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Trees: Bard's Humble Champions

NOAH WURTZ

We've all had the same conversation countless times: Where is Bard's community spirit? Bard is atomized: we are inactive. The unifying factor of Bard is that there is no unifying factor. Where can we take our pride? Our buildings are slowly deteriorating, almost as quickly as our school's (and our own) financial prospects. We lack the truly exceptional. We long for a champion. But perhaps, we are surrounded by them.

We need not look any further than our suspiciously silent campus co-inhabitants that have earned Bard's reputation as being located in 'the middle of the woods.' That's right, Bard College is home to 14 State Champion trees, which are the largest tree of a native or naturalized species in the

All but one of these trees were discovered by Dan McKenna, a Bard horticulturist. On a cold winter day I bundled up, and, along with my fellow Free Press reporters, clambered into Dan's silver station wagon to check out our Champs.

From behind the wheel, Dan inculcated us with the little known art of tree hunting. In essence, tree hunting is keeping an eye out for unusually large trees. Keep in mind, height isn't all that matters in the hunt for the champion tree. In fact, according to Dan, the circumference is usually the deciding factor.

To identify a State Champion, one needs to take three measurements: the height, the circumference and average crown spread (how far the branches spread out). The measurements are combined into a total point score which is then submitted to the state's Department of Environmental Conservation to be confirmed and added to the

But it's not always easy,

and sometimes it's a lonely

life. "It's tough man, it's

tough," said Dan. "It's tough

to get people to talk about

trees...The people I work

with are like 'come on Dan,

can you talk about trees for-

trees and preach the good

word, however, he spends

his days caring for Bard's

arboreal residents and

planting new ones. In his

time at Bard, Dan estimates

be

a campus to share with our

woody wonders. So if you do

considerably

Dan doesn't only hunt

Bard College

FREE PRESS



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2018

Annandale-On-Hudson, NY

Winston Cheney



database. Anyone can claim a State Champion tree, and once they get a forester to verify their measurements, their name is added to a list called the Big Tree Registry.

While he ranks among the best of them, Dan hasn't always been a tree hunter. It all started with a dream about five years ago. "I didn't even realize the list existed," Dan told us, "and then when I found it, I was like 'I betcha I can beat some of those.' And then I got one, and then another, and another, and I was like, 'yeah, I'm gonna be a tree hunter.'

And indeed he did. In the past two years he has claimed twenty State Champion trees. That's a rate of 0.00001902587 trees per minute!

Dan's simple; he goes on walks and if he sees a tree that's unusually large, he'll take its

found passion for tree hunting, Dan has had a love of trees that was planted when he first started working at Bard around 15 years ago.

that he has planted at least one thousand trees. For all their grandeur, perhaps the trees aren't the true campus champions. Everyday we walk among them, we appreciate their beauty and feel comforted by their presence. Yet if it weren't for Dan, there

ever?"

methods would are fewer places to recline in the shade, branches to climb, and leaves to crunch undermeasurements. foot. In fact, if it weren't for In addition to his newthe employees in Bard's horticulture department keeping the wilderness at bay, there wouldn't even be

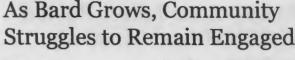
> Bard is rich, white, male, and heteronormative.

> To deconstruct this predominating narrative, the student body needs a democratically-operated organization whose purpose is to be an independent monitor of power.

It must publish regularly, it must strive for accuracy and objectivity, and most importantly, it must refuse to accept the institution's official depiction of itself.

One such organization is called the Free Press.

> Join the Free Press: bardfreepress@gmail.com



LIAM MAYO

On November 16, 2017, Bard hosted a presentation in Olin Room 102 called "Community + Place: Making of the Bard Master Plan." When members of the community arrived, they discovered that the presentation was meant only for Bard students in a specific class, and were turned away by security guards.

For Barrytown residents Deliana Simeonova and Andres San Millan, this incident emblemized Bard's relationship with the community regarding the Master Plan. They said in a statement to the Free Press, "Bard publicly advertises the Master Plan as the product of a participatory design process, while local residents have never been informed or involved.'

Along with 39 other members of the local community, they sent a letter to Bard and the Red Hook Planning

Board on December 13, 2017. This letter presented three suggestions for how Bard might engage the community in the planning process, discussing traffic, sustainability, and community engagement.

This letter was sent to several high ranking Bard executives, including President Botstein. It never received a response. During an open house in February, The Free Press asked Botstein if Bard was fulfilling its obligations towards the community in regards to the Master Plan.

The time for community involvement is "when the college has a concrete plan to do something," Botstein said. Community discussion of the Master Plan would be unproductive, in his view, because there aren't enough specifics to work with.

In addition, he claimed that Bard is in a special situation because it's "the most important economic engine

in the region." Bard's influence in the region inspires both great popular support and the criticism of an outspoken minority, he said, adding that Bard's responsibility is to work with the official representatives of the community, not groups of private residents.

Those representatives are the members of the Red Hook Town Planning Board, who are currently deliberating on whether to require Bard to write an Environmental Impact Statement for the Master Plan.

An EIS examines the potential impacts of a proposed action (in this case, all the projects proposed by the Master Plan) on the natural environment and local community. The EIS process allows for community involvement in planning and encourages revised plans to lessen potential negative im-

In a February 5, 2018 meeting of the Planning Board, Bard representatives in attendance, project manager Chuck Simmons and Morris Associates engineer Peter Setaro, strongly protested any requirement to fill out an EIS.

While the Planning Board postponed their final decision until February 26, they discussed several areas of potential impact--traffic, enrollment, and community aesthetics. Traffic has been a long

standing grievance for many members of the community. But according to statements from Bard representatives and President Botstein, Bard has little control over traffic flow around the college. Local residents have expressed doubt at these statements, and the Planing Board echoed these sentiments in their February 5 meeting, adding that traffic may continue increasing due to projects included in the Master Plan.

Evaluating the results of Master Plan projects on local traffic would require a survey of present conditions on the roads surrounding the campus, something Bard representatives claimed would be more suitable for specific site projects. According to the Planning Board, this would also require more accurate predictions about future enroll-

The administration has repeatedly claimed that the campus expansions will not increase enrollment. According to the Chairman of the Red Hook Planning Board, similar assurances were made in Bard's 1997 Master Plan, after which the student body grew immensely. The Bard representatives in attendance responded by saying that national trends, rather than specific policy, determined the size of the student body, implying that plans change with the times.

An EIS would also take into account cumulative effects, such as those on community aesthetics. Most of the proposed new buildings are taller than allowed by local building codes, and many have additional issues. While the effect of one variance may be small, the cumulative effects from multiple projects might be far greater, which is unknowable until thorough studies are conducted.

end up hunting down these champions, keep in mind the people who planted the seeds and nurtured their

Yet, for all that he and his colleagues have acheived,

there is always more to be done. "Maybe," mused Dan while puffing on a freshly rolled Amsterdam Shag, "a tree that I plant will be a champion."

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Anonymous Letter Posted at CCS Hessel Museum

CALLIE JACKS

In an act of institutional critique, an anonymous individual called for transparency at the Hessel Museum of Art. Sometime in October of 2017, a number of pieces of copy paper covered in bold typeface appeared on an exterior wall and in the coatroom of the museum.

The complete statement. hung in two neat rows next to a coat rack, was a message to all museums and highlighted the importance of aesthetic engagement, citing it as an action that "merges physical, mental, and spiritual perception". In comparing a museum to a semi-permeable cell, the author exposes institutional exclusivity as a problem that is prevalent in the art world.

Many museums worldwide experience criticisms of this nature; citizens and artists alike are demanding inclusivity, transparency, and true objectivity while denouncing systematic discrimination perpetuated by museums.

The Hessel treated the message like its own art exhibit, leaving it in the original place and including a small label to inform viewers that it was placed there anonymously. Marcia Acita, the director of Exhibitions and Operations, described the piece as a "deliberate" and "thoughtful" action. She wished for an opportunity to have a conversation with the individual. She imagined a situation in which a person could have entered the museum during a quiet hour and, out of view of the front desk, pasted each 8.5" by 11" sheet in the coatroom.

The proclamation was up for a few days even before security guards noticed. Acita recalled seeing two pieces of white paper attached to the exterior of the window, which looks out over the southwest wall and

of the bulletin, Acita questioned a group of Center for Curatorial Studies first years--some of whom curated a final exhibit for their class called States of Presence in December of 2017. She had remembered an instant when they asked if the Hessel had ever hosted an exhibit about the history of Native Americans on the land Bard now inhabits. Perhaps this interest was motive. The CCS students were surprised to learn about the anonymous act; if it had come from inside the graduate center, why were they just hearing about it

lawn. They were already

In a search for the author

buckled by wind.

States of Presence, curated by Mathilde Walker-Billaud, Drew Broderick, Srinivas Aditya Mopidevi, Moses Serubiri, and Julia Eilers Smith, was the third part in "the whole is not the whole is not the whole," the final exhibit put together by the first-year practicum class. Using pieces from the Marieluise Hessel Collection of Contemporary Art, the exhibit explored different perspectives on how parts make up a whole. States of Presence focused on "the act of staying." The curators looked for artworks that showed an engagement with territory and land. The exhibit included pieces that address the topics of immigration, migration, death, among others.

"the whole is not the

whole is not the whole" was one of three exhibits that surveyed multiple sides of an idea at the Hessel during the fall semester. No to the Invasion featured art from the contemporary Arab-speaking world, an area that has been characterized by conflict and shifting powers. Each work was meant to be engaged with alongside this frame of knowledge. Picture Industry, curated by former Bard student Walead Beshty, surveyed many elements of media from the 19th-century to the present including but not limited to, photographs, slides, periodicals, and films. Both exhibits brought many visitors, from first-year Language and Thinking classes to locals from the surrounding towns. Picture Industry, in par-

ticular, generated a considerable amount of conversation. Many people were drawn to Arthur Jafa's Love is the Message, the Message is Death, a compilation of found media about African-American identity projected from ceiling to floor in a gallery. Kanye West's "Ultralight Beam" pulsed under photographs of civil rights leaders, footage from the Rodney King riots, and news clips from Hurricane Katrina. The piece pulled emotion from everyone, security guards and students alike. A professor even brought a class to see the video multi-

ple times. One might look at these exhibits that took place at the Hessel in the fall of 2017 and question why someone would criticize such an institution in the form of anonymous poetry; each exhibit contained stories perspectives as seen by artists from all over the world. In a response to the posting, one individual cited the presence of Arthur Jafa's video and Gordon Parks' photogra-

RIGHT TO PRESERVE

THE MUSEUM HAS THE POWER TO GIVE

OBJECTIVE SPACE, THE IMPLICATION IS THAT THOSE

OBJECTIVITY WHILE UPHOLDING BLASED STANDARDS

EXCLUDED ARE OBJECTIVELY UNDESERVING THE

THE RIGHT TO INTERPRET AND THEREFORE

THE RIGHT TO GIVE THEIR LIVES MEANING.

OF WHAT IS WORTHY OF INCLUSION,

MENTAL, INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL

SIGNIFICANCE INTO SENSORY OBJECTS.

PRESERVING AND INTERPRETING.

THROUGH SECURING A PERCEIVED SENSE OF

THE MUSEUM INSTITUTIONALLY PERPETUATES

RACISM, SEXISM, CLASSISM AND DISCRIMINATION.

THIS SPACE COULD BE LIFE-GIVING, BREATHING

THROUGH PRIORITIZING INCLUSIVE AESTHETIC

ENGAGEMENT, IT COULD DISTRIBUTE THE POWER OF

MUSEUMS PLAY AN IMPERATIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING

phy-both of which appeared in Picture Industryas a counter argument. As if the existence of work by two notable black artists automatically made the Hessel exempt from the category of museum that "institutionally perpetuates racism, sexism, classism, and discrimination." In fact, only a handful of board members, faculty, curators-in-residence, and artists-in-residence at the Hessel are people of color. In addition, CCS only offers limited amounts of financial aid for graduate students. With limited perspectives to draw from, how can an institution of power be truly inclusive?

It cannot be denied that the past semester of exhibits focused on a narrative of inclusivity and consisted of art from a wide variety of backgrounds. Whether this theme was deliberate is unknown. Intentional or not, the anonymous postings raise important questions about the Hessel Museum and its actions in the future. Perhaps most important: by whose standards do we deem an object worthy?

Chelsea Manning Speaks at Bard er that's been in school or in

BROWNYN SIMMONS

Wednesday, February 21, 2018, US Army government whistleblower Chelsea Manning spoke at an event hosted by the Hannah Arendt Center Tough Talk series and Queer Student Organization. More than 800 people were in attendance.

Professor Roger Berkowitz, Academic Director of the Arendt Center, opened by introducing Harper Zacharias and Mark Williams Jr., the two students in charge of organizing the event. Rebecca Thomas, Dean of the College, and Professor Kevin Duong, Political Studies, moderated.. Chelsea Manning spoke first, initially broaching the subject of failing governmental institutions. "Sometimes you have to replace those institutions and sometimes you have to combat those institutions, and that's been an ongoing experience in my life, wheththe military or in prison or even today," said Manning. "Sometimes you have to actually step outside that system and move forward."

Following her opening remarks, Duong and Thomas probed Manning on government surveillance, ethics duty, transgender rights, artificial intelligence, U.S. military action abroad, prison systems, and community organizing. The energetic debate lasted for an hour before opening up to audience questions.

Event sponsors include The Draft, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Global International Studies, the Office for Gender Equity, Queer People of Color, It's on Us, Student Labor Dialogue, the Center for Civic Engagement, the Center for Experimental Humanities, the Office for Gender Diversity and Inclusion, and the Trans

This story will be continued in greater depth in the next issue of the Free Press.

Posted by an Anonymous Indivisual at the Hessel Museum, Fall 2017

AESTHETIC ENGAGEMENT MERGES PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION. ALL OBJECTS HAVE THE POWER TO INSPIRE AESTHETIC ENGAGEMENT, BUT GENERALLY THE CONTEXT OF THE OBJECT DETERMINES HOW WE INTERACT WITH IT.

THE MUSEUM IS A MAJOR CONTEXTUALIZER OF OBJECTS ENABLING AESTHETIC ENGAGEMENT ON A MASS-SCALE.

IF WE SEE A CARDBOARD BOX ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, WE MAY ENGAGE WITH IT PASSIVELY. IF WE SEE A CARDBOARD BOX IN A MUSEUM, WE ENGAGE WITH IT AS ART.

LIKE CELLS WITH SEMI-PERMEABLE MEMBRANES. MUSEUMS HOLD THE POWER TO EXCLUDE. INSTITUTIONALLY VALIDATING OR REJECTING THE OBJECT AS ART.

ANYTHING DEEMED WORTHY TO ENTER IS DEEMED WORTHY OF AESTHETIC PERCEPTION. **EXCLUSION MAKES THE ARTIST AND THE OBJECT** INSTITUTIONALLY INVISIBLE.

IF THE PURPOSE OF THE MUSEUM IS TO PRESERVE, TO CREATE A SPACE FOR REFLECTING UPON WHAT IS THEN THE MUSEUM PLAYS THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF

DOCUMENTING LIVED EXPERIENCE. ALL LIVES ARE EXPERIENCED, BUT ONLY FEW HAVE INSTITUTIONAL MEANS OF DOCUMENTING THEIR

HISTORICAL POWER IS BORN FROM THE ABILITY TO RECORD AND INTERPRET LIVED EXPERIENCE AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE IS AMPLIFIED WHEN THIS INTERPRETATION IS INSTITUTIONALLY VALIDATED.

INTERPRETIVE MEANING TO OBJECTS, ARTISTS, WHEN THE MUSEUM PRESENTS ITSELF AS AN

AESTHETIC ENGAGEMENT, BUT THE CURRENT IDEOLOGY OF THE MUSEUM MUST WE NEED MUSEUMS THAT ARE NOT PREDICATED ON

AN APPEARANCE OF OBJECTIVITY. WE NEED MUSEUMS THAT REMAIN CRITICAL OF THEIR POWER TO EXCLUDE, THAT REMAIN CANDID ABOUT WHO IS BEING

EXCLUDED AND WHO HAS THE POWER TO DO THE EXCLUDING.

BY WHOSE STANDARDS DO WE DEEM THE OBJECT WORTHY? LOOK AT THAT BIG WHITE WALL.

BY WHOSE STANDARDS DO WE DEEM THE OBJECT

If you have any more information or more to say about this incident, please contact the Free Press.

Lorenzo Ferrari Field Gets Turfed

ZACH HAYES

Due to heavy use and the reality of winter weather in the northeast, Ferrari Field is often unusable until mid-March. For Bard's lacrosse teams, who begin their season just as the calendar flips to February, this poses a significant problem.

Despite being a two-sport athlete and captain of the Bard women's lacrosse team, junior Casey Witte is less familiar with the Lorenzo Ferrari Soccer & Lacrosse Complex than she'd like to be. Location isn't the issue-the two fields that make up the soccer and lacrosse teams' game and practice facilities are just a few steps from the back door of the Stevenson Athletic Center--timing and weather, however, are a different beast.

"It has a lot to do with the spring sports. Both of the lacrosse teams, and really any sport that needs to practice outside, can't because of the snow. We don't have our own home games until at least halfway through the season, sometimes not even until the last few weeks," Witte said. The solution: lots of indoor practice time, and if not that, a bus ride to Deitz Field in Kingston, a frequent necessity spring teams during the early part of the season.

Practicing in the gym is a lot different than practicing outside," Witte elaborated. "During the bulk of the season we want to be outside as much as possible. so we'll go to Deitz at least two or three times a week."

Though it gets the job done, practicing in the gym is far from ideal. Due to lack of time and space, gym practices are often considerably more difficult and time consuming than their

outdoor counterparts, not to mention the hassle of a bus ride to and from Kingston. For everybody involved, the situation is far from ideal.

Soon, these will be issues of the past. In early January, construction began on a conversion of the Ferrari Complex from natural grass to artificial turf. While the switch may seem minor, it has vast implications for Bard athletics.

Access to Bard's athletic facilities is often inadequate. During the winter, for example, a quick game of pick-up basketball can be tough to squeeze in as the gym is often occupied by one of the six varsity sports teams in need of practice space. Anybody who has hit the gym at 5 p.m. can attest that it's far from an ideal spatial arrangement.

Today, there is seldom enough space for the student athletes required to be there, however, the turf field promises to open up more space for them, the

public, and the rest of the

student body.

For many, the sight of bulldozers laying down new foundations brings something stronger than relief--catharsis.

Plans to upgrade the athletic facilities have been in the works for more than a half a decade, an eventual necessity of a rapidly expanding athletics department. "Since 2011, maybe 2012," Bard athletic director Kristen Hall commented."there's been such anticipation for such a long time, it's like a sigh of 'finally, we're going to offer the students what they deserve."

But how did this finally come about? Though it has been an objective of the athletic department for nearly a decade, like any other ambitious undertaking by our underendowed institution, these plans were contingent on the generosity of a small number of enterprising donors. With the November, 2017 announcement that the college was likely to receive a significant grant from the United States Department of Agriculture, it

appeared that the long-de-

sired improvements might come to fruition.

Eventually, thanks to the efforts of students and administrators in the athletic department, who met repeatedly with upper administration in an effort to make clear the long-overdue nature of the desired upgrade, wheels began to turn. With considerable advocacy from Jim Brudvig, Bard's chief financial officer and occasional faculty basketball coach, a financing deal was agreed upon that would allow construction to begin immediately, with hopes for completion in time for atleast a partial spring sports season.

Brudvig, who frequently

works closely with the athletics department, understood that a change was rapidly needed. "Using the field for both soccer and lacrosse was a maintenance nightmare," he commented via email. "The turf surface is more durable, [and] I hope students on teams or students just out for a workout will feel good about using the field on a regular basis."

The field is expected to be ready by mid-March. Until then, many wait with bated breath as loads of rock, rubber, and strips of turf gradually pile up behind Stevenson Athletic Center. Its completion, as Hall and Brudvig both hope and expect, will be a boon for the entire community.

