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Bard College

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HOROSCOPES

MARCH 2019

LILLY STEWART



Pisces: It's your season Pisces! If these past few days have been an emotional rollercoaster, have a good cry and forget about it. Or, at least try. With Mercury going into retrograde this week, you might be faced with old problems. Go with the flow.



Aries: Old enemies might be resurfacing in the coming weeks, but try not to pick any fights (I know its hard, but you can do it). Take a leadership position this month so you can boss people around. Honesty is your strong suit, Aries--tell us what you really think!



Taurus: Uranus is about to go into your sign Taurus! This means things are about to get tough for a while, but don't fret, you can always buy some cute plants to make yourself feel better or binge on desserts. Stay grounded.



Gemini: Get your head out of the clouds Gemini, not everybody thinks the way you do. Talk a little less and listen a little more this month. Do some sleuthing this Mercury retrograde season; you might reveal some juicy secrets.



Cancer: Self-pity isn't cute, Cancer. Mercury retrograde might bring up old disappointments, but try not to take it personally. Just like you, everyone is focused on their own issues. Try to take a break from it all, and have some nice baked goods or something.



Leo: Mercury retrograde this week might force you to take a look in the mirror, Leo. And no, not to admire how hot you are--you do that enough already. Notice some of your nasty habits, and try to start a journey of self-growth. Even if you don't want to, Uranus in Taurus will force it! If it's too daunting, maybe start small, like a new skin-care routine.



Virgo: Virgo, you're probably the only one who hasn't gotten that stomach flu that's been going around, but don't get too cocky. Some old messes might be coming up this week with Mercury retrograde. Keep things in order like you always do, and you'll be golden.



Libra: A lot of choices are presenting themselves, Libra! Pick one and stick with it, you might be surprised at the outcome. Try to maintain your balance in the wake of Mercury retrograde glitches. Try not to create some miscommunications in these next few weeks with all that gossip. Distract yourself with a shopping spree on Depop.



Scorpio: Feeling vengeful, Scorpio? You might be facing some technical difficulties or life malfunctions with Mercury in retrograde in the next few weeks. But try not to blow a fuse, okay? Just because your juul is leaking, doesn't mean your temper should. Plenty of sleep should help. Take possession of your mental health this month!



Sagittarius: Things might be frustrating these next few weeks, Sag. But you can laugh it off like you always do. Try not to take everything too lightly, though. You've got some work to do, and not just with your classes! Self-growth is a process, so stay positive!



Capricorn: Things not going to plan lately, Capricorn? You can blame Mercury for that. You might face setbacks in your climb up the social ladder in the next few weeks, but don't worry. The year isn't over, and you haven't peaked yet.



Aquarius: Too much in your head, Aquarius? Maybe take some time with friends to bring you back to reality. Try not to let old habits of procrastination get in the way of your work this Mercury retrograde. Stay creative!

Bard College

FREE PRESS



MARCH 8, 2019
ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, NY

CATS Expansion a Distant Dream

BRONWYN SIMMONS

This semester has seen a new frenzy around Bard's Community Appointment Driving Service (CATS) program, as a record number of students have requested rides on Fridays. CATS, a branch of the Student Resources Group, employs Bard student drivers to take students to their mental health appointments off-campus. CATS is specifically meant to provide transportation to appointments that are not on the shuttle route, such as to Kingston or Poughkeepsie. Thursdays and Fridays are the most-requested and busiest days for CATS. On Fridays, students have had to wait up to three hours to be picked up from their appointments, as CATS struggles to accommodate too many students with only one vehicle available for the day. Some students have had to cancel their appointments if CATS is running behind schedule.

For CATS driver Ava Wagner, some Friday shifts can involve constant driving

to and from appointments from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM, which is an hour longer than her 9-1:30 shift is scheduled to run. "For some reason it's been so busy this semester, and I think maybe people have just found out about it [CATS]," she remarked. "We didn't use to drive people to Red Hook, because of the shuttle, and now on a case-by-case basis we do, but a lot of people sign up to be driven to Red Hook, and that can't always happen because we have people to drive to Poughkeepsie or Kingston." Another problem is with the driver switch-off in between shifts: If the first driver is running late due to late-running appointments, her shift will bleed into the second driver's shift, causing his shift to start late, as well. Says CATS Director Anna McEvoy, "there is an average of 15 appointments per week, which is the same amount as there has been in the past--it's just that now 8 of those appointments are all on Fridays, instead of spread



"So you're telling me I can't pay tuition in Bard Bucks?"

THEA MCRAE

evenly throughout the week."

A CATS expansion initiative has been broached by many students in the CATS community in an effort to accommodate more students, such as McEvoy. This would necessarily include hiring more drivers and buying another vehicle. If this expansion were to happen, it would not be until the coming fall semester, as CATS has already received its allocated budget for the year.

In addition to the overwhelming demand for mental health appointments, students and CATS employees have expressed a desire to see CATS expand to offer transportation services to not only those with mental health appointments, but also those with ongoing physical health needs, such as physical therapy appointments. Says McEvoy of her desire to see CATS expand, "The general mission statement of SRG is to provide students with services that they wouldn't have access to otherwise. So it doesn't make sense to have a driving service for only mental health appointments; it makes sense to have a driving service for all students."

Dominique Waldron,

Interim Director of Student Activities, who advises and oversees SRG, told The Free Press, "If we could hire more students and find another car, we would. Solutions aren't always as easy as we'd like to see." When asked about whether students with physical health needs can utilize CATS, Waldron said, "As it stands, if we can, we will. It's on a case-by-case basis. We don't want students to be burdened by financial cost. If we can accommodate a request, we'd never turn down a student." Waldron has been meeting with Health Services and the Dean's Office, among others, to talk about the issue of providing a transportation service for those with physical health needs, as well as the lack of current capacity to accommodate all mental health appointments.

Since SRG runs on a student employment budget and a departmental budget, there is a limit to its capacity in hiring students. 10 students currently drive for CATS. Fees such as vehicle maintenance and driver training must be covered. Student drivers are a big liability for the college, so insuring them isn't cheap. Further, balancing student

STUDY BREAK: MIDTERMS WORD SEARCH

P L P G N X Q V L S L S T P Q
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Photo courtesy of YouTube

work schedules with their class schedules is difficult. "We aren't just an Uber or a taxi service," Waldron explained.

Jeffrey Smith, Manager of Transportation Services, says that it would be very difficult with current vehicle capacity to provide another Bard vehicle for CATS. "We provide vans for Safe Rides and Tiv Deliv in the evenings. We also use vehicles for VIP transportation to trains and airports, as well as faculty conferences, student trips... there's always a lot that goes on. I'm not sure where we would find a car for CATS to be available for 40 hours a week. Our cars are almost always booked morning til night every day. Right now, I wouldn't have a car in my fleet

to give to CATS for this purpose."

When it comes to adding a new car to the fleet, Smith doesn't want to put the cart before the horse. CATS' current vehicle is old, requires regular maintenance, and should be replaced before buying a new car, he explains. Buying two new cars is likely not within Bard's budget. Other priorities, such as providing campus shuttles, come first. Coleen Murphy Alexander, Vice President for Administration would be in charge of allocating a new budget for the purchase of the two new vehicles needed for CATS to expand. All things considered, it looks like any talk of CATS expansion is in the distant future.

TAHJ FRAZIER: On Being Me

I honestly do not know what influenced me to give that speech during the Race Monologues. It felt liberating and powerful to advocate for this part of myself that has been hidden deep in my darkest thoughts in order to relay a message that will motivate and empower others like myself. I even used this essay to officially declare my sexuality to the world. This was a big step for me, and I thank everyone for taking the time to either be a member of the audience at the Race Monologues or for reading the essay from my social media platforms.

I originally intended to do an essay strictly about race and how my ancestors have played a role in my skin being a continuum of their presence. It then turned into my being gay because it's something I rarely talk about in an open setting. This is primarily because of all that I have endured trying to personify the sexual identity I chose. Despite the horrifying experiences I've gone through, I've still pulled through to become this great guy people know and love.

CW/TW: racial and homophobic slurs

I was beginning to recreate myself into my ideal person. This also started the hardest phase of my life. At the time, I was at an all boys school. I had been well aware of what straight people thought of gay people. They think that we are out to get them. They think we want to share intimacy with every male we come across. We are stereotyped as aspiring to be like girls in every way possible: with the twitch of the walk, the increased pitch of our voice, the flamboyant

styles, and excessive use of gestures.

I was starting high school and already well accustomed to the maneuvers of bullying. I honestly had no idea that I hadn't seen the worst of what people can actually do with their words. Sitting in the front of the class one day, one of my peers yells out, "Look at his faggot ass." Of course, everyone pays their attention to me and begins to laugh. The teacher overlooks the situation as if it's just boys being boys, and continues with the lesson. I remember just sitting there not thinking of anything in particular. Just sitting there.

I recall all the times I used to walk down the breezeway to go to lunch, listening to my music as loud as I could. I had to, to isolate myself from the other kids yelling out, "Faggot," "Gay ass," "Fruity ass nigga," "Pussy ass nigga," "Dick in the booty, ass nigga," "Get the fuck wit yo gay ass." These things were said as I walked by, bothering no one.

Anthony, another openly gay friend of mine, and I earned the title "the girls of

the school." One guy even went as far as calling us his bitches in front of his friends and many other students, as if he had ownership of our bodies. This is similar to the concept of feminine men in prison. Meaning that since there are no women around, feminine men are seen as substitutes for submission by being sodomized. Sometimes by force, others by seeking protection.

SAUL AMEZCUA: Depressional Burdens

I wrote my piece for the Race Monologues to emphasize the feeling of guilt that drove my depression here at Bard. For a large part of my childhood, my mother was a single mother raising me and my two younger sisters. I have seen her struggle emotionally and mentally with depression, and we have always had a tough time financially. Being away from home was a way out of that world, but it was the main source of my depression because it felt like I had left my mother behind. I felt like I couldn't be happy because I knew she wasn't happy. I have yet to share this piece with my mother because I do not want to add any more stress to her life, especially with what she already has going on. During the Race Monologues, a good friend asked me who my intended audience was, since my mother has no idea I wrote this or presented it, and I said it was for my sister to hear, not my mother. She was the only audience I needed to hear what I wrote.

Growing up as the oldest child, I wasn't around as much as I should have been. Even though my siblings looked up to me, I was never home and any interactions with my family were minimal. I knew that my younger sister, Victoria, who is now a freshman at Bard, was going to be present at the Race Monologues, and so a huge part of this piece was my being vulnerable with her for the first time. She was my source of strength during the event and it felt good using the Race Monologues as an outlet to reach out and repair the relationship my sister and I have.

CW/TW: suicidal thoughts and abuse

My name is Saul Amezcua, and I have thought about killing myself.

I hit the lowest or closest point of killing myself when I was in a Berlin subway.

I feel like I have always struggled with depression but never knew what to call it until I came to Bard.

You're always talking about mental health this and mental health that, for which I am grateful, but it's a double-edged sword.

It's a double-edged sword because being aware that you have depression and that there are ways to treat it is amazing... but not being able to pass this privilege on to my friends and family who are struggling with it is even more depressing.

Mental health is stigmatized, and we all know that, but what we don't always know is where this depression stems from.

Mine comes from the pressure and burden of being the first person in my entire family to go to college, the first person in my entire family to be offered a job with a yearly salary, the first person in my entire family to leave North America, and the first person in my entire family to have a taste of what luxury feels like.

My friends know I love

luxury brands and luxury things, and it's because I grew up not having anything. I told myself I'd make sure I had everything.

I wear a lot of gold because for me it's a reminder of the precious metals they stole from us when they slaughtered my people.

It's hard because I know this luxury comes at a stake and a cost to other people within the U.S. or around the world who can't have what I have.

But when you grow up being bullied for wearing oversized Payless or FUBU shoes and Walmart brand clothing because it's what your mother, a single mother of three, can only afford... You don't ever want to go back to that feeling. Kids can say the meanest things about you.

But it's funny cause we was all broke and in debt,

Yet making fun of the poorest kid always seemed to make us feel richer.

It's better to have on the newest kicks and the freshest fit than to have food in the fridge... that's what I thought.

And so, when my mother couldn't provide, and I was bullied and angry, I channeled it all to my family at home. Now I am questioning why Mami can't give me nice things even though I always had a roof

over my head and plate of food at the table.

I shifted the feeling of frustration and anger towards the one person who gave me everything.

Mi Mami.

I was angry at my mother growing up. Angry because we couldn't eat out like other people. Angry because she couldn't buy me the new Jordan's that just dropped. Angry because we didn't have cable, WiFi, or a game system at home. Angry because I felt my friends' parents loved their kids more because they had everything I didn't.

I was a horrible older brother and an even worse son growing up. I was selfish and bitter. I never thought about anyone but myself.

I remember one day in middle school, I had a girlfriend, and it was Valentine's Day, and I didn't have money to get her anything, so my mother gave me her jewelry, perfume and a little money she saved up so I could buy this middle school crush a gift.

I never got my mother anything...

I would always break the rules my momma had set for me and be out in the street having her stressed and worried. I never thought about what my mother was going through, and I didn't care.

It wasn't until after I got arrested for the second time that I realized the full extent of the pain I was causing her.

My mother broke down in tears and said, 'Por que eres como tu papá?'

Why are you like your father.

Mind you, this biological sperm donor raped my mother, forced her to marry him, emotionally and mentally abused her and destroyed her life, as well as mine, with drug and alcohol abuse, and in my mother's eyes, I was beginning to become like him.

It terrified me.

I finally began to turn my life around, received awards, got into Bard on a full-tuition ride, and began to flourish. My mother and my relationship has been amazing, and Bard became the greatest blessing bestowed upon me.

I should be happy, right?

But there's one caveat:

With knowledge comes great responsibility. I know that's really cliché.

But I became aware of my mother's mental health and depression the day I also became aware of mine.

I was having the best time of my life here at Bard, met the most amazing people and

created some of the deepest relationships I have ever had.

But my mother back home was still working, still struggling financially, and still depressed.

My mother has the strongest faith in God I have ever seen in a person. She prays every day and follows His every command, and that's what breaks my heart the most.

'Dios proveerá.'

God will provide.

'Solamente tenemos que orar.'

We only need to pray. That's what she'll always say.

Although I don't doubt any of that, I do doubt that prayer and God alone will be the only source of help for our mental health.

I have the luxury here of seeing a therapist, and not having to worry about my food or shelter. But my mother doesn't. That's why when I was in that dirty Berlin subway waiting for the Uban to arrive...

I thought about killing myself.

As I saw the headlights of the train approaching, I also saw the light of God calling me home. Calling me away from the pain and burden of being happy. The burden of being able to experience all the glory and privilege I have been able to encounter here at Bard, knowing damn well I didn't deserve it. My mother did.

So why was I there? Why wasn't she here? Why am I bad son...?

I obviously didn't jump because I am standing here in front of y'all, but there are still times I wish I did. Still times when the stress and burden of being my family's hope creep into my head. Times when my past failures as a son... brother... and boyfriend make me want to run away forever.

I found out what the source of my depression is.

It's the fear of my past coming back and swallowing me whole. The fear of turning into a failure and becoming the very thing I swore to destroy.

My father...

This fear doesn't go away... no matter my accomplishments or supportive surroundings. I have had many accomplishments, yet I am still depressed and still feel like a failure.

But come this May... when my Mami sees all her hard work reach out for that diploma... I'll be the one praying and hoping to God that he will finally provide my mami the happiness she deserves. Amen.



Above: Wahi '22; Middle: Frazier '22; Below: Amezcua '19
Photos by Armando Duno

KATHERINA WAHI: Planted Spice Grown in White Ice

Bard is a school that heavily breathes life into the concept of building a community amongst peers and staff, however the communities between students are very black and white; and I say this literally. As a brown female coming from two different cultures and countries, there isn't that space for people like myself to connect with others from similar backgrounds or even to understand the divide. Sure, there are clubs like CSA (which I am a part of), LASO, HSO and many more, but a lot of students still feel disconnected from the greater population.

The Race Monologues were a platform in which I got the chance to voice that, but also in the hopes of other students like myself seeing that this issue too has validation on campus. It was a space in which I had security to speak an unpopular opinion without the hating eyes or social media backlash. As a freshman, that space which the Race Monologues created is one that I want to see more and more on campus, wherein people aren't afraid to have these uncomfortable talks and actually call things out for how they really are. Bard originally started out as a PWI, but it's the 21st Century, times are changing, and the truth isn't going to change into a sweet one either. Racial and cultural ignorance is no longer allowed.

I am not black
I am not white
I don't claim this or that
My brown light
Wasn't given a space to fight
Caught up in the black
shadow of light
You're either black or white
And I am not mad at the
black community fighting for
unity
But yet I don't have the same
opportunity
Taken over by angry plights
and a fight
That isn't mine, get with the
same white battle ground
I am that ginger and spice
The ones that drive you to
great heights

From the hips of Caribbean
girls
That your white men bend to
call exotic
I am from Indian spice and
tropical breeze
Adding to this campus and
their scenes a
Beauty they've never seen
Yet it is hard to be that tree
that doesn't fall
When your bark is the only
thing holding you
Up against this wall
When you're in danger of
losing it all
That renders you the perfect
you
I am two halves that don't
make up a whole

HUDSON VALLEY

SAGE Table Connects Mid-Hudson Valley LGBTQ+ Community One Meal at a Time

NICHOLAS FIORELLINI

The Hudson Valley LGBTQ Center in Kingston, New York held their bi-monthly SAGE Table event in collaboration with the Culinary Institute's Sexuality and Gender Alliance on February 11, 2019. SAGE Table is an initiative launched to fight loneliness and isolation in the LGBTQ+ community through the power of intergenerational connections and breaking bread with one another.

This past event was held in the Kingston center, but events are held all throughout the Mid-Hudson Valley. Previous locations have included local venues like the Red Hook Community Center.

Since November, Bard students have been attending these events in an effort by the Queer Student Organization's and the local LGBTQ+ group Northern Dutchess Rainbow Coalition to bridge the distance between the LGBTQ+ communities in the area.

"The LGBTQ community is still feeling the effects of discriminatory policies and the loss of life, both in acts of

individual violence and the after effects of the AIDS epidemic. It's incredibly important that young queer people have access to safe intergenerational spaces—not only to carry on the stories and activism our elders pass on, but so we know that a long, joyful life is still possible, even when the world tries to stifle us," says Junior Queer Student Organization co-head Jasper Francis.

Past discussions have centered around disability, aging, gentrification, religion, race, HIV, and drug addiction—and how each affect LGBTQ+ people in the Mid-Hudson Valley, young and old.

Melanie Lewis, native New Yorker from Staten Island and a self-described proud lesbian woman of faith and LGBTQ+ activist, who currently splits her time in Rhinebeck, New York, Harlem, New York, and the Bahamas, shared her experience with a Bard student on growing up in a home filled with domestic abuse and battling her heroin addiction.



Left: Hudson Valley LGBTQ Center
Right: Author Melanie Lewis

In 2016, she released her memoir Slipping into Darkness, Blinded by the Light: Seeing Beyond Me detailing her life and spiritual journey, leading to her career as a self-employed physical therapist and real-estate investor.

According to a 2017 study conducted by the organization, participants were strongly motivated to attend a SAGE Table event through a desire to "make a positive change in their community" and in participating in an event that had a "family feel" to it.

Throughout each event, the topic of queer and transgender loneliness was a common thread between each conversation. From the isolation of getting older to the remote nature of the Mid-Hudson Valley, solitude is an all too familiar presence in the lives of elderly LGBTQ+ residents in the area.

"We might not be able to immediately cure loneliness," says Francis, "but there's a lot we can learn from each other if we come together as a community, one meal at a time."