but more sympathetic. They can't reconcile their ideals with the reality of living in an imperfect world.

*Utopia* has been criticized for its emotional ineptitude. Indeed, some of the most sentimental scenes in the play seem a bit forced and underplayed. But it's unfair to criticize a historical drama for lacking romance. In fact, I think that's the whole point. The intellectuals depicted in *Utopia* may have had noble goals to reform society, but they left their sentiments out the equation.

You can criticize this play for its pretentiousness and sophistry. But for Mr. Stoppard to take on this project was a heroic feat. Sometimes a great work of art can also be a huge failure. In fact, T.S. Eliot even called *Hamlet* one of the greatest failures in literature. So Mr. Stoppard is in good company.



## New Orleans cont'd

plastic FEMA trailers, as the national government spends a shit-load of money in a last-ditch effort to make Baghdad look like the lower 9th ward.

The prospects are clear: property values drop drastically in flooded parts of town, and those that can't afford to rebuild at such a great financial loss will be priced out of their neighborhoods; the Department of Housing and Urban Development will continue to stall and squabble over the five contested public housing projects (St. Bernard, Iberville, Lafitte, Magnolia, and B. W. Cooper, totalling nearly 10,000 units of housing, and all of them indefinitely shut down since the storm) until the strain on their past residents is too great and they leave for Houston or Atlanta or Dallas permanently. All the while, bids from developers continue to pour in for the land the housing projects are built on (much of it just blocks from the French Quarter) until eventually the city, desperate for some financial life-line, announces the development of a theme park/hotel resort/golf course, and the streets that once housed the Magnolia projects are lit up from all sides by neon signs: *Satchmo Town!*, *Jazzy Golf!*, etc.

And suddenly \$34 po-boys are dripping their fancy mayonnaise all over Rampart Street. I can't describe to you my fear of that nasty gumbo, that lumpy *etouffe*.

Meanwhile, well-intentioned volunteer groups continue to push all of their resources into destroyed neighborhoods that, it is becoming increasingly clear, will not come back. While their work gutting houses and bleaching mold is more than admirable, much of it serves to give community members in areas like the lower 9th ward a false sense of hope; these groups address the damage that the storm left on people's homes, but they don't address the more pervasive and terrifying damage wrought on the city by gentrification and institutional racism.

Rough though it may be, that's a realistic assessment of where things stand in New Orleans today. Before going on to discuss what can be done, it's important to acknowledge as explicitly as possible the scope and extent of the natural, social, and human devastation brought upon the city. When this doesn't happen, volunteer groups end up standing outside a gutted house, sweating, saying things like "One house at a time, we'll bring it back!" and slapping each other's backs knowingly like couples in therapy. Housing is great, but a house alone doesn't give a community member a say in the active and immediate reshaping of his or her neighborhood.

So many people, homes, and resources have been lost that the city can faithfully be considered dead, long past any point of miraculous and wholesale rejuvenation into the New Orleans of old, with its oysters and its glaring inequities. Native son Lil' Wayne explains: "It's not back to normal cause it won't ever be. It's back to a way that nobody thought it would ever or could ever be back to."

New Orleans today is something quite

- continued from front page -

different, a new and awkward organism squawking for money. And it is being decided today who gets to be a part of it. Seen this way—as a newly-charted city with needs far beyond its means—the urgency of lending help is clear. There's fertile ground in the Gulf, but, if it's to be developed fairly, a lot of hard work is gonna have to happen very soon. There are countless



photo by david burnett

community members in New Orleans today who are politically active, organized, know precisely what they want for their community, and know how to make it happen—they just need resources. And many of those must come from the academic community.

One person with a free week can help out in lasting and significant ways, without ever lifting a sledgehammer: one could tally needs in an out-of-the-way neighborhood and give the info to volunteer groups active in the city, or document a flooded school or community center and help the owner compile data into a grant application, or help a neighborhood association determine who's back and what their needs are by going door to door.

You don't even have to go down South: share project ideas with a friend at another college, or urge your own college to commit itself institutionally, or put together an independent study in which you help a neighborhood group with their research. Last year, Bard students working in Henderson in their spare time compiled a list of functional relief and volunteer organizations, letting community members know who to call to get their home remediated for free, what employment offices were open, etc. It was the most up-to-date and comprehensive list available at the time. They distributed thousands of the pamphlets through the mail to the major supply distribution centers across New Orleans. Nobody is incapable of contributing.

It's been eighteen months since the storm, and most New Orleanians are forced to face its aftermath everyday: to drive past houses torn off of their foundations and thrown across the street, past hollowed-out neighborhoods in which food and water are scarce at best. Without the immediate attention and care of the rest of the country, that "aftermath" will soon become a way of life.

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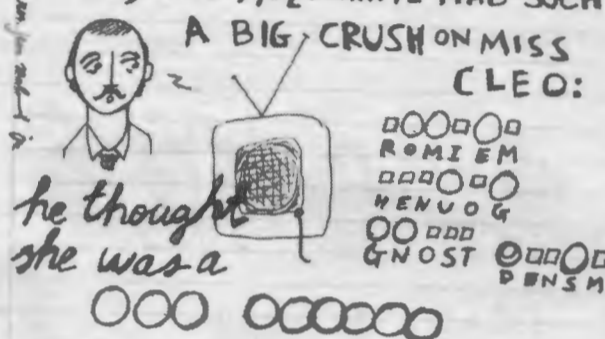


by walker schiff

**Jumble**

by jesse malmed

WHY THE MELUNANITE HAD SUCH A BIG CRUSH ON MISS CLEO:



you are such a cute little kitty & I love you!

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by jesse malmed

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