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FP

bard free press

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NEWS. 04
CULTURE. 09
REMEMBERING 18
BARDIVERSE. 24
SPORTS. 30
OPINION. 32

photo by alice weston

This issue features work by junior sally cole (p. 26)

[TERMS]

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BEWARE THE DTR ZIONIST

BY SALAM AWARTANI

Yesterday I was having dinner with my friends in Down the Road Café and a guy comes out of nowhere to our table, looks me straight into the eyes, mutters something that none of us were able to understand, and walks away. He left me completely baffled by what he just said, but after a bit of hesitation I decided to follow him before he left the building. I was able to catch him seconds before he walked out of the door. "Excuse me? Were you talking to me?" He kept staring at me for about three seconds, and with the deadliest poker face I've seen, repeats what he said back in DTR. I asked him "why do you keep saying that? what language is this?" "It's Hebrew", he answered "it means 'The Israeli people will prevail'" Completely caught off guard, I couldn't believe my ears, "What?" "The Israeli people will prevail," he said with a voice noticeably growing more hostile. My tongue tied in shock; I was only able to respond with "What the hell are you talking about?" I could see fire coming out of his eyes, his face had all shades of red like he is about to explode, "it's Zionism" and immediately repeated with a louder, angrier tone "Zionism! You will all see that the state of Israel prevails!" and quickly turned back and disappeared. Now out of a wide spectrum of reactions I could've taken, from punching him in the face in the middle of his second sentence, or shouting back as loudly, or even trying to follow him and discuss this furthermore, nothing was more satisfying than the looks on his face, the anger in his eyes, and the crack in his voice that is coming from mere animosity. If anything, I would go through the whole thing again with a smile on my face. To you I say, yes, you prevail... you single-handedly predominated every split of humanity there is. Matter of fact, Israel prevails every day. It prevails over all the souls of my people, our kids, our friends and family. You most definitely... prevail. But I thank you. See, being so far from home, helplessness starts to take over when you hear, read, and see what Palestinians have to go through without your presence among them. Today, however, you showed me that I am actually contributing, in a way, to my cause. The fact that I made you put the effort and time to look over my poster, read what I have to say, find me, and act so hysterically is the greatest accomplishment I made at Bard thus far. It's radicals like you who fuel my spirit of resistance, you Zionist prick. It's the agony you hold towards me that keeps me sleeping at night. My mission as a Palestinian studying in one of the most misinformed, misguided and oblivious countries in the world is to show people the true face of Zionism that Israel was established upon. This is my way of sharing the struggle with my fellow Palestinians back home. Distance has prevented me from contributing to the burial ceremonies of all the Palestinians that were recklessly killed by the Israel Defense Force, but it didn't stop me from provoking people like you. As long as my name tastes like ass when you speak it, I am fine.

PREZ JUST NOT DOWN WITH ANON

BY LEON BOTSTEIN

To the Editors of the Free Press:
I browsed through the February issue of the Free Press online and I was very impressed with the paper's range and layout. My only suggestion is that a double page spread with anonymous accounts of sexual life and encounters stood out in an unflattering way. The problem is not the subject matter itself. My response is not motivated by prudishness; it takes much more to shock, given the banality of the content. Rather I am suspicious of anonymity. And I am partial to discretion and privacy. What people say anonymously about intimacy invites skepticism. Frankly the whole section struck me as gratuitous and stood in stark contrast with the rest of the paper. But this is only one person's opinion. In the full knowledge that you have the right to publish this letter, let me express the hope that my response not be misconstrued as a reason to do more of the same. I am not outraged, surprised, or embarrassed—just disappointed. This stuff belongs, if circulated in public, on Facebook, not in a newspaper of quality.
Cordially,
Leon Botstein

CORRECTIONS

Once again, we apologize for misspelling Evelina Brown's name wrong in our spread in honor of her and Sarah McCausland's lives. May their memories be a blessing.

In the article "Citizen Science: Why So Many Scientists Want to Teach Science Literacy," a quote was mistakenly attributed to Natalia Frias-Staheli, when the true speaker was Alicia Solorzano. In addition, unlike Frias-Staheli, Solorzano works at the Rutgers Regional Biocontainment Laboratory.

In the article "The State of Music at Bard," one reference to Tivoli's "Rat Shack" calls it the "Rat Sack." Although it would be interesting, the venue was not actually a rodent's scrotum. Sorry to disappoint.

INSIDE THE BATTLE AGAINST HEROIN

THE LOCAL EPIDEMIC

BY JOHANNA COSTIGAN

A chemical SWAT team patrolled Robbins. The dorm was quarantined for 12 hours while officials searched the dorm for illegal drugs. The security department had encountered what they believed to be a mini meth lab on campus and called the administration, who let authorities handle the situation from there. Vice President of Administration Jim Brudvig recounted the incident that occurred over 5 years ago semi jokingly.

"It seems ridiculous, but that's what we have to do when we have the suspicion," he said.

Meth is not an issue at Bard. But there is a heroin epidemic in Dutchess County. Local authorities contacted the Bard administration and warned them about the potential danger of the increased presence of heroin and heroin hybrids in the area.

In response, President Leon Botstein called a task force to combat the issue within the context of Bard, and ensure that the drug stays off campus, while providing health services and counseling for those who are currently using.

A joint press release issued by the Ulster County District Attorney's Office, the Ulster County Sheriff's Office and the Kingston Police Department said that they have received reports from local jurisdictions of epic numbers of heroin overdoses, resulting in 68 deaths in Poughkeepsie alone, between Nov. 1 and Dec. 23, 2013.

Brudvig is in charge of the task force, which is focused on providing information about the epidemic so that students are well-prepared to avoid it, as well as helping those who may need assistance as a result of their use.

"We're an educational institution, not a penal society," Brudvig said. "If students have heroin and are using it, this is the time to get off of it and to get counseling. There will be no tolerance for dealers, students or staff or faculty. That policy hasn't changed. But we have a different approach for users."

There are not going to be cops roaming around the campus looking for heroin; there is not going to be an increased number of room checks; the aim of the task force is simply to provide information and assistance for those who need it.

Along with the sale of regular heroin, sales of a heroin hybrid deemed a variety of nicknames ranging from "Bud Light" to "TheraFlu" to "Income Tax" have risen significantly in recent months throughout the area. The added drug is fentanyl, a drug that is prescribed to cancer patients and others in severe and

chronic pain in lollipop, spray, or patch form.

Even in these cases, fentanyl is often used as a last resort, and is prescribed in very moderate doses. Oftentimes, buyers are unaware of the addition of fentanyl into the heroin they are purchasing.

"You don't know what you're going to get," Brudvig said.

Both are becoming more and more in demand around New York State, particularly in Dutchess and neighboring counties. While Bard's policies are non-punitive, if the police have a reasonable suspicion and obtain a warrant, they can search a student's room without telling the administration. The college can't protect students in that regard, once the police have jurisdiction.

According to Brudvig, the administration's awareness of the problem was piqued in an early November meeting after the first five of 38 heroin-related deaths in Poughkeepsie. Brudvig explained that there have been devastating effects of this drug in other cities, such as Philadelphia.

One of the largest difficulties surrounding the problem is the ambiguity about what exactly a buyer is purchasing. You can buy a bag of street heroin for about \$5. Five dollars later, your craving soothed or your curiosity satisfied, you have effortlessly accessed the drug that may very well kill you. According to NBC Nightly News, half of heroin users will die from it.

Local law enforcement, including the Red Hook Police, the Dutchess County Sheriff, and the New York State Police, have informed the administration that there have been fewer prescription drug abusers, and a corresponding increase in the use of illegal drugs that can give a user a similar high for much cheaper, namely, heroin.

Brudvig and the heroin task force are also working in conjunction with a road safety task force to make it known to drivers that the stretch of road in the middle of Bard's campus does, in fact, belong to the college. Ideally, there would be some kind of identification that indicates to drivers that they are on Bard property, which may discourage people who shouldn't be on campus, such as drug dealers, from entering.

"We have a mission to educate students who are using and make sure they know what the environment is like out there," Brudvig said. "This is not a time to be experimenting."

IN BARD'S OPEN DRUG CULTURE, HEROIN REMAINS VICE OF SECRECY, SOLITUDE

BY GRACE CAIAZZA

At Bard College, the people who know the most talk the least.

"I think that one thing that contributes to heroin use is that a lot of people here are very private," said sophomore Anna Wheeler, "and heroin is a very private drug." This culture of privacy is at the heart of the long silence on the subject in both official and social discourse. One student, who requested to remain anonymous for this article, said that she never spoke with anyone about her roommate's heroin use because she did not know how to begin the conversation. The roommate has since left Bard.

"She came home one night coming down from heroin," she said. "I didn't really know how to respond. I always thought that drugs were a distant reality."

The recent emails sent to the student body about the drug — first from President Botstein on March 5, then from Health & Counseling Services, the Committee on Wellness, and Peer Health on March 12 — were, for many students, the first they had heard that heroin use was a problem in the area or at the college. The suddenness of the conversation has left some students skeptical.

"I have a really hard time taking the email seriously because heroin use is not in my life," sophomore Melina Vanni-Gonzalez said.

Heroin has remained at the margin of life at Bard partly because heroin users tend to form a close-knit community. Another student, who also requested anonymity, and who claims to know more than one heroin user at the school, said, "the main people who are the source of heroin were involved in drug culture way before Bard... the people who were introduced to it [at Bard] formed close friendships [with the dealers] before they gave [the heroin] to them."

The mystery with which the issue is shrouded has made the newly public conversation about the drug misinformed.

"Because of this email, everyone is talking about it... the information spreads down to people who aren't directly involved and who think they know," said sophomore Hannah Taylor. Just as in the case of Philip Seymour Hoffman, whom both Botstein and Health Services mentioned in their emails, the community has dealt with its sudden consciousness of heroin by sensationalizing it.

"It comes up at every party," said sophomore Tessa von Walderdorff, "people trying to guess who has done it, or if someone was involved in it. I know a lot of people who have had to deal with accusations or fend off rumors that they had done heroin or dealt it because of the way they looked or who they were friends with."

Though the emails sought to work to help the problem, they have made students who know heroin users more wary to seek help for them. "I'm not close friends with them... People who don't want to be involved with that aren't going to want to get involved with that," said another student who requested anonymity. "I'm sure that the idea that the police are going to find out will scare them away from being as close to them [the users]."

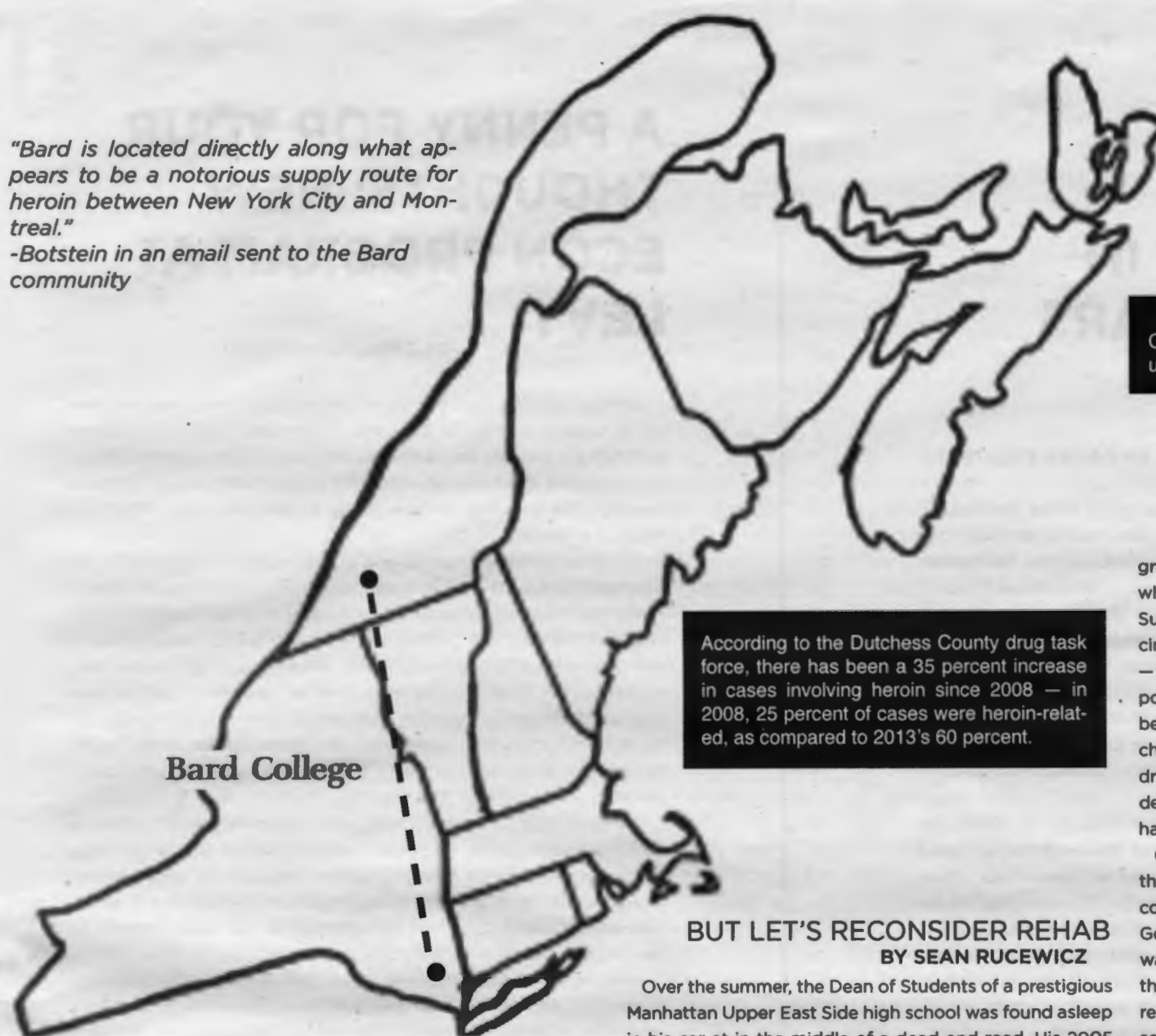
And yet others believe the emails have made a major change in the culture of drug use at the college. Students who purchase drugs from dealers who also sell heroin have become afraid enough to run the heroin dealers out of business. "The people who sell heroin don't only sell heroin," said one anonymous source, "so all the other drugs that people want to get from them, people aren't able to get them anymore [because] people are going to stop trying to buy anything else from them."

Marsha Davis, head of counseling and one of the authors of the March 12 email, acknowledges that rumors have and will continue to play a central part in the way that heroin usage is perceived, not only by the students, but also by the people whose job it is to help them. "What we have is an impression about heroin use at this school, what we know about it is what we learn from the students." She envisions that despite the rumors and mixed emotions of the student body, the individual's will to recovery and fair representation will eventually be able to eradicate heroin use at the college.

"We need to have an open discussion," she said. "It is easy for us get people who are at Bard saying that they don't use drugs or that they don't drink, but what we really need is for people to start coming forward who have used or are using and really start a dialogue with us about how this affects their lives and how we can help others change it."

"Bard is located directly along what appears to be a notorious supply route for heroin between New York City and Montreal."

-Botstein in an email sent to the Bard community



Bard College

In 2012, 24.6 percent of Dutchess County overdose deaths were attributed to heroin.

According to the Dutchess County drug task force, there has been a 35 percent increase in cases involving heroin since 2008 — in 2008, 25 percent of cases were heroin-related, as compared to 2013's 60 percent.

In the period of 2000 – 2010, heroin overdose deaths of teenagers and young adults have tripled as compared to previous decades.

BUT LET'S RECONSIDER REHAB BY SEAN RUCEWICZ

Over the summer, the Dean of Students of a prestigious Manhattan Upper East Side high school was found asleep in his car at in the middle of a dead-end road. His 2005 Nissan Altima had been parked with its headlights on for at least half an hour. When awoken, with glassy eyes Nicholas deSpoelberch informed officers that he was in possession of some pills that were not his. A search of his vehicle revealed three small packets of heroin, five Oxy-codone and three Clonidine pills, as well as silver spoons and hypodermic needles. He applied to a drug education program, which, if approved by the court and completed successfully, can dismiss all charges. Isn't it time this society changed its approach to drug crimes to allow for true rehabilitation to restore and improve lives?

With heroin coursing through the headlines, the country has reached a nexus. We must revisit implementing punitive measures when addressing addiction and drug infractions.

Mr. D., as I so fondly called him in high school, was my guidance counselor before he became the dean of Regis High School. He laughed at the routine silliness that comes with an all-boys high school. He helped me with hard times at home. He was a mediator and a disciplinary figure as much as he was my benevolent keeper.

DeSpoelberch lives with his wife and two young children in Darien, Connecticut, No. 9 on CNN's 2011 list of "top-earning towns." Stereotypically, drug addicts are degenerate sociopaths. Philip Seymour Hoffman and Cory Monteith's overdose deaths, along with many other drug cases, demonstrate that addiction afflicts even high-functioning revered members of society.

A family friend, Ewa Marcinkiewicz-O'Brien, became engulfed in a drug scandal that centered around her

grandchild. Her daughter had been with a man who, in a cocaine-fueled fight, battered their baby. Subsequently they were both incarcerated. Marcinkiewicz-O'Brien precipitated her own downfall — having her dental license in New Jersey temporarily suspended due to at least 10 arrests and behavior exemplifying a need for medical or psychiatric attention. The unfortunate truth about drug addiction is that abusers turn to drugs in despondency — where a temporary chemical enhancement provides a better alternative to reality.

Court and legal fees add up fast. For most users, their situation is dire to begin with. Work is hard to come by. Regional education facilities are subpar. Getting a degree is near impossible with their low wages and existing nearby infrastructure, or lack thereof. Using drugs is better, cheaper, and more realistic than improving general quality of life. With some street prices of \$6 for a bag of heroin, and with an already destitute life, why do we continue to be surprised by rising drug trafficking and use?

To re-enter society and regain one's footing, already slim chances decrease even further with a record tainted by felony charges and jail time. Isolating drug users from the "rest of us" only further reifies a feeling of banishment.

Coddling is not the solution. Instead of further impeding a person's ability to recover by burying them under financial duress with no reprieve we should implement a system that truly rehabilitates. Education and a judicial system that does not mar for a lifetime could instead aid in creating a society that could move away from drugs.

Vermont Governor Pete Shumlin, has pushed funding for treatment over jail time. He has begun to push policy away from the war on drugs to recognize and treat addictions, especially opiate addictions, as a public health issue.

Education has been suggested as the solution. Education is a solution, not the solution. Ultimately, addiction needs to be universally viewed as a disease, one that needs to be handled not with punitive measures, but with bolstering aid. Adding or reinforcing stigma to drug addiction only further shuts the door on real recuperation.

Re-evaluating the conversation on addressing drug dependency is the next step. Perhaps addicts have not failed society, but society has failed them.

"We're an educational institution, not a penal society. If students have heroin and are using it, this is the time to get off of it and to get counseling."

- VP for Administration Jim Brudvig

TLS PROJECT IN HUDSON 3 YEARS STRONG

BY DALMA SZENTPALY

"I want Building Up Hudson to become more; to be Building Up Catskills, Building Up Tivoli or Building Up Red Hook," said senior Jon White, one of the co-heads of the TLS project, Building Up Hudson Scholarship Program (BUH), passionately about the future of BUH.

Building Up Hudson started mentoring middle school students in Hudson, N.Y. in 2011. Brandon LaBord '13 intended to transform the previous project, the loose-structured Hudson Valley Tutoring into an effective and well-constructed TLS project, aiming to establish a long-term mentee-mentor relationship between students from Hudson and Bard. Together with senior Durante Barringer, junior Karimah Shabazz, and White, he started to organize weekly tutoring sessions followed by workshops at the Hudson Library.

However, as the library closed in the fall of 2012, just as White and Barringer left for a semester to study in the New York City program of Bard (BGIA), LaBord and Shabazz needed to find a space where they could continue to work with students. Miss Elena Mosley, the director of Operation Unite, a non-profit organization already rooted in Hudson's community life, offered her office and suggested cooperation with BUH. As Miss Elena's, as she is respectfully referred to by White and Shabazz, organization is concerned with engaging kids in safe after school activities, BUH was able to start to work with a pool of high school students already connected to Operation Unite.

Every Friday devoted volunteers spend two hours of their afternoons aiding high school students in academic problems and offering self-improvement workshops. In the first hour, every student focuses on, with the assistance of a mentor, a personal problem (e.g.: homework, filling out college applications or writing a personal statement for college), and the workshops vary from discussing the meaning of success or how to fit into college life to have a "general chat about what's going on in the Hudson community, Uganda or Ukraine," explains White.

Parallel to having a mentoring committee, BUH employs volunteers who either work in the fundraising committee or in the publicity squad. Next to the weekly mentoring session and workshops, BUH annually offers a scholarship. "We are known to have themed bake sales on Halloween, Valentine's Day or St. Patty's Day," said White. All the collected monies are offered to students applying, both from Hudson High School and Operation United, for the BUH Scholarship. Every year the number of awarded students and the amount of money offered increases (last year it amounted to \$2,500), and it is made possible "because you guys support us and eat our baked goods," said White with a big smile.

However, while BUH is in a good position currently, this semester will mark the end of the directorship of the graduating seniors Barringer and White. "Now, we are looking at possible co-heads, who will take over with Shabazz, when she comes back from Budapest," said White about the current turnover at BUH. White follows up this comment by mentioning that "last year we had an enormous amount of volunteers — twenty, which is big for a TLS project — but it has somewhat depleted this year; we would like to gain our momentum back."

Whoever will follow in the footsteps of the current board of leaders of BUH and join Shabazz in helping to build up Hudson one hopes that Jon's hope to "see BUH in the TLS brochure in ten years" will turn to reality.

A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS: NEW ECON PROGRAM AT LEVY

BY CARLOS GADELHA

Starting next fall, the Levy Economics Institute will initiate its Master of Science program in Economic Theory and Policy. The Masters program will simulate the same type of education that an undergraduate student at Bard receives. Focusing on small classes and intensive research, the graduate student will be involved with Levy Institute's research projects.

According to Azfar Khan '13, one of the graduate recruiters for the program, there are five areas of specialization: Macroeconomic Theory, Policy and Modeling, Employment and Labor Markets, Monetary Policy and Financial Structure; Distribution of Income, Wealth and Well-Being and Gender Equality and the Economy. When discussing the intricacies of the program, Khan focused on emphasizing the small graduate class size, which should be between eight and 12 students. The faculty-to-student ratio, therefore, approaches one, there are ten faculty members, four of whom are also teachers for the Economics undergraduate program.

The similarities to the Bard education are not limited to providing a strong foundation in macro- and microeconomic theory. By using Levy's broad worldwide network, the new program was quickly known all around the world, as students ranging from countries such as Brazil, Venezuela, Canada, Cuba and Ethiopia applied and were accepted to the program, continuing Bard's diverse student body tradition.

Unlike most masters programs, in which classroom sizes can reach three digits and individual meetings with your professor are rare, Levy's program is distinct and unique in keeping student and faculty in a close relationship in order to make sure there is both a development in the student's master thesis and its general research work. Taun Toay, research analyst and also a recruiter for the program, emphasized that the typical Bard student will feel comfortable with this environment, as it is similar to the Senior Project model, but at the same time allows the student to engage in high-level research.

The program aims to be able to strengthen Bard's Economics program by providing a bridge to a next level research environment, which could also benefit Bard's students who seek to follow the type of work they did at the undergraduate level.

DAVIS PEACE GRANTS ANNOUNCED

BY NAOMI LACHANCE

Two Davis Projects for Peace have been awarded to Bard College students. Senior Lia Sooreanian will receive \$10,000 to promote sustainable development in Armenia through beekeeping. Sophomore Zelda Bas, senior Harrison Liddle, sophomore Ameer Shalabi, and the rest of the Bard Palestinian Youth Initiative will receive \$10,000 to lead community initiatives in Mas'ha, Palestine. The college nominates grant recipients annually; last year, BPYI was awarded a grant as well. The grant exists through a million-dollar, seven-year-old fund created by philanthropist Kathryn W. Davis in honor of her 100th birthday.

FUND FOR PROF'S SON GROWS ONLINE

BY NAOMI LACHANCE

A fund has been started to raise money for a Bard professor's son's medical expenses. Assistant Professor of Religion Kristin Scheible's three-year-old son, Jasper Hanley, is undergoing chemotherapy for a tumor in his leg; the treatment is scheduled to last 42 weeks in total. All proceeds support the medical expenses as well as the expenses as-

sociated with weekly trips to Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. Funds also support his family: Scheible, her husband Pat, and Jasper's siblings, Elias and Aidan. The fundraiser was created on youcaring.com by the Abigail Lundquist Botstein Nursery School and Bard Children's Center, where Jasper Hanley is a student. "Jasper," the description

says, "is a bright cheerful 3 and a half year old who loves to play with the 'diggers' and tell stories about aardvarks and whales."

Contribute at <http://bardfreepress.com/jasper>

THE CONVOCATION FUND IS NOT BIG ENOUGH

BY DANA FRANCISCO MIRANDA

This year's Student Activity Fee pooled enough money — \$340,000 — to buy a nice single-family home in Red Hook. It was not, however, enough to supply every club on campus with the funding that they had requested. The Fiscal Committee has submitted a petition to raise increase the Convocation Fund from \$420,000 to \$500,000.

The Convocation Fund is the pooled money collected from Student Activity Fees that is distributed by the Student Government's Fiscal Committee to student clubs. This money is used for all student-run events, services and projects on campus. From clubs such as your very own Bike Co-Op, to concerts at Spring Fling and SMOG, to events by the Fashion Committee and AfroPulse — all of student life is dictated by available money in the Convocation Fund. The current Student Activities Fee at Bard College is \$85 per semester, or \$170 in an academic year. Over the last two years, clubs have requested and spent more money than the Convocation Fund can supply.

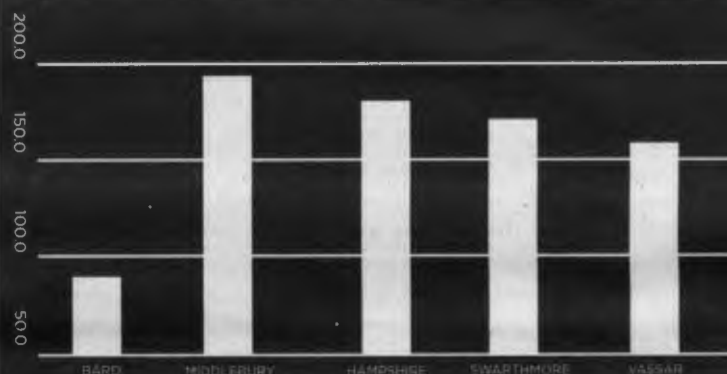
"Clubs are emphasizing the need for increases for the sake of more events and more activities, basically everything under the sun that comprises student life," said junior Carter Vanderbilt, chair of the Student Government's Fiscal Committee. "It pays for student life." Fiscal Committee issued a petition on behalf of all students to increase the available student-controlled money to positively influence student life at Bard.

The petition to increase the Convocation Fund asked Bard students their monetary preferences when it comes to increases in Student Activities Fee. The three options were an increase of \$20 per semester, an increase of \$30 per semester, or an increase of \$40 per semester. This would result in the Student Activities Fee being anywhere from \$210 to \$250 in an academic year. The increases in the Convocation Fund would result, at minimum, in an additional \$40,000 to a maximum of \$80,000. The results of the Convocation Fund votes show, "In total, about 1,000 students voted," said junior Jonian Rafti, treasurer of the Bard College Student Government. "[A] majority, over 50 percent of the student population, voted to have an increase of at least \$20 or more." Of course, it should be noted that the only option on the survey was to vote for an increase of at least \$20 or more.

The Fiscal Committee tabled over 50 hours at various locations around Bard, requesting student votes. "We started the petition at the beginning of last semester, but only got around 500 participants. We needed a majority of the student body to vote," said Vanderbilt. Student Government's Fiscal Committee was able to get the requisite amount of voting participants for the petition to come before the Board of Trustees when they draft next year's budget at the end of March. The Fiscal Committee is confident that their petition will be heard allowing for increases in student activity fees and therefore increases in the Convocation Fund.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES FEE FACT SHEET

INSTITUTION	STUDENT ACTIVITIES FEE PER SEMESTER
BARD	\$85.00
MIDDLEBURY	\$197.00
HAMPSHIRE	\$185.00
SWARTHMORE	\$175.00
VASSAR	\$160.00



PETITION TO INCREASE THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES FEE

BARD UNDERGRADUATES (AS OF MARCH 3RD, 2014)	1,921
PARTICIPANTS IN THE PETITION	1,073
UNDERGRADUATES IN FAVOR OF A \$20 OR MORE INCREASE IN THE STUDENT ACTIVITIES FEE PER SEMESTER	1,020 (95%)

SEMESTER	NUMBER OF CLUBS
FALL 2009	82
SPRING 2010	104
FALL 2010	97
SPRING 2011	124
FALL 2011	108
SPRING 2012	126
FALL 2012	132
SPRING 2013	120
FALL 2013	168
SPRING 2014	165

HELP IN HARD TIMES:

HOW CAMPUS RESOURCES SOFTENED TRAGEDY'S BLOW

BY LEELA KHANNA

In light of this semester's tragedies, the Dean of Student Affairs Office has been working overtime—on weekends, through meetings, and past office hours—to provide support to students and faculty coping with grief. While there were standard protocols that immediately went into place as soon as the first accident occurred, administration has continued to establish efforts to help students and faculty heal emotionally and mentally.

"This is my sixth year at Bard and we've had nothing like this before, in terms of the quantity of tragedy," said Tamara Telberg, director of Counseling Services at Bard. "There's been four deaths in a month; that's a lot for any community to absorb."

Counseling Services has particularly experienced a major increase in students coming in for counseling support.

"Every semester students are frustrated that they can't get a therapy appointment right away, even without the tragedies that have overwhelmed the campus and community," Telberg said. "But in general we have gotten students in as fast as possible and we are seeing as many students as we can possibly fit in."

To facilitate the number of students seeking therapy, the college has hired an additional full-time counselor. Counseling Services and has also gotten support from the Dutchess County Trauma Response Team, a local group of professionals trained in trauma treatment who collaborated with counselors to talk to groups of students who were present at the accident.

"Our responsibility is to support students in getting the education they came here to get, and to help them recognize and cope with obstacles that arise," Telberg said. "The model that Bard has, with the way that the Deans function, and the way that the counseling office is supported, there is a very high priority in the student's well-being, and there is a very high level of care and individual attention for students who are struggling."

While Telberg made it clear that it is not the role of Counseling Services to specifically reach out to students that may be struggling, the Dean of Student Affairs Office has prioritized helping students who were close friends of Sarah McCausland and Evelina Brown, who died after being hit by a drunk driver, and Elizabeth Stimson, who passed away from heart complications. The Deans have also reached out to students and faculty who knew Mark Becker, a professor at the Center for Environmental Policy, who died in a car accident late last month.

The Dean of Student Affairs Office—including Deans, Area Coordinators, BRAVE, counseling, and the Chaplaincy—meet after any tragedy of this sort and first gather information about the incident.

"We create systems of support, including getting together a good list of names of who the close friends are and would be most affected, finding out the details, connecting with the families, helping to tell the students what happened," said Bethany Nohlgren, Dean of Students. "The college feels very strongly that we want to talk to close friends prior to any email announcement that goes out so that they are not reading it, but hearing it from somebody."

Nohlgren and the other Deans reached out to the specific students, offering counseling support, meetings with faculty to discuss work expectations, and information about student services available on campus to help them cope.

"It is incredibly sad, and what my colleagues and I try to do is be authentic with students and be open to how everybody is feeling and hold and support students through it," Nohlgren said. "I think the space for developing support systems for students is there because we have no agenda in those gatherings other than helping the community heal."

An element that remains common for all aspects of the Dean of Students Affairs is allowing students the space to grieve and heal on their own time.

"Grief manifests itself in so many mysterious ways, and I think we are all trying to make our doors more open," Amii LeGendre, Bard Wellness Coordinator and faculty member said. "We are trying to remind students that grief doesn't look in any particular way and helping them identify what grief looks like in their own life and help them find kindness for themselves and practical strategies to navigate through it." LeGendre, who is also the director of Peer Health, has worked with students to put together numerous student-led activities throughout the semester dealing with wellness and grief.

Rebecca Stacy, director of Bard's Response to Rape and Associated Violence Education (BRAVE), which has also been having extended office hours this semester, also expressed the variety of ways people feel grief. For Stacy, offering a constant support system and reminding students that they have options for help allows students to feel supported.

"As a clinician, what I see happen as a trend when something awful [like this] happens is that it affects people at all different times," Stacy said. "I think [grief] can hit people a week later or four years later, so I think that it is great that the college zooms in and comes to immediate service but I feel a lot of concern for students who are holding it in."

Support has also come in from outside of campus from the surrounding towns and villages as well as around the country.

"I have been amazed at the strength of the students and that this community is really strong," Nohlgren said. "We got support from all over the country, locally and nationally. It is important to remember that in times like these we don't isolate, and we reach out. It's important to remind yourself that there are lots of people to talk to who are there to listen."

CULTURE

RIGZIN

BY AKSHITA BHANJDEO

, 'refy'oo, jw/

a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster.

An Interview with Rigzin Wangyal

The Race Monologues

How does one identify themselves when they don't have a place to call home? You cannot point to it on a map, people don't know your country, or if it even exists.

My name is Rigzin Wangyal and I am a refugee, with a double e.

Free Press: Where do you say you are from?

Rigzin: Brooklyn. My neighbourhood and the people I grew up around are the people who represent me. Even though I do not think of myself as American, as I have only lived here for a few years, I identify myself as someone from Brooklyn. It has a lot of similarities to where I grew up in India. Brooklyn has something that I connect with.

FP: What was it like to have lived in so many countries from such a young age?

RW: Well I was born in Lhasa, Tibet around the time when talks between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese authorities were breaking down. I was almost going to be born in a prison, but my mother had me in the capital while in hiding, while trying to figure out a way to get us across to Dharamsala in India.

FP: What do you remember about Tibet?

RW: I was four years old when we left Tibet and crossed into the Nepal border by foot. It was my mother, me and my two younger siblings. My mother was a political prisoner since she was born.

Her father was a *lama* (monk) and he and five of his brothers were killed by Chinese authorities when she was young. So she was part of political riots against the Chinese government and had to live in self-imposed exile so that we would grow up ...safe.

That's all I remember about Tibet. The process of leaving.

FP: Was living in India the closest to being home?

RW: Dharamsala is a city in India which are the headquarters of the Central Tibetan Administration (the Tibetan government in exile). I was raised with other Tibetan children in the Tibetan Refugee Boarding school. Most of the children have not seen their parents in years and grow up with other children living in exile.

FP: So what happened in the fourth country you moved to — America?

RW: I was 14 years old when I flew with my siblings and my mother and landed in JFK. I was seeing my mother for the first time in 10 years and spoke no English, since we were taught in Tibetan and Hindi in school. English was our third language in school, and so I picked up my vernacular from what I heard around me in Bushwick, Brooklyn. I tried to adapt, that's all I have tried to do.

FP: How did you identify yourself in India?

RW: The same way I identified myself when I entered America — a Tibetan refugee.

No matter where I go, I will always feel lucky to have this experience and to have learnt from it. I don't claim to be anybody but people always try to assume I am a specific race to label me — but how can they when they don't know what a Tibetan is?

FP: What do people try to label you as?

RW: Anything. Everything. My skin color, the shape of my face and eyes, the clothes I choose to wear and even the way I talk, they all give off a certain idea of who I am. But how can you form an idea about me, if all you have done is see, and not taken the time out to hear my story?

I did not have a place to call home, so when I came to a new country I tried to adapt to the environment, instead of running away.

The only thing that makes me mad is when people question the way I behave instead of looking at the amount of cultures amalgamated in me.

When people ask me why I talk Black, or try to be Black, all I can respond with is once you are part of a neighbourhood, you talk like you are from that neighborhood.

FP: Have you ever faced racism because of people fitting you into their stereotypes?

RW: All the time; theres no running away from that. People only think about their race, and I guess themselves, that's why they try to claim things — borders, land, people, and then put you down to give themselves some importance.

I got called a bunch of names that were derogatory towards other races and no one ever bothered to take the time to listen to me before making their decision on who I am and where I come from.

FP: So to end the interview, what is your favorite place from back home in Brooklyn?

It used to be this Mexican restaurant that served amazing tacos for a dollar that I always went to for lunch... but now there's a café opened up which serves coffee for \$4, so I'm looking out for a new place to eat.

WHY WRITE? WITH AMY HEMPEL

BY JP LAWRENCE

The conceit of a writer's interview is that one can plumb a great thinker's mind through words off the cuff to a voice recorder. It's rare to find an interview with Amy Hempel that doesn't note her dislike of the genre of the writer interview. She'd rather talk about dogs. Still, Hempel, writer of great short stories such as "In the Cemetery Where Al Jolson Is Buried" and "The Harvest," agreed to talk to the Free Press March 10. She had just discussed her work with Bradford Morrow's New Directions in Contemporary Fiction class and then had given a public reading. The white-haired and beautiful Hempel entered the room accompanied by her 11-year-old yellow labrador, Wannie. What followed was a conversation on why one writes, how one writes truly, and obsessions — past and present.

FP: There's a thinker, Hayden White, whom I read sometimes, and he was saying if you don't want to make a map of the world as large as the world, you have to shape the world into stories. When you encounter your world, how do you decide to shape it?

AH: I try to take on the biggest concerns, and just find a personal or individual way into it. It's all about finding a way in. Here's a universal experience, but here's what it felt like for my brother — that's what I try.

Some people think you should practice on less important stories that don't matter as much to you, so you can practice and can get better, and you then can take on something that matters to you more. But I think you start with what matters most.

FP: The great apprentices of the Renaissance would start by painting the wings of an angel or the curves of an orange, over and over again, until they'd master it. Is there an emotion or theme that for you is like that orange?

AH: I think the thing I write the most about is loss — different kinds of loss. Who's in a situation and what they're making of it is always more interesting to me than the situation itself. That's how you can make something new. Everyone's had losses, but what makes it new and what makes it yours is what your characters do in the face of it. But loss — I'm interested in how people navigate it, get through it.

FP: Why?

AH: That's just what I started writing about. I, and a lot of people I know, experienced a great deal of loss in my life, so it was a normal thing to think about.

I don't want to sound dreary. When I was younger, I also spent a lot of time around funny people. I put a premium on humor, so that comes in as well.

FP: As far as your approach to truth, how does it find itself in your fiction? You've said you started out in journalism because it had rules and guidelines.

AH: Notice I didn't stay in it.

FP: What did Hemingway say? Journalism's a great place to start, but you have five years before it ruins you? It seems as if the rules for fiction aren't as obvious in comparison.

AH: I don't like to talk about rules. There are narrative strategies. If you do this, if you try this, it'll yield x. If you try this, if you try this other strategy, it'll yield y. Which is closer to what you want a reader to experience? So I never think of

rules in fiction.

FP: You teach. What do students need to express what they want to say?

AH: Just nerve. Being able to say something somebody else wouldn't have the guts to say. The person I studied with years ago [Gordon Lish], he said you need three things: obsession, nerve and ground worth reporting on. Write about something substantial, be gutsy, and write about something you're obsessed with.

Because obsession is interesting; it's extreme. Look at your favorite pieces of writing, and there's probably some quality of obsession in it.

FP: For you, do obsessions fade, do they last, or do they come like a storm?

AH: They've remained pretty much the same. Language is an obsession. I'm obsessive about things in my life that aren't specifically about writing, but they end up in my writing. Like the story about the animal shelter I read today ["A Full-Service Shelter"]. I'm obsessed with rescuing as many dogs as I can from the terrible shelter system in this country. That work has nothing to do with writing, but it ends up in my work. But that's always been an obsession of mine — language is the first one. It's the obsession that makes me want to write.

FP: You've talked about how writing, quoting Emily Dickinson, can make you feel like the top of your head has come off. How often does that occur to you?

AH: Not nearly enough.

FP: Isn't it beautiful though, when it's not just A leads to B, but A leads to B to C, all the way to S?

AH: That's when you know you've done it. When you've really got it. It's great, but it's not frequent.

FP: When was the last time it happened to you?

AH: While writing the short-short I read today. I had the first half written a while earlier, with something else in the second half. And then trees came to mind, and as soon as I thought of trees, I knew how to put the two halves together.

FP: When you write, do you expect these highs or do you expect work?

AH: I don't expect them, but it's this great reward when it does happen. And it is hard work. Nobody's making me do

this. There must be some reward, and that's the first one — publication coming in second.

FP: I remember you've said that the problem with young writers is that they seek to publish, instead of write well.

AH: Well, I'm always wary of a student who asks me how to get an agent before asking how to write a story. That's worrisome, you bet. That's not the order you go in.

FP: In another one of Bradford Morrow's classes, he brought in another great writer, Junot Diaz. And he said a lot of being a writer is selfish. And that if you were to take two perfect clones of you, and one has a notebook all the time, harvesting things to write about, while the other simply experiences and thinks, the one without the notebook will write the richer book.

AH: Do I keep a notebook? Do I write down the things I want to use? Well, I used to, but I don't any longer, because if it's good enough to remember, I'll remember it. And also it makes you feel like you're not really in your life; you're just writing things down about it. I didn't think that way when I was younger, but it feels that way to me now.

FP: Is that why your writing process is more than writing? Why it also involves walking your dog and thinking? Is that a part of stepping back from what can be a rush to get everything on the page?

AH: I don't rush. It's just life. Trying to balance out any given day. You don't want to spend all of your time in your head. It's not only unhealthy; it doesn't help your work. Looking after the needs of another creature, whether it's a child or a mate or a pet, can be good as a way to take you out of your self, out of your head.

FP: There's a Hemingway quote: to write you must learn how to write and you learn to understand people, and both take a lifetime to learn. As far as writing things that are honest, how does one understand what is honest if you're in the process of learning, if you're unsure what's true?

AH: Ah! Be as honest as you can, and then challenge yourself, think: what's something harder to say about this or myself? or what's just underneath what I said? What's harder to say under that? And you just keep challenging yourself to say something truer and truer and truer.

Keep asking, what's the harder truth underneath what you just said? What's under that? And what's even harder to say?



artwork by nicole carroll

photo courtesy of maya osborne



MAYA SPEAKS WORDS

BY EVAN NICOLE BROWN

scribbling
early morning
resolutions
on displaced skin.

been running out
of gas
so fast
paycheck can't keep up
these days
these days,
been lung-ing my
mystic roots.

named by illusion,

move me
to Africa house
and maybe

i won't rot.

hand me
your heavy hips,
and maybe

i'll curse you
a few
double edged hymns.

(excerpt from 'Quadroon' by Maya Osborne)

You might see her before you hear her. You might catch a glimpse of her caramel curls falling down her back, or her fierce confidence round a corner. She is Maya Osborne, and she is poetry. Spoken word, to be precise.

A Brooklyn native, senior Maya Osborne has dedicated her education and life to the art of poetry. Though her poems certainly land on pages (most recently for her senior project), she is better known for her poems that slide off the tongue. At age 13, Osborne entered her first poetry slam and won, for a poem inspired by the first poem she read: Maya Angelou's 'Phenomenal Woman.'

Slam poetry is spoken-word poetry in the form of a competition. "I was exposed to slam poetry because I grew up in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, which is the home of the Nuyorican Poets Café...the most famous spoken word venue in New York City. But really, the whole area is filled with kids doing [slam poetry]. It's in the culture." It is this culture that birthed a poet in Osborne. "[The Nuyorican Poets Café] has a mesh of that hip-hop and Latina culture. It is that cultural mix that one finds in the Lower East Side that influenced my style of slam poetry." Despite this influence and after years of "slamming" in high school, Osborne wasn't certain that her passion for words would follow her to college.

"I got to Bard and there was no presence of slam poetry or people who did it. But soon I realized I wanted it to be a part of my life here. I started going to open mics and performing my poetry there..." her voice trails off. When I told her the working title of this piece, given to me by the editors, was 'Maya Osborne: Spoken Word Wiz,' she blushed and clutched at her heart. "I'm glad that's my reputation here...that's nice," she noted, smiling.

The journey of a slam poet traces a winding road: the ups and downs of growth and regression, confidence and vulnerability, but most of all, of the self. "Most slam poetry deals with identity. Slam poetry is about getting on stage and identifying yourself and proclaiming your identity. You can write love poems or political poems but even those relate to your identity in some way." The art of verbally baring one's soul, and being (literally) judged for it, is no easy feat. But for Osborne, it seems effortless, as if she woke up like this.

In the beginning, most of Osborne's poems dealt with her mixed race identity. With an African-American/German mother and a Jewish father, she had plenty of material. "My most well

known poem is 'Quadroon.' A quadroon is a person who has a quarter black heritage or ancestry. I have one black grandparent." The poem is a kind of journal of otherness; it stresses the gap between those who can relate and those who, by necessity, cannot.

Though her poetry helps her work through her own identity, Osborne writes as much for others as for herself. Like a mother hen of poetry, she strives to protect and preserve everyone's stories, no matter how unlike her own. And even her own have changed over time. "Although my poetry used to be about my race, recently I've headed in a new direction by talking about body positivity and the complexities of womanhood." And so Angelou's influence endures.

When she performs, Osborne's words sway in tandem with her hips, giving palpable expression to the issues of womanhood of which she speaks. Sometimes, her hands trace the words in the air, making her listeners double as readers, so she can double-check her thoughts as she goes.

This year, Osborne will complete her senior project as a Written Arts poetry major. She hopes to write a piece of performance poetry, engaging personal narrative to explore her experience as a woman of color. This past summer, Osborne participated in an international youth slam in Chicago called Brave New Voices, which included more than 1,000 poets between the ages of 14 and 19. "Spoken word is an up and coming art form that's popping up all over the country. [Brave New Voices] made me realize how much of a movement spoken word is."

Osborne's status at Bard as a spoken word legend earned her her current position as an intern for Thursday Night Live, in which she hosts and coordinates performances and art events at Down The Road Café on Thursday nights. She also created the Bard Slam Poetry club, which meets every Sunday. "I'm so happy I was able to build a platform where we have [spoken word] at Bard and I hope that it continues after I'm gone."

Osborne ends our conversation with words of hidden inspiration: "I started doing spoken word not only because I liked the musicality of words, but also because it was a way to express myself without spending money. You don't need lessons for this kind of art."

Maya Osborne's poetry has been published in both Bard Papers and Bard Lux Magazine.



FEATURED ARTIST: SALLY COLE

Free Press: Where are you from?
Sally Cole: Montclair, New Jersey

FP: What's your major?

SC: I'm a psych major, but I came to Bard because I wanted to take all of the art classes also.

FP: What medium did you use for this series, why?

SC: The black and white ones were just ink and the color were oil paint. It was a mono print class and I really like monoprints because there is no pressure. It's a cheap process so if you make something you don't like, you just throw it out. The choices for what to use were oil paint, ink or water color, and at that point in the class we hadn't done water color that much so I wasn't into it yet.

FP: You got into it later, right?

SC: Yeah, we did two series. So the first one I had a birth defect obsession, and then my second series was about taxidermic animals.

FP: You're interested in taxidermy?

SC: Yeah, I have some pickled animals on my desk. I have two bunnies and a pig and a hairless rat.

FP: What was your inspiration for the birth defect series?

SC: At the time I wasn't really thinking about the meaning but I took developmental psych last semester so I was thinking a lot about the perfect baby. I thought the pictures of embryos in my textbook

were really beautiful and I was thinking about what can go wrong during development and I got kind of obsessed with that idea. I thought it was really weird that people take pictures of babies as medical anomalies to document them as facts. I wanted to make art about it because I feel like it gave me the power to make people look at things that would otherwise be disgusting and they wouldn't want to see, and so that was really fun for me.

FP: Does your psychology class usually influence your art?

SC: They definitely did last semester. I guess I don't really know until I look back on my work because then you can make connections to everything.

FP: Are you working on anything right now?

SC: Yeah, I'm in a drawing class and it's mixed media so I'm doing monoprints. I'm actually doing more taxidermy monoprints. Right now I'm doing an in depth look on fetal pigs. I found pictures of mummified fetal pigs, pickled fetal pigs, dissected ones and I'm just going to do a small series on them.

FP: What was the last dream you can remember?

SC: Hmm... I know I had a good one because I hurt my back last week, so I've been on valium having crazy dreams. I don't think I can remember any. They were weird ones where you wake up and don't know if it actually happened or not.





IN WHICH DUNCAN GOES TO THE OPERA

BY DUNCAN BARILE

An evening at the opera is an exercise in exaggeration. It has been since Wagner's day. And as I waited in my balcony seat at Sosnoff on March 14 for the world premiere of Shawn Jaeger's "Payne Hollow" to begin, deafened by the recorded sound of thousands of ribbiting frogs, I already felt distinctly taxed. Jaeger, a young man whose turquoise shoelaces matched his socks, blinked on stage under spotlight. "I want you to know that these frogs are Hudson Valley frogs." There was a smattering of laughter. He shuffled, smiled.

The opera was to trace the lives of Harlan and Anna Hubbard, artists who from the 1950s through the 1980s lived a frugal life inspired by Thoreau, in an isolated cabin on the Ohio River. "[The Hubbards] sacrificed a lot of conveniences to slow down their lives and have more time for contemplation—more time to look, to listen, to taste," said Jaeger in his introduction. "So this piece is about slowing down sensory experience." The curtain rose, and I expected to spend the night watching a sedate piece of pastoral nostalgia.

Instead, I found myself caught in the mire of a post-apocalyptic Kentucky. Two bedraggled women, roaming the woods and clinging onto each other, recalled the *danse macabre* in "The Seventh Seal." They introduced the Hubbards as ghosts of the forest, in outcries that never quite evolved into melodies. The orchestra was shrill.

The violins crescendoed until they seemed a swarm of hiveless bees, and the spectral Hubbards arrived on stage. They looked like sleepwalkers, their gazes fixed in space, their hands outstretched, palming some invisible form in front of them. For the whole duration of the opera, they remained like this, nearly still. Never once did they look at each other.

Jaeger's piece served, ostensibly, to tell the story of two voices from the past; and yet the story they told had little to do with a vanished world. It focused, rather, on the desire to merge with the land, a desire doomed by the inability to extricate oneself from a human separation. "Payne Hollow" is much indebted to the Romantic notion of a transcendental life-spirit. All its central dramas spring from it: Harlan's desire to refract its splendor in his art, his failure to do so, his relationship with Anna continuing even after she has died. The orchestra remained in constant oscillation between harmony and dissonance, as if aching for one or the other. It all ended unceremoniously, without warning; the curtain abruptly fell. The audience couldn't decide whether or not to applaud.

Though "Payne Hollow's" ambitions felt slight, it revived one of opera's best traditions: the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or total work of art. Jaeger enlisted Wendell Berry, a Kentuckian poet who doubles as a farmer, to write the libretto, and the synthesis of

Berry's literary aims and Jaeger's musical ones is startling. "The brittle blandishment of counterfeit," reads one line. "In me, the half-formed secrets meet." I left the show baffled, unsatisfied, but stimulated by what I didn't know how to decode. If opera is to revive itself from a stultifying reputation, its future lies with creative agitators like Jaeger. It will require, though, a clearer vision than he shows in "Payne Hollow."

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO FLY A DRONE?

BY DANA FRANCISCO MIRANDA

Tucked in a one-room office in Preston Hall, Room 128B is home to The Center for the Study of the Drone. This innocuous room, overflowing with news articles, houses data of both foreign and domestic drone activity. Sitting across from me, in front of a map of the Middle East, is Dan Gettinger '13, co-founder of the Center for the Study of the Drone. The Center, an interdisciplinary research community founded by Gettinger and Arthur Holland Michel '13 in 2012, aims to lead research on unmanned and autonomous vehicles.

"I think the term drone brings up an image of an aerial unmanned vehicle, but the term is really abstract," Gettinger said. "What the Drone Center means when we say 'drones' is unmanned vehicles, sea, land or air. That also means we get to take a very broad perspective, such as a farm with an robotic milking machine — not a drone per se, but still an unmanned vehicle."

The Drone Center maintains a blog with collections of interviews and articles and an Internet archive on virtually everything drone related. Although the Drone Center engages with public debate on targeted killings and the legal definition of casualties, its focus is on the domestic future of drones, in which robotic technology will take on a far greater role in industry. "The farmer with a milking machine's daily life

is changed; he has a machine to do the work for him. What we'd like to ask is what if every farmer has robotic machinery in his farms, or when cars drive themselves, or when robotic airplanes start delivering packages?" Gettinger said. "This is a technology that is coming home to our domestic environment. We need to develop a model of understanding to see how they will impact our daily lives." Drone technologies already encroach on the supply chain, from Domino's Pizza aerial delivery 'DomCopter' to Amazon's business practices. "Amazon already employs Kiva robots in their warehouses. Like Google and, more recently, Facebook, Amazon is also interested in buying robotics manufacturers in order to make their operations more efficient and cost sensible. They acquired Kiva Systems in 2012," Gettinger said.

The Drone Center has offered lectures in New York City and at Bard, where it organized a computer science course last semester called "(De-)Coding the Drone." They have published interviews with leaders in the field, written about the role of drones in current affairs and even flown a drone.



artwork by lucy grzebieniarz

JONATHAN RICHMAN CAME TO SMOG

BY MARCEL RUDIN

Jonathan Richman's music is something unusual. By that I mean he seems to materialize all of these feelings humans have but may not have the ability to put into words, or, for that matter, in melody. He is troubadorial, whether in the context of matters of love ("Everyday Clothes," almost any other song he's written), heartbreak ("Let Her Go Into the Darkness," "You Can't Talk to the Dude"), childhood nostalgia ("That Summer Feeling," "Twilight in Boston") or pure and utter goofery ("The New Teller," "Government Center"). His career, long and illustrious, contains enough music to fill a library and melt a million hearts. Upon finding out that he was playing at SMOG March 15, I immediately felt the feeling anyone else must feel when one of their heroes comes to town: "I have questions to ask. Yet I must hide my fandom behind the guise of journalistic professionalism." Everyone must feel that way, right?...Guys?

I figured I should catch him before the show, early enough that it was convenient to talk, yet not so late that it would be an uncomfortable amount of time to talk and bother this wonderful man. Sweaty and nervous as I approach SMOG on a cold, crisp night, I hear something that sounds like singing in the distance.

It is Jonathan, singing to himself and dancing without a care in the world, waiting for the venue to open. Immediately, all my nervous feelings dropped and I just felt a weird mix of confusion and happiness. After a bit of small talk and nodding to his unmistakable "you know"-s, I ask him if he's interested in an interview. Apparently over the years Mr. Richman has been misquoted so often that nowadays, he's pretty apprehensive about a verbal interview.

Then and there was my "well, I guess it was worth a shot" moment until, miraculously, Jonathan proposes something that can please both parties. He'll answer my questions, but they must be on paper for him to write down his answers, so none of his information can be misconstrued. "Only two or three questions," he made absolutely clear to me. Boy, did I feel lucky that I had one of my notebooks on me. I grabbed my spiral notebook and shakily handed it to him, leaving its fate in the hands of a man who wrote the song "I'm A Little Airplane". So, dear readers, here before you is an exact transcription of my paperbound interaction with the inimitable Jonathan Richman.



photo by sam williams

Free Press: What, to you, is euphoria?

Jonathan Richman: [This] first question is one I don't understand very well: I've heard the word 'euphoria' all my life and I have, I guess, an understanding of it. Does it mean really joyful? If so, I'd just say that, really joyful. Yes?

FP: Does the audience feed your energy, or is it all self generated?

JR: The audience is half the show! The audience gives you all kinds of energy! So playing makes you feel way better after the show...Well, usually.

FP: What advice do you have for anyone feeling constrained by either themselves or the outside world?

JR: Well, your question is interesting because it seems to have its answer in it. The use of the expression 'outside world' implies an inner world. For me, this 'inner world' is "the place" to go. Mumia Abu-Jamal has written several books from prison, one of them being a collection of stories of life on death row where he was for 30 years.

One of these stories tells of a man in solitary confinement for a terribly long time. And one day, despairing, lonely beyond our ability to imagine, he saw the web of a little spider. That spider stayed with him in the cell for quite some time and he [the prisoner] told Mumia Abu-Jamal that that spider helped him stay alive. So, here we have an oppression from the outer world and spiritual aid from nature. And, as far as I can tell, the closer we get to the natural world and the more we train ourselves in the inner silence necessary to listen to the voice of that world, the closer we may be to the 'inner' world.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, AND PHILOSOPHY'S SELF-DESTRUCTIVE CULTURE

BY RASHIDA DUSHYANTH ALUWIHARE

I enter a musky, musty Olin room and see a familiar sight. Students slumped in their large wooden chairs, notebooks at the ready, and professors milling about, engaging in quick bites of catch-up conversation. Despite the long day, students and professors alike gather in this room to listen to Nancy Bauer's talk called "Making Progress in Philosophy (All Other Things Not Equal)." My eyes wander, ticking off the mental checklist of faces I remember from either a recent philosophy class, or the last event mildly related to this one.

I've always enjoyed the humanities departments' intimate, village-like atmosphere, where your adviser and his or her peers stand as your good-humored village elders, while you run off into the 'academic jungle' in search of that obscure 18th century critic/philosopher/kook that was energetically suggested to you during your last moderation meeting. And of course, you go to the library and spend an hour or so pacing up and down, muttering under your breath, and trying to make sense of the library organization system, even though you've been here long enough to get a handle of it. But you spend that frustrating hour because you've pinned all your hopes onto your professor and mentor, you've given him or her the steering-wheel to your life and trust them with it. A trust that I sometimes realize shouldn't be taken for granted.

The talk centred on a disturbing report carried out by an independent investigation team on the University of Colorado Boulder's philosophy department. The report came to the "strong conclusion that the department maintains an environment with unacceptable sexual harassment, inappropriate sexualized unprofessional behavior, and divisive uncivil behavior...This behavior has harmed men and women members of every stakeholder group in the department."

The commissioned report was carried out by the American Philosophical Association's Committee on the Status of Women under the mistaken assumption that the entire affair was to be kept low-profile.

According to the report, "some assistants and full professors (both male and female) report responding to this situation by working at home, dropping out of departmental life, and avoiding socializing with colleagues...Women are trying to leave in disproportionate numbers." The report goes on to postulate that many of the professors are unwittingly contributing to a University culture that repels potential male and female students interested in the field of serious post-graduate philosophy. Female students are rightfully afraid of even setting foot in the department for fear of falling victim

to that 'one creeper;' likewise, male students are dead set on avoiding the reputation-damnation associated with such a department.

Unfortunately, as Bauer explained, the situation at other universities is often as bad as that at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Recently, Colin McGinn, a heavyweight contender in the philosophy program at the University of Miami, had to step down due to allegations of sexual harassment from a graduate student. McGinn has since attempted to defend himself on his blog. This story has sparked an intense debate within the higher echelons of the philosophical foodchain over how and what policies and approaches must change if their field is to attract new philosophers and remain relevant.

"It's a dog-eat-dog profession," said Bauer, shrugging. The apologetic lilt in her voice feels practiced, from years of discouraging philosophy students who simply 'can't make it' in this difficult field. It has, after all, been an academic field 'dominated by men' for centuries, and the trend continues. But philosophy seems to be dominated by a selection of socioeconomically privileged white males applying their analytic philosophy skills exclusively towards discussing the "big questions," from the existence of a *priori* knowledge to the metaphysical possibility of zombies (hopefully with less Jesse Eisenberg involved).

"If philosophy is to survive, it needs to re-examine itself." Bauer explains that we need to step away from premature and prejudiced fallacies, such as the idea that "serious philosophy is likely to bore those with short attention spans." The philosophical aristocracy needs to widen its philosophical search, while also working to strengthen its internal affairs.

IN REMEN

The Bard community lost two beloved souls this month. Please

I am an employee who is actually enrolled in the GIS class, but I barely knew Mark. It was clear the class was going to be incredible given his years of experience and contagiously up-beat personality. His long-time friend and co-teacher, Susan Winchell-Sweeney, will continue the class, and though it will be hard for her, and the students, we will make the best of the rest of the semester. The EUS program and we GIS students all mourn Mark's premature passing, but we'll push on with the class in his honor.

-Tom O'Dowd

"Imagine what my mother thought when I told her I wanted to be a geographer." In our first class, Mark Becker told us his ultimate hope was that one of us might get hooked on global mapping and information systems, just like he had. And Mark was excited about it. He was a professor who truly enjoyed what he was teaching and the opportunities he had to work with his students. Never failing to excitedly email us an anecdote from the news or the Bard community, he did so because it was truly his joy. He was instrumental in protecting the watershed in Haworth, New Jersey and the surrounding communities; without him it would have been destroyed. He had also just returned from an environmental project in Antarctica. On Wednesday afternoon I lost my professor Mark Becker in a car accident on the New York thruway as he was driving up to Bard to teach my class. For the brief time I knew him, he was not only an amazing professor and scientist, but a dedicated environmental activist and a wonderful human being. He had just begun to advise me on my own academic trajectory, in the field of GIS/GPS and mapping. His influence of course is measurable by the many students at Bard who have chosen to continue their studies in geography and geographic systems, but also by his involvement in his community and the world around him. He truly cared enough to make a difference.

-Sophie Lazar

MARK BECKER

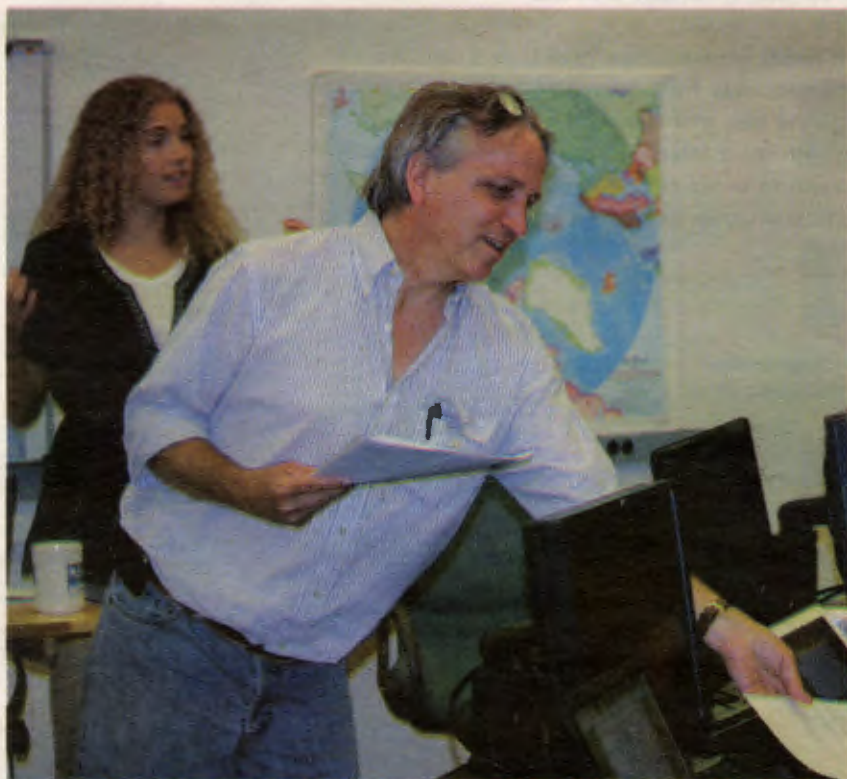


photo courtesy of the columbia spectator

Mark Becker, killed in a multi-vehicle car crash on Feb. 26, was a passionate teacher and a dedicated environmentalist. He was a Lamont-Doherty Observatory earth scientist, co-director of the environmental organization Bergen SWAN (Save the Watershed Association Network), Columbia University earth studies scientist, and adjunct professor at the Bard Center for Environmental Policy.

He was traveling to his class in Annandale when the accident happened. He had just returned from a 3-week research trip to Antarctica with his partner, Lori Charkey, who is also co-director of Bergen SWAN. He was 53.

MEMORANCE

Join us in remembering Elizabeth Stimson and Mark Becker.

ELIZABETH STIMSON

Lizzie Stimson, from Falmouth, Mass., was a first-year student at Bard. She died unexpectedly of complications from an unknown congenital heart condition on Feb. 28. She was a member of the a cappella group the Orca Pelicans, and had a passion for creative and performing arts. She is part of a historic 10-generation farming family in New England. A scholarship has been created in her honor. The Lizzie Stimson Scholarship for the Creative and Performing Arts supports young students in the Cape Cod area. She was 18.



The way Lizzie lived is so inspiring, she knew she was amazing and she demanded the best for and from herself and those around her, cultivating her friendships and surroundings with an affectionate but firm hand. Her artwork shows this: dedicated, intricate, methodical, lovely.

I am so struck by her statuesque beauty. To me she always seemed to be a reborn Viking princess — flowing hair, glowing face, striking, powerful. She radiated energy and confidence — on stage singing and in life.

I hear you in the haunting harmonies of our favorite singers — First Aid Kit, Fleet Foxes, The Staves. I remember when we first met during L&T, both elated to have found a folky singing buddy. I will miss singing with you so, so much, your sweet voice, the tenderness and sensitivity in your guitar playing and your attentive ears. You showed me such warmth and really reached out with such open arms.

I only wish I had told you more how I admire you, wish I had sang with you more, talked with you more.

My heart is breaking to see Bard's freshman class suffer the death of another talented beautiful young woman so shortly after Sarah and Lina have passed.

I will never understand why these had to be the girls to leave us.

Dear sweet Lizzie, you were too good and too kind for all of us. Rest in peace; may you be singing always.

-Lizze Marshall

I have known you for only one month, but you have given me so much. I remember the day I moved into the room, you told me that I am an angel surrounded by the light. I like your warmth, your hair and your everything. We went swimming together for only a glimpse of your ideal boy. We went to a sushi place and had a deep conversation about you and me, boys stuffs and funny things. We went to Kingston and had a decent breakfast. We went to the campus center and I bought you a friends bracelet. I bought you roses for valentines day and you bought me sweets. You told me to follow my heart to choose what is best for me... It just seems so unreal. I don't know how to describe my feelings, but I love you and I am proud of you! It's just I love you so much that it seems you are still here.

-Bella Zou

I'm so lucky to have gotten close with Lizzie Stimson in this past couple of weeks. I saw something I loved in her voice and spirit. Her presence in a room set a sort of calm, a precedence of serenity hung over us all. She was supposed to sing with me tonight at my show, and she was so excited. There is a mysterious bond that seems to appear between people singing in harmony. The connection is decided as soon as your voices lock and smiles of aural satisfaction are alive in both of your eyes. This is what Lizzie and I had. I will always honor her warm heart and magical presence. I loved her like a little sister. Rest in peace Elizabeth Stimson.

-Lissy Hope

Lizzie, We had only just started to get to know each other. When we sang together with Izzy last week; your soft, angelic harmonies filled the room with an inexplicable brightness. Over the past semester I've admired you from somewhat of a distance, always intrigued by your gentle luminosity. I was really excited recently when we started to become better friends. When we had dinner with Terry last week, we made plans to cook great food, light lots of pretty candles, sing, and go on hikes together. As I do these things now and throughout my life, I will always think of you. It makes me sad that we didn't become closer sooner. But I also feel so incredibly lucky to have gotten to know you as well as I did in such a short time. You've left an extraordinary impact and will forever be remembered, as your beautiful soul will always continue to linger.

-Eliza Mozer

HOW TO FIX 9G

BY NAOMI LACHANCE AND LEELA KHANNA

After three fatalities in the past three months and six fatalities in the past two years, local officials are finally coming together to figure out how to fix the road. This year, the shoulders of New York State Route 9G will be reconstructed from Route 199 to Columbia County so that they are at least 4 feet wide. This project was in its planning stages before the accidents occurred. The route is owned by the New York Department of Transportation. In another action that marks a step toward

safety, the Tivoli Green Committee, with the leadership of Tivoli Deputy Mayor Joel Griffith, is making improvements to the trail that connects Bard to Kidd Lane through the Tivoli Bays. The forest is owned by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Local leaders have come together in the past month to offer their suggestions. What follows is a wide range of possible initiatives that the college, the town of Red Hook, and the state of New York could take.

FEBRUARY 1, 2014

A hit and run accident kills Bard first-years Sarah McCausland and Evelina Brown.

FEBRUARY 7, 2014

9G safety meeting held at Bard College; college administrators and local politicians in attendance

MARCH 2, 2014

Dutchess County Legislator Micki Strawinski and first-year Lia Russell meet.

MARCH 3, 2014

Another accident at the intersection of W. Kerley Corners Road and 9G kills Brandon O'Connell of Hudson.

Nancy Mowris-Dauley's petition has 1,000 signatures

MARCH 5, 2014

Russell sends an email to President Leon Botstein

MARCH 7, 2014

Follow-up meeting about 9G safety with many of the same participants as Feb. 7.

MARCH 10, 2014

President Botstein replies to Russell; says he would like to help "in any way" to bring the issue to Governor Cahill.

MARCH 14, 2014

Nancy Mowris-Dauley's petition has 3,000 signatures.

UNKNOWN DATE

Assemblymember Kevin Cahill sends proposal to the Governor to include \$7 million in the budget to improve 9G. This budget would allot for sidewalks on the road.

LOCAL LEADERS WEIGH IN

KEN COOPER

Bard College Cycling Team is buying 'Halp' (LED) lights for students.

Spread awareness among students on the dangers of 9G.

"9G has to have barriers to speed. We've got to do something and the way to do it is to slow down traffic — as it gets going fast, slow it down."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WIN-NAKEE LAND TRUST

LUCY HAYDEN

Reflective color for the fog line

RED HOOK TOWN SUPERVISOR

SUE CRANE

Also look at improving Route 199

Put up signs such as "college student crossing"

FIRST-YEAR LIA RUSSELL

Build stop light at the 9G intersection

Reduce the speed limits

"The two girls who died were my best friends. And then I heard about the third man who died last week, and he was right across the street from where we were [the night of the accident]. So I consider this a public safety risk."

NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

TERRY GIPSON

Emphasize Bard entrance like the entrances at Vassar and Marist

Conduct an engineering study on the area

Conduct an engineering study

DISTRICT 103 ASSEMBLYMEMBER

KEVIN CAHILL

9G thoroughfare for pedestrians

Factor cab service into tuition

Work with what exists instead of building something entirely new

DUTCHESS COUNTY EXECUTIVE

MARCUS MOLINARO

Define 9G intersections better

Limit the number of intersections on the road

Create a boulevard on 9G

DUTCHESS COUNTY LEGISLATOR

MICKI STRAWINSKI

Install rotaries to slow traffic

Exercise safety precautions as a pedestrian

BARD COLLEGE

VICE PRESIDENT OF ADMINISTRATION

JIM BRUDVIG

Long-term creative solutions

Install rotaries to slow traffic

BARD COLLEGE SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER

LAURIE HUSTED

Following a "complete streets" program that paints the shoulder of the roads a different color

Worries that wider shoulders could actually make traffic faster

NEW YORK STATE

DPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

Context of the road is important to consider

More work needs to be done than just signs and lights

RED HOOK POLICE SERGEANT

PATRICK HILDENBRAND

Speed limit reductions have not accomplished anything

Do not blame specific establishments; a drunk driver could be coming from a private home

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

EOIN WRAFTER

OF THE POUGHKEEPSIE-DUTCHESS COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL (PDCTC)

Fiscal partnership with Bard to pay for improvements

"Don't lose heart; I think we shall prevail."
-Leon Botstein in an email to Lia Russell



photo by [illegible]

THE GIRLS JUST CLICK

BY ALEX HACKER

"An Exhibition," in collaboration with Through the Flower publication, is a celebration of women photographers at Bard, and presented a mix of digital and analogue photography. The show, which ran from March 1 to 8, was a celebration of work that may be underrecognized in the photography department. It comes at the heels of an all-male showcase; the anticipation of the event and quality of the work ran high.

A featured work, as well as additional content, can be found at Anexhibitionbard.tumblr.com. Through the Flower, a new women's literary and art publication, is set to print in May. "The show was incredibly well received, by both the artists who participated and the audience this past week," said junior Ginny Hanusik, one of the show's head organizers. "Having so much support from the Bard community reaffirms the importance of having a publication like Through the Flower in circulation — not just for female artists, but for everyone."

bottom
top
bottom

left:
right:
right:

eden
sophia
erica

ward
davis
imbasciani





top left: sophie braziunas
middle left: anna low-beer
bottom left: cassidy turner
top right: anna daniszewski
bottom right: hannah taylor



U P R I S I N G

THREE VIEWS ON THE CRISIS IN VENEZUELA

BY SAMUEL ROTTER

Venezuela is finally waking up after more than 15 years of repression, confrontation, violence, political abuse and economic deterioration.

On Feb. 12, following a series of student protests against crime and scarcity, a march was summoned by main opposition leaders Leopoldo Lopez, María Corina Machado and Antonio Ledezma alongside the national student opposition movements. It was during this day that the protests in Venezuela began to escalate. After thousands of people joined peacefully to protest the government of Nicolás Maduro, an immense wave of repression set in action against them. The National Guard accompanied by government-armed civilians called *colectivos* heavily repressed students who were acting under their constitutional right. Their methods of repression included the use of tear-gas, rubber pellets, glass pellets and bullets, leaving two innocent students dead. Protests began to escalate and intensify after this incident. The blatant censoring of the media and the continuous oppression on our students has been only but fuel to a rapidly increasing fire. In an attempt to relieve itself from any sort of responsibility, the government sought out opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez and held him accountable for the death of the students. They presented him with charges of conspiracy and intellectual authority over these events, which led to his arrest. What is even more outrageous is the government's failure to present a single trace of evidence or even conduct an investigation regarding these events. It is clear that Venezuela's dictatorship has finally taken off its mask. It now acts without any adherence to the law or constitution, and labels millions opposing them as right wing *fascistas guarimberos*.

Recently, the protesters led by the student organization have released a written manifest under the title "Manifest of Mérida" in which they express their written demands to Nicolás Maduro's government. Its three main points are as follows:

1. The immediate expulsion of Cuban officials from the country's military ranks and public institutions.
2. The complete disarmament of *colectivos* who are held responsible for multiple attacks against students and opposition militants.
3. The immediate release of all political prisoners.

So far, 22 people have died in Venezuela as a result of these protests, 261 have been seriously injured (including gunshot wounds), 1044 have been detained by state organisms, and more than 33 cases of torture have been reported — including the sexual abuse of a male student that involved a rifle cannon. Of course, not a single person has been held responsible for any of these murders. The victims of these attacks were not armed and great majority of the cases are backed-up by video or photographic evidence, as well as testimonies that implicate government or civilian forces to these crimes.

My country is now living in a failed paralyzed state of continuous protests and confrontation. Barricades, human peace chains, street resistance and armed confrontation occur every day throughout the entire nation. Information in Venezuela relies on social media such as Facebook and Twitter to report to the world our current situation. Many have come to our support, but the more we manage to cause an impact, the sooner change can be set in motion.

In the past, we have pursued alternative measures of coping instead of provoking change. But no more — a thin layer of authority, false revolution and time will not shackle us. The days of this government seem to be coming to an end. Venezuela is tired of failure and awful living conditions, and is now writing its own history through its brave people. Every day that goes by, I wish I were beside my fellow students, standing up to a force that is much more powerful than any of us, but neither greater nor more courageous. The enemy hides behind their shields and weapons, always thirsty for power and wealth. They cling onto their dying involution because they are afraid of all the corruption that would be exposed in the hands of the people.

Unfortunately, given my current circumstance, my fight has been reduced to the passing of information and the promotion of consciousness involving the situation. I urge every single reader to do what you can to spread the gravity of this situation. We can all help to give the Venezuelan people the freedom they so desperately need and deserve.

The fight lives on.

BY MELINA VANNI-GONZALEZ

Two weeks ago, I read an article from the popular Venezuelan blog The Caracas Chronicles titled "The Night Venezuela Finally Imploded." Having many family and friends living in Caracas, I sent Whatsapp messages to everyone I knew. A family friend responded with: "It is very ugly what is happening, and I feel so ashamed that you cannot know the country of your bloodline; it was a beautiful country but we are here fighting, and we hope that it will lead to something new. The situation is very bad." I was used to my loved ones in Caracas telling me stories of the violence, the protests and the crime rate, but February's events were something my family and I have feared for years.

Since 2000, when the former president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, fired thousands of oil industry workers on live television to assume government control of the industry, my mother, a native Venezuelan from Caracas, has been fervent in her anti-Chavista sentiments. Since Hugo Chavez assumed power in 1999, most of my family's friends have left Venezuela, and I have also never returned since. Most people I know in Venezuela have been mugged multiple times, and one very close family friend survived two shootings in one year. My mother, who grew up in the lower-middle class neighborhood, Avenida Victoria, in Caracas, told me throughout her 26 years of living in Venezuela, she was not mugged once. Apart from this, I had no reason to believe the situation in Venezuela would deteriorate into the utter chaos of the last month.

On Feb. 14, a family friend sent me this message from Caracas: "There is nothing worse than being afraid to tell the truth." Regardless of how many times I see "SOS Venezuela" appear on my newsfeed, it seems there is much ambiguity as to what is going on, even among the people who are living it.

So, what is happening? The main drive for protests is the blatant lack of democracy and obvious corruption within the government, along with rampant crime, lack of security, and a 60 percent inflation rate. Under Chavez, the Venezuelan economy boomed due to the oil industry, yet 60 percent of Venezuelans lived below the poverty line. The crime rate tripled, making Caracas the most dangerous city in the world behind Johannesburg, but the government has not officially reported any deaths linked to crime since 2011. In 2008, the Chavez administration was found to be supplying the Colombian rebel group FARC with Venezuelan military weapons, while simultaneously telling the international community Venezuela was doing everything in its power to stop FARC activities in the country. Hospitals, schools and any other public institutions crumbled, while the Bolivarian socialist government put its energy into condemning the United States, or *el imperio*, and broadcasting Chavez holding a cross on live TV every Sunday for five hours. When Chavez died, and his successor Nicolás Maduro was elected, by a margin of less than 2 percent, the situation did not get better.

In the last month, mass student protests in

the city of San Cristóbal were sparked by the sexual assault of a first-year student at the Universidad de los Andes. This instance was shocking because students had been petitioning for the last year to enforce security measures on campus due to the sharp increase in crime rates. The state did not provide the university with the funding to increase security, and the assault of the first-year student was thus a gleaming moment of the failures of the Venezuelan state for average citizens. The state police did not welcome these protests; five students were detained, and the Maduro administration promptly announced the act of protest as illegal. Sound familiar? The same thing happened in Ukraine, only this time, Maduro's parliament did not later override this law like Viktor Yanukovich's parliament did, making the law in Venezuela more practically legitimate than in Ukraine.

Also like in Ukraine, outlawing protests only sparked more protesting, not only in San Cristóbal, but also all over Venezuela, and thus the state resorted to violent repression of protesters. But there are still many people who support the government. Some supporters have formed government-funded groups called *colectivos*, and some have been using violence against protesters. *Colectivos* have been acting in conjunction with the National Guard, who turned a blind eye to their violent actions. Venezuela's military has also been using violence against protesters; video evidence shows they are responsible for the death of a student named Bassil da Costa. Meanwhile, one of the opposition leaders, Leopoldo Lopez, has been jailed and accused of being a conspirator to the violence that caused da Costa's death.

Along with protests, there have been widespread media blackouts. The Chavez government had previously passed ambiguous laws, which could abruptly shut down any TV stations for broadcasting material that could "instigate violence." CNN en Español was banned for a few days in February, and journalists both pro- and anti-government have been arrested. While there is currently a lull in the violence, protests are still happening daily, and the situation does not look as if it will end anytime soon.

I understand my position is a biased one. Many people have expressed to me that they would like to see what the pro-government media is saying, but I am not the mouthpiece for that. Undoubtedly, there are gaps in the information I am receiving, and too much is left uncertain. I want to encourage dialogue among the Bard community about what is happening. I have been inspired and impressed by Bard's awareness of and response to the Ukrainian crisis, and while Venezuela does not deserve any more or less coverage on campus, I would like to remind the Bard community that there are serious things happening in places other than Ukraine. Akin to Ukraine, there is not much the average student can do other than learn, be aware, and spread information. On behalf of my loved ones in Venezuela, awareness and the spread of information is already a great step.

"Mom, I am going to fight for Venezuela's Freedom; if I don't come back... it's because I've left with Her"

BY AMANDA BLOHM

This past month has been probably the most horrible I have ever felt for

Venezuela in my life — worse than all of the tear gas bombs, coups, and persecutions that have been ongoing since February. It is horrible because of the lives lost, the forced disappearances, the absolute dissolution of our already lacking human rights, the complete and utter lack of information from regular media, and for those living abroad, *the guilt*.

I do not think I am doing enough here. Sure, I go to protests and try to raise awareness, but what does that do? Our experience has consisted of being stuck to our computers, to our phones, to anything that will give us some information; praying that our family members are well; hoping to God that our disappeared friends will come back to us.

My family is trapped inside my house, my friends went missing, were beat to a pulp, businesses are being looted, and the country has collapsed. And yes, it has collapsed, but it appears to have been waking up after so long after being asleep.

This is Venezuela. To us Venezuelans, it is the love of our life, and like any good love story, there is so much heartbreak, drama, and pain.

February 12

This was the day Bassil Da Costa, the student from the *Universidad Central de Venezuela*, was shot and killed by the National Guard, along with two other people.

The morning of the protest that began this journey, Bassil had tweeted: "Mom, I am going to fight for Venezuela's Freedom; if I don't come back, it's because I've left with her." Bassil never came back, and neither did the Venezuelan students' patience.

They were tired of not being able to finish their college educations because the schools were always on strike; they were tired of medical students lacking the resources to practice medicine; they were tired of food shortages growing even worse — it wouldn't take less than three hours to find a bag of sugar or *harina pan*, the corn flour with which we make our arepas and empanadas from. Professors are paid minimum wage, which isn't even enough to buy a bag of coffee. Kidnappings and overall insecurity had peaked to an unbelievable level: more people died in Caracas — the capital — in a day, than in Iraq daily.

February 18

Opposition leader Leopoldo López turned himself in after an arrest warrant was issued; he was charged with acts of inciting terrorism.

López told Venezuela "you don't need a single leader; you are the leaders. Only you can change this situation."

This is going to change things completely, I thought, we may even have a shot.

...

I think probably one of the worst feelings in the entire world that I have ever experienced is suffocating from tear gas bombs. When you are hit by these venomous clouds, you cannot see, your eyes seem to be glued shut and watering, you cannot breathe, your lungs feel like they have closed shut and have been paralyzed, and the more you fight it the worse it gets, which inevitably happens because you have to run away from the military.

After 15 years of repression, of course you are trained to know how to manage these situations: carry a handkerchief drenched in white vinegar in a plastic Ziploc bag, and breathe through it while running. You go with a group of people, strategize, set up a meeting spot if things get crazy and have to run away. You have a plan A, B, C. You have a certain amount of money hidden in certain parts of your clothing: both your shoes, your pockets, your bra...hold on tight to that national ID card, because if you're caught without it, you could go to jail...

...

February 19

My best friend disappeared.

He was found 18 hours later; he hid underneath a car in a parking lot for three of them and ended up staying the night at an old woman's apartment that saved him from being persecuted.

The reason behind this persecution is that the National Guard wanted his motorcycle to give to the *colectivos*, a paramilitary group cooperating with the military, but much more violent than the military.

The next day, my friend Jose and his family moved into his grandmother's house; they were afraid his license records would lead them to his home to

arrest him.

I originally thought everyone would get over it after a week, something that has almost always happened. But I was surprised when other states joined in protesting — it wasn't just Caracas. In fact, the Venezuelans who kept propelling this movement, those who never stopped, never backed down, were those from *Táchira*, a state bordering with Colombia, far away.

The *tachirenses* became our example to follow, the first ones to rise up even before Feb. 12.

February 23

Hundreds of thousands participated in a solidarity campaign.

Venezuelans living abroad feel useless, so we started "SOS Venezuela" all over the world in protest of this regime with the objective of raising awareness. More 15,000 people participated in the one in Miami, over a thousand showed up at Union Square, hundreds made it to Madrid... it was everywhere.

March 5

Things got worse.

An old friend of mine, Ignacio Rojas, affectionately called Nacho, ran away from a protest with his group towards my friend Diana's apartment building. Nacho was followed into the building where Diana's mother lived and told the guard that he was her son to protect him, to keep them from taking him away.

They beat my friend's mom up and took Nacho, but not before someone took a picture of it, one that spread internationally, saving him from more jail time. So far, more than 30 people have been killed, with more than 500 incarcerated, most of whom have been tortured.

At this point, the military has become restless. Some people take this as a positive thing: "they are going to grow tired of this," some say; "most of them don't like having to violently treat one of their own like this," which is true.

Everyone is hopeful that this regime will fall, and I think that, if we keep this up, it will come to an end, but it won't fall into the hands of the opposition — absolutely not. I believe it will fall into the hands of Maduro's rival, Diosdado Cabello, the president of the National Assembly, a Chavista, who, unlike Maduro, hates the Cubans. The Chavistas are over the current president, and the coup will not come from us, but from them.

This isn't good news: Maduro may have the IQ of a peanut and have made ridiculous decisions, but Cabello is ruthless. We will probably end up going from bad to worse.

We need to prepare for the worst, and the international community — the governments — needs to stop looking at us only as barrels of oil.

...

When the killings started and the streets of Venezuela were filled with armed forces looking like Robocop, the first thing I wanted to do was get on a plane and go back home — I had every intention of doing so.

I feel that my experience — our experience — means nothing, when we know that our family and friends are at risk, and we are so frustrated because each and every one of us would rather be there, risking our lives, than be here or anywhere that isn't home. Most of us would easily risk our lives for our freedom — and that is the truth. Our experience means nothing; theirs is the only one that matters.

I think my friends here at Bard can grasp these feelings to some extent, but very few people are able to relate much — the majority finds it to be a bit of an exaggeration. Venezuelans love Venezuela, from the amazing Angel Falls, to the tiny street corner cart selling empanadas (the real kind) and arepas (the originals, not the Colombians), to the all-too-real fear of having a mango drop on your car and dent it or break its window.

We are one people: if that guy hurts, then I hurt. We are all Venezuelans — even if we forget it at times, even if polarization gets in the way. We almost always come back to: "Well, even if I am happy that this happened, millions of other people are not — we cannot be selfish".

One of my good friends said to me after the incidents of Feb. 12 (while I was crying watching videos of people getting shot at during protests) that he envied me, but not really. He wanted to know what it felt like to care so much about your country, but saw me, and wished he never had to experience that pain. I tried to explain: "think of the 'Murica stereotype;" think of it as literally standing in front of a military tank, looking into its barrel, and not moving.

Let me tell you, it hurts.

BARD UNIVERSE CONVERGES FOR CONFERENCE

BY DANA FRANCISCO MIRANDA

Eight Bard students will be leaving Annandale to participate in the Third Annual Smolny International Student Conference, called "New Approaches in the Humanities and Social Sciences" in St. Petersburg, Russia, April 18-19.

After the 2014 Russian military intervention invasion of Ukraine, the Smolny Conference will have an unprecedented opportunity to foster real dialogue over a politically current issue.

St. Petersburg State University, which includes Smolny College, invited the submission of undergraduate papers, presentations and projects from all Bard affiliated institutions. This multidisciplinary conference aims to foster international dialogue through a global exchange in the humanities and social sciences.

After the EuroMaidan protests and demonstrations around the issue of integration into the European Union, the Center for Civic Engagement and Hannah Arendt Center's essay prompt is strikingly relevant. Students were asked: "Are youth today 'political dropouts'? Are they disengaged bystanders or active citizens with a new understanding of citizenship, or something entirely different? In what ways could/should education encourage youth engagement?" In this essay contest the interstices between politics and education are clearly developed as prompts to promote dialogue at the Smolny Conference.

After such events, students must necessarily ask themselves, what ability does public protest have to impact change and what is education's responsibility in fostering this dialogue? In fact, there are three Bard students going to the Smolny Conference who were selected on the strength of their essays concerning active citizenship and youth engagement.

"I guess it is ironic that I am going to a country that is trying to suppress the very publicly-spirited zealotry that we try to seek or teach for our moral citizens," senior Durante Bar-ringer, an essay winner going to the conference, said. "Bard's place in education at the Smolny Conference is to express other ideas from an American institution. Smolny students might have other ideas what civic engagement is."

The conference allows for a unique opportunity to think critically and open up international dialogue on the impact liberal arts, humanities, and social sciences has on real-world implications.

The Russian intervention of Crimea should be talked about at the conference. It is more than ironic that three Bard students will be going to St. Petersburg, Russia to speak about civic engagement. It is rather an unparalleled occasion to open dialogue between international undergraduates about the power and repercussions of active citizenship.

HEADED TO RUSSIA AND TURKEY

BY J.P. LAWRENCE AND DANA FRANCISCO MIRANDA

Students from all over the Bard network will meet at two conferences — one in Istanbul, Turkey March 22-24, and one in St. Petersburg, Russia April 18-19.

Eight students from Annandale will be heading to Russia, while the invite list to Turkey includes five students from Palestine, six from Kyrgyzstan, seven from Annandale, four from Germany, four from Belarus, and three from Russia.

"We selected people based on their involvement in various community activities and leadership skills," Erin Cannan, associate director of Bard's Center for Civic Engagement, said. "There is a variety of different types of involvement (newspapers to community organizing). We considered students whose work involved expanding existing community organizations or starting a community organization (like a TLS project)."

Cannan added that students can look forward to networking, meeting experts, and developing ideas on expanding their

current project of launching a new one.

Senior Amanda Gan, a presenter at the Smolny conference has had previous experiences with Russia that have amounted to a mixture of excitement and homesickness.

"I feel like I am going back home, to a home I just discovered and never knew that until I discovered the Russian language," Gan said. "Last time I attended the conference, I was in the audience. Now I can participate and promote liberal arts from an American perspective, blending it with Russia."



photo by peter schreiber

P A K I S T A N

BY SAIM SAEED

On a warm Monday evening in December, armed gunmen opened fire on my office building. They hurled two home-made explosives and continued to fire indiscriminately at the entrance.

I was inside then, and I panicked. I stood there waiting to be told what to do. In a daze, I decided to watch television with the others to find out what was happening outside; we were in the basement. Within a few minutes, the gunmen got back on their motorcycles and sped away.

In January, three staffers from my office — a cameraman, a guard, and a technician — were shot dead in a parked van while routinely collecting satellite feeds.

The killers have not been caught; the police don't even have suspects, but there is little doubt who did it. A spokesman for the Taliban called in on live television in the aftermath of the van attack and happily admitted to it. He also said, casually, the attacks on the media would continue as long as they "wage a propaganda war against Islam."

"Was there a specific report, a specific comment that upset the Taliban?" The news anchor asked. The spokesman paused for a moment and said, in general, we don't like the work that you do. In a moment of desperation, the anchor tried to negotiate a deal. He said, if we don't talk about you, will you let us live? The spokesman again paused, and said we'll see.

Since then, my newspaper decided to close shop against the Taliban. When they bomb marketplaces, mosques and the police, we don't condemn it. When they say they want to negotiate with the government, and then blow something up again, our editorials do not have an opinion on it. In effect, we kept our part of the bargain by not saying anything. We are waiting to see if the Taliban keep theirs.

Many have called us cowards for not speaking up when it is most necessary. A columnist quipped, "Am I to write about cooking recipes now that I can't talk about the Taliban?" Others showed sympathy by lamenting the climate in which journalists are supposed to report.

As for myself, I had more mundane concerns. Before committing to this job, I had this image of myself bearing torture for the story that would 'expose it all.' The Scoop. The Truth. Lately, I have been doing data entry and theatre reviews. Sometimes I ask myself, do I really want to die for an "exceptionally good, but spatially challenged" performance

of Grease? In this climate of uncertainty and fear, there are a few things I want Bardians to think about.

The first is the price of free speech. In a staff meeting the day after the attack, the editor of my newspaper was clear about one thing: no story is worth the life of the person who writes it. Many passionate staff members, to whom I could relate, argued that we should fight, continue the work we do. The editor said fighting is for people with guns. We don't have those; our job is to report. I don't know what to make of this, to be honest. My hope is that within the confines of Annandale this discussion might be more fruitful than it is amongst journalists who are speaking out of self-preservation and insecurity rather than intellectual fortitude.

The second is the role of the state. In many conversations I've had at Bard, the state has always been a favored punching bag. Monopoly over violence, "Discipline and Punish," oppressive system, yadda yadda yadda. Here's the problem where I'm currently living: there is no one to protect us. We're on our own. It explains why the news anchor was trying to negotiate a deal with the Taliban spokesman. It also explains why, with razor wire, a bombproof vestibule, doubly reinforced sand and concrete barriers to absorb explosions, the office looks more like the American embassy than a newsroom. (They even filled the few existing windows with cement.) From this angle, *bellum omnium contra omnes* [the war of all against all] looks pretty real. So maybe sometimes we do need the state to kill the bad guys. Maybe sometimes it is that simple. Maybe not. Or it might be the inner journalist that's gotten the bejesus scared out of him who's talking. The state might still be evil.

The third is meaning beyond self-censorship. The harshest critics, especially in Pakistan, said that after our change in editorial policy, our paper was useless. Everyone is talking about terrorism. What else would there be to talk about? Some argue plenty. The newspaper's done some worthy coverage of Pakistan's recent support for Saudi Arabia in Syria, breaking with its previous neutrality. It also did a decent story on an abandoned train station that still unnecessarily employed 15 people. There has been coverage about the rights of minorities, and polio workers, and the famine in Sindh. Can good work still be done beyond the obvious constraints we are facing? More specifically, can a news-

paper do its job (well) without being able to report on the biggest story in the country?

Finally, there is integrity and personal choice. One of the reasons I'm still here in Pakistan is because when I was thinking of moving away, an interesting story was developing in Europe. A Danish giraffe, Marius, was about to be euthanized by his zoo officials. The reason was because his genes weren't diverse enough — he was an incest baby — and they couldn't transfer him anywhere else. People protested, and another zoo somewhere volunteered to host Marius, averting the execution. In that moment of satisfaction when Marius got a stay of execution, I realized that I did not ever want to report on giraffes.

If I ever found myself reporting on a giraffe, I would seriously question my life choices and maybe check into an ashram or something. I told myself: As long as the paper's running, I'm working for it, for better or worse. Of course the thought did occur to me, like it does to many people, to go to grad school, or better yet, Brooklyn. But then I thought if people here want to kill me for the work that I do, then I must be doing something right.

With these thoughts, I'll leave you to FYSEM, Judith Butler, rugby practice, that overdue paper, Sproj, or anything else that probably needs greater attention than the daily travails of a former Bard student on the other side of the world. My only hope is that you won't have to think about these issues under the pressures that I have to.



I S T A N B U L

Firsthand accounts from a Bard alum

BY DAN GETTINGER

The tear gas canister that hit Okan Göçer created a 7-to-8 centimeter fracture on the left side of his skull. Göçer, a slight young man masked in a red bandana, went limp, stumbling backwards before falling to the ground. Thick red droplets gathered first on his face and hands and then in a bright array on the pavement. The gas canister hissed and spun nearby, spitting plumes of the white smoke. A group of protesters, who were about to fall back to another narrow alley around the British Consulate in Istanbul, ran to carry Göçer to safety.

At the Diren Gezi demonstrations in Turkey last June, I witnessed the brutal tactics of the Turkish police during a several-day layover on my way to Palestine. The aggressive use of tear gas in Turkey resembled police tactics at other major protests in Egypt, Bahrain, and Ukraine. With the intensity and frequency of civil unrest growing over the past few years, the presence of tear gas in the headlines and on the streets will increase. At Diren Gezi, police methods of "crowd control" spiraled out of proportion and, at times, turned lethal.

On June 1, the day Göçer was injured, I followed the tens of thousands of Turks who were gathering in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul. They were protesting the expulsion of environmental activists from Gezi Park the previous day and the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. With groups of police and protesters emerging from all directions, exchanges of stones and tear gas, the flash and crack of stun grenades and police armored vehicles shooting torrents of water and rubber bullets, I don't think I realized at the start what I was getting myself into.

Göçer was one of at least 3,195 people injured in the first two days of the protests, as reported by the Turkish Medical Association. Dr. Hüseyin Demirdiken, a member of the Association, told Human Rights Watch last July that, after seeing so many injuries, he believed that the aim of the police was "not only to disperse the crowds, but also to punish." Between May 31 and July 10, police tactics resulted in at least 8,121 injuries, 104 cases of brain and head trauma and cost 11 people an eye. In a report published last September, Physicians for Human Rights, a watchdog organization based in New York City, criticized the excessive use of force

against protesters and medical personnel. "The police systematically used tear gas as a weapon on hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, firing gas canisters and capsules directly at protesters at close range, in confined spaces, and in other areas with no outlet for escape," the report stated.

When you are exposed to tear gas, you feel it immediately. The skin on your face burns and stinging tears flow from the corners of bloodshot eyes. Your chest tightens and, for a brief moment, dizzying panic sets in as it becomes more and more difficult to breathe.

Protesters suffering from the effects of tear gas were a common sight at Diren Gezi. They retreated to alleyways, crowded into underground parking garages, huddled in the alcoves of shops and lay sprawled in makeshift aid centers pressing their faces into soft cotton. During one particularly desperate instance on June 1, I ran with a group of protesters up the stairs of an apartment building in search of clearer air and an escape from advancing riot police, until the gas infiltrated the narrow passageways. The worst moments of any protest are not the effects of gas itself but, rather, when the crowd is seized by the mad panic that results from a concerted police attack. In Istanbul, the stress of these moments was alleviated when shopkeepers and sympathetic hotel staff in the area handed out lemons and towels to ailing protesters and children reached through the metal bars of their school yard holding small plastic water bottles.

On June 19, the Turkish paper *Milliyet* reported that during the protests, police launched 130,000 tear gas canisters. Much of the tear gas used at Diren Gezi was supplied by Nonlethal Technologies Incorporated, a company based in Homer, Pa. Nonlethal Technologies also helped supply CS gas munitions to riot police in Bahrain where there were an estimated 34 tear gas-related deaths between March 2011 and March 2012. Despite the international outcry against the tactics of Turkish police during the protests, on June 24, Erdoğan praised the police action as "heroic" and vowed to increase the size of the force.

Diren Gezi began with a group of 50 environmentalists protesting the destruction of one of Istanbul's last green spaces. As the demonstrations grew in size, the force behind the protests shifted. The planned destruction of Gezi

and alteration of Taksim Square to make way for a shopping mall came to symbolize the eradication of a free place of assembly and, more broadly, Erdoğan's repressive policies. In the months since last June, protests have repeatedly broken out in Turkey in reaction to the corruption scandals that rocked the Turkish government last December and against new curbs on Internet freedoms pushed forward by Erdoğan earlier this year.

Lately, the protests have taken a more personal turn. In the second week of March 2014, massive demonstrations took place across Turkey after the death of 15-year-old Berkin Elvan. On June 16, 2013, Elvan was hit in the head by a tear gas canister while on his way to buy bread; he was in a coma for nine months. "We are here because this little boy is part of us, it could happen to any of us, to our son, brother," said Damla Atalay, a lawyer participating in the estimated 100,000-strong funeral procession on March 12, in an interview with the *New York Times*.

When I returned to Istanbul from Palestine on June 14, I visited the encampment at Gezi Park where the protesters had returned after the clashes on June 1. Gezi was filled with hundreds of tents, food and aid stations, libraries, vendors, information stands for various political parties, and thousands of protesters. Piano concerts and dances were held in neighboring Taksim Square at the base of the Memorial to the Republic. The following evening, Turkish police stormed the park with unprecedented ferocity, sowing nightmarish chaos and shrouding Gezi in smoke. Cannons mounted on armored vehicles shot great streams of water laced with tear gas and police fired rounds of gas into a hotel lobby where medical personnel were treating injured protesters. On June 16, in another attempt to take back Gezi, I followed protesters during a 10-hour struggle until they were pushed out of Beyoğlu and to the edge of the Bosphorus. As gas canisters fell around us, the exhausted protesters abandoned the last ring of barricades. Among pillars of smoke illuminated in ghostly starkness by street lights, we crossed Galata Bridge where, during the day, crowds of fishermen and street vendors jostle for space.

LETTER FROM ST. PETERSBURG

BY TIM ROHZANSKY

On March 1, 2014, President Putin received support from the Federation Council on the introduction of Russian troops into Ukraine. The official reason for this was stated as the protection of Russians living in the territory of Crimea. The introduction of foreign troops into the territory of another sovereign state means war.

I can't believe it! Only 23 years ago we were the same country. I was born in the USSR, in the year when it decayed, and now Russians and Ukrainians will kill each other in fratricidal war.

I went to a protest in St. Petersburg. And on this day in St. Petersburg, there were no more than 1,000 people, in addition to the many counter-protesters in support of Russian actions.

Police arrested people with posters that said things like "Peace to the World" (in the Russian language, "peace" and "world" are the similar) or "No War!"

I was there with my friends, and I can't say I expected to see a lot of people there. There weren't a lot of people protesting when Pussy Riot was sentenced to a two-year imprisonment. There weren't a lot of people present when seven activists from the protest meeting in Moscow were sentenced between two and six years of imprisonment just for participation.

This is the worst part for me. Either people don't care about what is happening or they support their government's decisions to violate human rights. I can understand that it's really difficult to keep your mind clear when being exposed to Russian media, because it is nothing but pro-government propaganda.

Nowadays, I hear more lies from the Russian media than I have my entire life. If I hadn't seen Euromaidan for myself in

Kyiv in January, I would probably believe the Russian media's claims that there were lots of flags with swastikas. But saying that Ukraine is in the hands of fascists when you have access to so much information is a crime. It deliberately incites hatred.

It would be almost impossible to publish this letter in Russia for obvious reasons: the Russian media, those guys on TV who lie with brazen impudence, would censor it out of fear. They are idiots and scoundrels, and they already made zombies out of a fairly large number of ignoramuses with unstable psyches. When Ukrainians watch Russian TV, they see how Russians are being turned against them. The rare media outlets who tried to stay objective are closing due to different "official reasons."

The government thinks the country exists for its rulers, and the people allow them to think that. Russian fake patriots sell their freedom for imaginary stability and stay loyal to the government. Other people just don't care about what is happening. As a result, Putin shows his power to the world and we stand on the brink of a potential WWII.

There would be many deaths in a war between Russians and Ukrainians. We are brothers, and we know each other very well. We have the same weapons, the same military school, and almost the same language. But we shouldn't allow politicians to eventually embroil us and force us to kill each other.

Military service in Russia is required. Luckily, being in university frees me from military service for four years. I don't know what I would do if I were in the army now. If I were, I would have to make a really difficult choice between constitutional law and my sense of honor and freedom.

BACK TO STALIN

BY MARIA

In Russia, the situation with Ukraine is on everyone's minds. From the time the Russian government decided to send armed forces into Crimea, we had several protests for and against the invasion. In the democratic demonstration in St. Petersburg, a lot of activists were seized and sent to prison. As usual, patriots blamed the liberal part of society. A new internet community was set up a few days ago with the goal of finding people who do not agree with the policy course — "betrayers, who doubt the necessity of fight." If we change these words we'll get the term "enemy of the people" — a phrase that killed millions of innocent people in Stalin's time.

The worst part is that most people don't understand what is going on in Russia. It is expected for people who live in small cities because it's really hard to get objective information. But even citizens of Moscow and St. Petersburg are deluded by the government. We have two main TV channels in Russia and they are absolutely under the party's control. It's impossible to get real information watching these channels, yet people believe they do. They are satisfied with such news because they don't think that they need anything else.

From the beginning, Russian citizens never had the habit of think-

ing independently. I study at Smolny College and so, I am accustomed to the "liberal mentality;" I forget that the society isn't ready for critical thinking. I'm still shocked when I talk to my friends, who are wonderful and smart, and hear them say that "cruel Americans and Nazi activists made a revolution in Ukraine."

The biggest problem in Russia, which connects everything, is not about Putin, or politics, or economics, or anything related to that — it's about people. People who always believe what they are told. People who don't know how to think. People who don't want to think and choose to live with prejudice.

HERE TO PLAY: WHAT HAPPENS TO RECRUITS WHO ENROLL

BY AVERY MENCHER



Freshman Zach Ward's dorm room is unlike that of many others at Bard. Where some Bard students might hang a poster of their favorite band, or a potential fire hazard of a tapestry, he has an American flag made out of the remains of beer boxes. Some might have a guitar leaning against the radiator; he has a baseball bat. Ward is a member of a growing number of Bard athletes, a group of students that were contacted and courted by various members of the athletic administration in order to further attract them to the Bard campus. The student-athlete population on campus has exploded as of late, a direct effect of the increased efforts of the athletic department over the past year to develop Bard athletics. Bard student-athletes are trying to find a way to balance athletics, academics, and social life at a school with no tradition of the sort.

Gina Lewis, a sophomore PC in Tewksbury, did not originally plan to play soccer in college. That plan changed when she received a call from Bill Kelly, the women's soccer coach here at Bard. "I had never heard of Bard before that call," said Lewis. Without Bard athletic recruiting, Lewis would have never even known about Bard. Upon arrival at Accepted Students' Day during her senior year of high school, she became more interested in Bard, though she of course recognized that she would not be participating in any sort of powerhouse program. Kelly's recruiting pitch was honest — he made no false promises, and he did not oversell the athletic aspect in any way. Regardless, Lewis was intrigued, and she chose to attend. Now, she says she has "grown happier" here, especially through her engagement in the Peer Counselor program. Though she says that she initially made friends exclusively with athletes, her involvement with activities outside of her sport has allowed her to branch out socially, a problem which many first-year athletes seem to have trouble with.

When speaking to Ward, it is easy to forget that he

is a Bard student. Tall, muscular, and clothed in various athletic brands, he speaks with a certain fratboy affectation, throwing in "bro" often and laughing carelessly. He quickly reminds any listener why he is at Bard nonetheless, displaying definite passion and intelligence common to his classmates. Like Lewis, he was unaware of Bard's existence until he received a call in December 2011 from Jim Chambers, then-baseball coach, who talked to Ward for an hour and a half about Bard and its burgeoning baseball program. Though he says that he is happy with his choice given his college options, he asserts that he has definite issues with being at Bard.

Ward disappointedly discusses the unfulfilled recruiting promises made by Chambers — an artificial turf indoor facility, an athletes-only workout area, a conversion of SMOG into a baseball locker room, and of course a baseball field — some of which sound simply laughable to current Bard students. He enjoys the company of his teammates, but he expresses slight frustration with the "incongruence of values" between him and other Bard students that make it difficult to expand his social horizons. Above all, he emphasizes the absent support from the upper administration.

At a Q&A with President Botstein over Parents' Weekend, Ward took the opportunity to grill the college's top administrator about his feelings and commitment to developing Bard athletics. According to Ward, Botstein replied, "Athletics are directly corrosive to the academic environment," with special reference to larger, Division I-type schools that place an extraordinary focus on their athletic departments. Ward makes note of how Botstein is the only school president out of eleven schools that neglects to attend the Liberty League athletic meetings. It seems almost demoralizing for Ward to experience this lack of support, and he notes it as a major contributor to his reservations about being at Bard.

However, not all jock-y athletes experience the same

amount of unhappiness with Bard athletics. Sophomore Sam Funnell is perhaps one of the first students to transfer to Bard specifically to play a sport. Originally offered a lacrosse scholarship to University of Vermont, a Division I program, Funnell sustained an injury senior year of high school, prompting him to pass on the scholarship in favor of a school with better academics. He attended Trinity College for two years before he heard about Tucker Kear and his efforts to build a lacrosse program at Bard. He was intrigued, but he knew Bard's reputation — he had been more interested by Liberty League competitors Skidmore and St. Lawrence in his original college search. Nonetheless, Funnell visited Bard, and he was pleasantly surprised by Kear's dedication to creating a legitimately competitive program. Kear emphasized the room for improvement with a program like Bard's, and Funnell was attracted to the possible leadership opportunity as the oldest member of a brand-new team.

Since arriving at Bard in January, Funnell has embraced his role as elder statesman of the team, motivating his younger teammates and representing the men's lacrosse program at SAAC (Student-Athlete Advisory Committee) meetings. Among rumors of various student-athletes planning to transfer, it is refreshing and encouraging to hear about a student who actually chose Bard for its unique athletic culture.

Though Lewis, Ward, and Funnell all have had varied experiences as recruited athletes, their responses to the question of what to say to future recruits all line up: if you're ready for dedication, hard work, and responsibility, Bard is the place for you, no matter what you have on your walls or in your room.

CROSSFIT CLARA

BY JOHN HENRY GLASCOCK

6:20 a.m.: A seemingly-amplified phone chirps with an unpleasant wake-up reminder.

6:23 a.m.: Halfway to a barn in the middle of nowhere, beginning to reevaluate life choices.

6:30 a.m.: Standing in 9-degree weather, mentally preparing for the most exhausting part of an already extended day.

To most people, the prospect of a daily schedule with its beginnings rooted in inevitable torture of the mind and the body would keep them in bed for an extra couple of hours. Clara Sekowski, a junior at Bard, relishes the challenge of a morning like this - not once, not twice, but seven days a week. Her terribly early mornings are a product of a choice to take part in one of the most demanding exercise regimens circulating in the fitness universe. While researching the popular Paleo diet about a year and a half ago, Clara happened upon the world of CrossFit.

6:34 a.m.: The worst part. Waiting in front of the barbell trying not to listen to the rational thoughts flooding in. Once the clock starts there is no turning back.

CrossFit began in 2000 as an alternative to traditional weight-training programs. Centered on functional strength, the program aims to work people to their absolute limits. The workouts are brutal, draining the body of oxygen and depleting the muscles of any perceived idea of strength. The structure of CrossFit is unique and relatively alien to anyone on the outside. Explosive exercises designed to pump every muscle fiber to the breaking point are the cornerstone of the CrossFit regiment. There is never any respite. One movement after the other with screaming legs and lungs that feel three sizes too small - that's CrossFit. It is hard to describe why anyone would submit themselves the misery that comes with the territory.

The ultimate prize in CrossFit is to win the CrossFit Games, the sport's equivalent to the Super Bowl. Athletes from 8,642 affiliated CrossFit gyms worldwide put their best lifts forward in an attempt to break the barrier of amateur weight-

lifter to lay claim as the fittest person on the planet. The competition begins with an open round, wherein competitors are given four days to complete an assigned workout. There are five devitalizing rounds of this same procedure, all with varying specifications, with the ultimate intent of sifting through the pool and finding the strongest participants. If Clara had entered the 2013 Open, she would have been one of 46,639 women competing in the early stages of the Games. There are no concrete numbers available yet for the number of contestants in the 2014 Open, which has just begun, but rough estimates place the number of total contestants around 200,000; tens of thousands of the fittest people on Earth all ferociously contending to become recognized as CrossFit champion.

After the Open, the competition is broken into 17 regions, where the 48 top male and female performers of their respective regions square off in relentless pursuit of a spot in the Games. Once the Regional competition concludes, the top 43 men and 43 women from around the world are chosen to compete at the Games, the apex of exercise. Forty-three of the most mentally and physically strong women in the world, all in one place. That's what Clara aims to be a part of.

6:55 a.m.: The faster you go, the faster it's over. Motivation from within, motivation all around. Don't just get through it. Work to get better. Work to be the best.

We sit on the less-than-comfortable bench on the first floor of the Stevenson Athletic Center as Clara takes me through her CrossFit journey. Over the occasional cheers for the men's volleyball team, she tells me about the camaraderie of the CrossFit groups. "We're a family," she assures me with a smile. There are people who train with Clara whose intentions of reaching the games are similar to Clara's, but there are also people who want to see how hard they can push themselves. Essential to effective CrossFit training is a familial atmosphere that enables each athlete to perform against the biggest rival of all: themselves. "Every training

session is a test. You're always trying to improve." It's impossible to improve in an environment without support.

Clara was familiar with hard work and the necessity of support before CrossFit; it just opened her eyes to what a close-knit group could help a person accomplish. In the Bard community, Clara is on the women's lacrosse team and she is double-majoring in physics and math. "Sometimes we'll have conditioning for lacrosse with almost no notice, so I'll end up doing two-a-days." With an already packed schedule, it's shockingly impressive that she can fit something extra in. Especially on top of something as demanding as CrossFit. Clara tells me, however, that her motivation to get things done has skyrocketed since being a part of the CrossFit program. "If you push yourself in one aspect, you start to push yourself in other places too."

7:00 a.m.: Country music blasting. Perfect. Almost there.

As a junior, Clara has been right in the middle of the changes made to the athletic department at Bard. During her time here, there have been various improvements to the gym, and she really loves what the department has been able to do. She, along with many other athletes, hopes Bard Athletics will continue to expand and improve. It's more than possible with the dynamic that is evolving over at the Stevenson Athletic Center. At one point, we find ourselves on the inevitable topic of athlete/non-athlete relations and Clara amusingly reminds me that "not all athletes are assholes." Clara breaks that particular stereotype along with many others.

Gyms are usually associated with muscle-bound guys who are big for no reason. On any given day, however, if you find your way to the second floor of the mirrored weight-room with a Bard-branded oak platform beneath you, Clara might be lifting right in front of you, pushing every muscle in her body to the brink of failure. It is sometimes hard for Clara to train at our gym because her demanding workouts require a lot of equipment,

already set up, to be thrown into the air. The weight room gets crowded quickly and it's hard to stake a claim at a particular station, especially when Clara gets distracted by people she knows. "It's hard because someone always ends up taking a station I need. And it's always for curls," she accuses mockingly. The facilities we have here pale in comparison to what she's used to at home.

A Los Angeles native, Clara goes home to CrossFit Malibu, which is an official CrossFit affiliate along the beautiful California coastline. Nonetheless, Clara pushes through at school and at home, with her ultimate goal set at winning the 2017 CrossFit Games. At the moment, Clara is 40 pounds away from most of the lifts except the deadlift. "I kill the deadlift." The tenacity of Clara's daily training has the potential to land her in the top class of worldwide CrossFit athletes by the time the current first-years at Bard graduate. She could be confronting seasoned professionals like her favorite, Camille LeBlanc, a woman who helped CrossFit build and gain its international prestige. Camille LeBlanc is currently on the top of the leaderboard in the global Open, and Clara will look to take her down in 2017. So, the next time you're in the gym, make sure you don't get in Clara's way. She probably lifts more than you anyway.

7:15 a.m.: Exhausted. Splayed on the floor. But the day's not over. Time for class.

EXECUTIVE PAY CAP \$

BY ARMAAN ALKAZI, CONNOR GADEK, LEE GENSLER, JACK MAGNUSSON,
WILL RICKER, LAURA THOMPSON, AND STEVEN TRAN-CREQUE

Remember the one percent? You need to make at least \$350,000 to be in it. Leon Botstein makes twice that.

Last month, we passed a student resolution demanding a \$100,000 salary cap for Bard employees. The money recovered from this would be redistributed to all un-salaried workers, who typically receive the least pay for making our school run.

Associate Vice President Taun Toay responded to the resolution in last month's edition of the Free Press. He says it's misguided and dangerous to demand executives and administrators work for \$100,000. We say it's misguided and dangerous for them to demand Bard workers live on a quarter of that.

Toay claims we "don't take into account the level of education of the people" who earn more than \$100,000. We don't agree that more education entitles you to higher pay. Compensation should not be correlated with education, compensation should be a question of what you contribute to the community. Does Dimitri Papadimitriou contribute 10 times as much as the workers who keep us safe or make the school function?

However, if the administration wants to play this game, why are there numerous un-salaried workers with master's degrees who are not being compensated for their education? Or why are there professors with Ph.D.s who don't make \$100,000 a year? Clearly, the Bard administration is not very good at "taking into account the level of education."

Administrators insist that we live in a world where advanced degrees secure riches. The rest of us will graduate into a very different world.

The administration assures us that that no one is making too much money at Bard, that if we were really worried about pay scales, we would look at comparable colleges like Marist. We are warned that students would "likely be losing many of their favorite professors" if this resolution is enforced.

These claims don't hold up. The Chronicle of Higher Education reported that Leon Botstein was "the highest-paid president in his peer group," including Connecticut College, Sarah Lawrence College, Mount Holyoke College, and Bates College. Meanwhile, the vast majority of our professors make less than \$100,000, and would be entirely unaffected.

But we also reject these metrics. We are not interested in comparing ourselves to other colleges. Nor should policy be dictated by the fear of losing individuals who must be bribed to be here. It should be dictated by a commitment to fairness and the needs of all our community members. Bard should not strive to be slightly better than the worst-case scenario. We hold ourselves to a higher standard.

The main question the resolution poses is about the legitimacy — or rather the illegitimacy — of pay disparity. Work is work. People are people. Living in the Hudson Valley is expensive. There is no reason why some

workers at Bard — workers who make Bard function on a day-to-day basis — should be paid 10 or 20 times less than some college executives.

This is our demand:

All compensation paid to Bard employees in excess of \$100,000 be redistributed to all un-salaried employees on Bard campus — including, but not limited to: Environmental Specialists, Buildings and Grounds workers, security guards, and shuttle drivers.

While some on campus are generously compensated, the people who work every day to make our home beautiful, ensure our safety, and keep Bard running are routinely denied a fair wage.

In 2007, Leon Botstein made \$311,355. Four years later, after the financial crisis, his salary more than doubled to \$635,453. Vice President Dimitri Papadimitriou made \$281,582 in 2007 and \$483,991 in 2011. But other workers are making \$13 an hour and haven't even been able to get raises that keep up with inflation. The top 10 highest earning Bard employees collectively make over \$3 million. If they were each paid \$100,000 instead, we'd have over \$2 million to redistribute.

This money has been extracted — at great cost — from us. We have a responsibility to demand that it be distributed justly and equitably.

There are about 200 un-salaried employees at Bard. Distributing the \$2 million amongst them would mean a raise of \$10,158 to each worker.

The administration has repeatedly told students they simply don't have the money to pay workers more. Well, we found the money — over \$2 million, and the ability to substantially raise every worker's pay.

Colleges and universities today are managed by a swelling class of exorbitantly paid executives and administrators. Their salaries afford them the ability to demand that everyone but them make sacrifices.

These workers are our colleagues and our community members, and they are who we will be when we graduate. These workers are us. We aren't all going to grow up to be millionaires. We can't delude ourselves that we will not be exploited one day. We must fight for fair wages here and now.

Does the Bard administration exist in a reality separate from workers? They raised their own salaries while telling workers that hourly wages couldn't even keep up with inflation. And if the highest paid employees want to suggest that \$13 an hour is a living wage, we suggest they try living on it.

The administration doesn't think they need to listen to us. We aren't the board of trustees — but we are the people who study, live, write, and work at Bard. Bard doesn't exist without us: we are Bard. This is our decision.

IMMIGRATION REFORM'S NECESSITY

BY J.P. LAWRENCE

To see why young immigrants are looking to President Obama, meet Marco Lorenz.

Lorenz is a sophomore at Bard College, and whatever the chatter and clatter on Capitol Hill is, it has missed Lorenz, whose story shows how a slapdash federal immigration policy can create second- and even third-class citizens. And how President Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) memo may serve as their road map.

Lorenz has been in America since he was seven. He and his parents escaped Alberto Fujimori's corruption-riddled Peru. It is difficult to immigrate legally to America from Peru, due to the quotas of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, so Lorenz and his family lied and overstayed their visitors' visa. Lacking many benefits, such as the ability to work legally and to drive a car, Lorenz's family worked their way up from a twin bed in Queens to running a large church in Rahway, N.J.

Under President Obama's immigration strategy, Lorenz emerged as one of the 1.76 million people eligible for DACA, a small-scale timeout on deportations, allowing certain people to apply for work permits and removing the threat of deportation for two years. Lorenz's sister, on the other hand, was born in America and is a citizen. Meanwhile, his parents live as undocumented immigrants, constantly fearing that one slip-up or another will bring deportation agents to their door. Lorenz will not be deported, but he is not a citizen and has no pathway to become one.

One might think this dead-end, constructed by a Democratic president (who has deported a record 1.9 million foreigners), would be an opportunity for the Republicans. But the GOP seems less helpful to Lorenz than even the Obama administration. So for now, presidential executive orders may be the best way out of limbo for America's 11.7 million undocumented immigrants.

Applying for DACA enabled Lorenz to obtain legal documents such as a social security card and driver's license, allowing him to make money working at the campus gym and to save money by commuting to campus.

Is it a permanent solution? No. But without it, Lorenz, who is unable to receive federal financial aid, said he doesn't know if he'd still be able to afford college. If President Obama can get Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform this year, he'll be in better shape. If not, the president said he is looking at "all options." This could include expanding DACA and unilaterally halting deportations until a bill is passed.

Currently, various states differ wildly in their treatment of the undocumented, from the 31 cities designated as sanctuary cities to the 16-foot fence on the Californian border. Expanding the DACA has been rejected before, but in the current gridlock, this order would simplify an overly complex immigration system, turning the many layers of citizens into two: current and pending. House Speaker John Boehner tried to booby-trap this possibility, implying that the GOP will pass a bill when they trust Obama to carry it out.

Compromise this year is unlikely, but next year bodes well, says Kat Fisher, lead organizer of the liberal activist group Citizen Action of New York. Fisher met with U.S. Rep. Christopher Gibson (R-NY) Feb. 1 to talk about immigration reform. According to notes from the meeting, Gibson did not seem hopeful that anything would come to vote this year, and he emphasized that a special path to citizenship was not on the table. Next year, however, brings hope that the GOP will move from their extreme position toward the center.

"We are working to get cooperation from allies to pull together an educational forum and survey Hudson Valley folks who are impacted directly about the state coalition's position and what the options for compromise are," Fisher said.

Until compromise happens, however, young immigrants like Lorenz now look to the President to act on his words and bring the change they seek. "I think I'm American, even though I was born in Peru and know Spanish, because I've lived here so long," Lorenz says, "Whatever a piece of paper says."

"...the GOP seems less helpful to Lorenz than even the Obama administration. So for now, presidential executive orders may be the best way out of limbo for America's 11.7 million undocumented immigrants."

BOYCOTT DIVESTMENT & STRATEGIES

BY ADLEE EFRAIM

In his defense of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) currently being directed towards Israel, Robert Isaf mischaracterizes Israel as a "heavily militaristic society." I am writing to point out how such clumsiness and naivete contributes to the conflict. I am not addressing anything larger.

It is dishonest to attribute Israel's military capabilities to its conflict with Palestine. The minuscule country has had to defend itself against surprise attack from a coalition of seven neighbors in the Middle East in the past. More recently, the former president of Iran regularly mused about wiping the country off the map.

Nevertheless, Israel spent in 2012 just 6.2 percent of its GDP on defense, while Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates spent 8.9 percent, 8.4 percent, and 6.9 percent respectively. The United States spent 4.4 percent.

Less than 50 percent of men and women serve the three and two years respectively in the military. This is not to apologize for conscription, but to keep in mind that Israel has the second highest rate of postsecondary education in the world, at 45 percent.

It would seem as fair then to describe Israel as a "heavily academic society." Isaf's description implies Israel has an infrastructure of militarist coercion. If Israelis are perpetuating the draft, or for that matter getting a bachelor's degree, they are doing it because as a society they have rationally decided that they should prepare for an attack.

Wholesale ostracization legitimizes, with good reason because of its curiously selective focus on one country, the paranoia and recklessness of the far right in Israel. Activists in Europe and America believe that the center will reconsider their position in the face of populist international alienation. But they fail to see that Israelis look at this historically as Jews: held to a double standard, and detested by many regardless of what they do.

I do not anticipate any glee in Israel if BDS' popularity continues to eclipse its possibility, given the sophistication of their economy. If Israel's relationship with the world becomes purely transactional, it will substantiate the resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe.

Activists in America and Europe have dehumanized both the Palestinians and Israel.

Neither are entirely victims or aggressors. As long this criticism comes in the form of a paternalistic intervention and projecting our guilt over our imperialism, there will always be one conflict of rhetoric and another of reality. BDS creates a war within a war which will one day give opportunities for Israel to manipulate, and the next day for the Palestinians.

Peace has to be made between two parties who take responsibility for their actions, not influence over world powers and those activists who are condescending and expedient enough to dissociate responsibility and action.

I reiterate, romanticizing the actions of the Palestinians, as BDS does, only encourages Israel to verge from reality as well. Shooting dull arrows at Israel's economy under the diabolically vague mission of "ending the occupation" has become nothing more than a prolonged spectacle that is legitimizing opponents of Zionism who are also enemies of secularism and free speech, using violent means that endanger what remains of European Jewry.

"FUCK YOU, SALLIE MAE"

BY ARMAAN ALKAZI, CHRIS BUONANNO,
IAN BUSER, CONNOR GADEK, LEE GENSLE,
JACK MAGNUSSON, WILL RICKER, LAURA THOMPSON,
AND STEVEN TRAN-CREQUE
— MEMBERS OF BARD STRIKE DEBT

Graduation is coming. In two months, we will be thrown into a world of uncertainty.

Perhaps we'll move back in with our parents, submitting applications and hoping that someone will call us back. We've been told to work harder — that with enough effort, we will be rewarded; that we have in some way chosen to delay our careers; that our decision is indicative of an unwillingness to grow up.

It's not because we didn't work hard enough. The unemployment rate for recent college graduates is 7.9 percent, and fully half of recent graduates are working jobs that don't require a college degree.

With hard work and a lot of luck, you might be able to get a job in your field. But the truth is most of us can't do everything right. We can't all have enough money or come from the right backgrounds to do unpaid internships or wait six months for a job while applying for deferrals on our loans. If you don't get a job, it's not about you. And if you get a job, it's *still* not about you, because if you get lucky, you'll still have friends who didn't.

Even if we didn't do everything right, why should we embrace a society that denies us the right to live if we make mistakes? Our futures will be defined by precarity. If you get a job, you'll be expected to work harder and for less. If you get an internship, you'll be told you're lucky it's paid, even though it's not enough to live on. If your internship isn't paid, you'll be told you're lucky to have that internship at all.

The American dream is dead, but it still haunts us. College once promised a way to enter the middle class — now it's the bare minimum to stay there. Colleges just reproduce inequality. If you're rich, you can graduate debt-free with a resume packed with summer internships. The rest of us are left to drown with enormous debts, serving food and dreaming of grad school, being told to accept less and less while being blamed for our situation.

It shouldn't be like this. Education should be free. We shouldn't have to mortgage our futures for anything, and we don't want an education that just prepares us for future exploitation. We want education that enables us to imagine a better world than this — one that gives us the weapons to fight for it. Education should be a site of imagination and aspiration, not merely a place where students are prepared to be consumed in the workplace. A free society requires free education — and we don't just mean at Bard.

We've been told that debt is the essence of responsibility by the most irresponsible generation in living history. Since 2008, we've seen years of bailouts, subsidies, and exorbitant executive salaries—and we've learned: debts are always negotiable—just not for us.

We aim to change that. Every Strike Debt project is part of a broader movement. Last year, in New York, we launched the Rolling Jubilee to buy up people's debts the same way debt collectors do — but instead of collecting on the debt, we abolished it. So far, we've abolished over 14 million dollars of medical debt. Next month, we're also publishing the next edition of the Debt Resisters' Operations Manual. Ultimately, it's not just us, and it's not just student debt. Six years into the financial crisis, millions of people still owe more for their homes than their homes are worth, and medical expenses are still the leading cause of bankruptcy.

But for us, graduation is still coming, whether in two months or two years. When our student loans come due, they're backed up by extraordinary legal powers for lenders. But lenders need borrowers — and they need us atomized and alone. One of our goals is to build a debtors' union that could renegotiate the terms of our futures. Imagine if, when we defer and default, we didn't do it alone — if ten thousand of us could collectively tell Sallie Mae, "Fuck off, we're on strike!"

We're building an alumni network of our own, to provide support, mutual aid and information — like the Debt Resisters' Operations Manual — with which we'll be able to educate each other about strategies for surviving and resisting the debt system. It will be a part of the Strike Debt network, connecting us with the activist community in New York and joining a nationwide resistance movement.

Ultimately, debts are just social arrangements. They're promises — promises we made as teenagers — and now our futures are bound to them. It is only with collective action that we will reclaim our freedom. Alone, we can do nothing. Everyone who's ever felt the scope of their life narrow because of debt and fear — join us. We're striking debt.

KLINE IS BETTER THAN YOU WANT TO BELIEVE

BY GERGO FEKETE

While writing this, I can't help but wonder whether my fellow Bardians will ever talk to me again after they read this. Why, you wonder? Well, let me start by introducing myself as one of those incredibly (and surprisingly) few people at Bard who actually likes the food served at Kline and is entirely satisfied with it.

A point worth making is that I'm pretty new to the thrills of American cuisine. As an exchange student from Hungary, I made my debut in the USA through Bard's Globalization and International Affairs Program (BGIA) in the fall and coming to Annandale for the spring.

One thing you should know about BGIA is that you're supposed to be responsible for your own food during the semester. No DTR, no Kline, just the dorm's mediocre kitchen. I still remember that kitchen as the venue of many heated debates among my fellow Bardians concerning whether or not I would like the food at Kline once I got to Bard.

"The 19 meal plan? Change it immediately," one of them advised. "You're gonna hate it," the others agreed. Every time these discussions came to an end, I looked at my friend and asked: "Do you think it can be that bad?"

Finally, I arrived for orientation. I walked into Kline and found myself lost in the rich variety offered for breakfast. Things tasted delicious, but you can't really mess up scrambled eggs, cereals, bagels or fruits, so I thought to myself, "let's wait for lunch and dinner." I was surprised to find that lunch and dinner were just as delicious. "Okay, this must be the charm of novelty, or my seriously dysfunctional tastebuds," I thought.

Seven weeks have passed by since I first arrived at Bard and nothing seems to have changed.

Recently, I came to realize the reason behind the issue might be the lack of ground for comparison. I wish I could attach pictures of my elementary

school canteen food. Monday's soup was often poured together with Tuesday's, and then with Wednesday's. On the rare occasion that we would get dessert, sometimes bread was substituted in for sponge cake.

Equally as underwhelming were the average eateries at my university. The most expensive option on campus offered only two different set menus — variety, huh? It was even worse for vegetarians who had to go to the expensive speciality foods store.

Luckily, I'm not the only one having such experiences around here. The other day I was asking other transfer and exchange students what they think about Kline. Alex Clarke, a sophomore who transferred from the University of Pittsburgh, told me she also loves the food because she can eat organic and there's actual variety.

Of course back home I didn't pay thousands of dollars to eat throughout my academic year. Yet I somehow sense that most students at Bard don't appreciate what they're offered. I would be lying if I said I haven't encountered the under- or over-cooked fish or haven't recognized a previous day's dish disguised as a new one. What I'm trying to get across is that Kline has its good days and its bad days, and as the saying goes, "people make mistakes."

At the same time, however, I see students eating the (first-class) pizza day and night, and I overhear them being fussy and complaining about dishes they've never tasted. I see off-campus students pointing fingers at Kline but still finding it a good enough place to sneak in and eat for free. I see an ice cream counter, at least ten different types of

tea, six different types of cereal, and hamburgers and hot dogs. I see fruits grown on Bard's own farm. I see workers kindly warning you the food is hot, so you should be careful. I also see myself spilling a glass of water on the floor and another worker rushing up to me and wiping it up.

Why do Bardians think of Kline in such a negative way? Honestly, I have no straight answer. Maybe because they have never seen worse. In this case, they should. Maybe because they have always dined at excellent places or because they expect outstanding quality for their money. Or maybe complaining about Kline has now become a tradition that should be kept alive.

Kline is not perfect. But it's certainly not as bad as people present it. Think about it: it's an all-you-can-eat dining facility with decent food and nice people who understand and care about your dietary needs. Even the location is perfect. If you develop some more appreciation, you'll see that Bard is not just a place to think, but a great place to eat, as well.



artwork by Isabelle Marshall

RE: BARD TWEETS

@weirddeals

ides of march 44 BC: julius caesar dies; ides of march 2015, julius peppers signed by the green bay packers.....coincidence?? you decide

@jpcorner

Help I'm in Golden Wok and someone just asked the owner whether she was from Japan or China

@henryblosfelds

i think i am going to become an actual white girl if i keep watching these snapchat stories

@emilyparker09

Went to the Taco Bell drive thru alone. Can't decide if I've reached a new low or a new high.

@CypressCymbals

whispers: "she's a capitalist."

@yunggavery

does the black swan take bitcoin someone halp

@DybbukDan

Is it a result of buried misogynistic prejudice in me that I'm offended by the woman loudly flirting with her divorce lawyers in this cafe?

@Seaweed_Sally

Only go to the gym to watch chappelle show

@shilliminati

never under any circumstances should you transfer a carbonated beverage from two separate mouths by the direct contact of lips

@BardBaseball

Team dinner at Olive Garden.
#BardBaseball

