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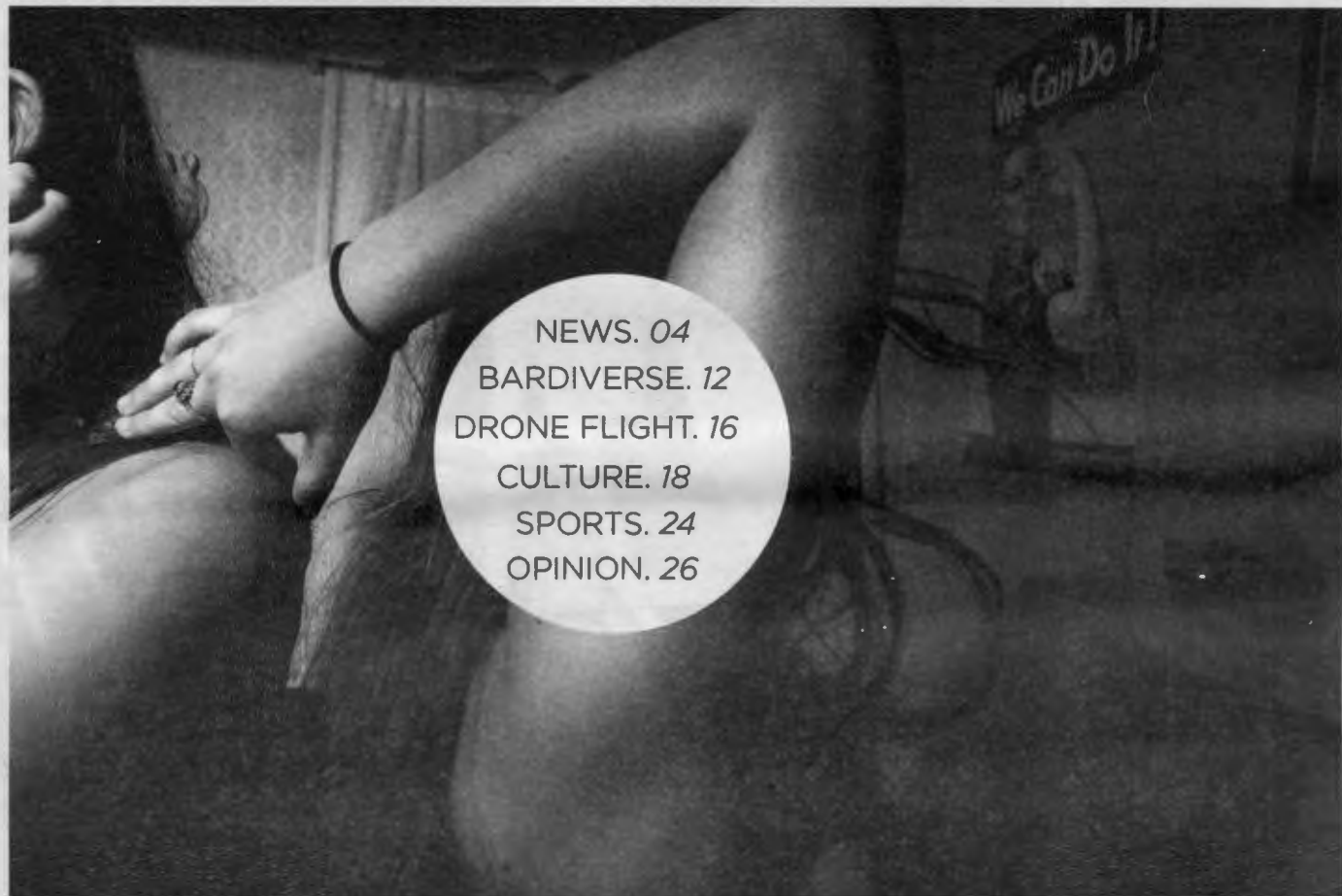
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[TERMS]

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LETTERS

In response to "New Kids on Campus"

To whom it may concern:

This morning I witnessed a brief altercation between a Kline employee and a Bard student, both of whom shall remain nameless for obvious reasons. The dispute arose because the student had his friend fetch him an eight-ounce cup of coffee, but had not paid for a meal. The result of this, and the reason he was chastised by Kline staff, is that he received a free cup of coffee.

I understand the obvious reasoning behind the choice to chastise the student. That one cup of coffee can evolve into a major expense for Chartwells if others, seeing the example, follow suit. One cup of coffee can turn into hundreds of free meals. This point I concede.

What I find disappointing is the fact that Kline employees are willing to publicly scold a potential customer, a student, in order to save a few dollars, but unwilling to adjust their strategy based on the business principle of supply and demand. Go into the dish room of Kline on any given day and you'll see the extent to which Kline loses money. Plates upon plates of food fill the waste bins. Hundreds of dollars worth of meals and labor—more than that of a few cups of coffee—fill those bins every day.

Perhaps part of the reason for this waste is that Bardians' eyes are bigger than their stomachs. Perhaps it is the poor quality of the food served at Kline. On a given day, one is bound to find undercooked dishes, sometimes still frozen. Variety is hard to come by. Things tend to be hugely over-salted. But I digress.

Kline's priority should be to create a comfortable, inviting dining environment for Bard students. After all, we're paying \$10 for a given meal. For what reason does Kline find it more important to chastise a student for a cup of coffee than to serve meals that won't be thrown into garbage bins?

Sincerely,

Stuart Leach

Dear Bard,

The new speedbumps by the RKC are like really, really, really sharp. My car is really low to the ground, and every time I go over the speedbumps, it feels like my car is literally splitting in half. When I'm driving to class from a different class, it scares me to drive over them.

But seriously, they're ruining my car. You'll be buying me a new sedan.

Best,

Katy Schneider

"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."

This seems to me a ridiculous proposition...Look at the schools Bard is competing with academically: Vassar, Wesleyan, Oberlin, etc. These schools have robust athletic programs that pale in comparison to the academic experience offered. Bard's athletic program has grown marginally, but in conjunction with its growing national profile and increased academic rigor, just as all other elite liberal art schools have done. To say that Bard would one day put sports over its lauded photography program is ridiculous, and the author doesn't really seem to challenge that notion.

Indeed, he affirms [the notion] with a hilarious quote: "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 don't know if J.P. meant to be condescending when he asked an athlete a question about a middle eastern country dealing with war crimes at a party, the "lark" suggests he was, but come on, can you blame the kid?

- commented by 'voodoo child' on 9/26/13

I'm a senior this year, and I was at matriculation (PC) — it offered a lot of perspective on the role of sports in Bard's future, although the freshman might not have known how important what they were hearing was. *Botstein* didn't acknowledge the increased number of athletes in the class of 2017, but he *did* talk at length about how sports have been responsible almost single-handedly for a decline in the quality of higher education around the country. He made a couple very clear statements about how sports are not why anyone should be seeking an undergraduate degree — they offer recreation and fun, sure, but they're not what anyone should be spending the majority of their effort on while they're here — and clarifying that they'll never take on that role at Bard.

Just think it's worth mentioning, as there's a great deal of concern I've heard amongst the student body about how this is somehow "just the beginning" of some unpreventable march towards being a Division I school.

- commented by "Josh Corner" on 10/3/13

ARBITRATOR RULES IN FAVOR OF HOUSEKEEPERS COLLEGE APPEALS

BY ABBY ZIEVE



photos by anna low-beer

A year and a half ago, Jody Cerasano was fired from her position as Tewksbury's housekeeper. After appealing the decision through her union, she was reinstated, only to have it taken away again as her employment was called into question once more.

"I was really excited when I got reinstated, excited about going back to work, and then I found out [the college] was throwing us for another loop," Cerasano said in a phone interview.

The money she receives from from the multiple part-time jobs she works is not enough to afford driving across the river to have an in-person interview. Cerasano's unemployment benefits have expired in the months she's been waiting for a decision on her job.

Until 2012, Aramark, an outside contractor, employed Bard's housekeepers. The workers were brought in-house as a result of campaigning by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Student Labor Dialogue (SLD) during the last year of Aramark's three-year contract. As this contract ran out, a 90-day probationary period was established at the end of that year, during which the college would evaluate the workers and decide whether or not to adopt them permanently as Bard employees.

The housekeepers, according to Cerasano, were nervous about the process, but understood it was a natural way to transi-

'On day 91 everyone started breathing easy,' Cerasano remembers. 'Unfortunately, they were wrong.'

tion. This understanding dissipated when she and five other workers were fired after the 90-day mark had passed.

"On day 91 everyone started breathing easy," Cerasano remembers. "Unfortunately, they were wrong."

Under normal circumstances, when a worker is fired, an employer must be able to prove just cause—that they had reasonable

and non-discriminatory grounds for their decision. The probationary period essentially relieved Bard of this responsibility. During the 90 days, the housekeepers were "at-will" employees, meaning their terminations were not reliant on reasonable justifications, and they were not under the protection of any contract.

Since the school did not administer the decisions within these 90 days, when Cerasano walked into Ludlow and was informed of her termination, she was under protection of a contract, and therefore her union as well.

The latter was the evidence used in support of these workers when the SEIU brought the college's decision to fire the workers to arbitration. The arbitration culminated in a two-part response: firstly, that the

After the decision was made in the first arbitration, the college, in an action that essentially appealed the decision, wrote a letter to the arbitrator asking them to agree to a different standard.

contract applied and the issue was indeed arbitrative; and second of all, that the employees should be reinstated and given back pay.

After the decision was made in the first arbitration, the college, in an action that essentially appealed the decision, wrote a letter to the arbitrator asking them to agree to a different standard—whether or not they had just cause in the individual cases, and therefore the right to terminate them. This presented a significant change in the college's position considering they claimed the right to fire the workers after the 90 days without just cause during the first arbitration.

"It was our fault, our lack of knowledge," said Vice President of Administration Jim Brudvig, "an arcane

piece of union contractual language says that when you have a 90-day probation, make sure you fire them on the 89th day, because when it's the 90th day and one minute over you lose. They weren't good employees on the 89th day and they're not going to be good employees on the 91st day."

The SLD has started a campaign to inform the campus and put pressure on the administration to treat the housekeepers in a way they feel is just. They believe the issues of worker's rights are relevant to the whole Bard community.

"The fact that we are attending this college and workers are being treated in a manner we think is unjust is affecting us, and we have a moral responsibility to make sure the campus we attend treats workers in a certain manner," said senior Lucas Duffy-Tumasz, an SLD member.

"It's not just that we feel bad, we want to enter a world where there are stable jobs that are possible and not exploitive," senior Molly Jacobs-Meyer, also an SLD member, said.

Jeff Wyatt, the union representative assigned defend the housekeepers, said the arbitrator's reasoning in agreeing to change the standard was because the probationary standard is much lower than that of just cause.

"The thought may have been that if the college can prove just cause for termination, then they had the right to terminate the six employees just like they would have the right to terminate any employee under that higher standard," Wyatt said.

For the time being, Cerasano and the five other employees remain in a limbo state. Because these arbitrations have stretched on so long, they have lost unemployment benefits and are living on little to no income as they wait to find out if they will get back the jobs many of them

still consider rightly their own. The lengthiness of the ordeal has begun to put pressure on both the housekeepers and the college to reach a settlement, and some of the workers have begun to waver under the dire realities of their economic situations.

"That's the advantage the college has in all these things—the longer they wait, the more it hurts the workers," said Wyatt. "Pushing it down the road increases the chances that the workers will settle for less than they deserve."

Cerasano, however, remains adamant that she will settle for nothing less than her job. "I just want my job back," she said. "I feel that they were wrong. They had 90 days. They made the rules and then they broke them."

The workers are not the only party whose financial situation is being affected. The college splits the cost of an arbitrator with the union, which comes close to \$1,500 and \$2,000 for each day of hearings, along with the cost of their lawyer. "How much this is costing in time and misery—we'll see," said Brudvig. "I truly believe that whatever result comes that Bard intended no slight on anybody."

Arbitration is not the only issue on the table between the college and the housekeepers. The administration is currently negotiating a new contract that will replace the one they adopted from Aramark, a process that has led to even further tensions between the parties involved. Brudvig was originally heading up the negotiations, but he recently removed himself from the negotiating table because, in his own words, he didn't see his presence there being productive. Coleen Murphy Alexander, Associate Vice President for Administration and Campus Operations, has since taken his place in the negotiations.

"There has to be some fiscal discipline involved in bringing them aboard, and they didn't seem to hear me on that," Brudvig explained. "So we got involved in some kind of back and forth on what I thought were silly matters."

One contentious proposal limits the contract's grievance mechanism, which eliminates the union's right to grieve any disciplinary actions that are not terminations. This stemmed from the administration's frustration with workers challenging every write-up their superiors dole out.

"That's fine that they can challenge it, but at some point it's got to come to an end. And the end shouldn't always be an expensive arbitrator we have to bring in to hear things that should be settled in house," Brudvig said.

Both the union and SLD find a flaw in this reasoning because it strips away the union's power to provide protections for the employees.

"If a manager didn't like you and wanted to get rid of you, this makes it a lot easier for them because there's no one to stand up and say no, that's not right," Wyatt said. "It's a very onerous clause from the respect of the union."

Both the language of the contract and Cerasano's job remain in flux as the union and college continue to butt heads. The one thing agreed upon is the unwillingness of either side to waver despite monetary pressures and the growing involvement of a broader campus community.

"Bard prides itself on being a progressive institution," said Jacobs-Meyer. "But when they're offering something that would be a pay decrease when the base pay is below a living wage, we can mobilize the campus around these things because it's not the Bard that was described to us when we visited."



FIELD OF DREAMS

WHY CAN'T BASEBALL FIND A HOME IN ANNANDALE?

BY WILL ANDERSON

It was a wet and dreary morning, but Kris Hall, Bard's director of athletics, had to give a tour. In a car, along with Vice President for Administration Jim Brudvig, Hall drove through the trail that encircles the woods behind Stevenson Gym. For about an hour, they talked about the site, stopping and getting out at various points: Hall noted where home plate would be, the site for the future dugouts, and where the scoreboard would soon stand. Orange mesh fences had been placed under the dripping foliage to represent the outfield. This was going to be the site of Bard's first baseball field. At least, that was the plan.

The story of this baseball field begins well before that morning. But it was on that day last May when, by most accounts, the story was going to reach a new chapter. The project had been in development for nearly two years, with a number of factors impeding its progress. Simultaneously, baseball at Bard had grown. Since 2010, the program had evolved from a club sport with fewer than 15 students to an NCAA varsity team, with two full-time coaches, a 32-player roster, and a full 40-game schedule. All they needed was a field. And it seemed like they were about to get one.

It should be noted that there was actually one other person in that car with Hall and Brudvig. He was, in fact, the reason for the tour to begin with. This is because in fall 2011, he had promised Bard the money for the field in question. At the donor's request, his identity has not been revealed by the college.

The tour last May was meant to signify the final step in the two-year long process. The idea was that, after the tour, the donor would approve

the college dropped the sport in 1937 based on a survey distributed to its 106 students. It remained absent in Annandale for more than 70 years.

But then came James Chambers. Most call him Jim.

Chambers re-enrolled at Bard in 2010 after leaving the college several years earlier—he planned on getting his degree in Russian studies. It should be noted that Chambers did not exactly represent your typical Bard student. He was 26-years old,

and he shared his passion for the sport. He put up flyers, advertised on campus, and even helped the athletic department recruit high school seniors who could play; he ended up recruiting a dozen or so players. Chambers became the team's nucleus—he was a player, the manager, and the coach of the team. They played their first season that following fall.

The team mostly competed against local schools and club teams. They won some games, but mostly lost. But the enthusiasm and commitment of the team stayed strong. Players showed up for practice. They traveled across state lines for games. They worked hard and developed and grew more comfortable as a team. And they got better.

But there were also setbacks. Since they were a club sport, the team often played against schools that far outmatched their experience and skill. They also received no funding from the athletics department, and were forced to pay out of pocket for things like travel costs and jerseys. And, of course, they didn't have a field of their own. The club used a field in Red Hook, but its small size limited the teams it could play against. Eventually they switched to Dutchess Community College's field

According to Hall and Kahovec, once the donor agrees to the new budget, building can begin within seven days. But it has been nearly 18 months since the college first asked the donor to increase his gift, and he has to yet to agree.

the project. Construction would begin over the summer. The field would be finished in the fall. And the newly-formed varsity baseball team would host their first home game in the spring.

But things don't always go according to plan.

THE FIRST PITCH

In the most general sense, baseball has hardly existed at Bard; the col-

lege son of Anne Cox Chambers (the 53rd-richest person in the world), and already had a wife and three kids. He also loved baseball.

When he returned to Bard, he bought a house in Tivoli and moved his family up to the Hudson Valley. He started a gym in Hudson. He began to think about his senior project. And, in the spring of 2010, he decided to help bring baseball back to Bard in the form of a club sport.

His first step was to look for stu-



in Wappinger Falls, but this required an hour commute every time they played.

It was around this time when an anonymous donor approached the college. According to Hall, the individual had noticed that the newly-formed baseball team was struggling without a home field.

The donor offered a set amount of \$1.2 million. The athletic department announced the gift in November 2011. They hailed the donation as the catalyst that could help bring baseball back to Bard. Plans were undertaken to make the baseball team a varsity sport. The college hired Chambers as head coach. The hope was that by spring 2013, the field would be ready.

A FIELD OF DREAMS

The logistics of the field should probably be explained. When anyone in the athletic department starts to talk about it—about the thought and efforts and hopes that have all gone into its construction—you can hear their voices peak with genuine excitement. This is because it's not going to be just any baseball field: it will include a turf surface, the first of its kind at Bard. It will have stadium lights, allowing for evening games. The dugouts and press box will replicate those at major league parks. The facility is large enough to accommodate nearly 170 fans. There will be proper fencing, an electronic scoreboard, and bullpens. According to Hall, it's not just going to be the finest field in the region—as far as Division III schools go, it will be one of the finest fields in the country.

For a team that is used to practicing in the gym and elementary parks, it has the potential to change everything.

But getting to the actual design of the field has not been without complications. Initially, a number of sites were considered. Using land on North Campus was proposed, but was scrapped because it conflicted with another building project in the college's master plan. Another site, where the current solar panels sit behind the soccer field, had to be reconsidered due to size constraints. The proposal of using the current dump site, near SMOG, was also dismissed due to unstable ground.

The athletic department landed on the current site, in the Enchanted Forest behind the Stevenson Athletic Center, based on its flat ground and proximity to current facilities.

But even once the site was decided, new obstacles emerged. In order for construction to begin, the area had to undergo an archaeological survey. While this was expected to be completed by January 2012, the presence of ancient arrowheads, a bat population, and an especially rough winter delayed the dig's completion until mid-spring. The survey also led to a slight adjustment of the field's placement in order to avoid ancient artifacts. Because of this, the construction project could not be approved by the Red Hook Planning Board until August 2012.

But the biggest obstacle has been far more fundamental: when all of the field's costs and amenities are tallied up, its budget significantly exceeds the original donation that spearheaded the project. Even after the field's size was reduced from 420 square feet to 390, the entire project still cost \$2.5 million—more than double the size of the original gift. According to Bard's Development Office, the college decided they were not willing to absorb the difference in cost. And because the college doesn't have a tra-

dition of baseball, the prospects of finding another donor to meet the gap is extremely unlikely.

So, around spring 2012, the college did the only thing it could do: it asked the original donor if he was willing to increase his gift to meet the project's full budget. They stressed that in order for the construction to begin, the donor had to approve the new amount.

The donor didn't agree to the new amount—but he also didn't disagree. The college nudged the donor several times, and claims he is still committed to the prospect of a baseball field at Bard.

While all of this was going on, there were ongoing changes to the baseball team as well. Recruitment for the team increased considerably in order to ready the team for varsity competition. And then, at the end of the 2012 semester, Jim Chambers abruptly left the college and resigned as head coach of the team. According to a former member of the baseball team, they received no warning or explanation as to why Chambers left the team he helped create.

In response, the college hired Ed Kahovec, an assistant coach at the University of Rochester, in August 2012. The college moved forward with its plans to make the team a varsity sport, and continued to hope that a field would be ready for them by the spring 2013.

On March 3, 2013, the Bard Raptors began their season with an away game against Yeshiva University. It was Bard's first varsity baseball game since 1937.

Ryan Conklin, a first-year pitcher, struck out 14 players and threw a one-hitter. Nolan Reece, a senior who had been on the original club team, hit a two-out single and stole second in the sixth inning. Cooper Roberts, then a junior and Chamber's first formal recruit two years earlier, hit a score-earning single.

The Raptors won.

BASES LOADED

With the permits granted, the site approved, and the plans finalized, the baseball field is ready for construction. According to Hall and Kahovec, once the donor agrees to the new budget, building can begin within seven days.

But it has been nearly 18 months since the college first asked the donor to increase his gift, and he has to yet to agree. After the tour of the site with Hall and Brudvig, the college expected everything to be finalized by the summer. But June, July, and August all came and went without any update.

In September, President Botstein's office developed an action plan to facilitate discussions with the donor. Botstein recently wrote a letter to the donor, explaining the need to begin construction as soon as possible. According to a member of the Development Office, the donor responded by talking about something else.

Despite the continued delay, the athletic department remains optimistic that a compromise will soon be reached. Their eyes continue to light up when the field is discussed. Players on the team continue to gear up for the spring season. And everyone hopes that this will be the year when Bard can host its first true home game in Annandale.

And in the Enchanted Forest, where Hall and Brudvig and the donor toured five months ago, the markings for the field remain. You can see where home plate will be. You can see where the stands will go; you can almost visualize an outfield.



General Elections will be held on Nov. 5. Dutchess County Legislator candidates for the 20th district are Micki Walsh-Strawinski and Ben Traudt.

BEN TRAUDT (R)

It has been an honor to serve my hometown in the Dutchess County Legislature for the past four years. In that time, I have voted for three consecutive county budgets that stay under the property tax cap, supported four consecutive Dutchess Community College budgets that keep its tuition lowest in the state, and sponsored legislation to protect over 100 acres of farmland in our community. As Environmental Committee chairman, I worked to pass Dutchess County's Local Solid Waste Management Plan since 1992, which triples our county's recycling goals. Additionally, I have helped secure over \$350,000 in grants for sidewalk im-

provements as well as improvements to Tivoli's Memorial Park. No matter what the issue has been, I have always worked hard to make sure that I have represented the needs of my constituents. It is my top priority to continue to work with my colleagues as well as the county executive to make sure that Red Hook has a strong and effective voice in Dutchess County government. I believe that my record of accomplishment, the experience I have gained, and the respect I have earned from my colleagues has put me in the best position to be that effective voice on behalf of our community for the next two years.

MICKI WALSH-STRAWINSKI (D)

I grew up in Dutchess County and graduated from FDR High School in 1974. I have been married for 29 years to my husband, Doug, and we have two children. Both are graduates of Red Hook High School and Pace University.

While raising my family I worked full-time, dedicated myself to my children's activities and volunteered in my community. I have served on PTAs, committees on special education, and have organized a number of community service projects, including food and winter coat drives and town-wide clean ups. I am a proud 13-year employee of Bard College and am currently the student employment manager.

In 2007, I was elected for a four-year term on the Red Hook Town Board. During my tenure we passed smarter, tax-saving budgets, protected our town's rural quality of life by adopting the highly-praised Centers and Green Spaces Plan,

kept hundreds of acres of farmland and open space from development through the Purchase of Development Rights program and, with grant money, installed solar panels on the town hall and firehouse and hired an energy consultant who developed the Energy and Climate Action Plan for Red Hook.

My platform for the county legislature is simple: While I am committed to listening and fairness, I will not be afraid to ask questions and challenge government officials when I believe their decisions are not in the best interest of the people of Dutchess County. I will vehemently oppose a new \$200 million corrections facility and work toward improvements to the county's criminal justice system as a whole. And I will keep the people of Red Hook and Tivoli informed about county issues through a regularly published newsletter.

NEWS-BRIEFS

/ BARDFREEPRESS.COM

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OFFICE GOES IN ON "OUT FOR WORK"

BY TROY SIMON

The Career Development Office is offering a new resource called "Out For Work" for Bard College students.

This site serves as a one-stop location for everything LGBTQ-career related: job searching, resumes, interviews, information on coming out at work, and more.

"It's for the LGBTQ community and allies," says April Kinser, director of the Bard College Career Development Office.

Out for Work (OFW) is a resource for LGBTQ students who want to research career opportunities. The website, outforwork.org, includes lists of jobs, an online library for career advice, and conferences that students can attend. Students who access the OFW resource can receive help with their resumes. Once students login, there is a calendar of events and conferences they can attend. Students who want to utilize the resource can use the username "outforwork" and the password "cccp2013."

NEW BUTT FEELINGS SWEEP ACROSS CAMPUS

BY MADI GAVIN

On Oct. 3, students in the Manor and Manor Annex dorms reached down for some toilet paper and realized that it was already brown. The new product on campus is Cascades Moka bathroom tissue, notable for its beige color.

Director of Environmental Services Michael Bemis and Manager of Environmental Services Brian Kiel spearheaded the toilet paper change. Bemis and Kiel were appointed to their positions in March of 2012 to lead the new in-house Environmental Services Team. The toilet paper project is one of their first large undertakings since Bard stopped using a private contractor for its environmental and cleaning services.

"It's been eight or nine months, maybe, that we've had it over at Olin," Kiel said. "It's been in the new Bitó Conservatory since it opened, and also in the new Alumni/ae Center." Although a gradual installation is still underway, the old white toilet paper will be in the Stevenson Athletic Center for a while longer.

"We're going to [allocate the old toilet paper to] the gym until we use up all of the supply. Just so we're not discarding," says Bemis.

The project's aim is to increase sustainability on campus. The toilet paper is made from 100 percent recycled fibers—80 percent of which is post-consumer material, and 20 percent of which is corrugated box fiber. The bathroom tissue's production is also more environmentally friendly, as Cascades offsets 100 percent of the electricity used for production with wind-generated electricity. Kiel emphasizes that this change will play a part in Bard College's goal of carbon neutrality by 2035.

In terms of the budgetary implications of the process, Bemis says that it's too early to tell how much money the undertaking will save. In the past, the Environmental Services Team spent approximately \$80,000 yearly on the traditional toilet paper and paper towels combined. Kiel adds, "we don't expect to save half that or even a huge amount, but if we can cut five

percent, that's significant."

The savings on the toilet paper will go back into the Environmental Services department. "We need to continually replace and add to our supply of equipment—new vacuums, instead of the \$180 vacuums that break all of the time. So we'd invest in newer vacuums, more window washing equipment...Hopefully we see the savings," says Bemis.

Now that the toilet paper installation is expanding to the whole campus, some students praise the product. Junior Rashad Crooks says, "I like it a lot. I was indifferent at first, but I think that if it's good for the environment, then it's a good thing." The new toilet paper has not impressed first-year David Mamukelashvili. "It's rough, but I don't care," he said. "I'm in college; I care about what professors I have, not the toilet paper I use."

The important thing is that the toilet paper is more sustainable. As first-year Adrienne Chau said, "same shit, different toilet paper."

As soon as next semester, a female student on the second floor of Olin won't have to go all the way to the third or first floor to pee. But better yet, a non-gender conforming student won't have to choose a bathroom either way.

The second floor bathrooms in the Campus Center and the second and third floor bathrooms in Olin will be gender-neutral in an effort to facilitate a community supportive of gender-neutral people.

Those who feel uncomfortable with gender neutrality can still have separated bathrooms, and those who feel uncomfortable with separated bathrooms can avoid publicly identifying.

The gender-neutral bathroom effort is spearheaded by the Student Life Committee, the Queer-Straight Alliance, and the Trans-Action Initiative, with leadership from juniors Elisa Caffrey, Morganne Sample and Jasper Katz.

"We realized there was a need for this last spring," senior Rosette Cirillo, Speaker for the Student Senate, said. She noted her privilege as a cisgendered woman to be able to use the bathroom with comfort. Cirillo said the administration has so far been "very supportive" of the issues of gender neutrality.

"Bard does an okay job with it," she said. She said she's worried about students who are transitioning genders,

bodied person wearing a skirt, or to see a student blend general notions of gender.

Going to the bathroom, this movement argues, shouldn't impede a person's identity.

"It's such a public statement to make about your gender," Cirillo said. "Making a decision about where you have to go to the bathroom is so silly."

The administration told the student government to poll similar schools to see how they make their respective campuses receptive to non-gender conforming and transgender students.

At Oberlin College, there are four categories of bathrooms: bathrooms for male students, female students, students of neither gender and students of all genders.

"Some schools are really far ahead. At Hampshire [College], they don't even have signs," Sample said.

Cirillo wonders if there are such vibrant non-gender conforming communities on other campuses, and in other pockets of the world. Cirillo is proud of the campus' accepting community; Sample wishes that the community were more radical.

Confusion over gender was something Sample encountered all their life; they never particularly felt like they identified as male or female. When they got to Bard, they learned more about their op-

professor, who subscribed to a feminist school of thought, associated transgender female-bodied students with a denial of womanhood.

Sample, who has a head of curly hair which they sometimes braid or dye, and, on the day I interviewed them, eyeliner markings on their face above their eye-

At Oberlin College, there are four categories of bathrooms: bathrooms for male students, female students, students of neither gender and students of all genders. "Some schools are really far ahead. At Hampshire [College], they don't even have signs," Sample said.

brows and more above their upper lip, speaks with understanding about the difficulty that people might have becoming accustomed to non-binary concepts of gender: that is, the notion that there are more genders than simply male and female.

They said that maybe a reason why students giggle at different gender pro-

THEY SAID, THEY SAID TRANS LIFE AT BARD

BY NAOMI LACHANCE

who don't feel comfortable using either bathroom.

The Trans-Action Initiative wants to have bathrooms accepting of all different kinds: for transgendered students who are transitioning and don't feel comfortable in either gendered bathroom, for students who don't identify as either gender, for students who identify with the same gender as their sex.

It's a big transition in a society where gender binaries are so ingrained.

"A lot of people will be like, 'Are you a boy or a girl?'" said junior Morganne Sample. "It's just not appropriate to ask someone that."

And last month, the residents of Catskill voted to make its bathrooms gender-neutral. The decision was made after a dorm-wide meeting, in an effort to make a more inclusive community for the different gender identities in the dorm.

For first-year Pat Kelly, it hasn't made much of a difference.

According to a resident in the dorm, the area coordinator, who has since been fired for reasons that have been undisclosed, was resistant to making the dorms gender-neutral.

"Pretty much everyone was for the gender-neutral bathrooms," Kelly said. "I don't think anyone has a problem with it." He said he thought maybe a girl could feel uncomfortable by sharing a bathroom with a creepy guy, but that that wouldn't happen in Catskill.

Exploration of the gender spectrum is a burgeoning movement in Annandale, where it's not particularly surprising to hear a student announce an identification with new pronouns, or see a male-

they realized they identify as genderqueer.

"It's something that can be defined now because I have the time and language to," they said.

The language surrounding gender is loaded, particularly in terms of pronoun use. Non-gender conforming people elect to use a variety of gender pronouns, from 'they' to 'it' to 'xe' to 'thon.'

Sample expressed their pronoun deci-

The language surrounding gender is loaded, particularly in terms of pronoun use. Non-gender conforming people elect to use a variety of gender pronouns, from 'they' to 'it' to 'xe' to 'thon.' Sample expressed their pronoun decision as an act of control over their own identity.

sion as an act of control over their own identity.

"If someone is calling you 'she,' they're gendering you," they said. "I didn't know that I could call myself something [different]."

Sample said they sometimes meet resistance from people who don't think the pronoun is grammatically correct, or from people who disagree with the notion of non-binary gender pronouns from a philosophical and political perspective.

They said that a friend was in a class where a professor wouldn't call the student by 'they' pronouns as they requested. Sample speculated that the

nouns, for example, is because those students just aren't used to pronouns other than 'he' and 'she.'

They acknowledged that getting a hang of the language takes time. It takes time to learn the nuances of gender, too.

The Trans-Action Initiative is also discussing a way to find a gender-neutral topless zone on campus. Cirillo hadn't heard of that idea before. "I'd love someone to test the boundaries with that," she said.

"It's looking into the question of, 'When does a chest become a breast?'" Sample said.

I asked them something about the restriction of women's bodies in today's society.

They replied with the art of someone so practiced in correcting someone else that the other person doesn't even notice they're being corrected.

A female-bodied person, regardless of identity, they said, should not be limited.

I apologized; they acknowledged that getting a hang of the language takes time.

For Cirillo, the idea of peeing next to someone in a bathroom of another gender hardly gives her pause.

"I've peed in the men's bathroom several times, sometimes next to Jeremy Gardner," she said with a shrug.

And in Catskill, the bathrooms still have 'male' and 'female' signs, but anyone can use either bathroom. Sample hopes it's not long before those changes happen campus-wide.

"It's just a change of signage," they said.

Assistant Professor of Literature Marisa Libbon is trying to uncover 240 invisible years. Contrary to what many history textbooks and even collegiate-level course readers would suggest, those 240 years of medieval history did exist, and now that she has the funds, Libbon is going to prove it.

Members of the Bard community benefit directly from a variety of departments and programs, making these grants relevant to anyone participating in those departments. There are a variety of grants that are available in all of these fields. Karen Unger, Director of Institutional Support, is responsible for finding and, along with a team of grant writers, applying for grants that fall in line with Bard's needs and values.

"Foundations have very specific guide-

cessful. Libbon was one faculty member who was successful in her attempt to procure a grant.

Along with a team of professors formed from the Early Middle English Society (of which Libbon was one of the founders) and due to a \$200,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the group will be able to revive an era of historical negligence.

National Endowment for the Humanities is a government body that funds research for the humanities, but due to the government shutdown, Libbon and her associates have yet to receive the money.

Every year the college receives dozens of grants. Many of these are institutional grants, which are for specific projects that could support anything from a building to an academic program. The college strives to cultivate and maintain relationships with large foundations such as the George I. Alden Trust, the Ford Foundation, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Vice President and Dean of the College Michèle Dominy explained that the foundations monitor the college very carefully to make sure they use the funds correctly. Another recently acquired grant is contributing funding to the Environmental and Urban Studies (EUS) program.

"The EUS grant is responding to two needs of the college: teaching interdisciplinary environmental science, and hiring someone to direct the program," Dominy said.

They have also used the money to fund student travel. The reason Dominy believes Bard received the grant is because, unlike most colleges, Bard does not separate the Urban Studies and Environmental Science programs, which made the college a unique and attractive candidate.

Roger Berkowitz, director of the Hannah Arendt Center (HAC), explained that the grants allow the center to undertake projects that they wouldn't be able to without extra funding. Though the HAC receives a plethora of grants within the year, varying in size, the largest one they are currently working with is from the NEH, called the Endowment Challenge Grant. The NEH is giving the Center \$425,000 on the condition that they are able to raise three times that amount within five years.

Berkowitz explained that one of their main goals is to be able to hire a famous writer or speaker for \$20,000 to spend a month at Bard, and integrate that person's expertise (in the forms of lectures or seminars) into the Common Course curriculum.

Associate Professor of Biology Felicia Keesing has been working with an \$800,000 grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) that is enabling her and other professors to identify, implement, and assess what kinds of scientific knowledge Bard students should be exposed to before they graduate.

"We looked at responses that other institutions have given to this question [of what scientific knowledge should be considered a graduation requirement]. A lot of colleges never ask the question," Keesing said.

But, she explained, there are a few very vehement and passionate responses about how much science colleges should teach, and to what end. While some believe that college students should learn the science they are interested in, others feel all college graduates should have a firm grasp on the fundamentals of science.

"All of these conversations have focused us on thinking more concretely about how and what we teach. What we've done in the first year is already changing in subtle ways," Keesing said. "Distribution requirements and Citizen Science aren't going to go away. Students shouldn't expect to see huge, dramatic changes. We're talking about making the goals of the courses we do offer much more concrete and explicit and having better data about how well they're working."

Most of the money from the grant thus far is used for dinners, overnight retreats, and guest speakers for faculty. In the future, Keesing and the other faculty members working on the project hope to hire post-doctoral fellows to have young science educators help faculty develop their curricula.

They also have some money for faculty to get time

off so that they can work on courses or pedagogical practices, as well as funds set aside to develop a set of assessment materials so they can ascertain how students are doing.

"This is the first grant contest where the HHMI has funded this particular focus area. That was really exciting for us. Typically the HHMI projects focus on the education of future scientists, so this is the first time that they've expanded that to say they're interested in future citizens," Keesing said.

Supplemental funding enables the college to adapt and grow. Grants allow for Bard to pursue supplemental projects that strengthen and distinguish the college.

Unger described the intensive process by which the college attains a grant. "When we do get a grant, we're incredibly happy about it and you want to make sure you are very thankful," she said. "There are foundations that are simply attracted to the whole mission of the college and what we stand for."

GRANTS ON GRANTS ON GRANTS ON GRANTS ON

BY JOHANNA COSTIGAN

lines about what they are interested in funding. A big part of our work is doing the research about what foundations or government agencies are interested in, which is always changing. Our priority is to find money that would supply scholarships for students," Unger said.

Another significant part of Unger's job is to find grants that could expand Bard's physical plant. She said that buildings such as Olin Hall and the Digital Media Lab were constructed due to fundings from grants.

In addition, individual faculty members have the opportunity to apply for grants that will go directly towards their own projects. Faculty Grants Officer Susan Elvin-Cooper assists professors in crafting grant proposals that are most likely to be suc-

BIOLOGY PROFESSOR RECEIVES \$1.5 MILLION GRANT FOR RESEARCH IN KENYA

BY JENNIFER GILLEN
via *bard science journal*

Felicia Keesing, biology professor and director of the biology program, has received a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation to study a new tick-reduction method in the African savannas. Keesing has researched in Kenya for nearly 20 years, with a focus on the disappearance of large mammals and its ecological implications. This new project diverges from her past research in Kenya and relates to the Lyme disease and tick research she conducts at Bard and at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies.

"There are a lot of connections between my work here and my new work there," Keesing said. "In essence, I'm interested in how the environment influences the transmission of infectious diseases." Here, this means her work involves the way that ecosystems interact. There, it means looking at the way the land is managed.

An abundance of ticks is dangerous for humans, cattle, and wildlife, because ticks are vectors for infections like Lyme disease. In Kenya, their bites can cause Q fever, Nairobi sheep disease, babesiosis and many other illnesses. To reduce the number of ticks and their harmful effects on cattle, some ranchers in Kenya have begun treating their cattle with a chemical that kills the ticks. The chemical is called amitraz, and is the same product people use on their pets to prevent tick bites.

"We have found that when this is done well, it dramatically reduces abundances of ticks in savanna habitats," Keesing explained. And although it is considered to be safe, as an ecologist, Keesing is thinking about the "potentially important but unexplored interactions and effects" of the chemical on the ecosystem. Her research team will be studying these interactions as well as the overall effectiveness of the chemical. If this new method does prove effective in reducing the number of ticks, more of the chemical will be needed for cattle farmers, and this cost could be great.

Because of this, Keesing and her research team are working with a team of environmental economists from Stanford University and the Nature Conservancy. "[We want to] figure out what the economic costs and benefits are to land-owners, indigenous peoples, and wildlife," she said.

One of the most exciting aspects of this project for Keesing is the location. "We were constantly on the lookout for rhinos, snakes, lions, and elephants—all of which can be quite dangerous," she said. Although the research is not happening at Bard, Keesing would like to include Bard students in the project.

"I am hoping to be able to involve Bard students," Keesing said. "The current security situation in Kenya makes that prospect a little uncertain right now. Ideally, students would be able to travel with me to collect data on aspects of this project, and to potentially be able to conduct their own projects."

This project is in its early stages, but Keesing traveled to Kenya in the summer of 2012 with a former Research Experiences for Undergraduates student to collect preliminary data. When she begins the research, in the summer of 2014, her job, she said, will be to "drive around Kenya collecting ticks on ranches that manage cattle and wildlife in different ways."

Ticks are collected in a process that involves dragging a white corduroy square mat for a certain number of meters, and then checking the mat for ticks. Ticks are removed from the mat with tweezers and placed in small glass vials. I can say from experience that tick collecting is not easy for two reasons: first, the ticks are very, very small, and second, they're fast; it's difficult to put one tick in a small glass vial while 15 or 20 ticks try to escape. It's also dangerous; although the tick collector wears a white "suit" with the pant legs tucked into their socks, there's still a possibility that a tick will crawl up the arm unnoticed. Of course, collecting ticks is just part of the fun for a disease ecologist like Keesing, who said that the wildlife is exciting, and the "ticks are quite lovely, too."



BARDIVERSE is news about and from Bard's efforts outside Annandale. We draw from Russia, Palestine, Kyrgyzstan, China and more.

photo by oscar tine

FIGHTING FOR LGBT RIGHTS ON THE EASTERN FRONT

BY GLEB VINOKUROV
VIA SMOLNY COLLEGE IN ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

"Fascism won't go!" The activists shouted as loud as they could. There was a feeling of alarm in the air. All together, approximately 100 LGBT activists were standing bravely in the Field of Mars, a park situated in the center of St. Petersburg, to fight for LGBT rights.

Only a line of iron barriers and policemen separated them from 200 furious opponents who came in counter-protest. Among them were nationalists, military people, and religious fanatics. Very soon all of them became one huge swearing, threatening, and, in the end, attacking faceless mass.

On that day, May 17, 2013, I stood on the side of LGBT rights. It was one of the most frightening moments I have ever experienced.

Russia, known as a highly conservative country, can hardly accept the idea of homo-, bi- and trans- sexuality being an acceptable form of human sexuality, even though the Soviet law for persecution of homosexual people was overturned 20 years ago.

But recently, a scandalous law (or, to be precise, an amendment to the law protecting children from harmful information), caused a hot discussion about homophobia in Russia. It established criminal penalties for so-called "propaganda of homosexuality."

Before obtaining federal approval, the law had appeared in St. Petersburg by initiative of Vitaly Milonov, a Russian politician and religious demagogue. After several absurd bills and attempts to sue Madonna and Lady Gaga for homosexual propaganda, even homophobes had to agree that Milonov was the laughingstock of St. Petersburg.

But there he was.

I could see him. Milonov came with his wife and young daughter to show that Russia would never give up "the true family values," which implies, obviously, heterosexual family values.

This is how it happened: we held colorful balloons as the sign of LGBT solidarity, and black balloons to honor the

victims of homophobia, as we chanted that we would fight for rights, whatever it takes. The crowd faced the anger against them with a stoic dignity. A huge crowd of people swearing, throwing stones and smoke grenades surrounded us and attacked people from behind.

The haters in the other group proclaimed themselves to be defenders of the minors and traditional Christian values. They called us a terror to the moral health of the youth.

All this hypocrisy! The nationalists shouted that Jesus was not actually against violence. Milonov, the protector of children, brought his own daughter to watch crazy, uncontrolled men get ready to destroy a smaller, weaker group of people.

The meeting took no more than 30 minutes, and the police, who from the very beginning seemed to be quite reluctant to

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protect LGBT activists, stated that they could not keep the aggressors back anymore. Buses came to safely take people away, although it took some time for the buses, surrounded

and pelted with stones, to depart. The police took us to a distant subway station, somewhere the haters did not know about.

Since then, a few more incidents have happened, followed by mass arrests on both sides.

The homophobic laws and all the games that our government is playing might seem to be just an awkward freak show, if it were not so scary. People's lives, their right to be themselves, were under physical attack.

I can say it all frightens me, yet I feel proud of all of the brave people who are ready to risk their lives to fight for their rights.

For all our rights, I would say.

When somebody's freedom is constrained, it won't take long until everyone's will be.

I hope we all can realize this before it's too late.

**WE ASKED A STUDENT FROM SMOLNY
WHAT RUSSIANS THINK OF SYRIA
HERE IS THEIR ANSWER**

BY ANASTASIA EFIMOVA
VIA SMOLNY COLLEGE IN ST.
PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

It seems that everyone in Russia is talking about Syria now.

Even people who do not have any interest in politics have started to talk about Russia's actions in the region. A great discussion about our support of Syria has taken place in newspapers and in online media. People ask, "Why did the government give aid to Bashar al-Assad?"

It is quite simple to guess the reason.

Russia has a significant financial interest in Syria's current regime, largely oil related, and it supplies

a significant percentage of Bashar al-Assad's weapons. Russia is the main petroleum supplier to Europe. Syria has announced plans to build a gas pipeline to Europe. For Russia, this means that there will be a competitor, and a serious one at that. Every day the Syrian conflict rages on is another day Russia monopolizes the European gas market.

We will not see any of this published in Russian media.

All that people know, if they watch only the main channels, is that the U.S. is going to invade

Syria and depose the sitting government.

And the Russian government, surely, does not want that to happen; such actions are not appropriate, and our country, of course, only wants peace.

I believe that Russia's role has become clear. I feel I understand what is going on and the reasons why our country acts this way. Nevertheless, some of my government's actions make me confused. And I have no idea how this whole situation will end.

**WE ASKED A STUDENT FROM SMOLNY
IF PUSSY RIOT IS STILL RELEVANT
IN RUSSIA
HERE IS THEIR ANSWER**

BY NASTYA DMITRICHENKO
VIA SMOLNY COLLEGE IN ST.
PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

An open letter from Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, imprisoned Pussy Riot member, was published in the media this fall. While reading the letter, which describes in detail the horrors of Russian prison conditions, only one question came to mind: to whom is the letter addressed?

Nadezhda's living conditions have only gotten worse since her letter was released, and moreover, this letter was not a revelation for Russian human rights activists. They are already aware of the situation in Russian prisons, where people are not only forced to work hard, but also frequently become victims of torture.

It may be right to say that the letter was addressed to Western society. A year and a half ago, when the incident with Pussy Riot took place, many European feminist groups and people who felt sympathy to the lawlessly incarcerated women went out on the streets to support the band. Protests were held in such countries as Germany, France, The Czech Republic, the

Netherlands and so on. Many foreign celebrities, especially musicians, came out to support Pussy Riot: Madonna, Bjork, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sting, and Pet Shop Boys. I do not want to say that the band was not supported at all by Russian activists, but the Pussy Riot affair caused a real outburst in Western media. Honestly, I was shocked by the fact that a lot of students I talked to at Bard asked me about Pussy Riot. The debates held in Europe and America about the Russian human rights situation were much more open than they were here. More importantly, debates did not cease after the women were sentenced.

That is why I think that by publishing her letter, Tolokonnikova did not even hope to provoke new discussion in the Russian public sphere. The idea of her letter was not to ask for help or elicit compassion, but to attract Western attention to Russian prisons' conditions. In Russia, the majority of people believe that prison is where outlaws should suffer in order to

improve. That is the main reason why new debates are impossible now. In the Western media, on the other hand, the letter was immediately translated and dispersed. It seems that the new wave of interest in the Pussy Riot affair is growing, but not in Russian society.

While Russians prefer to stay indifferent to the problem of prison conditions, how can Western support change anything—and can it at all? Actually, the main results have already been achieved: people know about it, people are interested in it, people discuss it. Debates held on an international level may influence any government, even one as authoritarian as Russia's. Last year, when the sentence was passed, one of the incarcerated members was released. Some people believe that this decision was made because of the outburst of Western attention to the Pussy Riot affair. Perhaps next time, the mechanism will work in the same way and cause change for the better in Russia.

**BOTSTEIN TRAVELS TO WHITE HOUSE
BARD EMPIRE EXPANDS**

BY JP LAWRENCE
VIA ANNANDALE

Another year, another Bard. The Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy joins Bard's expanding network of affiliates in New York City, Newark, New Orleans and overseas.

More partnerships are set to come.

Bard has been in talks to start affiliated early high schools with school districts in Cleveland and Baltimore for approximately six months, Stephen Tremaine, executive director of Bard Early College in New Orleans, said.

The two cities were selected for their visibility on the national stage and their evident need for public education reforms. "Cleveland and Baltimore are small enough to go

and pull something off, and big enough for it to matter," Tremaine said.

To proceed, Bard needs to get school districts to support the project, state governments to provide the budgets, and local families to express interest. "It's hard to say where talks are," Tremaine said.

Tremaine, President of the College Leon Botstein, Director of Early College Strategy Claire Botstein, and Dean of Education Initiatives Martha Olson spoke in August to members of the White House Domestic Policy Council. They came to pitch their vision and discuss financial incentives for efforts such as Bard's.

"Early college isn't just more inspiring classes for high school students," Tremaine said, "it's also a policy solution addressing two things that we're all aware of these days, which is the high cost of college education these days, and the crisis of lower degree completion rates in higher education in this country."

Tremaine said he looks forward to a Bard community that includes students in Cleveland, Baltimore, New Orleans, New York, and overseas.

"Bard is increasingly a real and credible voice nationally in rethinking what a high school can be," Tremaine said.

PHOTO TAKEN BY DRONE FLOWN BY BARD STUDENTS ON OCT. 19



PHOTO BY TUSHEVS AERIALS



"Are you glad
to have enough
to change the
country?"
Opa was

“Are 125 grads a year enough to change the country?”

Q&A with the president of Bard Kyrgyzstan

BY JP LAWRENCE

The Free Press sat down with Andrew Wachtel, president of American University of Central Asia, to talk about Bard's partnership in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Free Press: There's this idea that Bard's overseas affiliations have been structured around the idea of creating liberal arts institutions in countries transitioning to democracy. Kyrgyzstan is a former Soviet Republic that has had struggles in its transition into a functioning democracy. How does Bard fit in over there?

Andrew Wachtel: I think it is a little bit dangerous and presumptuous to say that a small university is influencing the process of democratizing in any immediate or obvious way. What universities can do, and what I think we do, is educate people to think and make them unwilling to accept what others tell them how things should be done. Ultimately, sure, we can create citizens — people who desire to live in democracy.

FP: What are cultural challenges in providing liberal arts education there?

AW: There are way more challenges in Kyrgyzstan than you might find in places where people have no idea what education should look like. Kyrgyzstan has a third-world income and a third-world economy, but it doesn't have third-world expectations. The Soviet state used to provide things for people, like schools, so people do not have a set of expectations for the idea of a private school. They have a very strong idea what it should look like. Our challenge is not only do we have to convince parents that we do a good job, we have to convince them that what we do is what they want. They think education should be highly fact-based. They know math and sciences and when they read, they know what they're supposed to say. They know probably more stuff than most American kids know, but they have no idea what to do with it. Their parents and their society are very concerned about them thinking too much. In their heads they have this idea of a Soviet golden age, which was what we would consider a rather repressive society, but one that provided a fairly high degree of stability and comfort, even if it was a lower level than we might think is normal.

I think the challenge, if you dig, is that people want a well-functioning stable society where people

know their place and prosperity increases. Meanwhile, all we're seen as offering is unhappy people who don't recognize their place in society and who are going to end up in China or Europe.

FP: So what's the bridge then, to promoting a liberal arts education in this environment?

AW: The good thing is that they realize that Soviet society has disappeared and is not coming back. They are not seeing now a society that is functioning very well, so we are saying they have a choice: you could try to recreate an authoritarian society, or you could search for alternatives.

We graduate nearly 250 people in a country of five million, and half of them leave the country because they can't find roles where their talents and their desires fit; so are 125 grads a year enough to change the country? But it is not at all obvious that that is true, the same way that it is not obvious that Bard College's 500 graduates a year are going to change the propelling discourse of the United States.

FP: As an institution with this mission, do people in the government perceive that the institution is subversive?

AW: Well, there is general belief in the society that the current situation is not stable, so that makes it easier for people to be willing to accept alternatives. Everyone is promising a return to the golden age, but we want to go forward to something else, and that's subversive to people in the government and subversive to a lot of layers of society. And for our students it puts them sometimes in an uncomfortable position.

FP: Does that give you pause — the idea that a Western institution is going to second world country and seems to be saying, “your previous ideologies and conception systems are bankrupt and wrong, please replace them with our alternative?”

AW: I am not asking them to replace anything, I am saying we will show you that we can create the group of people who can do better for your country than people who are created by those other institutions. I don't go around other universities and tell them how to do their job. If they want to know how 90 percent of our students are either working or getting further education two months after education, they can ask. But if they don't want to know, if they don't care, if they are happy with whatever they have, that's their problem.

FP: I understand the idea of training people who can change the conversation, but in order to come, it seems that you have to have a certain level of privilege.

We're the only uncorrupt university in Kyrgyzstan, and that makes a huge difference. For instance, we started this program for kids from really poor families, and when we first announced this program, we thought there would be a lot of people applying. We offered food and board, free living expenses, free everything. One hundred and fifty kids applied in the entire country of five million. We asked the kids who applied and they said, “we wanted to apply and everyone in the village said, “you will just be disappointed, because in the end, they will just accept the mayor's daughter, the governor's son.” They decided to apply anyway, but then everyone in the village said, “don't go, you will just be disappointed, you won't get the scholarship, it will go to mayor's daughter and governor's son.” In the end, we took 55 of these kids and we gave out 50 scholarships. These kids, they went back to their home village and they can say, “see, not everybody lies.” The idea that not everybody lies is really powerful in a country where everybody lies. I don't know if it's enough to change the country, but it's a start.



A SEMESTER ABROAD IN THE KINGDOM OF 'HAPPINESS'

BY MIKEY DI ROSA

Before heading off to the jungle, they pulled a water bottle full of turpentine out of their trunk. They began swathing their clothes in it, to prevent leeches from attacking, and I burst out laughing. I wasn't laughing because of how funny it looked; I was laughing because as a painter who uses turpentine as paint thinner and medium, my clothes and my hands are constantly covered in it. But here I was in the middle of Bhutan needing to put turpentine on my clothes to prevent leeches.

I came to Bhutan in part to learn about renewable energy. Bhutan is a nation with a population comparable to that of North Dakota—both around 700,000. Hydroelectric power has become invaluable to its economic survival. In part, I also came to Bhutan in hopes of rectifying my 20 years of seeing life through suburban goggles.

The first night in Trongsa, I shared a bed with my supervisor. We went to a local canteen and I was given a mug of the infamous egg ara for the second time. But this time it wasn't like there were a few scrambled eggs floating in my cup; it was a dense hot egg

alcohol smoothie. I took four forced sips and pushed it aside. In the words of my supervisor: "America failed tonight."

At Druk Green Power Corporation, my internship, I've learned that Bhutanese hydroelectricity sold to India accounts for 15 percent of Bhutan's gross domestic product. All of Bhutan's hydropower was created by an agreement with the Indian government in the '70s, and all of the hydropower plants were conceived by Indian engineers, and all of manual labor is undertaken by Indian migrant workers. Before Druk Green's formation in 2008, each hydropower site was an autonomous unit still in the shadow of the foreigners that built it. Now the responsibility has been handed over to Druk Green, to Bhutan. I like to view this as symbolic of the positive changes in Bhutan arising from innovation. "Change," the head of Human Resources at Druk Green said, "has to raise eyebrows."

On a night walk, me and two others switched off our headlamps and laid down on the dirt path, taking a front row seat to the magnificent show of stars in the sky. It appeared as though I was looking into an undulating black ocean, and the stars were a reflection in the water. One of my top five life goals is to witness the center of our galaxy. This has been impossible in my life so far because I live near one of the biggest cities in the world. That night in Dorikah, I was very close to seeing the Milky Way.

Bhutan's education system treats students like sponges: absorbing information instead

of being taught to squeeze out critical thinking and use that information to higher ends. I am often asked by my Bhutanese classmates to do their homework for them because I am better at English. I say no; they ask why. You won't learn anything, I say, but they just want high marks. But things are changing in the capital city Thimphu. At the opening of the semester Dasho Tenzin, the "Botstein" of the Royal Thimphu College, said, "Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit, but wisdom is knowing not to put a tomato in a fruit salad."

I visited a school filled with the cutest Bhutanese kids in a beautiful place, but I couldn't bring myself to take pictures. I sometimes feel that the most beautiful things I've seen don't need the gratification of a digital memory because it will be in my memory for a long time; more than an image, it constitutes a moment which is far more gratifying and incomprehensible than a picture.

The hunched over apas (old men) here will speak of the rice fields that they farmed in Thimphu Valley just five, 10, 20 years ago. Now the sprawl of apartment buildings has made it unrecognizable. Considering that five years ago Bhutan was under an autocratic king, the progress is astonishing. "Eyebrow raisers" exist.

There is a man who introduces himself as Farmer Sangay. He works to improve the image of the educated farmer to alleviate the huge youth unemployment in Bhutan by creating a television show called "The Farmer." His idea was selected to air on Bhutan's only television network.

Tourism websites will tout that Bhutan is a "Kingdom of Happiness," due to the well-known concept of Gross National Happiness. Please don't believe that bullshit. Bhutan is a developing nation. It is in flux. It is gorgeous. There are monks, leeches, tigers and far too many chillies in the food. A good Buddhist such as our sage Tsewang Nidup will tell you that like all worldly things, happiness is impermanent.

And according to the Gross National Happiness Index conducted by Bhutan in 2010 59.1% of Bhutanese people are 'Not Yet Happy'. That's a lot of Bhutan that needs to change.

Fortunately, while looking for change in myself, I ended up here. I like to think that the growing creases on my forehead are not because I'm getting older, but because I too am raising my eyebrows and changing.

'Not Yet Happy'.

Whether you want to believe that happiness can be quantified or not, that's pretty subtle, isn't it?





photo by sam williams

THE ART OF STEPPING OUTSIDE

GETTING TO KNOW DONNA FROM KLINE

BY JP LAWRENCE

Everyone knows Donna. Donna Butt is worker with the blond hair who minds entry to the cafeteria at Bard College. And I can't help but think that right now Donna's standing me up. I'm nursing a beer and watching the Yankees game in a bar that's nice enough for heels, but not too nice for cowboy boots. I had asked Donna to meet me here. She comes here every weekend, the bartender says, always orders a Jack Daniels and a diet coke. Twenty minutes go by. Finally, Donna walks in, and sure enough, a drink appears. "How are you doing?" I say. "Let's go outside," I say.

Donna pulls out a cigarette as we sit down on the porch. She likes coming here because of the people, and the music, and because she likes getting out of house. And because every time she comes here, it is a little victory. For 15 years, Donna says, she almost never left her house.

It all began in high school. One day, in social studies class, panic crept into her — she couldn't breathe. Her teacher sensed something wrong and asked her a question. She freaked out, ran to the girls' room, curled up on the floor in a ball. Everyone crowded around her. And all she could hear was noise.

Same thing happened the next day. Donna dropped out two months before high school graduation. And she never went back. Never left her house without fear. She was 17.

Agoraphobia is often misunderstood. Donna could leave the house, but not in peace. A person with agoraphobia isn't afraid of the outdoors, but of a sudden panic attack in a public place. They trod beneath the sword of Damocles whenever they leave their safe zone. So they avoid being trapped in a crowd, in case the panic hits them.

Donna says her goal then was simply to go to the store and purchase eight items. But she couldn't do it. "I'd get such anxiety," she says, puffing on her cigarette. "The worst that you can have."

She baby-sat to pass the time, got married, had a child. She saw doctors, took medication, read books that helped her a lot. But eventually, she needed to get out — she was 32. She found jobs making aircraft brakes, housekeeping, and began working nights at Bard's cafeteria. "I was so proud of myself," Donna says, "that I could finally get out of the house and get a job."

For the next 22 years, she worked at Bard. Bard kids back then were brats, she says: food fights all the time, students filling napkin holders with cat turds. Once, a student ran through an eight-foot cake, naked. Once, a student put a pig's head in the server. "Where'd they get a pig's head?" I ask. She laughs. "Who knows?"

Over the years, she got divorced, remarried, had that marriage fall through. She saw the birth of two grandchildren. Some days were rough. Some years were rough.

And some days are still rough.

Donna says she still has bouts with agoraphobia "once in a blue moon." She takes anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medication daily. Weekends are tough for her. She tries to stay busy. She watches a lot of television: "Golden Girls," "I Love Lucy," and "The Andy Griffith Show." The last show she likes because it reminds her of her father, who died young.

This is the point where I ask Donna how one handles all this; if she has some philosophy, some credo, that guides her through adversity?

"I have no idea," Donna says. "I'm still

trying to find that out. I try to think positive and do the best that I can. I was really, really down on myself for a long time. Always thinking, 'what is wrong with me, why is this happening to me?' But I know I am a good person. I do know that."

Donna lights her second cigarette.

"And I'm starting to feel good about myself. It was really hard to convince myself of that. But I'm really, really alone now, really trying to cure my sickness by myself. And I've got to learn how to do that by myself, because I can't be dependent on someone else."

It's good to vent, Donna says. She sees so many faces each day as they pass through her on their way to lunch. None of them really know her life.

"There are people who go 'hey, how are you doing?' all the time," Donna says, "but there's a certain few students who really care and want to know how you're doing, and always want to make you feel better somehow."

I finish my beer and she finishes her cigarette. The next time I see Donna, she is back at Bard, watching as people go by.

And I ask her how she's doing.

SHWETA KATTI, IN HER OWN WORDS MOVING FROM MUMBAI'S RED LIGHT DISTRICT TO BARD

BY ANNE ROWLEY

Interviewing first-year Shweta Katti might have been the closest I have come thus far to interviewing a celebrity, and yet the furthest from acting like one. She admits to have been stopped on the street and asked for a picture, but can't hold back laughter when telling the story. She was named by Newsweek as one of "25 Under 25" women to watch, but was unaware what Newsweek was beforehand. Shweta grew up in India's third largest red-light district and was raised in a brothel.

Free Press: You're from Mumbai— India's third largest red light district in Kamathipura. What was it like to grow up there?

Shweta Katti: It was my family and I still miss it. It was difficult, obviously. I grew up in a brothel. My mom is not a sex worker, but I still had to live in a brothel. Living in a city, the rent is very high, so we lived in a brothel.

FP: What was your education like growing up there?

SK: I never really cared about education at that point. The teachers would never show up. We never studied. You don't know the value of education at that point. I never participated in any school activities. Even studying at home, I couldn't concentrate because I always heard the voices and sounds of women being beaten and crying. It was just like growing up in hell. But they were still my family. My mom is a factory worker, she would leave at nine in the morning, so the other sex workers would get me ready for school. I was raised by them.

FP: So, being raised by sex workers, you've obviously never thought poorly of them.

SK: Many of my school friends would ask me: "why don't they just leave, why don't they just get out of that place and do some work?" But that's not easy. Even if you get out, people will abuse you when they find out. I know some stories where women have run away, but they've had to come back when they need money. It's with you for your lifetime.

FP: What was day-to-day life like?

SK: I never enjoyed my life because I had all of these problems with my self-esteem, thinking that I'm a bad girl and I grew up in a bad place. I never had bad feelings for the sex workers. I never thought that they were bad, but I could see that they suffered. I used to leave home at 12 p.m. and come back at 8 p.m. It would be getting dark, and it would be getting crowded with all of the men from the factory. It was dangerous, and there were times when men would ask me if I wanted to sleep with them. I was 12. The first time that a man asked I literally cried. I never told anyone in my family about that because people would say, "It's your fault, why were you standing outside?"

FP: Was this why you had such low self-esteem?

SK: Yes, it was that, but also because of my dark skin. In India if you are dark, you are not beautiful. My stepfather sexually abused me when I was young. He would say things like, "Your heart is as dark as your skin color." In school my classmates used to call me cow dung. My relatives used to say, "nobody will marry you because you are dark, and nobody wants a dark and ugly girl." I used to love watching Bollywood movies but they all have light skin. So I thought that "I'm bad, I'm not beautiful."

FP: How did you get to the point of being comfortable talking about your past?

SK: Two years ago, I joined an organization called Kranti. Kranti means revolution. Kranti works with girls from red-light areas. It's a shelter home. It was difficult for me because I had never lived without my mom, but I had to make that decision because I wanted to do something with my life. We were nine girls. It was like a family. We got weekly therapy. I got therapy for one and a half years. It helped me get out my trauma. I hated myself, and I hated society. I also traveled a lot and that helped me gain confidence. I went all over India and into Nepal. I was volunteering and doing workshops.

FP: How did traveling help you?

SK: It helped because I was alone. There is a stereotype that girls shouldn't go out because it is not safe for them, and they can't handle these things. But I learned that when you get out, then you realize that you can handle it. My English was poor before because I never really learned it in school, but when I started public speaking and traveling it helped.

FP: You've been interviewed by several major news sources, including CNN. What was it like receiving so much media attention?

SK: I never want that again. It was too much. I'm really sad that I couldn't spend any time with my family the last few weeks. I had trouble getting my visa and passport, and had to attend all of these fundraisers; it was too much. I was on two news channels every day, just sitting in front of the camera and smiling.

FP: So everyone from your home knows who you are?

SK: There was an incident that was

really hilarious. I was standing in front of the station and waiting for someone, and this girl comes up to me and asks "are you Shweta Katti?" She asked to take a photo with me. I started laughing when she left.

FP: You were named by Newsweek as a woman to watch on their "25 Under 25" list. What was that like?

SK: I didn't really know what Newsweek was, but when it was explained, I was like: "what?" I thought it was just a small article. That was surprising, even for me. I don't even feel like I'm somebody who's a social worker, or anything formal like that. I want to give back to my community, but I don't really feel like I'm doing a big thing.

FP: How did you find out about Bard?

SK: I was at a conference when I met an alumna from Bard. I told him that I was applying to different colleges but I couldn't give any of the exams like TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) because I didn't have a passport. He said "you should apply to Bard College. I studied there, it's really great, I can talk to them." That's how I got in.

FP: Did you consider any other schools?

SK: I didn't really know much about American universities. I looked up Bard on the Internet. I was just amazed by the nature. I was like, "I'm going there!"

FP: How has the transition to America, and to Bard, been?

SK: It's been amazing. Before, I never really studied because I didn't understand the value of an education. I'm still struggling with getting on track with reading and writing essays. I never wrote an essay before. The first essay I wrote on my own was during the Language and Thinking program.

I'm struggling with normal life. I never had friends. I never had people to talk to about normal things. I don't even know what people talk about. Before I joined Kranti, I never talked about things because I was afraid people would laugh. After I joined Kranti I only talked about social justice and how society should work. Not everybody talks about it and it's not fair to want everybody to talk about social justice. It is difficult getting into normal life.

FP: I know that I personally heard your story last year before you got here. Did you feel like people already knew about you here at Bard?

SK: There were some people who said, "Oh, you're the girl from the red-light district. You're the girl from CNN."

FP: Do you plan on returning to Kamathipura?

SK: Yeah. I can't even think of not staying in that place.

FP: So despite everything that has happened there, it still feels like home to you?

SK: Yeah. I have this feeling that I can't stay out of that area.



photo by miles lim

I can't just leave because I have seen bad things. If I want to change it then I will have to stay there and I will have to face whatever happened to me.

FP: Do you want to do something similar to Kranti?

SK: That's the plan. I was thinking of majoring in psychology because I want to open a free therapy center in the red-light area because there is no mental health care in that area; nobody cares. But they are the ones who need it the most.

FP: Do you think there is a solution for the problems that the women in red-light districts face?

SK: I don't know what the solution is, but you can't just ban brothels. I don't ever feel that sex workers are bad people. You can use your mind to make money. These women are using their vaginas to make money. It's the same thing. You are using your body parts. So what's the difference? Sex workers have this stigma of being the garbage of society, and of being sluts, but I don't think that.

FP: But what about the abuse that happens in these brothels?

SK: Yes, that has to stop, but it's not going to stop just because you blame the sex workers. You have to give them respect. It's not going to change if you're not giving us a good education. We deserve everything others deserve. The only way to stop it is through

education. Why do women get involved in all of this? Poverty, and lack of education, low caste...Without that, women wouldn't have to do this work.

FP: What about the women who are sex workers already, what should be done for them?

SK: [They should be] provide[d] therapy if they want it. I'm no one to judge what they want to do. If someone wants to do sex work, then it's fine. If they want to get out then I'll help them get out. It should be up to the person living that life.

TEWKSBURY'S NEWEST RESIDENT IS TINY

photo by jody wissner

BY REBECCA SWANBERG

Residence Life got a facelift this year—the people Bard has become accustomed to have moved on or up, and new area coordinators have moved in. Among the new A.C.s is Kim

the Culinary Institute of America (CIA). Jacowitz moved into the South Campus A.C. apartment in Tewksbury—bringing her six-month-old baby, who lives with her in Tewks. The Bard Free Press talked to Ja-

cowitz about the experience of raising a baby in a dorm, and even though one would expect that it would be really unpleasant, it's actually pretty okay, Jacowitz said.

FP: What is your living situation like in the A.C. apartment in Tewksbury?

KJ: I live in the apartment with my baby, Eleanor, and my husband. It's a decent size: two bedrooms—one full-sized, and one big enough for a baby. Nice open living room and a kitchen, and it's nice because it has its own outside entrance and a little patio outside, too.

FP: What was it like adjusting to raising your baby in a dorm setting?

KJ: Eleanor is six months old, born in March of this past year. I was living on campus at the CIA with her after she was born, so a large part of the adjustment happened there. It was set up a lot differently than here. In the space I had before, I didn't have an outside entrance; I had to go into the residence hall. [Our apartment] was located across from the laundry room so there was a lot of traffic. The way it was designed [at the CIA], the apartment was built into the building later, so it didn't really feel like home.

FP: What were your living expectations when moving to your new space at Bard?

KJ: The expectation was that I would almost have a separate secluded space, and my office would be across the quad from where I would be living so I would have a little bit more separation from work, and it definitely has felt like that. So I feel like I am going *home* at the end of the day and not necessarily at work 24/7.

FP: Is it challenging raising a young child in the same space as the students that you work with? Do you

feel like your work bleeds into your home life?

KJ: Not as much as it did at my previous institution. I think the separation between the two helps a little bit. The biggest challenge is that people love to hang out in the lounge, but they all know that I have a baby, and if I pop my head out and say, "Do you mind?," they are respectful of that. My child is a really solid sleeper; I think it bothers my husband more than it does me. It's an adjustment to live on campus with a bunch of college students, but it doesn't bother me as much. It's tough to balance how to be supportive of [my husband] and his personal space. [The students'] intentions aren't bad; they want to have a good time and I want to be respectful of that. I just ask if they can give a little bit of space. They have been so supportive of that. It's important to have a good relationship and I feel like we do have a good, respectful understanding of spaces.

FP: A lot of people at Bard smoke—do the smokers affect you and your baby?

KJ: I don't smell the cigarettes in my apartment. I think students are respectful in knowing that I have a baby in that space so they're respectful in the locations that they choose to smoke, so it hasn't affected my home. Walking around the campus I just choose to walk in another direction, especially if I have my baby with me. Everyone has the right to smoke and the right to not smoke. I think a lot of people see me and, if they have a cigarette, they go

the other direction.

FP: What has been difficult for you as a mother, raising Eleanor in a dorm?

KJ: I think having a family and living on campus has only been beneficial to me in a lot of ways because I can run home quick and nurse. I don't have to find a space to pump in the office, so that's been beneficial that I can provide that to my baby as a working mom. I like to bring her into work and take her to events because students love playing with her and holding her. I love that I can socialize her at such a young age and that she can be exposed to different cultures, styles, interests. So I see a lot of the benefits of it. I think there are challenges of being a working mom in general, but I don't think that those have anything to do with living on campus. It's just the challenges of being a mom and working, whether or not you live on campus.

FP: Do you see yourself staying here and raising Eleanor for a while on campus?

KJ: I really love Bard and I think that I will be here for a while. I'm not really sure how long I'll be in the A.C. position, but I'm comfortable and happy and it's working for myself and my family. As long as it continues to work, this is where I will be. I love the atmosphere of working with students and being on campus working with them on a social level and a professional level. I think that my family can get a lot from the experience.

OTHER LITTLE CHANGES THAT HAPPENED TO RESLIFE

+ David Pack, who had been an A.C. in the Village for four years, moved to Dartmouth. Pack is now the assistant director for the Collis Center for Student Involvement there, a shift up in his career. His position has been filled by Amanda Dickinson Beirne, who just finished graduate school at University of Southern California.

+ Jodi Andersen was hired last school year as the A.C. of Cruger Village and remains with the college.

+ Annie Berge, who was the area coordinator of North Campus for less than a year, moved on to be a coordinator at University of Minnesota.

+ Maurice Williams, who was recently hired from Penn State University as the new A.C. of North Campus was fired in early October. The college is currently making plans to interview and hire a new A.C.

+ Ashley Boltrushek, who has been the South Campus area coordinator for the past three years, has been promoted to the director of Reslife, sharing responsibility with Nancy Smith, the director of housing.

For many prospective students, Bard's political reputation precedes it.

College guidebooks tell of Bard's radical past and left-leaning student body; it is frequently placed on "Most Liberal Student Body" lists that litter websites like the Huffington Post, and conservative pundit Ann Coulter once spoke of Bard as one of several colleges that "have become a Safe Streets program for traitors and lunatics."

But on a Tuesday afternoon this October, the number of students gathered outside of Kline Commons for a teach-in on student debt resistance couldn't have been more than 30.

Passersby eyed the circle of students with varying degrees of interest or confusion. Some stopped to listen, but most went on their way.

Senior Jack Magnusson, an anarchist with interests in radical pedagogy and non-hierarchical organizing, is one of the organizers behind the teach-in and the group Bard Strike Debt, an offshoot of Occupy Wall Street that addresses the increasing levels of student debt and the poor economic climate that awaits today's college graduates.

Like many other Bard activists, his involvement extends to other projects and groups, such as Environmental Collective, Student Labor Dialogue (SLD), and *the root*, a radical zine first published in the spring of this year.

As a result, Bard has an interconnected but small group of dedicated activists.

At a school of Bard's size and rural location, Magnusson said, it seems inevitable that a

change things, you need to start with your community," Gurner said.

His involvement in activism began in high school with his participation in anti-gentrification action, when more expensive businesses like Whole Foods started moving into his neighborhood in his hometown of Boston.

Duffy-Tumasz was raised Quaker and his meeting (the term for local Quaker organizations) was involved in social justice activism.

From an early age he and his parents attended protests in support of longtime residents of Philadelphia's college areas, which were subject to gentrification.

When he arrived at Bard, he sought out the SLD and other like-minded groups.

For Duffy-Tumasz, the 2011-2012 academic year was a recent high-point for Bard activism.

The SLD's campaign to end Bard's relationship with the contracting service Aramark gained support from the student body through rallies and demonstrations.

That year, the college brought its housekeepers in-house, making them employees of the college rather than of Aramark (although in the May 2012 issue of the *Free Press* President Botstein claimed that student organizing played less of a role in the ultimate decision than students tend to think).

The same year, a group called the Student Union emerged in an attempt to unify the student body in pushing for policy changes, functioning similarly to a labor union. Though it has since fizzled out, the Student Union generated attendance of upwards of 70 stu-

of the Latin American Student Organization (LASO), which in the past has been primarily focused on cultural events that provide Latin American food and music to Bard students.

But Ferreira is interested in using LASO to engage the student body in dialogues on race, class, gender, and sexuality. To this end, she is organizing what she calls a "social justice retreat" to encourage contact between Bard's activist groups.

"These groups touch upon different things, but they do it differently and in their own spaces," she said. "And I kind of want it to be in one big space."

The retreat would involve workshops organized by different groups as a way of including others in their activities.

Duffy-Tumasz noted that the activist groups in which he is involved tend to be predominantly composed of white students, something he thinks is symptomatic of Bard's social and racial divisions.

Similarly, in Ferreira's sophomore year she organized a panel on white privilege that was attended by more students of color than white students.

She was disappointed.

Seeing the same faces over and over at events about class and race made her feel like she was preaching to the choir. Both are hopeful that the retreat will be a step towards expanding these conversations to both Bard administrators and other student groups.

Students for Women's Equality and Rights (SWEAR) is another group focused on dialogues on gender, privilege, and sexuality, specifically by interrogating and critiquing mainstream feminism.

But senior and Club Head Adrienne Kirk, who is currently working on organizing a workshop to educate students about self-defense and discuss notions of victimization and self-empowerment, sees a certain danger in the term 'activist.'

For her, it raises questions of whom the activism actually serves—the activists themselves or another party? Though she would like SWEAR to be more closely connected with groups like Tans-Action Initiative and Queer Straight Alliance, she doesn't view her group's activity as activism.

"I think of an activist as someone who hasn't eaten or slept in three days because they're fighting for the right of women to vote or for people to have jobs," she said.

Nonetheless, she notes that discussions of privilege and examinations of intersectionality are difficult, but essential at Bard. The ghost of privilege looms behind Bard activists, as college radicals are commonly criticized for being detached from the people and issues they fight for.

Magnusson acknowledges an inherent tension between being a student at an elite and expensive liberal arts college and being involved in leftist activism.

"I've thought about moving to the city, that I would be able to do more as an organizer there," he said.

But despite its isolation and ivory-tower feeling, Magnusson has a drive to spend his brief time at Bard working to improve the conditions of its community members, workers and students alike.

For Duffy-Tumasz and Gurner, the privilege that comes with being a student at a school like Bard also comes with a responsibility to engage with issues of social justice.

"Basically everyone who's taken a humanities class knows about these issues," Gurner said.

He often sees his peers speak passionately about equality and oppression in class discussions. So why does that passion dissipate when class ends? Gurner appears genuinely baffled.

THE SPECTER OF ANNANDALE'S ACTIVISTS

BY LUCAS OPGENORTH

community of activists will be somewhat insular, with several groups being made up of many of the same students.

Junior Willie Gurner and senior Lucas Duffy-Tumasz, who are primarily involved in the SLD—a group dedicated to building relationships between students and workers in order to improve labor conditions and address other labor-related issues—think that the difficulty in reaching out to the broader Bard community lies partly in Bardians' tendency to focus intensely on their own individual academic and extracurricular work.

They also notice a skepticism from a large number of students who view political action as futile and seem to value reading and writing over acting.

Even since his first year, Duffy-Tumasz has noticed a decreased prominence of Bard activism.

"There's something about Bard where no matter how much stuff we do on campus, there's still people who haven't heard of us," he said.

Despite these tendencies, the SLD, which has maintained a campus presence since 2005, is perhaps Bard's highest profile activist group.

Though many groups, such as Bard Anti-Racist Discourse, come and go due to the yearly changes in the student body, Duffy-Tumasz and Gurner attribute the SLD's success to the immediacy and tangibility of their goals.

"I definitely believe that if you want to

students at meetings.

This period of time also coincided with the autumn of Occupy Wall Street, a rare moment in which leftist perspectives on wealth inequality and direct democracy captured the attention of the American public.

Bard students travelled to Manhattan's now-famous Zuccotti Park to participate in Occupy's consensus-based working groups and march in protests. Those who remained in Annandale kept lines of contact to ensure that the protesters were safe and out of jail. Facebook groups were abuzz with discussion of the movement, its tenants, and the issues it sought to address.

Occupy was a catalyst for Magnusson's participation in activism at Bard. While his political beliefs had been radical since high school, Occupy demonstrated the possibilities of non-hierarchical decision making and organizing.

He also takes inspiration from the Zapatistas, a revolutionary group in Chiapas, Mexico, known for their opposition to neoliberal globalization and their blend of anarchist and socialist ideologies.

He has traveled around the continent, from Montreal to Mexico, meeting with and learning from other activist groups.

In addition to the activist community composed by the members of SLD, Strike Debt, and Environmental Collective, there are also several other groups that blur the lines surrounding the term "activist."

Senior Rosemary Ferreira is the club-head

Some sports are not fully played in the present, but exist as vessels of nostalgia, with sentimental tones that tether play to something in the past tense somewhere, somehow. Cricket at Bard is one of these.

I showed up to cricket practice one Friday afternoon. At Bard, they play in the field outside Kline Commons. I saw the wickets and decided to join.

Cricket is the world's second-most popular sport, after soccer. The game is an ancient one, spread across the world through the might of the British Empire: Australia, the Indian subcontinent, the West Indies, and Southern Africa. Proponents of the game bristle at any comparison of the game to baseball—but here we go:

Batsmen stand in front of a wicket—a flat piece of wood on top of three sticks. This is akin to a physical manifestation of the strike zone in baseball.

A bowler, or pitcher, aims to hit the wicket and knock it down.

The batsman tries to hit the ball as far as possible in any direction, or simply swings to block the ball from hitting the wicket.

There are only two "bases." Upon hitting the ball, the batsman can either run to the other base and score, or stay put and bat again. The batsman is out for the rest of the game if the ball is caught, if the ball hits the wickets, or if caught before reaching a "base."

Oh! Also there are two batsmen at all times—only one bats at a time, but both must be safe when they run between bases. Also, if the ball goes a certain distance, like a home run distance, it's worth six runs. There are a lot of other rules, too — it's a complicated game.

"The game is easy," one player, Abhishek Dev, a senior, told me, "It's the rules that are hard."

I walked onto the pitch and watched Casper Davis Jr., a junior, bat. Davis has played cricket his whole life, starting when he was five. He used to play in the streets of his village in St. Vincent in the Caribbean with a tennis ball, a wicket made of bricks or a chair, and a bat fashioned from coconut trees or scraps of wood.

Davis is the head of the Bard Cricket Club this year. His father, Casper Davis Sr., was a professional cricketer, a fast bowler for the Windward Islands team. People in the village would watch Davis play and know he was his father's son. It was a lot of pressure at times.

Davis came to America when he was 16. He joined his father, who had moved to America six years earlier. Crown Heights in Brooklyn was a long way from life in a small St. Vincent village. The culture shock was immense. He found himself playing cricket more and more.

He played in leagues around the city, with his father as one of his coaches. In many ways, the pitch was where Davis knew the most about his father. His father had been in America or traveling for cricket for much of his childhood. "I know a good bit about him," Davis said, "but I still don't know that much about him."

I stood next to the wicket and watched as the bowler lobbed the ball. I hit it off the bounce and it flew with a satisfying whack toward the gathered fielders.

Out in the field, Samira Omarshah, a sophomore, scooped up the ball and threw it back to the bowler.

Omarshah, too, said she plays to connect to her roots. She learned to play from her father and uncle. She lived in Zimbabwe and played cricket, field hockey and soccer with her cousins. Then her parents separated when she was 10. She, her brother and her mother left for the United States. She stopped playing cricket then.

She came back to Zambia two years later to live with her step-father, a diplomat. And Omarshah said everything clicked when she picked up cricket again. All the lessons her father and uncle taught her came back—how to hold the bat, how to line your fingers up on the beams of the ball.

"Because I couldn't really see him as much," Omarshah said, "it just felt like it was my job almost to keep playing. As a daughter, I wanted to be close to my dad, and I couldn't physically be close to him, and I felt through cricket I could somehow do something that tied me to him."

CRICKET IN THE PRESENT TENSE

BY JP LAWRENCE

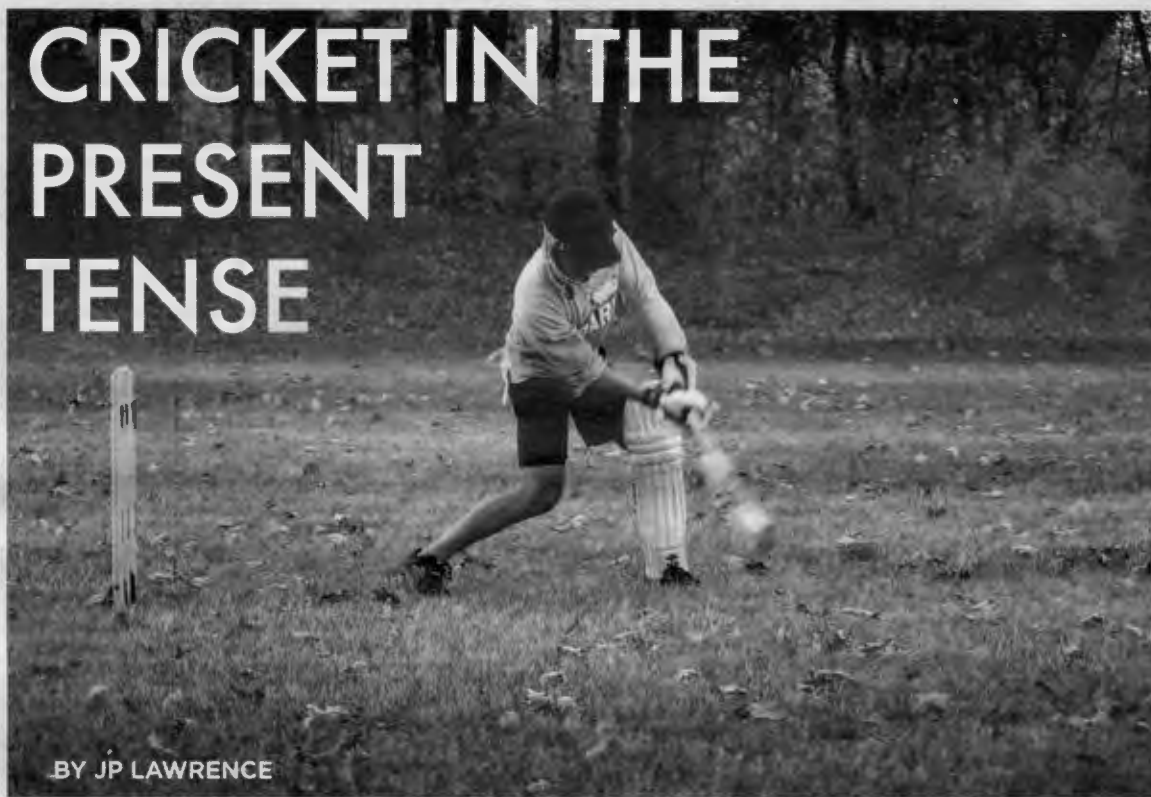


photo by miles lim

Swapan Jain, Assistant Professor of Chemistry and de facto faculty advisor of the cricket team, took the ball. Jain said he's played since he was three, used to play in bed with a pillow for a bat and a piece of fruit for a ball. When Jain pitches, the ball hits 120 to 130 kph. He runs and runs, and like a whirling dervish he swings his arm like the hands of a clock and lobs the ball like a heavy grenade toward the wickets before him.

It bounced before me, and I swung. I missed. It was much too fast.

Two years ago, the cricket club traveled to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. They woke up at the crack of dawn, traveled to Albany, played five to six hours, and lost horribly. They were destroyed. But you couldn't tell that from the faces of the players on their way back, Jain said. He showed me pictures of the team that day. Everyone was smiling.

The game may look like baseball on the surface, Jain said, but there are layers of subtlety and corners of intricacy. Cricket may use terms such as zooter, trundler, and maiden, but it does share with baseball this: the object, it seems, is coming "home."

KNOWING WHERE TO BE A STORY ABOUT TENNIS AND KYRGYZSTAN

BY JP LAWRENCE

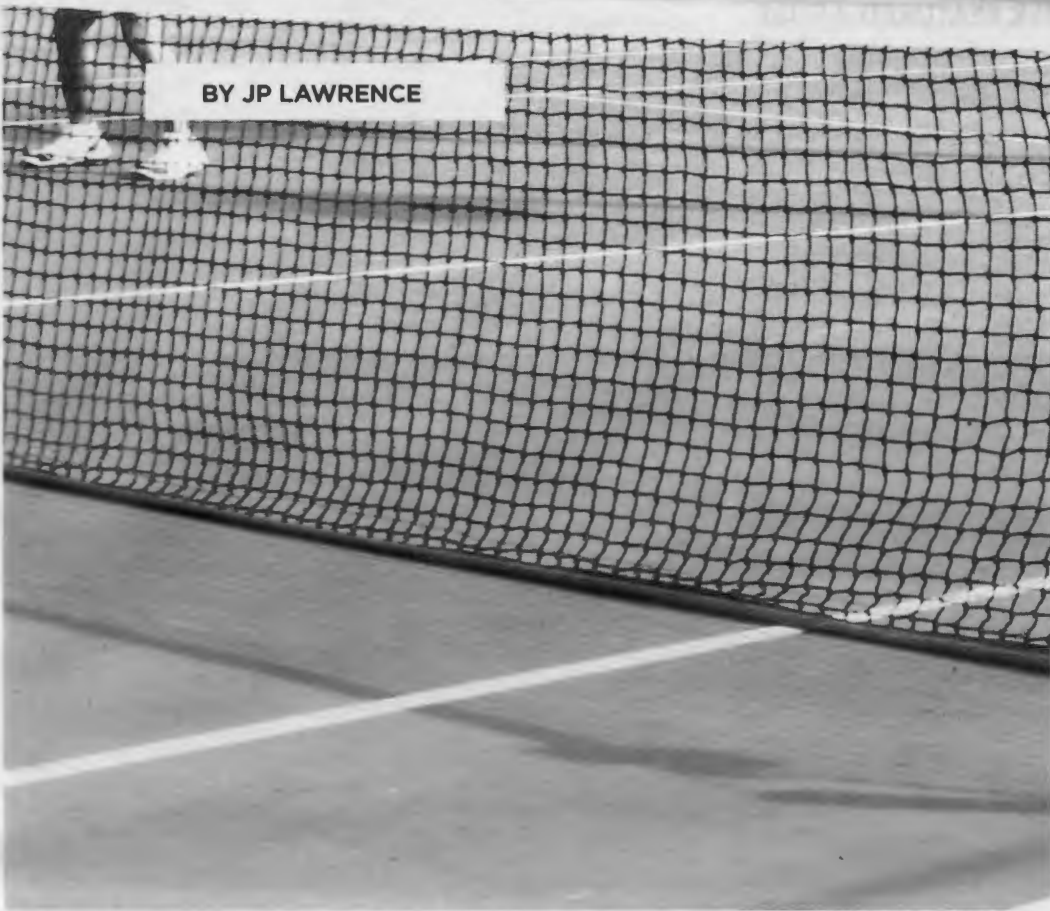


photo via bard athletics

So much of life is knowing where to be.

Albina Muzafarova waits near the net as her partner, Julia DeFabo, rears back and serves. It's the last doubles match of the season, and all four players on the court stand ready underneath the lights. The racket smashes the ball, and everything breaks down.

The ball darts, slithers, arcs like a grenade. Muzafarova and DeFabo scurry from side to side, back to front, syncopated like the pistons of an engine. They seem as one, but they've only really been playing together for three weeks, and Muzafarova is a rookie from Bard's affiliate school in Kyrgyzstan.

Muzafarova, a junior, was born in Tajikistan, but she attended the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) in Kyrgyzstan. When the opportunity came, Muzafarova traveled to Bard through the Program in International Education, which brings gifted students from "countries in transition" to Annandale for a semester. She saw the tennis courts and decided she wanted to play, having learned in Tajikistan from a friend.

Tennis is a way to rest, Muzafarova says, even as she runs around. Tennis is freeing; there is something beautiful when you hit the ball, and it goes exactly where you want it. Each swing of the racket earns a level of control and satisfaction—but

only for an instant. Even the best-hit ball can find its way back.

That's why communication is everything during scurrying time. One missed rotation and the ball is lost. Muzafarova enjoys playing the baseline, the rear boundary of the court, while her partner, DeFabo, loves playing near the net. When Muzafarova is back and hits the ball long, DeFabo closes in. If Muzafarova hits the ball short, DeFabo backs up.

"She lets me go crazy at the net," DeFabo, a senior, said, "and I know that she has my back if a ball gets past me."

DeFabo and Muzafarova have a rule where they are not allowed to apologize to each other on the court, so that it becomes less about the individuals on the court and more about the team—each point is a loss for both, or a winner for both.

Muzafarova said she wasn't very comfortable moving close to the net, but over the season, she improved.

She learned a lot over her semester at Bard as well, Muzafarova said. Going from a high school in Tajikistan to the AUCA in Kyrgyzstan to Bard in Annandale has shown her the various ways to learn.

She'll be going back to AUCA next semester, but as Muzafarova moves from one side of the world to the other, at least she knows that on the tennis court, someone has her back.

ATHLETICS UPDATE

BY JOHANNA COSTIGAN

Bard is launching a new academic assistance program for student athletes. The Academic and Co-Curricular Excellence (ACE) program will be directed by Assistant Athletic Director Stefanie Carrington. ACE will offer workshops, tutorials, life skills classes, and time management seminars, working in conjunction with the Learning Commons and the Career Development Office.

Athletic Director Kris Hall explained that although Bard athletes rarely have academic trouble, the college should have a support system in place, particularly since the number of athletes increases every year.

Bard will host the Men's and Women's Cross Country Liberty League Championship Nov. 2. While some sports' championship locations are

hosted by the No. 1 team in the league, such as basketball, volleyball, and soccer, other sports' championship locations are predetermined based on a regular cycle. This year it is Bard's turn in the rotation to host the cross country championship. This is the college's third year in the league. Last year Clarkson University hosted the championship; Vassar hosted it the year before that.

OCTOBER FEATURED ARTIST

Brendan Hunt '16
photographer



What's your name?
Brendan Hunt

Where did you grow up?
Burlington, Vermont

What's the hardest thing about taking pictures for you?
Trying new things. Trying new things is tough but you get better at things when you try them. Staying faithful to yourself, staying faithful to a certain type of work ethic. You have to be yourself and forget yourself, and that can be difficult sometimes

What do you order at DTR?
Crispy chicken slider with bacon, lettuce, caramelized onions, chipotle sauce, and pickles. And it has to be pressed.

Tell us about this series in a couple of sentences?
It's split. Half are event photos from parties which I enjoy doing because everybody's inhibitions, including mine, are lowered so I'm taking more chances. Catching little moments. I'm intrigued by empathy and the relationship between curves and lines in design. Any intercourse between people is something I gravitate towards. The other half is part of a project I did last semester where I would go to stranger's homes and businesses because I wanted to find them in an environment that physically de-

scribed them. I went to a deaf artist's studio and a socialite's home. Basically I was building very brief, but very intense relationships with these people that would only last like ten minutes.

What's the first photo you remember taking?
I bought this old 1930's folder camera when I was in high school, and I had no idea what I was doing but I was shooting everything. My friends, sand, fucking rocks and trees and daffodils. I photographed the shit out of everything but it wasn't good.

What's a picture you wish you took?
When I was home for fall break last year I was using a large format camera that takes a while to set everything up with and I saw this old man being pushed in a wheelchair by who I assumed was his son and a baby being pushed in his stroller by his mother. They were crossing each other and I just thought it was the coolest thing ever.

This is a chance to leave a message for your future self. What do you want to say?
Stay in school, don't fuck up, have fun, try new things, make a lot of money, get a beautiful wife, Get a beautiful girlfriend... let's start there.

HUMAN RIGHTS START AT HOME RESPECT AND A FAIR CONTRACT FOR BARD HOUSEKEEPERS

BY LUCAS DUFFY-TUMASZ, MOLLY JACOBS-MEYER, WILLIE GURNER, JACK MAGNUS-SON, DAN PITTS LAURA THOMPSON & DANIEL WALDO (MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT LABOR DIALOUGE)

Bard puts forth the image of being a progressive institution with humanitarian values. The college's recent dealings with its employees, however, call the reality of this image into question.

For about 20 years Bard Environmental Service workers (housekeepers) were subcontracted through the Aramark corporation. They were treated badly, paid less than Bard workers, and had to pay excessive fees for health care (up to half their salary). As a result of a three-year campaign by workers and students, involving petitions, meetings with the administration, and several 100+ person rallies, the college agreed to end their contract with Aramark and hire housekeepers directly.

Despite this welcome improvement, it seems that yet again the housekeepers are facing difficulties. They have been engaged in their first contract negotiations with the college since February. In the course of those negotiations, the administration has demonstrated that paying a living wage, honoring union rights and showing workers the respect that they deserve are not their priority. We, as students and community members, must support Bard workers and hold the college accountable for this hypocrisy.

When the college transitioned to hiring the housekeepers directly, there was a 90-day period during which workers were told they would be evaluated and either hired or fired. In May 2012, 20 days after the end of the 90 days, (and after housekeepers had worked commencement) the college fired six housekeepers, violating the terms of the agreed upon evaluation period. Students were outraged but were told by Bard administration officials to allow a third party authority, known as an arbitrator, to rule on the firings. This past summer the arbitrator ruled that Bard give the workers back their job, including back pay. Rather

than accepting the results of the arbitration, the college is sending the case to another arbitrator, with every indication that they will lose. This means the college is spending our tuition money on legal fees. They have refused to disclose the costs when requested. In the meantime, the fired housekeepers' unemployment compensation has run out and they need their jobs back to be able to provide for their families.

Meanwhile, the college has become increasingly hostile in contract negotiations.

Administrators have implied that they are penalizing the housekeepers because their union is contesting the unjust firings. One can look to the administration's latest contract proposal for evidence of this.

Firstly, the college has taken off the table its earlier offer of three percent and four percent annual raises over the three-year contract. Instead, they are now offering 1.25 percent, 1.5 percent, and two percent, a rate which doesn't even keep up with inflation—meaning it is effectively a pay cut. Secondly, the current proposal would require housekeepers to pay \$150 per month for healthcare if they smoke or use tobacco products. Not only is this an egregious invasion of the workers' personal lives, but also professors and other Bard employees are not required to pay this fee. Housekeepers—the lowest paid workers on campus—would be the only employees to face this penalty. Furthermore, smokers' surcharges, like this one, are not proven to be a disincentive to smoking and have been condemned by the American Lung Association.

The most appalling aspect of the college's proposal is the recently inserted contract language that would eliminate a fundamental workers' right: the right to contest unjust disciplinary actions or suspensions. This means that workers would no longer have recourse to the judgement of a third party arbitrator on matters of dispute with the college, excluding firings. This is particularly crucial, because past discipline or suspension can be used to fire a worker later. If this clause went into effect, there would be no way to hold the college accountable for its treatment of workers.

The college's proposal is exemplary of a larger trend of disrespect on the part of the administration, which is represented in negotiations by Vice Presidents Jim Brudvig and Colleen Murphy-Alexander, as well as Human Resources Director Fiona Smarrito. Most shamefully, administrators have made statements to workers during negotiations, and to students, that have created fear that housekeepers could be outsourced to an outside corporation again. Although this appears unlikely due to the college's financial investment in bringing the workers in-house, it has served to intimidate the housekeepers. These workers unquestion-

ably benefit from being directly employed by Bard. Their employment allows them to receive numerous benefits such as tuition exchange for their children, and allows them to be fully a part of the Bard community. In order for the college to engage respectfully with the housekeepers, they must reaffirm their commitment to keeping them in-house.

As Bard students, parents, alumni, and fellow community members, we must let administrators know that their hostility to

housekeepers during contract negotiations is unacceptable. Bard housekeepers are an integral part of the Bard community and we demand that the administration treat them as such. It is up to us, the Bard community, to hold the institution to the progressive image that it seeks to project.

There is a growing movement at colleges all over the U.S. to stand up to injustices on campus. Newly formed Vassar and SUNY New Paltz student labor groups are dealing with similar struggles to make their campuses more inclusive environments for workers and ensure that they are treated fairly. We urge you to talk to your housekeepers about these issues that they're facing. Demand that the administration give them a fair contract and the respect they deserve!

Student Labor Dialogue members are tabling in Kline and the Campus Center with a letter writing campaign starting Oct. 21. We encourage students, alumni, and parents to write to Bard administrators and trustees in support of the workers. You can also voice your support via email to Jim Brudvig (brudvig@bard.edu), Colleen Murphy Alexander (murphy@bard.edu), and Leon Botstein (president@bard.edu).



Brendan Hunt, 2013

I THINK THEREFORE TWERK TWERK TWERK

IN RESPONSE TO 'DON'T
CONSUME US, JOIN US'

BY MEGAN SMILIE

Laughs and claps came from the crowd of older high school kids as a 10-year-old me shook my hips to Nelly's "Hot in Herre." It was during a rehearsal for "Oliver!", the Verona, N.J. summer musical of 2002. For as long as I can remember, I have loved not only to dance, but the attention and praise that I have gotten for it, especially when dancing with an air of sexuality.

The term "twerk" has unknown roots but is possibly a shortening of "footwork" or a combination of "twist and jerk." It was first notably used in 1993 by New Orleans bounce artist, DJ Jubilee on his track "Do The Jubilee All", with the lyric "twerk baby, twerk baby, twerk, twerk, twerk, twerk, baby, twerk, twerk, twerk."

It was not until 2005, however, that the word entered my lexicon. "Dip it, pop it, twerk it, stop it, check on me tonight," sings Beyoncé on her hit single, "Check on It." Little did I know that twerking was a style of dance that I had been doing, or attempting to do, for a long time.

President Leon Botstein defined twerking as "trying to manipulate the body in a way that is at the once athletic, and also suggestive." This has, unashamedly, always been my dance floor M.O. It has typically been a crowd pleaser. Throughout my years of dancing and twerking at middle school socials, Sweet 16s and house parties, my movements have been likened to those of a "black girl."

The way that we—the way that I—interact with others is inevitably predicated on socially constructed stereotypes. I do understand the archetype of the black female dancer as projected by our media. I understand why someone would make such comments in reaction to my dancing. Does this mean that I shouldn't be doing it? My intention has never been an attempt to assume another identity. I am not African or black. Twerking, possibly derived from traditional mapouka dancing of Côte d'Ivoire and introduced to the world and to me by black entertainers, does not allow me to "connect to my ancestral past," as palo dancing does for Rosemary Ferreira, articulated in her article entitled "Don't Consume Us, Join Us."

Dancing, and in this case twerking, does make me, an otherwise horrifyingly self-conscious individual, feel good about myself and the way that I can move my body. I don't twerk because "I saw some black girl do it" or to belittle a culture that I am not a part of. I twerk because it is fun.

Unlike Rosemary's suggestion, I am not "play[ing] myself" and would never hide my enjoyment or ability

from anyone black, white, or brown. I would hope that I could join others in expression and share our personal relationships to these cultured activities.

Although I have been flattered by the colorization of my dancing, I am aware that it is a propagation of generalization and a negative form of appropriation.

Not every black girl dances the same. Not every black student hangs out in the Bardian Lounge, nor is it limited to the use of black students. Not every white student is ashamed of her understanding of culture as an amalgamation of experiences.

I am interested in individuals—persons, not people. Especially at this unique time in our lives, at a school with under 2,000 undergraduates, we can all afford this interest. We can take the time to know someone, to engage with another's interests, cultural (and non-cultural) identity, and personal history.

I love the idea of "dialogues@bard," of hearing individual perspectives on the issues at our school. "Don't Consume Us, Join Us" is the title of Rosemary's article and instruction to readers, but I am unsure of how I should be doing that. After assumptions are made about my intentions in interacting with what may be "black culture," I am told that my role is limited to that of an audience member in cultures different from my own.

I don't know how, nor do I necessarily want, to limit my passions or behaviors to things that are "white"—and I only use "white" to describe "my culture" because my heritage is that of a non-Jewish European mutt. At the same time, if my words or actions are ever offensive to anyone I'd like to know why; I'd like to stop.

I can't think of any activity that embodies my own or my family's history and experience. I have no emotional connection to Irish step dancing, and I cannot speak Alsatian. All four of my grandparents were born in New Jersey, where my immediate family calls home. I would say that going to the Jersey Shore is something that I consider to be a part of my personal and familial culture. I could tell you about my experience with New Jersey beaches, the stories that my parents and grandparents have told me along with my own, and attempt to give you a picture of what it is like, what it was like.

What I would like to do though is bring you there, let you see the August jellyfish yourself, introduce you the now infamous Jersey Shore, and maybe twerk with you at a club in Seaside.

DIALOGUES@BARD

"I DON'T KNOW IF BARD'S THE PLACE FOR INTERRACIAL DATING"

WITH DURANTE BARRINGER,
JP LAWRENCE, AND JAVAN
RICHARDS

JPL: My name is J.p. Lawrence. I was born in the Philippines and I grew up in Minnesota.

JR: I'm Javan Richards. I was born in California. I lived there for 13 years and then I moved to New York.

DB: My name is Durante Barringer. Growing up, I moved between Atlanta, Ga. and Charlotte, N.C.

JPL: I'd like to talk about dating at Bard. Specifically interracial dating—what we've seen and what it means.

DB: I know most of the black community at Bard, and most of the black community hasn't really dated anyone, I would say. There have been a couple couples here and there, but most of us have been single for the most part, although we've dated people outside of Bard. I don't know if Bard's the place for interracial dating—if it feeds that sort of dating.

JPL: What do you mean?

DB: I think certain people have different outlooks on what dating is, and what they expect from dating. I think a reason why interracial couples are not prevalent at Bard, and I think, in general, is because there is still a lot of prejudice that goes around.

JPL: Do you have any examples?

DB: It's not overt prejudice, but it's like, people asking, "why are you hanging out with this certain group of people?" That influences how you act and how you interact with certain other groups. If you're around your group of friends, you know if you date someone outside your group, that it could cause tension.

JPL: So you hang out with people you're comfortable with, and those people hang out with people they're comfortable with, so it's hard to find a new kind of people?

DB: People want to be comfortable with each other. There's always some prejudice in that feeling of comfort.

JR: I can't really speak to why interracial couples are so sparse at Bard. Because I've seen it happen. I've seen Caribbean people and white people, Asian people and white people, other ethnic groups and white people, it's a lot of

I'd ask friends of mine: "I'm a bigger guy, and I'm black, do you think I'm scaring these girls?" I had a real problem engaging in hookups when I was young. I was really self-conscious.

"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."
— Rosemary Ferreira

Behind dialogues@bard is the idea that dialogues, people talking with each other in terms of their experiences, is a good way to explore issues of race at Bard. This month, we talk about interracial dating.

things and white people. I can't say that it's prejudice. There are just so many white people. There are fewer bachelors of other ethnicities.

JPL: Racial identity is so slippery, as far as who you identify with. For instance, I was the only Asian kid in my school of almost all white kids. Growing up, all the girls I had crushes on in school were white; when I would turn on the TV or see the covers of magazines, all the girls were white girls. I was bombarded by this idea that white girls were the cultural ideal. It's actually really problematic. I remember in high school, there was girl who was Filipino like me. People would tease me about her. And I remember thinking, "Wow, if I were to date her, I'd be settling into the role that everyone had for me." Even at the time, I remember thinking that that's so screwed up, but that's what my thinking was.

DB: You think of what people of other races will think: "Oh, I bet you're going to get with her."



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JPL: Yeah, I was judging myself based on what my white friends would think. It's like I do things with one eye over my shoulder. It's not natural like a white person dating another white person is. There's a certain kind of difference.

JR: I've always dated interracial. I've never actually dated a black female. Where I grew up, all my friends were white. My parents paid a lot of attention to making sure that I felt it was okay to date a white girl. They made sure to say that "whoever you bring into the house, as long as they're not an asshole, it's cool with us."

I will say that only in my earlier years here did I have a real problem, or a conscious emphasis of whether people were staring, or if people were actively avoiding me because they thought I was scary or unappealing.

JPL: I know there are some people who say, "Dating at Bard is hard in general, what's new? Why make this a race thing?" But what I've been hearing throughout

this conversation is that dating between races is still noteworthy.

JR: But it is. It's a problem that's probably stopping people from meeting people who are really interesting and really interested in you. You don't want to have to be that person where people are constantly, not judging you, but wondering. It's something I've thought about before: Does this person like me or does she like black men? Or maybe does she like Asian men? I've heard people come up to me and say, "that girl likes black guys, you should go for it." If you're a white guy dealing with a white woman, you don't have to deal with that thought process.

JPL: I think the thing about issues of race is that it doesn't have to be blatant, Disney-villain stuff. Sometimes, even the most well-meaning, progressive, kind people can still make people uncomfortable and still do little things that make people conscious of their difference—that, "Oh wow, I was just reminded that I'm not white enough for you" feeling.

DB: Yeah, I think Bard suffers from a color-blind syndrome because of its progressiveness. And I will say that white people, Asian people, black people—whatever race—can scoff at this and say it's not a problem. But at the same time, it goes along with thinking that race isn't a big deal.

JR: Just like if someone were to look at me and say, "That guy's a big guy, he's black," what does that imagery denote? Where does that put you in the spectrum of appeal to someone who's different from you? It really becomes a game of how you want to present yourself.

When I was younger, I thought I scared people. Because I was heavy, because I'm pretty built. I didn't have nearly as much confidence and understanding as I do now. I would always try to be as unthreatening as humanly possible, because I didn't want to frighten anyone with my size.

DB: I totally understand the thing about the big scary black guy. It's an archetype that is played upon all the time.

I think a lot of people are intimidated by big black men. I don't know why. I'm not sure that it happens at Bard. No one's ever confessed to me, "hey Durante you're a scary guy." Hopefully I'm not scaring anyone, but I totally understand where you're coming from.

JR: I was made to feel that I intimidated people, just because there are so many stereotypes about angry black men, and violent black men. If I went to a party, and there was an attractive, smaller white girl, I didn't want go up to her and scare her.

JPL: You probably wouldn't have scared her!

JR: Yeah, but I would think, what if it does happen? I'd ask friends of mine: "I'm a bigger guy, and I'm black, do you think I'm scaring these girls?" I had a real problem engaging in hookups when I was young. I was really self-conscious.

JPL: We're all self-conscious when we're young, but it's just an extra little thing—

JR: Thrown on top of all of these other issues. It's one of these things where I'm like, "is this what's happening? is that why?" Once I started to push that out, it didn't seem to be a problem with my meeting people. Meeting people became much easier when I became more concerned with being a person while understanding that I am a black person.

THE POLITICS OF FUNDING POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY BEN POWERS

The National Science Foundation, whose budget is allocated by Congress, recently eliminated funding for political science research projects not connected to national security or furthering American economic interests. According to some members of Congress, political science ostensibly holds less value for society than other hard sciences. I interviewed the head of the Political Studies department at Bard, professor Omar Encarnación, as well as Political Studies professor Michelle Murray to hear their thoughts.

Powers: The National Science Foundation (NSF) has cut funding to political science research that does not engage with national security or further American economic interests. How do you feel about this recent development?

Murray: Overall, people tend to use NSF grants to do massive data collections they wouldn't otherwise be able to do. Data collection allows us to understand the way politics works, both domestically and internationally. Without those resources and support with which to do these things I think a lot of political science research is going to be hindered.

Encarnación: I think that it impacts a particular type of scholar, not so much with respect to the field, but in terms of where they are in the profession. Specifically, graduate students and assistant professors who are still establishing themselves. It's not likely to affect someone like myself who is already established and also has the means to secure funding, but it will put graduate students and assistant professors very much at risk.

Murray: A lot of times those are precisely the people who are in a position to challenge conventional wisdom and push our knowledge of the field. They are not entrenched in a way that a full professor might be. They are really trying to carve out new space, and so for it to affect them is devastating to our knowledge.

Encarnación: It is also a dangerous thing for Congress to presume it can predict or seem to understand what we do. You also wonder if there is a political agenda behind all of this. I don't see similar attacks on anthropology or sociology, or—

Murray: And those were not defunded.

Encarnación: Yes, those were not defunded, and in ways there are far more esoteric fields than our own. I think most

political scientists often put themselves particularly out there when tackling certain issues, some of which, of course, many members of Congress may not approve. So it's a field that again often puts itself, and those who do it, in fairly treacherous terrain, and there is no question that there is also this presumption in general and maybe with political science in particular that it is a sort of haven of liberalism.

Powers: You briefly touched on the value that political science can have to society, or to an election, could you speak more to what that value is?

Encarnación: If we believe in a well-rounded education, and we believe that

and then they have a toolkit that hopefully helps them think, process, and maybe act on those types of issues.

Encarnación: There is also a very, very full and rich humanistic tradition in political science that draws on philosophy and political theory and in principle serves as a great foundation for building citizenship and training. We all want educated citizens who question government. Conservatives supposedly do, and it is through political theory that you gain those insights.

Murray: There is this movement in higher education that it has to be this sort of means to an end. You learn a very specific set of technical skills that you then go and

get a job where you use those skills, and I think that's cutting out a huge part of what education is supposed to be. It's not about becoming a person who can do certain types of things, but being a person who can think and wonder.

Powers: Some might suggest that political science has done a poor job of presenting itself to the public and making itself accessible. Do you think this is true? Are there ways in which political science could better present itself?

Murray: It's somewhat of a chicken and egg argument.

If Washington is defunding political science because it isn't relevant, then new connections are going to be missed. I remember some of my professors in grad school were very much involved in policy debates. They would be talking on the CBS news hour, writing op-ed's, showing up on the news to talk about bombing in Kosovo in 1999, or 9/11 and terrorism, and I think that is important that the work be showcased as relevant. You know you can have your very specific scholarly debates, but it's good when academics try to engage in the world in those ways.



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the arts can enrich your life, then certainly a very similar argument can be made for political science. I don't see why you would not aim for the fullest and broadest sort of life experience you can have. Political science is also extremely diverse in what it does and what it teaches.

Murray: Professors are teaching students the ideas and tools they need to be critically engaged with the world. Not just that I write something and then it changes U.S. foreign policy, but probably the thing I have done that is most effective is teaching college students about international relations, and then they go out in the world,

MILEY'S TWERK VS. KENYA'S MASSACRE

BY SAMIRA OMARSHAH



Brendan Hunt, 2013

On Sept. 21 Alex Rodriguez overtook Lou Gehrig's record in Major League Baseball as having the most grand slams. The Yankee baseball player's home run pushed the Yankees ahead to a 5-1 victory over the San Francisco Giants at Yankee Stadium. Meanwhile in Kenya, a Somali terrorist group by the name of Al-Shabaab attacked the Westgate Mall.

The attack went on for three days with 72 deaths and 200 people wounded. The event was vengeance for Operation Linda Nchi, which involved Kenyan and Ethiopian troops rescuing hostages that were taken in Somalia by Al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab, Arabic for "The Youth," is a Somali terrorist group associated with al-Qaida that controls large parts of Somalia and imposes strict Sharia law on the people there.

Terrorist attacks are too common in Africa, but they rarely receive in-depth coverage on U.S. news stations. The images of the attack, gruesome photos of bodies scattered across the mall, seemed to be of more interest to the American public than analysis or understanding of the events. It happened in a far-away country. Americans did not care to look beyond the shocking images.

Almost 80 people died in three days. No one in the United

States knew the details or significance because stories about Major League Baseball history being made, a nine-year-old sneaking onto a flight to Vegas and Miley Cyrus twerking at the VMAs were more interesting to the public.

A powerful nation is fueled by an informed public. And not just informed, but globally informed. The media cannot be entirely blamed here; it is catering to the demands of the people watching the news. The media is working with a curious group of individuals where the top trending searches on Google are Miley Cyrus, LeBron James, Whitney Houston and the Hunger Games. Like any business or organization they cater to the

demands of the consumer.

On Sept. 21, the consumer's demand was Major League Baseball as opposed to a massacre in Kenya. This has its roots in ignorance. Many people do not realize how terrorist attacks in Africa are linked to attacks that have occurred in the United States.

Al-Qaida is directly linked to the United States through events like 9/11, which led to the long and draining wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The American public should be concerned with the actions of this organization. Al-Shabaab claims to be carrying out jihad against those who are "enemies of Islam." Even though this attack is said to be revenge for Kenya's involvement in displacing Al-Shabaab from towns in Somalia, there are deeper concerns regarding what this attack represents. The war on terrorism has lasted 22 years. Afghanistan has been subject to Western powers as well as the U.S. following Sept. 11. In Somalia, the U.S. and other nations are fighting against al-Qaida and the Al-Shabaab. In Syria, the U.S. is aiding government opposition with supplies in order to overthrow Assad. There are major links between foreign and domestic affairs that the American public seems entirely naive to.

People need to get more involved in their political communities and try to understand what is happening in the news. Things like global warming, the debt ceiling and the Affordable Care Act are all important terms that a surprising number of American citizens are not able to explain to one another. The importance of interdisciplinary courses in education must be emphasized and real life application to skills taught in schools must be stressed.

A country was affected by the same terrorist organization that killed many Americans, and yet the public remained largely unconcerned. The American public must strive to fully understand their own politics with the hopes of one day understanding global issues better. Hopefully, when the light needs to be shone on a country experiencing some darkness, the United States will be able to recognize the links between the affairs of another nation in relation to themselves. Distance and ethnicity should not obscure these links.

RE: BARD TWEETS

PHILIP POZNANSKY

@ppoznans

What if I dropped a plate
in Kline and it broke

ABIGAIL WELLHOUSE

@wellhouse

If you finish your to-do
list, do you die?

LISSY

@lissums

"Don't let his Aspergers
make you feel bad about
yourself!" Said my usually
politically correct friend.

RAJASRI NARASIMHAN

@therajasri

the only reason people
write for and read from the
@bardfreepress is
narcicissism

MADLINE PORSELLA

@inePor

I'm a junior. I swear
to God.

MARTHA BEATRICE

@barthameatrice

@BardFreePress Ken
Cooper is twitter
spamming me

LUCAS PUFFY

@realLucasDuffy

About to be at the point in
my sproj where anytime I
do work for my classes, i
am procrastinating.

TIAGO MENDES

@Tiagulus

There is something in-
credibly funny about
putting the letter R in
places it doesn't belong

