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COVER ART - "mcwhatever," a collaborative piece
by mari kon, ezra glenn, and curtis wallen

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LETTER TO THE EDITORS

*(In response to Lucian Wintrich's
op-ed 'Choosing Your Battles'
from the November edition of the
FREE PRESS.)*

Dear Lucian,
Freedom of speech, a right
that many human beings on
earth still do not enjoy, was
established to protect op-
pressed people from violent
punishment for such life-af-
firming expressions of dissent
as practicing an unpopular
religion or protesting a tyran-
nical government. Please do

not use patriotism to veil your
pseudo-intellectual masturba-
tion and adolescent longing
for attention. It is precisely
because of small-hearted,
short-sighted egomaniacs like
you that absolute free speech
will never be possible. De-
spite how little impact you
will ever have on the planet,
what you represent breaks
my heart.

Freely,
Madeline Williamson

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THE ENVIRONMENT, IT'S A THING YOU CAN DO



SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL WE'RE ON IT

by adrienne vitullo

In an exciting development for Bard's environmental future, the school has become a charter participant in the STARS program. STARS is the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System, which judges how we fare

across three categories: Education, Operations, and Planning, Administration and Engagement. The program grew out of the need for a more fundamental and comprehensive rating system for the level of sustainability of colleges. Schools around the country worked with AASHE, or the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, in order to create a guidebook which "levels the playing field" when dealing with campus sustainability.

That's according to Laurie Husted, Bard's Environmental Resources Auditor, who is leading the attempt to follow the new STARS system. Though Husted notes that the bar has been set very high by STARS, she says is making significant progress. For example, the college has reduced waste production by 30% since 2005.

Husted also noted that the STARS program has a strong academic component - it stresses the importance of sustainability being represented throughout the curriculum. Co-curricular activities are also important to the program, and Bard has been making attempts to integrate students into the process by solidifying existing programs such as BERPs, as well as introducing new engagement opportunities such as the Sustainability Council and the Environmental Collective.

The program also puts great emphasis on the standard of living of the college's employees, and community sustainability partnerships - topics of interest to many Bard students. The college has recently instituted a 10% Challenge with Red Hook, which seeks to reduce the town's energy usage by 10% within the next year, and to involve 10% of the town's citizens in this process. Husted is also leading this effort. Her goal, she says, is to expand the influence of the STARS program and create a greater sustainable community.

Husted provided some interesting statistics about our campus: three quarters of our carbon emissions come from our built environment, while the rest of our carbon footprint comes from cars on campus; and approximately 25% of on-campus buildings are run on alternative energy sources. For example, the Keene dorm building in Crugar Village is powered by geothermal energy. Yet Husted still says that there is quite a bit of work to be done in improving our "green building policies." She first hopes to install solar-thermal systems for Keene and Tremblay, as well as energy controls at the Stevenson Gym. These improvements will save the college approximately \$30,000 per year, Husted adds.

The base of support for making Bard a more environmentally conscious community is slowly growing. Husted indicated that there could be greater input from faculty and the administration at Bard in certain areas necessary for becoming greener. When discussing her efforts, Husted's overarching theme seems to be that awareness and knowledge are vital for the alteration of wasteful behavior. Her attempts to follow the STARS program are focused largely on the education of students, faculty and staff, which she feels is the most important step in the creation of an environmentally conscious community. In fact, the incorporation of the student body is essential to grand scale changes, Husted said.

Husted is optimistic about the improvements being made at Bard. Though she is realistic in her understanding of the amount of work that needs to be put into the school's environmental policies, she is also quite positive about the progress that has already been made.

IN DEFENSE OF THE DAY JOB IT'S ALSO A THING YOU CAN DO

by emily fischer '10

In the October issue of the FREE PRESS, Dan Wilbur, '09 described his day job after graduation as "soul-sucking," preferring to follow the less-traveled path towards a career as an up-and-coming comedian.

After graduating from Bard's Center for Environmental Policy last year, I quickly realized that I was going to have to acquire one of these jobs for myself. And, since I am far less talented than Dan and was not going to become a famous comedian any time soon, it had better be a good one. So this summer, I applied for and was accepted to the two-year Fellowship program at Environment America, a federation of 29 state-based environmental advocacy groups.

These citizen-funded groups consist of advocates who plan, run, and win environmental campaigns. Fellows at Environment America are given a ton of responsibility right away, working things like banning toxic gas drilling in the New York City watershed, protecting the Clean Air Act, cleaning up global warming pollution, and securing more funding for national parks. My current campaign, by comparison, seems far less than thrilling: I work on making building codes better. It's not glamorous, but it's important, and I love it. Here's why:

It's almost tough to believe that this blockbuster story has been largely ignored by the mainstream media, but New

York's building codes will be updated on January 1. This change will affect the energy performance of every new home and business built in the state. The Building Codes Assistance Project estimates that changes in this year's code update—requiring better insulation and more efficient lighting, sealing up leaky ducts, and cracking down on inefficient windows, among other things—will save New Yorkers \$178 million annually on energy bills by 2020, and \$360 million annually by 2030. The new codes will reduce global warming emissions by 2.14 million metric tons every year—approximately the same effect as taking 400,000 cars off the road—and conserve energy, especially during peak times, when the dirtiest power plants come online in order to meet extra-high energy demand.

In my mind, that's a pretty big deal.

So that's my job: I encourage states across the country to adopt the latest and greatest energy efficiency standards. I write op-eds and letters to the editor, hold press conferences, build coalitions of like-minded organizations, hold town hall meetings, lobby building code officials, write reports, and coordinate work by other energy advocates to make better codes a reality. Sometimes, my job is like herding cats. Often, I get to work with amazingly cool, smart, passionate people. Just a couple of months ago, I

worked with a couple of other fellows across the country to lobby building code officials, encouraging them to vote for a 30% increase in efficiency for the next round of updates. We reached that goal in October when the officials met for their annual convention—we may have even surpassed it.

Now, I know many of you of you are thinking "Emily, building codes sound so cool! How can I be involved in this exotic and impressive work when I graduate?" To you I would say: I know, I know, codes are awesome. But remember, fellows work on all sorts of issues. We had folks out in California this fall working to defeat Proposition 23, a ballot measure sponsored by Texas oil companies that would have essentially repealed California's global warming law. Fellows along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts have been organizing press conferences in support of offshore wind and in opposition to offshore drilling. In Oregon they're working to pass a plastic bag ban, and in Wisconsin and Arizona they're working to pass legislation to promote the use of solar power. It's exciting, challenging, important work, and I'm proud to say that it's my day job.

Environment America is currently accepting applications for the 2011-2013 Fellowship. You can find out more and apply online at www.environmentamerica.org/jobs.

BILL T. JONES WANTS TO SEE HANNAH ARENDT NAKED

JONES AND ROGER BERKOWITZ DISCUSS DANCE AND REVOLUTION

by lucas opgenorth

Just a few days before he shared the stage with Sir Paul McCartney and Oprah Winfrey in receiving 2010's Kennedy Center Honors, dancer and choreographer Bill T. Jones joined Professor Roger Berkowitz at the Fiscer Center's Sosnoff Theatre to discuss his work and the philosophy of Hannah Arendt. Titled *Thought and Action*, it was the second of two public events involving Jones on Wednesday, December 1. The first was a public discussion of a work of student choreography, featuring criticism by Jones himself.

Thought and Action was opened by Leah Cox's performance of Jones' solo improvisational piece *Floating the Tongue*. In the talk that followed, Jones explained that he designed the piece to explore the question: "Is it really possible to reveal the internal landscape while performing?"

Jones' dance company, the Bill T. Jones/Anie Zane Dance Company (which includes Cox) is now in the second year of its teaching partnership with Bard College. A leading figure in the modern dance world, Jones has recently received great attention and acclaim for his Tony Award winning choreography in the Broadway musical *Fela!* Additionally, Jones has been the director of several high profile performances around the world, the subject of television specials, and interviewed in award winning documentaries. The piece that Cox performed exemplified the innovative and thought provoking work that has earned Jones his

revered and respected status. *Floating the Tongue* is as much a philosophical exploration as it is a showcase of the dancer's skill and focus.

The piece allows the dancer to communicate the different levels of thought one experiences while performing, providing the audience with an understanding of a dancer's thought process. Phase one of the dance consists of an improvised dance, not set to music. In phase two, the dancer repeats the dance while simultaneously describing its motions in as much detail as possible. The third phase requires the dancer to perform the dance as purely as possible while accessing and verbalizing his or her mental action and in the fourth and final phase, the dancer allows his or her mental action to change and affect the movement of the dance itself. Cox's revelation of her thoughts during the dance sparked laughter from the audience, not used to hearing the details of another person's thought, let alone those of a performer. Her thoughts, which often reacted to the audience or the stage, personalized the performance, breaking the fourth wall without directly addressing the audience.

The piece's illustration of how thought and motion interact with one another served as the starting point for Jones' conversation with Berkowitz, which didn't begin until Jones was able to do a bit of dancing himself, pirouetting around

a surprised Professor Berkowitz. "I need to transition to conversation mode," he explained. Berkowitz compared and contrasted Hannah Arendt's work *Life of the Mind* with the concepts explored in *Floating the Tongue*. He gave brief descriptions of several of Arendt's concepts, some of which Jones articulately and charismatically disagreed with. Having no problem questioning Bard's own "sacred cow," Jones said, "I don't think she was pushed enough about actual experience." While Arendt wrote on the qualities of humanity as a whole and the way it organizes politically, Jones explained that he is concerned with specific individual experiences. *Floating of the Tongue*, he said, shows that a person never stops thinking, despite what Arendt may say about the true definition of "thought." Poking fun at Arendt as a classicist "while we are all just bottom feeders," he described how his growing up in the 1960s has influenced his interest in examining people on a deeply personal and individualized level. "If you want to know about revolution, Hannah, take your clothes off and go walking in the street" he challenged Ms. Arendt, comparing radical personal expression to the political struggles about which Arendt wrote. However, Jones' critique seemed to come from a place of respect and fondness for the late theorist. "A person like that, I'd like to see deal with modern dance" he said as the talk came to a close.

HANUKKAH WITH BOTSTEIN

by pp. Lawrence

Approximately thirty Bard students braved the rain on Dec. 1 to share in a traditional Hanukkah meal at the house of Leon Botstein, the college's President.

I was one of them. I'm not Jewish, but I had a passing knowledge of Hanukkah, not enough to know how to spell it, but just enough to know my way around a dreidel.

And so I went to the Hanukkah meal at Botstein's house. Botstein came to the door as I entered, found someone he knew, and began to talk classical music with them. Two rooms to the left, a crowd had gathered around a table filled with food. Conversations drifted around the room, often centering on Botstein and a flannel-wearing, salt-and-pepper bearded man: David Nelson, Bard College's rabbi and Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion. Nelson is a jocular man, effortlessly slipping in and out of lecture, a man who knows his history back and forth, and thus jokes about it when he can.

Hanukkah, Nelson explained, came from a Jewish military victory during a conflict 2200 years ago that later received a back story wherein a jar of oil that was only supposed to last one day lasted eight days, and all this oil business is miraculous but patently made up, but nonetheless Hanukkah remains one of American Judaism's most popular holidays, mostly because of one thing: it's a family holiday, with lots of traditions. And, like all good traditions, this involves food.

"What are those?" I asked, pointing to a plate of fried lumps. "These are latkes," said Jessica Wiseman, a nearby Jewish studies major. "Potato pancakes." "What's that?" "That's applesauce." Wiseman plopped a spoonful of applesauce on her plate and began to dip her latke into the dollop. "It's traditional to dip your latkes in it or, in some families, sour cream. Or in my family, both." "My family too," said Tadea Klein, the girl behind us in line. "Except in my family, the applesauce is homemade." "Sour cream and applesauce?" I said. "That sounds gross." "No. It's really not," said Klein, a senior and a creative writing major at Bard. "You have the savory flavor of the potatoes, the sweet flavor of the applesauce, and the sour flavor of the sour cream. It's a mishmash of flavors." "Like chocolate bacon?" "Yes. Except not disgusting."

I decided my stomach was not yet so pious to combine fried potato, sour cream, and applesauce, so I picked up some rolls, or sufganiyot. Rolls, often including jelly donuts, are another of Hanukkah's traditional foods. "The link between the latkes and the jelly donuts is that they are both fried in oil," said Nelson, "and that reminds us of the miracle of the little jar of oil."

At the end of the table, additional calories are provided by little bags of chocolate coins, or gelt. Each participant put forward a bet of chocolate coins into the pot and spun the dreidel to find their fate. "Gimel means you win everything, nun means you get nothing, hay means you get half, and shin means you have to put some in," Wiseman said.

Gelt is used in conjunction with the dreidel, that little top with the symbols on it. "They're little four-sided tops, and they were adopted and adapted by Jews in medieval Germany," Nelson said. "It's nominally a gambling game, usually played with pennies or peanuts."

"Go ahead. Be sure to take the dreidels," Botstein implored his guests. While Nelson said Botstein does not personally subscribe to religion, he can emphasize with the cause, and he opened up his home to the Jewish Student Organization, who had scheduled this dinner last summer.

After some time eating and conversing, Botstein brought the room to silence, Nelson gave a prayer, and Botstein lit a candle on the eight-wicked Menorah. Every day, the Menorah is lit, one on the first day, two on the second day, and so on.

Every day, as well, Hanukkah celebrations moved to a different location: Botstein's home, the village, the chapel, and the math department. "This year is the first year of the three that I have been here that we've had all eight nights of Hanukkah on campus," said Nelson, "and we will in fact be having Hanukkah candle lightings and celebrations in a different place every single night of the holiday. "I decided that if we did it in eight interested locations, more students would come," said Nelson. "I just thought it would be nice to let people have a chance to host, get more students in."

For Nelson, it's a way to share in the identity and memories he had growing up. Nelson said he remembers eating latkes, lighting the Menorah, singing Hanukkah songs as a child. "Getting Hanukkah gifts was a big deal, obviously, when I was a little kid," Nelson said. "It's a family holiday." "My role in life as a rabbi is about making Jewish life and Jewish identity as attractive and fun and meaningful and enriching to life as possible," Nelson said. "Because I believe it is to me." I left shortly before the singing of Hebrew songs. "How's the food?" A latecomer asked me as I left the house.

"The latkes are gone," I replied.

And as soon as I heard his feeble, whining groan, I knew that I had learned something valuable from my time at a traditional Hanukkah meal: always go after the latkes first. They go fast.

JOEL PERLMANN UNEARTHS BURIED TREASURE

RECRUITS STUDENTS TO SCAVENGE OLD DOCUMENTS

by mujahid sursar

Leaders and members of numerous prominent groups on Bard campus volunteered on Sunday December 5th for five hours to work on a very unique project co-ordinated by Professor Joel Perlmann.

Perlmann, a Research Professor and a Senior Scholar at the Levy Institute, found in the Harvard Library a copy of a six volume census the Israelis took of the Palestinians about a month after the 1967 war, in which they conquered the Palestinian territories. These census volumes are especially useful for two reasons: First, they represent the first modern census of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; and second, they form a baseline for studying Palestinian society with the help of the two recent censuses conducted by the PA, one in the mid-1990s and the other around 2006.

Astonishingly, according to Perlmann, almost no scholars and historians have used this census, and it is not available online in any form. Perlmann wants to create excel tables of all this important data and make it available for free online at the Levy Institute website to scholars worldwide who work on the Palestinian issues. He thought activists on campus might like to contribute to this effort.

Groups involved included the International Solidarity Movement, Jewish Student Organization, J Street, Kosher-Halal Neighborhood, Muslim Student Organization, Palestine Youth Initiative, Students for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine, and students from the

History of Jerusalem Class.

The volunteers met on Sunday and worked on copying the census to excel tables. The energy was very high. Everyone present believed in the importance of the project, and our energy was helped by Middle Eastern music and food, and lots of pizza. However, despite the great effort of the 25 volunteers, the data is so rich that we only finished 30% of it.

This effort has been very special for it is the first time students who especially care about the Middle East, despite their different approaches, have come together for a collective project.

Professor Perlmann is very grateful to all the students who helped: Sam Shapiro, Alyssa Goldstein, Lauren Blaxter, Amith Gupta, Faris Giacaman, Nora Palandjian, Karim Agha, Tedros Addisalem Balema, Seleme Basturk, Aminah AbuSway, Mohammed AbuSway, Benjamin DiFabbio, Emily Mallis, Karim Agha, Maria Gomez, Jeffrey Pereira, Liza Miller, Benjamin W Hopkins, Julia D Wallace, Paige Milligan, Francesca M Di Rienzo, Carolyn Bush, Maxime J Lancino, Marc Samuels, George L Harrar, George Glikerdas, Abhimanyu Sheshashayee, and Roy Zabudowicz.

Another session will likely be held next semester. If you are interested in joining, please contact me at ms837@bard.edu.

NOTES FROM THE STUDENT FORUM STUDENT ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES PUB ON CAMPUS

by hunter loen

Faster internet, beer kegs at club events, and an on-campus pub comprised part of the agenda of Thursday's Student Association Government forum in the main dining room of Kline. Over the background din of the dining hall, Jeremy Carter-Gordon, Secretary of the Student Association Government, addressed about 20 Bard students that had gathered for the event. Other topics of discussion included upcoming campus improvements, the results of a recent survey of Bard students, and information concerning current and future student organizations. All club funding requests for spring of 2011 submitted prior to the meeting were approved, and the budget was passed without dissent.

A new club, referred to as the "Party-hosting Club," will provide a keg at approved on-campus events, as well as members to supervise its use. One attendee asked if this would consist of "only one keg," to which the Secretary responded in the affirmative.

Most excitingly (for those over 21), Carter-Gordon confirms "we will have a pub on-campus next semester!" The Party-hosting Club will also be teaming up with the Bard Brewing Club to provide beer free of charge in the faculty dining room one day a week. "I think it'll be a great system," the Secretary said.

Bard can also expect faster internet access, beginning next semester, thanks to a new router the IT department will install over winter break. (The FREE PRESS previously reported on the delays to the internet update in our October issue.) Also, the Book Exchange will be making its inventory records digital, allowing students to search for books on their computers. This upgrade was made possible by a student-run Bard Works program, which provides funding for groups seeking to improve Bard's campus. Finally, a self-defense course will be offered during the spring semester.

Secretary Carter-Gordon went over some results of the Student Association Government's fall semester student life survey. Students' favorite parts of Bard included the campus, professors, and the amount of activities. Opinions were mixed regarding transportation services and dining, and internet access and housing rounded out the least popular things. On the subject of housing, Carter-Gordon said he had "been promised, yet again, that Williams will be gone after this year," referring to the unpopular temporary housing unit on south campus. 80% of respondents to the poll felt laundry fees were too high, and 70% were in favor of a fund to aid in making Bard more environmentally friendly, and the Student Association Government vowed

to work on those issues going into the spring semester.

The forum included a report on the Convocation Fund, which is comprised of a fee added to all students' tuition. "We have \$60,000 dollars in the Convocation Fund at the end of this semester," the Secretary noted. Other figures included \$100,000 of the Fund spent during the spring semester, and that \$13,000 were spent from the emergency fund. Mentioning that most clubs are budgeted more money than they end up using, Carter-Gordon exhorted club heads to "Spend your budgets!" in order to help "spread the money around to as many different clubs as possible."

The last topic discussed involved the Student Association Government relaxing the restrictions on how clubs spend their money. The money they are budgeted will be given more directly, and they will have more latitude in choosing vendors. Glowsticks, fog machines, and the direct purchase of alcohol will still be specifically banned, however.

In parting, the Secretary urged anyone planning on creating a club or getting officially chartered to attend a future upcoming informational meeting whose time and place are to be announced. He also mentioned that there will be another, sooner, meeting to discuss the issue of alcohol and student organizations, and to ensure that club leaders know what they can and can't do at on-campus events.

KAFKA IN PRISON

A BARD PROFESSOR SHARES HER BPI EXPERIENCES

by celia bland

I didn't choose "Metamorphosis." It's in an anthology of texts that ask, "What is it to be human?" At first, the first-year students don't like it much, but as we discuss the story, they become intrigued.

"Gregor's gay, listen up!" hollers Connor.

"No, he's bugged out!" counters Mikee.

Devon waggles both arms like antennae, "Yah, he just thinks he's a bug!"

"Wait," says Nando. "Kafka was a Jew, right? Didn't Nazi's call Jews vermins? He's talking about how people make other people insects. Then they can stomp them!" He demonstrates.

We read Vladimir Nabokov's expert opinion on what kind of bug Gregor was, and then another of Kafka's short stories, "A Report to an Academy" told by an ape, Red Peter, who "humanizes" himself -- that is, he learns to talk, smoke cigars, and wear trousers -- to escape captivity in a zoo.

"Red Peter's story is my story," says Devon with soft Caribbean sibilance. "Look at me here. I could be writing this story."

He reads aloud:

"No, freedom was not what I wanted. Only a way out; right or left, or in any direction; I made no other demand; even should the way out prove to be an illusion; the demand was a small one, the disappointment could be no bigger. To get out somewhere, to get out! Only not to stay motionless with raised arms crushed against a wooden wall."

"That was my first night here," he says. "No. My first week."

**

I'm struck by the way my students confide such personal information. Moving to the bottom bunk after having slept for four years on the top, was, Nando volunteered, out of the blue, "like my eyes couldn't adjust to the ceiling being so far away. The ceiling was wide-open sky."

And Mort, studious, devoted to NPR, already fifteen years in prison and only thirty, writes in his essay: "Gregor becomes the 'Other' to his family after his transformation, when he's no longer useful to them. At first his sister cleans his room and feeds him special meals, but then she has to go to work and she neglects him and decides he can't understand what's being said to him. It's not just that Gregor wakes up transformed into a bug; his family transforms him, too, into a beast, although the reader knows that he's still Gregor, and he still loves them. For them, he's garbage. Being a bug reveals how his family -- his society -- felt about him all along."

**

West block! echoes from guards to inmates along the long hallway of classrooms. Half my class speeds out the door.

East block!

My students are "on the move." Not to lunch, Mort tells me, but to "mess."

"There's an obvious distinction," he adds.

I skitter across the hall, past the bathroom with no panes in the door, to bang on the metal door, peering into its small spy hole. "Come on in," says Dave, an amiable man who has been teaching GED-prep for four years. Dave smiles a lot in a nearsighted way, bobbing his head genially as if agreeing to everything.

I follow him into a concrete rectangle with two metal tables of teachers. Some teach the alphabet and addition, some the rudiments of composition. Unlike my students -- young, slim, muscular (thanks to a weight room?) -- the teachers are mostly in their fifties and sixties, flabby and

grey.

I slide into an empty spot.

"Not there," whispers Trudy. "That's Mickey's place. You can sit over there." She points to a chair in the corner. My cheeks are red.

"He's sat there in that chair for the last thirteen years," she shrugs.

**

As I eat my sandwich, Mickey grills me: "What's a gerund? How do you spell ukulele?"

Mickey feels that he's been dealt a bad hand. He doesn't love teaching -- or even learning. He's trapped in a state contract and a good pension. He proudly shows me his key to the exercise yard and a short cut that avoids the crowded halls. It's eerie in the yard, seeing the cell blocks from the outside -- lots of windows, no faces -- and beyond the buildings, the blank prison wall, thirty feet high.

"So why are you doing this?" he asks me as we walk, and something makes me look at the set of his lips under his five-o'clock shadow. Am I crazy? He wants to know.

I like to teach, I think of saying. Or, education is the only way to reduce recidivism -- think about it. Or, they asked me and I couldn't think of a good reason to say no. Or, I could easily have ended up here myself. I feel like I owe

**

Next check-point, the plump woman guard, her throat beneath her uniform's collar inked with blue tattoos, hoists a massive book like an old fashioned hotel register on to the desk. I sign my name and under "Purpose of visit" write "teaching." Others have written: elevator broke; chaplaincy; counsel -- legal. She hands me the plastic tag I clip to my collar: O2, ESCORT. I sit on a pew in front of her high desk and wait. Smokers come and go. A shift changes. A young plump woman and a little girl enter. The woman's feet are stuffed into cheetah stiletto heels. Tattoo-décolleté peeks from her cleavage. The little girl is about three and stomps her tennis shoes as if testing their rubbery soles. The woman hands the guard a form, a buzzer sounds and a barred door to my left slides open. The little girl bounces inside and her mother, sliding a bit in her slick heels, teeters after.

At first I think she's talking to me when the desk guard says, "Did you see the lady who got detained last Monday?" But she's talking to another guard whose lunchbox is the size of a picnic hamper. "She was smuggling drugs in her baby's diaper. They confiscated the illegal substance and then --" she pauses dramatically, "they let the lady visit her husband. You believe that?"

**

"It's the rich keeping down the poor," Mickey tells me. He has revealed that his brother is an administrator and he's proud to know "the shit" about the prison's inner works. "Eighty per cent of the inmates are black, and of those, 85% are from the same eleven neighborhoods in Manhattan and Brooklyn and the Bronx."

"Wow," I say. "Which neighborhoods?"

"East New York? Maybe Brownsville in Brooklyn. But I'll tell you one thing, if they were to legalize drugs, this prison would empty. Empty! Even if they just repealed the "three strikes, you're out" -- no more overcrowding, no more two thousand

inmates. I'd be out of job."

He smiles cheerfully. "You know they used to have a dairy here? And a bakery; the smell was a slice of heaven."

**

Dave, Trudy, and the librarian, walk the empty hall at lunchtime, up and down, up and down. A bell rings, ear-piercingly shrill. "Here they come!" Trudy calls to me. "Hide!"

She scurries into her classroom and slams the door.

**

While my students write, I pretend to grade papers but I'm furtively watching them. One of the pleasures of teaching is to see a student find the right word, mouth slack or lower lip pooch-ed out, eyebrows screwing into a knot over their nose. In my class at the college, I might notice a tattoo on the soft inside of a wrist, a tattooed word in Hebrew or Arabic or Japanese; a lugnut that widens an earlobe. Here, I follow the traces of scars along hairlines, stretching from brow to nape, from ear into shirt collar, along the length of a forearm or braceleting a wrist.

**

I ask my class, "how was your study hall yesterday? Did you get some help with your papers?"

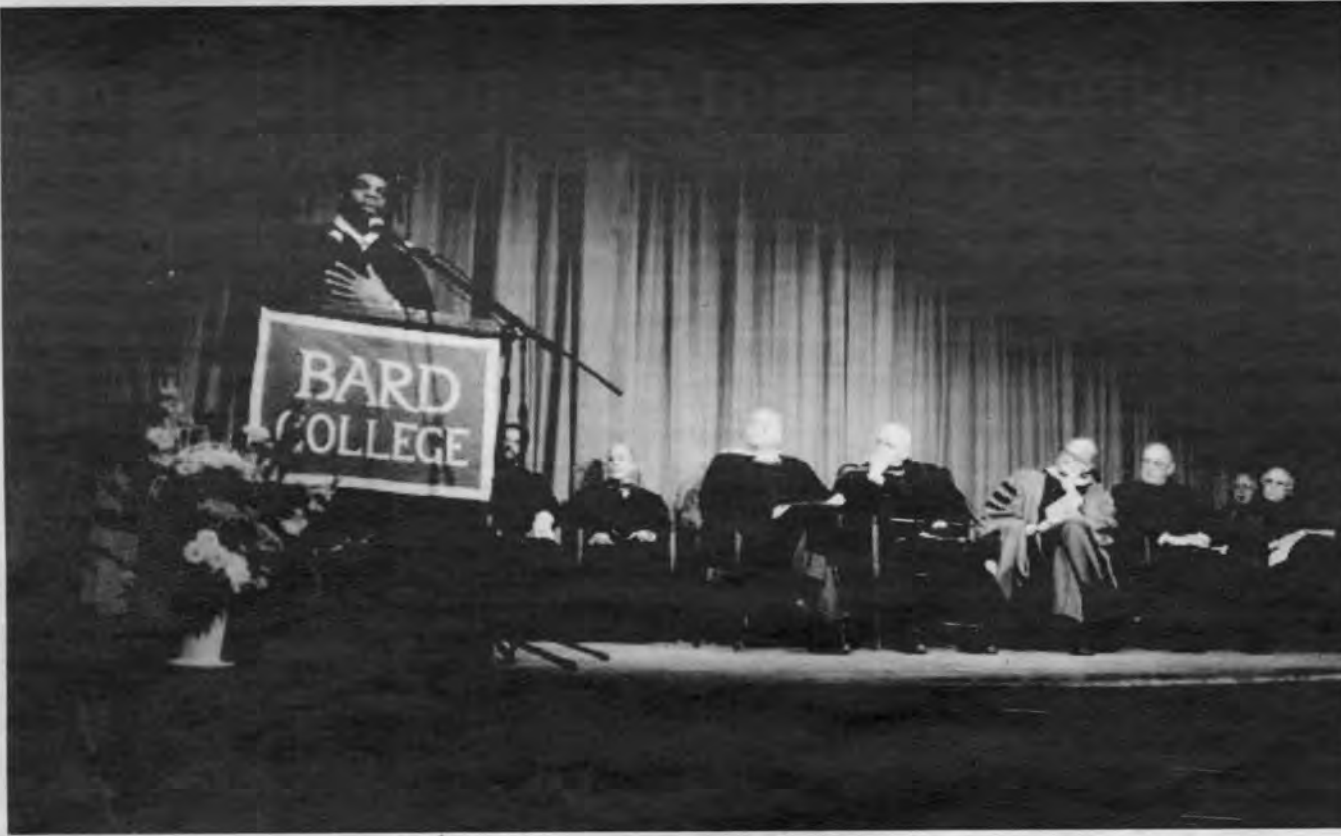
"Study hall was bad," Mort, shakes his head.

"No kidding!" I say, surprised. He's the one who usually helps the others understand.

"He got called out," Troy interjects as if to save Mort the pain of telling me. "Called out," means "called out of line," usually for some infraction. "He got tasered."

"Oh, my!" I say, surprised. Mort, large, slow-moving, particular in his grooming, seems so gentle. I look at him speculatively. Have I misjudged him? Is he hiding a foul and violent nature? If he weren't violent, he wouldn't





be here -- right?

Mort watches me think, shakes his head.

"Prison," he says, "is confusing. You think you understand it, you know what it is, then it takes you by surprise -- painful surprises."

He says nothing more until called upon to read from our story:

"You must try to get rid of the idea that this is Gregor," he reads, as Gregor's sister confronts her parents. "The fact that we have believed this for so long, that is truly our real misfortune. But how can it be Gregor? If it were Gregor, he would have long ago realized that a communal life among human beings is not possible with such a creature and would have gone away voluntarily." He pauses, waits for a classmate to read the next paragraph. For a moment, the classroom is silent. Silent and, as always, stifling.

*

I have in my bag some Lorna Doone cookies. I brought them for a little party the teachers had, but I didn't contribute after all. I sat in my classroom and wrote comments on papers. I'm feeling sick of this place, keeping to the right side of the traffic lines, avoiding the gaze of inmates who try to catch your eye as we stall at a barred crossing. I'm tired of being scared.

"Here," I say. "Take two each." But Vic only takes one and then Connor grabs three. "Two," I say, firmly.

"I was taking the one Vic didn't want," whines Connor but he puts it back. Devon eats his cookies so slowly, crumb by crumb. "Cookies," he says, as if giving them a new name.

East Block! sounds the call.

Vic stands to leave but stops by my desk. "No more," he tells me. "If the guard saw that -- you'd be out of here. Barred for life. And those" -- pointing at the empty box -- "are contraband. The guards didn't vet them. We could get years on our sentences."

"Oh," I say. I knew this, of course. I feel ashamed of myself for putting my students at risk simply because I was feeling rebellious.

Mort has stayed behind to listen. "I was nearly upped two years," he tells me. "For a book. I was talking about William Carlos Williams to my professor -- and he didn't

know better -- he handed this collection of Williams's poetry to me and said, read this and I'll get it from you on Tuesday, or some shit like that, and the guard saw from out in the hall and here I stand holding the book and it had my teacher's name wrote in the front cover. Man, they slammed me in solitary for a week, and I was brought up before the judge for sentencing. But, thanks be to Allah, he just laughed. Judge said, I never had a man before me in my whole career for smuggling poetry. And he let me go back to my cell. But it took years off my life, man. I got old after that."

**

The Orange. Devon takes it from his pocket at the end of class.

"Thank you, Devon. I appreciate it. But... but I have so much and I don't want to take your orange."

He looks at me then down at the floor. "I thought it would be appropriate," he says, hitting every syllable. "You gave us cookies. I wanted to give you something." Manners trump contraband. "It is appropriate. Yes. Thank you."

But I can't bring myself to eat it.

**

The calligraphy reads: (in white on red): White is out. (in red on white): Red is in. A board with numbered hooks and small metal hanging discs. BATONS ARE TO REMAIN IN THE FACILITY. If you have your baton you are to return it to your locker.

**

My eyes, starved for color, focus on the red Gothic calligraphy. This many-gated space is just a locked door away from the place where I'd signed my name in a black book like a hotel register eons ago -- this morning. This is a holding cell for civilians and prisoners, the axis of two curving wings.

I am exiting with the teachers, chatting as we stand apart from the lines of prisoners. I don't know whether to say hello to my students, now grouped with dozens of other inmates, or to ignore them as the other teachers do. It's as if they have been transformed from individuals into a mass, from persons into prisoners, as I have swapped

person for "02, Escort." Here is the plastic tag clipped. Here is the stamp on my left hand.

You can't see it, I can't see it, but the guards see it. Dave collects the teachers' classroom keys, then hangs them on hooks, flipping each disc from red to white. This is his job, and the other teachers wait for him and for the guard who must open the third-to-the-last double-plated door. I can smell it, feel my muscles tensing as I lean, tensed to run. Outside.

**

It feels like standing by your car in the parking lot of a correctional facility and feeling the bulge of keys in your pocket. Get in the car, crank it up, listen to it rev. That's what it sounds like. Freedom and death; there is a similar sense of release. Easy on/easy off that arterial highway.

On Gregor's last day, he "remained in this state of empty and peaceful reflection until the tower clock struck three in the morning. From the window he witnessed the beginning of the general dawning outside. Then without willing it, his head sank all the way down, and from his nostrils his last breath flowed weakly out."

**

What is it to be a human? I give my class a that speaks of the poet's violent, despairing family life, bereft of love, and yet says -- let them do it, let my parents meet and marry and have me. Let them do it.

"What do you notice about this poem?"

I want them to talk about the images, the language.

There is a moment of confusion -- what am I asking? What do I want to hear? Then Connor rests his hands on his long legs and prepares himself to speak. "It means..." he pauses. "Pardon me, Professor, but it means life is a mothafucker. You born a loser, live and die. The poet saying, life is a mothafucker. Go through with it."

Celia Bland is a Visiting Assistant Professor of the Humanities at Bard College.

8/25/00
Returning from a first visit home back to Barb.



france

by hand

self-portrait

02/26/60



LIFE EXPERIENCE WROUGHT BY EDUCATION

A BPI STUDENT SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE

by hancy maxis

For the better part of my life, I have had an insatiable thirst for knowledge. My self motivated drive toward education was borne by the sheer will, desire and aspiration for what I perceived as "success." Education, as an alternative to idleness, also shielded me from the ever-present pitfalls of inner city living. You see, honestly, I have never possessed either musical or artistic talent (I tried my hand at playing the alto sax but, unable to hold a note, failed miserably, and I can't draw much more than stick figures). Therefore, my path to "success" would have to be based in a more cognitive area.

Before graduating high school, I was accepted by my dream school: Howard University. That was my ticket! Howard, the most prestigious historically black university in the country, had accepted me. Me! I felt validated. All my hard work and long, hot summers spent in summer school had finally paid off. By attending Howard's School of Business I would be on the fast track to power and prestige. I was on my way to the corner office with the secretary out front. I could even be a multi-millionaire. But, before I became a jet-setting executive, first I actually had to attend school.

Immediately after graduation, I left New York and traveled to Washington D.C. to attend Howard's early, summer admission program for exceptional students. The campus design was beautiful: a scenic central yard surrounded by the antebellum architecture of the library and university halls. I was awed. An African-American educational oasis set to the background of the Washington Monument, Howard's scenery was simply breathtaking.

I soon adjusted to the insular nature of campus life, except for the meal plan - the bland cafeteria food made me so homesick for my mother's lasagna and baked zucchini dish I wanted to scream. Otherwise, I felt at home. I was amongst peers - serious students that wanted the most out of life, like I did.

After a productive summer session, I began preparing for the fall semester. My plan was to double major in marketing and psychology - a clear path to leadership.

A few days later, while checking in during one of my routine calls home, I noticed that my mom sounded abnormally apprehensive and reticent. Mid-conversation she hesitated then told me that during a routine self-examination she had felt a lump on the side of one of her breasts. My heart started pounding. My mom went on to tell me that her doctor had a biopsy performed and the results had just come back - it was cancer. My mouth went dry and my eyes ran fluidly. It couldn't be, not my mommy!

My mother, my beloved mother was dying. That was all I could think. I was crushed. Visualizing my mom - eternally a pillar of wise strength, inner fortitude, and outward grace - withering away stricken by a silent, deadly disease struck me to my core.

In addition to my virtual depression, I was faced with the dilemma of my future at Howard. My mom would soon be incapacitated due to the upcoming mastectomy and chemotherapy treatment, so finances would have to be diverted from my tuition toward medical and living expenses. In other words, I was at a crossroad: Do I scrape together student loans to pay tuition, or do I forgo Howard and return home to support and help my mother in any way possible?

Notwithstanding my strong feelings of love and devotion for my mother, that must have been the hardest decision I had - was forced - to make. My mom, placing my interests above her own (as usual), advised me to stay in school. She told me that I was grown and in college, so she would take of herself. She told me that I had a bright future and should remain focused on my goals. She told me that, at worst, she would live on through me.

After a couple of agonizing days spent locked away in

my dorm room, I decided that to leave my mom to suffer a potentially disfiguring surgery and chemotherapy (with the resultant loss of her luxuriant hair) without the presence of her only children to at least comfort her would be wrong and unforgivable. What kind of "success" could I enjoy at the expense of the one person who has always been, and would always be, my base of support? My mind was made up - but God it hurt to sacrifice the one thing that I had dreamed of and worked so hard to achieve. Ultimately, I relinquished my dream-come-true for the harsh reality of my predicament. So I steeled myself, held my head high, and just walked away.

Back in New York, my presence had tangibly positive effects. Obviously, this period was excruciatingly painful for my mom on several levels: physically, mentally and emotionally. However, after the surgery and chemo I, along with family members, did everything imaginable to make her as comfortable as possible. Suffice to say, the presence and support of loved ones greatly aided in creating an environment conducive to her recovery.

The fact that my mother recovered along with my role in helping her, although greatly offsetting my looming feelings of dejections, honestly did not extinguish my sense of melancholy. Instead of mulling in that state, however, I took action. I enrolled at Baruch College (City University of New York) as a business administration major with the aim of recapturing my temporarily derailed trajectory toward some semblance of "success."

Located in lower Manhattan, Baruch College afford the obvious benefit of the closeness to home I required, but it was also quietly one of the leading business schools in the city. Much of Baruch's faculty consisted of active and formerly active business leaders. Put simply, I viewed Baruch as an unfortunately necessary but good alternative to Howard, and frankly it felt good to be back in school, to be back in my comfort zone.

Baruch, however, had some stark contrasts with Howard. Besides the predominantly White and Asian student body, the culture of the school was vastly different in comparison to what I experienced in a campus setting. Baruch's culture was truly an extension of New York City's culture. Meaning, its social atmosphere was fast paced, sterile and impersonal. I felt like a drone bustling from one class to the next, then commuting back home without even the simplest of interchanges with other students.

Although my momentum toward my educational goals remained intact, laden with emotional burdens and feelings of alienation, I was inwardly unhappy. I felt isolated within the space of the college experience, a space in which I was better suited when it was inclusive, supportive and communal. My grades suffered. I was losing what I had always desired, what I had so vigorously pursued, what I came so close to achieving.

I started drinking, regularly. Maybe it was my way of relieving the self-imposed pressure to always succeed, without reprieve, without pause. Maybe it just felt good to simply let go. Whatever the cause, I put myself in a place where I should not have been, and, in what still seems like a whirlwind, I am now enrolled as a Bard Prison Initiative Student.

Consequently, as a BPI student I am in the unique position not only to applaud the college's recognition and appreciation of intelligence wherever it may lie but also to discern BPI's education model via-a-vis educational systems employed at other colleges.

BPI's liberal arts pedagogy - primarily concerned with objectivity, structure and critical analysis - provides the essential tools that allow for a precise yet expansive view of the world. Specifically, this three-prong approach to education permit the student to identify seemingly mundane details, analyze and explicate those details, and relate

them to larger, overarching subject matter.

Employing this formula, I began to see flaws in the Utopian image I had of Howard University. Howard is an excellent school, but the curriculum at the School of Business, tailored as it is toward being a feeder for entry-level corporate jobs, thwarted independent thinking - thus retarding leadership potential. Also, the predominantly African-American student body, though inspirational, was not reflective of the world after graduation. Things I had previously viewed as strengths were, in other ways, limitations.

Also, Baruch's rigidly compartmentalized educational format is severely restrictive in scope in comparison to an interdisciplinary educational approach. For instance, the melding of finance, psychology, philosophy, and sociology - absent in Baruch's educational schema - dissuades the tunnel vision so pervasive in business. It is my view that this unidirectional purview, as a product of pedagogical method, aided in blinding many Wall Street executives to the potentially disastrous ancillary effects of the hyper-speculation of mortgage-backed securities.

My experiences with different modes of education have endowed me with an acute sensitivity to the coupling of intelligence and imagination. You see, intelligence plus imagination equals innovation. As a result, I now view "success" through the lens of innovation, and innovation - the engine to future advancement - rests in the hands of today's students, tomorrow's leaders. It rests with you and I.

Look, I share my life experiences because I know the highs of triumph and the lows of tragedy, yet my passion for "success" remains undiminished. Be that "success" characterized as the attainment of my personal goals or the prevention of even one student's failure by my example, I will have succeeded. So I write. So I write to lessen my burden by sharing. I write because I know the pressures a student bears to superlatively produce, and the things done to alleviate that pressure. But on the other hand, I also know that a momentary lapse in judgement or "being in the wrong place at the wrong time" could very easily turn a Bard College student into a Bard College Prison Initiative candidate.

So I share. And so I write.





COP SHOP

by ken cooper

The Red Hook Police Department gave our local community an early Christmas present last month with the arrest of two men who attempted to abduct two 14 year old girls in Red Hook. They offered drugs and alcohol and actually tried physically to get them in the vehicle. That fact that the potential victims were walking together, may have helped defeat this attempted abduction. Good thing to remember if you like to hike, jog, walk or bike - do it with a friend.

The campus continues to suffer from vandalism. While the painted graffiti costs time and money to repair, some of the symbols and words will cost much more... to the individual who wrote them. Any person found to be painting hurtful and harmful symbols will be permanently banned from campus. If it is a Bard Community Member... do the math - loss of their college career, be it student or staff.

Hunting season is almost over. December 13th ends deer season, with the exclusion of muzzle loading guns- which ends on the 21st. Small game may still be hunted until the end of February. - The need to buy bright orange and yellow clothing from the Salvation Army still exists.

During winter break, lock your bicycle to a bike rack - using a light oil on the lock and the bike chain. In your parked vehicle, keep anything worth stealing out of sight.

If you have lost a cell phone, iPod or other valuables this semester, check in with security in the Old Gym.

The lost and found locations are:

- * The Old Gym
- * Library
- * Stevenson Gym
- * Kline
- * Campus Center

You must be able to correctly identify any lost item or have proper documentation that you are the rightful owner. Unclaimed items will be donated to various charity's and the Free Use Store run by Laurie Husted.

Have a well deserved break - and enjoy ski season!

ken



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

4:48 PSYCHOSIS AT THE OLD GYM

by ezra glenn

I really had no interest in 4AM theater until I was implored by senior Taylor Lambert to come and see the show he was directing last week which, for two brief performances in the middle of the night during finals, impressed crowds of student nightowls. *4:48 Psychosis*, starring Layla Wolfgang '13, was surprisingly worth staying up for.

The play, written by Sara Kane before her own suicide in 1999, is an intense study of a single woman's depression and institutionalization leading to her ultimate suicide. The play is non-narrative in structure and contains no specific direction, only a single voice, though it is often performed with multiple actors, as was the case here. The brilliant and lucid Wolfgang was accompanied by the generally banal Hannah Killhour '12 and Cooper Roberts '14 as the doctors sent at intervals to monitor and medicate the play's protagonist.

At four in the morning on December 9 and 10, in the most literal interpretation of black box theater I've ever seen, the play was performed in a small section of the Old Gym, contained by large black boxes on two sides, the wall the back, and the audience at the front. Stadium seats, the frontmost of which were actually within the boundaries of

the box-walls, gave the stage a pit-like feel.

Though the script has been described as "a 75-minute suicide note," the play's background and general synopsis are actually quite interesting. The protagonist's fight with clinical depression and nearly-philosophical contemplation of suicide, violence, pain and love is surprisingly resonant.

Most shocking, however, was the success of the experiment with late-night theater on campus. The (albeit small) house was packed, with many theatergoers standing at the sides of the risers, peeking their heads around the stage's walls to get a better view. It was easy for people to flake out of going to see this show--normal sleeping patterns alone could do a person in. One friend of mine with whom I'd planned to see the show caved and went to the open dress rehearsal at 5pm in the afternoon, an admittedly cushy solution to the problem of exhaustion and finals. Then again, maybe finals week is the best time for a performance like this--perhaps the depression of being in New Henderson before (and after...) the show writing a paper for my religion class was all I needed for the play to feel especially relevant. Well, sort of.



promotional postcard for *4:48 Psychosis*



"25 YEARS OF SEX AND DRAG": A TALK BY DIANE TORR

by jessie channel

Diane Torr, the feisty artist, writer, and educator from Canada best known for her drag king performances and man-for-a-day workshops, came to Bard on November 30th - and she certainly did not disappoint.

In a presentation entitled "25 Years of Sex and Drag" Torr discussed gender and what it really means to be a man or a woman. She began by talking about her earlier jobs where she worked as a wind goddess and secretary, and then as a go-go dancer. People often labeled her as a transvestite, and it was this labeling that made her so well known. She said she played into that label and began to use the go-go bars as rehearsal rooms for developing her talent. At the same time, she was studying gender roles.

Torr then went on to describe her life as a drag king

in New York City, testing boundaries and developing characters. Dabbling around in all the jobs offered, she gained a following that still remains today.

After showing pictures and sharing stories, Torr played a video of a man-for-a-day workshop she did in the mid-90s. The women taking the class not only learned the mannerisms of men but were taught to feel like men, even learning to make fake penises that they would then wear with the rest of their male attire. Torr talked about men's repression of feeling, even mentioning Bush's Desert Storm speech where she felt his masculine behavior showed his "opacity." She said she feels bad for men that feel the need to constantly repress their feelings and that it is unfair they cannot be so "expressive or well rounded."

She concluded her talk by dancing into the room with a live performance of a character she created years ago named Jack Sprat. Sporting long frizzy hair and a classy suit and tie, she told funny stories in a British accent while wowing the crowd with her man-like behavior.

After receiving her MFA from Bard, Torr went on to live in Glasgow where she now teaches workshops and occasional classes at various universities. Her new book, *Sex, Drag, and Male Roles: Investigating Gender as Performance* mixes memoir with the history of cross-dressing and is now available online and in stores. Her study of gender and endless experience made the presentation both unique and relatable and judging by the crowd's response, Diane Torr will most likely be back soon.

MOVIE REVIEWS

HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS: PART 1

by hannah khalifeh

If you seriously need someone to explain to you what *Harry Potter* is, then all I can say is, wow, it must have been really awesome to have been in space for the past ten years! In other words: *Harry Potter* is a big deal. And don't give me that apathetic Bard shrug—I saw you standing in line at the Kingston theater. The midnight show alone made \$24 million in the U.S. and Canada, so.

For those who haven't read any of the books, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1* does not offer any explanations. It is assumed that the audience knows all about the wizarding world. So if you don't know what a Horcrux is or understand the significance of the shattered mirror Harry clutches throughout the movie, then sorry, but you will probably be completely lost. A family friend told me she thought the movie was boring. "All they did was go camping!" she exclaimed indignantly. Well, yes, but that was the exact plot of the book. In fact, I was surprised

at how well they managed to transform an entire portion of the book that consisted of mainly underwhelming action into an exciting and enthralling film.

This time around, director David Yates and screenwriter Steve Kloves finally managed to stay true to J.K. Rowling's writing. Often, the dialogue comes word-for-word from the text, and there are no unnecessary scenes, unlike its predecessor *Half-Blood Prince* (i.e. The Burrow burning down for no reason, etc.). One thing I noticed was the lack of any older actors, a major change from the other films. Characters like Snape, Lucius Malfoy, and Bellatrix Lestrange have barely any screen time, and instead the fate of the film rests in the hands of Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson, as Harry, Ron and Hermione respectively.

And they manage to pull it off. Aside from the golden makeout scene, which was... well. I don't know. Weird. But what I loved about *Deathly Hallows* was how Ron and Hermione were brought to the foreground as conflicted

characters, instead of remaining Harry's faithful sidekicks as usual.

What took almost everyone I talked to by surprise was the fascinating and entirely unexpected animated interpretation of the Tale of Two Brothers, which comes midway through the film. This shadow puppet-inspired story telling was designed and directed by Swiss director Ben Hibon, and it's a beautiful and creepy scene reminiscent of Tim Burton's style. It's definitely a highlight of the film.

As the credits rolled and everyone stood up reluctantly to leave, it didn't take too long for reality to settle back in. Exiting the theater, I overheard one guy scoff to his friend, "What was up with Dumbledore's postmodern grave?" And immediately, I was pulled out of the wizarding world and brought back into the Bard realm.

by elena watson

I was still in elementary school when the hugely anticipated Hollywood version of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* first went up on the big screen, and I can still remember it clearly—sitting one row from the front with my best friend, our dewy little eyes transfixed by the action, our ears catching every word of dialogue. At nine years old, we were the movie's sharpest critics, noticing every neglected scene, every line of dialogue they hadn't gotten right, and shaking our heads whenever one of those distinguished British thespians failed to do justice to our beloved characters.

There's a different standard by which we judge each installment of the *Harry Potter* franchise. It's not just a movie; it's a memory from our childhood, retold with gawky teenage actors and flashy special effects. And, as such, it will probably never be as perfect as we wish it would.

While it's true that some of the *Harry Potter* movies

have fully deserved the harsh criticism they've received (I'm looking at you, *Goblet of Fire*), this second-to-last installment of the series does not. Part one of *The Deathly Hallows*, although not without its flaws, is an elegant and brooding film. Harry, Ron, and Hermione, three kids we've been with ever since they were fresh-faced eleven year olds, have finally grown up, and this movie possesses the same maturity. There are no more Quiddich matches, no more lush scenes of feasting in the Great Hall, and no more painful warm and cheery Hogwarts Christmases.

The characters in *The Deathly Hallows* are by turns scared and stony-faced, all too aware of the danger seething around them as they search for the lost horcruxes. They camp out in the moody English countryside, until one location becomes too dangerous. Then they pick up and move. Then they camp out again. Something scary happens. They move. Ron is mad, Harry is stoic, and Hermione is a watered-down mixture of the two.

In spite of some pretty decent acting on the part of the three young actors, these long, drawn-out travelling

scenes—devoted to nothing but angst and ever-growing sexual tension—made me question the director's decision to split this book into two. I would understand if it were to spread the interesting scenes out evenly between the two, but judging from part one, it looks like David Yates has left the majority of the action for the second installment, which is slated to come out in July of next year.

However, the film has many positive aspects, which shouldn't be forgotten. The acting is solid almost across the board, and the deathly hallows back story is elegantly summed up with a really nice animated sequence. Also, while nearly all the other movies in the series were rife with those painful moments of awkward dialogue and "emotion," *The Deathly Hallows* only has one, which I won't spoil for you by describing here. But in spite of that, and in spite of the fact that it's two and a half hours long, and in spite of the fact that it is not the book, *The Deathly Hallows* is actually pretty good. For a *Harry Potter* movie.

127 HOURS

by nicholas carbone

You've probably heard of the mountain-climber Aaron Ralston, who was trapped by a boulder in Robbers Roost, Utah for more than five days. Ralston's story comes to the big screen in *127 Hours*. (I'll try to avoid too many details, in case you haven't heard the story before.)

Danny Boyle directs this film with an energetic and visual flair that keeps Ralston's story moving at a smooth pace. As the movie begins we see the movement of people and cars in the street in split-screen conveying the constant movement of humanity and Ralston's addiction to stimulation, which only nature excursions could satisfy in his mind. By the end of the film we understand the irony of these notions as well as the irony of how humanity continues moving as Aron's life force drains away.

First, Aron is seen at his place getting ready, driving a car, and then riding a bike through the desert area. We follow him as he climbs some rocks, wondering when his fateful

moment will come. He meets two other female hikers and shows them some interesting areas around and then he goes off alone until he gets stuck. Finally, Aron seems to be stopped by his nature excursion instead of being physically stimulated.

James Franco brilliantly captures the stages of emotion that Ralston dealt with through the five days. Ralston quickly goes through Kubler-Ross's 5 stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Once Ralston realizes that he is in the middle of nowhere without access to any help, he starts focusing on his options and how he can survive with the materials he has.

Boyle keeps us interested in watching Ralston by conveying the thoughts going through his mind and how he starts to descend into hallucinations after a while. Boyle also uses flashbacks to Ralston's past with his ex-girlfriend and other experiences, but these are kept to a minimum. Most of the film's running time is spent on Ralston as he tries to keep himself alive while filming video letters that he plans on leaving to his family and friends through the camera that he brought with him in his backpack.

Ralston's thoughts come through in a voiceover which reveals his moral and philosophical imperatives. As we see early in the film, Ralston is alone and seems to try to stay away from others, instead leaving behind human existence to come into the wild. In the movie he confronts his identity as he faces the consequences of his lonely lifestyle through his lack of connection or communication with others. By the end of the film Boyle shows us the error of Ralston's behavior in life and the inspiration for all of humanity to be together in our endeavors.

127 Hours stands as a fantastically directed and acted film that displays a person's inner search for understanding in the problems he desires to overcome in life. Boyle and co-writer Simon Beaufoy indulge in many psychological games, and are unflinching in the way they present the actions that Aaron undertook to try to stay alive for 127 hours. James Franco's performance transports the viewer into the mindset of Ralston terrifically and allows us to easily empathize with the tragedy that befalls the climber.



AN APPEAL TO BARD SMOKERS, FROM A BARD SMOKER

by a bardian

(In response to Hunter Loen's piece 'Greater Smoking Restrictions to be Introduced' from the November edition of the FREE PRESS.)

Smokers! We are in dire straits! They are trying to take away our cigarettes! They are trying to restrict our freedoms! Have they read the first amendment to the constitution? Do they know that we have the freedom of speech? The freedom to breathe smoke out while we talk if we want to! Have they read the eight amendment to the constitution? We have the right to not be cruelly or unusually punished! And that is what this is! This is cruel and unusual! Having us smoke away from buildings! Setting up designated smoking areas! Taking cigarettes out of the bookstore! Health services setting up a table in Kline and urging us to quit and our friends to help us quit! How do they dare try to mandate us? This is Bard, this isn't Brigham Young University, it's Bard. Let this be our rallying cry!

But seriously, Smokers, let's think about this proposed smoking ban for a little bit. I've heard a lot of anger about this, from everyone including smokers and non-smokers, freshman and seniors. Most arguments range from something like, "Cigarettes are like water here! We need them to live" or "This is Bard, they can't do that" or

"This is just totalitarianism in action! Who do they think they are!" But let's be rational here, I'm going to speak as a smoker to all you Smokers out there. Reading the article in the FREE PRESS' November issue, it doesn't sound too awful. The thing they're asking us for the most is a tad bit of courtesy and a tad bit of respect. Respect for ourselves and respect for all those other people who don't smoke, and courtesy especially towards people who don't smoke.

Now, I'm not going to get up here and tout my infallibility as the perfect and most conscientious smoker, I'm certainly not, but this whole "smoking ban" business has got me to reassessing some of my habits. Looking around the campus, how many cigarette butts do you see? They're everywhere. Especially outside of buildings! I mean, I'm not perfect, I'll pitch a butt every once in awhile, hell, I pitch butts all the time, but I don't know why. There could be a perfectly good trash can or butt disposal unit right next to me and I'll still throw it on the ground and stomp it out. The saddest part is, though, that the people who have to pick those up are the Aramark workers (you know the ones, the ones who we keep complaining don't get paid enough and have no benefits but are perfectly content to let pick up our cigarette butts day in and day out?).

What else is this "smoking ban" going to affect? Where

we smoke. But maybe we need to reassess where we smoke now. Is it really nice of us to block all the doors into Kline when it's raining just so we get some cover? I mean, if we're being masochistic enough to smoke, we might as well be masochistic enough to get ourselves soaking wet. Same goes for the front doors to Olin, to Manor, to Ludlow, to the RKC, to the library. Would it really be so terrible if we moved away, down to the sidewalk, into the grass, away from the paths that people constantly walk on, away from the doorways? If I'm correct, second-hand smoke is kind of a big deal. Maybe asking a group of people if they wouldn't mind you smoking if you're all hanging out outside somewhere wouldn't be a bad idea. As much as we like to smoke, some people don't like smoke constantly chasing them around on this campus.

So, let this be our rallying cry in our fight to keep smoking: Courtesy. Be aware of your surroundings, put your butts where they belong, be nice to all those people who don't smoke. If they ask you nicely to move, nicely move. It's the least we can do. Because think of the realities, even if they do ban smoking, we'll still smoke. We'll smoke wherever we want, whenever we want, but maybe a rethinking of where exactly "wherever" is would just be a nice thing to do.

THINGS YOU CAN DO

by a free press staff, circa 3AM

1. Use repetitive to avoid being creative
- 1.a Take classes at Simon's Rock
- 1.b. Get paid to do nothing
- 1.c. Get 9-5 jobs in the real world
- 1.d. the Environment
2. Alternatively, misquote persons of good repute
- 3.
4. Put on plays at 4 AM
5. Sell your books for a fraction of the price you paid for them!
6. Misuse the alarming phrase "hit and run"
7. Cry in your midway/moderation board
8. Your mom.
9. Attempt to revive jokes from the '90's that were never funny in the first place
10. Get your decades wrong
11. Get your life wrong
12. Fail at life
13. Libel
14. Ignore copyright laws
15. Make a tumblr page called blank@

- bard
16. Dress up in tin foil and sit outside the campus center in 20 degree weather
15. Graduate and never leave the Bard area
16. Graduate and move to Brooklyn with all of your friends
17. Not graduate
18. Not graduate in four years
19. Max out your debit card on a flight to Yemen and never return
20. Create a website that reveals highly classified information and get arrested for rape, somewhat ambiguously
21. Cite sources that you've never actually read in research papers
22. Drink beer in the library (don't spill!)
23. Get denied from all of your classes
24. Read *Harry Potter* for class
25. Get snarky
26. Shave your armpits
27. Or not
28. Rot in hell

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ISO CULTURAL SHOW CONTROVERSY

Dear Bard community,

We hope many of you had a great time at the Cultural Show on November 20th and took a break from studying for a few hours to enjoy performances from around the world and the international food and party that followed in Kline. The Cultural Show is the biggest event on campus each year, filling all of Olin auditorium, so it should come as no surprise that we, the International Student Organization committee, worked very hard and invested a lot of time and energy to make this happen. We do not remind you of this because we want to be thanked but because we had to witness our hard work rudely disrespected on the day of the show. If you came to Olin that evening, you likely entered the auditorium with a flier in hand that accused the ISO committee of political censorship and urged you to disrupt the show in protest. This was a grave insult to us personally, but it was also profoundly disrespectful to all of the many students involved in making this show.

Let me use the beginning of this letter to outline how all of this started: in the beginning of trying to find performers, we actively encouraged the authors of the flier to submit a piece. They missed the sign up deadline, two days of auditions, and all subsequent rehearsals and their political statement was not important enough to them to show up any earlier than the very last rehearsal. At that rehearsal, they were completely unprepared and even admitted shortly after that this had only been their "first rehearsal." All seven of the nine ISO committee members present at the dress rehearsal unanimously decided not to include their piece because we all agreed it was too unfinished to be included so late in the production. None of our subsequent emails to them ever included any mention of the content of the piece, and since the show they have not

responded to our repeated invitations to come to our meetings.

All we have gotten in response are three framed letters of "apology" around campus that reinforced their earlier allegations that we did not include their piece because of mysterious political reasons. These letters ask, "If we can't learn to listen to and accept each other at Bard, where can we?" A good question to ask of someone who never spoke to or listened to us at any point in this entire process and instead chose to embark on an egotistical campaign of self-justification that accepted no views but his own. The letters also remind us, "Palestinians and Israelis do not dance every day. People struggle to support their families, put food on the table, and make sense of the chaos," a reminder needed because it is apparently our conviction that everywhere in the rest of the world, people have nothing better to do than dance and sing every day? We are somewhat baffled at how reminding us that "people struggle" clarifies at all why the authors of the flier never made it to any rehearsals, why they never managed to speak to us in person, or how their piece would have resolved any of the conflict to which they vaguely allude. They suggest that we tried to actively force them into a particular way of representing their culture, while really they chose how important their representation was to them by coming unrehearsed, unprepared, and at the last minute. It is unfortunate that we need to remind them of these basic facts so publicly, but we have no choice because they decided that the entire audience in Olin auditorium needed to be included in this.

But today we also have a different concern: to all of you who followed the instructions on the flier and turned away from the stage in "protest," may I ask you the following questions: did you know why you were getting

up? Did you read the flier? And if you actually read it, do you really think that a committee comprised of your fellow Bard students, many coming from countries with histories of political oppression and violence, would actually censor a piece on the grounds that it said that 'we should sort of talk to each other' and 'genocide is kind of bad?' And if you think this is really such a controversial text and that all of us would be up in arms trying to ban its dangerous and subversive message, it is our unfortunate duty to tell you that you are dangerously unaware of what is really considered worthy of political oppression today.

So, please, the next time a vague flier urges you to take a stand, think before you protest.

Best wishes,

The ISO committee

Irina Kalinka (President - Germany)

Jin Goh (Vice President I - Malaysia)

Siddhartha Baral (Vice President II - Nepal)

Jananie Ravi (Secretary - Sri Lanka)

Shivalika Kalra (Treasurer - India)

Yulia Genkina (Senior Representative - Russia)

Damianos Lazaridis Giannopoulos (Junior Representative - Greece)

Ammar Al-Rubaiay (Sophomore Representative - Iraq)

Eva Shreshta (Freshmen Representative - Nepal)

Also, the offer we made during the show still stands: If you have any questions about details, feel free to ask us.

To the ISO committee, the International Students, and all those that supported us at the cultural show:

We are writing this letter today first and foremost to apologize to all the international students who felt that we disrupted their performance. We were saying something positive, and did not mean to take attention away from the fine performances and the hard work of the international students.

Secondly we would like to express our utmost gratitude to all of the people who stood up and supported us at the ISO cultural show. We are both very touched to see that the majority of the audience connected with what we had to say.

Some people think that culture is about dance and music, but it is not the case for all people. Palestinians and Israelis do not dance everyday, people struggle to support their families, put food on the

table, and make sense of the chaos. Conflict is part of everyday life. These realities are unfortunately part of our cultures, and we felt the need to express it.

We felt our right to express it was denied. And most frustratingly, our message was neither one-sided nor desperate, but hopeful. Considering also the intense polarization of the Palestinian-Israeli discourse here on campus, we felt the need to emphasize the principle of co-existence. If we cannot learn to listen to and accept each other here at Bard, where can we?

Many of you who supported us at the cultural show may have been disappointed that we did not come on stage. We decided during the intermission that going on the stage, regardless of how many people stood up, would only exacerbate tension. Moreover, going on the stage and effectively declaring victory would have only served our own egos, and created an atmo-

sphere of us and them. That is exactly the antithesis of co-existence. We are sorry for the confusion it created.

Hopefully in the future, any international student will be able to express his or her culture; be it with hip hop music, popular or traditional dance or serious hopeful politics.

To all of the international students, please accept our apology. The cultural show is very important to all of us. To the ISO committee, congratulations on a successful show.

Mujahid Sarsur, Palestine

Yaniv Kot, Israel



MISSED CONNECTIONS/ SEEKING

I realized finally what I should have said to you when you were wearing that red coat and we were leaving class. Something about looking like a cardinal and would you like to have dinner with me? Bard mailbox 1911.

Lost: Sense of control over one's life. If found, please return to Campus box A76.

Seeking: Domesticated man to make me latkes at odd hours of the night. Hippies need not apply. Yarmulke a plus.

We had a whirlwind romance Sunday night. We sat together in the library, engaged in long-winded conversation, and grew to understand each other. And then you were gone. I don't think that we had enough time together before you were lost into the depths of my hard drive. Was it something I said? I know now that I made a lot of mistakes. Please come back. I can't stand the thought of going to class without you. Next time I promise to love you enough to autosave.

I met you at a party, well I guess it was more of a gathering of pupils, I mean it was a class presentation that I was giving, but it looked like you were having fun like someone might at a party. And I guess we met at the beginning of the semester since we have the class together but I wasn't so sure of your name for a while, but anyway you really seemed to enjoy my presentation and I was just wondering if maybe you'd want to get together and talk about it sometime. If you don't know what I'm talking about then I guess you didn't enjoy it as much as it looked like you were enjoying it I guess maybe you were just thinking about something else or maybe you'd just gotten a really nice text or something on your phone maybe from you're boyfriend okay never mind it's fine I'm really sorry have a great break.

You were wearing plaid at the party in Tivoli on Saturday. It was sexy. Very, very sexy.

CLASSIFIEDS

Do you love music and enjoy playing an instrument? Consider joining *The Upbeats*, and mentoring young children by teaching them the joy of music. For more information contact Lindsay Stanley at ls163@bard.edu

I'm looking to eventually direct a play, however I have no directing and little to no reputable theater experience. I was looking to perhaps find a senior who would let me shadow them while they maybe direct their own a play/senior project so I could learn about the directing process. I could perhaps be an Assistant TO a director. I could advertise my skills that may be of interest, i.e. I'm an excellent pack mule, and I make a mean cup of coffee. I could show up at rehearsals with warm baked goods. They may also find use for my extensive forensic background, i.e. if they're murdered by a crazy theater rival, I could catch the criminal with my mad skills. I'm actually serious about that last one. (CSI, eat your heart out.) E-mail rc7836@bard.edu if interested.

