

OBSERVER

Vol. 2 No. 5 December 17, 1985

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The Bard Observer

Vol. 2, No. 5, December 17, 1985

"Serving the Bard College Community."

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504

S.N.S.' Busy Semester

Students sacrifice for Oxfam fast

By Cristina O'Connor

320 Bard students sacrificed three meals and donated over \$1300 in meal money to Oxfam in the nation-wide Fast for a World Harvest on November 21. 109 participants contributed to the Oxfam Nicaragua Project, with the rest donating to the General Oxfam Fund.

Elaine Barber, president of Students for a New Society and an event organizer, termed it a success. "The fast brought the community together to actively participate in eliminating world hunger by supporting self-reliance in Third World countries, she said. Bard had one of the highest proportional participation rates in the country.

With additional donations, Bard contributed over \$1500 to Oxfam, according to Barber. Although more students participated in this year's fast, contribu-

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15 arrested at peace demonstration

By Christina O'Connor

Approximately 15 Bard students attended the largest anti-war protest in years at West Point Academy on Saturday, November 23, along with other protesters from the Hudson Valley area. The focus of the protest was on U.S. military involvement in Central America, and regarded West Point graduates as military leaders of the future.

The aim of the protesters was non-violent civil disobedience, and many demonstrators, including Bard senior Elaine Barber, were arrested on West Point grounds and in its War Museum. In addition, according to Ed Jones, one of the protest organizers, a group of speakers relating thoughts about peace was present to heighten public awareness.

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Protesters at West Point peace demonstration.

Photo by Holly Brown

Bard Campaign funds to change face of campus

By Nancy Galvin

Administration rhetoric calls it "Beyond Rhetoric," and says it represents a turning point in Bard College history. It is the Bard Campaign, which the school hopes will eventually raise \$47.5 million.

The campaign officially began in November of 1984 as a 5-year plan to gather funds for the endowment (which includes investments and liquid securities), for construction, renovation, and academic program support. So far, the plan has reached the \$21 million mark, ahead of the original timetable.

The first visible signs of expansion will appear in the spring. At that time a wing will be added to Hegan, the library will be expanded, and a humanities building will be constructed in the field between Fairbairn and Hegan. In the following years, there are tentative plans to build a recreation center, an athletic center by the tennis courts, and a theater. Construction of a swimming pool and renovation of the gym are also possibilities, as are plans to renovate many of the existing buildings of the college, including Blithewood, Ward Manor, Wardens Hall, and some of the other student dormitories.

The Bard Campaign is the first program of this kind the school has launched, and it comes after the school's long history of financial dependence. 10 years ago Bard's endowment was about \$250,000; today it stands at \$3 million. Up until the end of World War II the school was supported first by the Episcopal Church, and later Columbia University. The majority of Bard's funding has since come primarily from

alumni, as opposed to corporations. Corporations generally give to schools which train potential employees, and Bard lacks a professional program. Because the college is extremely small — during its first century, the average class was only 100 students — the number of alumni, and therefore the amount of funds, has remained small. The campaign, according to administrators, is necessary for the continuation of the school's growth.

One-third of the funding will be allocated to the endowment, which pays for the ongoing costs of the school, such as scholarships, faculty salaries, and equipment. These costs amount to about \$3 million per year above tuition. In addition to the endowment are allocations for construction and renovation, as well as for program support. Plans for construction do not include student dormitories, since administrators do not consider housing space a problem. Instead, dorms will be renovated. This is, according to President Leon Botstein, a reflection of the school's long range plan not to increase in numbers of students. However, the mid-Hudson Valley area is currently experiencing a real estate boom, and this is decreasing the number of housing spaces available off-campus. For this reason, the Board of Trustees is contemplating constructing new dorms in the future. They will not be built, according to Botstein, until a need exists, in order to avoid forcing students to live on campus to fill up extra dorm space.

The campaign is seen by Botstein as an attempt to preserve not only the school and its ideals but "the future of liberal learning itself."

Bard's attrition (or retention) figures confuse

By Elizabeth Cornell

Student attrition touches everyone on campus; every student knows people who are planning to leave Bard or have left already.

In trying to determine attrition rates, however, it is easy to get lost in the statistical shuffle; there are lots of different figures to use.

A study by Dean Stuart Levine, for example gives a "retention rate" — that is the college's preferred term — of 90 per cent for 1985, meaning 10 per cent of the entire student body did not return for this year. According to Jim Kridler, dean of students, this average is much higher than most schools comparable to Bard, some of which, he says, have retention rates that start as low as 60 per cent.

But a look at the 1985-86 Barron's Guide to Colleges shows a different picture. The guide uses figures that show the attrition rate of freshmen, not the entire student body. According to these figures, Bard does not measure up quite as well. Three schools roughly equivalent to Bard — small, expensive liberal arts colleges—retained a higher

percentage of freshmen last year. 10% of freshmen left Sarah Lawrence in 1984-85, 15% left Bennington, and 3% left Vassar, compared with Bard's freshmen attrition rate of 23%.

Barron's figures showing the percentage of freshmen who eventually graduate from the same institution show Bard on a somewhat more equal footing. 60% of Bard freshmen graduate in four years, as compared with percentages of 65, 60 and 77 at Sarah Lawrence, Bennington, and Vassar, respectively.

Students have diverse reasons for leaving. Kridler cited several: "Financial reasons, personal problems, they're not happy here, Bard is too big or too small for them, social reasons, or they want a different major. Anywhere you go you're going to find dissatisfied students. I would say that students have a love-hate relationship with Bard."

Many students voice complaints of having nothing to do socially. "There's not enough excitement, complained one student. Kridler refuted that statement by sweeping his hand over the Calendar

of Weekly Events and saying, "There are many activities going on here, and there are more student organizations now than ever before. There's a hell of a lot to do here; or you can sit in your room and bitch. Levine noted, "The school places its resources into the academic program. We have a low student-faculty ratio to maintain contact between the college teachers and students. Our quality of academics is why people want to stay."

Most students, pleased or otherwise, agree that Bard is strong academically. "I have good classes and good teachers, which is why I decided not to transfer to another school," recounted one student. But a general concern voiced by students is that it is too easy to get by. "It's not structured enough," said one student. "I'm paying too much money not to be motivated, added another. Motivation is an oft-cited factor in being able to keep up with the expectations at Bard. "It's good if someone can handle the lack of structure, but bad if they can't, said one sophomore.

There does not appear to be any

school philosophy on what to do with students who wish to depart. Students who had talks with their advisor about leaving say their advisors didn't do much to sway them in either direction. "My advisor said 'Fine, where do you want to go?' remembered one student. Kridler says that if a student wants to leave Bard, they are asked to see him, Levine, or a counselor. "Sometimes they haven't thought through why they are leaving," said Kridler. "We ask what they plan to do after leaving," and sometimes the students don't know. All they know is that they don't want to be at Bard."

The general atmosphere and feeling of students toward the school is "positive," according to Levine. "We have a dedicated student body, and people seem to enjoy being here, he said. Some students think differently. "I love it a lot, said one sophomore. "But human relationships are really screwed here. There is too much pretense. People cut other people down, cut themselves down, but are afraid of being cut down themselves."

Put journalism in the curriculum *Satire*

There will be a new Observer editor next semester. (At copy deadline the position had not yet been filled.) This is not an unusual situation; the new editor will be the fourth of the past three semesters. The lack of a structured staff has been a major contributor to this instability; editors have had to wear too many hats, and put in too many hours, to be able to also maintain decent grades, a semblance of a social life, and their sanity.

The pattern, ever since Scott Pass resurrected the Observer, has been that a very few people work long hours to get an issue out, spend some time catching up with school work, and then must start the process all over again. The lack of structure means that staff members must reinvent the wheel with every issue, and this has been the major contributor to "editor burnout." Though there are a lot of students at Bard who would willingly contribute to a campus newspaper, most are completely lacking in journalistic experience. This means that editors now have to also double as teachers; as the high attrition rate shows, this workload is just too much.

There are two ways that the paper could gain the structure it lacks. One is for a well-organized student with journalism experience, lots of motivation, and a light schedule to enter the picture and set the staff on its feet. The other is for the Bard administration to put journalism into its curriculum, and assign a professor capable of teaching introductory classes and who would act as advisor to a working staff. Unfortunately, neither is likely.

A journalism advisor would have a thankless job, no doubt. Until a well-trained staff could be organized, it might require long hours. An advisor would face the same problem recent editors have, in finding a sufficient number of students willing to sacrifice the necessary blocks of time needed to put out an issue regularly. Putting journalism within the curriculum — by offering a regularly scheduled, four-unit course — would surely help alleviate this problem, however. But to do his job well, an advisor would have to encourage a process of thorough coverage of administration policy. Often times sound editing decisions would require publishing facts that Bard administrators might just as soon not see in print, which could put a professor in a difficult position.

Perhaps those responsible for setting the curriculum feel that an active campus newspaper might be more trouble than it's worth. Certainly the attitude in the literature department is that journalism is not worthy of inclusion in its curriculum. But according to Bard rhetoric, at least, teaching students how to write — be it essays, poetry, fiction, or newspaper stories — teaches them how to think, and is one of the primary duties of a liberal arts institution. If any college should be cognizant of this duty, surely one that requires participation in the Language and Thinking program should.

An active newspaper which provided a forum for students to explore different avenues of writing would benefit admissions office efforts to attract students, it would benefit the curriculum, and it would benefit the campus. But it is the opinion of this editor that the Observer will not become a more integral part of campus life until under the guidance of an extraordinarily motivated, organized student editor, or in a structured system with faculty guidance.

Gavin McCormick

Satire

In which Rowland the Rube takes a journey to The Big City

By Rowland Butler

Ah yes, the plans were made well in advance. We were going to have such great fun, my friends and I, over Thanksgiving. We were a diverse group, held together by one chain-link: inadequate finances to go home for the holidays. I looked forward to the rendezvous, thinking it was going to be one of those reunions where you talk about all the great times you had as a merry prankster in high school. Boy, was I wrong. REALLY wrong.

"C'mon, POWER BOOT! David (his real name) exclaimed with a startling amount of conviction. "BE A MAN! PUKE!"

Poor Bill (also his real name) was getting killed in a game of Quarters. Bill wanted to quit, but at his friend's(?) encouragement, he decided to lean his head out of a seventh story window, and empty his stomach of some 72 ounces of Budweiser, that he might continue to have a "great time."

"Ughhhh!...Aaaaa!" cried Bill.

"More!" David urged.

"Nah, I'm ready." Bill was ready.

Bill and Dave like to have a good time, as should be readily apparent. They were staying at the same apartment that I was, and were interrupting my sleep. This scene was to be repeated twice during my stay, but who was I to tell them to be quiet? Besides, this was Thanksgiving, and what's wrong with a little good cheer?

Well, Bill and Dave were loud, but at least they didn't try to convince me that they had learned Everything after only

one semester of College. Another girl, the roommate of a friend of mine, was enthusiastic and cheerful when she met me; and why shouldn't she have been? She had another chance to talk about herself! She gave her all to convince me that she not only, a), had single-handedly started the anti-apartheid movement at her school, but also, b), had translated the Bible from Greek to Serbo-Croatian, and c), knew every obscure music band that had ever existed.

This girl also praised Greenwich Village as a cultural Mecca. "You, Rowland, will especially enjoy the Village."

I went to Greenwich Village. I ate at the McDonald's. I looked at a bunch of people. I walked. I walked some more. It wasn't all that boring, to give the Village its due. I actually got into an interesting conversation with an attractive female, not far from my age.

"Hey, who's cap is this?" Her voice purred with affection.

"Oh, it's mine."

"Here."

"Thanks."

Then I walked around some more. I went back to the apartment, where Dave was threatening to "teach Bill a lesson." I encouraged them to settle their differences, though, and I soon was sound asleep.

The next day, I awoke, packed, and returned to Bard. Try as I might, I couldn't stop thinking about poor Bill's "Power Boot," strewn down seven stories of high-rent district property. Some things have a way of staying with you, I think.

Letters

Drinking problems; SNS corrects; student mugged

Dear Editor:

New York raises the drinking age. People can't go to Adolph's anymore. The coffee shop stops serving beer. The Entertainment Committee stops serving beer. Bard is dull. Bard is 750 people 96

miles from New York City in booming downtown Annandale-on-Hudson. Bard is small and isolated and dull. Maybe drinking shouldn't be a way to alleviate boredom and/or pressure, but this is the United States, and we drink. And if we don't drink, we smoke, and if we don't drink or smoke, we see a shrink. Or all of the above. We at Bard, being good Americans, also indulge in these national pastimes. Take away our beer, and we'll find something else.

So what happens now that the drinking age has gone up, and approximately 314 people on campus can't drink legally? And Adolph's is no longer open, and the dull keg parties become even duller kegless parties, and all the serendipity of the coffee shop has up-and-dipped? When there are no longer any outlets for this intense and somewhat incestuous environment, what will students do?:

a). Get fake i.d.'s. Drive somewhere where they'll be able to use them. Get drunk. Drive home drunk. Crash.

b). Stay at Bard. Take drugs. Get your friends to take drugs with you. Decide that you can do this at home with \$14,500 more to do better drugs.

c). Go insane. See the school psychologist. Get more insane.

d). Transfer.

Certainly some people will say e), none of the above. And that's great.

More power to you. I have no doubt that there are many interesting, enlightening, and enjoyable things to do here socially that don't involve drugs, alcohol, or nervous breakdowns. I have even less doubt that more people will fall into categories a, b, c, and d, than will fall into e.

Solutions?

a). Re-arrange the entire American culture, so that we Bard students, who have been ingrained with approximately 20 years of that culture, will no longer need sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll, and psychoanalysis.

b). Overthrow the government so that Reagan can't use public highway funds to manipulate laws which are constitutionally guaranteed to individual states, making those laws, in effect, federal laws.

c). Continue to serve beer at parties and at the coffee shop, thereby keeping Bard drinking within Bard property. If the legal implications of serving beer to minors are too potentially threatening to the well-being of the college, then take i.d.'s at the coffee shop and stamp hands at parties. The means by which people try to get around these restrictions on campus will certainly be a lot less dangerous than the ways they try off-campus.

David Quinter

SNS corrects

Dear Editor:

In the Bard Observer of October 31, the article on Anti-Apartheid day misrepresented my view of divestment, as well of that of Students for a New Society, the Bard Left Press, and the Bard Black Student Organization. The article attributes to me the following statement: "The petition emphasized the consideration of where the board is investing its money rather than asking it to divest completely." The petition in fact asked the Board of Trustees to go beyond the Sullivan Principles and not invest in South Africa. The petition addressed the investment of the Bard Capital Campaign. According to the administration, the college presently holds no investments in South Africa.

Allow me to elaborate on divestment in South Africa. The country has been the focus of human rights workers because of its government's brutal legalization of racism. The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Africa in January, 1978, reported: "The net effect of American investment has been to strengthen the economic and military self-sufficiency of South Africa's apartheid regime." Total U.S. financial involvement in the country, including direct investment, bank loans and

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The Bard Observer

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Opinions expressed on the editorial page are not necessarily those of *The Observer*. Letters to the Editor must be signed and should not exceed 300 words in length. Send to *The Bard Observer*, Box 123.

Reviews

'Am I Blue,' 'Lovers,' 'Jungle,' entertain

By David Quinter

It's always difficult to review a Bard play as a Bard student. Let's face it — I want to like these plays. I'd much rather concentrate on the play than sit there with my arms crossed and my nose in the air thinking of snide comments and loving every acting mishap. So I usually end up enjoying them, regardless of the professionalism (or lack thereof) of the actors. Another thing which makes it difficult to be objective is the fact that, in some way or another, I know all to these actors outside the theater. If I'm not watching a friend of mine, then it's the guy who I always see at lunch with the girl who I once went out with or who my friend once went

out with or who we both went out with at the same time...

So sometimes I have to suppress a vested interest in disliking the actor or actress. What all these subjective approaches add up to is this: it's inevitably difficult to see the actors as characters, rather than "so-and-so" acting.

Yet sometimes this fact is more apparent than others. During the first week of November, two plays were shown simultaneously at the Bard Theater. The first, "Am I Blue," was an amusing skit which centered around the meeting of John, a naive 18-year old college freshman, and Ashby, a bubbly, street-wise girl of 16. The play opened with an excellent rendition of the Billy

Holiday song, "Am I Blue," which served to establish the scene: a lonely nightclub in a rainy city. A whore, pimp, and bum revealed the seediness of this section of town. When the play's female co-star entered the scene, however, I found my anticipation dimmed somewhat. I was struck by that old demon which can ruin any fiction: the realization that this is just fiction. "Oh, okay, she's acting now..." was my immediate reaction. For a while I found myself thinking about the acting rather than the storyline, and noticed other actors working too hard to achieve their effects. The most glaring example of this was the pimp — when he told John, "Up yours," it sounded more like a promise than a threat. He didn't seem tough at all, but rather like an actor trying to be tough.

Despite some mis-characterization and overacting, I did enjoy the play once it became more focused on the relationship of John and Ashby. It seemed like the actress became more and more her character as the play went on. From the start, the main actor seemed more natural in his role, but both had forced moments. There were moments they pulled off beautifully; the ones that stick in my mind the most are when John turned out the pockets of his sweater while talking about being pressured by the guys in the fraternity, and when Ashby talked on the phone with her father.

I would also like to point out the performance of the bum, who I thought was excellent. The clown-like role he played and the manner with which he did it, as brief as his part was, added a lot. Yet I couldn't help feeling disappointed that the most professional performances seemed to come from three very minor characters: the nightclub singer, the piano player, and this bum. It's not that the co-stars were that bad — in fact, I thought they showed considerable potential — they were just lacking in polish.

I thought the second of these two plays, "The Lovers," was much more interesting, and the best performed of

the four Harold Pinter plays shown this semester. Before this year, I had never seen a Pinter play, but I was immediately struck by the resemblance to the plays shown in October. The matter-of-fact absurdity of the dialogue, the psychological confusion of the characters between reality and illusion, and the venture into the regions of madness all combined to make this seem vintage Pinter.

The husband and wife are a caricature of the typical suburban, read-the-paper, kiss-goodbye, commute-to-work, clean-the-house couple. Love here is a question of convenience, not passion. He works, she cooks, they have meals and drinks together. I used to deliver newspapers in a country club — this couple was very familiar to me. This couple, however, has a twist. In the first scene, the husband asks, in the same casual manner with which he grabs his briefcase, "Is your lover coming today?" The old housewife-affair-with-the-tennis-pro is out in the open.

The first day, we don't see the lover. When the husband returns from work, he asks again about the lover. The complete calmness and openness of the couple in talking about this mysterious third party contributes to the comic effect, and adds an element of suspense. From the very beginning, I found myself wondering, Who's the lover? When will he appear? During the course of the evening, the husband asks about the lover several times. We get the impression that this affair has been going on a long time, but that this is a sudden interest on the part of the husband. This furthers our own curiosity about the lover.

I notice that I'm only writing about the action and themes of the play itself, not the actors or the performance. I think that this is the highest compliment that I could pay the actors, because this is what I saw — characters, not actors. Later, we realize that the lover and the husband are the same person. Somehow the wife seems more sane, as though she knows the whole time who's who. She

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Review

Disney's 'Magic Christmas' not quite Hollywood holiday classic

By G.W. Hicks

According to Hollywood, there is a certain Christmas spirit, some internal joy, which becomes an essential part of every human creature each December. Unfortunately most people outside of Hollywood have developed an immunity to it; skepticism some might label it, or disbelief, or perhaps even depression.

But "Moviedom" is never without a cure. Edmund Gwenn convinced us that there really was a Kris Kringle in "Miracle on Thirty-Fourth Street," while morose ol' Bing Crosby brightened his holidays by crooning "White Christmas" in "Holiday Inn." It took an angel on Christmas Eve to convince Jimmy Stewart that life was worth living in Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life." And now, another victim of A.S.S. (Anti-Santa Claus Syndrome), Ginny Grainger, must suffer a fantastical plight to discover Yuletide joy in "One Magic Christmas."

Presented by the Disney Studios, "One Magic Christmas" preserves some of its studio's stereotypical naivete while delicately stepping in to non-Disneylike territory. Deriving much from Capra's "Life", "Christmas" focuses on Ginny Grainger, (Mary Steenburgen), whose husband has been recently laid off work with the Christmas season quickly approaching. Ginny tries to substitute for his lost income from her own salary as a cashier. Ends are barely met. Her husband (Larry Basaraba) wants to open a bicycle shop; their two children, Abbie (Elizabeth Harnois) and Cal (Robbie Magwood) are astonished at Mom's scroogish disposition. To make matters worse (and this is where the work treads ever so tenderly), Ginny's husband is shot in a bank robbery, and the two children are inadvertently captured by the fleeing thief.

Ah, but faith is not to be lost or cast aside. An angel has been waiting from somewhere on high. Abbie and Cal are returned to their grieving mother, but their father is still dead. Gideon, the angel (played by Harry Dean Stanton of "Repo Man" and "Paris, Texas") appears to little Abbie, who doesn't quite understand why her pop isn't coming home. Only one person can help bring

her deceased father back, Gideon tells her - Santa Claus. With the angel's supernatural abilities, Abbie is whisked away to the North Pole, home to that ever so famous fat man in a red suit, Kris Kringle. And what do you know! He can bring her papa back. Not only are all reunited, but Ginny is now uncontrollably brimming with that stuff known as Christmas Spirit. Even the bank robber, who was killed in his escape, is returned to mortality. The Christmas lights are brilliantly blazing, the tree is decoratively dazzling, and all is well in Everytown, U.S.A.

Didactic, yes. Sentimental, yes. Predictable, yes. But lighted with a particular charm, most notably by Steenburgen and the young Harnois. As in her previous performances, Miss Steenburgen endows her characters with an awkward humility, humorous or serious, and makes an off-balance, distracted heroine, somewhat like a female Jimmy Stewart. And Elizabeth Harnois as the chosen youngster visited by an apparition of good tidings, is (as usual for Disney) adorable, though not disgustingly so. She is impressionable, full of belief — that something that seems to fade with age returns, incarnate, in her.

Stanton, currently in vogue for the acclamation received from his recent film portrayals, performs well, but if comparisons are to be made, he fails to attain the humor of his counterpart in "It's a Wonderful Life." Such is not the fault of Stanton the actor, but the screenwriter Thomas Meehan, who lacks the wit to alleviate the seriousness of some of the subjects, particularly the father's death, which remains a burdensome void until the end of the film. Not much assistance is given by director Philip Borsos, who handles the picture without the spirit it needs to be delightful.

All right, how can one degrade a movie about Christmas! The ending is warm, like heat from a fire as you lay before it while the snow blows outside. Mary Steenburgen, as one who has no faith in Christmas, and Elizabeth Harnois, as one who will never lose it, are entirely pleasing. But "One Magic Christmas," though touched with charm, is not quite magical.

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Reviews

Bard Theater productions showcase talent

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has learned how to deal with her husband's apparent madness very effectively. And it's not so bad for her either; after all, the convenience is still there, and all her needs are taken care of. In the scenes of their relationship that we're witness to, it's obvious that something in the husband's mind has started to click, some dim awareness of the strangeness of his situation. Both the lover and the husband decide that it's time for the affair to end. It's as though he has an intuition of his own mental imbalance, yet is not conscious enough of it to realize that he's acting with two distinctly different personalities. The wife, however, is uncomfortable with this change. She no longer knows what to expect; the careful order and balance of her life have been upset. Parts of the husband are showing up in the lover, and visa versa. As her mate begins to lose touch with his roles, the wife tries to take control with wonderful scenes in which she says, "It's whispering time." The play ends with the husband and wife transforming to the lover and the whore, in effect bringing all the various roles together.

The extraordinarily subtle and effective way with which the actors switch roles, the quiet power of the whispering scenes, the tactful lewdness of the seduction scenes, the play's sheer absurdity, and many moments too numerous to recount, all combine to make this a funny, carefully executed, thought-provoking play. The only criticism I can point to is that in the show I saw, the actor who played the husband twice made verbal slips. He stumbled on the word "articulate," which was an appropriately Freudian slip; however it's very important for an actor to avoid such nit-picky mistakes.

The co-stars gave two of the most professional performances I've seen at Bard, and the best thing about them is they're both freshmen! I'm sure we'll be

seeing a lot more of them in the future, and I hope their talent is contagious. Lastly, I think a lot of the credit for the success of the play has to go to Chip Hellman for an excellent directing job. These actors were obviously well-coached; they knew what they were supposed to do, when, and where. He seemed to have provided the background expertise necessary so that when the lights went up, the actors' talent could carry it off. Encore.

Jungle

By Jon Lybrook

Berthold Brecht's *In the Jungle of the Cities* was presented by the Bard Theater of Drama and Dance last November 9-12. Directed by Endre Hules, the show's abstract overtones kept the audience captivated, as did superb acting, a magnificent set composed of pretend iron girders towering above the stage, sound effects, dramatic captions, and lively accompaniment by David Arner on piano.

The play evolves around two main



Is Anybody There? — Scene from the Bard Theater's production of three Harold Pinter plays, which appeared in October.

Photo by Sean Reid

characters: Mr. Schlink, a prosperous Oriental lumber dealer (played by Craig Fernandez), and George Garga, a simple, honest librarian (played by Bill Boynton). Throughout the drama's unfolding, many questions concerning human nature are raised. Schlink, who is nearing the end of his life, decides that he must have a challenge before he dies, and chooses Garga as his competitor. Realizing that Garga is proud, Schlink initiates the fight by offering to buy Garga's opinion of a book randomly picked off the shelf of the library. Garga, of course, refuses the outrageous offer, but Schlink calmly persists, and threatens to ruin this stranger's life. But Garga doesn't give in, assuring Schlink a good challenge.

By using his wisdom and power as a businessman, Schlink begins to slowly tear apart Garga's life, starting with his job and then moving to his girlfriend, and ultimately to his sister Maria (played by Courtney Hay) and entire family. All throughout his sadistic game, Schlink offers Garga whatever is within his power — eventually his entire business — to give him something with which to fight back. By continuously giving, Schlink adds fuel to the fire, finally leading up to the climax and the dramatic concluding confrontation between the two.

Fernandez and Boynton, who both appeared in partial fulfillment for their senior projects, made their characters believable. Fernandez's portrayal definitely deserves mention: his quick, efficient actions in speech and movement made his effort in developing his character faultless.

Every supporting character in the play, from John Garga, played by Chris Paul, to Pat Manky, played by Joel Stoffer, seemed to have his own moment of glory.

All combined with the innovative set, dramatic lighting, and top-flight direction to make the show a success.

Singer Alix Dobkin expands audience in Bard appearance

By Johnna Imel

Singer/songwriter Alix Dobkin performed in concert on Saturday, December 7 as a Lesbian/Gay Collective-sponsored event during Bard's Cultural Weekend.

Ms. Dobkin, presently a resident of Saugerties, has been writing and performing woman-identified music since 1971. Her first album, "Lavender Jane Loves Women," was released in 1973, and she followed that with the albums "Living with Lesbians" and "XX Alix." Her latest effort, the e.p. "Never Been Better," and her fifth work, an album, of the same name, will be released early next year.

Until a few years ago, Ms. Dobkin played exclusively to lesbian audiences. This is no longer the case, and the performer has been broadening her horizons and widening her audience.

Ms. Dobkin played two sets, which included, along with previously released material, many of the songs from her latest, as yet unreleased album. The Lesbian/Gay Collective, which is co-led by directors Deadalus Brook-Smith and Justine Fout, provided refreshments and a D.J.

Ms. Dobkin's music encompasses many stylistic components, "pop, rock, folk and ethnic music." Her lyrics express very real concerns, primarily for women, but also for society at large. Her talent on stage was accented by her interaction with the audience as she strived to invoke response. Her sense of humor and honesty created a level of intimacy between artist and audience that is not always found in contemporary music.

Proceeds from the ticket sales and donations went to the Mid-Hudson AIDS Task Force.

Officers of the Lesbian/Gay Collective felt that the event was an effective part of the cultural weekend, and expressed a definite interest in asking Ms. Dobkin back next year.

Halley's comet: an oft-misunderstood phenomena

After calculating the orbits of over 20 comets, Edmund Halley noted that three of their paths were almost identical. He made the assertion that these were not the paths of different comets, but rather the orbit of a single one. Speculating that sightings reported in 1531, 1607, and 1682 were in fact that single comet, Edmund Halley wrote in his diary, "If it should return according to our predictions about the year 1758, impartial posterity will not refuse to acknowledge that this was first discovered by an English man." Sure enough, the comet was seen in 1758; posterity, despite its wish to remain impartial, did not refuse.

Thus was Halley's Comet born. Every 75 years since then, this "dirty snowball" has appeared to earth-bound mortals, bringing with it much speculation and fear, as well as elation. The comet can now be counted on to also inspire visions of dollar signs in the eyes of capitalists, who, upon learning of the comet's allure to man, feel the need to offer (at a reasonable price, of course) some indispensable pieces of comet paraphernalia.

The terror associated with Halley's comet in the past owes largely to coincidence. Comets have made appearances

during plagues, and have been seen both following and preceding the deaths of kings, such as Caesar. They have also been blamed for the fall of great empires, like Constantinople. The fire of New York City was attributed to Halley's comet in 1835. Prophets in history seem to equate comets and floods. As late as 1910 the French prophet Madame de Thebes predicted that the comet would cause Paris to be ravaged by a great flood; she also foretold of financial disaster, pestilence, mass suicide, and a host of other fates which never occurred.

Save for the exceptional case of someone being struck by one, comets pose no threat to mankind. Rest easy, folks; even high tides cannot be the work of Halley's comet. Tides, being caused by the moon's gravitational pull, aren't affected by comets, which have almost no gravity.

Halley's comet gives us something to look at, and that is all. What springs from observation, though, is interesting. This year, four satellites are being sent to rendezvous with the comet for a closer look. A U.S. satellite, ICE, has already met with comet Giacobini-Zinner, to observe its tail. The U.S.S.R.,

despite Rambo's efforts, has launched the most ambitious project, sending a satellite which is projected to fly within 300 kilometers of the comet.

Since the comet visits only once every 75 years (plus or minus 1.5 years), many people have decided that souvenirs are needed for the occasion. There is much memorabilia from which to select: lunch boxes, plastic figures (evil beings from the tail of the comet), 13 different t-shirts, many telescopes (all "perfect" for comet-viewing), books, posters, and many other useful items. In 1910, sheet music came out enabling astronomy lovers to play the "Comet-tail Rag" on the piano.

Halley at Bard? Don't get too excited. The comet will be visible, but very low

on the horizon. The best viewing will be during late February through April, when its tail will be longest. The Astronomy Club hopes to have a field trip to one of the taller mountains in the area, allowing students to view this once-in-a-lifetime spectacle. The comet has been sighted by Rowland Butler, club president, who described it as "very faint, but with a noticeable, if short, tail. Butler hopes to have the school's telescopes in proper working order in the near future, but binoculars will be best suited for the comet as its tail increases in length.

As a spectacle, the comet's impact has been grossly exaggerated. The fact remains, though, that after 1986 the comet will not appear again until 2061.

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Sports Roundup

Women hoopsters improve; men face struggles

With new coach Carla Davis, the women's basketball team seems to be getting back on its feet. As of the copy deadline, the team was 1-1, beating Berkshire Christian and losing to a strong Dutchess Community College team. The team is not involved in conference this year, but Coach Davis hopes to show enough strength so that they will be able to join one next year.

The first game was a relatively simple victory, 40-26. "At first we weren't rebounding on the offensive end," Davis said. When Thea Bloom and Debby Waxman began to pound the boards after a quick refresher course during a time out, the club began to pull away. The women were extremely excited to win their season opener.

But Dutchess Community College took this seemingly improved Bard team to task and won 79-34. The Blazers did not appear able to stop the fast break or Dutchess' point guard, probably the best in the area, who scored 19 points. In an attempt to stop Dutchess' outside shooting, Davis went to a man to man defense, but as she said, "Everyone else [for Dutchess] picked up the slack."

Carla, as the coach prefers to be called, was very happy to have 17 players come out for the team this year. She sees a different attitude here than at Salem College, where she previously coached. "Athletics are secondary here, academics come first," she said, obviously understanding the Bard philosophy.

The starting team of Dorothy Atchenson, Gloria Cassetti, Debby Waxman, and the freshmen duo of Jody Kipper and Rachel Barrett, have been doing a good job, with Thea Bloom coming off the bench often. But this is one of the first times that there have been any substitutes, let alone good ones, for the Blazers. Davis has nothing to compare this team to, but she said, "We have the opportunity to win some games."

By David Thureson

The future looks grim for Bard's "Forgotten Five," the men's basketball

team. At press time, the team had a record of 1-5, including an 80-point humiliation at a recent tournament, and from the looks of things its week-long Thanksgiving break from games and practices may turn out to be the best week of the season.

There are no reasons to believe things are going to change for the better. Veterans of last year's team say that these early games have been the easy part of the schedule, and that the middle and later parts of the season will find Bard pitted against teams that will make 80-point losses more of the rule rather than the exception.

So an obvious question to ask is whether the team has been handed a schedule which it can't live up to, and is forced to play games it hasn't a prayer of winning. Couldn't the team play schools closer to its own talent level?

According to athletic director Joel Tomson, the man responsible for making up the tough schedule, Bard is already playing roughly equivalent schools: small liberal arts colleges which don't give athletic scholarships. With the exception of five or six, he says, Bard should be competitive with every school on the schedule.

Some team members, however, put the number of "no-contest" opponents as high as half of those Bard will face this year. They should be able to compete with the rest, these players say, which they define as not being blown away by 80 points, but still losing most games.

Most people involved think the team should be more competitive than it is, but what exactly does this mean?

Tomson maintains that the problem lies with the whole environment of athletics at Bard. He blames the team's current bleak outlook on lack of raw talent. What is needed, he says, is a new sports facility, with a full-size basketball court, a swimming pool, a proper weight room, and other features to attract more athletically-inclined students. But this doesn't help this year's club, or those of at least the next several years, since the new sports complex is still, as always, on the back burner.

Andrew Zwicker, a team member, agrees that this building is necessary at some point, but he also believes that more support from the administration right now would help. The team particularly needs, he feels, better transportation, more uniforms, and a van to take fans to the home games, which are played in Red Hook.

Playing home games in Red Hook was a decision Tomson was forced to make, he says, because it is impossible to play on Bard's three-quarter sized court. Referees have told him they can't call a game properly in the gym. Besides,



Bard hoopsters in action in last week's games against Mt. St. Mary's College. Andrew Zwicker (above) dribbles up-court in the men's game, and Jody Kipper does likewise for the women. Despite their efforts, both teams lost.

he says, "if you really want to watch a game, a four-minute car ride isn't too much to ask." Fan turnout, however, has been almost non-existent, probably because a lot of people don't have cars. Publicity for the games has been nil. Last year, when the home games were played on campus, the team could usually count on at least a dozen people cheering them on.

New coach Matt Kurdziel is reluctant to directly blame the administration. The main burden of improving the team, he says, belongs to the players themselves: giving consistent effort, having everyone coming to every practice, and building a base of experience. Experience, he says, is one of the major advantages other teams have over Bard. He admits, though, that the team is also limited by the amount of talent



available.

So the team remains caught in a vicious cycle of lost games, low student involvement, low administration support, lack of proper facilities, and no way to attract athletic students in the future. Each of these factors in some way contributes to the others, and unless something breaks the cycle, this rags story may never end.

Soph Tim Leshan represents Bard at X-country nationals

Sophomore Tim Leshan represented Bard at the National Athletic Intercollegiate Association cross-country championships, held last month at the University of Wisconsin, Parkside. His report:

Coach Bill Griffith and I arrived in Kenosha, Wisconsin on November 15, the day before the meet. Having finished fifth in the District 31 championships, I was one of three runners, besides the district-champion St. Thomas Aquinas College runners, to qualify for the Nationals. The coach and I ran the course the day we arrived and could not believe how muddy it was.

It had been raining in Wisconsin all fall, and the night before the meet was no exception. "It's too muddy out there; just set your pace, hold it for the first two miles, and then concentrate on taking people," Coach Griffith said to me. He was right. Within the first couple of miles I ran through three streams

that had not been there the day before, and I fell once.

Slowly I got control of the situation and began to pass people. Realizing that the conditions were slowing me down, I forgot about time and went for place. "You're 180th, someone said to a runner behind me at the four mile mark. But by the finish I was number 192. Later I found out I was the third person from our league to cross the finish line. Although the two people from Concordia College who had beaten me in the Districts did not have good races in Wisconsin, I was glad to beat them.

It was a great honor to represent Bard in the Nationals and to be in the top 200 out of 354 nationally ranked runners. I was also very impressed by STAC's #2 runner of the year. He ran a spectacular race, coming in 20th and becoming an All American. I owe a great deal to my team, my school and my coach for their support.

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How to place an Observer Classified in our next issue:

1) Think of something to say (sometimes the hardest part).

2) Write it down (try to keep it less than 30 words).

3) Send to Box 123 by February 1 for next issue.

4) Keep your money — Observer Classifieds are free to the Bard community.

Welcome thy neighbor to thy fallout shelter. He'll come in handy if you run out of food.

M & C: Go change your pants, Guv, that's disgusting!

Why from this her and him did you and did i climb (crazily kissing) till into themselves we fell-

Wanted: college-age females to help with women's studies sr. project. No experience necessary. Wear loose clothing. Right?

Horny one — Hey, asshole, are you ever going to let me get some sleep? — Sleepy One

And we're not little children
And we know what we want
And the future is certain
Give us time to work it out

"Saay —" the zookeeper cried. "Over my dead body!" Any way you like it," they said.

201: For all our mutual experience, our separate conclusions are the same....

"To the Sands crowd 84:" Always look life straight in the face and remember that I love you all. — Peter.

Phony Beatlemania is phoenix-like.

"But when you come right down to it, all you need is a smoke and a cup of coffee."

Hey, bozo, if you try sometime, you'll get what you need.

EEEEAAZZZZEEEEEE!

LONELY, DEPRESSED, SUICIDAL? Cool. Can I have your stuff?

It isn't even winter and I'm freezing freezing; this sort of feeling isn't pleasing; and what I want to know, man: why o why does she treat me like a...

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ARE YOU OVER SIX FEET TALL, well-built, alert, keen, with a smart mind, a good education and think you deserve a better chance in the world today? Cocky little bugger, aren't you?

Leon: Save us from the ball and chain.

If u cn rd ths thn y're prbly th btch who chrgd me tn bcks t typ my trm ppr.

I'm so bored with the U.S.A.

...and if it weren't for me you'd still be diving under library carrels.

Laura: Giant Knobby sends his regards but no baklava.

Happy? You're beautiful, intelligent, talented, have an amazingly caring steady boyfriend, and solid, worthy goals. You can't possibly know the meaning of the word.

But don't think I didn't fully enjoy my terrifying love.

You turn me on, baby; wanna weave?

Us steady, solid folk from the land of broken typewriters will miss you.

Can we be honest for a minute? I like you; you've got style.

Here's to the trippy January that will at least exist in a subconscious realm.

Bichin' Blonde Babe wants to know if King Kong wiggles when he walks. Send answers via campus mail, Box 561.

Hey R and S: Howzabout some matching white turtleneck sweaters for Christmas? — The Grinch

Hey, I hate to edit and run, but....

West Point protest

cont. from page 1

The civil disobedience action began at 11:30 a.m. Its object was to try to non-violently convey with words and thoughts a message denouncing West Point in an appraisal of peace. Participants in this action cautiously entered West Point grounds in hopes of eventually getting arrested.

After distributing leaflets that gave a negative depiction of the institute and which voiced the concern that, "Current West Point activities will end up serving U.S. military intervention in Central America, 15 civil disobedience protesters were arrested, including Barber.

Another offense committed by demonstrators was the exhibition of children's artworks with a theme of peace, which were placed over war displays in the museum in attempts "to convert the War Museum into a Peace Musuem." As soon as protesters began speaking against the academy, the Military Police were issued an order to stop the action, even if it meant arresting people. Protesters who refused to abstain from speaking were frisked, handcuffed, and dragged outside.

Finally, when things got too out of hand, the War Museum was evacuated.

Oxfam fast donations

cont. from page 1

tions were down from the 1984 total. "We had a lot of extra donations last year from students and faculty because the fast was held right around the time that the Ethiopian crisis hit, and there was more public awareness about world starvation than normal," she said.

A series of activities was set up for the fasters. There was an herbal tea table set up in the lounge, courtesy of the dean of students' office; a short lecture by professor Sanjib Baruah concerning the political economy of world hunger; and a discussion led by Oxfam volunteer Dina Karabell about women and world development.

Oxfam America is an agency that supports development projects and disaster relief programs in countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The name "Oxfam" came from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, founded in England in 1942. Oxfam America, organized in Boston, was founded in

A visitor who approached a female M.P. to ask a question was curtly told, "All subjects who remain downstairs will be subject to apprehension." Those who remained downstairs were either threatened with dismissal or physically forced out.

One of the protesters' goals was to engage soldiers in a dialogue, but this was not always successful. "I felt as if I were treated in a mechanical way," said Barber. "They never gave us a chance to explain what we were doing." Apparently, all those arrested were separated from each other, and told not to speak. Barber also expressed feelings of intimidation and alienation. "They believe they're sane and we're crazy, but we were trying to prove that they are the ones who are crazy."

The most prominent speakers at the protest were Conrad Lynn, a civil rights attorney from Pomona, and Ron Kovic, a Vietnam veteran and anti-war activist, as well as the author of Born on the Fourth of July.

Lynn's speech concentrated on justice. "We are not out there to change the world, but we are out there so that the world doesn't change us," he said.

1970, and is one of six Oxfams around the world.

Reactions from both participants and non-participants varied. "I think it's really rewarding to know that the money from our meals is going to people who are in need of it, remarked Katie Hubacz. Daedalus Brook-Smith said, "We should do this more often. For example, some students don't eat breakfast and that money should be going somewhere."

Some students, including a few who did fast, felt that the gesture was "ridiculous, and was set up merely to generate publicity for the school." One student, who requested anonymity, said that the fast was "only for people who could afford not to eat," and said that it is "impossible to compare situations about food." There are different degrees of suffering [in the world], and that doesn't take away my problems. You just can't compare — we can never understand their struggle, nor can they understand our problems.

Letters

SNS corrects; mugging

cont. from page 2

shareholdings, totals some \$14 billion. Since 1970, direct U.S. investment has tripled to over \$2.6 billion. Control Data Corporation sold equipment to the South African police in violation of U.S. Commerce Department regulations. IBM supplied computers which the government used for streamlining its racist population controls.

If U.S. investment was an agent for positive change, this would have been proven in the last 25 years. Rather, the repressive apparatus of apartheid has grown with that investment. The vast majority of blacks in South Africa support divestment. Despite the Internal Security Act (1982), under which any person inside or outside South Africa who supports divestment commits the crime of "subversion" (for which the penalty is up to 20 years in prison), trade unions, black political organizations, churches, and students continue to call for divestment.

U.S. investments are the foundations for many of the key sectors of the economy. U.S. firms control 75 per cent of the computer market, 23 per cent of the automotive market, almost 40 per cent of the petroleum producers' market, and a sizable share of the electronics market. Disengagement would be an enormous blow to the ruling white minority government. The Sullivan Principles have proven ineffectual in ending the fundamental structure of apartheid. Various corporations, over 40 universities, and numerous churches have divested. Many of these institutions have found it to be part of the process of becoming more socially responsible and have invested in affordable housing, health care and human services, and alternative energy resource conservation.

The anti-apartheid movement must continue to work for divestment.

Elaine Barber

Students for a New Society

Student mugged

Dear Editor:

I am writing concerning an incident which happened to me on November 1 while I was at the Hudson Valley Mall. It was about 8:30 p.m. on a Friday, and

I had just bought three cassette tapes from Record World. As I left the store I walked past a newsstand where a youth approached me. He pushed my right shoulder, and as I turned towards him, he began to strike me repeatedly in the facial area with his closed fists—causing multiple contusions. This youth was trying to steal my package of cassettes. As usual, no one among the vast multitudes was willing to try and stop the crime. Hudson Valley Mall security arrived three minutes later and began to subdue the youth. One of the security guards was able to give me the name of the youth because of the youth's prior experiences with the law (shoplifting at the mall).

The security guard gave me the individual's name and I pressed charges against him. The charge was assault in the third degree, which, although it is a felony charge, was treated as misdemeanor because this youth was seventeen. What is particularly striking and strange, is that the youth was at that time under suspicion by the Hudson Valley Mall authorities. Unfortunately, they were not about while I was being assaulted. The trite, pious platitude applies here — where are they (the police) when you need them?

I suppose that in these days when modern technological advancements can't yield adequate protection to college students, the Bard Community must become more alert to the dangers which are prevalent where a great deal of people gather. Are we to believe that the once peaceful Hudson Valley Mall cannot provide adequate protection for its customers? Perhaps my unfortunate experience should awaken people up to the fact that no place is entirely safe from the muggers of New York. The mugger with whom I had my encounter had to be somewhat bold and uncaring to choose the busiest day of the week and a time of night when there were the most people around shopping.

On the way back to Bard from the Kingston Hospital, I began to talk about this with Walter, the driver of the Bard security car. I asked him, "What is this world coming to — when you can't be safe in the Mall?"

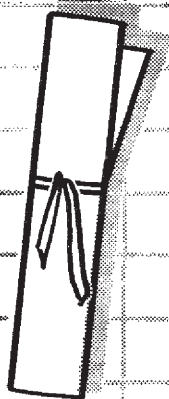
James Murphy

P.S. I plan to sue for damages!

**DRINKING
IT'S A MATTER
OF DEGREE.**

SOBER IS SMART

A public service message from the New York State Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse and your campus newspaper.



so·ber (sō'bēr), *adj.*

Characterized by self-control or sanity;
reasonable; rational.

SOBER IS SMART

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P.O. Box 33705 • 1145 19th Street NW • Washington, DC 20033

Please tell my representatives in Congress that I oppose H.R. 2911 or any legislation that would impose taxes on audio recorders or blank tape.

Name (print) _____

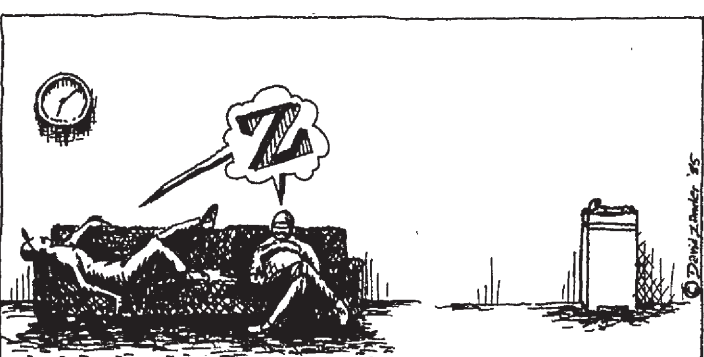
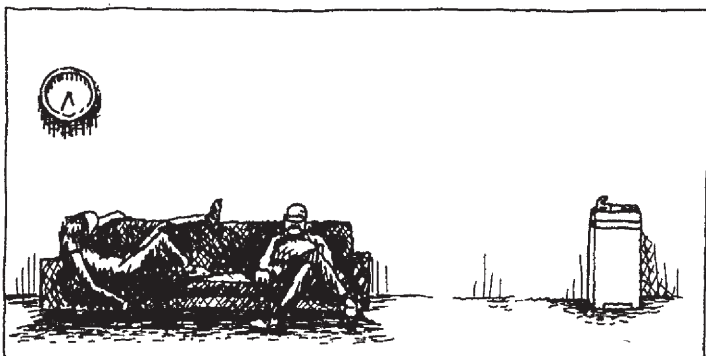
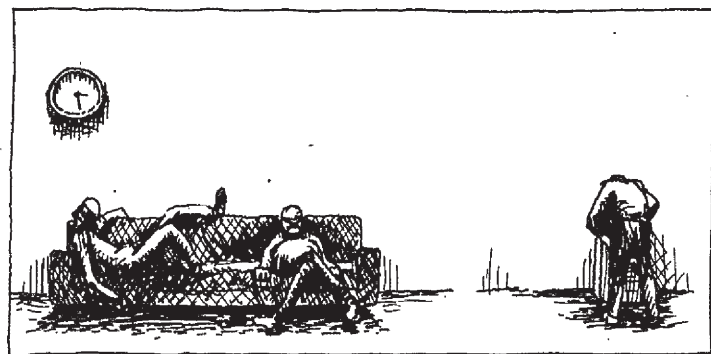
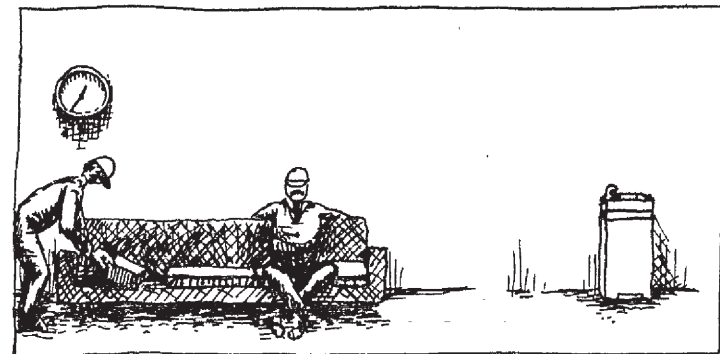
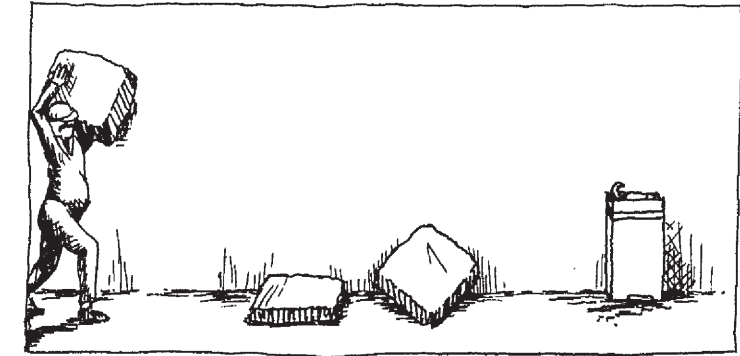
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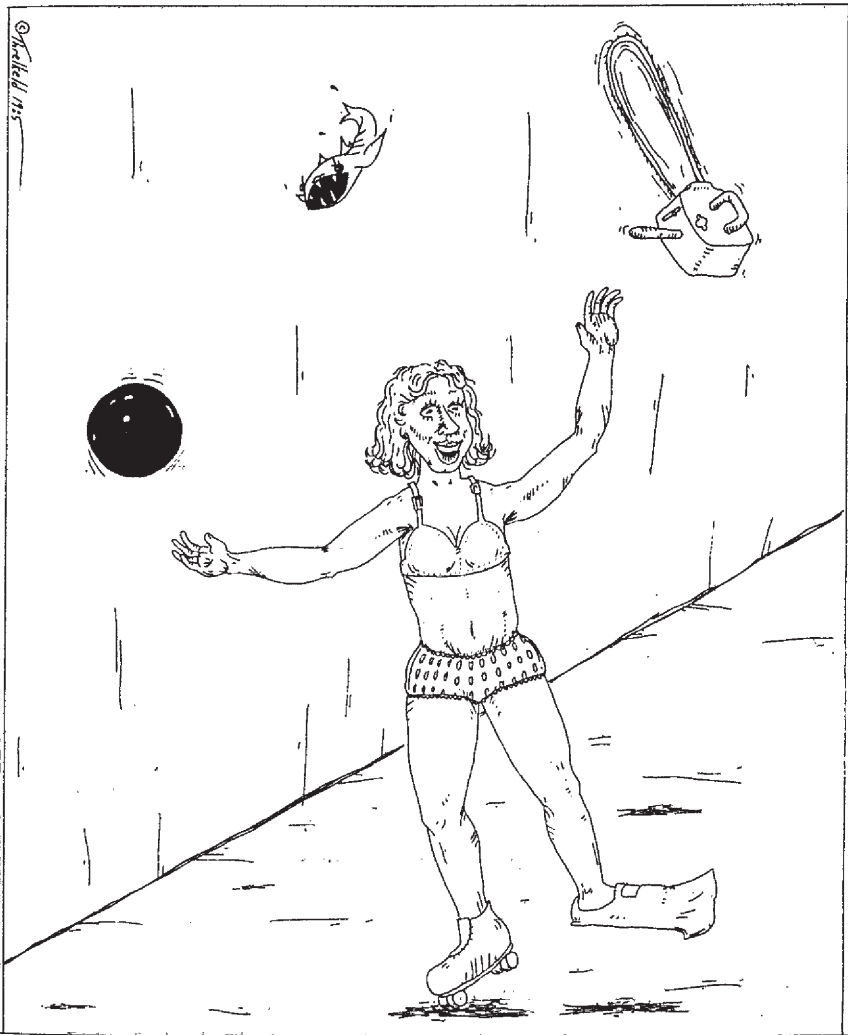
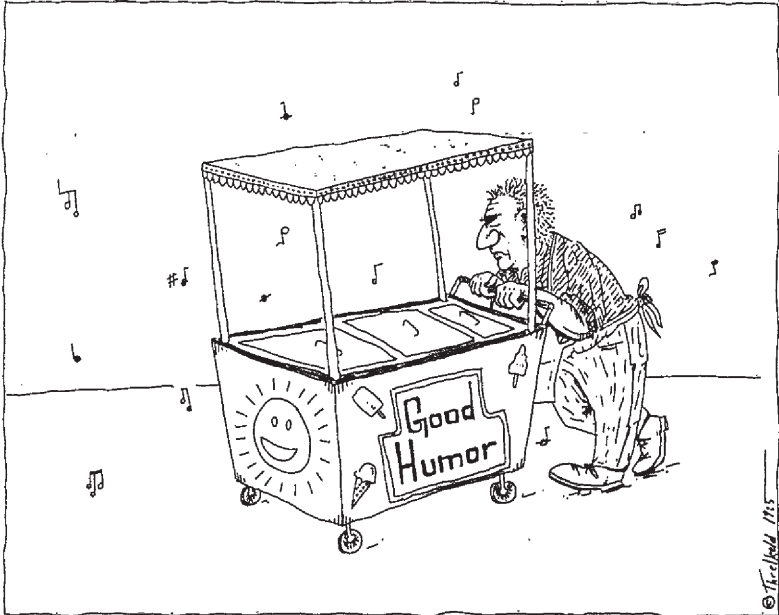
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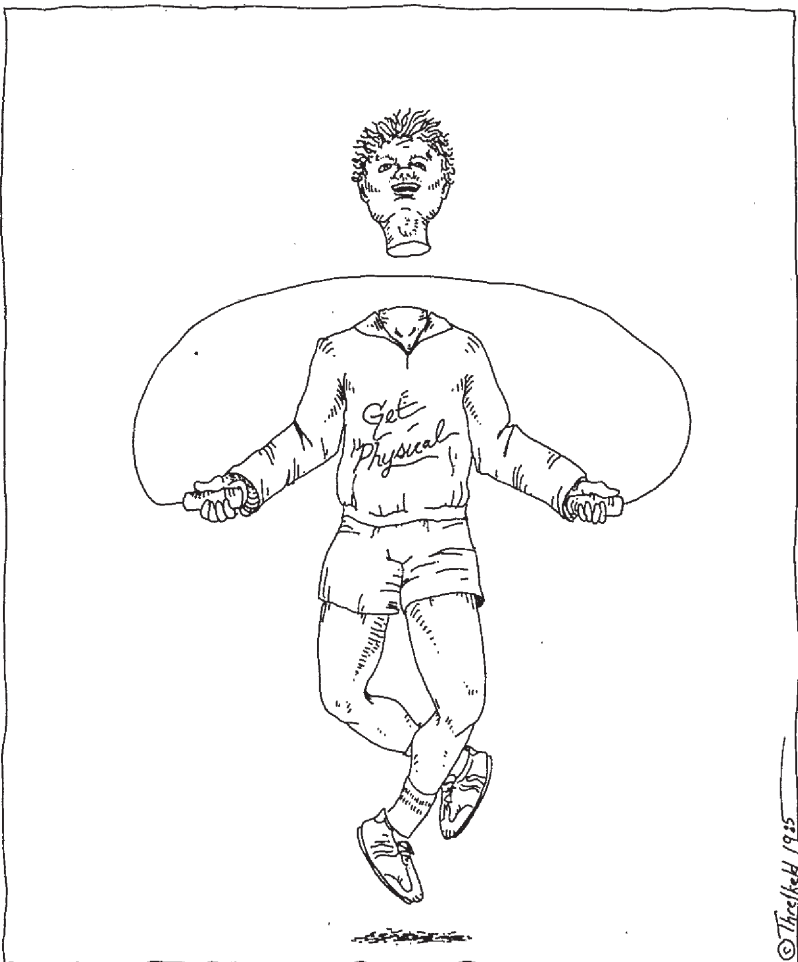


Incongruities

#17



Do not attempt this at home.



Some forms of exercise may be hazardous to your health.