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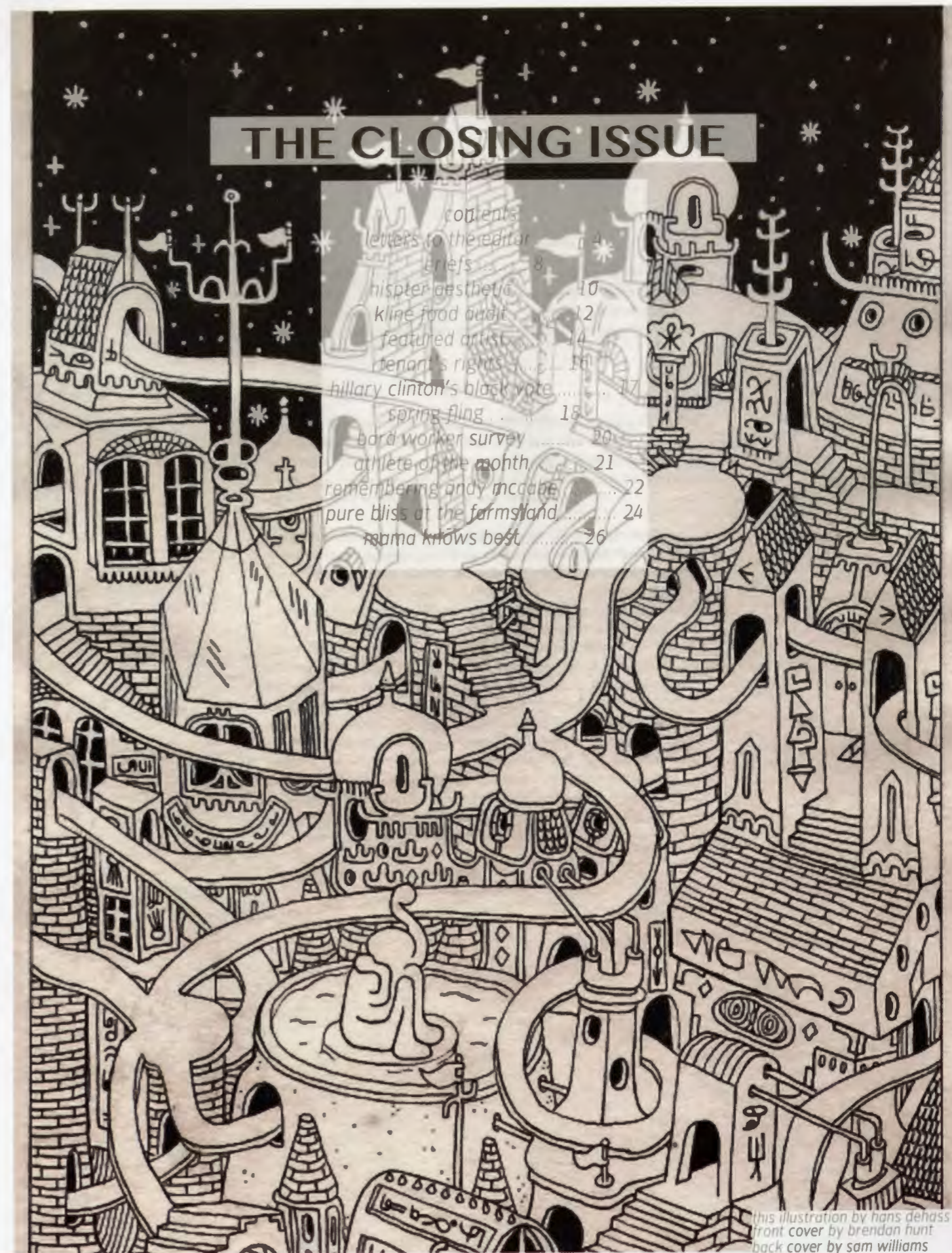
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this illustration by hans dehaas  
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There's nothing I can write here that hasn't already been said to a previous class. There's nothing I can say that won't be covered in your commencement address. There's no way for me to write anything original here, but I'd like to say the same thing others have heard and that you will hear.

Dear Senior Class,

I'm going to miss you so much. So many of you have changed my life permanently and for the better. This is the first year for me where it doesn't just feel like the seniors are graduating. It feels like my friends are leaving. I wish each of you the very best and I'm grateful for having known you. You're my friends, and I'll miss you.

In my first editor's note, I wrote that "as we move through Bard, we notice change happening and a lot of the time we don't like it." I don't like this change. Yeah, there's a reason it's called commencement and this is a new beginning and all of that. But, in the immortal words of Semisonic, "every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." And much like Semisonic's lead singer Dan Wilson, I already know who I want to take me home. Or in this case I know who I want to hang out with and I'm sad that you're all leaving. Like I said, though, this experience isn't unique. We know when we start here that we're joining part of a cycle. This happens every year. But just because something keeps happening doesn't mean it's not important. Other people will do the same things we do and others already have. How we do it and who we do it with is what makes our experience distinct. Even that thought is so unoriginal I feel bad for having written it. Others have come to the same silver-lining conclusion. But just forget about that. We're always repeating history. That doesn't mean the story loses its value. It just means it's a story worth telling.

Thanks again seniors. Best of luck.

-grady nixon

## targets of abuse

*the following letter was submitted anonymously*

Probably none of what you're about to read will make any sense. Maybe that's because I'm a bad writer. Or maybe because this experience is too fresh for me to write anything remotely coherent. But most likely, what you are about to read will make no sense because what I am attempting to express is a story of Bard administration's poor decisions, fuckups, bad judgment, and betrayals. What makes no sense here is why the comfort of a perpetrator of domestic abuse, a Bard student who is not enrolled this semester, has been prioritized over the safety of his victim, me. That makes no fucking sense. How would you describe what it feels like to feel safe? I knew what it felt like the moment my mother held me in her arms at the hospital where I was born. I think feeling safe is rarely something I ever thought about, because I never felt threatened, I never felt unsafe. I never considered that my feeling safe was contingent upon others protecting me. It is though. As much as I want to believe that I am independent and that I have total agency, there are people whose responsibility it is to protect me and to make me feel safe. My parents, my friends, my school. My ex boyfriend broke into my apartment, where I live alone, over winter break. I returned in late January to discover that my property and belongings were damaged. My safe space in Tivoli was violated. My sense of safety in my place of residence shattered. I was not as angry then as I am now. I got a restraining order on February 11 after having gotten a temporary Order of Protection from the Family Courts in Poughkeepsie on the first day of classes of the spring semester, my final semester in college. My mom flew from Los Angeles to support me in court on February 11 because he was going to be there.

The document that I obtained in court reads as follows:

"A petition under Article 8 of the Family Court Act, having been filed on February 01, 2016 in this Court and On Consent, and [the perpetrator] having been present in Court and advised of the issuance and contents of this Order. NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that [the perpetrator] observe the following conditions of behavior:

[01] Stay away from:

[A] [me] - At least 500 feet;

[B] the home of [me] - At least 500 feet;

It is further ordered that this order of protection shall remain in force until and including June 11, 2016."

I gave this document to multiple administrative offices on campus to ensure that its parameters were known and would be enforced. A No Contact Order for Bard's campus was allegedly filed by the Office of Title IX after I received the Order of

Protection. My family and I were guaranteed in writing that Bard would protect me.

If my ex were to return to the Bard area while I was there, it would only be allowed for an academic reason, he would be accompanied by his parents, and I would receive fair warning before his arrival. I was happy with by Bard's swift response and ostensible support with regard to this crime committed against me and the emotional distress it caused.

From March onwards I began rebuilding my sense of safety. These past couple of months have been the happiest I've ever been at Bard. I told my mom that on the phone last week. I was happy to be ending a tumultuous year on a positive note.

However, on May 12, I received a text message from the dean giving me a "heads up" that my ex would be returning to Tivoli for five days and four nights, May 12-16, to see senior shows.

This is not an academic reason.

He was not accompanied by his parents.

A text message hours before his arrival is not fair warning. His likely presence in Tivoli automatically violates my restraining order against him, as our homes are about 500 feet of each other. I called the dean after receiving her message in tears. Why is this allowed? Why is this happening? She told me that her hands were tied; he is an adult and can do what he wants. I had no choice but to leave. I did not feel safe. I felt frightened. I felt like I was reliving the trauma that took place in February. What was the point of the restraining order or any of the promises that Bard made if no one would follow through? I was displaced for the weekend, my education disrupted. A critical weekend—a weekend demarcating the end of my career at Bard: finishing final assignments, packing up my home, embracing time with friends these last days where we are all in the same place, our school.

Instead, I have been in New York City in a hotel, on and off the phone with my family who has been relaying developments of the situation from my ex's parents and the dean to me. Instead of being escorted by the Dutchess County Sheriff on May 16 from Rhinecliff to Tivoli and then to campus for class as I was previously promised, I will be going alone, in fear of seeing my ex at any given moment. Instead of my completing the semester celebrating, I will be anxiously awaiting to get the fuck out and never come back.

Instead, I will not be walking at Commencement; I will not shake the hands of those who have attempted to invalidate this act of domestic violence. Instead, I will scream. I will scream until Bard's systemic silencing of the voices of fearful targets of abuse is finally heard. This is not the last time I will be writing about this, and you will know who I am once I am holding a diploma. This is not the last time you will hear a story like this. Please scream with me.

## bard's dangerous gap in aids knowledge

*conor williams*

"If this article doesn't scare the shit out of you, we're in real trouble," begins Larry Kramer in his legendary piece of writing, "1,112 and Counting", first published in the New York Native in 1983. He was—and is—an openly gay writer and activist who was the first to speak about AIDS, before anyone else was even thinking about it. Larry's prophetic paranoia changed the face of modern medicine and how we think about disease. Because he spoke up, and because he has not ceased to this day to shut up, we have managed to get where we are. But where we are is not far enough, apparently. Before I begin, I must repeat Larry's words here in all seriousness. If this article doesn't scare the shit out of you, we're in real trouble.

Nobody at Bard knows as much as they should about HIV/AIDS. The fact that I can count on one hand the number of people on this campus who know the bare minimum is appalling. There is a severe ignorance in my generation, oddly enough, even within the queer community, on HIV/AIDS history as well as its current state. Last year, we learned, through gossip on Yik Yak, that a student at Bard is HIV-positive. Everyone here lost their collective minds when a student here was discovered to have measles—but the proper information was disseminated in a timely fashion. Leon Botstein did not make any statement on the news of HIV at Bard, and nobody here knows anything about HIV/AIDS, so the majority of Bard's student body was left in the dark to pass around misinformation, rumors, and plain ignorance. The truth is, HIV is easily treatable. It is no longer a death sentence. And AIDS can be rare nowadays, at least in the US—if you know how to handle yourself, and HIV. But none of this was made clear. We had students equating HIV with AIDS—and thinking their lives were in danger. Here I saw an ominous equation working in real-time. When you have mass ignorance, it leads to mass fear. Analiese Dorff spread attention last year by advertising an informational talk hosted by Health Services. A fair amount of people showed up. But not enough.

Aside from the sphere of public health, there is an entirely separate and equally important reason why AIDS is so pertinent to me, and should be to you too. AIDS wiped out an entire generation of gay/bisexual men and trans women. An entire generation. And Presidents Reagan and Bush completely ignored it, hoping to make the mass death of queer people a quiet non-issue. Luckily enough, the activist group ACT UP screamed loud enough to make a dent in the sociopolitical consciousness, eventually bringing what I see as a fully intentional genocide to a near halt. The AIDS epidemic brought about decades of beautiful art and activism—but it left too many behind. Too many people are gone, and the survivors won't be around for much longer. This is a crucial story that must be told—and for people my age in the LGBT community to not know about this is something that cannot continue. We have made great strides in the fight for equality, equity, and survival, and that fight is far from over. But we must not forget those who fought literally with their lives to keep us from dying at a far more rapid pace. The AIDS epidemic was a time that changed LGBT history. And for the names of those who died to be unknown is exactly what

Reagan and Bush and Jerry Falwell and the other homophobes of the 80s and 90s wanted.

When Hillary Clinton "misspoke" earlier this year post-Nancy Reagan's death when she praised the Reagans for "starting a national conversation about AIDS," (in my opinion, not a slip of the tongue, but an indicator of her still lingering homophobia) this wholly insulting remark caused a fiery backlash from the older AIDS activists as well as the people who I can count on one hand. It created something of a surprising educational moment for some—wait, you mean the Reagans didn't start that conversation?—but it was born out of an entirely unnecessary moment. Because people my age know so little about AIDS, Clinton's remark could and certainly did ring true for far too many people—worst of all, queer people. It is imperative that you learn the truth and get angry—or else our older queer brothers and sisters will have fought for nothing, and died.

Sophie Lazar, a Bard alum, created the short-lived Bard AIDS Memorial Project (BAMP) during her time here. It was meant to serve as a continuation of the one at Yale, (YAMP) which exists online as a beautiful reminder of the Yale alums and professors who died of AIDS. She stopped the project after a lack of support. I intend to bring BAMP back, into a fully realized and long-lasting part of Bard's legacy. As of now, the project is rough, and details are still being planned out. I will need help. I will need the focus, support, and collaboration of the Bard student body—particularly and hopefully the LGBT clubs on campus, as well as help from alumni. (A Facebook page still exists for the group, a page entitled "Bard AIDS Memorial Project" that I intend to reanimate, and encourage you to like/follow.) When AIDS first struck America in the 80s, nobody at Bard cared. There was no activism. The only thing that pushed Bard toward any action was a death in the faculty—professor Israel Rodriguez, whose grave can be found here at the Bard Cemetery. Bruce Chilton, along with other professors, formed the Bard AIDS Committee in 1988. By that point, the epidemic was well underway. The committee worked to spread information about the epidemic—eventually disbanding in the mid-90s, arguably when the plague had reached its peak. To their credit, they stirred enough controversy on campus (by implementing condom vending machines) to get attention.

But the fact that there was otherwise no AIDS activism at Bard was confounding to me. The Bard I know now, and the Bard we all know, is one of action and activism. We must keep it that way—and we must include HIV/AIDS as a target, while never forgetting its I won't allow AIDS to fade from Bard's memory—and I won't allow further attempts to bring AIDS to the forefront of our collective attention to fail. And neither can you. I close, again, with Larry Kramer's words, because they connect to an ache inside me that I maybe one day won't need. I know that unless I fight with every ounce of my energy I will hate myself. I hope, I pray, I implore you to feel the same. Thank you for your attention. I hope to hear from my fellow Bardians in the following days.

**the teach-in**

*miriam roday*

We all know that Bard prides itself on being "A Place to Think," and last month, students found a way out of their classes to do just that. Many students attended the Teach-ins—a series of lectures, workshops, readings and performances that were held all around campus. This two-day event, sponsored by the Center for Civic Engagement, was intended to bring the Bard community together to talk, share and reimagine "educational episteme" in a celebratory spirit.

That's why it was shocking when freshman Jeszack Gammon stepped forward and shared his story with me. He explained that his experience of the seminar, on the role of creative expression in a racialized society, was spoiled because of an incident that led to a heated confrontation between him and a professor at Bard.

It was clear there was a schedule mix up when the professor barged into the Lasso Audi in the RKC, carelessly interrupting the two female coordinators to assert he had reserved the classroom and was entitled to the space. While initially he marched in muttering under his breath, he became more expressive—shaking his finger aggressively and raising his voice at the students. According to Gammon, it seemed the professor was thrown off, exasperated at the very idea that he would be cheated of something that was rightfully his. He kept repeating things like, "I don't believe this...what are you all doing here...this is my room." The professor was prepared to blame anyone involved in the minor logistical problem, when it was likely no one was at fault.

The coordinators along with Annie Seaton, the director of the Difference and Media project, assured him they would leave shortly. They were agreeable Gammon said, because they wanted to "deflect his negativity" and continue with their workshop, "Beba at Bard." The seminar was such that the questions asked were difficult, open-ended and very personal. Students were sharing past experiences, knowing they could do so "without ridicule or persecution" because there was a sense of security that protected the room and the students in it. It's this kind of catharsis and

connectedness that people don't get to experience very often; so when the professor finished his tirade and stormed out of the auditorium, the class stood frozen in disbelief. Some had "disgusted looks on their faces," others didn't know how to react, but nobody wanted to follow him out. Gammon was the first to leave the room, and he approached the professor to express what many were afraid or unable to say—"I told him I didn't appreciate the way he handled the situation...At the very least, he could have been more professional." Gammon suggested maybe the professor behaved that way because he "saw two females leading the workshop and felt like he had the authority to do what he wanted." Gammon said memorably before he turned and left the conversation, "If you had seen Leon Botstein in the room, you wouldn't have behaved like that. You would have walked in and not said a word."

Gammon felt compelled to speak to the professor because in his view, the manner in which he conducted himself was nothing short of inappropriate; the level of disrespect with which he addressed his colleagues and the students warranted a response. In Gammon's mind, the events that transpired epitomized the very purpose of the Teach-ins. This small miscommunication escalated into a familiar tug-of-war between "what's mine" and "what's yours," and it became representative of the egotistical behavior that often mangles social relationships in other contexts; when a sense of entitlement supersedes a small gesture of kindness, you tend to see things like a grown man throwing a fit because he has to adjust his plans to accommodate somebody else's. That's why Gammon spoke up, to show others "You can confront these things. You don't have to let these sort of things go by."

Ultimately, the Teach-ins were meant to gather students of all different backgrounds in a safe space, to instill in them the courage to respond to both intolerance and ignorance. Gammon did just that, and he concluded, with an ironic smile: "Coincidence shows us how important these Teach-ins really are."

**rusty's fire**

*olivia smith*

On the corner of Old Farm Road and Route 9, the familiar building with half exposed wood and half navy paneling is gone. A devastating fire destroyed Rusty's Farm Fresh Eatery and seven other establishments in mid-March. The Red Hook Fire Department was called at 5:30 AM, and took over three hours to contain the flames. Trucks from Rhinebeck, Milan, Tivoli, Hillside, West Clinton, and Fairview were called in to help.

The roof is caved in, various shards now embedded deep in the dirt. Exposed wires and drywall trail through the scorched walls that once separated the businesses from each other. The front bumper of a BMW parked outside is melted and fused to various scattered debris. According to a press release from the Red Hook Fire Department, there were no injuries aside from one firefighter who was hospitalized for smoke inhalation. The fire is thought to have started in the back kitchen area of Rusty's, but the exact source is under investigation. Here is what is left.



photos by olivia smith



photo by graylen gatewood

## square to be hip

hayden f.w. hard

The hipster aesthetic, in its current incarnation, is a post-modern bricolage consisting of images taken from other subcultures or failed countercultures. It's not so much a philosophy of life as a philosophy of appearance. Unlike punk, whose ethos and iconography overtly opposed capitalism - at least until that iconography was co-opted by advertizing - hipsterism is an inherently consumerist, commercial, middle-class culture whose *raison d'être* is the performance of good taste. To remain on the avant garde of taste, hipsters must constantly find new images or new aesthetics to appropriate. Anxiety-provoking? Yes. Right now, the white American working class supplies a treasure trove of potentially fly outfits. American workwear has been aestheticized by the hip middle class - this is nothing new - remember trucker hats? - and thus the original, utilitarian purpose of a rugged Carhartt jacket, for instance, has been co-opted into a "look" or a personal fashion statement. Workwear is designed for a utilitarian purpose; hammer loops and tool pockets were originally meant to be used, not merely ornamental. When objects like carpenter's pants are marked as hip, their signified meaning is reduced to a wholly aesthetic symbol of coolness. Thus, the hip owners of carpenter pants assert their class power to make anything cool. The point of this observation is not simply to note the inherent classism of what we call hipster culture but to shed light on the bourgeois anxiety of constantly needing to express one's individuality through tasteful consumption. Even your humble writer has suffered bouts of this anxiety: just the other day, I bought another pair of Dickies slacks after seeing Palberta live. And they're itchy pants. This pervasive identity and class anxiety can be found in past issues of this very publication. In the March, 2016 issue of the Free Press, The Tivoli Taste-maker section is essentially a how-to guide for hipsters. Author Charles McFarlane traces the "rough hem" trend back to a 1913 article about lumberjacks who cut their jeans shorter so they wouldn't get wet or snagged by spiked boots. Once again, the utilitarian function of blue collar clothing has "come into the 21st century" by being marked as aesthetically desirable. The piece didactically concludes with instructions on how to hem one's jeans to properly express the wearer's sly sense of taste. Paradoxically, an object or trend quickly becomes uncool once it has been identified as hip in discourses such as this.

While hipster fashion persists, the word itself is pejorative. Being called a hipster calls into question the authenticity of a person's expression of identity. Consequently one would be hard pressed to find someone who unabashedly self-identifies as a hipster. The term is associated with pretentious social climbers who only listen to, wear, or do something as a performance of coolness. The pure embodiment of this definition has yet to be discovered, and it may in fact be a boogeyman. The phenomenon of the hipster, or at least the fear of being perceived as one, threatens everybody's sincere appreciation of any given hobby. So to avoid that embarrassing interaction, one might try to fetishistically reject whatever is currently defined as hip. But therein lies another paradox of capitalist culture. The constant eschewal of hipster aesthetics results in the same amount of anxious, bourgeois consumption as the adherence to aforementioned fads.

You might ask, "But Hayden, how can I rock a sick 'fit without further perpetuating the violence endemic to middle class values?" Well, as with the scourge of alcoholism, the first step to dismantling the constructed concept of "the hipster" is to admit it. Unconscionable, I know, a sacrilege to the cult of the self, but fessing up is one way to subvert the elusive identity we call "the hipster." The next step is to not think about it too much. Diametrically opposing hipster culture and its aesthetics reifies it further through the constant redefinition of what is and is not hip. Ironically, it's a hipster move to continuously avoid being a hipster. There can never be ethical consumption in capitalism, but maybe the recurring history of appropriation and anxiety can be broken with this hopefully ethical imperative: honestly pursue your passions, wear what makes you feel pretty, and don't be a prick about it.

## food and trash waste in kline commons

anna sones

Each week, Bard produces 16,000 pounds of trash. A quarter of that comes from Kline Commons alone, not including compost. Contained in that is Chartwells' weekly order of 13,500 non-recyclable, non-compostable paper cups. One would think this dependence on disposable cups would mean the reusable cups do not see much service. On the contrary, Chartwells has ordered 1,508 of them just since February. "I just ordered another 700, and the last order that I had previous was just about a month ago now," says Chas Cerulli, Senior Director of Dining Services in Kline, on May 6. That's not to mention other items, including the 912 plates and 880 forks replaced since February. "Where they end up is beyond me," says Cerulli, who says that efforts to recover the missing items have turned up almost nothing. "I've been here almost 20 years," he adds, "and it's always been like this, just particularly bad right now."

The phenomenon of missing dishware is only one symptom of the greater trend of wasteful behavior in Kline. This applies not only to dishware, but to food and landfill trash as well. Recent records show that 70% of garbage generated could have been composted. On top of this, Bard composts hundreds of pounds of food scraps daily, which sounds positive. "But is it a good thing that we have that much compost?" asks Katrina Light, the Food Sustainability Advocate for Chartwells. If that food was not wasted, the amount of food bought and cooked could be reduced. According to Bard EATS student intern Emily Kuper, "Students don't see that composting is not the same as recycling your food," but rather "a huge quantity of food that is not going to get eaten or even recycled back into the earth for a little while." What accounts for Kline's waste numbers? According to Bard EATS (Eating Awareness Transforms Society), it may be connected to the structure of Kline itself. The all-you-can-eat setup may create a disconnect between what students take and how much they can actually eat.

Kuper also pointed to the architecture of the building itself. "You're in this tiny space," she says of the servery, "and it's kind of set up like a circle, and so you have to grab things as you go, and you don't really have the option of stopping and assessing your options." Additionally, the unsorted trash bins in the sitting areas are more accessible than the compost and recycling in the dish room for students rushing off to class.

That being said, architecture does not explain everything. "There's also this scarcity mentality that I've noticed," says Kuper of her peers' behavior, "like, 'I need to get as much as I can before I walk out the door.'" In addition, students feel that the money they have spent on their meal plans entitles them to take as much food and equipment out of Kline as they like. Cerulli does not believe that students intentionally waste resources, but their behavior is wasteful nonetheless. "What people don't realize is that meal plans are progressively getting more expensive because of the amount of food that people take," Kuper explains. According to Light, every dining service on campus has to order according to the projected number of students who will be eating there on a given day. When students take meals out to their friends or sneak in, that projected number has to rise, along with prices. The logic is similarly circular with paper cups, which are often used when too many plastic tumblers have been lost. Thus, wasteful behavior, whether in regards to food or dishware, does in fact impact both Chartwells' budget and students' costs. "That's why people don't understand how theft and food waste go hand in hand," Light says, adding, "It's like absurdist theater."

This utilitarian view of Kline food has also come up over the years when faculty and students have tried to implement a Meatless Monday campaign, which would reduce costs and what Kuper refers to as the "carbon footprint." When the campaign was organized, student backlash, primarily from athletes in search of protein, forced Chartwells to backtrack. In spite of the lack of student support, less meat is often served on Mondays, only now without the advertising and education.

Nonetheless, Bard EATS, the Office of Sustainability, and Chartwells are all continuously working on new initiatives to combat Kline's waste issues. The twenty-four hour, professional, grant-funded trash audit on May 11 and 12 is one example. The results will show a detailed account of how much is being thrown away and how much of that could have been eaten. It comes a few months after the smaller March 8 trash audit, to which there was essentially no student reaction. The professional audit will examine both the student and kitchen waste, and while it may be impossible for the kitchen ever to eliminate waste altogether, Light believes students' trash should ideally be "banana peels and napkins." Additionally, students may have noticed that the sitting area trash cans are occasionally turned upside down. The eventual hope is that this change will become permanent.

Recently, more effort has gone into tracking the numbers: how much is spent, used, and wasted. The recycling system has simplified from dual stream to single stream. Even Bard EATS, with Katrina Light at the head and several elected student government positions, is essentially two years old.

Chartwells, BoS, and Bard EATS all have suggestions to help students be more sustainable on a daily basis. First, taste food before filling your plate with it, and take less at once. "It's going to be there if you come back," says Husted. "It'll be there the next day. It's not your last meal." She adds, "Make it so you don't have to scrape your plate." Light, who responds to the comment board, asks that students "don't only offer complaints, but offer solutions." Use the resources. Katrina Light's desk is in New Kline so students can approach her. Cerulli, who occasionally hears rumors spread, says, "The door is open, guys. Come on in. Seriously, there's no secrets." Finally, be mindful. For Light, "it's always been thinking through problems and then realizing that the solution involves me changing my behavior." Everyone agrees that student behavior has in fact improved over time. Students care about their food more than ever. "It used to be labeled as a 'fad,'" says Cerulli. "It's just not."

Husted notes that although the amount of trash still needs to decrease, students are getting better at sorting their waste in the dish room. She is optimistic that the situation will continue to improve. If it does, the reward for a sustainable mindset and conserved funds would be better food bought from local, sustainable vendors. "Even though it seems intractable," Husted says, "something new can happen, and we can surprise ourselves, and you guys can surprise us."



photo by hugh hopkins



**featured artist: rosa polin**

*artist's statement courtesy of rosa polin*

Flawless is about the ebb and flow of embrace and disavowal. My feelings towards my own femininity are ambivalent. In some ways I see myself as fitting comfortably into the role allotted for me by history. But I feel a vacuum that cannot be accounted for when I try to know and express myself solely in terms of the types of womanhood I have been conditioned to embody. This work is in many ways about figuring out how to fit comfortably in a body. I'm interested in the performance of femininity, in what happens when we try on poses that allude to the history of representation: versions of Eve, Salome, The Virgin, Mary Magdalene, Venus or Olympia. These icons are complex and intimidating. They bring up more "questions" about the way we treat femininity than they provide answers; it becomes both menacing and nurturing, empowering and a sign of weakness. The resulting image is my attempt to describe something that can be felt but not as easily defined. The portraits become symbolic, signs whose forms grasp at their meaning, but necessarily fall short. Flawless is both genuine and ironic. It invokes the construction of femininity. It inches towards reclamation or empowerment, but remains haunted by the ghostly forms of the past.





photo by sage elder

## tenant's rights

xaver kandler

How rent works in Tivoli and in Red Hook, are on the cusp of change. Next year marks the first time that only moderated students will be able to live off campus. This creates an opportunity to fix a recurring problem in the community of off-campus Bard students, to shift tenant and landlord relationships. Once the demand for off-campus housing goes down, all tenants—not just the early birds—will have the ability to choose their house with the criteria of a responsive and respectful landlord in mind. The Bard renting atmosphere suffers from a number of structural issues. First, for the majority of us, this is our first time renting and our knowledge of leases, security deposits, and other important concerns are limited. Secondly, we are a transient population; we are only going to be living off-campus for a max of two years which can make people feel that it isn't worth investing their time into where they live. Lastly, we lack the established resources to help us learn the information we need. Navigating the tenant/landlord terrain becomes all the more treacherous. This situation intensifies the problem of absent or negligent landlords that are not held accountable. The question that arises is how can the Bard community create an infrastructure to help students deal with the risks and responsibilities of living off campus?

There are a number of initiatives that are just starting to respond to this problem and provide a new culture and infrastructure around tenant right issues. The first is addressing the problem of accountability. Since students will now live off-campus for only a couple of years and are relatively stratified by grade, the reputations of landlords—good and bad—are reset every couple of years. As we all know, RateMyProfessor is a great starting resource and is an effective tool to get a basic understanding of a professor. You won't be able to find out every detail of their teaching style but you'll know if the professor is horrible or incredible. In response, I am starting a similar system for landlords. Just go to [www.reviewmy-landlord.com](http://www.reviewmy-landlord.com) and type in Tivoli to see all the reviews we have collected in the past couple of weeks. Add in your own story—negative and positive—

to add to this collective knowledge. Consult it when you are looking for a place next year. Tell your friends to look at it when they are making a decision. This is a place for us to change the way landlords manage their properties and interact with the people who rent them, through a collective pool of knowledge.

The second problem is the lack of knowledge on how to approach your rights. With the help of Timand Bates, the sophomore Dean of Students, and the web services team, the ResLife website page is being remodeled and will be updated to include a multitude of useful resources. We will have the basics—New York State Tenant Rights Guide and the the New York State Standard Lease—and the specifics—the legal definition of habitability (for when it's 40 degrees and your heat goes out or when you have mice in your house)—all in one place to make it easy to find information on moving in/out or what to do if a problem arises.

Lastly, both Bard and the town of Tivoli want to see the properties managed better and the students treated with respect. As a result, I am working with Joel Griffith, the major of Tivoli to put together the Renter Handbook for Tivoli Residents and the Information Kit for Tivoli Residents. The Renter Handbook will be the go-to if you have any questions. It will have all the necessary information about renting in one place and links to anything that you may have further questions about. It covers security deposits (take photos before moving in!), leases (remember to negotiate before signing), heating (you're entitled to two years of data on heating and cooling costs), and rights to privacy. Additionally it will offer information on Tivoli, such as: how to deal with garbage, information on village government, and a schedule of all the cool festivals in town. The handbook will be available online, at the village office in Tivoli, and throughout campus.

It is up to us to take control over one of the most important relationships that we have: the relationship to where we live.

## saxophones and hot sauce: hillary clinton's black vote

taylor butler

All it took was a saxophone and a night of a satisfactory musical performance on Arsenio Hall's nightly show to win the hearts of Black American voters, so much so that we failed to recognize that our "first Black president" Bill Clinton was detrimental to the Black American community.

Clinton's signing of the 1994 crime bill prompted mass incarceration, lengthened prison sentences, and also put more police officers on the street, which increases the quota that police departments are pressured to meet. Specifically, these government policies were the remnants of a heavily influential Johnson-era War on Crime and Reagan-era War on Drugs. As well, the 1996 bill whose mission was to reduce poverty by expanding labor demand and therefore labor supply, only led to an increase in vulnerable families that found themselves below the poverty line, often times living on \$2 a day. In fact, it is no coincidence that these vulnerable families were minority Black households.

And still today, these issues are pervasive. So much so, former President Clinton has admitted to his wrongdoings when he recognized that "[I] signed the bill that made the problem worse" during his speech to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples, better known as the NAACP. Clinton shared these sentiments only less than a year ago, however, not surprisingly he has retracted them when he stated in his Hillary Clinton endorsement speech that "[You are] defending the people who kill the lives that you say matter." To be clear, Clinton's remarks were a response to his wife's labeling of "superpredators," a term that has considerably reduced [Black] youth down to anything other than human, and of course, a major target for unnecessary shootings and arrests—as well, a remark that she has yet to acknowledge in her current campaigning. And though Hillary Clinton has attempted to spark interest within the Black community by suggesting that she carries essential delicacies such as hot sauce in her bag or learning culturally Black dance moves on Ellen Degeneres' show to prove that she is "down," Hillary Clinton is proving quite the opposite.

In fact, she is proving that her presidential campaign towards Black people is nothing other than a minstrel show. Her campaign is a type of performance that hopes to garner the Black vote by performing what is perceived to be the cultural aspect of Blackness—by learning how we dance, and what types of condiments we eat with our food, and what music we are listening to. By reducing the importance of the Black vote down to having hot sauce in her bag, Hillary Clinton has shown repeatedly that the political identity of the Black community is not of much importance. Observed in many videos in which Clinton has scolded #BlackLivesMatter protesters, or has had them removed from the vicinities where she gave her speeches sponsored by large banks and corporations, or has held closed door meetings in which her voice mattered more than protesters demonstrates Clinton's politics as a model of white privilege.

Hillary Clinton's platform, though economically expansive in regard to education and criminal justice issues, shows that she has no time for "changing hearts" but rather for changing policies. And her sentiments on the importance of economic justice to improve racial justice highlights her potential belief that by offering Black people their forty-acres and a mule, her appeasement would win her our vote. This presidential-hopeful, by placing economic policies as the crux solution for racial issues, proves that she doesn't refuse to acknowledge the root of the problem of racism: racism perpetuates itself through the dissemination of knowledge, and that it is a form of discourse that is internalized by all races, including Black and Brown people.

More than dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline with a 2 million dollar budget, a very ambiguous policy, perhaps a more real solution would be to confront the racism that is taught in homes, but more specifically in schools that intentionally fail to accurately portray the history of all people. An education that discounts all histories by illustrating the history of one people, with which popular Stanford professor and author Sylvia Winter might agree, is the reason for this school-to-prison pipeline. Simply this—Hillary Clinton's reliance on economic solutions for solving racial issues shows that she is completely cognizant of the rooted issues that continue to perpetuate racism and racist violence against all people of color, but rather hide them than confront them.



## the bard worker experience survey

olive kuhn

I am writing this article in a considerable hurry, after waiting half an hour for Bard Security to let me into the Sawkill computer lab. When the friendly Security Guard finally arrived, he thanked me for "hanging in there" and advised me not to shut the door behind me, as it might lock again. There was a clear understanding in our brief exchange; he had not wanted this request to take half an hour, but the bottom line was that Security- like so many departments at Bard- is understaffed.

Understaffing, mismanagement, and underfunded departments are some of the most common complaints which the Bard Student Labor Dialogue (SLD) hears from Bard workers. Historically, the SLD has worked mostly with the unionized workers (Buildings and Grounds, Security, and Environmental Services) on campus, as unions provide an effective framework through which to reach large groups of workers. Last semester, we staged a successful campaign in conjunction with Buildings and Grounds pertaining to the bargaining unit's health care situation; the college signed a satisfactory contract of winter intercession, and our campaign methods raised awareness and interest of workers' rights at Bard to a level that I had not personally experienced before here.

So basically, last semester was rad and this semester the SLD has been, apparently, dormant. In truth, we've been rethinking. Working in conjunction with the on-campus unions is great, but what about the un-unionized workers, those who can't be reached through a meeting with the shop steward? Librarians, administrative assistants, postal workers, shuttle drivers, and employees that are harder to classify (what do you call someone who is neither administrative assistant nor management?) work in disparate locations, often in close proximity with management (whereas B&G, Security, and ES) work around campus, away from management. This means that if non-unionized workers want to discuss workplace problems, they may not feel at liberty to do so. The SLD has historically worked most closely with unionized employees because a union eliminates barriers to student-worker communication.

In order to address the above-mentioned barriers, the SLD has spent most of the semester creating and circulating the Bard Worker Experience Survey, an ANONYMOUS online survey which addresses personal issues (economics and job security) as well as workplace issues (resources, environment, etc). We even met with the Vice President of Administration in order to run the survey by them before sending it out. After weeks of circulating campus buildings and handing out surveys (or, often, links to the survey), we feel comfortable sharing some of our findings.

First of all, many of the staff who participated expressed concern for the funding and management of their department. Of our twenty respondents, six said that their department "sometimes" has sufficient resources to fulfill its mission, three said "often not" and one said "never." Librarians stated that the budget for purchasing new books was prohibitively low. Other workers voiced concerns that disorganization costs their department extra money; that their department is spread between three offices; that they felt difficulty in communicating with other departments or with administration. Another, perhaps surprising, theme which comes through in the surveys is that some staff desire more structure and accountability in the workplace. "Better job training," "accountability," and "supervision" are all key terms which occurred multiple times throughout the responses. One person asked for firmer deadlines. A stereotype of an office environment might feature tight deadlines and a boss breathing down your neck, but the surveys present a different image of how these jobs can be difficult. Throughout, we find a common thread that the non-unionized staff want the ability to do their jobs better.

In regards to the personal economics of working at Bard, what comes through in the surveys is a wide array of problems which are contextual as well as numerical. When asked, "What are the economic concerns that you face in your job?" staff pointed out that, while living costs in the Hudson Valley are increasing, as is the New York State minimum wage, their salaries are stagnating. One respondent stated that their department requires more skill and talent than it can pay for. Furthermore, two participants pointed out that new employees in their department are hired at a higher hourly rate than that at which experienced employees are already paid. Such a practice raises issues of respect as well as financial security. When staff do not receive recognition for the work they do, when they find themselves holding the same job title and salary but twice the responsibility that they did five years ago, this is an issue of respect. Salary raises and benefits are important to workers' qualities of lives but also to creating a sense of appreciation. From talking to staff and reading the surveys, I got a sense that many workers are devoted to, but do not feel appreciated by, the college.

The Bard Worker Experience Survey remains open and can be accessed by emailing [bardslid@gmail.com](mailto:bardslid@gmail.com). We see it as a continuous resource by which any employee can, at any time, express a particular thought or concern about their life at Bard. For the SLD, the next step is thinking about what problems we can address as students and how we can address them. In the meantime, we are pleased that the survey has served as a learning process as well as a tool. Visiting offices across campus was, for many members including myself, surprisingly difficult. Starting conversations is awkward. Continuing them? Not so much.



## athlete of the month: satwik srikrishnan

avery mencher

The May Athlete of the Month is squash player Satwik Srikrishnan, '17. Hailing from Mumbai, India, he is an Economics and Theater double major, and he recently helped to lead the men's squash team to Team Nationals this spring.

**Free Press:** What made you start playing squash and how long have you been playing?

**Satwik Srikrishnan:** I tried my hand a couple of different sports as a child: cricket, soccer, swimming, tennis and ping pong. I found eventually that racquet sports became my forte. Being from a large city, there are a lot of community clubs in different areas. My middle school had an extra-curricular outsource deal with 'Otters Club' - which was in my neighborhood. My mother enrolled me into one of the squash clinics offered at Otters, when I was in Grade 7. After some rough experiences with numerous coaches—in terms of demanding training sessions, and student-coach relationships— I found myself competing at the inter-school level and I represented the MSSA (Mumbai Schools Sports Association) for about three years. In my junior year of high school, I was diagnosed with sciatica and bed-rest for about 2 months hindered my fitness and skill level. After a year of hard work and intense practice sessions, I was back on court, and I haven't stopped since.

**FP:** Do people trash-talk during matches?

**SS:** Yes, to an extent. The College Squash Association is known for its on court behavior and bizarre reactions. But college squash is a communal sport where your teammates become family, hence accepting respectful behavior on court.

Every game differs. Watching your opponent warm up for a few minutes before the match makes you scrutinize carefully, and carve out a character in your mind. This in turn allows you to make assumptions about your opponent purely based on what you see. As for me, I base it solely on facial expression.

An instance that I remember fondly was when I played a student from Boston College. He lost a point off of a stroke and he began arguing with the referee, accusing him of making a wrong call. The referee stuck to his decision and my opponent slurred a couple of insults under his breath—obviously, towards me. There is a 'conduct warning' rule in the CSA which nobody really pays attention to because the referees are students and they understand the brunt of losing, just like everybody else!

**FP:** Why did you choose Bard?

**SS:** I chose Bard because of its communal environment. I wanted to go to a small school to create close-knit social experiences with my peers and Bard had the right things to offer. Also, the Economics and Theater Programs both were known to be extremely accessible in terms of receiving assistance outside the classroom and conversing with professors. I haven't heard of a better open-door and office hour policy in any other school.

**FP:** What do you like about playing at Bard? What would you change?

**SS:** I love hype. I look forward to games during the season and the pre-game advice is always a treat because of our fantastic coach, Mr. Craig Thorpe-Clark. It's always good spirited when we tour other schools to play, and my teammates have an innate ability to look out for one another, cheer and respect when we are up on court, giving it our all. I play because I love the sport, and I want the best for my team and my coach. If I had to change anything about playing here, it would be to alter the community's idea of generalizing athletes into one perception.

**FP:** What do you do to get ready for a match?

**SS:** Pour out half an orange gatorade, fill up the space with iced water and place it near a towel, outside the court. As a team, we then do the captain's regime of court sprints, lunges and a few three-quarter court games. And of course, bump "Freebird" by Lynyrd Skynyrd on my headphones, full volume. And yes, I dedicate a whole ten minutes before the game so I can listen to the solo.

**FP:** Favorite pregame meal?

**SS:** Stacked chocolate chip pancakes with syrup, eggs, toast and a cup of coffee.

**FP:** Any superstitions?

**SS:** Last season, I found myself folding my bandana the night before the match and putting it into my squash bag, so as to readily wear it and look fierce in front of the opposing school, the day of the game. This drove me, during every tournament to feel excited and ready to play. I also pray to a few of my Hindu idols in my dorm room before leaving and perform a little ritual I learned back home. It entails positivity, luck and safety.



## remembering andy mccabe

*avery mencher*

I first met Andy McCabe in the fall of 2014, interviewing him for a Free Press piece on how their team had grown substantially over the off-season (the actual headline of the piece was "The Men's Soccer Team Has A Lot Of First-Years: Like A Lot"). Until that point, I had known Coach McCabe simply as the men's soccer coach. I saw him around the gym, hobbling due to his multiple hip surgeries; I had heard good things about him from friends on the team, but I had never met the man himself.

Coach Andy McCabe passed away suddenly and unexpectedly at the beginning of April, a tragic loss for the Bard community. He was in his third season as head men's soccer coach, having seen the team through from a 2-17 year in 2013 to getting their first Liberty League win this fall against Skidmore. He played soccer at Middlebury College and served as assistant coach there for eight years, winning a national championship title in 2007. He loved work and the way it allowed him to enjoy life, telling me in that initial interview that "if I want to visit friends, I'd rather they invite me and say 'let's hang drywall for six hours.' I'd rather do that than go to their house and sit around the coffee table watching television." Sophomore captain Nick Shenberger, recruited by McCabe, remembers McCabe's ability to put others before himself. "I've never seen someone who would always have time for others the way he did. His life was about the team, but it was also about your life, if you cared to share something about it with him. I've heard multiple stories from colleagues, family, friends and of course my teammates and it is unanimous that he would always have time for you wherever you were and whenever you needed a bit of advice."

That advice, though almost always sage, could be bizarre. As a man and as a coach, it is widely agreed-upon that "unorthodox" was the perfect word to describe Andy McCabe. He implemented a man-to-man defensive scheme in a game against RPI this fall, a tactic virtually unheard of in college soccer. Before becoming a coach at Middlebury, he owned a wine store in rural Vermont, where he met Middlebury head coach Dave Seward and was asked to join the staff. According to Seward, McCabe immediately responded, "Sure!" with a smile, not even stopping to think about the proposal.

When I think about that first interview with Coach McCabe nearly two years ago, the image is burned into my mind: walking into his office, greeted by an enthusiastic "Howdy!" from a man wearing decrepit Adidas sneakers paired with a collared shirt, sweater, and chinos. McCabe was at home in that office and on the Lorenzo Ferrari Soccer Field behind it, surrounded by his valued peers in the athletic department. At a memorial service in late April on campus, that same athletic department showed their love for Coach McCabe, as the Bard Chapel was filled to the brim with students, coaches, and administrators, as well as Coach Seward, McCabe's family, and even the Vassar men's soccer team. Throughout remarks from Rabbi David Nelson, McCabe's assistant coach (and now head coach) Brandon Jackson, captains Shenberger and Austin Higgins, and Seward, it was clear that McCabe had an uncanny ability to bring happiness wherever he went. Nearly every story caused the entire crowd to burst out laughing, and even though it was a memorial service, it truly felt like a celebration of this man's life. Seward put it best: "With every person I've talked to about Andy since he passed, we start the conversation out crying, and we finish it laughing." At a reception after the service, sophomore lacrosse player Dalton Davis recalled a time that he and assistant men's lacrosse coach Marcel Godino were standing next to the soccer field. Davis had never met or spoken to Coach McCabe, so it was that much stranger when McCabe zoomed by on the department golf cart, yelling "What's up, fuckers?!" Again, McCabe's tendency for bizarre hilarity shines through. Apart from his contributions to the athletic community through his undying dedication to his team, that will be Andy McCabe's legacy: an infectious, unorthodox ability to inspire laughter and joy, no matter the situation.

## pure bliss

ilana silber

I remember the first piece of Montgomery Place Orchard fruit I ever tasted. It was a Bartlett pear. Sophomore year had just begun and I was desperately craving a fresh snack to break up the monotony of Kline apples and bananas. Newly equipped with my grandma's 1999 Chevy Malibu, I headed to the nearest farm I could find. After driving less than five minutes south on 9G, I spotted the MPO farm market. Here's where the pear comes in. I never saw myself as a pear person, and I don't know of too many people who do. "They're OK," everyone says, and it's understandable; pears can be mealy, flavorless, and overall unremarkable. But only a person who hasn't tasted an MPO Bartlett pear would think this way. One bite and I was hooked. I went back every day that week to buy a new quart of them. I was intent on force-feeding everyone I knew a piece of this heavenly crop so they could finally see the light.

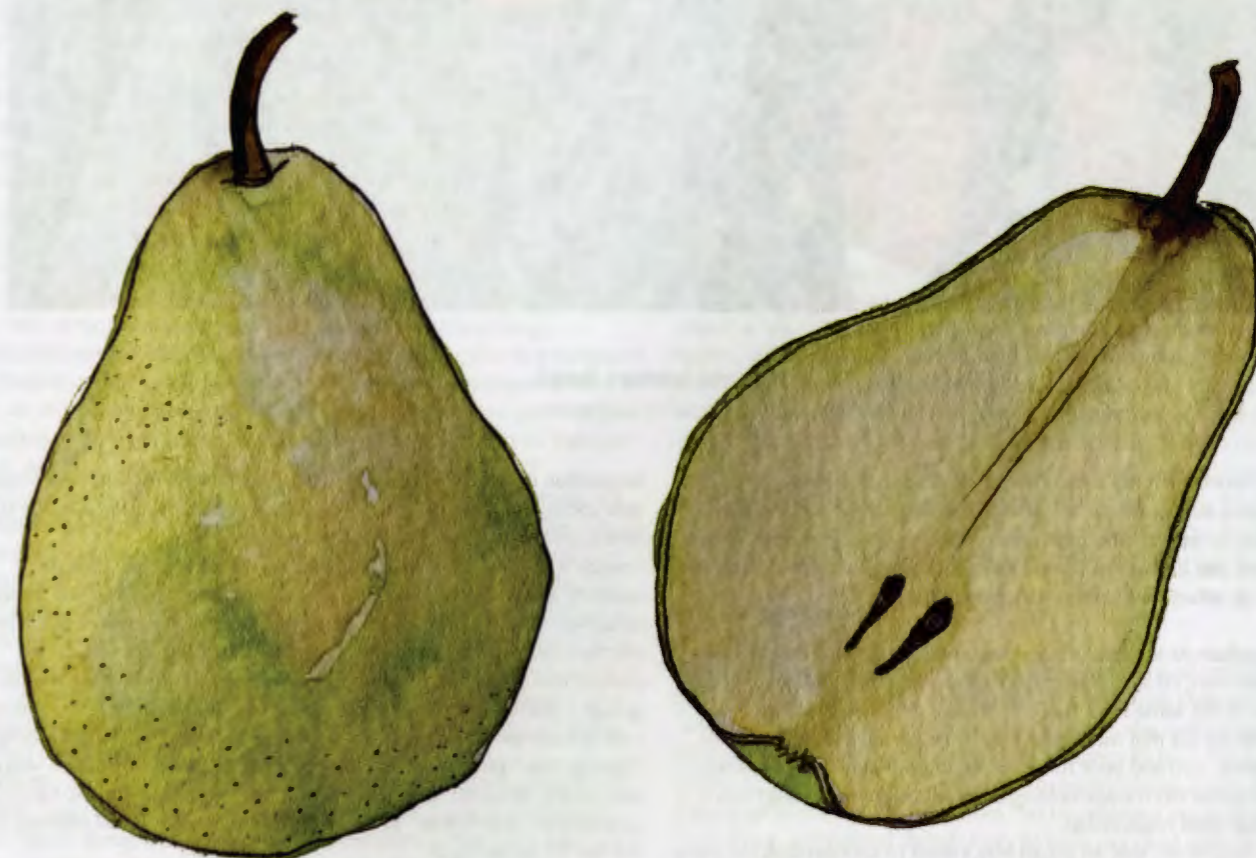
Two and a half years later, I am beginning my third season working with Doug and Talea Taylor, who manage Montgomery Place Orchards. I now know that the Bartlett pear is Talea's favorite fruit for this exact reason. As she puts it, "I love to watch people's expressions when they eat a perfectly ripe Bartlett Pear for the first time - just pure bliss." Also, as Edward Bunyon wrote in his 1929 book, *The Anatomy of Dessert*, "The pear must be approached, as its feminine nature indicates, with discretion and reverence; it withholds its secrets from the merely hungry." This might explain why I never fancied myself a pear person. Over the course of their thirty years at Montgomery Place the Taylors have cultivated not only scores of antique apple varieties, and various fruits and veggies, but also a base of knowledge and lore that enhances our understandings of fruit. The Bartlett pear is my favorite fruit, but each apple variety has a tale; each stone fruit has a saying; and the storytelling that surrounds not only each fruit, but also the caring and farming of these crops is rich and deep on Montgomery Place Orchard's land.

The joy Talea describes when watching someone taste a perfectly ripe Bartlett pear is a sensation I often feel at the farm stand; newness, community, and frankly, pure bliss. For me, Montgomery Place Orchards was a little piece of utopia I was lucky enough to be let into. This is in part what made learning about the Taylors' struggles so shocking. Talea and Doug never advertise their hardship. Doug spends most of his time at the orchard, and at the stand Talea is stoic about these things. Slowly, though, I began to learn of the difficulties the Taylors have had over the last several decades securing their livelihoods and their rights to remain the caretakers of the orchard. For twenty-nine years the Taylors lived with no more than a year-to-year license to work the land. As winter approached each year everyone would wonder whether this season would be the last. Over time tensions mounted with

the official landowners of the property, Historic Hudson Valley. The Taylors' security seemed less and less assured. When rumors began to spread that Historic Hudson Valley was gearing up to sell the property, the Taylors started preparing to lose everything. Then Bard bought the property.

Though frightening for the family at first, the Bard purchase has brought the Taylors renewed sense of hope in the future; barns are being fixed, lighting has been installed along paths, and lines of communication are finally being opened with the new landowners. Bard College and Montgomery Place Orchards have been the two most important communities to me during these last four years. Now, as I gear up to leave, the connections between them are only growing. These connections have been growing in my mind for some time though. Writing my senior project about the Taylors and Montgomery Place Orchards meant letting these worlds intersect in unexpected ways. From the library archivist to my favorite Tivoli carpenter, people from my separate communities have been colliding for months. Graduation is quickly approaching though, and while these intersections will only continue to develop between Montgomery Place Orchards and Bard College, it's time for me to navigate the muddied community waters I've created, to figure out how and when to say goodbye, and to make decisions about where to go from here.

Talea's father has a saying that has become commonplace at the orchard: "There's no tomorrow in the fruit business!" The sentiment is to live and plan for the day, because farming is innately uncertain and tomorrow is filled with unknowns. The phrase is so poignant to the Taylors' lives though, because, as Talea explains, "the way my dad said it is ironic. Everything you do in the fruit growing business is for tomorrow—training and pruning trees, planting trees, spraying for pest control." This is at the heart of the Taylors' lives as fruit growers; the inherent tension between thinking for now and thinking for tomorrow. It's also the dilemma I face leaving Bard. Do I plan for an uncertain future or make decisions from day to day? Tomorrow is certainly filled with unknowns, but today I can say there are a few things I'm sure of. I know that my time here has been well spent, that against all odds I've grown into a person I truly like. I know that Bard is a finite experience, but there are those golden gems I've met who will stay with me for years. Most importantly though, I know that the fruit business is not done with me yet, and I happily concede. Talea, Doug, and the workers at Montgomery Place Orchards have become my Hudson Valley family. And so, it may be time for me to say goodbye to Bard, but if you find yourself in need a Bartlett pear next fall, come find me—I'll be at the farmstand on 9G.





## mama knows best

julie and avery mencher

**How do I work with my mom to find a balance between my desire to feel more independent at college and my mom's desire to stay in constant contact? She cares more than anything about me, but sometimes she can seem like a helicopter parent even though she means well. What do I do to work through this?**

**Julie Mencher:** At the risk of sounding old (you guys already know I'm old, anyway), I'd like to start with an idiom here: "You never stick your hand in the same river twice." Life is a constantly-moving river, and no one knows that more persistently or perhaps more painfully than a parent. You and your mom are facing the inevitably growing pains that come from transforming a parent/child relationship to a parent/adult child relationship.

When my boy Avery was an actual boy, I used to sob through his every milestone and birthday. Leaving the hospital with my swaddled-up pumpkin? "It's the end of an era," I wailed. His first steps? "He's going to walk away from me someday," I foretold. "Graduation" from preschool? "He's not my baby anymore," I sobbed. All the way to his first day of college, when I cried so hard driving away from him that I got lost in Annandale-on-Hudson!

And then I stopped crying and began a new chapter of my own life. As he wrote L & T essays reflecting on his childhood and, in particular, his relationship with me, I learned from him that sometimes, just sometimes, loss leads to gain and when one door shuts, another opens, ya-de-ya-de-ya-da.

After finding my way out of Annandale, I came home to my completely empty house, cried for five days, picked myself up and moved on. I started writing for HuffPo, and began consulting to schools on transgender issues. I beefed up my social life and borrowed a friend's high school daughter to surrogate-parent sometimes.

As the (mostly) single mom of a single child, others always remarked on how close we were and how special our relationship was. But as we learned to be close from a distance, we found new sources of

inspiration in our own lives and new opportunities for what we could talk about, laugh about, and cry about by text, phone, and a volley of articles, FB posts, and emails back and forth.

Maybe it sounds like I'm writing this to your mom, dear college student, and maybe I am. Because I think it's primarily her job to find whatever new chapter(s) can emerge for her in this new river (to mix metaphors). It's up to you to figure out what level of contact and connection you want, and then be direct with her to find the middle ground. Rather than assert your wishes by ignoring her texts, which will only arouse her anxiety and ramp up her pursuit, set up a weekly "quality time" phone call and let her know the number of texts you can reasonably respond to in a week. Ask her to assume that 'no news is good news' in between. You can even send her my email address, and tell her to get in touch.

**Avery Mencher:** Surprisingly enough, as the only son of a Jewish mother, I am pretty familiar with overbearing, overcaring parents. Obviously you know that your mom only wants the best for you, and it all comes out of love. Unfortunately, it's pretty difficult to always remember that, especially when you're at school, trying to be as independent as possible.

I totally agree that it's a tough position to be in; you don't wanna seem like you're rejecting unconditional love, and you want to be sure that you don't worry her or give her any reason for anxiety (more than she already has from being an overbearing mother). Though she definitely needs to change her expectations, that change may not come easily, and you will probably have to have a serious conversation with her about it. I agree with what my intensely loving mother suggested – set up concrete ideas about weekly phone calls and what she can expect. Before going abroad last semester, I had the very same conversation with my mom, two years into my college career. It definitely kept things clear, and I think both of us were happier for it.

**One of my roommates has an eating disorder, but I don't think she knows I've picked up on it (Binge Eating Disorder). She's been open about struggling with mental health, but hasn't been specific about her struggles. I've never had a friend with an eating disorder as serious as this before, but I don't know how to intervene or if I'm the right person to intervene. She is very insecure, and her insecurities are starting to affect me in a negative way. Part of me doesn't want to get involved in this aspect of her life. The other part of me feels like I have to get involved since I noticed it, even though she didn't explicitly tell me. Should I approach her and let her know I want to support her? How could I talk to her without seeming accusatory?**

**JM:** As a former therapist at three women's college counseling services, I'm very familiar with this dilemma. You want to be a good friend, but don't know how. You also want to protect your own needs and boundaries, and not sacrifice your well-being in order to rescue her. You are beginning to suffer the effects of compassion fatigue.

You know how when you're on an airplane, the flight attendant says to parents traveling with children, "In the event of an emergency where oxygen is required, put your own mask on first?" This just might be a Your-Mask-on-First-Moment. While your concern for your roommate is warranted, it's not your job to save her ahead of yourself. And if you are going to be able to help her, you'll need to be sturdy and sane enough to do the job.

Keep in mind: She is not your responsibility. You can choose to help her or not, based on a well-considered calculation of what you have to offer and what the nature of your relationship with her is. Since she is both your roommate and your friend, it's important that your home remain your safe harbor, and not be a place you view as soul-sucking. If you do choose to help her, know that an eating disorder is a symptom of a deeper mental health problem, a dysfunctional symptom which goes on to become its own problem. You can say, "I know you've been struggling and lately I've noticed some things in your behavior that worry me. Are you sure you're getting all the support you need?"

The best she can do on her own behalf is to get professional help, not lean on and burn out her friends. Friends can help by supporting, directing to professional resources, offering companionship and distraction – but NOT by standing in for the real deal of therapists, nutritionists, physicians, and parents. Setting boundaries on what you can and cannot do offers structure and models relational integrity – by doing so, you send the message: 'I want to be here for you for the long haul, so we need to take care of our friendship by maintaining mutuality and balance.' This is a great set of skills to master, since life often presents us with those dangling oxygen masks.

**AM:** Damn, love the oxygen mask metaphor, Mom. Some real textbook therapist lingo right there, you guys should pay us hourly for this shit. Totally agree though; you need to make sure that, before you help her in any way, you make sure that whatever way this is affecting you is taken care of. Once you've done that, go ahead and follow our advice. How well do you know this woman? Is there anyone (parents, administrators, friends) that you could talk to beforehand and get on your side? If you're noticing it, you're probably not the only one. You also say that you're not sure if you're the right person to intervene: you may not be. Since you're saying that, it might be better to try to go to someone who is a little closer with her and bring up your concerns. I'm sure they'd be appreciative and open to hearing about it and helping in whatever way they can.

**My boyfriend is transferring schools and we're mad in love and working in the same city this summer to be together. Is it worth it to try long distance?**

**JM:** "Mad in love" is nothing to sneeze at. You don't say how long you've been together, but clearly the relationship is already important enough to both of you that you're making whatever geographic choices you can make – the summer option – to be together. Chances are that

more will be revealed this summer, as you take your relationship on the road, out of the Bard bubble, and see if it works with a change of locale. That will probably tell you much about whether it's worth trying the long-distance thing.

My first impulse was to say, "What have you got to lose?" by trying a long-distance relationship. When I read a NYT article about ambitious women refusing to engage in romantic relationships during college because they didn't want to have a relationship sway their after-college career choices, I thought to myself, "Why are they so afraid of loss?" They're actually foregoing relationships because it might hurt someday to say goodbye?!

You're already in it, my friend. It'll hurt to say goodbye at any point, and you might as well see it through to its conclusion, whether that's from near or far. I would also urge you and your bf to think creatively about how to adapt your relationship to a long-distance format, whether that involves the freedom to date others, hitting a pause button for a time, or setting up a certain regularity of in-person contact. Just don't expect that long-distance is the same thing as being there, have reasonable expectations, and keep up candid, honest communication.

**AM:** First things first: long distance is hard. I've done it, and it was absolutely harder than I expected. It's not impossible, and I do know couples that have done it and been happy. However, I think it really takes a special relationship to be able to survive being apart. This is also a hard question to answer without a bit more context: How long have you been together? How often will you be able to see each other? Can you drive to where he's going, or do you have to fly?

I would also think long and hard if you're considering an open relationship. I've tried that as well, and I learned that you both need to be very honest about why you want it and if you're both actually comfortable with it. That doesn't mean that you do it because you think it would be better for your partner and therefore your relationship; that means you do it because you think it would be better for both of you (emphasis on you). Your relationship will not do well if you're sacrificing your own happiness for what you think makes your partner happy. You're the only one who can fully know what you want or are comfortable with, so try to be as honest with yourself and your partner as you can be.

**Is it bad to be a nerd?**

**JM:** When Avery was small and showing some signs of nerdiness (I know, it's hard to believe), I panicked – the last thing I wanted was a nerd for a son. When I complained to a friend, she said to me, "Just think about it – there are so many worse things to have for a son than a nerd. If he's a nerd, you won't have to worry about drugs, crime, or school performance." Hmmmm. So I swallowed my pride and cool mom cred, and forged ahead. Only to have my child grow into this cool dude.

The truth is, nerds rule the world, my friend. Just think Mark Zuckerberg, Barack Obama, Lena Dunham, Melissa Meyer, Tina Fey. If others laugh at your nerdiness, just remember someday you might be laughing all the way to fame and fortune.

**AM:** Yeah, you might...just depends how long you're willing to get stuffed in lockers on your way there. Just kidding! Labels like "nerd" are obviously very ingrained into our culture, especially throughout adolescence and young adulthood. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter if you consider yourself a nerd. You're not going to be happy unless you're "being true to who you are" (or something corny like that), so do that. If you're a nerd, oh well.

However, I do want to take this opportunity to publicly disavow my mother's claim that I "showed some signs of nerdiness." I've never heard her say that before right now. Couldn't every 4 year old kid name every single type of dinosaur and spell their names correctly??

