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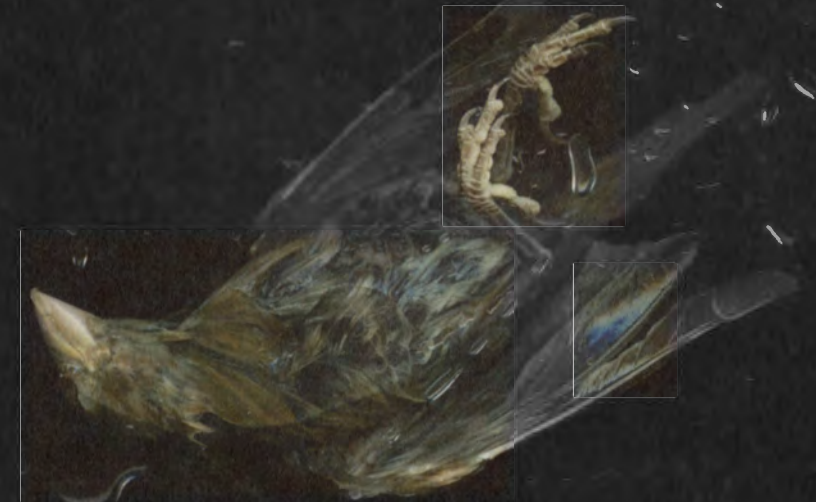
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THE WASTE ISSUE

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this photo by graylen gatewood
front cover by flannery harper
back cover by hugh hopkins

correction:

in last month's issue the article entitled "no boys allowed" misspelled catalina bulgach's name as 'catalina bulgrach.'

"What a waste of money," I think to myself after pretty much any purchase. "You're wasting your education!!" I say to myself when I'm a month behind on my Moodle posts. "You're wasting away!" my grandmother tells me each time I see her. "Let's get." Every time you use the word, you're talking about a loss. You had money, and you wasted it. You had X amount of meat on your bones and now you've lost some. You were of clear mind and consciousness, and now you're wasted. Waste isn't the same thing as garbage or trash or litter. When you say waste, you're acknowledging that something has value and you lost your chance to take advantage of that. You wasted an opportunity or your energy. You had something, and you lost it. But the thing had value to begin with. This month's issue focuses on those things that we waste. What's the effect of losing or discarding something that has value? How are our lives affected by the human tendency to not make full use of our resources? What happens when we forget to take care of the buildings on our campus, or think about the food we throw out and where it goes? Why do we get rid of clothing that's still perfectly functional? What does a Donald Trump rally look like when you only have ten minutes to photograph it before you get kicked out? What happens when activism loses its ideals to corporatism? What about the disenfranchised groups of people that our society's power structure keeps down? Waste isn't the same thing as garbage. Waste is something that shouldn't happen. It's discarded value. This month most of our submissions try to address this theme. Each contributor has their own perspective to offer on something we waste at Bard or otherwise. This month we used our waste as best we could. As always, I hope you enjoy the issue and I hope you consider submitting to our next one. I swear we won't waste your time.

-grady nixon



photo by hugh hopkins

are your ideas safe?

katie mcdonough

At Bard College, like most other liberal arts colleges, we have the distinct luxury of social awareness. We are constantly discussing the idea of right and wrong, sharing our outrage of social injustices, and rising to the intellectual challenges that we are faced with every day. What I have come to discover, in my experience at Bard thus far, is that sometimes this desire to stand up in the face of offense can become stifling and oppressive. For those of you who do not have a Facebook, or who do not care to engage in these kinds of controversies through the internet, I will shed some light on the recent events that have caused an explosive argument within Bard's community.

"Wanted" posters were posted around campus, and chalk messages were written on a handful of high-traffic paths. The messages were requesting information about a "Girl with bunny ears" to be sent to a P.O. Box on campus, and proposed a reward for any information put forward.

When I saw these posters, I, like many avid readers of the blog "Like Some Bardian" (LSB) recognized them as copies of a post made on the site sometime last year. I didn't pay them much mind—I usually assume any unexplained phenomena on campus are art pieces of some sort. So when I went on the "Overheard at Bard" page on Facebook the next day, it was to my surprise to find that the posters had sparked absolute outrage among the community. Many people demanded that the post be showed to the administration, calling it "harassment." Many others expressed concern for the girl this post was written about.

To be fair, the messages, which are exact transcriptions of the original post, are rather forward. The author names this girl as their "#1 fetish," and the form of a "wanted" poster makes the message seem almost aggressive. I can confirm that it is an art project, having discovered the student behind the posters and their intentions behind their project as a whole. What was most shocking to me, reading the replies, was that only three Facebook users addressed the issue that the student intended: how the context of this post became of utmost importance as soon as the posters were hung up, and why the two forms of this post seem so different. Only one person posed the question of "whether or not this would still be 'creepy' if it were posted on something like Like Some Bardian". Their question was answered by two other users, who seemed to believe that LSB—like other missed connection type sites—are somehow different from the posters requesting information about the girl it was written about, and that those kinds of sites are "disturbing" in general. Everyone else who shared their thoughts, condemned the messages as "creepy, harassment, inappropriate, [implying] sexual violence, illegal," and, "aggressive," to name only a handful of the opinions held on the nature of the Posters.

My main concern is not with why or how the message changes meaning when presented on a blog like LSB or posted around campus—I'll leave that to the student conducting the project. My

concern is with the students who were incensed by the posters and still held their opinions despite the idea that it might be an art project. They want to find the person responsible and punish them for taking material posted on a public blog—somehow violating a rather arrogant assumption that LSB is private or special in any way—instead of engaging in a discussion of why the posters sparked these feelings. This is only one example of how our community reacts to controversy. All of a sudden, opportunities for dialogues about public vs. private, for example, instead become opportunities for students to express why it is offensive and how offended they are. I would like to point out that the artist has not received one single thing in their P.O. Box since the posters were hung, despite the suggestions by several students that they be flooded with notes telling them how creepy they are. (Is this not a form of harassment? Are we really resorting to fighting fire with fire?).

For some reason, our community loves any chance to engage in controversy this way, which is not actually engaging with it at all. It always seems to be, in my opinion, too concerned with the topic being controversial, and not with the true issues at hand. This was a golden chance for our community to discuss the concept of an online space, like LSB, when we have 24/7 access to the internet. How does this compare to a physical space? - One where we can remove the posters and throw them away, while the original post still exists and will always exist.

No one wants to put forward any thoughts about why it was posted and what kind of discussion it could start, but instead, they want to demonstrate how angry they are that it was posted at all.

I will also add, regarding the highly controversial opinion piece posted in the February issue of the Free Press, the editor of the paper was the subject of hate and anger for even publishing it because of its content, instead of there being a discussion of the issues it brought up. Since when does our community believe in censorship?

Ideas are not safe at Bard. We are stuck in a virtual war against anything remotely offensive. Art, the most perfect vehicle for exploring controversy, is now under attack and we have to tread more carefully than ever on a campus that we deem "progressive." I am disappointed. Stirring the pot is a good thing. We are not weak; we are not so sensitive that we can't handle an inflammatory art project without complaining that anyone dare to be politically incorrect. Bard, as an establishment, is founded on the idea of thinking. What becomes of us when we are faced with difficult topics—the ones that should inspire thought and discussion—just get added to the list of times our feelings got hurt? I implore our community to respond with constructive criticism instead of ambivalent displeasure. Respond to me, respond to each other. Write an article and submit it to the Free Press. I'll be waiting for a real discussion to start.



photo by franklin savulich



photo by hugh hopkins

please keep reading

lia russell

In last month's issue of the Free Press, Pansy Schulman published "Keep Reading," which she in part described as a love-letter to Bard. I very much identified with the piece and wanted to respond through the lens of my experience at Bard.

I have had what some might call an unusual college experience. I lost two family members during my L&T, one of whom I was very close to and had proudly reached triple digits. A week into my second semester at Bard, I was walking from a party in Tivoli to the shuttle stop when a drunk driver plowed into the group I was walking with and sped off. I was less than five feet away from Lina Martin Brown and Sarah McCausland, my best friends at Bard, when they died on impact from being hit at 75 mph. Another friend's leg was shattered as a result of the car hitting her. The force of the car was so great that the seventeen of us who were there were knocked in two opposite directions 115 feet apart.

Elizabeth Stimson, whom I did not know but with whom I had many mutual friends, died a month after from an undiagnosed heart condition. A Bard professor died from a collision on 9G, and a Hudson local died after being T-boned by an oncoming truck exactly across the street from where my friends and I were hit. I spent most of my freshman and sophomore years walking around in a catatonic daze when I wasn't lashing out. A third friend from home who I was close to in high school lost control of her car and flew off of a cliff at the end of my second year.

Not a day goes by where I don't think of Lina and Sarah and Lizzie, and I am loath to let anyone at Bard forget them. However, the response I have received from the Bardian community even two-and-a-half years later is overwhelming. Friends and strangers alike still reach out and ask how I am on a daily basis and express support and their sympathies. The administration, while it has its own unrelated problems, has been amazingly supportive. One of the deans accompanied my friends and me to the sentencing hearing for the woman who killed my friends, and spoke at the length about the horrible effects it had on the community.

We have a reputation for being a school that embraces apathy, self-loathing, angst and romanticizes depression and mental illness in general. I believe that this is mostly unwarranted and frankly insulting.

Anyone can look around and see the opposite – from the dedication we devote to supporting our students of color, to urging the college to divest in a country that terrorizes our fellow students, and even the "little things," like a private Facebook group that exists as a space to support female-identifying students at Bard. Each of these things is problematic in its own way, but the fact that they even exist speaks volumes about a campus that is caring, considerate, and willing to accept criticism and learn. Bard's ethos of promoting creativity and collaboration shines through when you consider the various publications and organizations and venues we boast: Eugene Paper, the Free Press that you hold in your hands, the Root Cellar, SMOG, the bands we foster and support like PWR BTM and Jawbreaker Reunion, the QSA, the TLC, QPOC, Brothers at Bard, Colored Womyn United, BSO, MSO, ISO, New Orleans Exchange, Joanie4Jackie, and BRAD Comedy Club to name a few.

An environment like Bard's has not only allowed me to begin the healing process that trauma survivors face – the initial stages of shock, denial, anger, bargaining and acceptance – but also lifted me up in ways I can't even describe. I can't speak to other survivors' experiences but I can say that wherever I am, I'll always be proud to a Bard student in a school that allows and fosters a community of caring, solidarity, and love for others.

In short: I love you Bard.

new york state power dialog held at university of albany

xaver kandler

During COP 21 last December, 195 nations signed a climate pledge in Paris to keep global warming under two degrees celsius and avoid catastrophic climate change.

The agreement depended on the participation of the United States and its backbone, the Clean Power Plan. The Clean Power Plan lays out a path for the United States to cut carbon emissions from power plants—the single largest emitter of carbon—32% by 2030, relative to 2005 levels. What makes the Clean Power Plan interesting is that the EPA issued a mandate to each state with different reduction percentages, but allowed the states to decide themselves on how to reach it. Immediately following the ruling, interests groups such as utilities and gas companies began to meet with regulators to influence them to implement the Clean Power Plan in a way advantageous to them. Students, the stakeholder that will be affected the most, is noticeably absent.

On April 5th, forty students took the one hour journey from Bard to the University of Albany to join over two hundred students and twelve universities for the New York State Power Dialog. The Power Dialog's goal was to give students a voice in the implementation of the Clean Power Plan. To do so, organizers brought in the two most important people regarding energy in New York State: Richard Kauffman, the Chair of Energy and Finance and Jared Snyder, the Deputy Commissioner of Office of Air Resources, Climate Change and Energy in DEC, who is in charge of the implementation of the Clean Power Plan. Before the dialog itself, students participated in a poster session, two hours of student led workshops featuring climate justice, natural gas pipeline and eminent domain, and the specifics of New York's Clean Power Plan. Once the workshops ended, students trickled into the University at Albany's ballroom.

The event kicked off with a talk by Eban Goodstein of the Bard Center for Environmental Policy on the danger and the hope surrounding climate change. He remarked on the effects of climate change on the Hudson Valley and our apple farmers who have lost 80-90% of this year's crop to the dramatic fluctuations in temperature.

Following Goodstein, Kauffman and Snyder presented about New York State's policy choices regarding the shift to renewable energy and mitigation of the effects of climate change.

The highlight of the night was the dialog between the students and regulators. Soyna, a student from Union College, put it best: "Environmentalism seems like such an uphill battle sometimes but seeing you all here really provides momentum to keep going keep fighting this battle." Excellent questions were raised: students asked about the Indian Head Nuclear Power Plant, environmental justice and natural gas processing and transportation, and how New York State is working with other states to reach its goal of 50% renewable energy by 2030. A Skidmore College student from the Maldives, a country which is on average 5 feet above sea level, asked about how the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative indirectly affects countries that are in threat of disappearing completely. Beyond the advocacy of representing the needs of students and marginalized communities when considering implementation options, the Power Dialog was simply inspiring. I also asked a question and when I looked down at three hundred students and knew that they were here for the same reason that I was and that my question and voice was going to be heard, I recognized the power of organizing. The Power Dialog is a testament that in this increasingly smaller world, undergraduates can make a difference in organizing something bigger than the Bard bubble.

The New York Power Dialog and nineteen more like it across the country were organized by a group of two undergraduates, Maggie Berk and I, two graduate students, Meredith Lavalley and Becky Chillrud, one local organizer, Ajax Greene, and the aforementioned Goodstein.

The Power Dialog is only a part in the beginning of a long fight. The push to keep our promise and responsibility to the most affected countries and futures generations depends on the organization, structure, and activism of environmental and social movements. What Bard students do will have an impact on what happens post-COP21.

Currently, Bard has about a 75 percent occupancy rate—extremely low for a residential campus. According to Coleen Murphy Alexander, Vice President for Administration, "most of our peer institutions have over 90 percent...we're on par with Marist, which is not a residential campus." This breaks down to around 2000 total students and around 1500 beds on campus. The goal is to bring between 50 and 100 more students to campus—a process called "recapturing" students. Alexander recognizes, though, that increasing available housing alone won't be enough to appeal to students when deciding to live on- or off-campus. One of the larger complaints from students living on campus surrounds the rigidity of the meal plan, in which on-campus students are required to participate. Currently, all of the meal plan options cost the same, a contributing factor in choosing off-campus living for students with dietary restrictions, or who simply want to cook for themselves. The administration is exploring options for creating a much more flexible option for upperclassmen. The hope is that this, combined with efforts to create housing that more closely resembles the style of off-campus houses, will result in more students making the choice to remain on Bard's campus.

The reasons for wanting more students to reside on campus are numbered, but Alexander cites safety as a serious concern—mostly

(montgomery cont'd)

related to 9G and the very real potential dangers associated with students commuting to campus, especially by shuttle. Aside from this, Alexander hopes to improve upon "the sense of community that a lot of students feel and vocalize is lacking," she said.

Before Montgomery Place was purchased by Bard, it only operated seasonally, and did not receive much in the way of funding or resources. "By the time Bard took them over, there were only 3 full-time employees, since 2009, I think," Alexander said. Although certain things of historic value were kept, very little money was put into the buildings, and by and large they are in need of complete renovation before they can be put into use. "There's no infrastructure, for wi-fi, for data—that all has to be put in...to merge these two landscapes into one campus over the next few years, it needs to have all of the... infrastructure that places need to operate, especially campuses with students and student spaces," Alexander explained. Further, safe walkways and bike paths will need to be implemented, along with proper lighting. The shuttles will also alter their routes in order to make Montgomery Place more accessible to students, especially because at least one or two classes will likely be held there as early as the fall. Alexander explained that Bard's purchase of Montgomery Place was "a very specific Board of Trustees decision...based on the fact that Historic Hudson Valley had come to Bard and said, 'we want you to have this property.'"

bernie sanders comes to poughkeepsie: waiting in line for the political revolution

sam copeland

"That's a fat line," my friend Zall said as we summited the hill overlooking Marist College. It was a cool, cloudless day on Tuesday, April 12, and we had come to Marist to participate in a Bernie Sanders rally. The "fat line" beneath us consisted of over five thousand people, all hoping to see a socialist, septuagenarian Jewish man who has somehow become a major candidate for president. In that sense Bernie Sanders really is "revolutionary", as he likes to say, but whatever revolutionary fervor our fellow rally-goers might have been feeling was well-contained. They held their places in line with gentle vigilance, as if at a Eucharist rite, only with more Instagramming.

The crowd displayed a surprising age range. There were college-age kids like us up to near-ancient hippies, and in between a lot of those middle-aged couples who give off the impression the husband likes jazz way more than the wife does. Most of the people were white, though not without exception. After some asking around we were directed through the human labyrinth to the end of the line behind a charming couple, whose errant toddler was wreaking havoc on the local squirrel population.

Six of us had traveled to Marist together. I have heard that there were a few other Bard students there although I didn't see any. I was surprised by the lack of turnout given the endless stream of Bernie links my Facebook feed emits, though I understand that people are busy. The atmosphere at the back of the line was friendly. Everyone reacted civilly to the roving Hillary supporter, although it helped that she was holding a "Free Hugs" sign. I only noticed two people getting riled up. One of them was an unseen denizen of the nearby dormitory, who kept shouting "Fuck Bernie! Trump 2016!" with Cobainian hoarseness, while the other was his unfortunate neighbor who was requesting that he shut the fuck up.

We were in the "overflow" line, meaning we hadn't been organized enough to get the free tickets before they ran out, and so we were

Other than the initial costs of purchase, additional funds are needed to transform Montgomery Place to 'Montgomery Place Campus.' Amy Husten, the recently-appointed Managing Director of Montgomery Place, is heading fundraising, which will go toward the necessary renovations to get the buildings up and running, and the continual costs associated with maintenance and operation. "It was never set up to be year-round— it was never set up to be a college campus," Alexander said.

When the news that Bard had purchased Montgomery Place was announced, some students voiced concerns of what would happen to the individuals who worked there. Bard has honored those contracts, and continues to lease parts of the property: for example, the land will still be used for farming, but now Bard handles the lease rather than Historic Hudson Valley.

As to what can be expected for the future of Montgomery Place, Alexander says that, "For all intents and purposes, it's pretty much going to operate the way you're used to. Except you'll see things—not develop in the sense that you'll see buildings pop up or anything, just they will be more people there, which is great. There will be more life in the place."

just sort of hoping that there were empty seats. An enthusiastic woman coated in Bernie paraphernalia told us that there were 500 seats for overflow and, by rough estimation, we were at about the 430 point. We had a shot. Once they started letting people in our anxiety mounted and the "rough" part of the estimation became increasingly distressing. We came cartoonishly close to the front of the line before they shut the doors. Before our despair had time to settle the event staff herded us into a tight semicircle perpendicular to a brick wall and told us that Bernie would "probably come speak" to us. After that recent encounter with uncertainty the "probably" wasn't unencouraging, but I had already skipped Principles of Economics at that point, so I figured I had nothing left to lose.

Civility began to fray in the cold, crowded semicircle as tens of minutes passed without the arrival of our cynosure. The two hundred or so frustrated overflow-ees bristled with the security until, finally, before the first blow was unleashed, the man himself emerged from behind the corner of the brick wall, posse in toe. The crowd's agitation transformed into an eruption of all-out Berniemania. There he stood, nearly engulfed by his enormous black coat, with his spindly white hair thrashing wildly in the breeze.

After soaking it all in for a few moments he held up his hand to quiet us, and proceeded to go through the talking points you're all well-acquainted with if you've been following his campaign at all. He was particularly inspiring with women's issues, demanding that women get the "whole damn dollar" for their work. The speech was only ten minutes long, but satisfying nonetheless, because we were only about two Kline tables away from him. Then he left, leaving us all in a state of ecstatic bewilderment. We hugged and exchanged photographs; it was all very touching. As the semicircle dispersed I would guess that many of us, like me, felt lucky to have been in the overflow.

a fleeting eden

josh gachette

African animals have become so naturalized to American children that a parent "might well point out a lion in a zoo, or put a child to bed in pajamas covered in cartoon hippos, without consciously associating either with Africa, or with the West's historic relation to Africa... their existence taken for granted as the birthright of people everywhere," notes Elizabeth Garland. That birthright is a one-way street: African children aren't going to bed in prairie dog PJs with a stuffed bison. The project of protecting charismatic megafauna holds neo-colonial power relations in place. Structural Adjustment (World Bank and IMF loans) are largely responsible for the stunted economies on the continent that drive rural persons to depend upon resource extraction. How else are they to support themselves in the absence of social stability or a tenable agricultural infrastructure? More than one quarter of Gabonese are employed in the nation's logging industry; \$50 million dollars are generated annually from the trade in bushmeat.

A disclaimer: I am an Environmental and Urban Studies major, but I don't care much for pandas. I don't have any beef with vegetarians, but were the meat on campus seasoned better I'd probably eat more of it. I've never read "Silent Spring," but I have read Fanon. I hate imperialism more than I love "nature," whatever that means.

In the Supreme Court case, "Jacobellis v. Ohio," a theater owner was fined for screening a film the state deemed obscene. Potter Stewart, the Supreme Court justice who overturned Ohio's ruling, said in regard to the film in question, "I know it when I see it, and the motion picture involved in this case is not that."

I know it when I see it. Kinda how I feel about "nature." I don't really know what it is, but I know it when I see it. My sinuses do too. Lest we forget, the Tivoli Bays are second and third growth forests, which means they were clear cut at least once – hardly "natural growth." "Nature" is a fishy concept, and it problematizes the idea of "conservation," because it introduces three core questions:

What is being preserved?

By whom?

From whom?

These questions implicate conservatism and its attendant wildlife reserves into a colonial mode. Under the guise of environmental stewardship the Global North seizes what "natural" land the Global South has left and turns it into resorts for middle class jetsetters.

Land gets treated a certain way based on who lives there, even when power brokers act with the best of intentions. The market directs the least desirable accommodations to the most marginalized persons. And this procession delivers deleterious human outcomes. The Flint water crisis is an example of domestic environmental racism. Wildlife preserves (in Africa, for instance) are an example of international environmental racism – i.e. environmental imperialism.

The era following World War Two gave rise to a new global marketplace predicated on the view that humanity's destiny is increasingly global and "modern." Anthropologist Christine J. Walley disavowed this fetish:

Historical trends do indeed "move" in certain directions. However, this is a product of the social logics at work within particular social and economic relationships, networks, and institutions. It is not because there is a teleological totalizing force that is transforming the world as narratives of modernity and, their latest offspring, globalization, both suggest.

Her 1965 publication, "Rough Waters: Nature and Development in an East African Marine Park," was part of an emerging subset of cultural anthropology that focused on the ethnography of development projects. The first "development" projects came with the end of World War Two.

Upon ceasefire, international bureaucracies were tasked with reconstructing global society. Europe's empires waned; former protectorates moved from the colonial to postcolonial mode. African states in particular faced a rushed, tumultuous, adolescence. Local incompetence failed. National identity and like quandaries sometimes turned violent. Africans were denied the spoils of industrial modernity, despite their continent's material wealth. The West's capital wealth bogarded it. Development projects are touted as a means of mitigating this gulf. But do they?

No. Projects are premised on assumptions about First and Third World countries – add to that the social consequences of the institutional apparatus of a development project itself. These dynamics can be just as broad as they are unintended. Any project is inevitably pulled into a dense web of interpersonal and political relationships. Conservation projects in Africa get crammed into this mess. Such was anthropologist James Ferguson's takeaway on a development project in Lesotho. Elizabeth Garland, in her article published in the African Studies Review considers wildlife conservation in Africa "foremost a productive process, a means of appropriating the value of African nature, and of transforming it into capital with the capacity to circulate and generate further value at the global level." This paradigm is extractive. Classic Occident.

Conservationism is principally sound. But on the ground they buttress imperialist legacies. African people and African nature are framed as combatants who need to be mediated by a third party. One obtuse National Geographic article says Anglo American conservationists are "saving Africa's Eden." This trope equates the continent to the primordial. Africa becomes a foil to Western society, from which industrialized persons can extrapolate incivility.

Tourism industries often require major investments of time and capital before coming to fruition, like roads and hotels. Some conservationists contend that ecotourism can generate revenue to offset these losses, and that it has the potential to be a more sustainable form of resource use. But the gains seldom go to the newly jobless.

I would be a troll were I to claim that wildlife conservation is a bad idea. The anthropocene is upon us, and bureaucracies should be pulling "natural" spaces out of economic production, lest their ecosystem services wane. But the conservationist mode is predicated on that same exploitive paradigm. The interplay between environmental issues and social indicators is robust.

Ecosystems are all too often collateral damage between jockeys; I don't know how to define imperialism offhand, but I know it when I see it.



photo by emma ressel

**who protects us?
the inherent erasure of black women in confronting rape culture**

taylor butler

If there is anything that Emma Sulkowicz has taught us, it is that white privilege is still ever present in the fight against rape culture. So much so, that if you ask many women of color who Emma Sulkowicz is and why she matters, you might get a confused look or a laugh. The truth is: Emma Sulkowicz represents what women of color, specifically Black women, cannot do. That is, parade around Columbia University's campus with a mattress in hopes that they would bring awareness to their sexual assault. Oddly enough, the rate at which Black women experience sexual assault is 1.1% more than white women, yet Black women are largely silent about it. However, it is with good reason, as sophomore history major Jasmine Collins puts it: "White women aren't taught to be silent. [You] call [rape] out as soon as it happens." Historically speaking, Jasmine is correct. Black women, as slaves, had experienced sexual exploitation of their bodies long before the term "rape culture" had come along and, although rape of Black slaves is discussed in discourse, the rape of women of color in current times is not.

A school such as Bard, where the protection of student rights and interests is at the forefront of concerns for the campus community, a place that bombards students with resources such as Title IX and Peer Health, a place in which hook-up culture is always a question of discussion - this type of place seems to have transcended the quandary of social justice issues concerning rape and sexual abuse. With slogans such as "Consent is Sexy" and "Your Body is Yours," there seems to be an erasure of the nuances that exist in sexuality and body ownership. In those exact phrases that encourage ownership of one's body, what is erased is the fact that it was only less than 200 years ago that the bodies of Black women were owned not by themselves, but by white men and white women.

The question of whether Bard student groups took rape culture too seriously was met with hesitant, but sure, "yeses." Aasiyah Ali, a sophomore Human Rights and Sociology student, added: "Students take it seriously, but [the] majority of [those] students are white women." Jasmine, mentioned prior, taking a long pause, chimed in that she, in all honesty, didn't take activism against rape culture seriously. Perhaps it is because sexual assault was something hard to define for her as a Black woman. The threshold under which Black women and white women claim sexual assault is different. Perhaps it is because the language around what sexual assault is can be ambiguous and at times, sliced down to what has made one feel uncomfortable. The language is already exclusive due to the fact that at Bard, we have been taught that if someone's actions did not sit well with us, then we had the right to report it. Historically speaking, Black women as slaves were used for both labor and for labor reproduction, violated in the most egregious ways, and could not report it to anyone without being penalized.

Much like feminism, rape culture has built its legitimacy by claiming support for all women, but promoting exclusive language and experiences that seem to erase the conflicts Black women face when confronting rape. These two conflicts include commitment to self or commitment to community and stigmatization of gender or stigmatization of sexuality. Because the Black community is collectivized and not individuated, a Black woman's reported sexual assault is viewed as a betrayal of her community, and if she decides to be free with her sexuality, she cannot escape being deemed promiscuous and deserving of any potentially accrued assault.

Black women are between a rock and hard place. In the case of sexual assault from a white man, she is, in the beginning unlikely to receive justice, and in the case of a Black man, she would be put in a conflict of self-interest, in which she has a bond to her people, but also a bond to herself and her body. What the Black woman does is something not many white women are told to do: she puts her solidarity to the Black community above her solidarity with herself.

And although promotion of sexual freedom is ever present on Bard's campus, this language excludes Black women, because that is a privilege, once again, that Black women do not have - to be sexually free. Because Black masculinity has been continually forced upon Black women, sexual freedom is not within reach, as Black women constantly confront sexuality over gender. As Aasiyah tells, "[there's] a Black masculinity that doesn't allow Black women to be sexually free." For the Black women, to pursue

sexual freedom would either mean to be stigmatized as promiscuous, despite having been subjected to involuntary sexual assault - without alcohol and without consent - or to be gendered as masculine and without need for protection, thus making Black women more susceptible to rape because their bodies are not seen as something needed to keep sacred or protected.

To avoid the pressed stigmatization of being promiscuous, Black women have to shy away from sexual activity in the way that white women on Bard's campus are allowed to flirt with it. When asked what rape was to her, Aasiyah responded, "Rape is not about attraction to someone, but rather the power to dominate over someone." Considering this look at rape and sexual assault gives way to another reason Black women are resistant to reporting sexual assault as best explained by Jasmine: "Strength and independence is instilled in Black women. Rape takes away that power and replaces it with subordination. And we are not taught [by our mothers] to be subordinate." So, even in the event that a Black woman is sexually assaulted, the conflict is deeper than whether or not she wants to report it or say something, but whether or not she should because it puts her in a position of admitting a moment in which she was not in control and was not acting in accordance with what was taught to her: the performance of strength put of necessity.

In short, activism against rape culture was never created for women of color, especially Black women, and that is perhaps the reason that Black women don't engage in conversations on the matter: because they don't matter in it. Activism against rape culture is a white privilege, because white women have now come to be subjected to the same violation that Black women have been experiencing for years, and they have been entitled to do something about it. And even in this progression, Black women have been left behind.

When asked whether or not she would want to be a part of the conversation on rape culture, Aasiyah, after a few moments, admitted that she would, but she also admitted that only under the condition under that there would have to be an understanding of privilege in this type of activism. That privilege includes understanding that Black representation in the media around rape culture and activism against it is essential to Black women being comfortable and empowered to report sexual assault, yet it is not present. Aasiyah added, "There [was] only one time that I've seen a woman of color who was raped and immediately reported it... And that was in 'For Colored Girls.'" Aasiyah's lack of experience in seeing diverse representations of Black women confronting sexual assault might be reflective of many Black women. And though diverse representation is thought of as broad, it is significant to the way that Bard student groups and the overall campus community see rape.

First off, inclusion in the fight against rape culture starts with shifting the disseminated literature on rape and sexual assault from empowering all women to stand up against rape culture to realizing that there are still social and other institutional structures at play that hold certain marginalized groups of women from viewing and accepting their own experience as an occurrence of sexual violence and reporting it. It starts with addressing the internal and external consequences that Black women face when deciding to report their sexual assaults. Sexual empowerment is not the same for all women and is distinctively separate based on race. Though sexual empowerment might resemble freedom for certain groups of women, Black women have been conditioned to associate empowerment with performing strength and not allowing circumstances, even sexual assault, to get in the way of that need to stay strong. Thus, any sexual violence that a Black woman might fall victim to might be suppressed. Furthermore, addressing this privilege continues with knowing the political change that most [white] women are seeking in regard to rape culture is in conflict with the trust that Black women lack for the same political structure.

As the story goes with most problems, every solution starts with a conversation - a conversation that acknowledges that the bodies of Black women matter and that addresses the history of disenfranchisement and disempowerment that has influenced how we talk and don't talk about rape culture.



photo by eliza mozer

gender neutral bathrooms at bard

natalie west

The gradual appearance of gender neutral restrooms throughout campus has drawn attention from the student body, but not all of the responses to this initiative have been positive. Students have noticed that they are mostly found on the upper levels of buildings, such as Olin and the campus center, raising questions about why gender neutral restrooms are so hidden from view. Dean of Student Affairs Bethany Nohlgren has been at Bard for thirteen years, and has been leading the gender neutral movement since her arrival. Nohlgren is quick to assure us that this could not be farther from the truth, and that Bard is doing everything they can to provide restrooms that suit the needs of all students on campus.

"Myself, along with a former colleague, worked with the first iteration of the TransAction initiative now called TransLife to catalog where there were stalled restrooms versus single stalled restrooms and we worked to try to make some shifts," Nohlgren said.

In the last couple of years, with the help of Julie Duffstein in Student Activities, Nohlgren has succeeded in designating the second floor restrooms in the campus center as gender neutral. They have also been introduced on the second and third floors of Olin, and the staff at the performing arts center have worked to create a gender neutral restroom both on the Luma theater side and the Sosnoff side.

The process of deciding where the gender neutral restrooms should be incorporated has been relatively informal, with many of the changes taking place due to conversations with students, faculty and staff members of the college.

"So much of it has been word of mouth, having a conversation, looking at places where we have single stall restrooms and not putting them as male or female, just gender neutral. We did that [recently] in Manor, on the first floor," Nohlgren said.

The college hopes that by the middle of the summer, all buildings on campus will have at least one single-stalled gender neutral restroom, with the exception of residence halls and the gym. Although there will be moves toward more gender neutral restrooms in residence halls, in addition to the ones already implemented in McCausland and Brown, it is not one of the college's current financial priorities. This is justified by the fact that first year students are able to choose gender neutral housing, and in subsequent years have the ability to choose housing that fits their needs.

The debate over gender neutral restrooms in the gym is significantly more problematic than those surrounding other buildings on campus. The gym is the only building that would require construction in order to include a single stalled restroom, and as the building is already dealing with a lack of space, a new restroom would have to take the place of an office or conference room. Plans are currently being made, however, due to issues surrounding discrimination laws.

"From what I understand, if a place says, 'we know you identify as a man, but you're biologically female and you have to go into the female restroom,' that's where the discrimination comes in," Nohlgren said. "So we're not breaking any laws, because we're not saying if your sex is female, but your gender is male, you have to use the female restroom. [However], just because we're not breaking the law, doesn't mean we're making it the most supportive environment possible, which is why we're looking into it."

Nohlgren made sure to clearly falsify the possible presumption that the college is avoiding placing gender neutral restrooms on the first floors of buildings in order to make them less obvious to visitors and tours. "It's not a conspiracy. Truthfully, the feedback that [Duffstein] and I received from students who identified as trans a couple years ago is that there is still a stigma about walking into a gender neutral bathroom, so [they asked if] we could please be thoughtful about not having them in the most wide open public spaces," Nohlgren said. "There's a dramatic stigma in the United States about people going into a gender neutral restroom and people making assumptions about what that means. We're never going to get to a place where we're all gender neutral because they're stalled, and it's not appropriate for some people who do not want to be in a restroom with someone with a gender they do not identify with. To put people in positions where they feel uncomfortable is inappropriate, so our thought is to give all the options possible."

After bringing this concern to Nohlgren's attention, she ensured that all tours are notified of the presence of gender neutral restrooms by giving Cathy McDannis, head of the Bard tour guides, a call right in front of me. Nohlgren was informed that the tours already make a point of mentioning them if they are passed, and will from now on make sure they are acknowledged on every tour, even the ones that pass them by.

"Most state schools are doing it because of the pressure from the discrimination laws, and they feel like they have to, but we're doing it because we want to, and we feel it's the right thing to do," Nohlgren said.









paul dugliss makes a good impression

grady nixon

We're driving back to campus on River Road. We just picked up some trash from Montgomery Place and Paul points to a sedan about a hundred yards in front of us. "Two weeks ago I pulled outta here, heading back to Bard, I was just about where that silver car is, and all of a sudden I just stop. Two cars are going back the other way and I see this black thing go up in the air and there's freaking money everywhere," he says. "What?" I ask. Paul looks over at me. His oval glasses reflect in the sunlight and I can't see his eyes. "Money! Raining down! All around - all over here! I was like, 'Holy shit!' So I pull over, I'm running around, picking it all up and I stop and I see what I've got. I look over and there's a twenty dollar bill on the other side of the road. I run over and get that. I start back across and some guy blows through - didn't even slow down - thank God I saw him coming or he would've taken me out. And I get to the truck and I look back behind it, ten feet behind it, another twenty dollar bill ten feet behind it. I run over and pick that up. Two hundred and ninety seven dollars.

Just raining down! It was everywhere! It was amazing!" Paul's laughing a lot by now. "Holy shit! It's raining money!" he says, in the voice of his two-weeks-ago-self. "So you got three hundred bucks?" "Yup," he says, but then quickly corrects himself. "I turned it into security. Wasn't mine." I can't imagine doing the same thing. "So you risked getting hit by a car just for the citizenship of it?" "I guess." Paul Dugliss, real spelling not a typo, has been working at Bard for the past eight years. He was hired to perform maintenance on air filters. Somehow he ended up on the grounds crew instead. He did that for a while. "I finally asked if I could do what I was hired to do," he tells me. He did that for a while, too. After some staff-switching there was an open position at Bard's dump. Paul took it, and for the past seven years he's been collecting garbage, picking up litter, and sorting out what's next for all of the stuff we throw away. Paul spends most of his day driving around campus in a small

white truck picking up litter and trash bags Environmental Service workers leave outside of buildings. Even if you haven't seen him before, he's driven by you. He has a lot of time to notice the students. He notices the change that's occurred. He says "you have your occasional purple hair," but that Bard's "gotten a lot more mainstream." He also notices things like this: "[A student] was walking along at Robbins and working her phone like crazy, and all of a sudden she walked into this branch. Blah! I thought I was gonna freaking pass out!" There was more trash around when he started working in his current position. "It took me two years to get it to a controllable point," he tells me. "Litter, beer bottles, cans, papers. Just litter. Big time. Everywhere."

Paul's thin and he's got a short mop of curly salt and pepper hair. His mustache is mostly white, though. He's got his oval glasses with the clip-on sunglass lens option. He wears a thin gold chain and the B&G grey and blue. He's got a gold-colored metal cigarette case that he keeps his Spirits in. He's lived and worked in the Hudson Valley his entire life. When he was young, he lived in what he refers to as "the booming town of Staatsburg." Now he lives in "the booming city of Kingston." I ask him if he's ever considered leaving the Hudson Valley, and he says no. To him, this is the most beautiful place on earth. He's left the area, went out to Colorado a little while ago and visited his step-daughter, but it's clear that he knows that this is where he belongs. "Every job I've had, I can see the river," he tells me.

Before Bard, Paul worked at the Culinary Institute of America for eight years. Then he worked at the Linwood Spiritual Center in Rhinebeck. Run by the Society of St. Ursula, the spiritual center is essentially - according to Paul - "a retirement home for nuns." Some of them come for silent retreats and don't speak the entire time they're there. I ask him how involved he was with the nuns. "I watched them do their thing and I did mine." What was your thing? "Everything." He was the general handyman at Linwood for fifteen years. When they got a septic put in, Paul got a sewage treatment certification. That's how he knows that there's something off with our sewage plant when you can smell it from the baseball field.

When he came to Bard, he tells me, "it was almost like I belonged. I fit right in here from the start." Paul's a nice and friendly person, I can't imagine he'd have much trouble fitting in anywhere.

Over the summer I was working for B&G and over lunch one day I heard that a skunk had fallen into this crevice in front of Ludlow. For some architectural reason beyond my understanding there's about a three-foot wide and deep hole between the building and the shrubs. Right before lunch ended my boss took me up there to check out the skunk. It was gone. Paul came crawling out from the bushes with the skunk in a cardboard box. I'm really not sure how he didn't get sprayed.

Paul has a black lab named Webster and two cats he got at the Dairy Queen in Hyde Park about sixteen years ago. He needed to check with his wife first. I ask him how long they've been married and he smacks his forehead. "She just told me... I'm gonna say fifteen years." Well, I say, if you had to check with her about the cats - "Oh, you're right," he says. "I'm gonna say sixteen."

He was a volunteer firefighter for the same amount of time, sixteen years. The bureaucracy of it got to him and eventually

he left. "They make people that volunteer - volunteer to wake up at two o'clock in the morning - take six months of classes." He laughs. "If I have to go through all this crap just to help, I don't want to help!" Over the course of the sixteen years he says he fought about a hundred fires. Some stand out in his mind more than others.

One night he responded to a call. A dormitory at a school in Staatsburg caught fire. It was ten degrees out. "They have a thing with firemen. If they blast the truck horn multiple times, that's telling the firemen 'get out.' You know, 'we think the building might go down.' All of a sudden we hear the horn." The other volunteers cleared out. Paul and his brother-in-law, also a volunteer firefighter, looked at each other. "Grab a hose!" He laughs.

"Just as I turn the water on, the freaking ceiling collapses. Freaking smoke and ash everywhere. And then the hose dies." He's cracking up.

He and his brother-in-law scream for the water to get turned back on, it did, and the other volunteers came back in. When it was over, Paul went out the fire escape. He put his hand on the railing and his glove stuck to it. He took his coat off and it stood on the floor. "It was frozen," he says. He got frostbite that night. To this day, Paul tells me, "if I get cold, I'm done. Pins and needles." He breaks out in laughter for a second and a smile washes over his face. "Then I had the best breakfast I've ever had that morning. Steak and eggs. And beer. Oh my God was that good."

We drive in quiet for a few minutes. He starts to tell me about the worst call he ever had, and here I assumed that we already had gone over that. "Somebody had been swimming in the river, and they didn't make it. And we had to look for them. So in water up to here [mid-torso], walking around kicking our legs, trying to find em'. 'Please don't let me find them.'" For the first time in the car ride Paul isn't laughing. "I think that was probably the worst one. It affected me the most. For a couple weeks I was off."

Soon enough he's back to his normal self. Smiling and laughing.

The car ride's almost over and I ask him if he's got any jokes. He thinks for a while, but his is a more observational humor. "There's a lot of humor if you're looking for it," he tells me. Then he turns his head. He has his joke. "Did you know that killer whales are neither?" I look at him, wondering where the joke was in that. "It's sort of a situational joke. You had to be there."

He drops me off at the library and tells me to make sure I spell his name right. I ask about the spelling. Apparently, he says, "the story is that a relative of mine sent the King of England a calf's head on a platter because he didn't like a law that he made. And he had to come over here and change his name so he could keep his head. Don't know if it's true." He laughs.

He loves his job and he loves it here. He told me earlier, "I hope I die here." "On the grounds?" I joke. "That'd be okay too. I hope this is my last job. It'd be a great way to go out." He's only fifty-six now, so I guess that means he's planning on sticking around for a while.

When I asked him about his job the first thing he told me was that "when [people] visit, you've only got one chance to make a good impression." So that's Paul's job. He helps us make a good impression. He makes one too.



photo by brendan hunt

grassroots campaigns incorporated

jason toney

This is the story of the nauseating capacity of a political consulting firm and the author's experience interviewing for a position as Assistant Canvas Director with a NATIONAL RECRUITER from Grassroots Campaigns, Incorporated (GCI). The author learned of the shady business that major nonprofits including the ACLU, Planned Parenthood, and the Sierra Club depend on for their funding. If you applied to GCI, you should read this. Sometime around April 13th, I was eating a Down the Road (DTR) wrap with an extra-regret-build-up when I saw the banner in the The Heinz O. and Elizabeth C. Bertelsmann Campus Center for "Grassroots Campaigns." Sounds bullshit — the thought emerged without consent, a psychological flinch. It proved to be an unequivocal understatement. Why would a grassroots campaign leave their community to come here? More specifically, leave their campaignS? Who were they? Why was their tabling color scheme so white? Why was their logo suspiciously corporate? Vertigo ensued. DTR was being digested with a side of the spins. Scratch that — full spins, side of DTR. I arose from my chair in a state of veritable amnesia. I stumbled past the banner I had almost been fortunate enough to forget about, but my symptoms rushed back as I overheard the NATIONAL RECRUITER talk a Bard student up on the opportunity to change the world — I nearly lost my lunch.

I moved on. I took a walk, went to the library, checked in at Kline to see if I could sneak by Donna and grab a loaf of Bread Alone (no dice). Alas, I went to my evening class. As if fated, it began with a two minute long presentation from a NATIONAL RECRUITER. I was rocked. The memory is a fog. This was not the kind of experience I could afford to revisit moments before a class began. I remembered my lunch. I resisted the spins. All I can recall with certainty from the presentation are the words, "Change... World... ACLU... Parenthood... Club... Progressive... Experience... Job... Signup... Interview." Masochism, - don't.

I did, I signed up.

With my interview to be an "Assistant Canvass Director" coming up soon, I had to start digging. I knew I'd be sifting through dirty laundry and that the opportunity to interview was more or less a chance to sniff it. If we're taking this dirty laundry metaphor seriously, then know this: Grassroots Campaigns, Inc. sprays a lot of Febreze on their overstuffed laundry bin, a bin that definitely rests at the bottom of a long, dim laundry shoot.

It's no revelation that nonprofit organizations depend on funding. Most nonprofits accept that it's messy business running around the streets with clipboards, a notable exception being Greenpeace. As such, many major nonprofits defer to GCI, which hires thousands of college students on Craigslist, job listing websites, and college campuses around the country. Sounds kosher so far, right? Yet what I quickly uncovered after a bit of digging was that GCI has a tendency to immediately terminate any employee who isn't willing to give their life to the corporation, and it works those passionate enough to stick with it into the ground. The model is entirely contingent on the exploitation of so-called liberal progressive youth. While the organization undoubtedly produces funds for nonprofits, it also conjures up a nifty \$25 million in revenue a year, which supports a massive corporate bureaucracy and a wealthy CEO. This begs the question: how much of the money raised by GCI is actually making it to the nonprofits?

The name Grassroots Campaigns, Inc. — whether deliberately or

not, I couldn't tell you — harks back to the first political consulting firm in American history: Campaigns, Inc.. This is the corporation that singlehandedly prevented Upton Sinclair's bid for Governor of California in 1934. The successful smear campaign against Sinclair led to a tidal wave of business from Right candidates, issue areas, and corporations. Campaigns, Inc. came to make millions in profits on the entire project of turning politics into business. The historical unfolding is diligently discussed in Jill Lepore's "The Lie Factory," in the September 2012 issue of *The New Yorker*.

While GCI speaks to and for the Left and nonprofits in particular, the same thrust remains. Political consulting — whether in the form of spreading a cause or raising funds — has become a part of the nonprofit structure. While I hesitate to condemn nonprofits themselves, we ought to be more critical of the system itself. The work of Campaigns, Inc. and GCI alike remain contingent upon an outsourcing of activism. Nonprofits rely on this. Within this nonprofit structure, the notion of genuine grassroots organizing is entirely broken down and the localization of progressive politics becomes increasingly alienated and unattainable. The message is clear: don't fight for yourself, you won't last. Instead, wait until a nonprofit sweeps in to do that for you, and accept that they are going to outsource the fundraising necessary to keep them employed while they do that.

The first bit of my investigation led me to Glassdoor, a website that sources employee reviews. With 241 reviews and a 2.4 out of 5 rating, I presumed GCI was struggling to maintain an attractive image. As I would come to learn, GCI builds a high employee turnover rate into its business model. If you're a canvasser and you don't hit your fundraising quota during your trial run, it is likely that you'll be immediately terminated and denied your pay. If you pass your trial phase, but miss the mark one too many times, you'll still be terminated. If you do stick around, there's a well-documented chance that you will be coerced into working overtime without compensation. What's worse is that many employees report working 80-100 hours a week and earning less than \$300 for their labor. One of the most salient employee reviews, written by a former Assistant Canvass Director in Miami, FL reads: "If you want to end up being 30 and still working an underpaying job (like poverty level type pay) and living with roommates this is the job for you. If you don't want a social life, want to eat like crap because you have no time to cook and get groceries, and want to never exercise because you are working every day this is the job for you. If you come from a wealthy conservative family and want to rebel against your parents because anyways they can spend over \$1,000 for Christmas gifts, this is the job for you." This review was by no means an outlier. Glassdoor also lists the CEO approval ratings for the companies being reviewed. Douglas H. Phelps, the CEO of GCI, has a 22% approval rating. Phelps was and still is on the Advisory Board for the Fund for Public Interest Resource Group, a nonprofit with a seemingly identical business model to Grassroots that was infamously prone to being sued by its exploited workers. While "The Fund" made huge swaths of money for the organizations it fundraised for, it lost a great deal of legitimacy and now has a remarkably tarnished public presence. There are blogs dedicated to telling the stories of its abuse. GCI's strategy has been to maintain this exploitative structure, make it for-profit, and be more attuned to local and state laws regulating work hours and pay.

continued on following page

grassroots campaigns incorporated (continued)

In 2009, the New York Times published an article written by Scott James about Grassroots Campaigns entitled, "Making a Profit Off an Appeal for Nonprofits," which began a line of inquiry into GCI's practices but stopped short of any damning revelation. At best, the article is a sketch, lacking any critical investigation. And yet, stories abound. From a \$600,000 out of court settlement with 125 current and ex employees in the 2007 class action lawsuit *Angela Badami, et al. v. Grassroots Campaigns, Inc.* (the workers couldn't be represented by the ACLU due to a conflict of interest) to the 2014 unionization and strike of workers in Portland, OR who were being overworked for less than the legal wage; both of which marked a truly profound moment in liberal irony. The Orange County Register wrote a story in 2011 that detailed hundreds of thousands of dollars of losses for nonprofits that contracted GCI for fundraising contracts. Granted, according to the nonprofits, these losses are part of the plan. The initial campaigns that accrue these losses are about establishing contributors, which pays off in the long run. The question still remains, though, of how much money is actually making it to these nonprofits when you give your donation. While the 2009 New York Times article alone seems like it should have demanded further investigation, nothing followed. What did follow, though, was some notable activity by GCI's CFO Douglas H. Phelps and his foundation, the Douglas H. Phelps Foundation. Since Grassroots Campaigns Inc. grosses around \$25 million in revenue annually, according to Glassdoor, and is in the process of doubling in size, it seems Phelps has needed a place to evade a few taxes and implement some sway. Foundations are essentially legal tax havens, because if you give enough, you are given significant tax exemptions. While there is generally not public access to any kind of line item spending that a 501(c)(3) (a foundation or nonprofit) does, I did find Phelps' name mentioned on some interesting reports. On a report on corporate responsibility published by Corporate Responsibility International in 2010, Phelps made a personal contribution as well as a Phelps Foundation donation. Given his corporate track record and pathetic approval rating, the decision seems like one worth reporting, but I suppose it's for the reader to read into.

NOTE TO THE READER: The following is paraphrasing. My flip phone, which hosted this conversation, cannot record.

So, needless to say, my interview went tragically. The NATIONAL RECRUITER and I started off hot. We jived on a whole slew of pressing issues from campaign finance to the crisis in public education. THE NATIONAL RECRUITER's tone was excited, and the background environment they were in was loud, to the point where I struggled to hear them occasionally. It seems that GCI wants you to know that its offices are, well, fun! After about twenty-five minutes, THE NATIONAL RECRUITER was out of questions. It was my turn. "So," I asked, "how do we hire our staff? Is Craigslist our best bet? What does that process look like?" "Well, you can do that," THE NATIONAL RECRUITER responded, "but there are some other ways." "Alright, fair, what happens if one of my staffers has a bad day and falls short of the fundraising quota?" THE NATIONAL RECRUITER hesitated just about three seconds before they explained with a now dimmer tone, "well, that's unacceptable." "I'm not sure what that means," I responded. At this, THE NATIONAL RECRUITER said nothing. So, I prodded on, "GCI is a for profit

company, right?" This question was for giggles; I knew the scripted reply.

"Of course, we couldn't do what we do unless we were. Given that GCI's business model is entirely based on The Fund For Public Interest Resource Group, a nonprofit organization, I just had to hear them say it. At this point, the question of disingenuousness was answered. I moved on.

When I questioned how much money actually made it to the nonprofits that GCI contracts with, THE NATIONAL RECRUITER replied, after an even greater, dimmer wait, that they couldn't answer the question, because they weren't "part of that process."

NOTE TO THE READER: The semantic content of what follows is a bit of a blur. It would be unethical to pretend to know exactly what was said next. Though, I viscerally remember what wasn't said.

A door must have closed, as the background noise disappeared. THE NATIONAL RECRUITER presumably left the fun office. At this, I pulled the speaker just far enough away from my ear such that I could hear it, but I could also watch the seconds tick by. Fifteen seconds counted off.

"Are you there?" I finally asked.

As if just being awoken from a nightmare by a worried partner, THE NATIONAL RECRUITER replied, "what did you ask me again?" I couldn't remember. We ended it there. THE NATIONAL RECRUITER told me I'd be informed about their decision in a week. Needless to say, I haven't heard back.

What are we to do with this? Nonprofits are already riddled with pseudo-transparency and cloaked in opaque, self-righteous claims of liberalizing development. The for-profit corporation that has become fundamental for the operation of these already problematic nonprofits has only further muddled the grounds. Grassroots Campaigns Inc. upholds a system, the nonprofit system, which decimates genuinely grassroots movements. There are innumerable nonprofits that exist because of societal ills, and because these nonprofits benefit from the existence of these ills, it is not in their interest to empower, or rather, to pay, community members to fix these problems. Doing so would put them out of a job. The tactic instead is to reject genuine grassroots organizing, fly in paid experts, and keep those who are impacted by the issues in the struggle, to make money off of their pain and humiliation, to keep the liberal ironist at play. GCI only reinforces this system. GCI has corporatized the very project of grassroots organizing. It seems to me that conservatism, insofar as we might understand that term to connote a Tocquevillian sense of coming together in something like the town hall, is actually a much better model for contemporary progressivism. The systemic problems with nonprofits are exactly that they are part and parcel of their very existence. It is not in a nonprofit's interest to reject its status-quo, that is, the enjoyment of total opaqueness, the ability to dole out funds as it pleases with little oversight beyond a well organized tax document that hides plenty. Grassroots Campaigns Inc. has found a way to legally exploit the already problematic nonprofit structure, fueling the fire that rages against the very causes it claims to represent. The corporation is hypocritical, and the activist's participation, at a certain point, becomes ironic. The mythos of the activist is breaking down.



student athlete of the month: anna richard

July 2014

This month's featured student-athlete is sophomore Anna Richard, a Track & Field runner. Richard has made a noticeable impact since transferring to Bard this year from Fordham University, consistently breaking school records - she now holds the record for both the 800 meter and 1,500 meter events. Recently she competed in the Liberty League Championships at St. Lawrence, where she was the only Bard runner to place in the women's 800 meter.

Free Press: So, how long have you been running?

Anna Richard: I think I started running in sixth grade? I didn't have track at my school, but a private Catholic school near me had it, so I joined their team and I've been running ever since.

FP: I guess the obvious question is why do you like running? Since so many people really hate it.

AR: I get that a lot. I really like the competitive side of it, more than the running itself. Racing is definitely my favorite part, as opposed to practicing, but that's what you have to do in order to compete.

FP: Have you ever tried other sports?

AR: Yeah, I've played a lot of different sports, but I think running has just been what I've been able to excel at, so that really drives my motivation.

FP: How do you prepare for a race? What do you do the day of

the race?

AR: Well I always eat a plain bagel; not toasted, nothing on it. It's kind of disgusting, but it works for me. Sometimes I actually sleep in my uniform too. I do the same stretches in the same order before every race as well.

FP: I've heard that it's pretty common for runners to pee themselves during races. Is that something that happens for you?

AR: I've never peed myself during a race, but I have during practice. I've definitely thrown up after a lot of races though.

FP: What do you like about being an athlete at Bard? What would you change?

AR: I guess coming from Fordham, which is a D-I school, it's just very different. I really like that academics come first, and it's not just totally about track. At Fordham, it was a big deal to be an athlete, and everyone praised the athletes like they were so great. Here, it's definitely not as much of a big deal, but that doesn't bother me at all and I've been able to branch out more. Instead of having mostly athlete friends like I did at Fordham, I think I have more friends outside of track, which is another thing I prefer about running here. The last part is that at Fordham a lot of kids on the team were motivated by scholarships, and here people just run because they love it. The one thing I would like to change is having an actual track! That said, I love my coaches and my teammates, and I really enjoy running at Bard.

fixer-upper: a look at bard's architecture

hayden hard

As Bard's campus expands to the south with the purchase of Montgomery Place, and the rest of the campus grows crowded with new construction, many of the college's existing buildings are decaying. The degradation ranges from general shabbiness to something more serious: imminent structural failure. If the school's infrastructure continues to decline over the next few decades, the administration will need to decide which buildings are historically significant enough to restore and which structures will be replaced or left to ruin. No one would suggest that tearing down a building, especially a landmark building, is an easy decision. But sometimes it has to be done. Such as when the cost of maintenance is simply impractical, or when the building can't fulfill its original purpose and it cannot be repurposed for another use.

Many of Bard's buildings are in a state of minor disrepair. Perhaps because those buildings are not considered historically significant, there is little motivation either for the administration or the buildings' residents to adequately maintain or restore those structures. South Hall is a prime example of this. Located next to the Old Gym, the simple, rectangular dorm was completed in 1936 soon after St. Stephen's College changed its name to Bard. Today, however, a lot of the interior is falling apart, and residents feel shortchanged when doors don't properly close or windows fall out of their rails. One of the bathrooms has gaping holes in the ceiling and a mysterious, lone faucet on one wall that gushes water onto the floor if you happen to turn it on. Paint is hastily applied and there are a few areas with exposed drywall. The dark, claustrophobic showers on the western side of the building supply cold water only. Still, though it was built inexpensively even for its day, it seems to be a pretty sturdy structure. Except for some drainage problems, we noticed no major building faults.

Aesthetics are another matter; it's offensively bland. Its style departed from the Gothic Revival exemplified by Stone Row, and while there are plenty of reasons to reject the triteness of Gothic Revival, South Hall is a banal outgrowth of Modernism, unlike the flamboyantly Bauhaus-style Tewksbury, which poignantly represents the Modernist ethos in architectural history. Though South Hall dates from an interesting era in Bard's history, its uninspiring and utilitarian form fails to adequately capture the larger architectural movement, which may have made it more desirable and interesting. According to the 2008 Master Plan, its architecture is not considered historically significant enough to maintain in the long run, and it can be torn down if need be.

Neglecting a sturdy if architecturally second-rate 1930s structure is one thing but older campus buildings that

actually are considered historically significant have been forgotten as well. Drill Hall, a red brick coach house on the old Blithewood estate, has been vacant for decades and is "in danger of imminent collapse," according to Bard's 2008 Master Plan. This is an appealing, single-story, steep-roofed brick building that's sadly gone to seed.

The Master Plan called for the erection of a fence to prevent entry and potential injury in case the building should collapse, but since neither the fence nor the collapse has happened yet, I took the opportunity to take a self-guided tour. The slate-shingle roof was cheaply patched with tar paper and wood. Even those stopgap repairs have since deteriorated. Inside, there are piles of desiccated bird shit under the holes in the ceiling, and a few rusty light fixtures dangle precariously over broken cinder blocks. The Master Plan recommends that Drill Hall be torn down while preserving its historic building materials, such as the Washburn red bricks which were fired in Saugerties sometime in the early twentieth century. Restoring the building would be prohibitively expensive, but even tearing it down would be costly. So Drill Hall currently exists in limbo, waiting for the end.

It's unlikely that many other Bard buildings will soon face the state of terminal decay that Drill Hall does right now, but lack of maintenance could bring the wrecking ball to any of them some day. Infrastructural maintenance is required to ensure the longevity of any structure and to sustain a relatively comfortable standard of living. But preventative upkeep is seldom conducted, and major infrastructure malfunctions are common.

For instance, Tewksbury suffered from a heat shut-off for three days in the winter of 2015. An informed source from Buildings and Grounds claims that the lack of preventative maintenance is due to a shrinking workforce among other budgetary constraints. The few B&G workers we still have spend their entire day fixing things that have already broken, and they have little time to prevent further infrastructural degradation, which winds up costing the college more money. Meanwhile, Bard receives large donations specifically to build new facilities like the Fisher Center or the new baseball field. That money doesn't trickle into other sections of Bard's bureaucracy, so there isn't any additional money to maintain those shiny new structures. Routine maintenance isn't sexy, and few donors, one imagines, want to slap their name on a new furnace. Like the Roman Empire, Bard has over expanded its borders and has begun to crumble from the inside. Perhaps the barbarians are already inside the gates.



photo by sam williams

compost at bard

grady nixon

Bard's compost system is dysfunctional.

The Kline kitchen has been throwing raw meat, a big no-no, into the compost for the past eight years. We throw about 40 pounds of raw meat into it on a daily basis. That leads to a vulture problem, which leads to a romantic scene of raptors circling around the athletic fields but also to destroyed rooftops. Laurie Husted, the college's Sustainability Manager, told me that the roof of Stevenson Gym has had to be repaired twice in the past few years due to "vulture damage." She didn't clarify whether or not the school's insurance covers "vulture damage."

Depending on the yearly budget, we can get the compost processed and turned into a usable product. Sometimes, though, it just rots there for longer than it should. The temperature isn't taken daily. Sometimes the pile gets so hot that the deeper parts of it turn to ash. The Horticulture department can't really use it because the PH level isn't ideal for plants. The Bard Farm can't use it because it isn't organic. Sometimes it's used as a filler. It was used for the green areas around the Olin parking lot, but now those spots are patchy with weeds and metal forks. It's not high quality enough to use on our campus and certainly not to sell to anyone else.

During a meeting with Katrina Light, the Chartwells Food Sustainability advocate, and Husted, one of them told me that they'd be hesitant to use it at Montgomery Place.

This is all a symptom of a larger problem. We throw away way too much food. 7,000 pounds a week. That food waste ends up in buckets on the loading dock in the back of Kline. This summer, composting had to be halted because the buckets got so dirty a fly infestation put the facility at the risk of failing its health inspection.

Environmental Services, Chartwells, and B&G all disagreed about whose union contract obligated them to clean the buckets. When they're in Kline they're Chartwells' problem. But Environmental Services cleans the building's bathrooms and clears the trash bins in the dining areas. But Chartwells is responsible for cleaning the dining areas. And B&G is in charge of the compost pile itself, and compost pick-up, but cleaning the buckets? Eventually the men who work at the school's dump just started cleaning them.

Kline is an all-you-can-eat facility. People take more than they can eat. Or they don't like what they got and they toss out a plate full of food and get something else. Keep in mind that it's a minor victory for the sustainability advocates if the food waste even gets to the compost.

Plus, students expect to have the full slate of options available to them right until the kitchen closes. Any cooked food that goes out on the floor can't go back to the kitchen. If a tray of food is put out at 7:00 and two people grab some, the rest becomes compost scraps at 7:30. Some leftovers from breakfast and lunch

are brought to a soup kitchen in Kingston, but the Chartwells employees have to bring it there. The soup kitchen runs started out as a student project. A lot of sustainability efforts on our campus do. And then the students leave, and there's not much money to keep the projects going so they either die or turn into volunteer efforts on the part of Bard's staff. Katrina summed it up. They "kind of stagnate."

Budget fixes might help, but Kline goes through so many disposable - and non-disposable - utensils that there's a lot less money than there could be to invest in these things. Over one weekend in April Kline lost 150 forks. This semester alone they've lost 700 plastic tumblers. They go through thousands of paper and plastic utensils each year. Like I said before, some years it's just not in the budget to even process the compost. So it just sits and rots and maybe burns for another year or semester.

Even still, as Laurie Husted told me, "we have to remember we do a lot more than other colleges." One might wonder, what the hell are other colleges doing? They're throwing all of their food waste away. At least we try to do something with it, right?

A small group tries, at least. But on the whole we use paper cups, we throw out full plates of food - compost it if we're feeling earthy - and steal plates and cups and leave them in hiding spots all around campus. The last part of that doesn't simply harm our sustainability aims, it's an inconvenience to every Environmental Services worker. Unless they're masochistically optimistic and view the collection of lost plates as a sort of year-round Easter egg hunt.

It's a system of waste, and the student body's behavior keeps the system right where it is - barely sustaining our sustainability initiatives.

Our compost system is massively flawed. But it's a system that the school can't keep up with. It's a problem that creates other problems, like vultures and flies and union issues. These things become the short-term priorities and there's enough of them that the long-term can get overlooked. A significant part of Chartwells' budget is spent on replacing utensils and buying disposables. Other funds are spent on food that's put out to be thrown away because we expect a cornucopia of options at 7:25. We can't afford to do better with food sustainability because we're too busy paying for our own wastefulness. Instead of being something we can be proud of, our compost pile is a rotting reminder of that wastefulness. It's a reminder that we throw out at least 7,000 pounds of food a week from Kline alone. Or it would be a reminder if it weren't hidden in a corner of the dump which is itself hidden at the end of Woods Avenue behind a fence.

Here's the silver lining, as Katrina told me. If we didn't compost, "Kline would account for 78% of trash on campus."



the freeuse store: "the bard thrift store"

marisa bach

The FreeUse store is one of the best resources on campus. Often referred to as "The Bard Thrift Store," it acts as a marketplace to get free clothes, shoes, books, housewares, and electronics that people no longer want or use. According to The Bard Office of Sustainability the FreeUse store "aims to reduce Bard's contributions to the landfill," instead of throwing out unwanted but usable items they can be placed in blue bins which are located in dorms by the recycling.

Upon first entering the FreeUse store, it can be a bit daunting compared to a more conventional thrift store. However, further inspection will reveal tons of useful items ready to be repurposed. To display just how useful the FreeUse store can be I decided to pick up some items of clothing and show how they could be incorporated into a few days worth of outfits.

Day 1:

The first piece I discovered a pair of Tripp NYC circa 2008 pants, they were covered in cheap plastic chains and skull embellishments. How could I not pick these up? When I arrived back at my dorm, and did a further inspection I found that there was a huge hole in the crotch. Perhaps they were intended to be crotchless emo pants? Who knows! I decided to transform the pants into something that fit my personal style more. First, I cut off all the chains, straps and other indescribable pieces. I decided that the crotchless look was not for me, so I sewed the hole closed. What remains from the original mess is a pair of black wide-leg pants with side zippers, now a lot more current and wearable.

Now that these were only black pants with some zipper detail, the outfit formed around it needed to compliment the simplicity. The pants were a bit too big so I added a belt, which would either be hidden or exposed over the white t-shirt I paired on top. To accessorize the simple outfit I added a blue bandana around my neck and some white sneakers. The overall look is minimalistic, a far cry away from the overly embellished gothic pants I originally picked-up.

Day 2:

There is a lot of denim to be had from the FreeUse store, much of which is able to be further personalized. My second day I found a pair of Calvin Klein jeans (probably previously owned by someone in the studio arts department) with some slight tears and covered in paint. The perfect worn in look, without any actual effort on my part! Comparable pants by designers like Ralph Lauren and Rag and Bone sell for upwards of \$100, but luckily enough these were free.

There are so many ways to style a pair of jeans, the options are endless! Luckily for me, the paint on the jeans led me to decide what colors will compliment them. White and yellow paint led me to a vintage 1960s red baby-doll dress with a white and yellow pattern. I am big proponent for dresses over jeans because the silhouette that is created is more interesting than a dress alone or jeans and a shirt. For those that shy away from the dress over jeans look I would suggest a white or light colored button up shirt, with a scarf or choker to add some detail. A well worn pair of jeans is a staple in any wardrobe, and finding them for free, and not having the need to break them in made this pair all the more special.

Day 3:

As I was leaving the FreeUse store I spotted a piece of floral fabric on the ground which turned out to be a fabric belt or thing used to tie a dress. Whatever the intended purpose I decided to use it as a neck scarf. Stemming from the choker trend, neck scarves are an alternative way to decorate the neck, I usually use small floral scarves or bandanas to achieve this look.

The Marisa Bach specimen found at the FreeUse store is textured fabric in light pink with small multicolored flowers. While looking around the store I saw many shirts, dresses, etc., which could easily be turned into neck scarves with a little snipping. The neck scarf is a small part of my overall look, but because of the colors I decided it would look best combined with an all black outfit. I tied the scarf around once and let the remaining material hang to the back, but it also would look good to the front or the side, depending on the shirt. I chose a black long sleeve shirt which went under a velvet button up vest. For bottoms I wore a pair of linen wide leg pants, which are my go to because of their similarity in comfort to sweatpants. For shoes I decided on a pair of penny loafers with a small heel. If I was trying to get crazy and the weather was right I would probably also wear my black beret, which adds instant elegance to any fit! Scarves are a big part of what I use to accessorize my wardrobe, but for those who aren't interested the FreeUse store has a variation of clothing to fit anyone's style.

Day 4:

The main reason I picked out this shirt is for layering. A button up shirt, especially one with a little personality, is perfect for layering because not only does it keep you extra warm, but it adds a little interest to an otherwise plain outfit. This shirt is brown and white vertical stripes without sleeves, the lack of sleeves makes it perfect to go under another shirt without the added bulk. The FreeUse store has multiple button-up shirts which can be altered, like cutting off the sleeves by oneself, in order to personalize the used clothing. Because of how versatile the button up is I decided to build the outfit and then add the shirt more as an accessory. I started with a navy and green plaid mid-length skirt which I topped with a light weight black sweater. Once I was happy with that combination I added the brown and white button up underneath. The accent of the collar pulled the whole outfit together and made the look more polished. Another way the shirt could be style while keeping with the same look would be removing the sweater on top and adding a denim jacket instead, which would reveal more of the shirt. The shirt is a great piece that can be worn over and over without repetition.

I was originally nervous about wearing clothes from the FreeUse store for a week because I thought that they would look too forced within my everyday wardrobe. After I was able to take the pieces home and experiment I was able to find a way for each article to seamlessly blend into my personal style. The FreeUse store is an amazing resource on Bard's campus and I recommend everyone check it out, whether it be to revamp your wardrobe or just see how Bard is contributing to sustainability.





mama knows best
julie and avery
mencher

What advice do you have for how to weigh the costs and benefits of doing drugs? (From a pragmatic perspective weighing the social benefits, and the value of self-exploration/fun)

Julie Mencher: This is a tough one. Let's get weed and alcohol out of the way first. UNLESS consumed in excess – which is a VERY BIG 'unless,' VERY subjective, and likely to be skewed to the excessive for the average college student who looks around and sees what others are consuming – I think they're relatively safe and can be safely enjoyed. Just keep in mind: blackouts, sexual decisions that you wouldn't make if you were sober, and chronic asshole behavior when drunk or stoned equals problematic use in my book.

In terms of other drugs, I have to say I was waaaaay more open-minded about it before the incident at Wesleyan last year when a group of kids got hospitalized after doing Molly. Now these students insisted that they had vetted their drugs (who even knew that was a thing?!), knew their supplier, and that the drugs were "safe." And yet – they could have died or sustained brain damage, some of them were suspended or expelled from Wesleyan, some were arrested. Pretty high stakes for a night of fun, I'd say. Personally, I'd rather have a self to wake up to after a night of self-exploration, but that's just me.

The "self-exploration" piece doesn't really speak to me. Beyond weed or alcohol, the self you're exploring when you're on drugs is a changed, altered, morphed-into-something-else self, not your true-essence-self. So, if you want to balance safety AND fun, I'd stick with weed and alcohol and leave the adulterated, possibly toxic stuff to more self-destructive people who wouldn't even have the good sense to ask the question you're asking.

Avery Mencher: Going to Bard, drugs are obviously prevalent in our social life. A lot of students try them, and even though I've personally never felt much outside pressure to experiment, I understand that being around people using drugs can generate interest.

I definitely appreciate the idea of self-reflection and exploration; isn't that what college is for? Though I believe that Bard is a great place for personal development and soul-searching, I'm going to side with my mom on this one. Using drugs to "find yourself" (or whatever '70s cliché you'd prefer) seems to me to be a lazy, ineffective route to self-exploration. If you're doing drugs, you should be doing them because you think they're fun, not because you want to know what department you should moderate into or whether you should drop out and WOOF for a

year. Talk to your friends, family, or advisor about that kind of thing, and save the drugs for Spring Fling.

Note: If you do decide to try hard drugs, please do your best to be safe! There are a variety of purity test kits readily available online, and if you think something seems sketchy, it's probably not worth doing.

I'm a recent graduate of Bard and a straight male. I found that it was much easier to makeout with hot girls while I was in college. Where do I find girls who are as hot as Bard girls? Do all hot girls go to Bard?

JM: Oh, sweetie, definitely not. I'd say the only difference might be that the women (notice I didn't say 'girls'??) at Bard are a "captive audience" of sorts, with only so many guys to choose from – whereas the women of the real world have many, many men to choose from.

So I'd advise that you start with YOU – are you the most appealing you can be with women? What vibe are you putting out there, and is it one that's likely to attract appealing women (notice I didn't say 'hot girls'??)? Also, how much effort are you putting into your search, and what exactly are you looking for? It's not gonna be so easy as walking out of your dorm room and having a 'hot girl' dying to 'makeout' with you, as it was in college, dude.

And in case you missed the snark in my parentheses, start by cultivating some respect for women, think about how you can communicate that to them, and see if the hookups happen for you then.

AM: Look, as a heterosexual man at Bard, I think a lot of guys have had a somewhat similar realization when they go home on break or leave campus. We're lucky to have a lot of very beautiful people at Bard, and the party scene and prevalent hookup culture makes it easier to engage with these beautiful people. However, moving beyond the superficial, I've realized that, along with the physical attractiveness of the Bard population, students here are just more interesting and mentally stimulating than a lot of the outside world. Maybe you could focus on finding people that trip that switch in your brain as well, and you might find more attractive women around you than you originally thought.

Also, there are clearly so many strictly physically beautiful women outside of Bard as well. Kind of a dumb question, guy. As far as where to find them, try parks, bars, coffee shops, farmer's markets...just about any public place for the most part.

I'm in a romantic relationship with a person who expresses the utmost devotion for me. This person is emotionally attentive, responsible, communicative, and always wants to know how I feel about something. But when this person says, "Tell me more," and "I'm sorry to hear that" if I express the slightest bit of discontent, I sometimes feel that a therapist has infiltrated into my intimacy. I feel frustrated and silenced, and I want to run away. At the same time, I feel that I'm being deeply unfair to this person by responding to their accommodating nature with anger. I feel like since I just got out of an abusive relationship, I should be more than happy to be with such a "nice guy." Is there something wrong with me that I feel really turned off and even angered by this type of niceness in a romantic relationship? Am I only attracted to assholes?

JM: Mazel tov, baby! You've really climbed many rungs up the ladder of relational health by choosing this person after your last abusive partner! If you're more accustomed to assholes, you're likely going to have some significant growing pains if you're on your first non-asshole boyfriend. It may even be that you've overshot the mark, and you're not quite ready for a healthy partner.

One thing you should know – you're in good company with this "I choose assholes and don't know what to do with a partner who's really good enough for me." So many of my clients of all ages bring this theme to therapy that I can say that this problem alone has paid for my son's Bard education (maybe even several hundred times over).

But just because lots of people struggle with this, doesn't mean you should just do nothing about it. If you don't want to end up like many of the 50-year old women on my couch, I'd get thee to a therapist to tackle this one. We all have a relational template which comes from how you grew up – but since not everyone in your adult life is like your parents, your siblings, or your abusers, many of us need to change that template. Changing your role in and expectations of relationships is like learning a language – it's SO much easier when you're younger. Work on it BEFORE you've put too many nails in the coffin of your love-life, and it'll be so much easier to let go of the past and create a new and improved relational paradigm for yourself.

And I gotta say, if my boyfriend said, "I'm sorry to hear that" and "Tell me more," I'd knock his block off. Too therapisty! Maybe gently, and not right after he's said that, you could say to him, "I love it that you're so emotionally present for me, but those two phrases just somehow bug me. I'm sure it must be me, and I get that you're just trying to help, but could you do ___ instead?" And spell out exactly what feels like an empathic response to YOU – cuz, believe it or not, everyone's different on that one.

AM: I'm mostly going to defer to my mom on this one; she's got considerably more serious relationship experience than I do. I think communication – especially in these weird college quasi-relationships where each person can have a different expectation or idea of how things should work – is incredibly important. If something isn't working for you, vocalize that! On the other side of the coin, I have been in a similar place as this guy. When your significant other expresses unhappiness about something that you have no control over, it's hard to find a way to empathize without it coming off as "therapisty." You want this person to feel better, but if it's a problem that's out of your control, there's only so much you can do. While he may need to learn new ways to communicate his empathy for your situation, you may also need to allow yourself to receive this empathy, especially if it's something that you're not used to receiving in relationships. Have an honest conversation!

Memes are controlling my life. Help!

AM: Turn off your internet.

JM: What's a meme?

This month, the Free Press launches an advice column cowritten by mother-son team Avery Mencher '17 and his mother Julie Mencher, MSW, a licensed therapist in private practice for over 25 years, with a specialty in working with college students. Every month, students will submit questions anonymously, and Avery and Julie will choose a few to answer, so keep those questions coming!

Waste Management



