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# the bard free press

annandale-on-hudson, ny

march 18, 2008

"coming back" since 2000

volume IX, issue 3

## Report Back:

NCOR 2008

by kendra schirmer

For one weekend a year, while the rest of American University is away on spring break, radicals from around the nation flock to the DC area. The National Conference on Organized Resistance (NCOR) now in its eleventh year, is a student-organized conference that's an impressive hub of activist energy. On the weekend of March seventh, at least twenty Bard students car-pooled their way down to our nation's capitol to take part in the varied workshops, panel discussions, skill-shares, and tabling that is NCOR.

On these Saturday and Sunday afternoons a series of 90-minute workshops are led by (not all self-defining "anarchists", but many) activists/students/writers/other able-minded & socially-conscious folks of various ages and backgrounds. One highlight was Brian of *Visions of Anarchism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* workshop. His bio in the NCOR registration packet gives little personal information, not even a last name. Perhaps because his bio mentions that, "he has outrun police vans in Leipzig"—among other things. This workshop was a fluid discussion about the status of the anarchist movement, and opened up to audience questions and comments at the end. The room was overflowing with attendees, and time constraints cut the conversation much too short. Some of the topics touched upon were: the possibility of nonhierarchical organization as an end in itself and in practice, while on the journey to find a more just world through, as workshop facilitator Cindy Milstein put it, "paths in utopia" (in a



"Mind-mapping" During Re-thinking Climate Change Workshop photo © kendra schirmer

## The End of Budget Forum?

*How the Administration Threatens the Future Sovereignty of the Student Association*

by abby ferla and daniel terna

This past Wednesday, following Dean of Students Erin Cannan's recent announcement to the student government of her proposal to make changes to the budget allocation

process, the Student Association Government held a meeting with club heads and concerned students about the future of budget allocation at Bard. However, within the association there still exists

a great deal of trepidation that the administration plans to infringe upon the sovereignty of the Student Association to allocate funds, a measure, which according to Student Association Treasurer Oliver Traldi, "reflects the administration of a college that says it is based upon the presumption of

adulthood, but actually believes that Bard students are incapable of taking care of themselves."

Cannan refutes Traldi's sentiments, insisting that the Bard administration is not looking to overthrow the Student Association's allocation powers, but is instead seeking to organize a dialogue that would include members of the Anti-Racist Dialogue (ARD), Student Government, representatives of the deans, administrators, and other groups and individuals that have a shared interest in student budget allocation. "We're having a group of people threatening to break off [of the jurisdiction of the Student Association]—so we need to have a conversation," Cannan said.

Despite concerns,

## International News Bites: Select Security Briefings from Around the World

by Jessica Loudis



### Israeli media and the language of conflict

In a recent *London Review Of Books* article, Yonatan Mendel, a former correspondent for the Israeli news agency *Walla* examines the semantics of the Israeli media, making the case that "journalists and publishers see themselves as actors within the Zionist movement, not as critical outsiders." Analyzing the Israeli media's use of language, Mendel found

that while Israelis "confirm" or "say" Palestinians always "claim;" and while Israelis "respond" to violence, Palestinians "provoke," or "attack." Additionally, Palestinians killed by Israeli attacks often tend to be posthumously "promoted."

After a Hamas secretary was assassinated in 2003, media organizations immediately adopted the IDF assertion

that he was head of the military wing of Hamas in Gaza.

Beyond lexical choices, the very infrastructure of Israeli media reflects a similar unwillingness to grant Palestinians a voice. Native Arabic speakers are almost never hired as Israeli correspondents for Arab affairs – they must always be Jews. Foreign media deemed insufficiently pro-Israel have been prevented from broadcasting. But while these measures have been internalized in Israeli media, "a majority of Israelis feel that their media are too left-wing, insufficiently patriotic, not on Israel's side."

While the Israeli media is careful to regulate how issues are framed and language is used, by employing media to prop

up government policy, Israel distances itself further and further from any kind of real journalism and as well as from the realities on the ground. By maintaining a system that is fundamentally exclusionary, the media becomes little more than a state mouthpiece with few claims to legitimacy. In this respect, perhaps what is most telling in Israeli journalism is what is not being said.

### Kidnapped Iraqi archbishop found dead

A Chaldean Catholic archbishop kidnapped last month in northern Iraq is now dead, according to reports from Iraqi church officials. Paulos Faraj Rahho was abducted in Mosul last month after leaving mass, the latest in a growing list of Chaldean clerics who have been kidnapped since the onset

### In this Issue:

Health and Sex Feature ..... pg 6

Interview with Devin White.....pg 2

Spotlight Smog.....pg 11

Shuttle Woes.....pg 5

Album Reviews.....pg 11

Comics from the Vault.....pg 12

## International News Bites Cont'd from page 1

of the war in 2003. His body was found buried near Mosul.

### Tibetan protesters arrested in India

More than 100 Tibetan exiles were arrested last week as they began a six-month march in protest of China's control of Tibet. The marchers, mostly monks and nuns, were arrested in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh after police detained one of their members and the rest of the group sat in the road in protest. Beginning the march in Dharamsala, the home of the Tibetan government in exile, the group planned on reaching the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in August, timing their arrival with the beginning of the Olympic games in Beijing. The group has since undertaken a hunger strike in protest of the arrests.

### Serbian parliament dissolves

Following the collapse of Serbia's ruling government, President Boris Tadic dissolved the country's parliament and called for a new round of elections to be held on 11 May. The

collapse came after nationalist Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica declared that his party would not stay in a coalition with the liberal, pro-western Tadic government. The move comes in the wake of increasing tensions over Kosovo, which Kostunica maintains must be recognized by the EU as part of Serbia, while Tadic has refused to link the Serbia's future in the EU to the issue of Kosovo.

### Janjaweed leader cites direct link to Khartoum

Mohammed Hamdan, a Janjaweed leader who controls over 20,000 troops in Southern Darfur, has gone on record saying that his men received direct orders and arms from the government in Khartoum to undertake military campaigns in the region. In video footage to be aired in Britain on 14 March, Hamdan claims he met Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir on two separate occasions and was given orders to carry out operations in Um Sidr and Kiryari in northern Darfur after rebels

successfully conquered the area. In the video Hamdan argues that the government made rebels a scapegoat for the violence after enlisting their help. This marks the most concrete evidence to date of a link between Janjaweed rebels and the Sudanese government.

### Ugandan president refuses to turn rebels over to The Hague

Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni has declared that he will not turn members of the rebel Lord's Resistance Army to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, stating instead that rebels will be tried in traditional Ugandan courts. Museveni argued that it was the victims of the conflict who wanted LRA members tried in local courts—known for emphasizing apologies and compensation over punitive measures. The trial, intended to bring closure to a twenty-one year civil war, has exposed a rift between African governments, who want to deal with such cases internally, and the ICC, which was created to set an international standard and act as a global arbiter for justice.



Chinese state television frame-grab of March 14 protests.

## Doomsday Vault Opened

by emily diamond

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault, located 620 miles from the North Pole on the Norwegian island Spitsbergen, had its grand opening, on February 26, 2008. The idea behind the vault is fairly simple: to preserve the world's quickly diminishing seed variety so humanity will continue to survive long after the bees die.

Construction for the vault began in mid-2006 in the town of Longyearbyen, in the Svalbard archipelago. Seeds are sent from all over the world to reach Longyearbyen, but first they have to qualify. Each seed must have already been in two long-term gene banks prior to being housed in Svalbard. When a seed arrives it might be "black-boxed," meaning its container

is prohibited from being opened unless every other seed source has been destroyed. Despite this prospect, there remains hope for the future. The vault has a two billion seed capacity, roughly 4.5 million samples, and scientists are dedicated to the preservation of each of the world's estimated 1.5 million seed samples in existence, although there are no permanent on-site staff. Seeds can be preserved for hundreds- sometimes thousands- of years if properly stored. The idea for keeping them in these underground bomb shelters originated as early as the 1980s.

The vault is located nearly 500 feet underground in the permafrost, so highly protected that it can withstand any of the



Out of sight: Ice sculpture of polar bear stands guard over the world's precious seeds. ([www.howstuffworks.com](http://www.howstuffworks.com))

numerous threats to crops, claims The Global Crop Diversity Trust, the nonprofit provider of upkeep costs. These threats include, "civil strife, war, catastrophes...poor management, lack of adequate funding, and equipment failures." It seems that climate change is perhaps another factor. Seed vaults in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines have been destroyed by national conflict and natural disasters so the locale of the earth's newest vault was crucial.

The funding for construction was paid for by the Norwegian government as a service to the world, so that the earth's seeds could be transported from less secure seed vaults to the safe-haven of the North Pole.

There is even a life-size polar bear made of ice by the entrance to the vault as yet another security measure. Hopes for the future include the ability to identify seeds that can survive in harsh conditions, which will be of value when all of the plants die. These kinds of projects conducted by governments tend to foreshadow some kind of negative event, and perhaps this explains the nickname "Doomsday Vault." The Nordic Gene Bank, a part of the Nordic Genetic Resource Center, will be creating an online database of all the samples housed in the vault that will continue to evolve as more seeds are sent to Svalbard for safekeeping.

## THE BARD FREE PRESS

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## End of Budget Forum Cont'd from page 1

Traldi claims that, "it is unclear what the administration is planning to do." Tentatively there will be a meeting between Cannan, the school lawyer/ombudsman Roberta Tarshis, and a group of students chosen by the administration after Spring Break. However, as of yet, the administration has provided no outline for this process.

According to Cannan, ARD approached the Bard administration over its frustration with the results of last month's Budget Forum. Specifically, complaints were made by the ADR against the forum's methods of "hostile" appeal. The underfinanced group is also concerned with the way it was shoved aside at the forum, feeling that there should be another place to appeal for money aside from at the Budget Forum.

The administration has raised concerns about the legality of the process and the "hostile environment" of budget forum. Much of the controversy centers around the distribution of alcohol at the forum, a measure designed to attract large numbers of Bard students to the event. Furthermore, Cannan has suggested the environment of budget forum has grown hostile, which--if true--could violate federal law.

Cannan emphasizes that

Tarshis' role is not to make decisions, but to make "helpful, legal suggestions." Director of Student Activities Andrea Conner is also looking into the process of student budget allocation for

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other colleges and universities. Cannan maintains that safety for students as well as the college is a priority in regard to the illegal drinking that occurs at the Forum. While the college understands the traditions of Budget Forum, there are serious legal consequences to looking the other way.

The administration has indicated that it would like to create a new procedure for budget allocation drawing from a few sources. One would be a memo about the process at other

colleges. Another is a proposal made by two students after budget forum this semester when their affinity group received what they considered to be inadequate funding. Student government is under the impression that the administration would like to take some money directly from the allocation fund for certain clubs on campus such as affinity groups and EMS. It would also like to choose how parts of budget forum are run, which student government describes as, "a blatant jurisdictional problem, because student government is by definition autonomous. In my view," said Traldi, "the administration took advantage of the moments that affinity groups complained in an opportunistic gesture that would infringe on the democratic tradition of our school." Traldi continued, "At Bard we don't make decisions in smoke filled rooms."

Student government admits there is some validity in these claims. Traldi, though not in agreement with Cannan, accounts much of whatever hostility there is in the process to the lack of transparency of budgets. Currently only the raw number of dollars allocated to clubs is released. As a provision to preserve privacy of the clubs, details of the budgets are kept confidential, which can cause the amendment process to become uninformed and

unfriendly. He also admits that, while the distribution of alcohol does ensure that the number of students necessary for democratic process attend the forum, it can cause disarray. Alternatively he suggests that maybe an after-party for Budget Forum, though he notes that there is no U.S. law against voting while intoxicated. One anonymous administrator suggested making it a requirement to have at least one club representative attend the Forum, which would make "at least a hundred students present."

Among the proposals on the table is the one that Student Government began drafting last Wednesday, which would divide the clubs into groups depending on their type on Club Head Day. These groups of similar organizations would form a caucus and then elect a delegate to be the voice of this caucus at Budget Forum. "It is unclear how much power these delegates would have," said Traldi, but likely they would know the intimate details of each group's budget and be able to work with other delegates to amend the budgets across caucuses. The administration reportedly invited their proposal to be put on the table. Traldi took issue with that, saying, "When the students of a college put forth an organized proposal of how they want to self-govern, for me that isn't put on the table--that is the table."

## Students Raise Awareness for

by nina jordan

On Tuesday night, the Human Rights Project and the Darfur Action Campaign (DAC) hosted a screening of the new HBO documentary film "Sand and Sorrow," directed by Paul Freedman. "Sand and Sorrow" examines the historical events that have led to the slaughter and displacement of the non-Arab Sudanese community and the shameful lack of response from the world's nations. Freedman underscores how the conflict and the resulting atrocities might have

been limited if the international community had taken action. The film features compelling insight from Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, U.S. Senator and Presidential candidate Barack Obama, human rights activist John Prendergast, New York Times columnist Nick Kristof, Pulitzer Prize winning author Samantha Power, Sudan scholars Alex de Waal and Gerard Prunier, and rebel leader Minni Minawi. Kristof notes that in the U.S. there is a "long tradition of

ignoring genocide as it happens" despite the resolve that genocide should never happen again. The film sends the message that governments will shift their focus toward Darfur when people raise their level of concern and pay serious attention to the atrocities taking place in Sudan.

One way to do this, the film suggests, is through student run organizations such as Bard's Darfur Action Campaign. DAC is strongly urging the Bard College Board of Trustees to divest from companies doing business with Sudan, following in the footsteps of other New York State colleges including Vassar, Skidmore and Cornell. Divestment also cuts off Sudanese government revenues that come from external trading from oil, which is supported by foreign investment. By withdrawing our economic support of the Sudanese government, the Janjaweed militia will be rendered inoperable and the genocide will end.

Bard's DAC will host a Darfur awareness week beginning April 23 to encourage students



to take action to aid the citizens of Darfur. The scheduled events include academic lectures, a panel with UN speakers, a presentation by actress Mia Farrow on her visits to Darfur, Chad, and Central African Republic, movie screenings, and a concert.

The DAC was started in 2005 with the hope of sparking genocide awareness on and off the Bard campus, and is affiliated with the international anti-genocide coalition Students Taking Action Now: Darfur (STAND).



The DAC meets Sundays at 5PM in the Red Room of the Campus Center.

# Believe It or Not, Bard Students Organize for Obama

by pat kelly

By any measure, this has already been an historic year in American politics. The race for the Democratic presidential nomination has generated record levels of interest, as indicated by voter turnout, volunteer efforts, fundraising, and citizen interest. One of the great stories of this race has been the significant jump in turnout among previously disaffected and uninvolved voters, especially college students.

Right here at Bard, Weis

Cinema was filled by students watching a televised debate for Super Tuesday, and dozens of students attended an Obama rally the night before the election. New York, of course, went for Hillary Clinton by a significant margin, but Bard students helped deliver the Town of Red Hook for Obama, and helped make Dutchess his fourth strongest county in the state. It is estimated that over 73% of active Bard students who are locally registered Democrats voted on

February 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Bard College Democrats, along with the Red Hook and Rhinebeck Democratic Committees, co-hosted a mock debate between representatives of four of the major Democratic campaigns. Andy Simon represented the Obama camp, while Oliver Traldi represented John Edwards. Numerous local residents commented on the excellent job they did and how well it reflected on the Bard

community. Obama went on to win a tight audience straw poll conducted afterwards. We hope to conduct more joint events in the future that help us engage with the local community, both politically and otherwise.

The Bard Democrats have continued to support volunteer efforts on behalf of the Obama campaign. There have been several phone-banking sessions, and we assisted five students in taking a bus from Albany to Ohio in early March. Looking forward, we are hoping to organize trips to Pennsylvania and encourage anyone who might be interested to contact us.

In the fall, the Bard Democrats hope to continue our previous work of registering students and assisting them in voting, either at Bard or elsewhere. There a number of important races in which Bard can vote in November, including the 20<sup>th</sup> New York Congressional District, a seat currently held by Kirsten Gillibrand, first elected in 2006 with the help of hundreds of voters from Bard. This district has a huge Republican registration advantage, and the national Republicans have targeted her as a priority race for them in 2008.

Also at stake is a local Town Board race deciding which party holds the majority locally. Local races like this one have a huge impact on the character of the area in which we attend college, and where many of us settle. It will also impact issues of immediate concern to students, such as the lack of a polling place on campus. Local, state, and national races this fall will also provide great volunteer opportunities where you can really learn the nuts and bolts of political campaigning. Get in touch with us if you'd like to get involved, make sure you're registered to vote, and stay tuned for future events.

*Some of you know him from the recent Get Out of Your Head and Into Your Bed Bard-On talk. Others of you, who have been here for quite awhile and, frankly quite too long, know him from his time here at Bard ten years ago. In any case, you now have the opportunity to get to know Devon White better than you ever did before – and to learn what Devon has to offer us in his upcoming workshop on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.*

*Free Press: To start with the basics: What, exactly, do you do?*

Devon White: Essentially, I do PR for the brain. My job is to make feeling good, being self-aware, and knowing how to run your body and your life seem attractive. So when I say I do PR for the brain, what I actually mean is I do PR for your brain – because if you're at all like most people, you've got the engine of a Ferrari for a brain and you're using it as if it were a tricycle.

*FP: What would you say is one of the core messages of the work you do?*

DW: I'm a proponent of a message that I feel is much too underplayed in our culture right now, which is: Go out and do what you love, follow your heart. I want to enable people to go after those things that fascinate them, the things that they feel passionately about.

That said, that message is not one that I'm pushing on anyone. It's your prerogative to decide what you want to do with your life, even if what you want to do is listen to the opposite message of putting off what you really love in order to do what other people tell you to do. But there are very few people that I've met for whom that's worked. Most of my clients come to me having lived in the mindset of, "I'll just make enough money and get enough security that at some point I'll have so much money that I'll be happy and able to do what I love." But

what they've done is spent the last twenty years of their life learning how to be really unhappy. They've created everything around them to put their attention on the thing that gives them the least amount of joy, and they've become really good at doing something that they don't like. I don't know how that's of value to anyone.

*FP: Any misconceptions you want to clear up about your work?*

DW: People assume following your dreams means being an idiot. When I say follow your dream and do what you love, I don't mean following your dream to Arcadia; this isn't fairyland. Following your dream includes eating, drinking, having friends, all those things

and absolute no's that you feel in response to different scenarios. Once your attention is on them, their volume will begin to become louder, so to speak, and you'll be better able to know what you do and don't want to do. Once you know what you want, you can make anything happen.

*FP: Tell us more about the workshop you will be giving on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. What can we get from it?*

DW: The workshop will address that seemingly elusive combination of making a living and doing what you love, whether you want to build a business or go into the Peace Corp. Before that though, it's going to address the thing that

## Oh The Places You Will Go!

### Interview with Devon White



that you need to live a healthy and fulfilled life. It would be foolish to assume that dreams don't include those things.

*FP: Give us a little taste of what you'll be able to offer us at your workshop. What do we do to start learning how to actively shape our own lives?*

DW: The more you organize yourself to make choices that support you in having your life the way you want it to be, the better you get at having the experience you want to have. The first thing you want to do is begin paying very close attention to your own primal signals. Have you ever been asked if you want to do something and you immediately feel a complete repulsion or an enthusiastic affirmative? Pay attention to those absolute yes's

is most fundamental to and most fundamentally missing from our current educational system and culture: that there is a way each individual is when they are at their best. What we will be doing is learning the structure for each person of how they are when they're at their best, and how to access that and lock it in, in a deliberate way, so that they can begin to make decisions from that place. What I want people to have when they walk away is the sense that when they make a decision there is absolutely no question in their mind that for them is the right decision, and all the wrong opinions in the world to the contrary wouldn't even begin to sway them from the direction they know they need to move.

*If your appetite's been whetted and you want more, you can get one-on-one training with Devon in a group setting at his workshop on Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, convenient for those few of you who have a class or two on the weekdays. Contact me to contact him.*

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## Sam Worthington's Insight into the Human Lottery

by shaan sachdev

One would think that the Armenian genocide in Turkey would have shocked the world into ensuring no sequel—no further episode of mass slaughter and crime against humanity. After the inconceivable horror of the Holocaust, European powers and the American administration should have shuddered at the thought of a future repetition. So there must be some reason why, in the following 60 years, similar acts of genocide and/or crimes against humanity were executed in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, (arguably) Bangladesh, Guatemala, East Timor, Iraq, DR Congo (which ironically accommodated the deadliest war since World War II and in African history, and yet received significantly less coverage than Darfur), currently Sudan, and possibly even Kenya

The answer as to why genocides have rarely been suppressed before considerable harm has been done, and as to why crimes against humanity in developing nations haven't been smothered by military intervention: *situations are not simple. (And Western powers have no interest intervening in countries without significant resources).*

It is undoubtedly meritable to donate money. To assume that money will single-handedly combat poverty and crises, however, is too easy. Humanitarians have learned through frustrated, first-hand experience that crises tend to be oversimplified when depicted in news reports. Iraq's insurgency plague cannot be solely attributed to Al-Qaeda, and Darfur is considerably more complicated

than Islamic militias targeting African villagers.

Sam Worthington, President of InterAction, spoke at Bard on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, and truly put humanitarianism into perspective. InterAction is an umbrella organization that is the largest coalition of American-based NGO's. Based in Washington D.C., the organization consists of 250,000 humanitarian workers worldwide, and a \$10 billion network to keep the wheel of righteousness spinning. Worthington, who had just arrived from Darfur, outlined InterAction's main goals:

- 1). Promptly establish, as part of the U.S. government, a cabinet that deals specifically with humanitarian issues.
- 2). Effectively manage its resources and direct them toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- 3). Unify the American public, and create a partnership that enables a relentless drive toward humanitarian action.

In cases of extreme humanitarian violations, which are out of the government's hands, InterAction steps in and makes the country's problem the world's problem. They evaluate the constraints of NGOs in situations, as well as their relationship to the UN. Those who were fairly young to the concept of humanitarianism grew steadily more boggled at the immense complications that Worthington proved arise during the process of humanitarian intervention.

Sure, humanitarian organizations raise money, collect food and medical supplies, walk into a crisis zone, and attend to



Reuters/Stuart Price

the wounded civilians...right? How do the hundreds of aid organizations penetrate Darfur? They obviously cannot fly in without permission, and the permission ultimately comes from the Khartoum administration. The Sudanese government at Khartoum is (however directly or indirectly) related to the Darfur emergency. Thus the NGOs are in Darfur, working under the rules and regulations of the very government facilitating the crisis they are trying to resolve. This creates countless complications. It is initially made clear to the humanitarian workers that they have no voice. Any public statements or condemnations or accounts of atrocities they face daily will cost the organization its presence. Furthermore, they can only "help" who the government allows them to. This presents the next question—who do they aid? Do they remain neutral and give medical attention to anyone wounded in a conflict—victims and combatants, civilians and soldiers—or do they take sides? In Rwanda, when the tables turned, the NGOs on the border went from dealing with Tutsis victimized by the Hutus, to Hutus victimized by the new government order. Did the NGOs now aid the Hutus, many of whom were part of the militia that slaughtered the Tutsis? Groups

like the MSF completely pulled out of the region, unable to deal with this moral dilemma.

Another issue that Worthington featured was the relationship between NGO's and the military. The U.S. military often attempted to exploit aid organizations' resources, and use the knowledge of aid workers to their advantage, demanding eye-witness accounts and inside information. In doing so the military explicitly violated the organizations' *neutrality*. The neutral sphere in which humanitarian organizations operate ensures (for the most part) their safety. When this is removed, they are as liable to danger as the general populace, thus establishing a clear divide between humanitarianism and military interest is one of InterAction's main problems.

Worthington asserted the complicated nature of the humanitarian movement, and the necessity of the public to address each situation individually and without simplification. Often times, the work of an NGO is like a "humanitarian lottery," Worthington told his sizeable audience on Monday—sometimes a camp with 20,000 displaced civilians is extremely successful while another of the same size fails.



# HEALTH AND SEX

## DISPOSABLE TAMPONS & PADS: EVERYTHING THEIR CORPORATE MALE PRODUCERS DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW...and what you can do (at least once a month) to stop them.

### If you menstruate or know anyone who does consider these facts:

- A menstruator is likely to use 16,800 sanitary pads or tampons in a lifetime.
- Tampons soak up more than just blood. They also absorb vaginal mucous, which is necessary to maintain a healthy pH balance in the vagina; this phenomenon has been linked to yeast infections, not to mention the discomfort of pulling a tampon out of an almost dry vagina!
- Artificial fibers (like rayon or polyester) used in tampons are abrasive, so when a tampon lengthens it pushes against the cervical area, causing tiny cuts and leaving tiny fibers behind, which often become embedded in cervical tissue. This has been traced as a probable cause of Toxic Shock Syndrome and has also been shown to damage the vaginal walls by causing ulceration and peeling of the mucous membrane.
- The vaginal walls are the most absorbent part of a menstruator's body. 25% of all pesticides are used on cotton, which are used to make tampons. No long-term independent testing has been done on the health effects of using non-organic cotton tampons.
- Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS):  
TSS is a rare but fatal bacterial illness that occurs mostly in young menstruators. TSS has been linked to tampon use and the high absorbency level in tampons. The number of reported cases has dropped significantly in recent years, from 55 deaths and 1,066 cases during 1979 and 1980 to 5 reported cases in 1997 and 3 in 1998, due to increased regulation by the FDA of tampon absorbency and a change in tampon ingredients. (*Tampon Safety*, FDA) But it's always a monthly possibility.
- Dioxin:  
Up until a few years ago, tampon companies used chlorine gas to bleach tampons which produced small amounts of dioxin. Now, if you call up Johnson and Johnson, makers of O.B. tampons, their spokesman, John McKeegan, will tell you that the company uses elemental chlorine-free bleaching, which does not produce dioxin. Tests provided to the FDA by the big tampon manufacturers claim that the dioxin levels in tampons range from undetectable to a mere 1 part in 3 trillion, much lower levels than what one receives through daily, environmental exposure. Technically, this is true, but in practice, even industry spokesmen admit that dioxins can enter tampons through ingredients such as cotton and rayon, which are exposed to pollutants throughout their life cycles. And most importantly, the tests that have been done were provided by the tampon manufacturers, and no tests that have been done can prove that any tampons are *completely* dioxin free. When dealing with the most absorbent part of your body, why take the risk?  
• Some known health effects of dioxin include: endometriosis, headaches, cancer, hormone disruption, birth defects, low birth weight, miscarriages, and infertility.  
• The effects of dioxin from various sources are cumulative and can be measured 20 to 30 years after exposure. Women may be exposed to dioxin in tampons and other menstrual products for as long as 60 years over the course of their reproductive lives.

### The Feminine Hygiene Industry's Dirty History

- Internal documents of the Food and Drug Administration suggested the agency had not adequately investigated the danger of dioxin in tampons, according to a 1992 staff report of a subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations of the House of Representatives.
- In 1992 Representative Ted Weiss of New York led a congressional investigation which "uncovered evidence that FDA scientists had found trace levels of dioxin in some tampons and that the agency had attempted to downplay the risk this posed to women's health."
- The Food and Drug Administration has historically relied on data provided by manufacturers of feminine hygiene products in determining product safety.
- An independent study in 1991 found that tampons commonly included one or more of the following additives: Chlorine compounds, absorbency-enhancers (such as surfactants like polysorbate 20), natural and synthetic fibers (such as cotton, rayon, polyester, and polyacrylate), deodorant, and fragrance.

### Ecological Effects

- Over 12 billion pads and 7 million tampons are used once and disposed of annually, clogging our overburdened landfills. (National Women's Health Network). The average menstruator throws away 250 to 300 pounds of tampons, pads, and applicators in a lifetime. The great majority of these end up in landfills or sewage treatment plants. Over 170,000 tampon applicators were collected along U.S. coastal areas between 1998 and 1999. (from the Center for Marine Conservation, info featured in E Magazine, March/April Issue 2001)
- Pesticides: Tampons are made from rayon, produced from wood pulp and cotton, a heavy pesticide crop. 25% of all insecticides are used on cotton. In California, it has become illegal to feed the leaves, stems, and short fibers of cotton known as gin trash to livestock, because of the concentrated levels of pesticide residue. Instead, this gin trash is used to make furniture, mattresses, tampons, swabs, and cotton balls. Five of the top nine pesticides used on cotton in the U.S. (cyanide, dicofol, naled, propargite, and trifluralin) are known cancer-causing chemicals. All nine are classified by the U.S. EPA as

All of this information was garnered from the website of a menstrual health activist group called Tampaction. The pdf is available at: <http://www.seac.org/tampons/resources>

So why do we never hear about any of this? From my calculations women are expected to spend about \$6,000 on tampons and pads over the course of 35 years of menstruating. Multiply this by the millions of people who menstruate, and it adds up to lots of **male-owned corporate profit**. If you're feeling overwhelmed and upset about the crap you've been unknowingly shoving into your vagina since that awkward middle school health class when unhealthy practices and patriarchy-tainted taboos were first enforced as the norm, let it be known there are other options! Tell all your friends! The least you should do is spend a few dollars more on the somewhat more sustainable and dioxin-free tampons or pads, available from a brand like Seventh Generation. Or for a more exciting change, get a **Divacup**.

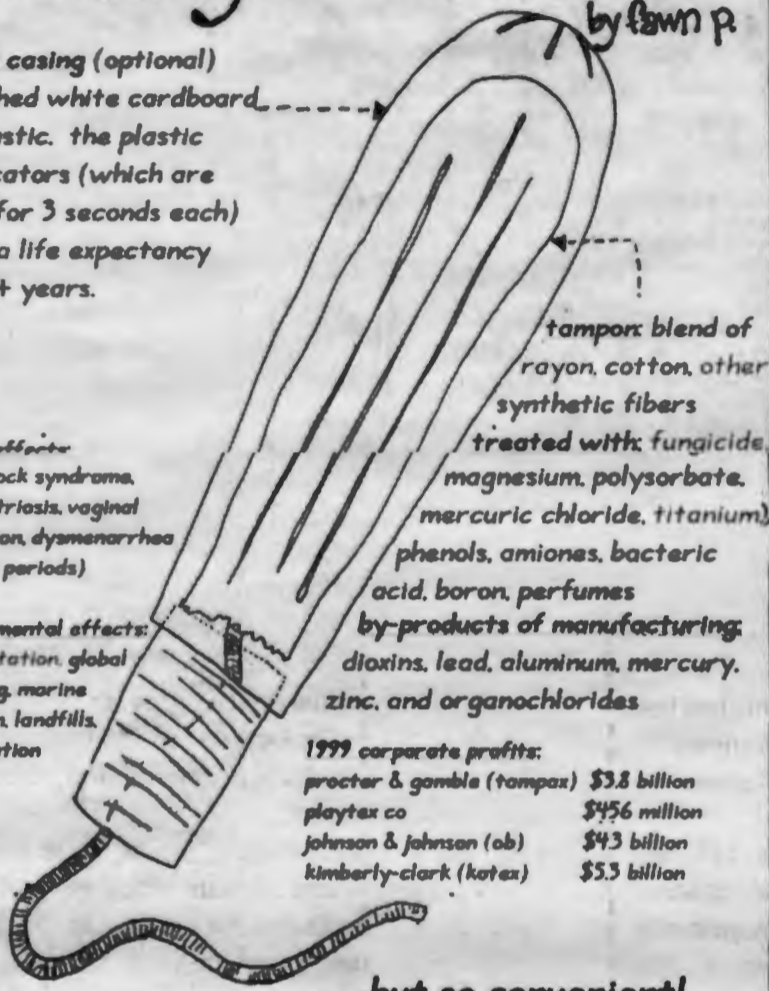
# HEALTH AND SEX

## anatomy of a TAMPON

outer casing (optional)  
bleached white cardboard  
or plastic. the plastic  
applicators (which are  
used for 3 seconds each)  
have a life expectancy  
of 10+ years.

health effects:  
toxic shock syndrome,  
endometriosis, vaginal  
ulceration, dysmenorrhea  
(painful periods)

environmental effects:  
deforestation, global  
warming, marine  
pollution, landfills,  
air pollution



1999 corporate profits:

procter & gamble (tampax)	\$3.8 billion
playtex co	\$456 million
johnson & johnson (ob)	\$43 billion
kimberly-clark (kotex)	\$5.3 billion

... but so convenient!

by fawn p. redscare@eudoramail.com

For around \$30 ([www.divacup.com](http://www.divacup.com)) you get a dioxin-free reusable silicone receptacle that is worn internally (lower in the vagina than a tampon) and collects, but doesn't absorb, your menstrual flow leaving your other fluids intact. No more rippingouch when you tug that super tampon out after a light-ish day. You can pre-emptively insert it before you even start bleeding, so you won't have to be stuck frantically asking everyone if they have a tampon when your flow catches you off guard. You can leave it in for up to twelve hours, TSS is not an issue, and you won't have to invest one additional penny for up to thirty years, or longer! The divacup and other similar products (such as the rubber Keeper) have been available since the 1930s, yet very few women ever hear about them. When one considers that a woman's lifetime tampon usage is about 11,400, it isn't hard to guess why a corporation like Playtex or Tampax would emphasize the grossness of re-usable options on their websites tailored to teens, as they continue to allow women to believe their products are the best and only options. You're smarter than that now. See the websites listed, or go to your local health-food store for these vagina-healthy and earth-

Also you should attend—Tuesday nights at 8 PM in the Root Cellar, meetings of the Ladies Misbehaving Society. We are a new student club trying to start activism and dialogue related to wimmin's health issues and combating the pervasiveness of patriarchy in all aspects of our lives. Even if you're not a lady, feel free to come! To get on the email list to receive info and updates, send a message to: [kendra.schirmer@ks794@bard.edu](mailto:kendra.schirmer@ks794@bard.edu)

## A Reflection on Sex Work:

*Or the Spitzer Controversy is not Real News*  
by emily mcmaister

Unless you've been concerning yourself only with your own sex life, chances are you have been following the recent scandal over New York Governor Eliot Spitzer. While hands were slapped to foreheads across the nation in faux-shock ("A wealthy politician did WHAT?!") and discussions of political integrity ensued, I was surprised to hear no discussion about the matter at hand. I am in no way defending Spitzer's blaring hypocrisy, after all, in 2003 he prosecuted a company in the Philippines for arranging prostitutes for men. However I hope this will develop into an opportunity to scrutinize our own assumptions and our country's policies when it comes to prostitution.

It is both fascinating and infuriating how American culture readily accepts women's bodies as commodities as long as they appeal to the public as a whole but not on an individual level. It is so routine to see a woman's body objectified to sell anything from movies to breakfast cereal, but the notion that she would choose to wield this influence for her own benefits is deemed outrageous. In other words, it's quietly acceptable

to sell a woman's body, as long as she's not earning the profits.

And what a prudish idea it is to think that sex becomes a commodity only when exchanged for money. Excuse me for saying it, but someone has to: we're all a little whorish, no? Sex is always an exchange in one way or another. Some people exchange love or security and others, if you're lucky, offer pleasure. I find it downright absurd when people are so goddamn self-righteous because their exchanges don't involve any material goods. I mean let's be honest, marriage in this country is the most sacred form of prostitution.

The dehumanization of sex workers specializing in prostitution comes in two forms. They are either high-class gold diggers who earn their undeserved overabundance of cash by constantly spreading their legs, or they are streetwalking, drug-addicted hussies. The only thing these stereotypes manage to accomplish is squandering the public's sense of duty or compassion. After all, these sluts are just asking for it, right? When will this superficial veil of disgust be lifted to reveal actual human

beings? These so-called whores are actual productive members of our society who quench one of our most important, yet unspoken needs. It pains me to have to defend these women when no one should have to, they deserve just as much respect as the rest of us. The lack of outrage over this is not only embarrassing, it is inexcusable.

While idealists like myself would love to see a world that provides benefits for sex workers instead of degradation, protection is the least we can demand. There

have been countless reports over the years detailing how prostitutes who seek police attention for abuse or rape and are in turn arrested. As we can recall, the prohibition of risky behavior has never played out well in our country. In fact, prohibition of alcohol and abortion just drove acts underground and resulted in health hazards and crime. Not to mention in the case of alcohol prohibition, the immense waste of money and the diversion of police attention. The same effect applies for prostitution.



Ike Cole, 38 years old, Los Angeles, CA, \$25, 1990-92; Phillip-Lorca diCorcia



# Road to Nowhere: Bard Shuttle Continues to Disappoint

by ilaria mazzocci

As many students may have noticed, last month an accident rendered the shuttle out of service. This latest interruption in the shuttle service generated a new wave of complaints and inconveniences on campus. The transportation department resorted to using the smaller shuttle and even a six-people mini-van. Describing the latter, Abhay Puskoor says “when the gray van pulled up it was a rat race. Students had to be left behind.” Ed Schmidt, the head of the transportation department, openly admits that the shuttle usually used to replace the newer and larger bus has too much mileage to be reliable, which raises safety questions. Schmidt confirms, “equipment reliability is problem.” He also explains that he has “no back-up” when such setbacks occur. Given Bard’s isolated location, the shuttle plays a fundamental role in connecting students on campus with the nearest bastions of outside civilization, Tivoli and Red Hook. In the years to come, a growing campus population will stress the capacity of Bard’s transportation infrastructure, which begs attention from students and administration alike.

Although over the past few years the afternoon break has been shortened and the weekend nighttime schedule extended, many students feel that transportation options are still insufficient. The current shuttle schedule is designed such that the loop bus may complement Bard transportation. Yet, the unreliability of the bus service run by Dutchess County creates many inconveniences to those traveling between Tivoli, Campus and Red Hook between 3:30 and 6:00. Daniela Gallegos-Anda, for example, complains that “it just sucks! When I get

out of class at 4:30 I have to wait until 6:10 before I can get home.”

Commenting on current arrangements, Schmidt himself concedes “Do I think it’s enough? No!” In his view, a solution might involve two shuttles; one servicing campus and the other running between Tivoli, Red Hook and Bard. Yet, when asked about the feasibility

of this project, Schmidt explains he does not see “a budget for that in the near future.” The scheme would require buying a new shuttle and hiring new drivers, since the ones currently in service already work 8 hour shifts and hiring student drivers is not a viable option. Some students complain that while the inner campus is overly serviced, the more important connections between Tivoli and Red Hook remain neglected. “I think the problem is not the size of the shuttles but the frequency of their routes,” explains student Jeremy Bennett, who proposes two separate shuttles, one running between Kline and Tivoli and another from Kline to Red Hook. Again however, proposals are contingent upon the availability of greater budgetary allocation for transportation.

Other concerns about Bard

number of vehicles on campus. Yet the profusion of cars clotting the parking lots on campus hints at just how popular personal usage of cars is among Bard students and staff. While dramatically altering the transportation habits of Bard students may be a difficult and incremental process, increasing the transportation system’s efficiency will no doubt be an important first step.

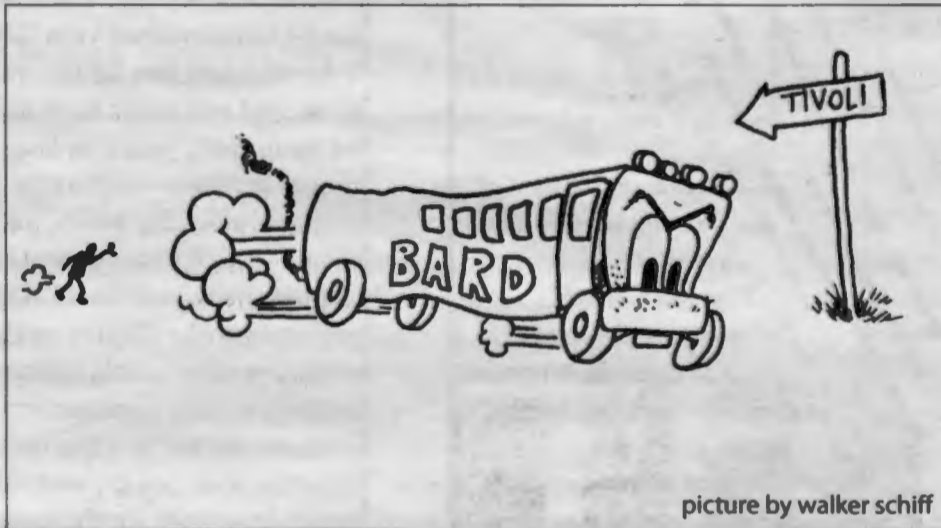
Improving the shuttle’s services might also contribute to solving the seemingly never-ending housing crisis. As more students join Bard’s ranks, campus housing will once again prove to be insufficient and many will opt out of the nightmarish room-draw experience to try their luck in the local real estate market. Bard could improve living standards for students living in Red Hook and Tivoli by investing more

in the shuttle service. “Instead of making Blithewood into a trailer park, the administration should embrace this trend and provide better incentives for those who want to live off-campus,” comments Souzana Anastasi a car-less senior living in Red-Hook.

A more mundane and yet crucial issue is nighttime transportation to and from Tivoli. One might expect more students to use the shuttle on weekend nights if the services were less hectic and connections between Tivoli and Red Hook were improved. “There are times when people have to wrestle their way onto the shuttle, and it’s not a pleasant experience,” explains senior Barnaby Alter, “I just take my car to avoid the trouble.” Given the risks related to driving in bad weather and the statistical propensity of 18-25 year-olds to drive under the influence of alcohol, promoting the use of shuttles rather than personal vehicles would undoubtedly be a positive initiative.

On the whole it seems Quixotic to expect near-term improvements given how demands outstretch the department’s budget. Yet, if complaints remain unofficial, it is doubtful students will see a response on the administration’s part.

Schmidt invites students to personally contact the Loop Bus service run by Dutchess County by calling 482-4690. Furthermore, he suggests students familiarize themselves with the website (<http://inside.bard.edu/community/transport/>) and contact him by email ([trans@bard.edu](mailto:trans@bard.edu)) with any comments or complaints. “I can’t service them if I don’t know,” he explains. While it is Bard’s responsibility to provide basic services like transportation, student



picture by walker schiff

## RWPR: Rich White Public Radio

by claire lutz

I think it’s safe to say that I’m a lifetime listener of National Public Radio. My earliest experience with it was probably *in utero* (the slightly muffled sounds of *Morning Edition*, perhaps?), and one of my earliest memories is simply an image paired with a sound: my mother cooking pasta, and the horn intro to *All Things Considered*. Of course, as a child my exposure to NPR wasn’t a matter of choice so much as absorption. The radio was always on, so I listened, passively at first, but as I grew older and my brain developed further, I was able to harbor strong preferences for certain programs. I went through phases, from *Car Talk* to *A*

*Prairie Home Companion* to *This American Life* and *The Writer’s Almanac*.

I stayed devoted throughout adolescence, until NPR was a distinct part of my life—not just something that I chose to listen to, but something I found I had in common with friends and family. I knew I was a public radio fan, and with that knowledge came the ability to recognize others of my kind (Not to imply that there’s anything cultish about public radio—except that there is). You can find public radio fans just about anywhere, usually denoted by key indicators such as: Kerry/Edwards and Free Tibet bumper stickers, coffee thermoses, fancy pens, etc., etc. We all know the stereotypes,

but the fact that there’s a specific type of person who listens to what is ostensibly “Radio for All People” brings up an important question: how public is public radio?

The question bears answering, but first: what exactly does being an NPR fan say about me, if anything? That I’m a slightly nerd-ish WASPy Democrat? That I drive a hybrid; that I am either a teacher or the child of one; that I might be rich and white but I’m awkward about it? Those aforementioned nasty little NPR stereotypes abound, and they probably say more about the nature of public radio than any of us would like to hear. Surprise: they’re kind of true. The 2007 Arbitron “Radio Today” report concluded

that public radio listeners (at least those who tune in for “news/talk”) have “income and education levels well above the national average.” Assume all you want about us NPR geeks—with a disappointingly meek show of predictability, the statistics reflect the popular image of a Public Radio listener. 71% are college graduates, and 32% are Democrats, compared to 26% Republicans and 30%



continued on the next page...

...RWPR continued from page 8

**AQH Share of Total Listeners**

FA05	44.8%
FA06	43.8%

**Weekly Listeners 12+**

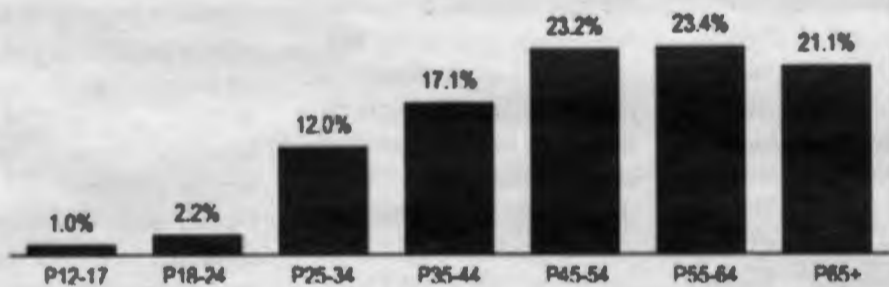
**13,945,700**  
Format Cume

**Listeners 18+**  
Mon-Sun, 6AM-Mid



**Audience Composition**

Percent of Format Audience by Demographic  
Mon-Sun, 6AM-Mid



**Independents.** Over half of public radio listeners earn more than \$75,000 a year—this isn't quite a majority, which is somewhat promising (unless the other 45% are just their school-age children), but it's still a far cry from the populace at large.

NPR's website proclaims that they value diversity, but if that assertion seems a tad bullshit to you, you're both right and wrong.

While there is a whiff of dreaded politically correct sentiment on the breeze, the "diversity" that public radio is talking about here applies not to their listeners, but to their contributors and employees. I'm sure NPR does aim to be like their television twin, PBS, and have an audience that reflects the demographic breakdown of the nation, but their official statement on diversity emphasizes that their

"employees represent a wide range of different generations, cultural histories, racial and sexual identities". It's a different kind of diversity, but it is important. NPR is known for the stellar quality and range of its international news reporting; it's a great medium for people such as Bard students (who will most likely end up in the vast majority of public radio devotees with college degrees) to learn about the world around them. What sets radio journalism apart from other media is also the most visceral of its merits: radio allows us literally to hear the voices and stories of people who we will probably never encounter in our day-to-day lives.

NPR's vaunted international coverage ensures that those voices are heard in the most concrete way possible. But those who listen to public radio are probably among the most likely to already have some knowledge of what's happening in the world. The disparity between the diversity of contributors and the narrow demographic of listeners could easily be construed as a one-way information highway flowing from The Rest of the World to Us (all puns intended). It's this kind of split that makes me

slightly uncomfortable to identify myself as a public radio listener—especially when the vaguely elitist radio in question is funded in part by my tax dollars. As someone who's aware of being part of the NPR community, I'm also aware that by using public radio as a way to educate myself about the world, I'm simultaneously setting myself apart from this rhetorically omnipresent "global community" of which I wish to be an informed member.

But declaring myself a public radio fan doesn't change anything about who I am—it just reveals a little more about me. I happen to be a white, female Democrat, and a student at a sophisticated liberal arts college. To very roughly paraphrase David Foster Wallace's 2005 commencement speech at Kenyon College the purpose of a liberal arts education is to change the way we think about ourselves, the world, and ourselves in the world. This sounds like a goal of the news media in general and public radio in particular. We should be quick to acknowledge that diversity in voices reporting doesn't necessarily equal diversity among the ears listening, and to remember that public radio isn't the precious lamb of mainstream media. Alternatively, it's also worthwhile to recognize the quality of the information being broadcast—the stories given voice—and the importance of it to students such as ourselves.

...Prostitution continued from page 11...

And just what is the price? A report from the 1980's revealed that cities in the United States, on average, spend 7.5 million dollars on matters involving prostitution control and incarceration. Larger cities, like New York, were spending 23 million dollars. Perhaps if jailing women (who are often the only ones penalized for such affairs while the Johns and customers don't get shit) were less of a priority, tax dollars could be spent in a more responsible way. Far-fetched, I know. Wouldn't it be lovely if such expenses were being used to battle more pressing matters like poverty which sadly enough often forces unwilling women into the lifestyle in the first place. With legalization, or at least decriminalization, would come mandatory STI-screening and condom use, police protection, the option to quit the profession, and less crime. There are even unions such as the International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW) that demand

rights, fight stereotypes and empower sex workers.

I fully admit to living in a fantasy world of feminist ideals. In a perfect world, everyone would have an infallible right to choose to use their body in anyway they please. Please don't forget that these values of privacy, choice, and women's health are what finally legalized a woman's right to choose an abortion in 1973. Unfortunately, the world we live in may just be too complex for legalized prostitution. Gruesome byproducts like human trafficking are impossible to ignore. Human trafficking and sex work are so intertwined that it is extremely difficult to formulate an effective solution. Nevertheless, I think it is imperative that we do what we can at the time being: decriminalize and protect. It's about harm-reduction, feminist ideals and respect. Once these values are adopted, perhaps we will live in a country where a sex worker is more than just a skeleton in some politician's closet.



## MUSIC



Artist: British Sea Power  
Release: Do You Like Rock Music?

Label: Rough Trade

The title of this record tells you everything you need to know—just understand it's irony-free. On their third record, British Sea Power make a brazen grab for the mantle of rock 'n' roll superstars, combining squalling guitar, bombastic drums, and stadium chants for an epic record of distinctly British pop/rock. The band retains its eccentric lyrics—as overtly intellectual as you're likely to find outside a Talking Heads record—but has expanded itself sonically, incorporating at-times a nearly post-rock wall of guitar-sound and seemingly endless buildups and pay-offs. Although cathartic, the effect at times is simply draining, and as the record concludes with the 8 minute long, instrumental, "We Close Our Eyes," you may find yours will too, from exhaustion. That's not to say the fatigue is anything less than earned because the album is easily the best record the band's made yet. In fact "No Lucifer" wins my vote for single of the year (thus far). British Sea Power is likely too...well British to make much of a commercial impact in the States. However, if your love of rock 'n' roll supercedes your heartfelt patriotism, you'd be well served to grab a copy of this

sprawling minor masterpiece.

by elias isquith



Artist: Drive-By Truckers  
Release: Brighter Than Creation's Dark  
Label: New West

Drive-By Truckers is one of the better bands in the world right now, but they're hindered by the unfortunate fact that they play a type of folk-inflected southern-rock that hasn't been hip since 1990. Still, *Brighter Than Creation's Dark* they appear to be keepin' on. *Creation's Dark* contains a whopping 19 tracks and runs comfortably longer than an hour. For the most part, the Drive-By Truckers earn their excess. The best songs—"Two Daughters and a Beautiful Wife," "Self Destructive Zones," "That Man I Shot," and "A Ghost to Most"—deftly combine roots rock reminiscent of the Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet* or Uncle Tupelo with funny, sad, direct, and heartfelt lyrics about American losers and castaways. *Brighter Than Creation's Dark* reaffirms Drive-By Trucker's reputation as the thinking-man's southern rock band and, in its own way, it may be the best thing they've ever done.

by elias isquith



Artist: Fleet Foxes  
Release: Sun Giant EP  
Label: Sub Pop

The first reaction one is likely to have upon hearing Fleet Foxes is amazement—and perhaps a slight annoyance—at how similar lead-singer Robin Pecknold's voice is to My Morning Jacket's Jim James. Some of this is due to the excessive amounts of reverb applied to Pecknold's singing—as is the case for most My Morning Jacket recordings—but mostly it's due to old-fashioned, unvarnished influence. Although Pecknold is often a dead ringer for James, Fleet Foxes are no My Morning Jacket rip-off (That dubious title still belongs to Band of Horses). Where My Morning Jacket roars, Fleet Foxes sighs; they have none of MMJ's southern-rock inflections and instead mine the Band's and Dylan's more rustic and mystical recordings. This is most apparent in the ethereal harmonies and slightly off-kilter song structures of their newest EP, *Sun Giant*. Apparently recorded after the band's forthcoming self-titled debut, *Sun Giant* bodes well for the band's future, already showing maturation from the debut (which leaked a while ago, if you're interested). The best song here is "English House," a beautiful jaunt that displays some of the tuneful whimsy most associated with Animal Collective, filtered through a decidedly Americana prism. Everything on this EP is good, and I'd recommend it as the best starting-place for those interested in Fleet Foxes.



Artist: The Magnetic Fields  
Album: *Distortion*  
*Distortion* is The Magnetic Fields' second release since switching labels to Nonesuch in 2002. The album follows *69 Love Songs* and *i*, released in 1999 and 2004 respectively. If you have never listened to the likes of front man Stephin Merritt you are in for a real treat; he is an amazing songwriter and vocalist. From the first chord of *Distortion* it becomes evident that this is Merritt's most commercial release to date. The attraction lies in the looping melodies and feel-good lyrics. Despite this terribly un-hip mainstream appeal, *Distortion* leaves the listener satisfied that The Magnetic Fields have produced another great recording. "California Girls," the second song, has both poignant lyrics and a catchy melody: an unbeatable combination. "Drive on, Driver" and "The Nun's Litany" are arguably the best two songs. Even though it may not live up to *69 Love Songs*, *Distortion* is well worth your ears.

by emily diamond



Artist: Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks  
Album: *Real Emotional Trash*

You may have heard some of Stephen Malkmus' previous albums, *Face the Truth*, or his self-titled LP, but more likely you will recognize him from his Pavement days, pre-1999. *Real Emotional Trash* is Malkmus' fourth release since going solo and taking on The Jicks for support. Overall this album has a nice rock-and-roll sound underneath all of its cute riffs and appropriately silly lyrics. The first song on the album, "Dragonfly Pie," is irresistibly fun until the song hits 3:45 minutes and the band proceeds to have an extensive jam session that is significantly less endearing on the ears than the vocals in "Cold Son" or "Out of Reaches." Some of the songs may be a bit too long. "Elmo Delmo" actually becomes irritating, likely because of its constant sung repetition of "Elmo Delmo."

This album is fun to hop around to for a while and, if you are a fan, you might even think of seeing Stephen Malkmus & The Jicks when they come to the Bowery Ballroom in New York City at the end of April. If you are like me and could live happily without ever hearing Pavement again, you should probably put off buying the ticket and try listening to the album a few times first. There are a few songs you will listen to on repeat and a few you will only hear once. Together, these form a very respectable release from Malkmus and high hopes for future projects.

by emily diamond

## FILM

## Honey: Don't

by ben greenblatt

John Sayles' new film *Honeydripper* examines a subculture of music-makers in a rural Alabama town in 1950, mainly through the eyes of Tyrone Purvis (Danny Glover) as he tries to fix up his old blues club, the Honeydripper, for Saturday night. Sayles explores this group of individuals through their interactions with Purvis and other members of the Honeydripper as they all clearly anticipate the final showdown. Purvis remains the focal point of this story, as does his club, which every character, big or small, ends up at for that grand Saturday night.

Although on paper the plot may seem convoluted or disparaging, for better or for worse is a very conventional film. Practically every aspect of this film, whether it is the directing, writing, acting, or even the music, are all expressed in a

very calm and peaceful manner. Simply put, the film functions too neatly. It seems as if the script, which Sayles also wrote, didn't provide much leeway for directorial diversions, thus making the film seem very tightly wound. The film provides a space with no room for ambiguity or speculation, just a clean cut, and at times, immature story.

Sayles clearly has a tremendous ear for using music to structure the film (almost a la Altman for *Nashville*), and this period music actually ties everything together, not just acting as some superfluous agent that typically invades most films. The music brings to us the evolution of black music, beginning with the gospel, moving towards the blues, and finally showing us how rock n' roll really got started, all in the span of a few days.



Overall then, Sayles gives us a very clean story that, although exploding with racial and social tensions, seems weak or boring at moments. However, that appears to be the whole point; it is actually a quiet hit.

## FILM CONT'D

### *La Meglio Gioven* Resonates Well with American Audiences

by *ilaria mazzocci*

Italian self-pity is as old as the culture itself. An ancient tradition, pondering Italy's existential misfortunes has been renewed through artistic production and social commentary to this day, bringing special pride to all citizens alike. *La Meglio Gioventù*, loosely translated in English as *The Best of Youth* was recently screened on campus by *Il Circolo Italiano*. Given the taste for history and self-flagellation in the country, the movie's popularity in Italy is understandable. What surprised me was this six hour long family saga's relatively wide circulation abroad.

From the very first scene, the up-and-coming director Marco Tullio Giordana winks at Italian audiences. I recently watched the movie again among non-Italian friends, I found them enthralled in the story regardless of the historical references. Is this a sign that the prolific Italian-historical-commentary movie-genre may budge towards a more holistic approach to movie-making, addressing a more

universal audience? Well, maybe. The younger generation of socially conscious movie-makers has often failed to move beyond the specificity of particular events in Italian history. Yet the two screenwriters for *La Meglio Gioventù*, Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli, did succeed in creating an interesting story, with deeper metaphorical purposes. This is not to say that the result is flawless.

The movie fails to avoid the cheesiness inherent in most TV productions, as the outright weird and soap-opera like appearance of Matteo's ghost proves. Nonetheless, the story manages to stand on its own separately from Italian history, as a fable of progress and madness. Certainly, the final result is less dense than the likewise historical *Romanzo Criminale*, a rather compelling box office champion whose screenplay was also written by Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli. *I Centro Passi*, also directed by Giordana, is another beautiful film that utilizes the historical genre. Both of these movies present a much bleaker outlook



on Italy's future than *Best of Youth*, which probably contributes to the latter's charm. Yet charm is not the only requisite for a good movie, and one good movie is not enough to judge a whole artistic world. We may then ask, is there still hope for Italian art? It may well be that social and political failures fuel much of Italian production. Given the present environment in Italy this may be a fine start, but the challenge will ultimately lie in moving beyond the simple momentary satire and toward a universal form of art.

## SHOW

### Love of Three Oranges: A Fairy Tale on Crack

by *amy levenhagen*

I emerge from the MPR with excessively high spirits and an abundance of gratitude for those responsible for the creation of "The Love of Three Oranges," written by Hillary Depiano and directed by Molly Conway. I am awakened to the joys of Bard-filtered Commedia Dell'Arte, gifted with whatever it was I always thought I'd find at Renaissance Fairs, and, above all, filled with relief at Prince Tartaglia's (played by Blake Bishton) miraculous recovery from his terminal hypochondria.

The physical comedy of this production was a welcome change of pace. While a frightening number of Bard drama kids seem to operate under the misconception that the rest of us want to sit around watching their one-dimensionally neurotic creations spout endless monologues through drags of filtered cigarettes, this play sought to engage the

audience in both form and content. With the lights on, as the program notes, "to better facilitate communication between the actors and the audience," the show embraced the Commedia style of comic theatre by bringing it into this time and place. Slapstick comedy mixes with highbrow humor (Kaycee Filson muses in 'Fakespeare' and Robert Kittler references Coleridge, with a Botstien tie) with timely satire.

Rita Halpert is the hot henchwoman to Jordan Williard's Fata Morgana, who brings gusto and theme music to the stage every time she walks on. Nelson James makes a hilarious king, flailing superfluous tissues in distress. Danielle Sherman plays a poor old cook, and Nick Friedman's Farfello's exaggerated queerness and marginally loyal union ties make him a devil worth summoning from hell. Did I mention that Blake was brilliant? He fell in

love with oranges. And he made you believe it.

At times I got lost in the plot, but it did not take away from the show, which was focused on the hilarity of the moment. There was one point at which David Goran was prancing around the stage with a long black wig, and while I honestly wasn't sure who he was supposed to be, I think I liked it. The plot issue was also partially remedied by the narrator's intermittent updates, much appreciated by a bunch of Bard students on a weeknight.

The show brought the classic art of Commedia into a modern context with revived stock characters, cleverly employed self-consciousness and audience involvement, and timely humor. If anyone doubts the brilliance of the production, consider the fact that it had Bard students enjoying a fairy tale, sober, with the lights on. How's that for 8:00 on a Monday?

## SPOTLIGHT SMOG



photos by daniel terna

...NCOR continued from page 1

Michael Albert, a co-founder of *South End Press* and *Z Magazine*, led the *Creating an Economic and Social Vision* workshop Sunday morning. Despite my bleary-eyed state after a blustery cold night of sightseeing, I still laughed at his many jokes and lucid anecdotes as he led us through the workshop. I'm guessing this workshop was largely based on the ideas in his book (spotted at one of the many vendor tables) *Parecon: Life After Capitalism* which can also be found online at: [www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org), some parts for free! His workshop was only an introduction to the ideas of participatory economics and society, and he encouraged all of us to do more research instead of simply taking his ideas as gospel. One of the basic premises of the workshop was that he felt it wasn't enough to be eloquent and impassioned; the real task of a successful movement requires generating an institutional vision for fitting our values. He criticized the "primitivist" fantasies often entertained by radicals envisioning a new society (or lack thereof). This workshop also seemed to run out of time at the end.

Last year I enjoyed the *Radical Urban Sustainability* workshop led by the

Rhizome Collective. This year they taught the similarly themed *Radical Sustainability for Autonomous Communities* which got rave reviews from some Bard attendees. The Rhizome Collective is a non-profit group based in Austin, TX and they discussed a "cross-section of permaculture and social-activism" in describing their methods of urban ecological survival skills. You can learn more about them at: [www.rhizomecollective.org](http://www.rhizomecollective.org). In Spring 2008, they will publish the RUST manual, or *Radical Urban Sustainability Training manual*.

Other 2008 workshops I experienced were: *Confronting Fascists, Fighting Racism// Climate Change, Capitalism, & Resistance: Building a Movement for Climate Justice Outside the Neo-colonial Box// Anarchy in the USA: the Love-Hate Relationship with Presidential Elections// Class and Classism*. The NCOR website still has a full list of the workshops that occurred with descriptions.

Whether or not those who attended learned all that much they didn't already know from the zines and books they got at NCOR the year before, or will really

implement what they learned about in their own communities, is debatable. Taken at face value the crowds of mostly white, rather crusty punk kids could be off-putting for many, especially those not acquainted with the snuggly utopian side of anarchist philosophy, piercings and tattoos aside. Yet, the very valid question of diversity within this kind of movement is an important issue that many workshops I attended addressed as a failing or weakness of anarchism, reflected in the homogenous makeup of other alternative movements, like the closely related punk scene. But overall, it is truly powerful to experience two days of so many people engaged passionately in what the NCOR website's mission statement describes as: "*In workshops and presentations communities in struggle will share their stories and organize toward revolution in our lifetime. NCOR in its eleventh year will reflect the global in the local, because the oppressions we face in Washington DC are, on a small scale, the same as those we face everywhere. Come to DC March 7-9th with a new world in your heart..*" ([www.ncor2008.org](http://www.ncor2008.org)).

# The Artists are Gone, but Their Comics Survive

