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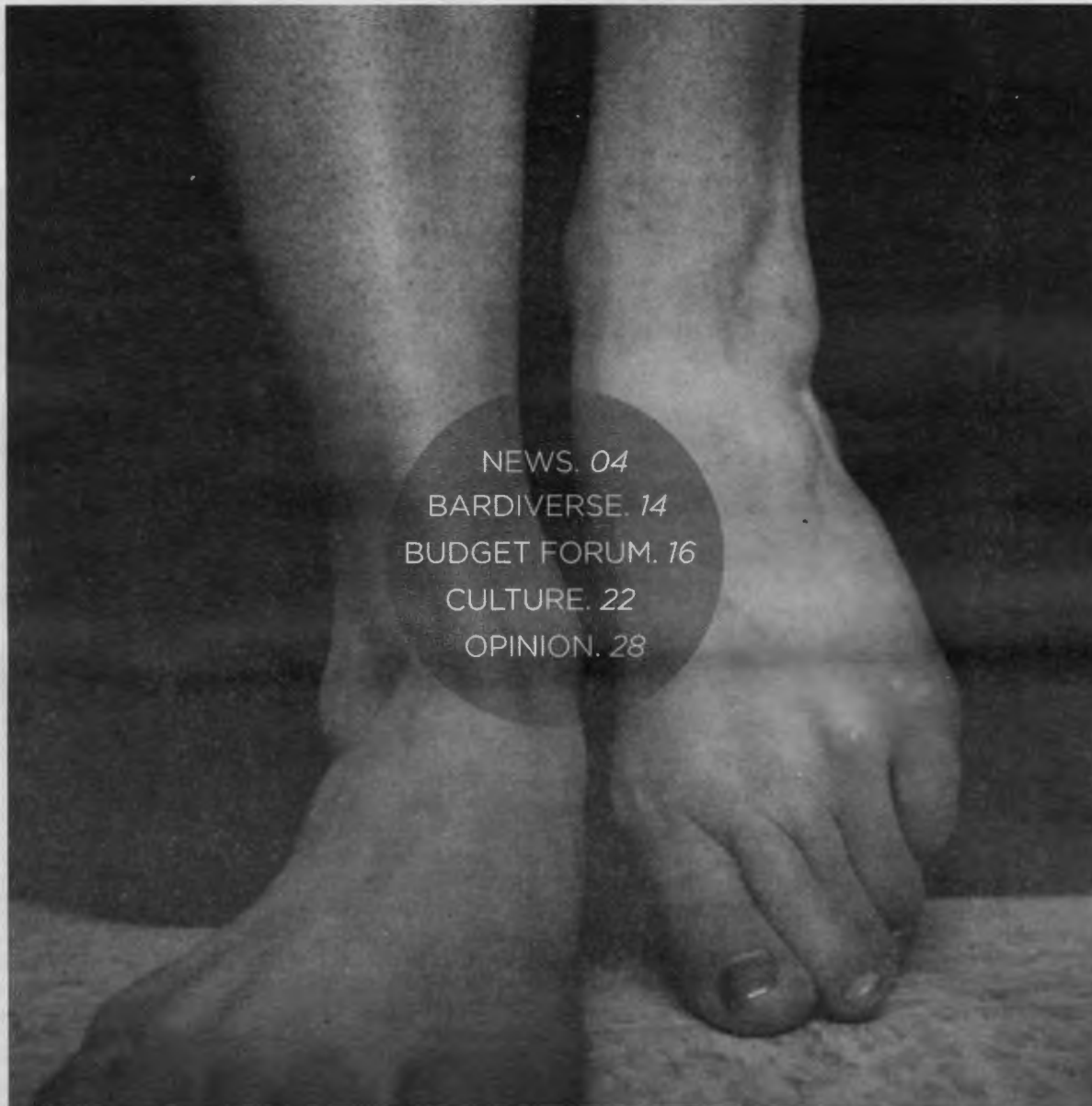
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This issue features the photo series "Spring" by junior maya sommer (p. 26)

[TERMS]

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Hi,

Last year was a great year for the Free Press. We printed more than 500,000 ad-free pages of our paper, circulated 20,000 digital copies, and hosted events and sponsored speakers at Bard. We expanded our production capabilities four times over, invested heavily in our online identity, and expanded our staff and student involvement to new levels. We gave voice to 83 writers through 235 articles across eight issues.

We think this year will be even greater.

As the Free Press enters its thirteenth year, we have brought on new writers, new photographers, and a new layout team—all to ensure that the Free Press can continue for years to come. We've developed new programs, including dialogues@bard, intended to give voice to minority students at Bard. And today we're excited to announce a brand new website. It has been carefully designed over the past six months, and we think that it will entirely change how students read the Free Press. With our new site, we will also continue to expand our online multimedia content and breaking news reporting.

Regardless of these improvements, the Free Press can't achieve anything without an active and open dialogue between our staff, our readers, and the college administration. We will continue to focus on an open and transparent process, and urge all to engage us through editorials, letters, and feedback. We love you all.

Except for the person who stole our computer. We really don't love you.

All the best,

The Editors



THE NEW KIDS ON CAMPUS

BY JP LAWRENCE



PREGAME

Eleven years ago, when Adam Turner came to Bard College to play basketball, the program was a laughingstock. In all of the '90s, the team had won two or more games in a season just four times. There was no scorer's table for games. The scoreboard didn't show how many timeouts each team had. There weren't even matching uniforms—there were three kinds of uniforms, all made by different companies.

"I'd have a maximum of three guys at practice," then-coach Chris Wood told ESPN's Howard Megdal. "We had to beg people just to show up and stand there as dummies so we could practice a pick-and-roll."

Today, Turner '06 is the men's basketball coach. His team boasts 18 members and plays in one of the most prestigious athletic conferences in NCAA Division III sports. His team's home court resides within a newly renovated athletic facility. And his school is now experiencing an influx of athletes, Turner said, as Bard recruited 117 student-athletes for this year, or 20 percent of the first-year class.

At another school, this number would be met with a shrug. But some at Bard hold tightly to the college's reputation as one of the most liberal of liberal arts schools—a place to think, not to cheer.

These students fear any increase in the status of athletics at Bard. They say that an emphasis on sports detracts from the college's academic mission. They say the incoming group of recruited first-years do not look like Bard students. And they say that the recruited first-years represent a threat to the Bard culture they want.

Coaches and administrators, on the other hand, say that the number of athletes at Bard is rising organically, in response to student demand. Student-athletes, for some reason or another, now want to play sports at Bard College, and if they do, they have to go through the same admissions process as everyone else.

No one is saying that increased recruiting at a small NCAA Division III College will one day create a Penn State on the Hudson. But the portrait that emerges is one of a college in transition, of a school moving into the complex whirlpool of college recruiting, and of a student body with differing and competing visions of what Bard is, and most importantly, whom it is meant for.

FIRST QUARTER

This is the point where I tell you I came to Bard because of its weirdness, that I wanted to go to a liberal arts school with no football team and no fraternities, and that I joined the cross-country team my first year and am now a captain.

In many ways, I came to Bard for the same reasons as Miles Berson. Berson, a senior,

said he came to Bard to get away from a culture of athletics. Berson grew up in Madison, Wis., four or five blocks from where the University of Wisconsin Badgers football team plays. Madison is the kind of town where everyone is a football fan, and Berson said he heard the announcer on game day whenever he opened his window.

Walking with Berson, the photo and classics major talked about the difficulty of switching his "headspace" from sculpture to fine art photography, and of Herodotus and the invention of the history, and of corresponding scenes in the Odyssey and the Aeneid where both Ulysses and Aeneas wake up on the shore.

Berson told me he applied to Bard for a reason: the school promised him a place for "weird kids with a capital W" — a haven for artists and lit majors and dancers, not "jocks and preps." Berson has nothing against sports, or athletes in general — it's

gling, Schmidlein said, and yet the athletic department expands.

There are plenty of schools with overbearing athletic cultures, Schmidlein said. Bard doesn't have to be one of them.

Second quarter

Berson and other students said the speed of Bard's transformation astonished them. How did the college recruit so many athletes? Where were these students coming from? Why are they only now deciding to come here?

The answer, Bill Kelly, Bard's Director of Recruiting, said, starts with the athletic department's focus on recruiting. Coaches simply expend more time and effort now.

Two years ago, Bard left the Skyline Conference and joined the Liberty League, an athletic conference of elite New York liberal arts schools. In a *Free Press* interview last

to that level of excellence."

The recruiting process begins in the spring of a student's junior year of high school. Coaches find candidates after going to athletic showcase camps and to online databases. After looking at reams of stats and unofficial transcripts, coaches find students with GPAs matching Bard's entrance requirements.

Turner said the next step is contacting students — hundreds of them — via flyers and phone calls: "This is how the phone call works: 'I'm Adam Turner from Bard College. I saw you play at this event. I really liked your game. I saw that you have a 3.6 GPA; is that right? (I always confirm it). And what did you get on your SATs?'"

Each initial phone call takes approximately 20 minutes, and Turner said last year, he called more than 300 students. That's 100 hours of work just to see if a student is *maybe kinda sorta* interested, not to mention follow-up calls, calls to parents, putting the student in touch with the admissions office and professors, and personally taking visiting students on campus tours.

If it seems like a lot of work, it is. While recruiting, coaches must whittle a forest down to a few usable toothpicks, a process that Tucker Kear, coach of the men's lacrosse team, knows all too well. Kear basically recruited an entire team since being hired last August. The numbers: 1,000 candidates or so at first. From this pool, he called 400 to 500 of them. From that pool, 85 students visited campus, 47 of those students applied to Bard, and 29 of those students were accepted. Of those 29 students, just 17 joined the team.

None of these students, Kear said, deluded themselves into thinking Bard is some kind of lacrosse powerhouse. Some were attracted by the prospect of playing in the Liberty League, home to some of the top lacrosse teams in the country, some were

"under the radar," and some simply wanted to come to Bard.

All of them, Turner and Kear stressed, have to go through the same admissions process as everyone else. A lot of their picks get rejected every year.

Remember the 300 students Turner said he called? Just 10 were accepted and joined the team.

"I think at some point in time, coaches started to recruit here," Turner said. "I can't tell you why or how that happened. To my knowledge there was never any big, 'you must now recruit' declaration. Things just got more and more serious, and the players that were here were demanding more kids on the team, and the coaches go, 'okay, let's recruit.'"

Turner added: "A lot of the coaches who did not want that kind of experience kind of just left, on their own."



just that he thinks there are other schools for athletes and their needs.

"I see a lot of kids who I never would have pegged for Bard students in the past," Berson said. "If you see a crowd of baseball players all walking together, there's a certain sports culture that exists, and it does its own thing, and I just don't think that it's particularly similar to the culture I was promised at Bard."

[Bard] is now experiencing an influx of athletes, Turner said, as Bard recruited 117 student-athletes for this year, or 20 percent of the first-year class.

Kurt Schmidlein '13, captain of the men's soccer team his senior year, had many of the same concerns. Schmidlein, who last year served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Bard Free Press*, told me he decided to attend Bard for its academics. Sports was a bonus.

Since his senior year, Schmidlein has become disenchanted with Bard's "insatiable need" to grow its athletic programs. Many of the smaller varsity programs are strug-

November, Director of Athletics Kris Hall said that to stay competitive, coaches are constantly in recruiting mode.

"We were recruiting when we were in the Skyline," Hall said, "but we knew that we had to attract higher caliber student-athletes to run with some of these nationally ranked programs [in the Liberty League]."

Kelly, who also serves as the women's soccer coach, became an official liaison be-

tween the admissions and athletic departments at the time. For the last two years, he has helped coaches who are less experienced with the recruiting process.

"With this growth of pursuing excellence, we have to compete at the level we need to in order to be successful; we have to match the level of competition," Kelly said. "We have to have students that have the experience, that are going to be able to contribute

CONT. ON PAGE 6



THE NEW KIDS ON CAMPUS

[cont. from page 5]

HALFTIME

Before we progress, we ought to hammer out some details. Bard is a Division III school, which means that neither the college nor private donors can offer athletic scholarships. Schools in the division must have at least 10 sports, and no part of their financial aid budget may be set aside for athletics.

At Bard, athletics takes up less than 1.4 percent of the budget of the college, said Taun Toay, Associate Vice President at Bard. After removing coaching and administrative staff, spending on athletics makes up less than 0.7 percent of the budget.

"I have not looked at our peers in some time, but I am fairly confident to guess that this is the lowest of our peer groups and pretty certain that it is the lowest of the Liberty League," Toay said.

Still, students like Berson and Schmidlein are leery of Bard becoming ensnared by the multi-billion dollar world of collegiate sports. In the course of our interview, Berson showed me a Nikon D800 digital camera, outfitted with a Voightlander 28mm lens. The photo department last year bought four such D800s (\$2799) plus lenses like the

to help her de-stress after a long day in the library. DeFabo hates losing, but she fears that both coaches and athletes at Bard are being pushed away from sports as recreation.

"Suddenly, when there's pressure on the team to do better, be better, compete with these heavy-hitting teams, then it's not fun anymore," DeFabo said. "Then, it's something that takes over my to-do list. I *must* workout at the gym. I *must* get stronger. I *must* get better. I want to be the best that I can be, but at some point, it's not fun anymore."

For instance, the women's tennis team does not make cuts, DeFabo said, and every year newbies want to join the team. Fred Feldman, her coach, always welcomes them, and if there's not room on the court during practice, he'll work with them afterward.

DeFabo fears that the hours coaches will need to spend on recruiting better athletes will take away from the time they can spend helping the athletes they have.

"I just don't want the athletic department to grow so much that they're unable to giving me the same nurturing

'I think at some point in time, coaches started to recruit here,' Turner said. 'I can't tell you why or how that happened. Things just got more and more serious, and the players that were here were demanding more kids on the team, and the coaches go, "okay, let's recruit."

Voightlander (\$629) and the Carl Zeiss Distagon 35mm (\$1117) for seniors like him to borrow.

"It might not happen this year, or in five years, or in 10 years," Berson said, "but if we're all about sports, all the time, who knows? Maybe someone decides we don't have enough money to buy cameras for the photo seniors."

THIRD QUARTER

Julia DeFabo is a senior and has been a tennis player at Bard for four years. DeFabo was a four-year starter for her high school tennis team, too. There, she saw friendships broken as people fought for coveted spots on the team roster. Several schools recruited her to play tennis, but DeFabo came to Bard to escape the culture of win, win, win.

In her opinion, the changes happening at Bard are detrimental to the student athlete experience she signed up for. Tennis ought to be fun, something

love that they have given me in the past four years," DeFabo said.

Some athletes, however, welcome greater competition. Christian Letourneau, captain of the men's soccer team and the only remaining four-year player on the team, said he always wished he could have had more competition.

Letourneau recruited himself to Bard. He contacted the coach and came to Bard because of the writing faculty, because of Bard's planned move to the Liberty League, and because of a recruiting visit that ended with him watching non-stop Beyoncé music videos at a house party in Tivoli.

What Letourneau didn't expect was that he'd start as a first-year, and then be the first name on the roster four years in a row. Soccer is a holy thing to him — his mode of personal expression — and he said he wishes there had been a more competitive environment on the team, that had been enough students for cuts. "I've never had to look over my shoulder," Letourneau said. "My personal develop-



photo by miles lim

ment has been mitigated by the fact that I haven't had any competition on the team. And I regret that — I felt that was missing in my Bard experience."

Letourneau invites me to meet some recruits at a bonfire that weekend. There, I meet nine high schoolers, all gathered around the fire and eating pizza on a Saturday night. I ask simple questions to students: where are you from, what do you think of studying? One student wants to major in finance or business, or maybe become a lawyer. Others want to study environmental science. I ask one student, and he bellows, "I don't fucking know." Then for a lark, I ask him for his thoughts on Syria; he looks at me, his eyes bulging and incredulous, and says, "That's no question for a bonfire!"

I walk away and think, when did *these* people start coming to Bard?

FOURTH QUARTER

Mary Backlund has been working admissions at Bard for three decades. Everyone with a passion ought to be able to exercise their talents, Backlund said, and everybody at Bard, except for conservatory students, goes through the exact same admissions process.

Why student-athletes are coming to Bard now, I ask. Part of it, she responds, is simply greater awareness. Student-athletes can't consider Bard if they don't know about it; after all, and perhaps guidance counselors are now directing kids toward Bard for sports when they didn't think of it as an option before.

The common application, in particular, changed the game of who gets into college. Students can now apply to dozens of schools at a time. Before, only people who already knew about Bard and its reputation applied to the school.

The other part is that more students are applying to colleges, and these students are doing more and more extracurriculars to get in. The rise in student-athletes is simply a part of this larger trend.

Helicopter parents are investing in their children, enrolling them in activities and sending them to camps once they are knee high, Backlund said. Participation in high school sports has increased for last 24 years, according to a survey by the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Backlund said she thinks that all the hours that the coaches invest in the recruiting process is crazy — but they only do what they think is the industry standard, what they have to do to compete with the other coaches, also recruiting, out there.

Today, Bard coaches spend hours on the phone, all in an effort to compete. They are part of an industry now where Bard competes against other schools, coaches compete against other coaches, and students compete against other students, with all parties constrained by the standards of competition.

After years on the sidelines, Bard is now part of the recruiting game.

POST GAME

I met Elias Cottingham, a first-year, as he was exiting the library on this way to practice. He held a stick in his hand and wore New Paltz Lacrosse on his shirt.

Cottingham said he knows that athletes are treated differently at Bard — Bard is not a sporty school, he said. This difference is present, but he's never felt it.

Still, Cottingham said he knew Bard is a place to think. Talking to Cottingham makes me realize that soccer recruits I had judged earlier were young kids — high schoolers with their identities in flux.

Berson and DeFabo are confident that soon, first-years like Cottingham will either become Bardians, or transfer. "This happens every year," Defabo said. "The freshman class is so mainstream." She scoffed. "They're going to turn into Bardians in a semester."

Letourneau, too, has high hopes that Bard can survive students who dress and talk in a slightly different way.

"I was sitting in Kline, and these lax bros were talking about their final L&T reading," Letourneau said, "and one of them was talking about the dope clarinet solo that one of the kids had played in collaboration with a poem that was being read, and he was totally stoked about it — he was totally serious."

"Yeah, he talked a little differently about it than a hipster would," Letourneau said, "but I was stoked. I wanted to walk over there, and pinch his cheeks, and say, 'you'll be okay.'"

Backlund remembers the hand wringing that occurred in the '80s, when Bard began requiring a math "Q" requirement for graduation. High school counselors were shocked at the idea that the dancers and painters they had previously directed to Bard were now required to take math classes.

Last time anyone checked, Bard as a concept survived.





photo by miles lin

BARD GIVETH & TAKETH A SKATE RAMP

BY NATHAN SUSMAN

It's an unusually cold Thursday evening in September, and club budgets are due in one hour. Outside the Campus Center's computer lab, Bard Skate Club President Matt Dalrymple, senior, sits cross-legged, clutching a white piece of paper, explaining how he intends to get his club's ramp back in the hands of its skaters.

"I'm hoping that the convocation fund will help us out," he says. "Then, I'm going to do a friendly amendment to see which clubs want to back us, not so much to raise money, but to show that students are really behind this project. From there, I really want to start a petition or something."

That Dalrymple is in this situation comes as something of a shock to him. He, along with seniors Gabe Adels, Adam Skinner, Cyrigue Dessauce, and a revolving group of 15 other club members spent hundreds of hours—and \$5,000 from the convocation and emergency funds—building the Bard Skate Club's ramp back in the summer of 2011. Located in the unused patio space outside SMOG, they intended it to serve as an activity center and hangout space for the college's small but active population of skateboarders.

After they finished construction, the ramp regularly served 20 to 25 skaters on any given day of the week, not to mention "the people who would just have a picnic next to it on a sunny day," Adels said.

As the ramp's popularity grew, its reputation did, too. Through word of mouth, people outside of Bard began to seek out and skate at Bard's park. "I've met people who have come all the way from Connecticut or Massachusetts just to skate the ramp," Dalrymple said. "It's like a big deal." Whether they found out about it from siblings schooling at Bard, or friends in touring bands who play at SMOG, people flocked to the park.

But this fall, returning students eager to carve up the half-pipe were confronted, instead, with its absence. The administration divided the ramp in half and moved it to an undisclosed location on campus.

Cutting the ramp in half didn't mean destroying it. "We built it to be moveable, and to be taken apart to some degree," said Adels, who had built a ramp prior to the one

he helped design for Bard Skate Club. "And we hope that they come through in their guarantee to help us out [with reconstructing it]."

Bard administrators cite insurance troubles, saying that they got a serious threat from their insurance broker who demanded that they make the skate ramp unusable immediately, Dalrymple said.

During an inspection of the campus, Maggs & Associates Insurance, who have worked with Bard for 20 years, cited several issues they had with the park. Some of these issues included a lack of controlled entryway, insubstantial safety signage, a desire for guardrails and peer supervisors, and low ceiling clearance.

Other issues were also brought to attention. A contingent of local youths were said to be using the park during the summer, when Bardians were not present. The administration was also uneasy about the proximity of the park to parties and oft-inebriated skate ramp users. Bard administration says that it was the insurance company's

'I've met people who have come all the way from Connecticut or Massachusetts just to skate the ramp,' Dalrymple said. 'It's like a big deal.'

pressure on them to take direction on the matter, or else face sharply increased premiums, that caused the park's closure.

Maggs & Associates was not available for comment.

When asked why he neglected to clear the skate ramp with the insurance company before constructing it at SMOG, Vice President of Administration Jim Brudvig didn't have a firm response.

"I don't know why [the insurance company] was not aware of it. I'm not so sure I didn't discuss it with them," he said. "I don't remember. I don't have any paper that indicates [whether or not it was discussed]."

Fortunately for the skating community, the Skate Club and the Bard administration are working to find a new home for the skate ramp. The home will be one with the modifications required by Maggs & Associates. Instead of

SMOG, Dalrymple and the skate club are pushing to reconstruct the ramp near the gym's tennis courts, though this idea has not yet been cleared with the college. Brudvig's proposal includes "a pavillion-like structure, with a fence, or walls."

"It's probably going to look kind of ugly," Brudvig added, "so putting it in a place where it would be usable but not highly visible would be key."

Brudvig is optimistic about the expedience of the project's completion. He thinks the ramp will be reconstructed sometime this fall.

"I can't predict exactly, but if the money's right for the materials, and [we have] an architect to design the pavillion, and we have all the other things in a row, it shouldn't take too long," Brudvig said.

When asked whether or not the Bard administration would provide labor to help construct the pavillion and put the ramp back together, Brudvig said that he would "absolutely join that conversation."

The office of the Speaker of the Student Body released the convocation budget on the evening of Sept. 15. When Dalrymple submitted the budget, he asked for \$7,000 from the convocation fund. Increasingly strapped for cash due to a decline in alumni donations, the fund granted the club only \$2,500.

Dalrymple plans to meet with Brudvig and Speaker Rosette Cirillo, senior, to negotiate more money. "Right now I am working with student government to show the administration that this is a project students really do care about, and that they need to help fund," Dalrymple said.

At Budget Forum, students demonstrated exactly that. Dalrymple said Skate Club raised "a couple hundred dollars, but not nearly enough to fund the new structure."

For die-hard skaters in the Bard community, failing to bring the ramp back is not an option. The club remains positive about its chances of achieving its goal.

"One thing about skating that's really cool is that you make your own spots with what you have," Adels said. "But nothing beats having a really sick half-pipe to just go to and spend all day at."

A COLLEGE IN BARD'S BACKYARD

A TINY STORY ON FAITH

BY NAOMI LACHANCE

Chaplain Drissa Kone came to Barrytown College from a chaplaincy at Queen's Hospital in New York. He wants to help students with their spiritual and emotional lives so that they are happier and more successful, within the body and soul. He is a tall man, with a broad smile and a caring demeanor.

Kone came to his Unificationist faith from a desperate situation. Kone was raised in the Ivory Coast and as a Muslim. He looked at me and drew a map of Africa on the chalkboard to explain the West African country's complicated situation. He mapped out Muslim influence in the North and the Christian influence in the South.

When ethnic war broke out between the North and South, Kone was arrested and put in jail because he was misperceived as a soldier.

"In jail, I saw Jesus in a vision. He said, 'If you follow me, you will be saved.'"

The next day, Kone was set free. He came to the United States in November 2008.

"I'm sure that God helped me through this," Kone said.

The family is at the core of society for Unificationists. Kone views everyone as God's children, and views intercultural marriage with strong families as a catalyst for peace. He and his wife, who is Mongolian, have a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter.

Kone's faith makes him happy.

He gestured to me: "This is my sister, even if we've never seen each other before."

BY NAOMI LACHANCE

A poster on the wall at Barrytown College of the Unification Theological Seminary points out that Yale, Princeton, and Harvard all started out as seminaries with fewer than 10 students. Barrytown, it says, could be next.

For its first semester ever, the college that's a 15-minute bike ride from Bard has 20 students enrolled. They're mainly freshmen, but some are transfers from colleges including Tufts and Lehigh. It's such a discrete, isolated place that when I asked a faculty member for directions, he said, "You're from the *Bard Free Press*, aren't you?"

The college is guided by the vision of a small school where students of different faiths can study together. This year is Barrytown's first as an undergrad college, and almost all of the students are Unificationist. The college didn't receive accreditation until last February, so, with a late start to the admissions game, it mainly solicited Unificationist students. They pay only half the \$24,000 tuition.

The college has had a quiet start. Before it earned approval as an official institution, it was not allowed to advertise or recruit. But the new school is off to an optimistic start.

Students take five classes for a 15-credit semester. The college offers one major, world

religions and philosophy, and three minors: human development and family studies, media arts, and business.

"It's an intentional community of people exploring these topics together," said Stephen Murray, Dean and Associate Professor of Theology.

Freshman Hitoka Sato didn't want to go to a big school. Originally from Washington state, she learned about Barrytown during a Unificationist youth mission trip to New York.

The campus has long been in the domain of the Unificationist faith. The Unification church, under the leadership of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, purchased the Barrytown campus in 1974. It became home to the Unification Theological Seminary and the lead seminary of the Unification Church. The church was founded by Moon in 1954 in South Korea after he reported that Jesus appeared to him in a vision and asked him to do his work. The religion is based on the Bible's teachings, and views God as the embodiment of both a mother and a father.

Sato wasn't sure how to exactly describe her faith. "We are all God's children," she said, and added, "it's about living for the sake of other people."

The college's curriculum is based on interfaith communication. Every morning, students study texts together from Christianity, including Unificationism, as well as from Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. They meet in a prayer room that has symbols from all five religions.

Religious thought informs the secular curriculum. Sato is enrolled in English Composition, Computer Basics, Critical Thinking, Great Minds of East and West, and Music Theory.

Murray's background is in the Baptist faith, and this is his first experience with Unificationism.

"It's interesting to watch students developing in ways I hadn't expected," Murray said. "They're more interested in having close-knit community than going out to the mall or the movies."

A popular club on campus is a singing club, where students sing top 40 songs as well as hymns and chants.

Sato, so far, has been having a good freshman year.

"It's pretty comfortable for me," she said, "We're close-knit. We eat together, we study together."

COMMON

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The new First-Year Seminar (FYSEM) curriculum, now called the Common Course, was introduced this fall after a summer of discussions and brainstorming sessions.

The difference between FYSEM and the Common Course is the organization of the readings. To select and sequence the texts, professors Robert Weston and Cole Heinowitz, the creators of the curriculum and new directors of Common Course, consulted colleagues in all critical programs to identify junctures in the history of thought. Once these were distinguished, the directors added texts that would supply students with the background needed to better understand the critical ones.

"This process involves compromise and refinement," Weston said.

There were two competing visions for the Common Course among the faculty. Some saw it as a great books course in which each work stands on its own and is encountered on its own terms, merits, philosophical importance, and influence. Others thought it should trace intellectual history.

"When I first started teaching at Bard, I thought I had to master every text before I could dare to approach the subject in the classroom with students," Heinowitz said. "One of the joys of the Common Course is that your professors get to keep learning. It's a collaboration and exploration."

Weston and Heinowitz tried to synthesize the two views: students will look at each text as a work of art and thought, but will also consider how it is oriented in the general history of thought and as ground for their future studies.

"We are trying to build in conversations across massive swaths of time that are still occurring between contemporary and ancient texts," said Matthew Mutter, a Common Course professor. Mutter intends on helping students see the impact these texts have on modern understanding.

According to Weston, establishing the new Common Course curriculum was and is a "collegial process" approached through extensive discussion and conversation.

"One of the most rewarding processes at the college is to think seriously with colleagues about what it is at this particular point in our own institutional and national history that we should be reading with our students," Weston said. "It was a tremendous opportunity to think about the big questions."

The course title "Common Course" actually preceded "First Year Seminar." The return to the original name was largely based on a welcoming lecture given by Hannah Arendt's husband, Heinrich Blücher, in 1952:

"A lot of things [Blücher said] in these lectures resonated with us," Weston said.

The renaming recognizes the course's importance to the Bard educational tradition. It emphasizes the universal hope for the course to be a shared pursuit among all students at Bard developing an intellectual community, Mutter said.

"The task is to major in life," Heinowitz said, quoting Blücher. On the first day of class, the poet and philosopher asked his students ques-

tions like, Why are we here? Why is this a required course? What does it mean to enter higher education? Heinowitz and Weston are interested in posing these questions at the very beginning of the college experience.

"I don't think it's dangerous," Heinowitz said. "It's empowering. Let's work with the criticisms in order to really be in the classroom as a full person, not just an information sponge."

The symposia associated with the course have also been restructured. Traditionally, they were a series of lectures, screenings, and panels that supplemented the core readings. Now, the focus is on the students. The context from which these influential texts emerge is entirely student-generated.

"We are simply trying to increase the variety of work and complexion that's being done," Mutter said. "By exercising the brain in different ways there will be other kinds of outlets of creativity that may make it easier to go back and tackle the heavy reading."

Heinowitz and Weston, with colleagues across the program, created sets of topics that fall under three main categories: Science and Technology, Culture and Society, and Arts. For each symposium, half of the freshman class will present, working in cross-sectional groups that will meet with a faculty mentor from one of the three fields of research.

"We want this to be first and foremost something that students themselves are interested in. It's very free. The whole breadth of the context in which these cortex emerge will be palpable," said Weston.

The first round of presentations are scheduled for October 27 during family weekend, and the second round for December 8. It will be a vibrant atmosphere of intellectual exchange, Heinowitz and Weston say, jokingly naming it an "Occupy Olin" day.

With this new symposium, they hope to create a bridge between the Language and Thinking program and the rest of the college experience. Weston said they want to carry the spirit of experimentation, innovation and invention that is fostered in L&T forward into the Common Course.

"The whole time I've been here, students would go through L&T and be exposed to radical, out of the box pedagogy and then they would go to FYSEM and have this kind of vertigo," Heinowitz explained.

The directors are trying to move the Common Course away from prescribed forms of expression. The main goal is to stay open to experimentation. The professors hope to tap into students' skills and passions and exercise them in different forms.

"Developing this course has made both of us really rethink what can happen in college," Heinowitz said. "One of the biggest effects that this has had on my own teaching is that it has encouraged me to put more responsibility on students to generate their own knowledge and take ownership of the fact that you chose to be here."



CAMPUS CHANGES GEARED TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

BY ABBY ZIEVE

Last summer, as Bard students went home to their families or off to various internships, hard workers of a different sort took their place on campus. These men and women were not writing 10-page papers on gender norms in 18th-century American literature. They were beginning work on the number of campus projects that happened in the absence of the some 2,000 students who are now reaping the improvements' benefits.

Three of the biggest improvements carried out this summer were upgrades to the Tewksbury dormitory, renovations to Kline Commons and the beginnings of a solar field behind the Stevenson Gymnasium, all of which were undertaken by outside contractors. The choice to outsource these projects, according to Jim Brudvig, Vice President for Administration, was made for a need for manpower. Although Bard's Buildings and Grounds crews take care of most of the campus' mechanical and construction needs throughout the year and have similar expertise to these other companies, the size of their staff is too small.

The main attraction of Tewksbury's makeover is the new windows throughout the building. Brudvig, who spearheaded all three of these projects, says that the windows serve both an aesthetic and prag-

matic purpose. They give the dorm what he describes as a dramatic improvement from the way it looked before, and create a unified look to the entire quad, since the windows were chosen to match those of the surrounding dorms.

Along with the benefit of a facelift for the dormitory, the windows will also help to seal in conditioned air during the winter to keep the resident's rooms warm during the dark New York winters.

The second of the large projects this summer was taken on for practicality. Kline's 20-year-old refrigeration system was gutted out and replaced with all new equipment, including brand new refrigeration and walk-in freezers.

Sustainability was a key component in the Kline project, an effort which was piloted by Dan Smith, Bard's Energy Efficiency Coordinator. His endeavors to make this an energy saving project led to a creative utilization of the refrigeration system's energy outputs.

"When you have refrigeration, you are taking heat that would be inside the refrigerator and just moving it out of that space," Smith explains, "most of the time you'll see fans on tops of buildings, and they're just ejecting hot air out into the atmosphere. So what we did was, we worked to design

a system that instead of ejecting the hot air, would eject the heat into a hot water loop, which would then go into our hot water tanks." The waste from the refrigeration system is now being used to heat Bard's domestic hot water system, achieving a 40-degree rise in temperature from what would have just gone into the air.

The second part of the Kline kitchen restoration was a new and more efficient dish machine that uses dramatically less hot water. According to Smith, the new machine will use 950,000 fewer gallons of water per year than the old one. In its entirety, the cost of the project summed up to an estimated \$1 million, for which a sizable loan was taken out. According to Brudvig, however, the cost is justified by the efficiency of the systems. This method of payment sets the Kline renovations apart from the Tewksbury and solar field efforts. The funds, paid for out of the Bard Project money, were drawn primarily out of tuition, room and board, philanthropy, and grants.

In keeping with the energy efficient theme of Kline's upgrade, the solar field behind Stevenson Athletic Center, is estimated to be completed by mid to late October.

Smith estimates that the field will produce the equivalent kilowatt-hours of electricity

that 30 average American households produce in a year. While this is an incredible amount of energy and an important step towards sustainability on Bard's campus, it doesn't come close to covering the energy needs of the school.

"[The solar field] is really a demonstration for students and faculty that the solar business has a long way to go," Brudvig said. "We'd have to cover the entire campus in order to power what we need every year in terms of energy."

Progress in energy efficiency is not the only thing Bard has to look forward to in changes around campus. Plans are underway for new dorms, modeled after those in Village A, to replace the temporary trailers, Catskill and Hudson. The two temporary dorms, according to Brudvig, will be gone by next year as construction on the new building, set to house 80 beds, goes underway.

As these beds are being added, the 10 beds in Sawkill dormitory, one of Cruger Village's many buildings, will be taken out of commission and reconceived as a student space.

The role of this new space is still undecided.

NEWS-BRIEFS

A TOTALLY UNBIASED ARTICLE ABOUT
CAPTURE THE FLAG

BY NAOMI LACHANCE, MVP

A well-intentioned nerd-against-nerd jaunt ended in the creation of mortal enemies on Friday, Sept. 19. The Bard Free Press had graciously accepted an invitation to play against Lux Literary Magazine.

The games began a little after dusk at Blithewood.

After several minutes of play, and several failed attempts at capturing the flag, and several jail breaks, the Lux players audaciously moved their flag closer to the, er, line of scrimmage or what-

ever it's called.

Editor-in-Chiefs Rebecca Swanberg and J.p. Lawrence ran for the flag. The Lux staff attacked.

Meanwhile, in the shadows, News Editor Naomi LaChance crept toward the flag. In a valiant flash of speed, she snatched the flag and returned in glory to the home side.

A confusion over Lux's written rules, as well as a lack of referee, have lead a controversy over who actually won. Then a twitter war ensued. Sorry about that. We love you, Lux.

CRANNA CRACKS DOWN

BY DUNCAN BARILE

The village of Tivoli is cracking down on those who do not obey village ordinances. In a press release issued by Mayor Bryan Cranna on September 5, he warned renters to obey village law to the letter, or else be prepared to "face the consequences." The mayor noted that he had already arrested malefactors in the first week of term, in what seemed like an attempt to prove that he would match rhetoric with action.

Proclaiming his policy to be "zero tolerance," Cranna specifically pointed to the ordinances regarding noise, mass gatherings, open alcohol containers, property maintenance and trespassing. The regulations forbid noise louder than 50 decibels (the volume of a quiet conversation or a refrigerator, according to Galen Carol Audio) between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.; "shouting,

yelling, calling, or hooting at any time or place so as to annoy ... a reasonable person of normal sensibilities;" assembly of 50 or more people in a public place without a permit; and possessing or imbibing from an open container of alcohol in a public place or a vehicle, among other strictures. The list of ordinances in their entirety is available for perusal on the village's website, tivolinyny.org.

The identity of the village is as both a college town and a multigenerational hamlet. Cranna says he aims to maintain harmony through these village ordinances—he has been knocking on people's doors handing out notices.

"We want people to live here, but you have to obey the ordinances," Cranna said at the Board of Trustees meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 18.

CAT FOUND IN CATSKILL

BY NAOMI LACHANCE

A fire drill on Thursday, September 19 revealed that a freshman was keeping a cat in her dorm room.

WHY DON'T WE GET
LABOR DAY OFF?

BY LUCAS OPGENORTH

Most Bard students have surely wondered why we celebrate Labor Day by reading through syllabi rather than bagguing, camping, or chillin' at the beach like the rest of America. But like other mildly inconvenient Bard peculiarities, no one really cares enough to find out why. Except me. I sought out the man with the plan, Registrar Peter Gadsby, to get to the bottom of this. As it turns out, the answer is not that interesting.

"We're always in session on Labor Day and when school is in session we don't take public holidays off," he explained. "We have a 15-week semester, and it needs to end in time for people to get home for the holidays. As far as I know that's the only rationale. And it's not really been an issue."

While Fall Break does align with Columbus Day,

the college also holds class on Veteran's Day and Washington's Birthday. According to Gadsby, taking Labor Day off would mean that the college would have to add another Monday to make up for lost time. Also, starting school earlier would bump the beginning of L&T back, making first-year students arrive at an unreasonably early date.

Bard's Buildings and Grounds workers get to enjoy a day of rest, but the college's faculty and administrators (and of course students) have a normal workday. As compensation, Bard's office workers receive a block of off-time when the college is closed between Christmas and New Years. Thus far, the college hasn't encountered any problems regarding this scheduling policy.

So there you go. Like I said, not that interesting.

CONVOCAATION FUND IS SUPER, SUPER LOW

This year's allocation of club funds has a problem: the convocation fund is the smallest it has been in five years. As a result, clubs have smaller budgets, and the Student Body Association is leading a proposition to raise the student activities fee.

Students have paid an annual student activities fee of \$85 since 2009. That money goes into a pool for the students to spend, known as the Convocation Fund. The Convocation Fund is the smallest it has been in five years, with a budget of \$125,000.

"It is not that there are more clubs or clubs are getting bigger budgets; it's simply that clubs are doing a better job of spending their budgets," said Chair of the Fiscal Committee, Carter Vanderbilt.

Clubs are more involved in student life, Vanderbilt said, and so they're spending a lot of their budgets.

Treasurer of the Student Body Ethan Solomon explained the tight funds: "We have 150 average clubs and the current fund averages to just under \$1,000 per club, which when you consider [Bard] has clubs like student government spending \$2,500 just for the *New York Times* alone, it's not enough."

Clubs have been spending their budgets with this vigor for the past four semesters. The number of clubs has more or less stayed the same, but they're spending more than the fees provide.

"People are just being more active, more involved, more engaged," Vanderbilt said.

The allocation of funds has long come to a head at Budget Forum, where clubs ask for extra funds. This year, Budget Forum went on into the night. Dozens of clubs asked for money to skate, gallop, sing, pursue their individual passions.

Vanderbilt is spearheading the plan to increase the convocation fund with an online vote. As of print time, about 100 students responded in favor of raising the student activities fee by \$20, \$30, or \$40. They will need 900 more students to respond affirmatively before the decision can be taken to the Board of Trustees for review.

By raising the student activities fee to \$105, the Convocation Fund would be increased by \$37,000, which is roughly the budget of Spring Fling.

"All the club heads seem to like it, but I haven't heard too much from other people," Vanderbilt said.

But there is hope yet for this year's clubs. The emergency fund has increased to \$1,200. It's for clubs that need more funds and have spent their allocated funds in the ways they said they would.

"It's for the diverse and active student body we are trying to fund with our limited monies," Vanderbilt said of the emergency fund. "We are trying to reward you."

BY NAOMI LACHANCE AND SAMANTHA SACKS

THE ENDING OF AN AUGUST IN AMERICA

BY JP LAWRENCE

In a crowded room in Olin Hall, the students performed their skits and then sat down to reminisce about the ending of things. It was the end of summer, and it was the end of Bard's Language and Thinking program (L&T), and for these students, it was the end of their days in America. Some of them cried, and others took photos.

They were the 29 students of the Bard English Summer Language Intensive (BESLI) program. BESLI is a program that brings students from Smolny College in St. Petersburg, Russia, to Annandale-on-Hudson for the month of August.

The program aims to prep Smolny students for English writing and speaking, Bryan Billings, BESLI program manager, said, as Smolny is the only one of Bard's partner campuses that does not have a curriculum primarily in English.

Bard President Leon Botstein presented what would later become BESLI during a meeting in St. Petersburg in 2008. The program has since expanded to three classes of different levels of English fluency, with joint sessions with L&T classes, an organized excursion program, and peer mentors hired to integrate the students into the Bard community.

Students arrived in New York Aug. 1, and while at Bard they lived in the Oberholzer dorm and ate at Kline Commons. The lack of soup in the American diet and getting used to the presence of air conditioning were big shifts, Billings said. Students would tell him that Americans are disingenuous, that they did not actually care about the answer to "how are you?"

Introductory level classes focused on English with some L&T materials mixed in, Billings said, while the intermediate classes read an L&T curriculum adapted for ESL students, and the advanced students took a week of training and then attended L&T classes with Bard first-years.

Speakers from the Bard Prison Initiative and the Trustee Leader Scholar Program greatly inspired the students, Denise Minim, English Language Coordinator and Director of Academics for BESLI, said, and students loved biking around a rural campus after class.

BESLI students also explored New York City, Hyde Park, Albany, Ferncliff Forest, Olana and the Dutchess County

Fair, with engagements at an opera and the Bard Summer Music Festival.

Strong bonds formed among the students and their American peers, said junior Michaela Walker, a tutor and one of two BESLI peer mentors. Walker lived and ate with the BESLI students and watched them progress through their culture shock and English lessons. On the last day of class, during the gathering in Olin Hall, Walker cried several times as she watched the students run through their final presentations.

"They were such a delight to live with and to help," Walker said. "I miss them so much already, and I cried like the saddest baby when they left. They worked so hard all month long, and their English was phenomenal by the end of the program."

Some of the BESLI students may come back through one of Bard's exchange programs. The Center for Civic Engagement is exploring means of integrating students from other campuses into the BESLI program, as well as other summer opportunities overseas which will involve academic programs for students from multiple Bard affiliates, including Smolny, the Al-Quds/Bard Honors College for Arts and Sciences and the American University of Central Asia.

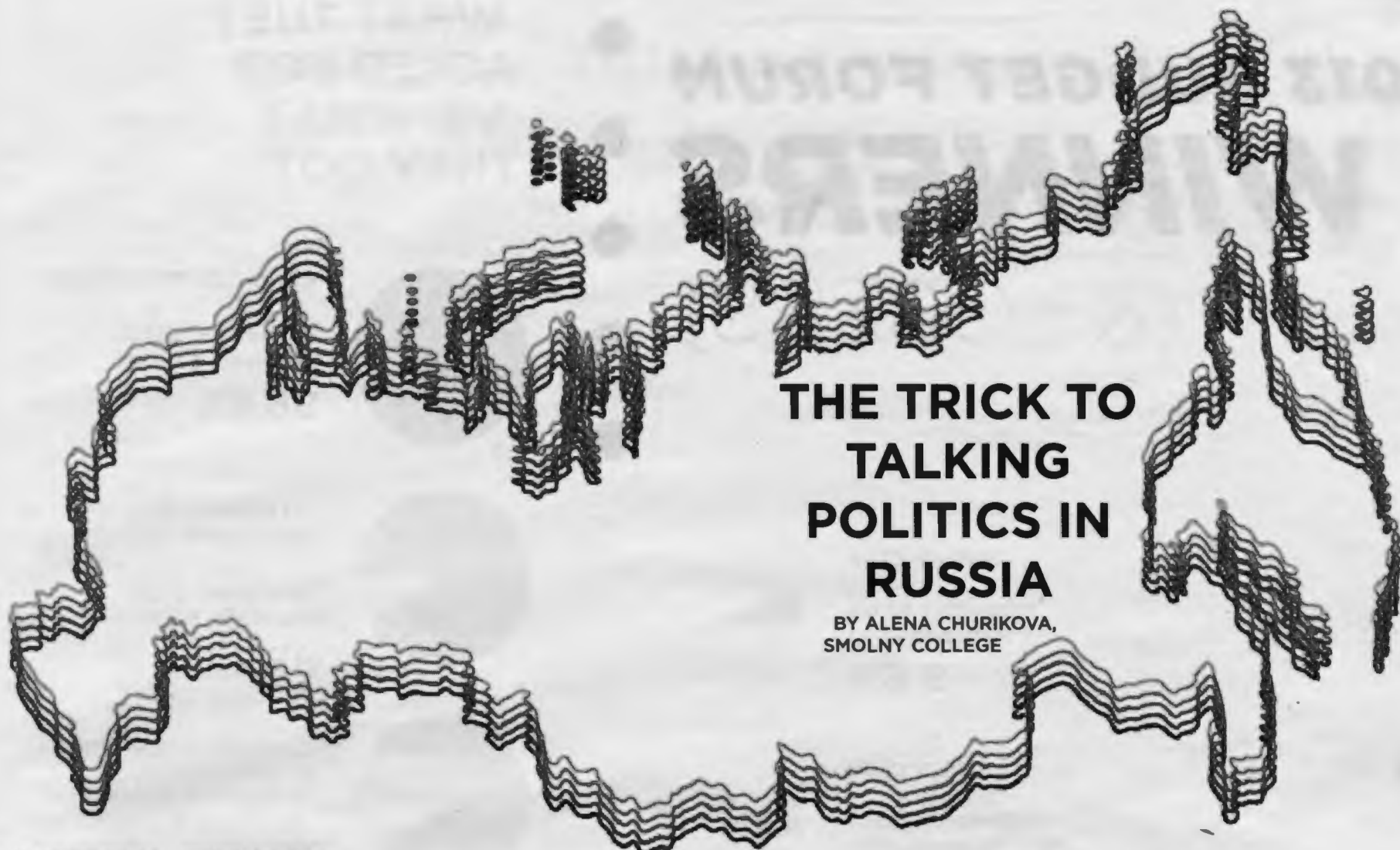
In an ideal world, Billings said such exchanges would be expanded among Bard's worldwide affiliates.

Endings are often difficult, but the best ones are lined with such hopes. One BESLI student, Svetlana Yumaguzina, said that the experience helped her become more confident not only in English, but also in herself, and in her courage to be strange and creative. She said she liked the idea of smiling at strangers and that she took the idea home with her when she left.

"My favorite part at Bard was the last week," Yumaguzina said. "There was a moment when I realized that I had totally gotten used to that life. I had made friends, and all the BESLI participants had become something like a family. At that moment everything was so easy and simple for me, so I really wanted to prolong that feeling, but, as it always happens, that was exactly the time to say goodbye."



photo provided by alena churikova



THE TRICK TO TALKING POLITICS IN RUSSIA

BY ALENA CHURIKOVA,
SMOLNY COLLEGE

NOTES FROM A RUSSIAN POLLING STATION

BY JANE SMIRNOVA, SMOLNY COLLEGE

People in Russia know and feel that there are no free elections. They don't even want to vote, because they're afraid that their votes will be stolen by the one main party that we have (Vladimir Putin's United Russia party). And even if they vote, they are absolutely sure they know the final result before the campaign starts.

I was an observer once for the presidential election. I was 18. I was trained, I was very well prepared, I learned all the laws that an observer should know. But I was scared. They needed at least three observers and I was alone.

The vote counters were not afraid of me, and the leader of the polling commission went with me in the dark corner and said, "keep calm, stay silent, if you don't want some trouble, you should stay calm and not take photos." He was really heavy. He prevented me from doing my job, and he was connected to the party, United Russia.

I think there are two main ways, which I have seen, to fix an election.

The first one: people with disabilities who can't come to the polling station call in so they can vote from home. At the beginning of the day, I saw the list of people who asked for home voting, and there were 10 or 12 people on the list. In the middle of the day, when the person came with these votes, there were more than 70 votes, and they were all for one party—United Russia.

The second way is very simple: when the four or six women count the votes after the polling station closes, they put all the pieces in one pile. And they said to me, "please stay near the wall; you have no right to see the procedure." But we do have this right—I saw a ballot where another candidate was chosen, but they put it in the pile with Putin's name.

Maybe the connection between the poll workers and United Russia is not so straight, but the people may just be afraid that if the results are not just so, they'll lose their job. It's hard to explain here in America; because of our history, because of the last 100 years, people in Russia are afraid of everything. They're afraid of every authority. They just want to do their best.

We wear white stripes at Smolny. It symbolizes that we want the vote to be fair. And we protest in squares in St. Petersburg, but the policemen force us to go away. Now, this way of protesting has decreased to nothing. I believe—maybe I'm a pessimist—the main feeling is escapism. The youth in Russia don't want to hear about politics—they want to follow their film projects, they want to talk to about literature and everything but politics. Because everyone knows that politics in Russia is corrupt, there's no more to say about it.

It is hard to take what we know in the classroom and take it to the streets. It is so difficult to go out onto the streets and say that we are not happy with the results of the elections. Instead, it's nothing, nothing.

I know when I came home that night after we tried to count the votes, on the TV screen, I saw the face of Putin, who was crying on the stage, and he said that he's crying because he's so happy he won the elections. And I was crying also, on the other side of the TV screen, because I knew the price of his victory. And it hurt me.

We need more poll watchers during the election season. The idea is not to change the result; the idea is to give people a feeling of power to change something, so we can build a political culture in Russia.

I spent this August at Bard College as an exchange student from Smolny College. There were a lot of things in America that were unexpected and even strange for me. Probably most surprising was that almost every student I talked to asked me about the Russian people's attitude toward certain laws in my country.

And I caught myself finding it difficult to reply. My new friends seemed to be waiting for concise and detailed answers, and I did not know what to say them. Then I noticed that American students talk about politics quite often, at least more often than my peers in Russia.

Why is this so?

Probably the first reason is that it is somewhat impolite and even inappropriate to talk about politics in Russia. If you have a tight circle of friends, you may have some discussions, but when you talk with unfamiliar people, you will most likely perplex your fellow interlocutors.

There are some people who believe that if you are interested in politics, that means that you are not a very clever person, and you do not have any serious passions for anything really important if you have time to talk about such rubbish.

Politics is a taboo subject in a polite society. People pretend not to be concerned about it, not to think about it, not to deal with it. And this conviction is probably not baseless, because actually very few people in Russia have their own political opinions.

The majority of people perceive all political decisions as nothing more than means of political struggle. Those Russians who support the governing party, because it is safe, are always against any liberal laws and decisions. Those who belong to the opposing parties, because it is fashionable, are always ready to support any initiative that contradicts governmental policy.

Moreover, life in Russia is good but not perfect; people have a lot of everyday problems. For average Russians, the justice of the Pussy Riot Trial, the legitimacy of authority, the rights of minorities, and all matters like these are so abstract, so far apart from life, that people do not believe there is any sense in thinking about them. People separate themselves from government and concentrate on their domestic problems.

Young people who have more free time and who are more open to new ideas sometimes love to talk about politics, rights, laws, and justice. But they usually come to nothing more than the conclusion that our officials are always making the wrong decision. At the same time, if you ask them what exactly needs to be changed, they would not be able to say anything more concrete than "everything!"

Americans know more about politics, talk about it more, and are probably more open-minded. In any case, this month in America really made me to think about differences between Russians' and Americans' attitudes on political life.

2013 BUDGET FORUM WINNERS (& LOSERS)

WHAT THEY
ASKED FOR
VS. WHAT
THEY GOT

BARD CONTRA DANCE

Requested: \$3,150
Received: \$3,050

96.8%



INTERNATIONAL MARTIAL ARTS CLUB

Requested: \$700
Received: \$600

85.7%



BARD SCIENCE JOURNAL

Requested: \$1,500
Received: \$1,250

83.3%



AFROPULSE

Requested: \$1,595
Received: \$1,200

75.2%



BARD FILM CO-OP

Requested: \$956
Received: \$685

71.7%



BARD FREE PRESS

Requested: \$3,740
Received: \$2,500

66.8%



SURF CLUB

Requested: \$3,124
Received: \$300

9.6%



BARD ARTISTS' CLUB

Requested: \$5,942
Received: \$385

6.5%



ANNANDALE FOLK CLUB

Requested: \$1,480
Received: \$185

5.1%



BARD RAPTORS ICE HOCKEY

Requested: \$6,370
Received: \$185

2.9%



BARD EQUUS COLLECTIVE

Requested: \$3,484
Received: \$90

2.5%



BARD INVESTIGATES THE PARANORMAL

Requested: \$15,745
Received: \$6.66

0.4%



**SMALLEST
BUDGETS
AWARDED:**

EMERGENCY FUND \$11,965.43

STUDENT GOVERNMENT \$9,700

ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE \$9,000

LUX MAGAZINE \$4,500

THE OLD GYM \$4,000

BIG WINNERS

\$6.66

"BARD INVESTIGATES THE PARANORMAL"

"BARD
STUDENTS FOR
JUSTICE IN
PALESTINE"

\$25

"BARD ANTI-
IMPERIALIST
LEAGUE"

\$29

FIGURE
DRAWING
CLUB

\$35

\$180,881.45

SPRING 2011 FUND

\$126,384.16

FALL 2012 FUND

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

\$121,046.18

FALL 2013 FUND

RUSSIA ON SYRIA VIA WEBCAM IN ANNANDALE

BY CLAIRE OLSON

The classroom was surprisingly crowded for 9 a.m. on a Tuesday morning. More than 30 students and faculty members crammed into the small room, clutching their coffees in order to attend a talk entitled "Russian-U.S. Cooperation/Contradiction in Light of the Syrian Crisis." The lecture was given by Professor Alexander "Sasha" Kubyshkin of Smolny College and moderated by Professor Jonathan Becker, Dean of International Affairs and Civic Engagement of Bard College.

However, this was not a regular scholarly talk. Instead of speaking in person, Kubyshkin presented to the community by video, projected on a screen at the front of the classroom, all the way from St. Petersburg, Russia, where it was 5 p.m.

The lecture began with Becker briefly introducing Kubyshkin, followed by Kubyshkin's lecture, and concluded with a brief question and answer

portion. Kubyshkin spoke in detail about the current situation in Syria, Russia's relations with the state, and what is next in terms of action in Syria. He also discussed Russia's pragmatic approach to foreign policy, the use of chemical weapons that was recently confirmed by the United Nations, and the necessity for all countries involved to act "very, very, carefully" in Syria.

Kubyshkin is an expert in international relations and U.S. foreign policy, as well as a member of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences at St. Petersburg State University and a Professor of International Relations at Smolny College in St. Petersburg, Russia.

"I thought that Alexander Kubyshkin would be a good choice for discussing Russia's approach to Syria both because he specializes in international affairs, and because he has spent considerable time studying and working in the United

States," Becker said. "Last spring he gave a very well-received presentation on Chechnya and Ingushetia after the Boston Marathon bombings."

Becker was "extremely pleased" with the turnout for the talk. He was especially thrilled that Kubyshkin "did not shy from challenging conventional American assumptions," allowing all in attendance to learn more about the issues from another perspective.

Overall, Kubyshkin exhibited a realistic approach to the conflict in Syria, remarking that "both sides understand very clearly the very complicated character of this problem for the international community." He ended his presentation on an optimistic note, stating that he is "sure that we will find the right way to soften the problem, to keep the rights of the Syrian people, and to keep the stability and the peace of the Middle East, together."

AL QUDS-BARD COLLEGE STUDENTS GRADUATE, SHAKE BOTSTEIN'S HAND

BY SAMI OMARSHAH & JP LAWRENCE

The Al Quds-Bard College Partnership graduated its first class in May 2013, with 646 undergraduates and 157 graduate students earning a Bard degree from Bard President Leon Botstein.

Anan Abu Shanab was the class valedictorian and spoke at graduation. Abu Shanab, who majored in human rights and international law and minored in urban studies and spatial practices, will be studying refugee and forced migration studies at Oxford.

"It was great, I mean, this is an opportunity of a lifetime," Abu Shanab said. "I never imagined that I could get a liberal arts degree while living in Palestine."

Similar to Bard's programs in Russia and Kyrgyzstan, which aim to introduce liberal education to "countries in transition," Al Quds-Bard College offers a combined U.S. and Palestinian degree. This venture is the first U.S.-Palestinian coordination of its kind.

Funded initially by liberal financier (and personal friend of President Botstein) George Soros and his Open Society Foundation, and later with help from the U.S. Agency for International Development, the program is made up of the interdisciplinary, four-year Honors College for Liberal Arts and Sciences and the larger Master of the Arts in Education two-year program.

"The thing about this program," notes Anis Al-Qaq, a former Palestinian-ambassador to Geneva and member of Al Quds's Board of Governors, "... is that it is about strengthening bridges between the Palestinians and the United States without being political. It's about giving young Palestinians some exposure to the best of the United States. They don't need a green card. They have a little bit of America coming directly to them."

A NEW LOOK AT BARD PALESTINIAN YOUTH INITIATIVE

BY CLAIRE OLSON

A group of women gathered around a table. Everyone had a notebook, and had just completed a Language and Thinking-style free write. Each woman read a piece of her work, just a sentence or two, speaking about marriage, family, occupation, identity, gender segregation, past experiences, and anything else she could think to share. Nothing was off-limits for this group.

The women, a mixed group of Americans and Palestinians, gathered every day for three weeks. Some were reticent to speak at first, but many opened up over the course of their meetings. Their previous cultural experiences may differ, but each woman had something in common with the others.

This is the Palestinian village of Mas'ha, the base of the Bard Palestinian Youth Initiative's (BPYI) program in Palestine. For three weeks this past summer, 12 Bard students traveled to Mas'ha, located in the northern West Bank. Each summer, the BPYI engages with the community through a planned service project. This year, the group focused on equipping the village's youth center that was built two years ago.

Mas'ha was once the center of commerce in the Palestinian territories. Located half an hour from Tel Aviv, there used to be a large trade road through Mas'ha that stretched from Tel Aviv to Jordan. Due to the Israeli occupation, the road was closed, completely cutting off trade and leaving the village in a stagnant state. The village has a special geographic position in the West Bank and is located in Area B, near the Separation Wall between Israel and Palestine.

The BPYI was founded in the summer of 2008 by Mujahid Sarsur '12, who is originally from Mas'ha, and Aaron Dean '11. The project is currently organized by sophomore Ameer Shalabi, senior Harrison Liddle and sophomore Zaida Bas. During the school year, weekly meetings of the group are dedicated to discussing Palestinian culture, preparing participants for trips to Palestine, and organizing fundraising events.

"We believe that constructive civil engagement, cultural exchange, and education are fundamental means to build a sustainable Palestinian state," Shalabi said, quoting the mission statement of the BPYI. "We believe that cultural exchange bridges cultures and helps overcome the differences between others and constructs understanding between nations."

Cultural exchange is one of the largest parts of the BPYI's program in Palestine. For Caley Cross, a sophomore sociology and human rights major, this aspect was especially critical to her experience and understanding of Palestinian culture.

"The cultural exchange is really important, especially with the younger generation," Cross said. "We also had a bit [of cultural exchange] with the older generations, but that was more difficult. We had some great conversations, asking them about their covering, their identity, and their gender mixing ideas."

The impact of the BPYI has expanded beyond just cultural exchange, and has involved several physical projects, including, in 2010, the creation of the first children's library in Palestine. For Bas, one of the project's organizers and a junior political studies major, seeing "the library the BPYI built and funded full of children" was especially powerful. These projects have obviously had a lasting impact on the village, solidifying the connection between Bard and Mas'ha as well as fostering the values of education, knowledge and cross-cultural connections.

Although the trip was filled with triumphs, there were also many difficulties that the project faced this summer. This year was a transition year for the leadership,

with many Bard seniors graduating and underclassmen stepping into new leadership roles. There were also issues with fundraising this year.

Students on the trip had to overcome the language barrier and were especially aware of "the political conflict taking place," says Bas. Bas describes the trip as "particularly hard because the West Bank is a world immensely different from France, where I was raised, and America, where I am studying."

"However," Bas states, "it's precisely the hardship I faced during the trip that made my experience so real, eye-opening, educating and human."

Despite these challenges, the students constantly considered their relationship with the village, always thinking about the future for the program and village.

"We knew the village appreciated us, but we weren't sure to what extent," said Cross. "This year, we talked a lot about the significance we were having on the village. This year, we did less than in previous years. In previous years they built a library, they built a playground, they had just done more. I think that for this project to continue, we really need to keep talking about what we want to accomplish in the village."

Bas was especially touched by the acknowledgement from the villagers. She describes teaching in the village, feeling amazed as she would "see the light go on in the Palestinian women's eyes while learning English when they understood a word."

For Shalabi, the evidence of the BPYI's impact was especially prevalent in terms of the relationships between the participants of the program and members of the community. Once, the BPYI participants were invited to a wedding in the village, Shalabi recalled, where they danced with youth and kids.

"One old man who was involved in BPYI two years earlier said, 'you see, there is no difference between us and them, it's just that we think of certain things differently. Good job kid, you keep bringing these people here so they would know that we are just like them; we dance and laugh,'" Shalabi said.

The leadership of the program has several projects planned for the coming year. Bas is especially excited about a collaboration with Bard Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, which will involve running an English and Arabic Language and Thinking workshop in Mas'ha this January.

"This will be the first time we work on critical thinking, free writing and thoughtful reading and discussion in both languages with teenagers of the village," Bas said.

In addition to this, there is a newly created sister-city relationship between Red Hook and Mas'ha, which the BPYI plans to further this year.

The mission of the BPYI will stay the same as the group looks to increase their impact on the village and refine the program's projects for the next few years. For Shalabi, the mission's focus on cultural exchange is stronger than ever, and he is hopeful that the BPYI will continue to shape his and other's views of the world.

"For me, BPYI gave me such a great chance to see the world from a different perspective," Shalabi said. "It helped me understand the world better as it brings out our human identity that lives within ourselves rather than the national identity that lives in our passports."

One of the women spoke on the last day of the sessions, sharing a story of how her family originally did not want her working with the Americans and was uncomfortable with her interacting with them. Despite this, she worked with the Americans anyway, and was absolutely thrilled that she was able to do so.

"This was the best summer of my life," she said.

BOOKS BEHIND BARS

A LOOK AT BARD'S PRISON TUTORING COMMUNITY

BY JOHANNA COSTIGAN

Max Kenner founded the Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) while he was an undergraduate at Bard in the early 2000s. Since then, the program has expanded astronomically; according to the program's website, Bard enrolled nearly 550 students in the BPI program by 2013. The program more than doubled both in number of students and course selection.

The program added two new campuses this summer, said BPI Director of College Operations Megan Callaghan.

The first is Taconic Correctional Facility, a women's prison in Bedford Hills, Westchester County, and the other is Fishkill Correctional Facility, a men's medium security prison in Beacon, N.Y.

BPI initially worked with a women's prison called Bayview in New York City, but due to damage as a result of Hurricane Sandy and subsequent budget cuts, the facility was closed down. Callaghan explained that when Bayview closed, BPI worked to maintain an academic engagement with its students and re-established the program at a correctional facility of a comparable security level, Taconic.

There are 36 students enrolled at Taconic for the fall semester, some of whom were enrolled with Bard at Bayview, but the majority are new students.

"Expanding into Fishkill is an important development for BPI because it not only enables us to enroll more students and to make college accessible to people where there was previously no way to obtain a college degree, but also, as a medium security facility, Fishkill will have students returning to their communities in the not distant fu-

ture with a college education or degrees," Callaghan said.

She said 62 courses are offered this semester across the six campuses; they range in size from 14 total students at Green Haven Correctional Facility to 100 at Eastern New York Correctional Facility. Bayview was a medium security prison, as is Taconic, so the inmates who were transferred were placed in a prison with an appropriate security level.

There could have been "a moment of vulnerability for BPI" when it was faced with the closing of its only affiliated women's prison, Callaghan explained, but due to staff efforts and generous donations from two separate foundations, they were able to reopen this new campus, continuing the BPI's involvement with a women's prison.

Several recent donations made the two new prisons possible, BPI's Director of Development Laura Liebman said. One is a two-year \$500,000 grant from the Ford Foundation for BPI's general operating costs, and the other is a five-year \$750,000 challenge grant to re-establish BPI's program for incarcerated women at Taconic Correctional Facility.

Every BPI-affiliated prison has a site director who works on the premises to manage college operations. Along with the addition of two new BPI prisons over the summer, two site directors were hired to manage college operations at their respective prisons.

"We're excited about the new campuses and site directors," Callaghan said. "Out of the six site directors, four have Bard bachelor's degrees."

This year's BPI club leaders senior Alex

Diaconis and senior Katy Schneider are trying to strengthen the application process of potential BPI tutors and ensure that all participants are willing and able to assist the students in a beneficial, meaningful way.

"Students deserve tutors who are going to be as helpful as the tutors who work at the Learning Commons. It's our commitment to them," Schneider said. "They can't stop by their professor's office or email them like students on campus can, so when we come in it's really helpful. The students generally really value the tutors, especially the Chinese tutors who will have a huge classroom full of guys speaking in Chinese to them."

Building a sense of togetherness among the student tutors and using the resources offered from TLS are two of the program's main goals for the year.

"The prison initiative tutoring program has no community, there's no clear-cut way to get involved, and there's no support among the tutors," Diaconis said. "At the Learning Commons they have required meetings where you learn from each other and get to know the other people, but the BPI never had that."

Diaconis said they will be hosting monthly meetings in which members could share their tutoring experiences. Whether their experiences are negative or positive, they will have a place to talk with other people who can address their questions, concerns, or pride with a unique level of understanding.

They did express concern regarding attendance and enthusiasm for the meetings, since they have never been required for BPI tutors before. "We don't want them to be

boring, didactic classes; you're supposed to want to be there," Schneider said.

It is essential that the tutors are committed and hardworking, because, according to BPI math professor and Volunteer Tutor Coordinator Ryan McCann, the students certainly are. "If I assign three problems, they'll do the whole book," McCann said.

He spoke to the extreme progress students make over the course of just a semester or two. "Some of the guys who had trouble with exponents just a year ago are now taking my calculus class," he said. He attributed some of this progress to the fact that the tutors are so committed and helpful. They are able to explain concepts to them in different ways, and can provide a fresh perspective since they have learned the material more recently.

McCann also mentioned that inmates are being trained to become tutors as well; although due to a number shortage, they do rely heavily on Bard students. As a result, he is frustrated by the fact that since only students over age 21 can tutor, by the time a student is trained to tutor and is cleared by the Department of Corrections, he or she will only be able to work for a few semesters. Since the process can be time consuming, the program benefits most from tutors who are able to continue working with the program for as many semesters as possible.

But McCann believes the best component of his job is his ability to observe genuine scholarly dedication firsthand. He said, "I'm constantly hearing them debate philosophy, and things that are over my head. I'm always struck by how serious they are about their Bard education."

DEFINING A COLLEGE EDUCATION (IN PRISON) ED TALK WITH BPI

The Bard Free Press is undertaking a special project exploring issues of education in America. The idea is that there are a lot of education issues that affect students, and there are a lot of people at Bard with intelligent thoughts on these issues.

We'll have a talk each month. This month, we speak with Delia Mellis of the Bard Prison Initiative about the concept of liberal arts education behind bars.

Jack Magnusson: I'm here with Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) history professor and Director of College Writing and Academic Resources; Delia Mellis, to talk about the phenomenon of "College in Prison." Hi, Delia.

Delia Mellis: Hi, Jack.

JM: Could you define "College in Prison" and explain how it differs from traditional prison education?

DM: "College in Prison," as such, isn't new. There were many colleges operating in prisons around the country since the early '70s. Then, in the mid-'90s, the Clinton Crime bill got rid of federal funding for those programs ... so it's not a new idea. What is unique, however, is our Consortium for the Liberal Arts in Prison. We're helping schools around the country start or develop their own versions of this, and there are several that are already operating. Also, we strive to make what we're doing the same in prison as it is in Annandale.

JM: It's Bard College, not a special prison service program.

DM: Exactly. In our writing program, we have people who are trained to teach L&T in Annandale teaching L&T in prison. Also, we have our students go through the same training to be Writing Fellows and Writing Tutors as Annandale students at the Learning Commons.

JM: Perhaps the distinction between "College in Prison" as it is with BPI and traditional prison education is that a lot of other prison education is much more...

DM: It's vocational.

JM: What I find amazing and new about BPI is that it's not that "we're teaching prisoners something related to being prisoners, rather we're teaching humans who happen to be in prison."

DM: What you say is right. We don't think of them primarily as inmates. We think of them as students, and we make demands of them as students. It's not a therapeutic program. We're saying this is not about rehabilitation; this is about education. That, I think, is as true to Bard as you can be.

JM: In all prison education—also in BPI if I'm correct—there's a lot of emphasis on reduced recidivism ... and emphasis on economic opportunities. In all education, there is an interesting tension between other priorities and the utilitarian ends of investing tuition and getting out a value-added human.

DM: It's an ancillary benefit. Employability or non-recidivism are not the goals of liberal arts, but active engaged citizenship is. That to me includes being an effective dissenter. But yeah, I think you're right. We certainly do point to the fact that for people with even a tiny bit of college education while incarcerated, recidivism drops considerably.

JM: It's only 4 percent of BPI students, no?

DM: Yeah, compared to the 40 percent New York State average. But our students often ask, "Why should I do liberal arts? I want to get a business degree." They are under the pressure of what they'll face when they leave: expectations of failure and a tight job market. The utilitarian concerns are not to be dismissed, but as Max [Kenner] says in one of the films, a liberal arts degree actually makes you more employable than a vocational degree.

JM: It's more versatile?

DM: Yeah, you're a problem solver, you're a critical thinker, you know how to communicate, you have context for much more of the variety of things that you're likely to encounter ... It's not just a principle; it's the social and economic and political reality that generations of Americans have experienced, and that's how people have moved, have found class mobility—through education.

JM: Maybe it doesn't reduce to, say, prisons are utilitarian and colleges are humanistic, but at its best, college subscribes to the idea that we can only develop as humans together through dialogue and questioning. That seems starkly in contrast to the idea behind prison—that we take the people who don't fit into our society and we separate them out of society. I wonder, are the goals of prison and college reconcilable? And is it possible that in certain instances they undermine each other?

DM: There are ways in which these institutions do echo each other ... Then again, it's not for me to say what Corrections wants because it's an entity that's composed of a lot of individuals ... Still, there are facts: that a substantial proportion of our entire population is incarcerated or will be

incarcerated for some part of their lives, all the disparities in sentencing, in arrest rates, in conviction rates, racial and socioeconomic disparities. You can't ignore them... It's not a problem with the corrections system; corrections doesn't arrest people. We as a society are taking these members of our society out and institutionalizing them in the way that prisons are designed to, which is disempowering. They're not, for the most part, learning how to come back and function better than when they were when they went away, and that's a problem.

JM: That was something that struck me about a response to a question about punishment on the BPI website. It says "punishment is one important goal of the penal system, but it's equally important to provide people with a realistic opportunity to assume the responsibility of returning to general society as better parents, neighbors, and citizens." Likewise, Brian Fischer, the former Commissioner of Corrections in New York, points out, "Education changes people. And I think that's what prisons should do: change somebody from one way of thinking to a different way of thinking." Perhaps, bringing education right next to incarceration and the prison system illustrates something that's always there in education, which is that we're trying to change people. What exactly are the moral responsibilities of changing people?

DM: I don't make the change. I offer information and critical responses to people's ideas, and they either change their minds or they don't. What BPI is trying to do is put the responsibility for the education on students, because we assume and expect that they can live up to that. That might be the operating difference between how we approach this process and approaching it as if it were charity—the idea that you have to do it for them, that they're abject, that the subjectivity of the incarcerated student is limited. That's why we're so leery of this kind of rehabilitation model and this therapeutic model because it assumes—

JM: That they're just objects.

DM: That goes to what both Max and Daniel [Karpowitz] have said to me at different points—that the one thing that conservative politicians have right is this idea of the soft bigotry of low expectations. When they're saying that in some horrible context of cutting some social program it's one thing, but they're right if you're saying, "well they can't, they're not really equipped to because of their backgrounds, we have to do these things for them because they can't do these things for themselves." But in fact our students are so driven ... Maybe they haven't read as many books or had as much support for learning elegant sentence structure, but they're going to work that much harder to get it right once they do have access to those resources. It's about high expectations. Those that they have for themselves—and for each other because there's a lot of that too within the student body of BPI: students pushing each other. There's something really to be emulated there.

JM: It is, definitely. From my experience with the students at BPI, I'd say that they're much more committed than the average Annandale-campus student, and they bring a level of intensity to the classroom that's just amazing. It comes from the faith and trust that's put forward by the professors of BPI.

DM: And it makes us better at our jobs. That's the beauty of it, I think most teachers will say that they've learned from every class that they teach, wherever they teach. But that is amplified in this context in a lot of ways. And that's why it's not charity, or do-gooding. We get as much out of it as they do, if not more.

JM: Well, just before we wrap up, if anyone reading this is interested in helping out with BPI, what should they do?

DM: They can get in touch with me, and I will direct them to the right people. We always have a work-study staff on hand in Annandale and students from Annandale come into the facilities as writing, language, and math tutors. At this point, they have to be 21 or older. But there's a new crew of TLS people, Alex Diaconis and Katy Schneider, who are going to be looking for other ways that people in Annandale can be involved with BPI. We're looking for ideas and help for that so people can contact them as well.

BASILICA

BY LUCAS OPGENORTH

The Basilica Hudson looms like a cathedral at the end of a dead-end road in Hudson, N.Y., a stone's throw from both the river and the Hudson Amtrak station. On Sept. 13 and 14, it was home the Basilica Soundscape festival: two nights of music, literature and film in Hudson's 19th-century glue factory turned arts space.

The Basilica's creative directors, filmmaker and Bard graduate Tony Stone and former bassist for the 90s alt-rock band Hole Melissa Auf der Maur, bought the building three years ago from Patrick Doyle, an anarchist, performance artist, and stilt-walker who built gigantic wicker men and set them ablaze behind the factory. After the couple moved to Hudson, Stone and Auf der Maur began using the building to shoot film and play music. Though it didn't have plumbing, water, or the amenities of the Basilica's current incarnation, it had been cleaned out from its former life as a glue factory. In 2010, Doyle selected Auf der Maur and Stone to take over the building and further expand its use as an art space. "One day he called and said, 'I have to move to Pennsylvania. Immediately.' And within one week he basically made us an offer we couldn't refuse," Auf der Maur said.

Since then, the venue has hosted a slew of film screenings, art exhibitions and concerts by the likes of Grimes and Godspeed You! Black Emperor, but nothing that matched the scale of this year's Soundscape event. For assembling the festival's bill, the Basilica partnered with the popular indie music website Pitchfork. Pitchfork editor Brandon Stosuy, who writes the site's metal column "Show No Mercy," curated Friday night's diverse line-up, which was headed by the relentlessly brutal grindcore band Pig Destroyer.

"We like to pick oddball shows every now and then, because we don't like to preach to the converted all the time," J.R. Hayes, the band's vocalist, said about being the only metal band of the weekend. "You can look at this crowd, and a lot of these people would never come see us at our own show. It's kind of interesting to get in front of people who would never come see us and possibly make some new fans and maybe scare the shit out of some other people."

Before their set, Pig Destroyer, along with three other artists, participated in a live sound installation conceived by Stosuy, filmmaker and visual artist Matthew Barney, and composer Jonathan Belper. The mostly black-clad audience circled around Belper, who stood at the center of the cavernous factory and conducted the four artists positioned on opposite sides of the room. The thumping bass of instrumental hip-hop producer Evian Christ, who is best known for his work on Kanye West's "I'm In It," blended with Pharmakon's screeching electronic noise while Julianna Barwick's ambient vocal loops duelled with Pig Destroyer's blazing metallic bursts. When the applause for the piece subsided, Pig Destroyer tore into "Sis," the first song of their 2012 album

"Book Burner." This unlikely melding of musicians and genres exemplifies the festival's focus on showcasing surprising but appropriate combinations and making connections between apparently unrelated artists. Friday's attendees sat for readings by punk icon and author Richard Hell, watched pieces of "Severed Heads," a film by Stone that screened in a small room close to the main stage, and heard music that ranged from the angelic to the demonic.

Though Saturday more closely resembled a conventional festival, with a consistent lineup of music all evening, Gambian kora duo Malang Djobateh played short sets of swirling African folk as bands set up and prepared for their performances. Highlights from Saturday included Cass McCombs, whose Grateful Dead-esque live show added a new dimension to his typically stripped down folk. Late on Saturday night, Brooklyn indie band DIIV played and was joined by singer Zachary Cole Smith's girlfriend Sky Ferreira for a cover of Cat Power's "Nude As The News" among a set of new songs and tracks from their acclaimed album "Oshin."

For Auf der Maur, the Basilica represents a way of interacting with art that is at odds with the values of the Internet Age and its emphasis on ease. "The sound of last night and tonight and the responses to it have given me total faith that there is a movement in the 21st century that people want to gather in intimate experiences of music and art that require effort," she said. "You can't just walk out of your doorstep and walk around the corner. It takes effort and you have to work to get sacred things. You cannot have everything at the tip of your finger."

With this do-it-yourself spirit, the Basilica was able to enlist a crew of volunteers to staff the festival in return for food and free admission. The atmosphere of the weekend was relaxed and comfortable; there were no corporate sponsors trying to push their products to a "hip" demographic or pushy security guards keeping the kids in line. It was clear that attendees and staff alike were there because of the film, literature, and music on display. As New York City's rent prices continue to rise, more of these people are heading to Hudson to live cheaply and make art. "Not that I'm trying to push Hudson, but for the Bard students who don't want to do New York City and the whole Brooklyn thing, Hudson is a great alternative," Stone said.

After eight weeks of working 12-hour days, taking care of her and Stone's two-year-old baby and managing the festival's logistics, Auf der Maur found herself finally able to enjoy the fruits of her labor on Soundscape's second night. "It's been very difficult and nerve-racking for three years and this evening was my first two and a half hours of enjoying myself in this building," she said while DIIV played in the background. "This is the dream of the rock show you want to go to."



photos by sam williams

CREATING A CAMPUS LEGEND

BY LEVI SHAW-FABER

Like the inside cover of a fantasy novel, the map is complete with details—sailboats on the Hudson, train tracks behind Blithewood, a sweeping view of the Catskill mountains. The ever-changing official Bard College campus map is a pictorial landscape that is more than simply functional. Mark Hess is the commercial illustrator who was commissioned in 2002 by Director of Publications, Ginger Shore. Hess, who designs everything from portraits to restaurant graphics, has illustrated “46 postage stamps for the U.S. government and 17 *Time* (Magazine) covers.”

Shore, who used to work at *Time*, said that Hess had been on her radar for years. When the publications office started looking for illustrators to draw the map, she remembered Hess even though he is not a cartographer by trade. She reviewed his book and discovered it contained a map. “He can really draw, and I thought that he was our guy and we would give him a chance,” Shore explained.

Hess originally painted the map by hand. Now, as the Bard College campus frequently changes, he updates it digitally. To get accurate photographs from which Hess could paint the map, the College rented a helicopter to get an aerial view. Hess said, “It was the middle of winter, probably in late December or early January, and it was freezing. We took off from Newburg Airport and flew up to Bard and then, in one of the fields in the back, we landed and actually took the door off and left it in the field so that I could hang out of the helicopter.” Hess took hundreds of aerial photographs, spending “about two and a half hours crisscrossing [across campus].”

Although 10 years have passed since he first painted the map, Hess still became outwardly excited talking about it. “The helicopter trip was an incredible rush because it was so frickin’ cold,” he said. “I was hanging out the window and I was totally wrapped up. I must have looked ridiculous from the ground. We were maybe 500 feet up and the thing is, I wanted to get every single building from like two or three angles. So there isn’t one photograph that I used for this painting. It’s all this montage, this collage of photos together.” Hess said that it was helpful to take the pictures in the winter because the trees were bare, exposing the buildings.

The original painting is hanging in the foyer of the admissions building. That version lacks buildings such as the Reem-Kayden Center, built in 2007, and the extension of the CCS Museum, built in 2006. Other than the missing buildings, the most notable difference between

the original map and the current version is the Frank Gehry-designed Fisher Center does not actually look like the Fisher Center. The colors are off and the roof is drooping. This is because the map came out before the Fisher Center was completed. Hess said that the Fisher Center, “was just being dug out of the ground when I took the photographs and after it was built; there were obviously things I hadn’t done quite right and I had to go in and correct the painting.”

At first, corrections and additions were made by hand. Admissions Director Mary Buckland said she “sent it back at least once to be repainted and then we said, ‘this is crazy.’” After realizing that it was inefficient to keep sending the painting back to Hess and running out of room on the canvas for new buildings, Hess digitized the painting into a 20-gigabyte file that he expanded to include numerous buildings on either side of campus. Now, Hess still paints buildings on canvas by hand but he then digitally stitches them into the map. Publications Office Director Mary Smith is responsible for sending Hess photographs of new buildings and other additions to the campus. Recently, the Bard College Farm and the new Bitó Conservatory building were added to the map. Hess said that he receives photographs from all different angles and “interprets it to what it would look like from the air.” For some projects, including the Parliament of Reality, Hess received plans and artist renditions of the pieces.

Freshmen arriving to campus assigned to live in Hudson or Catskill, the two “temporary dorms,” or trailers, might find the map confusing because these two medium-sized dorms were intentionally omitted. Smith explained this is because adding structures to the map is quite expensive and the College does not want to pay to have the dorms rendered and then removed. But Hess said, “I think [the trailers] were in the painting once, but I painted over them because I heard that they were supposed to be razed.”

Although he says that the map is 99 percent accurate, Hess admits that he had to “cheat some of the buildings.” He said, “Some of the buildings don’t present themselves as beautifully as they should because of the angle that they are on the ground. So I would turn a building just a little bit to give it the best face.” Since the map is a promotion tool sent to every accepted prospective freshman, Hess and Shore did not want it to be, as Hess said, a “line drawing that most colleges have.” By careful rendering and intentional omissions, the publications office and Hess want the Bard College map to put the campus’s “best face” forward.



STEPHEN COPE: *HUMAN*

BY ABBY ZIEVE

Stephen Cope likes to be confused. It is for this reason, among others, that he returned to teach at Bard College's Language & Thinking Program, which he affectionately refers to as "thought camp," for the seventh time.

The road that led him here was not a traditional one. After graduating high school at 16, an age two years younger than the majority of the recent high school graduates he teaches, Cope took eight years off before beginning any further traditional educational endeavors. During the time off between his formal schooling, he lived in and around Santa Cruz and the Bay Area of California. He spent his time dabbling in amateur philosophical thought and failing to succeed in his dream of becoming a rock star, among those who he describes as "musicians, artists, poets, squatters, and things like that."

During this time Cope solidified his fascination with literature, along with his discovery of two writers: James Joyce and Nathaniel Mackey. "I was really interested in the fact that I was loving something and completely baffled by it," he said of discovering James Joyce. This complimentary love for literature and confusion eventually led to a doctorate in literature with a concentration in modern literary studies.

But now that his studies have culminated into a teaching profession, a new question is raised: what kind of teacher does Stephen Cope aspire to be?

"The one I am," he said. "If I stopped being anxious and insecure about it from time to time, I don't think it would be as good, somehow. It's different [during L&T], though, because I feel like I'm just another member of the class who happens to sort of have an instruction manual."

Though he identifies no specific professorial character he wishes to em-

body, there is one brand of teacher Cope is determined not to be: Robin Williams' character in the 1989 cult classic "Dead Poets Society." His resemblance to the actor has been noted and agreed upon by many of his students, and according to Cope himself, this year's crop of freshmen thinkers are not the first to make the connection.

"Yeah, people tell me I look like Robin Williams," Cope said reluctantly. "He's just kind of hyperactive, and I'm kind of not hyperactive. But I actually get Denzel Washington a lot, too."

Comparisons aside, no matter how uncanny, (particularly in the case of the Denzel Washington comparison), Cope's psyche is composed of an impressive range of thoughts, the majority of which he claims come into existence

during the time most of his students and celebrity look-alikes are curled up in the fetal position in their own beds.

"I tend to have insomnia, and often some of the most interesting thoughts, and most productive thoughts come between the hours of midnight and 5 a.m.," he explains, "so I've learned to stay up late often."

This particular professor's ingenuity is not, however, limited to the midnight hours. "I think a good thought can occur anywhere. On the Bard campus, my best thoughts happen in the classroom," he said. "When other people are reading what they wrote, I feel like my head is a light bulb factory just shooting continuously."

While Cope spends most of his week-day nights stirring in insomnia-driven

motions of circular thought, Friday nights mark a weekly modification to this routine. One night per week Stephen Cope leaves his position as teacher, father, and Robin Williams look-alike, and takes on the role of nighttime radio DJ for a show he calls "Conference of the Birds," a title derived from the name of a jazz album and a Sufi text. The show began as, and continues to be, a means of sharing music that Cope believes is not, but should be, heard in the United States.

When asked if he takes on a DJ alter ego during the show, his reply is an adamant and disappointing no, however Cope does admit to a fairly significant on-air change in vocalization.

"I talk low," he says in a voice slow, and sure enough, a few octaves below

the pitch he had been maintaining until now.

Though adopting a husky tone is Cope's most significant achievement thus far in finding his true radio personality, he admits there is still time for him to adopt one. Namely Dr. Midnight, a pseudonym given to him by fellow residents of his local coffee shop after he mistook the name of a drink called a Midnight Rider for, you guessed it, Dr. Midnight, while ordering.

"Maybe [I would do it] if I had another radio program that was booty music, you know, like soul slow jams," Cope considers. Luckily for him, he's already thought of a catchy, yet understated promotional slogan: "Dr. Midnight: slow jams all night long, rockin' you 'til the dawn."

Nurturing his newfound alter ego is not the only thing Cope has left to do in this life, however. After some initial confusion about whether or not one has "to be really old to have a bucket list," Cope came up with a few things he sees as potential fragments of his future.

"I don't really feel like jumping out of an airplane, but I may end up doing that at some point," he said. "And maybe play in a major league baseball game."

His aspirations aren't all so tangible, however.

"I would like to see a hereto unthought-of form of politics exist in which poverty and oppression would be eradicated," he said. "But that's like a pipedream, right? I've always had this kind of strange reluctance to think about the future," he explains. "I want a lot of accidental things to continue happening to me."

This wish is very closely related to the theme of the Language & Thinking Program: What does it mean to be human in the year 2013? Cope has devoted the majority of his August to thinking about and/or teaching this question. But when asked for an answer, his response was immediately, "I refuse to answer that question."

However, in keeping with his tendency to refuse a notion only to elaborate on it moments later, Cope eventually produced this answer to the question to which hundreds of first year students have written their own wildly thoughtful and presumptuous answers in the form of final L&T essays: "I believe being human is in some sense fraught from the outset with irresolvable paradox and contradiction, and that paradox and contradiction is always generative or prohibitive."

"And it's also to suffer," he adds, laughing.

I believe being human, is, in some sense fraught from the outset with irresolvable paradox and contradiction

THE MEN WHO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON

BY CHARLES MCFARLANE

Paul Johnson walks along the west side of Tewksbury. In his hands are two magnetized metal wires in the shape of an "L." He lets the pieces rest on the side of his worn hands, holding them with his thumbs. As he walks, the metal rods swing, and then suddenly snap together. The wires are pulled by the magnetic field of the electric lines underground. He looks up at me and smiles. "I have a locator, but this works just as well."

Paul Johnson has been an electrician at Bard for 19 years. Like many of the people who work at Bard, he grew up in the area. In high school, he was an avid computer programmer. He could program in five languages. But during his time as a student at SUNY Ulster, he grew tired of programming. "I was in the computer lab once that semester. I got bored."

Paul walks backwards in front of me as I try to repeat his trick with the two pieces of magnetic wire. His face is weathered, beaten, and sunburned, contrasting with his white hair. Paul dropped out of college to start silversmithing. He became skilled at making jewelry and eventually moved to cutting jewels. He was supposed to go to California to study silversmithing, but he never made it. He ended up in Houston for 10 years, selling products door-to-door, roofing, and working a slew of other jobs.

As I walk, the wires swing together, just as they did for Paul. He chuckles at my amazement—this trick is commonplace for him. Paul uses these wires to find the electrical lines that run out of Tewksbury. He marks the spot where I stand with orange paint. Bard is changing the heating system of Tewksbury from oil to more efficient propane. Paul has to mark the lines so they are not cut up when the new line is put in.

Bard is his place of work, but he also has a genuine love for the school. "You guys are fun," he said. Most of his interactions revolve, of course, around the electrical department: changing bulbs, doing wiring for shows. When students do performance art pieces in the chapel or an installation on Ludlow lawn, Paul is usually the one to help them get the lighting they need. "It makes me feel good [to help out students]" he said.

He puts the van in park and looks out the window. Three students have made an "A" frame out of two folding tables. "If there is one thing we are, it's safe," he said. He leans out the window and tells the students to cut it out and put the tables back. They apologize and do as he asks. Paul knows they meant no harm.

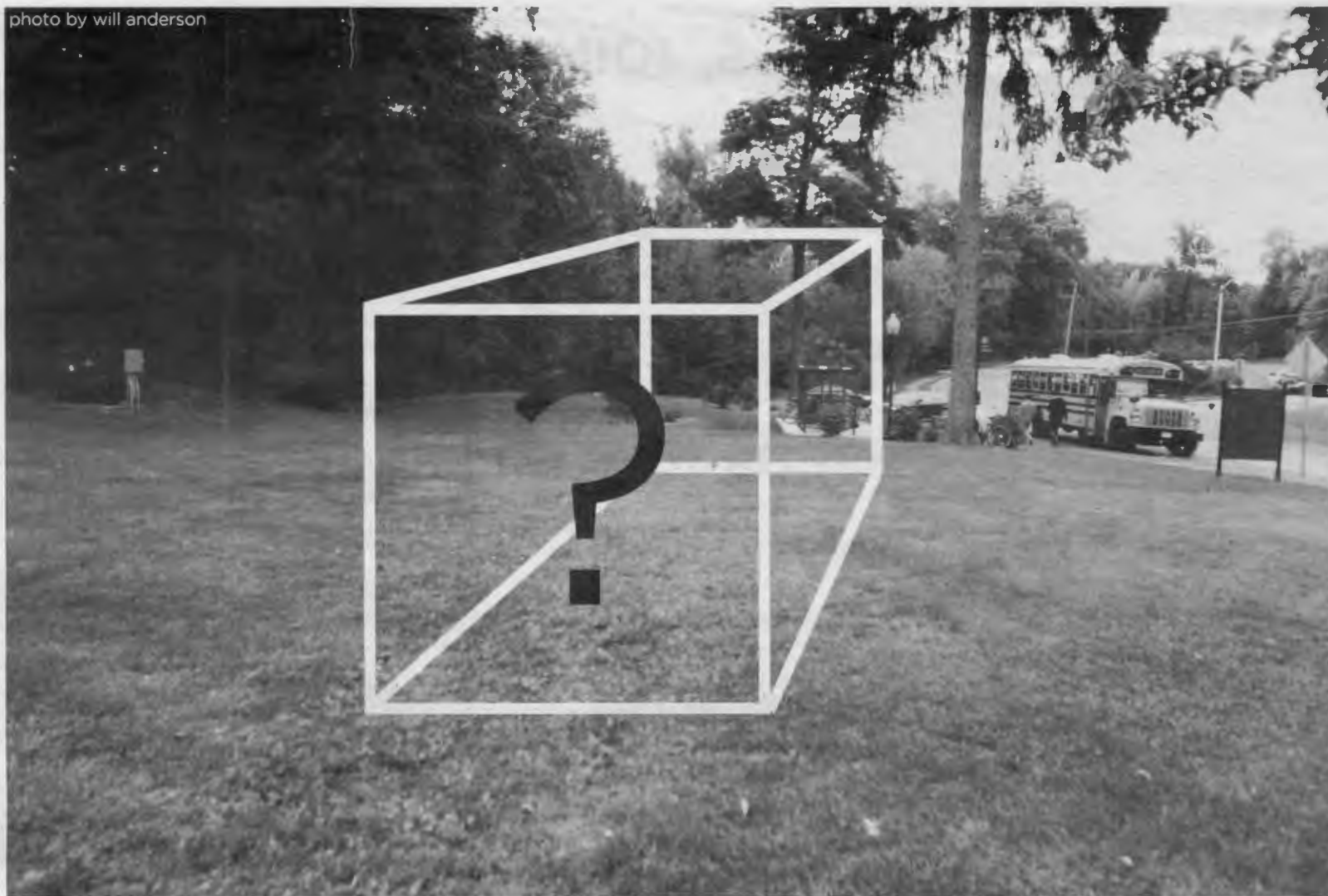
Paul found Bard by accident. In 1994, he moved back to Kingston and was working for his uncle's cabinet business, when Bard hired them to install new cabinets in Ward Manor. One day, while installing cabinets, he struck up a conversation with a Bard electrician. He asked him, "What do I have to do to get a job around here?" Paul started two weeks later. In 2002, he was made head electrician.

Bryan Smith, head of the electrical, telecom and fire safety departments of Buildings and Grounds (B&G), has only been on the job for two months. His office is tucked away in the back of the B&G wood shop. There are four desks squeezed into the room. He sits, his back to the window. His desk is cluttered with paper, a lightbulb box and a thick piece of wire, with countless lines revealed by a cross cut. Bryan looks overwhelmed. The big thing this week was the loss of fire control throughout the village. It appeared that a lightning strike fried most of the Village's fire alarms and AC. All of the systems were able to be fixed relatively quickly, except those in Village A. They had to place a 24-hour fire watch on the building until it could be fixed. Bryan is "just starting to get the ball rolling," figuring out goals for the departments and figuring out how to maneuver and maintain over 70 buildings on Bard's campus.

Lights. That is the electrical department's biggest job. Every time a student or faculty member fills out a service request to change a burnt-out light, it falls to one of the four electricians of B&G. With over 2,000 students and over 70 buildings, that's a lot of lights. Bard uses up one megawatt. That's equal to powering 1,000 homes. "It's like a mini city," Bryan said.

Perhaps that's the way to think of Bard: an infrastructure equal to a small town, run by the men and women of B&G — like Paul and Bryan — who make sure Bard can function day by day.

photo by jody wissner



BARD PLANS FOR FUTURE ERECTION

BY LEVI SHAW-FABER

Before commencement, there will be a new building on the Bard College campus. With fewer than eight months until deadline, the structure, which will be located behind the Kline shuttle stop, does not have a blueprint or even a designated purpose. Architect and artist Adam Kalkin will design the building with input from the Opportunistic Architecture: The Social Art of Building class. In order to get the Alden Trust's \$150,000 donation, the sole funding for the project, the structure must incorporate a shipping container and have video conferencing and digital media capabilities. The Free Press talked to Kalkin about the future of this project.

Free Press: How were you chosen for this project?

Adam Kalkin: I've been told I am the godfather of container architecture or some other organized crime leader. I've been doing it for a long time. I've been doing the coolest stuff and the most verity. I don't do it purely from a sustainable point of view or purely residences or purely commercial buildings. I've done a lot of different stuff; I've written books about it.

FP: How do you feel about the amount of student input on the project?

AK: All architecture comes from certain constituencies and you want to hear as many voices as possible. Clearly you need to do some editing, curating of those voices and see what lines up with what makes a successful building.

FP: What has been the best idea coming from the class so far?

AK: It's more about the tone of what people say, but I hear that there is no central spot where kids can get together and hang out — a successful spot, an intimate spot. I do hear that. That seems real to me. It's not going to be big enough to serve that whole purpose, but I think that's one of things this building needs to do in addition to paying attention to the grant. There is a strong social desire from kids to get together and have coffee or whatever.

FP: Do you have any ideas of how the building can be used as both student space and a digital media classroom?

AK: I think it's unrealistic and a little bit spoiled to think that every space needs to have one use at one time. That's not the reality of the world. Every space needs to have multiple uses. If you are overly specific, things become outdated, obsolete. You need to build flexibility into each space.

FP: Can you estimate how many containers are going to be used?

AK: All [the grant] said was that there needs to be some containers in it. I'm not obsessed with containers as the sole building material.

FP: What is the feasibility of building the structure with the \$150,000 budget?

AK: It's a tough ask. I think we are going to need to raise some money. We need to build it in an unusual and cost-effective way, but we also need to raise some money. We don't need to build a glossy Gehry showpiece, but it's a prime, beautiful location so we don't want to build some impoverished outhouse kind of thing.

FP: Is this the biggest budget challenge you have ever faced?

AK: Yeah it is. This is pretty down and dirty as far as far as budgets go.

FP: So the \$150,000 budget is probably not possible, but what about the timeframe: opening before graduation?

AK: Yeah I do [think it is possible]. We are going to have to kick ass. This is clearly a different way of building than the usual way of, 'let's get a committee together,' OK next month, we are going to do this and next month we are going to do that. We need to have momentum. This is not just a regular building on an accelerated time frame. We are going to need to qualitatively do this in a different way than you would normally do a campus building. I think this is one of the things that makes this specific and special to Bard. If we were doing this at Princeton or Harvard with some massive bureaucracy I don't think it would be possible. It's an experiment. We need to prove that we can do it.

FP: Who are your most prominent architectural influences?

AK: I was a painter before I went to architecture school, so I would say that I am more influenced by certain artists and musicians than architects. I really like some of Duchamp's stuff and Chris Burden. I really like the Beastie Boys.

FP: Two of the Beastie Boys went to Bard.

AK: Did they really? Those are the guys that really... that's cool... that's great stuff.

DON'T CONSUME US, JOIN US

BY ROSEMARY FERREIRA

This is not an article that addresses why most students of color sit together in Kline, or why black students hang out in the Bardian Lounge. We have heard these remarks before in casual conversations, on panels, and in student-government forums. Let's stop scrutinizing students of color and refocus our lens. This article is addressed to you, one of the majority, the white student.

We know you listen to Lil' Wayne in the confines of your dorm room, try to "twerk" when you are with friends, and use our slang when speaking to each other and on social media sites (Ghetto Prep?). Don't play yourself. We know. The consumption, exploitation, and appropriation of black culture is not an isolated incident at Bard; it has been and continues to be a fundamental component of American culture that has been ridiculed when created and performed by blacks and celebrated when appropriated by whites. Although white students actively participate in the appropriation of black culture amongst themselves, parties that are thrown by organizations run by students of color such as BSO, CSA, and LASO, which all try to openly celebrate black and brown culture, are rarely attended by white students. The parties that we, as people of color, throw are the only spaces on campus where we feel comfortable with our black and brown bodies. It is a time when we feel that we are in complete control of a space at Bard. It is a shame that we cannot enjoy these spaces without making you feel uncomfortable.

You see, white students, unlike you, we are not given ownership of most spaces at Bard. This is not only because there are more white students on campus; it is also because of the authors of the literature we read in class and the people who we study are white writers, white scholars, and white thinkers. Where are the people of color, and more specifically women of color, in our L&T binders? In our FYSEM literature? I am aware that we have Martin Luther King, Jr. in L&T and W.E.B. Du Bois in FYSEM. But I wrote *people*, as in *plural*, not just one or two token individuals whose experience has to be generalized for the experiences of all people of color in the U.S. Where are the faculty and staff of color on campus? Therefore, how should we, students of color, feel when we are struggling even to be seen? To be heard? To feel a part of a campus that consistently erases our experiences?

When I dance the Dominican *palo* in the ISO Cultural Show, I am not doing it for you. I am not here for your entertainment or for the expansion of your experience to "culture." I dance *palo* and merengue and bachata and reggaeton to connect to my ancestral past—a past deeply rooted in colonization, the enslavement of African peoples, and a near genocide of the indigenous Tainos. The music and dance of *mi gente* speaks to this history. When I dance, when I shake my ass to a mean dembow beat and when I swing my hips to the tambora, I am engaging in a conversation with my history. You sit in the crowd as a testimony to this experience, nothing more.

You read about me in the classroom. Latin American Politics. Contemporary Immigration. Latinos in the U.S. To you, I am a subject of research and a subject of cultural consumption. This does not have to be our reality if you just listen to me, to us.

We can engage in dialogue. We don't have to speak in the jargon of academia. Instead, we can delve into personal narratives. The personal is, after all, the political. Let's talk about whiteness. Blackness. Brownness. It is real. And it is here at Bard.

DIALOGUES@BARD

SEGREGATED SPACES

BY ROSEMARY FERREIRA, JP LAWRENCE AND TROY SIMON

Lawrence: My name is J.P. Lawrence. I am a senior and I was born in the Philippines and was raised in Minnesota. I am an anthropology major at Bard.

Rosemary: My name is Rosemary Ferreira. I am a senior studying environmental and urban studies with a focus in urban sociology. I was born and raised in Brooklyn and Queens, but my parents are both from the Dominican Republic.

Troy: My name is Troy Simon. I am a sophomore here at Bard College. I am from New Orleans, Louisiana. My intended major is American literature.

Lawrence: The topic of discussion today is the idea of segregated spaces at Bard; the idea that some spaces seem to align themselves a certain way. What does that mean to you?

Rosemary: For me, I feel like when I think of a segregated space, I think automatically of the campus center.

Lawrence: What do you mean by that?

Rosemary: I feel like the campus center is utilized mostly by people of color, in terms of the pool table and the TV room. Since the campus center is the hub of where things happen, I find that the campus center is a space for people of color.

Lawrence: Okay, so is that a problem?

Rosemary: No, because I feel like it's sort of like a home for us.

Lawrence: So why isn't everywhere a home?

Rosemary: Well, I feel like the classroom doesn't feel as much like a home for some people.

Lawrence: Why not?

Rosemary: I feel like that is where the white student really owns the space.

Troy: The reason why I felt kind of isolated is because I was like the only "black oreo" inside of the classroom. I come from the South, and in the South there were mostly black students in my classroom. Here, it actually made me afraid to speak, so I would wait for everyone else to speak, assess my intelligence level, and then I would start speaking.

Lawrence: That seems detrimental to your classroom experience.

Troy: One of the reasons why I came to Bard was because I wanted to be around people who looked different from me. When I get around with those people who look differently from me, I can learn more. I truly believe that, but I did feel a little uncomfortable because these people aren't the same color as I am. I believe I broke out of it after my spring semester. I realized that some people actually struggle with the same things that I struggle with, and they might not tell me, but they are struggling. So I realized that from my first year experience and that's what actually made me come out of the thick eggshell that I was in at first.

Lawrence: Because the classroom is all mostly one way, people of color come to the campus center as a kind of refuge of some sort. So it's almost like it's defeating the idea of coming to a campus and meeting all kinds of diverse people, if the people from all these different backgrounds clump together. What do you think?

Rosemary: Well I think that's an argument that I heard before, where it's like "oh the people of color, why are they all sitting together?"

Lawrence: Well, why are they?

Rosemary: Well I think it's about being comfortable. I don't want to put the blame mostly on students of color for wanting to feel comfortable on a campus that is constantly making them feel uncomfortable.

Lawrence: How so?

Rosemary: I'm also now going to introduce the idea of socioeconomic class. Because most of the people of color on this campus, I'm not saying all of them, but most that I know, also come from low-income families. So they also have an education that wasn't as great, so when you're in the classroom, you feel intimidated. I mean that's your life, here at Bard; you're a student, and you're feeling intimidated to do your own job.

Troy: People from low-income backgrounds actually have different cultural experiences than people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and those people have unique ways to communicate. The high class has a unique way to communicate.

Lawrence: What you're saying about this uncomfortableness—I'm reminded of the humidity in Florida. Like when you're in Florida, and you have this humidity around you at all times, and it's uncomfortable, and other people are totally fine with it, because they're used to it, but it's something that's always there that you're always cognizant of, at least a little bit, and then sometimes, of course, you want to go to where there's air condition-

ing. And for people of color, you're saying that that's the campus center?

Rosemary: It's when you're constantly feeling like you're not welcomed on campus because you don't really see yourself in most of the students, or you don't see yourself in the faculty or in the staff. Now, I think the staff is a little bit different, and again, that's why I think the campus center is important, because you have people like Brian Mateo. Also BEOP is another space of mostly people of color, and that for me personally has always been a refuge when I felt like I don't know what I'm doing here. I always go to BEOP and I feel comfortable because I know that the people understand me culturally.

Lawrence: This is something I've heard: like why can't everyone just forget about race? Just be colorblind and not even think about it?

Rosemary: Well because it's a part of who I am. Me as a Latina—that's a part of my identity and I'm not willing to let that go because you don't want to see color. You don't want to see me as a Latina because you don't want to see your own race or your own whiteness or whatever it is. I am still going to support my racial identity, my ethnic identity. That gets me pissed off when people are colorblind, like "I don't see color" because that's such bullshit. Of course you see color and your interactions with people are colored and I never want to throw away that part of my identity.

Troy: I am an African-American. In this country, my people were an oppressed group that fought for their civil rights. If I let that go, I would lose what life really means for me. They fought for my ability to go to a place like Bard. You ever heard of that poem by Maya Angelou, "I am the dream and the hope of the slaves." I got to live that. I have to back her words up with my own life. It's like I am a walking apostle, right?

Lawrence: I've had a different experience as an immigrant. I was here when I was three and I basically grew up in a predominately white community. So I assimilated pretty extensively, and it is actually kind of sad, when I go back to the Philippines, I realize how much of my culture I lost—I can't relate to my heritage. It is really important I think to hang on to portions of your identity, because once



Maya Sommer, 2013



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you lose it, you realize how much you lose when you try to go back home.

But now, what's the solution? You might be comfortable around people who get your jokes, get your language, get your tics and rituals, but maybe everyone in other groups has that same thing and if everyone has that same thing, no one is ever going to branch out.

Troy: I purposely talk to students who are different from me. I do it on purpose because I believe if I don't explore new landmarks of opportunity I won't be able to rub off this uncomfortableness that I'm feeling towards other races. I think I will continue to stay in my shell. I am forcing myself to talk to a lot of other people. Once I get comfortable around them I can actually come out my shell and start saying some things that may be funny. I am not a funny person at all, but at least I try. And that is my way of getting around it.

BARD'S LABELS LOST

A CASE FOR LABEL-FREE LEARNING

BY ADAM TURNER '06

Shakespeare wrote, "This above all: to thine own self be true." The beauty of Bard College is that over the years, this has been a place where students are encouraged to be their "own self." This "self" has no rules and regulations guarding it. Each student is charged to become the person he or she wants to be and the college challenges students to never stop thinking and analyzing what that means.

This "own self" is something individual students must search for in their own way. Bardians find themselves in the classroom, in art studios, inside music practice rooms, in dorms on a weekend night, and on the court of competition in Stevenson Athletic Center.

As a high school senior 11 years ago, I wanted to find a college where I could find myself. I found high school to be extremely limiting in many ways because of the closed minds of my fellow students. High school was full of labels: the jocks, the geeks, the theater kids, the marching band, the TV station kids, the overachievers, the burn outs, etc. Everyone had a label.

Looking back, I don't think being labeled was the root of the problem. The real problem was when students judged others based on preconceived labels without knowing the person behind the label. With everyone so obsessed with which label they were associated with (because that is how you were going to be judged ultimately), it was hard for anyone to truly find that "own self."

I wanted more out of a college. I wanted a place that was friendly, inclusive, and most importantly, open to different ways of life. At Bard, I found this community. Everyone here was able to find and pursue their passions without those around them passing judgment. Whether you were a musician, athlete, or science student, Bard was a place that encouraged you to be your "own self" without fear of exclusion or ridicule.

Bard has been in a state of constant growth over the last decade, making the school a stronger, more dynamic and diverse institution. Having people who

are passionate about different areas of study and extracurricular activities has made Bard a better place. When we surround ourselves with difference and we embrace that difference, we enable ourselves to grow. This is what Bard College is about.

I expect our student body to question, critique, and never stop challenging the administration to make Bard the best place possible. But I also expect students at this incredible institution to support each other. Whether the person sitting next to you is an artist, musician, scientist, athlete, TLS Scholar, writer or some combination of the group, it is up to the students to carry on the tradition of Bard College.

That tradition has nothing to do with making sure that we all fit into certain labels and that different types of people are excluded. That tradition is about creating a community of inclusion, acceptance, and open mindedness, no matter what label the person next to us may be subjected to.



Maya Sommer, 2013

SHAKE THE DUST

A SYRIAN TWIST ON SOCIAL PARALYSIS

BY NINA DE PUY KAMP AND SAGIV GALAI

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."
-MLK, Letter from Birmingham Jail

Here's what we know:

1) As a premise to the conception of the new world order, a system meant to serve and protect all sovereign entities on earth, a mantra was established after World War II by the U.N.: "Never Again"—from which the regime of Human Rights began.

2) The world order and its power structures have rendered the individual utterly paralyzed. It is governed by power relations, motivated by narrow self-interest of superpowers hidden under a cloak of benevolent humanitarian language.

3) The institutions which are due to act as oversight and fair mediators among the states are modulated to serve the volition of these powerful entities, who were incidentally their creators.

4) Syria: the conflict has lasted the years. As of now, 100,000 are estimated dead. Approximately a million refugees are spread across the region, and millions are internally displaced. Multiple attempts by the U.N. and other entities to resolve this conflict peacefully have failed due to mis-approach or interception by the Security Council. The conflict has developed into an utmost complicated case in which none of the parties involved seem capable of leading the country through a positive transition.

So where does this leave us? Where does the responsibility for peace reside? Is there such a thing as a responsibility to protect? And if so, is it ours?

It strikes us as legitimate to characterize our student body with this statement:

"I know, I care, but what the fuck do you want me to do about it?"

As a response, we confess with the

same tone of frustration: we have no clue how to change the reality on the ground. Yet we are constantly searching for a pathway through which our passions can manifest themselves. Let us start by talking about it all more seriously. Talking, thinking, willing will not be the end. Just like protests in Kline should not be an end; they launch us on the road of conceptualizing our abilities and inabilities.

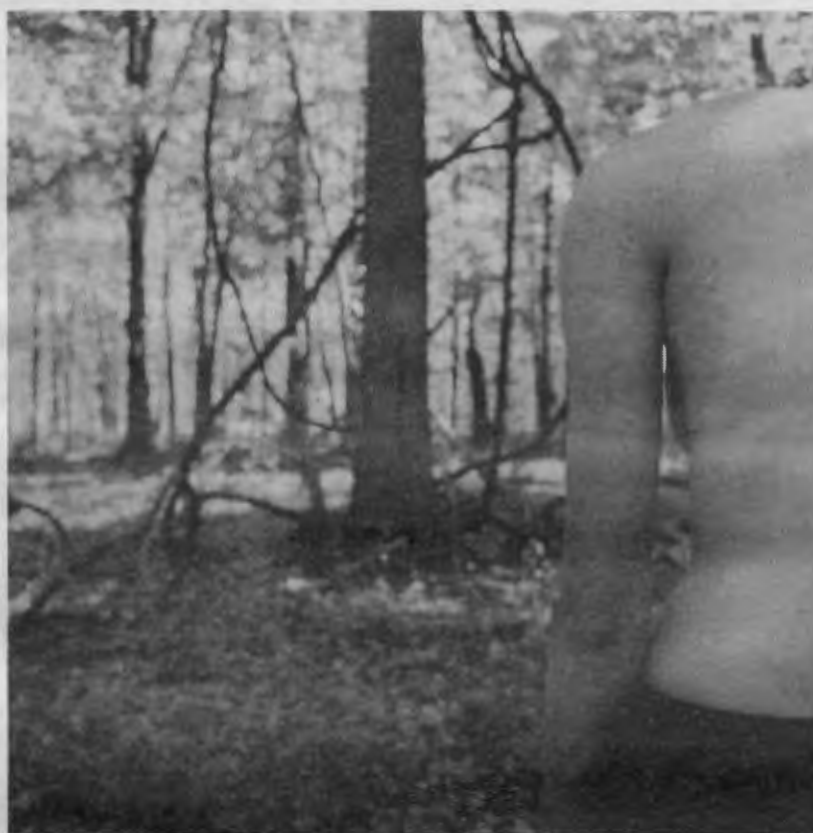
Do we have a right to apathy? Do we, in reverence of our social positions, have the right to disengage our hearts, minds, and hands, because of the awareness of the obstacles laying in our path to revolutionary global reform? Do we have the right to shut up and plug out?

There seems to be a point where criticism and pessimism collide to yield the intellectual. The intellectual often finds himself shackled to the throne of observation. We as students are guided by our hearts just as much as by our minds.

The obstacles that face our generation are as obvious as our capacity and potential to act beyond these limitations. Freedom is will, knowledge, and action, and never any of these features independently. We have no answer to the pursuit of action, yet we will not be constrained by the right to apathy.

We will not be paralyzed by excessive theoretical proof. We will instead utilize the academia to fit our purpose. Power is concerted action. Power is asserted energy. Power is a student body transcending the mantra of thought.

We welcome you to a new semester, and invite you to start lighting shit on fire.



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