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Bard Free Press, Vol. 10, No. 4 (February 2009)

Bard College

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Bard Loses \$3.5 Million



BY STEVEN PIKELNY

It was revealed over the intersession that Bard College and the Levy Economics Institute lost \$3.5 million in conjunction with the downfall of the Ponzi scheme designed by disgraced financier Bernard Madoff. Because Ezra Merkin, the manager of the fund containing Bard's lost investments, omitted his involvement with Madoff from his quarterly reports, Bard administrators and the board of trustees only became aware last December that a portion of Bard's endowment had been invested with Madoff.

As the Madoff scheme collapsed at the end of last year, Bard found itself in the company of several colleges duped by Madoff, including NYU, which lost \$24 million, and Yeshiva University, which lost \$14.5 million. In an attempt to recover some of the lost funds, according to Bard VP and Chief Financial Officer Dimitri Papadimitriou, Bard plans to join NYU in a lawsuit.

Madoff created an investment pyramid scheme by using new investors' money--in lieu of investment profits from real companies--to pay off the securities of old investors. When the market began to decline and new investors stopped coming, the system collapsed

and Madoff's too-good-to-be-true short-term returns were revealed as a fraud. Madoff is currently under house arrest in his Park Avenue penthouse, awaiting trial.

Of the \$50 million Madoff allegedly swindled from investors worldwide, roughly \$1 billion was from Merkin. New York Attorney General Andrew Cuomo has begun an investigation of his relationship with Madoff, and Bard has complied with Cuomo's request for information and records regarding

“It's absolutely outrageous,” says Botstein

transactions made with Merkin, according to administration VP Jim Brudvig.

Leon Levy -- the namesake of the Levy Institute -- introduced Merkin to Bard in 1991, at which point an account in Merkin's Ariel Fund was created. The two organizations invested a combined \$14 million in the fund, which reported good returns until 2007 when they

started to decrease.

The loss from the Madoff scheme, however, was overshadowed by the losses due to the faltering stock market. Bard has lost roughly 11 percent of its formerly \$270 million endowment since the beginning of the fall semester.

Merkin continually notified Bard that 30 to 40 percent of the fund was held in cash, said Papadimitriou, who also heads the Levy Institute. “We initially felt good that such a portion of our investments were in cash with such economic conditions,” Papadimitriou told the FREE PRESS.

The optimism proved misplaced, however, when the Ariel Fund's quarterly report revealed in December that the cash was actually heavily invested in Madoff securities, which, as was then also becoming apparent, did not actually exist.

“It's absolutely outrageous,” Leon Botstein told Bloomberg News. “We never knowingly invested with Madoff. We invested with Ezra Merkin.”

Though Bard can plausibly claim ignorance, Brudvig expressed some doubt that the school would necessarily have terminated the investment if Merkin's relationship with

Madoff had been brought to life earlier. “I guess he fooled a lot of people out there, and he seemed to be making a lot of money for people. So I don't know if it would have changed,” Brudvig told the FREE PRESS.

The story earned Bard some (albeit dubious) mention in national news media, including The New York Times and Bloomberg News; a misquote of Botstein in the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that Bard lost \$11 million to Madoff. At a trustees meeting on Jan. 21, Botstein expressed some satisfaction with the misquote, since it gives a greater appearance that “Bard can survive anything.”

Bard's current investments consist of fixed-income equities and bonds, and the remaining portion of the Ariel fund. “Fortunately we are not as dependent on income from our endowment as other institutions are,” noted Papadimitriou. “We are managing frugally.”

Bard's more conservative investment strategies leave it less vulnerable to the stock market's fluctuations. In 2005, Bard held approximately \$200,000 in AIG, the failed bank, according to a report from the investment committee of the board of trustees. It is now worth less than \$5,000.

MARKET DECLINE FORCES BUDGET CUTS

10 administrators laid off

LUDLOW MAKES EFFICIENCIES, REFINES PRIORITIES

BY JONAH MOST & TRAVIS WENTWORTH

Tucked away as we are in our camp by the river, our perpetually cash-strapped institution has not escaped the effects of the bank failures, plummeting stock values and fraudulent investment schemes that have dominated the headlines in recent months. The administration has slimmed services, shed jobs, and even taken a voluntary pay cut to match the lost income. Faculty and staff expect that department budgets, which are due at that end of this month, will be broadly cut, affecting most everything from executive pay to B&G service requests.

The numbers underpinning such actions are jarring: in total, Bard

two million dollar adjustment."

Still, trimming \$2 million from the budget is not without victims. Ten low- and mid-level administrators were laid off over winter break in an effort to increase administrative efficiency. Among them was, somewhat ironically, the budget director, whose function ordinarily consists of overseeing construction projects. Since those have mostly been put on hold, the administration felt that his remaining duties could be picked up by the controller of the College.

Upper-level administrators have not stood above the changes. After the first two rounds of budget cuts last semester, Brudvig convened 20 administrators, including the pres-



of University Professors, reported that though academic department budgets have been cut by 10 percent across the board, previously authorized candidate searches continue in a number of departments.

Looking forward, however, some positions will likely remain vacant. Bard will host fewer visiting and temporary faculty. Kris Feder, director of the economics program, explained that "a lot of searches are going on," but that many of them started "before anyone understood what was going to happen." In order to make up for the shortage, it is expected that some under-enrolled classes--often highly specialized upper-level seminars or obscure courses in the particular research areas of faculty members--will be cut, and that some professors will be asked to add a section of FYSem to their course loads.

In the big red barn, cuts have been more pronounced. Overtime wages for B&G employees are now only authorized on an emergency basis, which is making routine operations difficult for a department that has a history of being understaffed. As a result, renovations are behind schedule, responses to student work orders have been slower, and projects, including long-dreamed-of renovations to Kline, the library and Stevenson Gymnasium, have been pushed aside. Steve Pinchbeck, a steward in the HVAC department, explained that "Basically, we have to jam everything we can into an eight hour day." The union that represents B&G, SEIU Local 200, is currently in negotiations with the College to prevent layoffs.

Meanwhile, Laurie Husted, Bard's Environmental Resources Auditor, has been busy baking wedge-shaped brownies, a service normally provided by Chartwells

and funded by the College, in preparation for a conference on climate change. Environmental projects, which are sometimes considered a luxury, are often the first to go in leaner times, and her department has faced cuts. Bard temporarily switched from using 100 percent post-consumer paper to 30 percent, but through a change in suppliers Husted was able to return to the old paper. The message, however, seems clear: in tough times, paper is not a priority. Her department is also managing a 10 percent reduction in funding for trash collection, leaving Husted to "hope people recycle more."

Students already upset with food quality on campus may or may not be glad to hear that Chartwells is doing fine. No matter where the market goes, students still eat, although Chartwells has lost some revenue from its catering business. Chas Cerulli, Director of Dining Services, has noted a 20 to 30 percent reduction in orders for department breakfasts and staff meetings. He explained that some menu items may need to be "redeveloped," but was confident that budget cuts will only affect options and not quality.

As far as financial aid is concerned, there have been no changes for now. "That's another priority we have," says Brudvig, "maintaining and boosting financial aid whenever possible." No aid packages have been reduced due to budget considerations, but a greater demand might soon be seen from parents who have lost jobs and investments. The recession is "starting to trickle in a little bit," he says, "some parents losing jobs, things of that sort, asking the college for some change in financial aid packages. We try to respond as best we can by offering some more money in certain situations."



has lost about 11 percent of its endowment since the beginning of the school year -- close to 30 million dollars. But compared to colleges with much larger endowments, the loss of income on Bard's relatively small \$270 million in savings has made for an easier adaptation process. Most colleges tend to finance operations on returns from endowment investments, which for Bard were quite modest even in the best of times. As Administration VP Jim Brudvig told the FREE PRESS recently, "We had a problem, but we only had to get three or four million dollars a year from our endowment... When you cut it in half, then you're talking about making a

ident, vice presidents and other managers, and asked for voluntary participation in a salary reduction, from 2.5 to 10 percent each, from each of them. All agreed. "I have to say that it was wonderful to see the response, frankly," Brudvig said. Still, the pay cuts did not suffice, and layoffs had to follow.

As the budget shortfalls clarify Bard's priorities, academics have come out on top; according to Brudvig, financial aid and faculty pay remains unaffected, and two faculty hires--both in the economics department--will continue as planned.

Matthew Dedy, Professor of Physics and the faculty representative to the American Association

FREE PRESS Editors Used Leftover Budget to Pay Speeding Tickets

By Travis Wentworth

With approximately \$400 left in last semester's budget after printing the last issue in color, FREE PRESS editors Travis Wentworth and Daniel Terna, each with outstanding fines from speeding violations that occurred while driving from the printing plant in Wappinger's Falls, directed the student government treasurer to issue two separate checks made out to the Dutchess County Clerk.

"It's totally justified. These tickets were bona fide Free Press expenses. Try asking our readers if they would tolerate dallying at 55 MPH on Route 9 when there's fresh news to distribute," Wentworth said, obviously irritated.

Terna was issued a ticket for going 43 MPH through Hyde Park, where the limit is 30. "It never occurred to me that I could get a speeding ticket," says Terna, who drives a minivan that's not as good-looking as he is. "My car normally can't break the speed limit."

Wentworth was stopped outside of Poughkeepsie going 57 in a 40 MPH zone. "I could have sworn the limit was 55 there. I thought I was being responsible," he told the FREE PRESS. "Honest mistake."

Though Wentworth and Terna are unreservedly defensive of their actions, they did acknowledge that if word got out of their decision to pay their fines with leftover FREE PRESS funds, it could be perceived as a corrupt abuse of power. "It's a damn good thing we control the discourse on this campus," Terna told Wentworth in a telephone conversation that they did not know was being monitored.

"Word," Wentworth agreed. "What are we going to do - write some sort of biting exposé on student-journalist corruption?"

When informed of the editors' actions, Rob Ross, who is on the Student Government Planning Committee, said that "these guys are clearly assholes."

Ryan Gustafson, the Secretary of the Student Association, refused to stoop to their low standards. "What a shame," he said. "We're going to live on. We're going to survive."

A TREE FALLS IN ANNANDALE

FELLED BY HIGH WINDS, TREE DEMOLISHES TWO CARS

"I HEARD A CRACK, LOOKED, AND WATCHED IT FLY!"

ROBBINS LOT SUFFERS DAMAGE

By Alex Eriksen

At 3PM on Thurs. Feb. 12th, Linda Christensen, an administrative assistant at Health Services, heard the sound of snapping wood during the wind storm that hit campus, and looked out the window in time to see a large section of a 75-foot tall white pine tree plummet to the ground and damage several cars.

She immediately phoned security. No one was injured, but the felled tree damaged five cars parked below, two of them seriously. One car, belonging to a student, suffered a broken windshield and numerous dents; the other received a direct hit, a branch piercing the windshield and then some twelve inches through the dashboard. The owner of the car, a nurse at the Health Center, declined to comment. The three other cars received minor body damage.

The remains of the tree were cleared early Friday morning. The fallen 30-foot long section was carved up with chain saws and then carted off by tractors and flatbed trucks. A cherry picker came in later to remove the section of the tree that remained standing. All labor was done by Buildings and Grounds staff. The tree at Robbins is one of five that fell during the heavy winds blowing through campus Thursday. The other four fell at Shafer, the Water Plant, Finberg, and Blum/Avery. None of those trees caused any damage. Two were alive, and two were dead.

The tree that fell at Robbins was a living white pine between 75 and 100 years old. It had a double trunk. Its trunk split off at a joint, forming two sections. The section

that fell was suppliant to the main body of the tree. In the 60 MPH wind, the weaker section could not withstand the strain. White pine trees also have soft, comparatively weaker wood. It stood on its own, not in a host of trees, so it was exposed to the full force of the wind.

B&G annually inspect the 550 acres of trees on campus for possible dangers but said they never considered the Robbins tree to be in any danger of falling. "That tree was never on my radar," said Horticulture Supervisor Amy Foster. "We have a lot of white pines on campus and they're very beautiful trees. They just unfortunately are not that strong" said Foster.

Randy Clum, Assistant Director of B&G, agrees with Foster that the Robbins tree was never thought of being structurally unsound. B&G will be reexamining trees in parking areas to assess any possible risk. "The problem is there are just too many trees, we have a limited budget, limited equipment, and limited staff," said Foster. "I can't really think of one place on campus that's safe." B&G told the FREE PRESS there are no plans to move student or faculty parking away from trees.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUTHOR

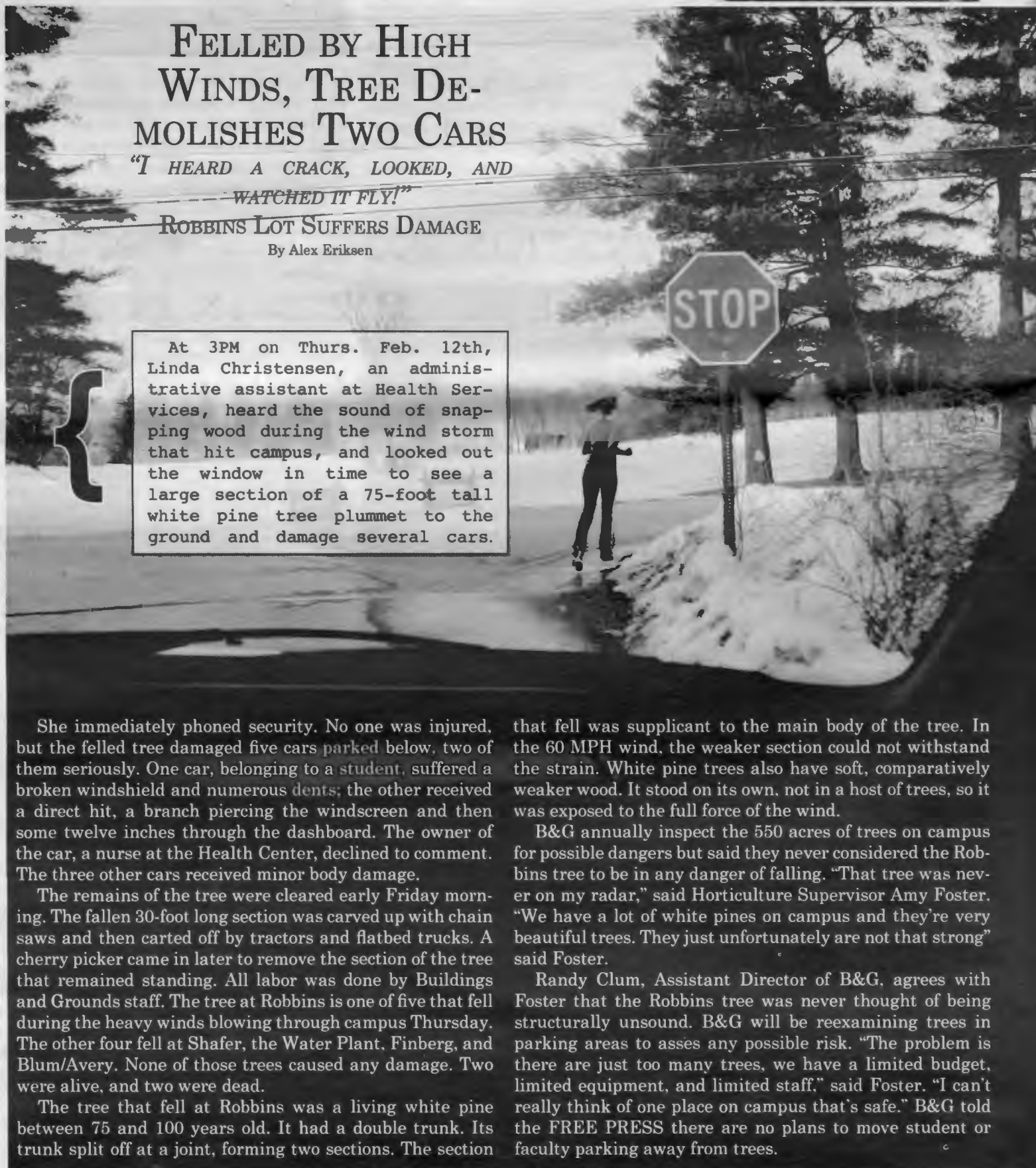


PHOTO BY DAN TERNA

Republicans Turn Up Heat in Contest for Gillibrand's Vacated House Seat

Last Wednesday, Governor David Paterson set March 31st as the date for a special election for the 20th Congressional District, making official a local race that has, by all appearances, already begun. This race ultimately results from President Obama's appointment of Senator Hillary Clinton to serve as Secretary of State. After a months-long process, generally portrayed as a two-way contest between state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, son of former Governor Mario Cuomo, and socialite Caroline Kennedy, daughter of President Kennedy, Governor Paterson ultimately selected Congresswoman Kirsten Gillibrand, who had represented the 20th Congressional District

since January of 2007, as Clinton's successor.

Gillibrand has proven to be a controversial choice with many in the New York City area, due to her low name recognition and her staunchly conservative stances on guns and immigration. Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy of Long Island, an outspoken proponent of gun control, who entered politics after her husband was shot to death by a mass murderer, told reporters that she was considering a primary challenge to Gillibrand, before her appointment was even officially announced. On the other hand, Gillibrand is enormously popular with voters in upstate New York, being the first upstater to represent New York in the US Senate in over forty years. She has also received praise from GLBT groups for her endorsement, just after accepting Paterson's appointment, of national same-sex marriage. Gillibrand has also promised to meet with leaders of the New York Latino community to discuss accommodations on

immigration issues.

Gillibrand's shifts on these issues likely reflect the political differences between her former congressional district and the state as a whole. The New York 20th was created after the 2000 census to be a fairly safe Republican district. It extends from Hyde Park, just south of Bard's campus, along the eastern edge of the state, bypassing the greater Albany area and extending north almost to the Canadian border, with a western extension reaching almost to northeastern Pennsylvania. Like much of Upstate New York, most of this area has been solidly Republican, with only a handful of exceptions, as long as there has been a Republican party. With the decline of industrial activity in the Northeast, the region's general opposition to President Bush's aggressive foreign policy, the influx of population from the expanding New York City suburbs and exurbs, and the increasing threat of global warming to local wildlife, the area has recently become a battleground for

NATIONAL ATTENTION TURNS TO SPECIAL ELECTION IN HUDSON VALLEY

By Donna McColloch

the two major parties. Before the 2006 midterm elections, the Republican Party held seven congressional seats in Upstate New York; now, they have been reduced to two.

In addition to Democrats and Republicans, three minor parties will have ballot access for this special election: the New York Conservative Party, which is generally close to the Republicans but has refused to nominate a moderate candidate, such as New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg; the Independence Party, a moderate group whose sole member in the State Assembly sits with the Democrats; and the Working Families Party, a left-leaning group close to the Democrats. The Republican and Conservative Parties have endorsed State Assembly Minority Leader Jim Tedisco, who represents a district in the Troy area. The Democratic Party has nominated Scott Murphy, a local venture capitalist and former senior staffer to Democratic Governors of Missouri Mel Carnahan and Roger Wilson. The Independence Party is expected to endorse Tedisco; the Working Families Party is expected to endorse Murphy. Under state law, candidates nominated

by more than one party appear on each party's ballot line and are credited with the total number of votes they receive on all lines where they appear. For special elections, no primaries are held; instead, the chairs of the county chapters of the parties in the relevant area elect nominees. The Libertarian Party, though it lacks ballot access, has put forth party chair Eric Sundwall as a write-in candidate.

Both major party candidates have reason to be hopeful about their prospects in this race. Despite Barack Obama's narrow victory in the 20th this past November, the area still has far more registered Republicans than Democrats, and the Republican apparatus is still strong. Tedisco has a long track record and a favorable reputation in the Upstate area. A poll commissioned by his campaign with Public Opinion Strategies showed him leading Murphy by 50% to 29%, with the remainder undecided.

Murphy, on the other hand, has advantages of his own. He has already raised more than \$200,000, capitalizing on national party connections. Much of Tedisco's lead in polls is likely due to Murphy's

status as an unknown, and over the next six weeks he will have time to introduce himself to far more residents of the district. He has already connected his work as a venture capitalist, funding and consulting for startup businesses, with the district's overwhelming need for more jobs. Now-Senator Gillibrand, who won here last November with more than 60% of the vote, has come back to the district to campaign for him.

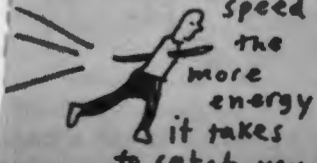
Ultimately the outcome of this race hinges mainly on turnout. If Democratic voters continue to show the low level of motivation they have demonstrated in other special elections since Barack Obama's victory on November 4th, Tedisco will win in a landslide, giving the Republican Party further hope of taking back control of Congress in 2010 and defeating President Obama in 2012. On the other hand, a win for Murphy over such a prominent figure in state politics as Tedisco would be a humiliation to the Republicans. Special elections are wildly unpredictable. Given the low expected turnout, the participation of Bard students and employees may prove crucial.

HOW TO SNEAK INTO KLINE.

BY SOFIA PIA

SPEED

1. appear rushed.
the faster your speed the more energy it takes to catch you.



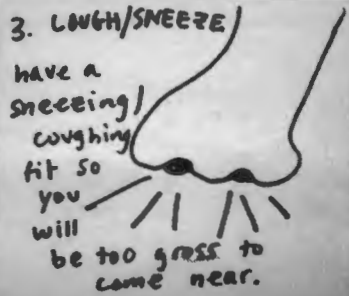
Coffee

2. go straight for the plastic/to go stuff when asked say "I'm just getting something to drink." Then survey food options once inside.



3. LUGH/SNEEZE!

have a sneezing/coughing fit so you will be too gross to come near.



4. WAVE

confidence is key. avoid eye contact look straight ahead and wave to a friend inside.



5. DISTRACTION

RRRRR * but don't try when the doors first open. sneak in when it is crowded or someone is not swiping correctly.



6. PLATE

a. b. c. choose a, b, or c. Find a friend and use their dirty plate/cup/fork to appear to be getting ends.



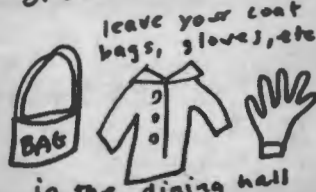
7. DRAMA

if you appear very upset. crying screaming into a phone or simply talking on your phone as you walk in is a good detour.



8. DISROBE

leave your coat bags, gloves, etc in the dining hall to give the illusion that you were already eating.



Best of Luck!
use with caution.
avoid being put on 'the list'
if caught wait 1 week before attempting re-entry.

BARD BACK TO #1 POT SCHOOL, SAYS PRINCETON REVIEW

By REBECCA WEBB

How taboo is the subject of marijuana usage? Of course, the action is illegal. Major bummer. But the discussion, and the odd cultural roots of our "pot school" status, are not. However much a non-issue pot is, the Princeton Review's guidebook for college-bound youngsters has devoted a section of its "Campus Life" coverage to the prevalence of this very illicit and somehow very illustrious non-drug of a drug. Impressionable teens and their parents from all across the country can see which college tops the list of "Reefer Madness" schools. This year—after a sad decline in 2008 when Hampshire and UVM overtook us—clinching the number one spot, and taking home the title, once again, is Bard College.

The whole thing feels a bit like a perverse version of the Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards, a televised popularity contest in which kids vote for whatever illustrious titles are to be bestowed upon their own ranks. In weird categories like "Birkenstock-wearing, tree-hugging, clove-smoking, vegetarians," for which Bard came in third, or "dodgeball targets," for which Bard came in 15th, the Princeton Review ranks colleges using a survey that students complete of the college they attend. Bring on the slime and a belching Justin Timberlake.

So the question seems to be: How did Bard land the much-coveted first place position? Are we really smoking that much pot, and for that matter, are we brimming with pride just at the prospect of holding that big orange blimp?

not the reason we say so to the Princeton Review. Bard's being deemed the number one pot school has little to do with pot, and all its non-issue goodness. Drug use, even marijuana (in what is more of a prescription drug era), earns Bard kids leftist street cred.

Though it's definitely not hard to get marijuana on campus—as Allen points out, you only have to ask one or two people to get sent in the right direction—it's not the easy access that put Bard above other institutions in the polls. Bard is all about the mainstream left image, and putting forth an image of, in Allen's words, a "hip Mecca." He agreed that students will say whatever it is that cultivates that image. "If it means saying that they smoke a lot of weed in the moment, they'll say that, and if it means Bard has awesome literature classes, they'll say that."

It's la mode. In order to put forth an appearance of grand and conquering cool, the students at Bard ended up making a statement about something the school itself goes out of its way to have a lack of statement about. And maybe this is why the ranking gets so much attention. On campus, where there are many out-there issues we seem to own, legalization of pot isn't one of them. No matter how good, in the end pot just isn't all that dear to our hearts. (Right?) As Allen so eloquently put it, "Weed is like video games and masturbation. You always enjoy doing all three, but at the end of the day, you wish that none of them were part of your life."



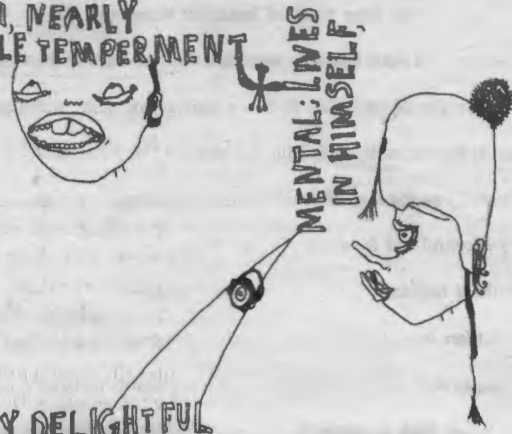
No, says freshman Michael Allen. "Bard is absolutely not the number one weed smoking school in the country," but we do "have exactly the right level of arrogance and abrasive, odd school pride to lie about how much we smoke." We just want to win. We have a reputation to uphold as upstanding non-conformist badass intellectuals. If doing that means embellishing our illicit tendencies for all those eager parents, impressionable youths and Princeton Review execs who think reefer madness is not a non-issue but in fact some sort of a manifestation of intellectual rebellion, we will do just that.

When asked why people smoke pot, Allen said simply, "Pot is good because it feels good." Presidents, Olympic athletes, and hipsters alike can attest to that. So yes, maybe we do like pot, but that's

We are a school with great literature classes and marijuana, maybe not the most, but enough to keep the oversized cardigan-wearing pilgrims and their parents coming to this "hip Mecca" annually. The students at Bard are willing to own this image, even if the administration, or individuals like, for instance, Allen's father, who upon hearing about the interview sent him an email discouraging it as legally irresponsible, are not. Unfortunately in the case of Allen père, the email was received after the interview had already been conducted. Allen then forwarded me his father's email and his own response, reprimanding his father for his lack of backbone.

We've got the abrasive school pride. We'll take that orange blimp now.

WE COULD HAVE
AVOIDED NEARLY
ALL OF THEM, NEARLY
UNALTERABLE TEMPERMENT



REALLY DELIGHTFUL
AND PLEASANT, WHO
USED TO LIVE IN CAVES



THE 'VOICE' OF
A HOUSE SHARES
THIS MOTIF, SWOLLER
YOU TILL THE VOMIT
ADVICE OR BUST WIDE OPEN,
THE HIBERNATION IS OVER

- 1-10
- A-Z
- WHITE-BLACK
- R-V
- -
- - ▣
- △ - ▽
- ⊥ - ⊥
- ① - ②
- THE END IS NEAR - THE END
- TO MY MOTHER - FIN/ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MOLLY SCHAEFFER



PHOTO BY LINDSEY FEINBERG

- ☺ - ☹
- ☹ - ☹
- WALKER - Walker
- START - FINISH
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- Hi - SORRY
- ☾ - ☾
- THE - A

WALKER TATE

Animal Collective, Merriweather Post Pavilion

By ENRICO PURITA

Merriweather Post Pavilion's 'pop' hit, "My Girls," is six minutes long and features no conventional pop instruments. That some Animal Collective fans call the new album a pop album shows how far Animal Collective has always been from being defined as pop, as well as the innovative quality of the so-called 'pop' within the album.

From the first atmospheric textures that start off "In the Flowers" before Avey Tare whisks the listener away with his well-known penchant for whimsy, it is clear that Animal Collective has continued the logical progression that started with *Feels* and continued with *Strawberry Jam*. The luscious acoustic numbers, for better or worse, seem to have eluded the band. In the process, however, with *Merriweather Post Pavilion*, Avey Tare, Panda Bear, and Geologist have crafted something alternately luscious and just as beautiful.

It is inevitable that the group has alienated some fans that either appreciated the more sonically chaotic "Here Comes the Indian" or immediately sentimental "Sung Tongs". However, Animal Collective has retained the creative energies and sonic layers that have defined their music, while putting focus into their compositions, something most legitimately creative acts find so difficult in the commercial recording industry. This focus has made the band capable of attracting a wider audience.

Though make no mistake: this is not conventional pop music by any means. In fact, it is the band's folk roots, which show through once again on this album, that make the songs memorable and accessible.

The slow progression of "My Girls" is no Beach Boys song, despite the uncanny resemblance that Panda Bear's voice bears to Brian Wilson's harmonic quality. Instead, "My Girls" takes its time in reaching its musical climax.

The rest of the album flows as if the listener were meant to listen to all songs in progression (a breath of fresh air, as other artists focus on appeasing the iTunes store). The grungy guitar sounds and four-to-the-floor bass that kick off "Summertime Clothes" lead it into the fast-paced summer sing-along, which is a perfect example of the manner in which each song on this album progresses in its own rightful pace.

"Daily Routine" finds Avey Tare singing a darker melody that eventually turns into a vocal drone that any AC fan, especially those that loved *Feels*, can appreciate. "Bluish," in shifting the mood from summer to winter, fuses eerie synth layers and sparse Panda Bear percussion with a catchy chorus filled with bells to make both Aphex Twin and Peter Bjorn eat their hearts out.

The latter half of the album continues the mood shifting and slow build-ups. "Taste" features analog synths that show that Animal Collective can do 8-bit music while still incorpo-

rating catchy melodies. "Lion in a Coma" steals the album's hard-fought prize for best song for three reasons: the play on words in the title/lyrics (classic AC), the vocals by Avey Tare and Panda Bear (they've never sounded better together), and the "Lion in a Coma" tribal chant that could only be Animal Collective.

"No More Runnin'" and "Brothersport" also could be considered among the album's best. "No More Runnin'" is a slow number that's sentimentally off-kilter. "Brothersport," already played live by the band for about a year, is also song that's sure to be a fan favorite for years to come.

Yes, it's true, the group has gotten much more popular and you can already see the marketing process begin (namely the "My Girls" video, that, despite being quite trippy, also bears an all-too-similar resemblance to an iPod commercial). However, the band continues to make the music that they want to make. They are still on Domino Records, they still sell out shows that don't exceed \$30 for a ticket, and there is nothing theatrical about them.

By being both down-to-earth and accessible, they have become an indie kid's worst nightmare. Animal Collective, with *Merriweather Post Pavilion*, is both an untainted experimental act and an indie pop dream.



Puberty



LOONEY WWII PROPAGANDA (ALMOST) LOST TO HISTORY

RETRIEVING THE JAPANESE CLUB SAND- WICH, AND OTHER "TOKIO JOKIOS"

By Enrico Purita

World War II era television is a wealth of controversial, disturbing, and, through a historical lens, extraordinary cartoons. The *Looney Tunes* and *Merric Melodies* shorts, reflecting popular sentiment in the U.S. at the time, aired a series of patriotic cartoons aimed at discrediting the Axis Powers. Not exactly elementary material for the youthful target audience.

The most incredible of these shorts, "Tokio Jokio," uses its more than six minutes of airtime to write off Japanese militarism and Japanese culture as a joke. This is not a surprise given the strong anti-Japanese sentiment in the U.S. at the time, and upon viewing, it is not a surprise that the cartoon was swiftly banned after the war ended in 1945.

The short is meant to be a parody of a Japanese news report chronicling the brightest aspects of Japanese militarism and culture. Using exaggeration and sarcasm that characterized most *Looney Tunes* shorts of the time, the news reporter speaks in a stereotypical Japanese American accent, all the characters are skinny with large buck teeth, and the usually playful melodies *Looney Tunes* is known for are replaced by parodies of traditional Japanese folk music.

The cartoon first blatantly attacks the Japanese military. Japanese warning sirens are portrayed (rather alarmingly) as two men stabbing each other with needles to induce screaming, an aircraft spotter is literally an aircraft with spots painted on, and the fire prevention post has burned to the ground.

The short also displays the perception of Japanese naiveté when a man thinks he only has to wait five seconds before ap-

FLASHES
FROM THE
AXIS

TOKIO
JOKIO

HEADLINE
POISONALITIES

Setting aside the fact that this stereotype is seemingly unfounded, the use of a hot dog as the food of choice for the Japanese man is also puzzling.

When a Japanese chef demonstrates how to make a "Japanese Club Sandwich," it is clear that the animators have little knowledge of Japanese culture. Besides the humor to be found in the American ethnocentricity of making a fictional Japanese Club Sandwich, there is the fact that the chef, in the animators' attempt to somehow display American economic superiority, makes it with a bread ration card and a meat ration card.

The cartoon continues to assault Japanese culture by showing the latest Japanese fashion craze as a man dancing around a candle dressed in nothing but a diaper (this feature is titled "Nippon-Nifties"). The Japanese Babe Ruth is also shown, and not surprisingly, he is yet another skinny man called the "king of swat" who is swatting at a fly (a play on Ruth's "Sultan of Swing" nickname). The creators of the short, how-

ever, were not satisfied with just offending the Japanese. They devote a small portion of the short to poke fun at both Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. The segment on Hitler is perhaps the most disturbing scene in the entire short as it depicts him receiving a postcard from someone pictured waving and smiling inside of a concentration camp with the word "Wish You Were Here!" written on the card. The cartoon pokes fun at Mussolini's vision of re-creating Rome by showing him sitting lonely amongst Roman ruins playing with a yo-yo.



This is the last we see of the other Axis powers as the focus shifts back to the Japanese military industrial complex. In the dramatic final scene,

a kamikaze pilot is asked for his last words. He says, "None, except get me out of here." The last scene is a buoy floating with a sign on it that says "Regrettable Incident Please" to mock the typical Japanese American speech.

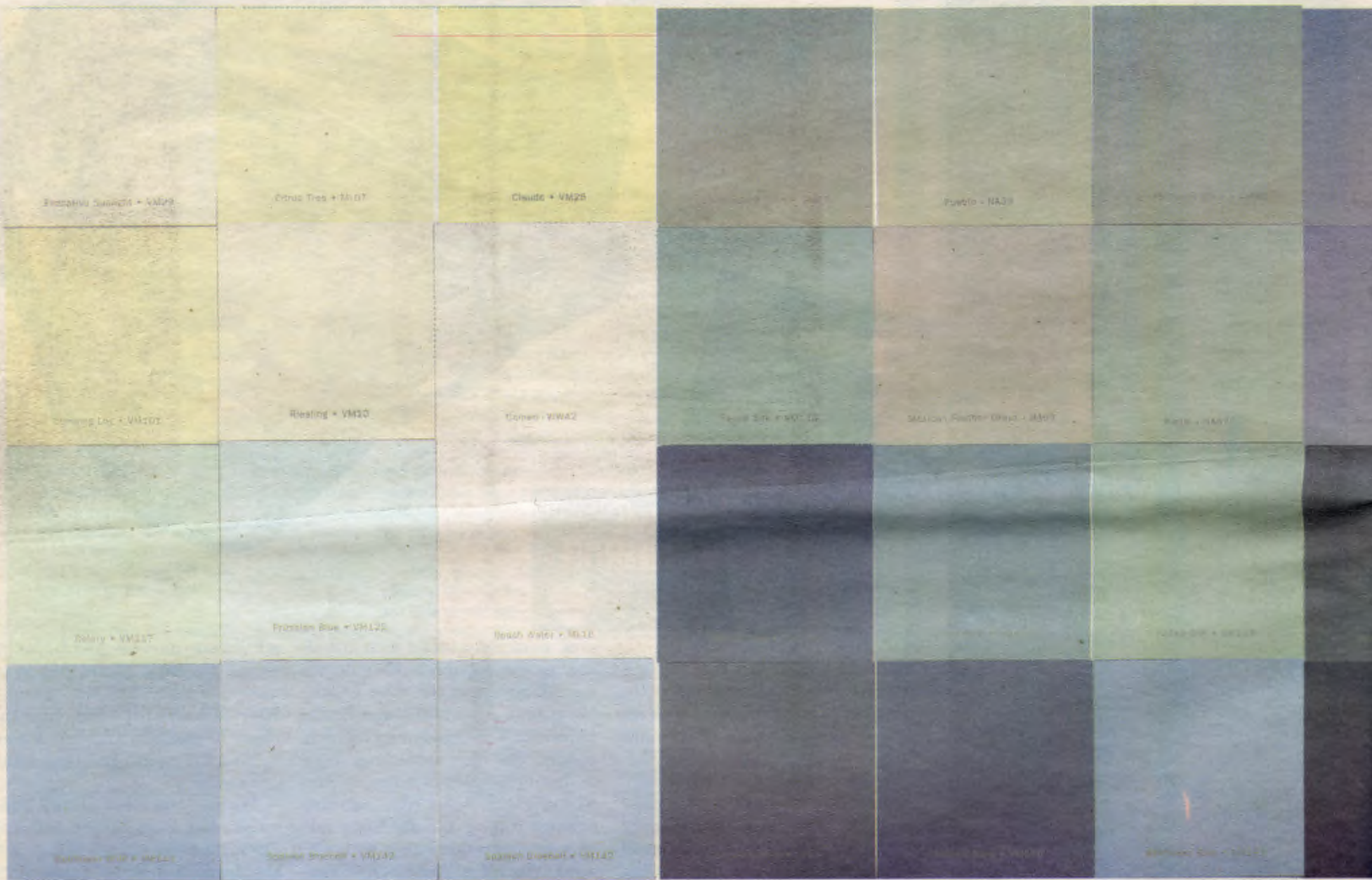
Without the aid of *Looney Tunes* staples like Bugs Bunny or Donald Duck, the short starts and ends with the familiar *Looney Tunes* jingle coupled with the stuttering of Porky Pig, but in no other way resembles a *Looney Tunes* cartoon. This is in sharp contrast to other controversial cartoons of the era, such as Donald Duck's run-in with the Nazis or Bugs Bunny's own adventure with the Japanese.

The short is also extremely dark, which, despite its (albeit racist) humor, was one of the main reasons why it was banned from the view of young, impressionable children. Going far beyond Captain America's war of ideology with the Soviets, this short is a censored piece of history. It is a cartoon that shows the American mindset that was prevalent in 1943. Thank god it's not 1943.



WAITING FOR THE BLUE HOUR / A TIMELINE OF THE SKY

M Feb. 9, 2009, 5:27 - 6:27 pm
 New Robbins 139, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY



5:27 pm

5:43 pm

5:50 pm

5:56 pm

6:59 pm

6:02 pm

6:07 pm

I will come to a location with a window and wait in that location for the blue hour if you ask me to. Then I will go to Home Depot with my notes & pick out paint chips which correspond with we can install it somewhere. I will make this for (or with) you if you ask me

NOTES

5:27 pm - blue white yellow orange

5:43 - blue green yellow orange

5:50 - blue blue-green green yellow orange

5:56 - blue green green+orange (brown?)

5:59 - blue green dk. yellow

6:02 - indigo green orange-green?

6:07 - indigo blue blue gray

6:12 - indigo blue green gray

6:15 - blue-black blue-green-gray

6:17 - blue-black gray

6:18 - blue-black dk. green-gray

6:22 - blue-gray

6:27 - all blue-black



pm 6:12 pm 6:15 pm 6:17 pm 6:18 pm 6:22 pm 6:27 pm

will sit there & take notes on the colors I see until it is too dark to discern colors,
 my notes. Then I will create a timeline of the waiting period out of the paint chips &

Emily Denian DeMartino

FILM

Body-Slammed with Love

In The Wrestler, Rourke on the ropes is at the height of his career

By ALEX ERIKSEN

After a string of roles as bit-part tough guys and grizzled Mafioso thugs, Mickey Rourke has finally come into his own. He plays Randy "The Ram" Robinson, a washed-up professional wrestler trying for one last shot at the big time. The Ram was a fan favorite in the '80s, but now that the crowds have fallen silent, Randy finds himself wrestling in foreign legion halls and moving crates at a local grocery store to pay the rent. Other than being among the fellow pliers of his trade, Randy is largely alone in the world. The broken down trailer he lives in is only sometimes visited by the neighborhood children who still see him as a hero. Despite his appearance, Randy suffers from a number of health problems. Yet he persists in his one passion, wrestling. For the Ram, making it back to the top of the wrestling circuit is not just a way to pay the bills; it's what means the most to him in life.

When he's not wrestling he spends time at a local strip club, trying to win the affection of Cassidy (Marissa Tomei), one of the club's more senior erotic dancers. Cassidy and Randy from their first scene have great chemistry. They've both built their lives out of selling themselves and are beginning to question how much further they can go. It's a difficult relationship from the start. Cassidy is barred from seeing customers, and Randy has nothing to offer but stories of days gone by.

At the beginning of the second act, Randy suffers a near fatal heart attack after a particularly grueling match. His use of steroids and painkillers have taken their toll on the fifty year-old Robinson. On Cassidy's advice, he tries to reconnect with his estranged daughter Stephanie (Evan Rachel Wood). Their first encounter is sour, but another attempt lands Rourke the best scene in the movie and arguably the best of his entire career. From here, Randy must struggle with abandoning his wrestling persona and trying to lead an ordinary life. The transition is painful and truly lays bare the soul of Rourke's character.

The story and characters are slimmed down to the bare essentials. The film choos-

es several key themes and hits them all with equal force. Love, life, death, age, fame and consequence are the foundation for the drama that unfolds. Back story is sacrificed for the power of the present; little background is provided about Randy's abandonment of the adolescent Stephanie or how Cassidy ended up as an exotic dancer. These points would make the characters more rounded, but the real meat of the story is in Rourke's performance. The tragic hero of Randy "The Ram" Robinson is undoubtedly one of the best in recent memory. Rourke emotionally wrestles between his persona in the ring and that of an ordinary man. I can't help but think of the Greek hero Achilles having to choose between dying a hero or living to old age as an ordinary man.

With Maryse Alberti's camera sticking close to Rourke, the audience feels intimately close to the aging wrestler. Shot predominantly by hand-held cameras, the movie feels like a documentary shot by an invisible man. The camera deftly moves around Rourke and his environment like a silent partner. In the wrestling matches, the camera work shows really how innovative it can be, receiving a few well earned wows from even the staunchest anti-wrestling proponent. What is strange to note is that the overall style feels somewhat constrained compared to director Darren Aronofsky's body of work. His previous films, such as *The Fountain*, *PI*, and *Requiem for a Dream*, rely on split-second editing and a bag full of camera tricks. *The Wrestler*, however, boasts of none of what Aronofsky is most recognized for. Perhaps, in the end, this is a blessing. There's nothing to distract our focus from Rourke.

The Wrestler is one of the most beautifully tragic films of our time. It has a way of capturing the places, sounds, and people of everyday life without drawing obvious attention to what it's doing. *The Wrestler* can bank most of its success on how well it translates the unconscious thoughts of our times. Money, the future, success, all of these and more are contained in every frame. In a cold New Jersey winter, Rourke emerges as a hero we can believe in—in a struggle we can believe is incredible.



The



Wr



Waltz With Bashir

Animated History

Waltz is milestone cross-genre picture

By ALEX ERIKSEN



estler

Waltz with Bashir is the first animated film to be nominated for the Academy Award for best foreign language film, and it will be nothing short of a shock if it doesn't come away with a win. *Waltz* is a mesmerizing cross between a documentary and the best in animation in recent memory--cross *A Scanner Darkly* with *Full Metal Jacket* and your favorite war documentary and you've got the basic idea. The film centers on Ari Folman, writer, director, and star of the film, as he retraces his lost memories of the 1982 war between Israel and Lebanon. More specifically, Ari is trying to recall where he was as Christian Phalangist militia executed Palestinian civilians en masse in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

Ari's renewed interest in the past comes after a friend and fellow Lebanon veteran recounts a strange dream in which he is hounded by a pack of ravenous dogs, a dream somehow tied to events in his war experience. The dream leads Ari to have a waking vision of the past; a single fractured event comes to mind and he becomes determined to collect and organize the missing pieces. "Memory is dynamic," a friend tells Ari: "it's alive." More than a retracing of recent history, the film dives deep into the question of what happens to soldiers in war. Rather than being a political diatribe, *Waltz* is a passionate and striking anti-war parable. The dream-like quality of the visuals and the gruesome detail with which the film renders violence could only be achieved through animation.

What unfolds is a documentary that exceeds the boundaries of time, memory and convention. The animated styles allow Ari to weave in and out of the worlds of memory and the present. The people he interviews in his journey all have their own powerful experiences from the war and their retelling them allows us to see them as real and not mere reconstructions. This, again, is where the film earns its

stripes; without animation, the film's aim would have been nearly impossible to realize. The world of the film vibrates with color and sound. The soundtrack is equally worthy of praise, it sets a pitch perfect tone and if removed would significantly lessen the power of every scene.

At the heart of *Waltz* lies the notion that memory is alive and mutable. Ari's journey is a vital one, not only to make sense of his role among the soldiers who failed to stop the massacre, but to understand what links us to our past and what can disrupt the flow of memory, which is easily taken for granted. At moments the film takes surrealist turns but with enough restraint to keep sight of its goals. A dream recalled by another friend of Ari's of a naked giantess sweeping him away from his transport ship to the front is bizarre but equally hypnotic. It captures the desperation and fantasy within the soldier's mind as he contemplates his journey into the war zone. Ari has a similar moment when he imagines his own death and funeral to get back at his ex-girlfriend. He sees his casket lowered into the floor of the very transport helicopter that is taking him to war. These dreams perhaps most of all highlight the best use of animation in story telling and blend the world of inner-monologue, fantasy, memory and reality.

Waltz is a film that succeeds on all counts. The narrative is straightforward and keeps the audience on board for the whole ninety minutes. Folman spares his audience a history lesson, knowing the limits of the medium, and takes a balanced approach to the audience's knowledge of the relevant history. If you are already familiar with the Sabra and Shatila massacres, or choose to learn more, *Waltz* will make you appreciate this film more. If not, the film's impact is not lost.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

BY JOEY SIMS

When Bradford Morrow was invited to bring his literary journal *Conjunctions* to Bard, he knew as soon as he arrived that it was the right place for him. "I felt, 'This is the home, this is home,'" said Morrow, a professor of literature at Bard since 1990.

Nineteen years later, Morrow and *Conjunctions* are firmly established in Annandale-on-Hudson, and just as the journal brought Bard literary repute, so Bard has brought more to *Conjunctions* than its founding editor could ever have predicted.

Conjunctions began in 1981. The first issue was a Festschrift (homage) to the publisher of the renowned experimental publishing company New Directions. From the beginning, *Conjunctions* embraced disparate authors (John Ashbery, Tennessee Williams, John Hawkes) and forms (prose, poetry, plays, critical works and interviews). Morrow's modest hope was to publish a few issues before folding. Yet later this year, *Conjunctions* will publish its fifty-second issue. The publication's survival, Morrow freely admits, is largely thanks to Bard College.

"It's been as perfect a relationship between publisher and editorial and authors that you could imagine," said Morrow. He feels the partnership was a natural one. "I've always thought of Bard as an institution that represented many of the same ideals [as] *Conjunctions*--a willingness to innovate, an interest in coming out of a tradition but creating a new tradition at the same time."

The Bard connection had begun even before Morrow arrived here: Bard faculty members Robert Kelly and Mary Caponegro were early contributors.

Upon arrival, Morrow set up a fiction reading series, and he said he has always been impressed by "the level of discourse, the level of inquiry the students can show in some of these encounters with writers." Visiting authors have included Joyce Carol Oates, Paul Auster, and Jeffrey Eugenides, who, not long after his visit, won a Pulitzer Prize for *Middlesex*. Oates, instead of reading, wrote a short play that Bard students performed and she then revised. "So it helped her," said Morrow. "There's something in it for them, too."

One of the most memorable readers was the late David Foster Wallace, now iconic for his innovative postmodern prose

style. He had been published in *Conjunctions* before he became well-known. He came to Bard in the early '90s, "long before he became mythologized and lionized, and he became the great David Foster Wallace of *Infinite Jest*," Morrow says of Wallace. Wallace committed suicide last year.

Morrow recalls that when Bard students tore apart one of Wallace's stories, the author admitted they were right, put his head on the table and begged them to move on.

Morrow is a huge fan of his students. "Bard students tend to be inquisitive and intelligent and unafraid." When speaking of the Bard graduates now involved with *Conjunctions*, his pride is palpable. "Several former Bard students still work as editors," he said. "There's almost a generational arc taking place that's frankly gratifying to behold."

One former student, Micaela Morrisette, is instrumental in *conjunctions.com*, which Morrow calls "a third phantom issue" of the semiannual journal. The site publishes one new work every week and has had nearly a half million visitors. Morrisette regards it as essential to the future of *Conjunctions*. "Some of the most innovative and exhilarating work that we're involved with appears on Web *Conjunctions*," said Morrisette.

As Morrow sees it, the Bard ethos is an excellent fit with *Conjunctions* and his teaching. "It's an idealistic approach. 'What would be the best course you could have taken when you were at college? Okay--design it. Do it!'" Similarly, he has been allowed to do what he wants to with the journal.

"The support you feel here is very liberating and makes you feel responsible towards the students, toward the community, to do the very best you can do," said Morrow. "Like everyone else here, I'm here to learn too."

Bard to Provide American Accreditation to University in Kyrgyzstan

AUCA professes "love of critical thinking," says Becker

INITIATIVE FUNDED BY SOROS

By ELIAS ISQUITH

Bard College, which currently accredits its degrees from schools in Israel and Russia, is poised to expand its already global reach to Kyrgyzstan this summer. The American University of Central Asia, located in the republic's capital city of Bishkek, has been in existence for 16 years, and describes itself on its website as the product of a "wave of change" that "swept across Central Asian countries" following the fall of the USSR. It is comprised of 1,305 students from 19 countries and professes a "love of critical thinking" that it considers distinctly American in nature.

Jonathan Becker, Director of Bard's Global and International Affairs Program, visited the campus and calls the university a "leading institution in the re-

assistance that a formal cooperation with Bard can provide.

Though high-minded support for liberal education certainly played a part in Bard's decision, a more direct catalyst for this initiative was none other than George Soros and his Open Society Institute, which originally proposed the partnership to Bard. The involvement of Soros, Bard's proverbial rich uncle, provides financial guarantees to the program, ensuring that Bard will not lose money on the endeavor. The involvement also puts Bard further in Soros's gilded good graces.

Asked whether Bard intends to make a political statement by accrediting AUCA, Mr. Becker commented that the move is in line with previous decisions—such as Bard's joint campuses with Al-Quds Uni-



gion" with a "strong reputation" and "excellent students."

Asked why Bard chose AUCA specifically, Mr. Becker noted the university's international student body and its global reputation as a "leading educational reform institution." Bard is routinely "approached by many schools" looking for cooperation, Mr. Becker says, but AUCA's liberal arts ethos is especially "unusual in the region" and deserving of support. Beyond the university's prestige, Mr. Becker also cites its need for "assistance" dealing with Kyrgyzstan's Ministry of Education,

versity in East Jerusalem and St. Petersburg University—to "promote the value of education." Yet Bard students should not expect to hear "Bishkek" as often as "Smolny" in the coming years, as there is no dual-campus plan. Mr. Becker added that Bard won't be as close with AUCA as it currently is with Smolny. "There will be some adjustments, and the relationship will be less joint."

The Republic of Kyrgyzstan borders Kazakhstan to its north and China to its south. It is home to a population of more than five million.

RED HOOK

Photography by Kendra Schirmer



FREE PRESS: The Bard Fiction Prize committee described you as having "limitless potential" in the future with your writing. Do you agree with that? Do you feel drained, or like you're just getting started?

Maazel: Oh God, I mean, I hope I have limitless potential, it was an incredibly generous press release that they put out. Yes I would like to imagine that I have limitless potential, I'd like to imagine that I have any potential, forget limitless, I do very much feel like a novice though, I mean I'm really just starting out. It was my first book that received the prize and I'm now working on a second one and I have so much to learn. Each book is its own universe, it's like you have to start from scratch. So you can only bank so much on how well the first book did. It gives maybe a modicum of confidence, maybe just enough to get started on book number two.

Talking about getting started, when you begin a book what is it exactly that you begin with, a specific character or theme?

That's a good question, I don't have so much experience, like I haven't written seven books so there's no actual control, but generally I usually start out with themes which I don't really know is the best way to go. Often if you're a cerebral

much what reincarnation is about: you just keep coming back and you pick up where the last life left off. But no, I don't myself believe in reincarnation, it's sort of an appalling idea actually.

Really?

Well I'm not sure I'd want to come back - what if I come back as a newt or something?

Well what would you like to happen after you die - what do you think happens after you die? I think you just go into the ground. I think that's it. Although they say you can only come back the same or more, it's like you're ascending a ladder, so in theory I wouldn't come back as a newt but I might come back a slightly better writer, let's say. Or you know, an opera singer.

That's another career you'd like to have?

No, every writer secretly wants to be a rock star, play in a band. I have a little bit of those aspirations. I play guitar, but I suck. I wanna be - this is a total embarrassment - I want to be a car mechanic, if you must know, I've always been fascinated by how things work, and I love cars. So

If you someday were to teach a class here, but the requirement was you had to teach one specific book or author, who would you choose?

Oh, that's a good one. On the spot, I think I'd teach Jose Saramago and I think I would teach *The Cave*, which is one of my all time favorite novels. I think he is a marvel. *The Cave* is just a stunning piece of work and nobody's read it. He's so inventive and lyrical.

There's also the wit and humor in your writing. I was wondering where that came from in your life, or how you came to use it to balance out stories in your book.

Well I've always been a bit of a hant - you know when I was growing up, my parents had a lot of cocktail parties, and I was forced to make appearances at these awful events. My job was basically to be charming and entertaining and I hated it, but I went anyway and somehow I got into this habit of just banter, it comes very easily to me. But then as I got older I got into this very bad habit of lying all the time, just making stuff up - not self-aggrandizing lies, or lies that got me anything, I just liked to tell stories, it was all in service of getting the laugh. When I started to write in earnest, all of that went into the fiction, and I suddenly got extremely boring. Nobody wanted to talk to me anymore because I just stopped lying, stopped telling stories, stopped being funny, because it all went into the work. Pathos is very hard to write without trying to look at the comic underbelly of things. Usually things that are really ugly are usually also just hilarious.

Important question: where would you say students are more attractive -

Bard or Williams?

Oh Bard, hands down, I could elaborate if you want... Bard.

Is grad school when you started writing seriously?

When I was getting my Master's at

around the page is really what I always tell people, because you can get stuck in a box, and what you want to figure out is how to get out of your box. This is starting to sound lewd, but if you're constantly playing around with things and trying to do things that feel counter intuitive to you, you will be able to open new doors and that's how your writing will improve.

How do you address any serious snags in your writing?

Often if I really get stuck I just go read something. Just go read some writer that will get you excited. I like to do a lot of found poetry - I open up some random book and pluck out words that interest me, and I try to rearrange them on the page and see what becomes of them and that's fun. The whole point is to find a way to enjoy yourself again and usually once that starts to happen the words will come.

Last question, what do you like to do for fun outside of writing - or is writing enough?

No, well I make really stupid movies - on my website there's four movies of the reincarnated people in the book. I have a lot of action figures all over my apartment and one day I thought, 'Oh I'll just make some movies with my little goofy camera.' And they're so stupid that one day the New York Times emailed me and said, 'Do you want to write a piece for us - an op-ed for this thing we do in the summertime' - and then they asked me to make a movie to accompany the piece, and I was like 'Have you seen my movies?' They're so dumb. But they said 'No, we like them' and I thought wow, the paper of record is going to publish one of my stupid movies, and so I made this movie for them and boy was it stupid, but they put it on their website. Second to the day I found out I sold my book, it was the most exciting thing that's every happened to me professionally. Besides that, I play my guitar but like I said I

Fiona Maazel received this year's \$30,000 Bard Fiction Prize for *Last Last Chance*, her first novel. She is a writer in residence at Bard during this spring semester.

kind of writer usually your work comes at the expense of story and people and emotional content, if you're just all thematic. My new book is about loneliness, you know far be it for me to write a book about people who are lonely, like, 'Hey I want to write about this guy who has this problem and wants to accomplish x-y-z,' I usually think I want to write about loneliness and how loneliness rears its ugly head in the world, and then just find people to accommodate the themes I want to put in play. Eventually the characters do sort of take over.

Yesterday at the reading, you said that a re-emerging topic in *Last Last Chance* is reincarnation.

That's true.

Has that always been something you personally have been interested in, or did it just fit well in the book?

The latter, I think. I might have mentioned at the reading that my grandfather, who is quite old - he's 105 - he believes in reincarnation and so for a while he was teaching himself German because her wanted to come back in the next life knowing German, and I thought 'this is mad,' but I really thought it was kind of just charming and fascinating and I kind of had that in mind when I was writing up this grandmother. But in order to make this useful for the book and not just some quirky thing, I decided that maybe she thought that everyone in the family was someone else reincarnated, and this gave me an opportunity to give voice to all the dead people that eventually become the main characters. As it turned out thematically, I got very lucky because a large part of the book is about narcotics recovery. So many of the principles of narcotics recovery and even recovery from alcoholism is that you go and you tell your story and you keep coming back, keep coming to meetings, and you keep getting new chances to reinvent yourself. And that's pretty

maybe rock star, auto mechanic, writer.

I'm sorry I didn't crowd surf at the reading. Next time.

So you are teaching a class while you're here at Bard?

No, the beautiful thing about the Bard prize is that they really let you decide what you want to make of your time up here. Obviously my top priority is to write my book, but I've so enjoyed being here, and the students I've met have been just so engaging and smart, that I think I'm gonna try to have a bi-monthly salon, for a lack of a better word - encourage whoever wants to come to a nighttime event, sit around and discuss various aspects of craft, first sentences, last sentences, intercourse in fiction, how do you write it - that sort of thing. Talk about the kind of stuff you don't necessarily get to talk about in your more official classes.

What is the one characteristic needed to be a writer?

Tenacity, really, you have to keep at it, keep writing, keep reading and do not stop, you can't settle. Besides that, you need some thick skin, because there's always people out there who don't appreciate what you're doing. And you know, passion is always good.

So you got the prize, and along with that came \$30,000 - what was your last big purchase or the most exciting thing you bought with the money?

The economy is so bad, and the arts are just always under siege, that it's unclear to me when I'm ever going to make money ever again. My brother tells me I have this scuttle mentality like I'm always hoarding, like any second I'm going to be broke, the reason I think is that frequently I am broke. I want to take the judges out to dinner, this is gonna be my big expenditure. I do a lot of teaching, it's not like a lucrative lifestyle I'm living, whatever I get I have to squirrel away.



Bennington is when I really started to write fiction in earnest, writing regularly. When I say that you always have to write, I don't mean fiction - write non-fiction, write poetry, write song lyrics, write found poetry, doodle, whatever, experiment, push words

suck. Besides that I'm just a normal girl.

Fiona Maazel's website is lastlastchance.com, and does indeed have four movies. "The Viking" is recommended. Interested students should be on the lookout for Fiona's bi-monthly meetings.

bud



get

misappropriated for the benefit of the student body as a whole. This is the Senate's main issue.

In the coming weeks, we'll work with the planning committee and establish an auditing process for clubs. So, club heads, this means that you ought to have much more of a handle over your club's budget, and how faithful you are being to your original intentions that gave you the budget in the first place.

Please use your budget allocation to benefit every student. As students, we pay the student activities fee in the hope that it will somehow come back to us. Throw more Manor parties, book bands that people want to see, and bring some important people to speak. It's not too much to ask.

Student life issues are firmly in the hands of Senator Travis McGrath and Student Life Committee member Jeremy Carter-Gordon. First of all, you can thank these two dashing gentlemen for getting us the all-day waffles at Kline, the all-day eggs at Manor, and the much-improved DTR menu.

Student Space and Student Employment will also be talked about in the coming month within the Senate. We need to get Student Space off the ground and that will be our first goal in regards to that issue. With student employment, we intend to firmly take on the administration's hard-line stance on capping work-study hours. The Dean of Students Office shouldn't be deciding how many hours we're allowed to work because we're all grown up now.

Together, they've been working on making the Kline menu more consistent with student tastes, revising the room draw process to make it based on class year rather than credits, and getting professors to hand in textbook requests to the bookstore earlier.

Now about budget forum. Budget forum on February 13 was significant because the atmosphere was generally more heated and full of debate. This is what we want. Budget Forum is a place for rowdy politics. We get our anger for bureaucracy out at Budget Forum and come out better people.

Congratulations are in order for Dan Severson, the newest Senator who was elected at Budget Forum in a close run-off election. For those, namely Donna McColloch, who felt that the election was unconstitutional because it did not happen through an online referendum, your point is taken but easily refuted.

Not only was there ample forewarning of the Senate election, but Budget Forum is not like any other student forum. Ideally, those who attend Budget Forum represent the student body. If anything, the election was one of the more honest assessments of candidates that I've ever seen. Also, to further negate the argument, the motion to move the election to an online referendum failed overwhelmingly. This was the most time-efficient manner of filling the vacant senate seat. In order for things to actually happen, we can't be slaves to a document. We must, of course, follow the constitution, however, the Constitution is meant to be read as well as interpreted. This was our interpretation.

This Budget Forum also made one thing decidedly clear: Entertainment Committee needs to drastically re-organize themselves and change the way in which they spend the largest allotment of any club at Bard. Many negative opinions were expressed during the hostile amendments about Entertainment Committee and these student opinions cannot be ignored.

This being said, however, there are many problems with the Entertainment Committee. First of all, they have gone from being a democratically elected portion of student government to being one of the least accessible, highly exclusive groups on campus that also happens to get the largest allotment each semester. My esteemed colleague, Elon Ullman, was in the process of booking a show in the MPR and could not get in touch with any member of the entertainment committee by e-mail.

This is not right. Entertainment Committee must be publicly accessible. The bands that come to Bard ought to be decided by the students and not two or three friends. Everyone has different tastes in music and I apologize once again to the Entertainment Committee for criticizing their choice of bands. However, Aaron Dean, in one of the hostile amendments against the Entertainment Committee, showed us a list of the bands that may be coming to Bard this semester and a grand total of four to five people knew who any of the bands were.

Rest assured, this is something the Student Senate intends to fix. The student body cannot be ignored when it comes to spending large amounts of money on poorly attended SMOG shows. We plan to put out a survey to get a true barometer of student opinions on this issue, and we intend to make the booking of bands a more democratic process.

I urge anyone that has any questions/comments about Student Senate or Student Government in general to please contact me at ep694@bard.edu or the whole senate at senate@bard.edu.

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FIRESIDE CHATS

Notes from the Student Senate Speaker

BY ENRICO PURITA

I want to let you all know, first and foremost, that the Student Senate is very ambitious this semester and hopes to change some of the less favorable aspects of campus life. Yes, I know, everyone in Students Government spews this same cliché rhetoric. However, this is the Senate's second semester of operation. Chris Given and the first Senate set the precedent and focused on establishing the powers of the Senate, which, for those who are unaware, is the legislative branch of student government responsible for shaping student government policy. We have five returning senators (including myself) and six ambitious, newly elected senators. This, however, is the boring introduction. I want to focus these chats on updating you all on the progress that we are making. Rest assured, there is progress and what follows is all important. I won't make this convoluted, I promise. Here's what we're busy with this semester.

We are working on a student government website. We envision an open forum in which all students can voice their opinion about student government or campus life in general. We want a blog in which all members of student government can update and all students can comment.

This, we feel, is necessary because we sincerely believe that Bard is a place in which change can happen when we work cooperatively. It's not as corny as it sounds because it's true. We have to stick together.

We are also looking to have more oversight over club budgets. It's universally known that planning committee doesn't mind if funds are misappropriated as long as they are

NEXT BUDGET FORUM TO OCCUR AT END OF SEMESTER ...and other notes from the Secretary of Your Student Association

BY RYAN GUSTAFSON

On Feb. 12 the Student Government hosted the annual Budget Forum. I wanted to thank all those that attended and also inform you of some reforms to the budgeting process that will be proposed and voted on by you at the other Student Forums this semester. For one, there will be another Budget Forum held in May to determine club budgets for next semester. We are having this second Budget Forum in order to switch the budgeting process to the end of semesters. This will allow clubs to know their budgets earlier and plan events even before school starts; no longer will the first weeks of the semester lack for social programming. The Planning Committee will also be proposing amendments to the Constitution that will clarify what their procedures are in the determination

of budgets. Anyone who has a suggestion about how the budgeting process can be improved ought to email the Planning Committee at planncomm@bard.edu. The next Student Forum will be held on Wednesday, March 4th at 8PM in the Campus Center Multi-Purpose Room where votes on these changes will begin to occur.

At the Forum we also elected Dan Severson to the Student Senate. At that time there was some confusion as to whether a Senate election could be held at this event, so I will try to clarify that matter here. The constitution stipulates that Senators are to be elected in "campus-wide elections." The issue here is whether or not the Budget Forum counts as a campus-wide election—if only an online election can count as a campus-wide election. In my estimation, the Budget Forum

counts as a campus-wide election. It is the most widely attended Student Government event. Moreover, emails and posters advertizing this election's occurrence were distributed campus-wide one week in advance of the Forum. Anyone who would have opened an email in order to vote in an online election would have also been able to open an email in order to know that the vote would occur at the Forum. None of the candidates challenged the constitutionality of this election before submitting nominating petitions to participate in it; in nominating themselves for this election they effectively certified it individually. If the election's constitutionality had been questioned prior to the Student Forum, this matter could have been referred to an interpretive panel to decide its legality. Moreover, this matter

was put to a vote at the Forum itself and those present voted to authorize this election and voted against moving it online.

In addition to budget matters, the Student Government continues to work on a range of issues, and we encourage you to give us feedback. Student Life Committee member Jeremy Carter-Gordon (slc@bard.edu) and Senator Travis McGrath are meeting regularly with Chartwells to reform the food services, and their joint effort has led to more affordable meal options at Down the Road; The SLC and Senate continue to meet with Residence Life to discuss reforms to the Room Draw process; the Educational Policies Committee is in the midst of evaluating professors up for review, and you can submit written testimony about them to epc@bard.edu. The

Central Committee is continuing to meet with members of the administration to ensure that club funding is increased next semester; we are also emphatically insisting that the administration clarify its policy with respect to the limit to campus employment and expect a letter of clarification shortly. Lastly, if there is any issue of particular concern that you would like to see raised with the administration, please contact the Student Senate, the body charged with creating the official policies of the Student Government, at senate@bard.edu; or feel free to talk to me during my office hours every Monday and Thursday from 1-2 PM in the offices on the second floor of the Campus Center.

Gustafson is Secretary of the Student Association. He can be reached at rg865@bard.edu.

DISCONTENT FLARES AT BUDGET FORUM

BY DONNA MCCOLLOCH

Budget Forum is the iconic institution of Bardian democracy. For many Bard students, it's the beginning and end of their participation in campus politics. It sets the tone of campus politics for the rest of the semester. A year ago, it heralded a fraught and intense debate over the racial politics of the Bard community, the fairness of the budgeting process, and the relationship of the Student Association to outside authority. Last fall, it announced a broad range of changes to student government structure and practice—with an ambiguous relationship to transparency and democracy.

It was hard to know what to expect this time around. Several students saw fit to write in their own commentary on the Planning Committee's itemized draft budget, calling Rob Ross of the Planning Committee a racist and elsewhere cryptically stating, "Oh oh it's magic!" The section of the budget containing the remarks about Rob Ross, which were amended by other parties to include instructions for impeaching student government officials as well as, according to one source, racial epithets, were removed by parties unknown early on Wednesday. So I came to Budget Forum expecting tension to be high.

The Forum opened only 15 minutes after the scheduled 8PM start—its most punctual opening in years, although sullied by the bizarre request of the Central Committee for a "motion to convene." The first

remarks made were by Student Association Secretary Ryan Gustafson, who made a plea for civility. Reports from the members of the Central Committee were brief and contained few surprises.

Next to take the stage was Speaker of the Student Senate Enrico Purita, who introduced his fellow Senators. The Senate did not submit any acts for the ratification of the Forum. Purita did mention an "attendance policy" involving automatic expulsion of any Senator missing more than three of the chamber's weekly meetings. To be clear: any expulsion by the Senate of one of its own members requires a vote, which must have the support of all the Senators except the one under consideration.

Gustafson then called for an election to a vacant seat in the Senate. Four candidates submitted nominating petitions: Zack Heller, Elon Ullman (represented by David Silberberg), Evan Grupsmith and Dan Severson. Severson defeated Ullman in a runoff vote, after a contentious proposal for five minutes of open debate between the two was narrowly defeated. Upon the declaration of Severson's election, Heller stood to challenge the constitutionality of holding the election at a Forum rather than online. I agree with Heller that this was totally unconstitutional. When I rose to speak in his defense, Gustafson challenged my knowledge of precedent on the grounds that I had not been to every single Student Forum at my time here (for the record, he has missed

many more than I have). As I was answering, my microphone was cut; I took the stage in order to complete my remarks using Gustafson's microphone. At this point Student Association Treasurer Doug Moses rose, forcefully put his hand on my shoulder, and said, "Get off the stage, right now." I asked him to remove his hand, which he did, and I continued my remarks. Gustafson then called for a vote on whether people cared that the Constitution had been violated—something he has no authority to do—and this motion passed by a small margin.

I had been apprehensive about taking such an active role in this Budget Forum. Since my resignation from the Student Senate in September, I had taken a major step back from involvement in campus politics; as Gustafson pointed out during our debate, I had not attended most Student Forums last semester. Until Heller raised the question of whether the election was constitutional, I thought that there was little interest in or respect for the Student Constitution. But after he raised the issue, I felt, as someone with experience in the workings of the Student Association and as one of the coauthors of the language added to the Constitution to create the Student Senate, that I had an obligation to share what I knew and that I had a right to speak. For their part, I trust that Gustafson and Moses were merely attempting to preserve order and civility. But the democratic nature of Budget Forum, and of the Student

Association as a whole, is incompatible with the silencing of legitimate commentary.

After the resolution of the Student Senate election, we proceeded to the budget amendments. The Paintball Club made a series of five amendments against various clubs; after the first three failed, the rest were withdrawn. The Barbecue Club and Men's Rugby attacked Student Government. This marks the first time in at least four years that Student Government's own budget, which goes primarily toward stipends for the members of the Central Committee. Gustafson countered that the motion by BBQ might not have been constitutional, as the Constitution mandates a payment of \$400 per semester to Central Committee members. This is not in fact the case; the Constitution mandates that there be a stipend but does not specify an amount. BBQ withdrew after making a speech, which then allowed Rugby's motion to come to the floor. Rugby's Rob Ross stated that the team's funding from the Athletics Department was being cut, jeopardizing several of their traditional events. Around this time, the Radical Student Union, which was denied all funding by the Planning Committee, began distributing hastily-printed flyers criticizing student government and advertising their first meeting.

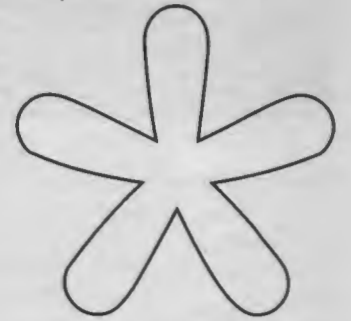
Next the Creative Music Committee took the floor with a series of three amendments. Following a vigorous debate over the state of

music on campus, focusing issues of inclusion surrounding SMOG and other music venues, the CMC was awarded \$45.80 from the Bomb Squad. These themes were taken up again as the Entertainment Committee attacked the Paintball Club for \$3,000. After heavy debate, during which Scott McMillen raised questions about the Entertainment Committee's transformation, in possible violation of the Constitution, from an elected body to one that chooses its own members, the amendment failed. Damaged by this argument, the Entertainment Committee then lost \$150 in an attack from the Ska Society.

The evening ended with a series of requests for friendly amendments—a period marked by vastly less animosity as well as reduced attendance. About ten minutes after the conclusion of debate on the last hostile amendment, the Forum was adjourned, barely two hours after convening. It was the shortest Budget Forum in three semesters.

Budget Forum has a reputation for strife and hostility. This is well deserved, and last Thursday night, though not as acrimonious as some Forums, was no exception. But a good Budget Forum, beyond just improving on the Planning Committee's budget, can invigorate the campus. It can stir new enthusiasm for participation in campus politics, give new club heads a sense of belonging, and demystify the workings of student government. This one may have been a good one.

Budgeting Gives a Clear Picture of Bardians,



By Rob Ross

I spent about 24 hours in bureaucratic hell February 7th and 8th picking through every item on clubs' budgets, interviewing club heads, and talking to administrators so that the Planning Committee could make reasonable cuts and bring the budget that stood at about \$223,000 to \$152,000. During that process, I got a really good idea of the kinds of clubs that exist at Bard, the kinds of activities they host, the kinds of difficulties they face, and the kinds of people that run them, and, though most of them are decent groups of students with good ideas and reasonably good follow through, there are enough assholes to make me ask, not for the first time, "what's wrong with this place?"



and the view's not pretty

Before I go on to describe the different breeds of Bard Asshole, I should write that this isn't venting... well, at least it's not all venting. I also hope that students reading this will take a small, terrified peek inwards, past the insecurity and emotional baggage and into that part of the soul that asks "am I an Asshole? Does this describe me? Am I an entitled brat who is going to get a great big kick to the Johnson when I graduate and live unemployed with my parents for a year?"

First and foremost, there are the My-Time-Is-Precious Assholes. These are the folks for whom things like keeping track of their own club's budgets, reading the club head packet, registering their club online, submitting a properly formatted budget or evenshowing up to budget defense are trivial distractions from their masturbatory work on who knows what. "I'm only asking for thousands of dollars," they think. "Why does that require me to explain myself?" One club head even told the Committee that it wasn't her responsibility to keep track of her club's money, and that it was Doug Moses's fault they didn't spend their full allotment from last semester. Jeez, Doug.

Second, you've got the I-might-as-well-be-Jesus-Christ assholes. These folks think that their club is the most important club in the universe, and if we don't give them thousands of dollars, we're committing some grievous crime. These folks actually aren't as annoying as the first type, since we don't have to rewrite their budgets for them and it gives me a little pleasure when we do cut their budgets. But the entitlement complex is still disturbing for its self-importance and lack of empathy and connection with other students. One new club head, who apparently could not be bothered to read the club head day packet, became angry that her club received \$.01 and scrawled on the posted budget "how many ways can you split a penny? 1.3 women are raped every minute." I fail to see the connection. I also wonder how one third of a woman can be raped, but prefer not to speculate.

Finally, there are the Where-Am-I-and-What-Day-is-it Assholes. These folks are just innocent space cadets and must be very happy when, not remembering that they had submitted a budget request, find that the Planning Committee has given them thousands of dollars just out of the blue. During budget defense, one girl stared at her budget for a good minute wondering what she meant when she asked for \$15 for info sessions.

If you are one of these people, don't worry. You are a smart and valuable person, and don't you ever doubt that. I'm sure that I'm going to get some dirty looks from people today, but I'm graduating and I don't care what you think. The problem is, neither do you.



Photos clockwise from mouse: Dan Terna, Emily DeMartino, Unknown, Omri Levni



I Love Pancakes and Democracy and Here is Why by Travis McGrath

For those not familiar with budget forum, it is a meeting where students may democratically decide which clubs receive how much money. It always entails much discussion and sometimes heated debates about a club's importance on campus.

If you were there Thursday night you know how all the money got doled out, and if you weren't, you can find it in this issue or posted in the student activities office. Though those heated debates may have been important, budget forum was interesting for another reason. On Thursday night, several comments and events demonstrated students' abilities to make statements about Bard's social life.

The three events I found most striking were the ridiculous nature of the student senate elections, the overwhelming discontent with the planning committee's failure to be more open, and the BBQ club's use of a hostile amendment to get a chance to comment on an issue.

The student government had been doing a good job all night of making its reports quick and simple. Gustafson & co. knew everyone wanted to get to the money. Sadly, the senate elections did not follow the central committee's shining example. There was debate over whether the elections were constitutional, which included Donna McCulloch's jumping up on stage and yelling something or other about democracy. It was obvious that most of the crowd, myself included (even though I am in the senate), didn't care at all. Needless bickering marred the student government's best-attended event. With such silly squabbling, it is no wonder why there might be a general feeling that the government is disconnected and fails to get anything done.

The second interesting event at Budget Forum was

the speech by the BBQ club. BBQ attacked the government for their entire budget—nearly \$6,000. They didn't actually want to steal money from the government to make steak and chicken. They just wanted to talk. The speaker posed a simple question: When did Budget Forum stop being fun? The club head simply wanted to say how silly it was that we couldn't have beer. He used Budget Forum to grab the ear of the student body (and the administration, via Marshall up in the sound booth) and state his point. This is the best use of the forum I can imagine.

The third event was another eye opener. I don't think many people knew or cared who ran the entertainment committee up until Thursday night. That changed when everyone realized a bunch of hipsters are getting \$16,000 a semester to throw bad smog shows. Perhaps they asked for it when they attacked the paintball club to boost their cash from 16 to 19 grand! Paintballer Aaron Dean's defense was pretty simple: He just asked anyone who knew more than 5 of the dozens of bands the EC would be bringing this semester to raise their hand. The only hands that went up came from the hipster peanut gallery that accompanied the entertainment committee. The EC made some promises of having more open meetings, but already student government is considering making the EC an elected group (which is how it used to be, as Scott McMillen pointed out at the Forum).

Budget Forum isn't just about students' ability to decide which clubs get supported and which don't. Budget Forum is the only well-attended government forum and it is the one the administration pays attention to. Budget forum constantly provides a great way for students to get their voices heard by all other students.

COP SHOP

Dispatches and Alerts from Your Friend Ken Cooper

Safety & Security Director on bathroom doodles, arresting local children, being stuck in an elevator

* The pre-break power outage had officers scurrying to inform students and staff as to the extent of the outage, and discovering those who did not charge their flashlights.

* Magic marker vandalism in the Campus Center once again increased our financial burden in this tough economic time. We are convinced, after seeing the level of artistic ability, that the perpetrator is no more than five or six.

* Last week a resident stuffed toilet paper in a bathroom in New Robbins. After an extensive investigation, we could only link the

incident to a showing of Animal House on the entertainment channel.

* During that latest ice storm, several trees fell and claimed the life of a number of parked vehicles in Robbins Lot. No injuries, but plenty of broken glass.

* Security Icecapades - a security officer, being vigilant in patrolling Cruger Island Road, began a slow and steady slide deep into the woods off the road. While his physical body was not injured, his ego suffered greatly. The patrol vehicle was not damaged.

* Another ice-related

tragedy - a student reports a very hurt butt, after flying through the air near Kline in front of many friends and interested observers. The improvised pathway was more like a skating rink. B&G will attempt to widen its ice response, but it is almost impossible to salt and sand all the unique and imaginative routes Bardians create through campus. Our sincere best wishes to the part of the students body

that was hurt.

* Three Red Hook Highschoolers were arrested after a basketball game in the Stevenson Gym. They have been issued person-non-grata letters. At least one is making an effort at apologizing to Bard for his immature and dangerous behavior. We meet Wednesday to talk.

* During the second partial

power outage, a student was caught in the Olin elevator for over one hour. While he showed coolness and a calm demeanor as we spoke through the door, doing his class work, Gerard Nesel from B&G raced in to help Paul Johnson solve the problem. Even after skidding off the road, Gerard arrived to solve problem after commandeering his wife's car. Bard dedication at its finest!

