

# OBSERVER

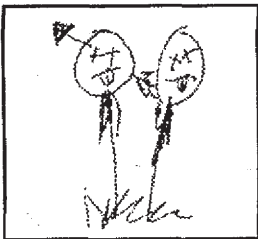
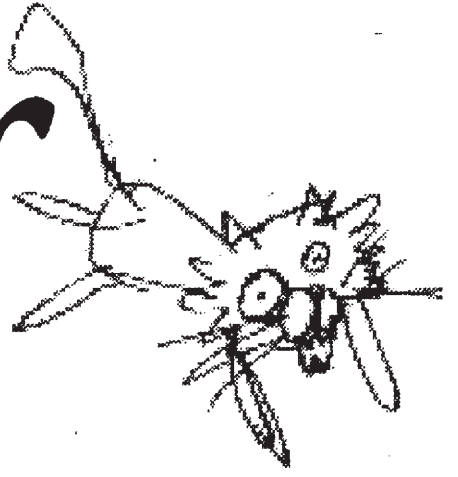
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# THE BARD observer

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 12504 - October 28, 1996 - Issue 3, Volume 7



"The newspaper  
without qualities."

## News

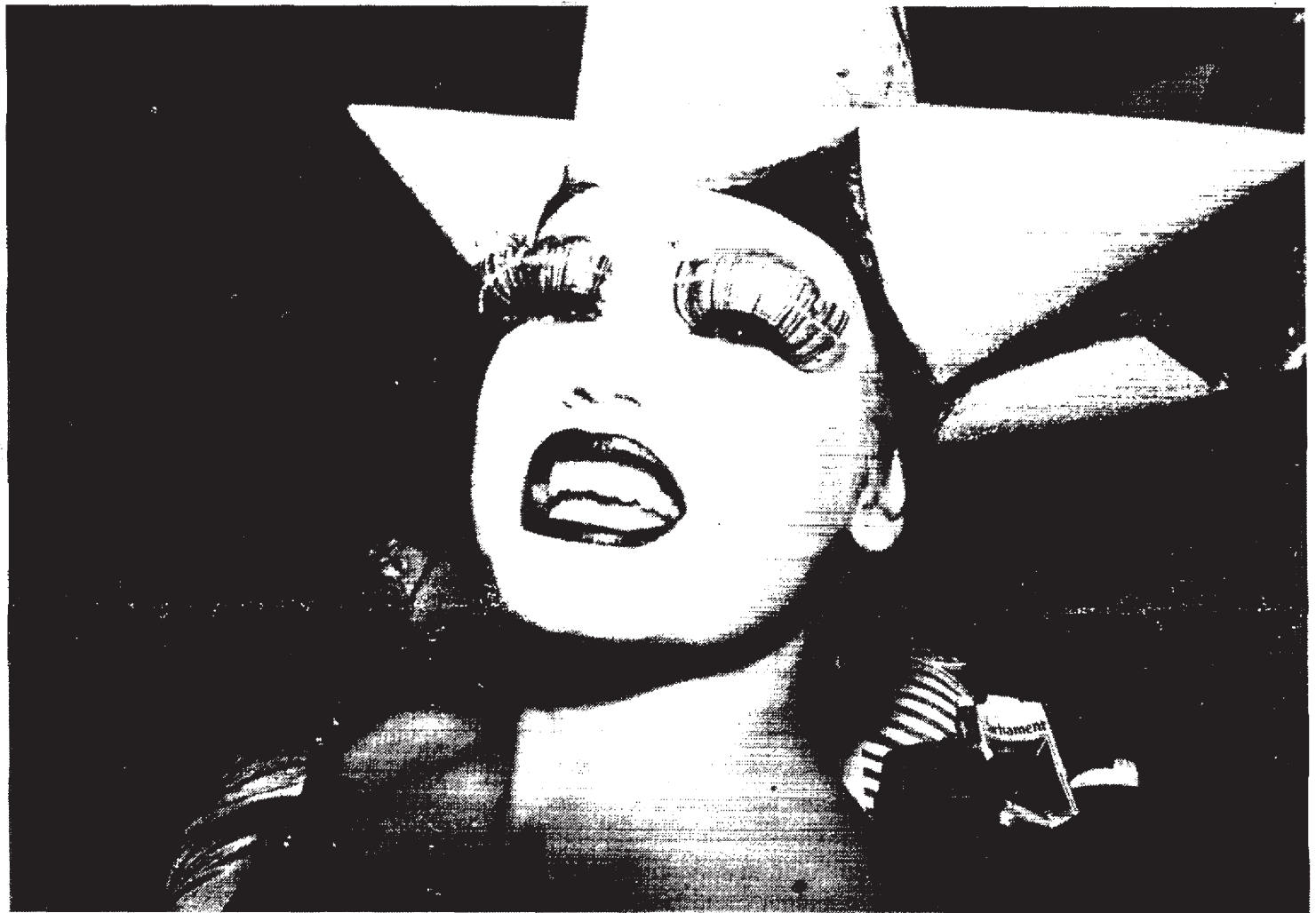
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1996 Drag Race in Space. (See pages 12 and 24.)

photo: Seze Devres

## Bard Program Wastes Nothing Campus Recycling/Composting Resources a Model for Neighboring Schools

by Andrea Davis and Amy Foster

Beginning six months ago, Bard began composting 206 gallons of food waste each day. This year alone, 74 tons of campus waste have been recycled, avoiding disposal costs and conserving resources. Despite this tremendous reduction of waste, 214 tons of campus waste were sent to the county incinerator last year, comprised primarily of contaminated paper, household waste, and food waste from faculty and staff quarters.

On Tuesday, October 1, INFORM, a non-profit environmental research and educational organization

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and the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council held an educational workshop entitled "Making Less Garbage on Campus-A Kick Off of Waste Prevention at Bard College." Waste Reduction Day, the first annual workshop on campus-wide waste prevention, brought community members, staff and students together to brainstorm possible means of reducing the remaining waste that is being produced on campus.

Mark Wheeler, waste prevention specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension, and David Sapphire of INFORM got the workshop off to a start with an overview on waste prevention and an introduction on the role Bard can play in avoiding disposal and saving resources. The audience consisted of Bard's Recycling Committee members, who have been in charge of the recycling and composting issues at Bard for the past two years, interested students, and three representatives from Marist College, who came to see and learn how Bard's waste reduction program works. Mark informed us that Bard is leading the way with the current well-run and working recycling and composting program and it acts as a model for other schools to follow.

The group then headed out to Bard's composting center (behind the gym), to see where all the leftovers and wasted food at Kline end up. Marie

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## Notebook

by Meredith Yayanos

A DeKline Coffeehouse on Monday began **Queer Awareness Week** with a bang, and the rambunctious performance by Disappear Fear ended it Friday night with an even bigger bang (there was, however, quite a bit of whimpering in the interim, as conveyed on various flyers by the dimwitted scribbles of one desperately bored, homophobic vandal). Rainbow ribbons distributed in Kline by BiGaLa members made for some interesting impromptu fashion statements, and the Tuesday evening forum concerning campus homophobia drew a large, articulate crowd. Unfortunately, the anti-gay contingency did not attend as he was hard at work in Kline, scrawling "straight poeple [sic] stick together...kill a fag" on the **Alcohol Awareness Week** banner, and learning to walk upright.

Much erudite commentary concerning sexuality had been posted, as well as an onslaught of heated remarks by other students pertaining to the Bard Alcohol Policy and its effects on campus sociability. Located across from the paranoids by the dishroom, the banner, brainchild of Dean of Students Shelley Morgan, quickly filled to capacity. Most of the commentary questioned the assumption that a strictly reinforced drug/alcohol policy makes for a healthier campus attitude, and focused on just **HOW** keenly aware Bard students are of alcohol.

**Lost: big, wiggly \$1.5 million water fountain.** Last seen in front of Fairbairn. It is much-loved, like one of the family. Answers to name, "What The Hell Is That?" Please call.

**Halloween** is almost here, and the festivities have already begun. Several Bard students who have been working at Grieg Farm's haunted hayride this month urge you to come visit them and recommend applying for the job next year. It's "monstrously fun" and the pay is six dollars an hour, seven if you can consistently goad small children into profuse weeping. The Arr Club will be hosting a **bash in Proctor** on Wednesday, All Hallow's Eve, two dollar cover charge and you must be in costume. And of course, there's the **Bard Zine Library's Grand Opening** party on Halloween night in the Root Cellar.

In actual news, the few students who showed up to last Wednesday's **Student Government** forum elected Jamie Blackman and Mahajabeen Padamsee to the Health and Counselling Advisory Board. They ran uncontested.

## Security Beat

by Jordan Parkerton

You may have noticed something missing on Annandale Road. Bard's little school bus and a student's vehicle collided at the dirt road bend by Crueger Village. Although no one was injured, the shuttle suffered significant damage, especially the bumper. The shuttle is out of service until repairs are complete. A burgundy van, with its lettering altered by tape to read, "Campus Shuttle," will be used until then. When asked if he preferred the van, one driver said that its seats are more comfortable, but not only is its space limited for student accommodations, the van handles turns awkwardly.

The new green drapes of Robbins' lounge were stolen, also over reading week. "I don't condone this, but I fully expect them to turn up in somebody's art project," stated Lisa Sadowski, Coordinator of Bard Security, with a smile.

A student's Macintosh laptop computer was stolen from Bourne the following week. The room from which it was stolen was left unlocked. The New York State Police are investigating. Yet another bike was stolen. This time it was a blue-purple Schwinn stationed in front of Kline.

The prevalence of quick-release axles on newer bikes makes securing bikes safely to Bard's current bike racks difficult if not impossible, especially with Kryptonite-style locks. Sadowski said that better bike racks are being considered. Sadowski mentioned that Health Services has been working quite hard as well. She said that it is now offering flu shots, now that the season of ailment is upon us. Its office at Robbins is open 9a.m. to 1p.m. and 2p.m. to 4:30p.m., week-days.

## What is "Normal" at Bard?

by E.P. Keller & the Counseling Center

L&T orientation, as relevant to drug and alcohol issues at Bard College, offered some interesting topics of concern by first-year students. It was gleaned from the feedback that these students were certainly not moralistic about drugs in our society. In fact, many felt that Bard can be a place where moderation and personal choice remains a beacon for other institutions. This opinion was particularly prevalent when the discussion centered around alcohol and marijuana use. While a small minority felt indifferent about the conversation because it did not pertain to their own personal habits, the majority highlighted reasons why moderation and personal choice worked for them.

First, they recognized the reality that the interconnection between drug and alcohol use is too much a part of our society to ignore. Second, students identified ways in which they interacted in a drug-oriented society without losing control or integrity. A sense of community responsibility and respect was a high priority. The vast majority felt their behavior or that of others should not impinge on the group. They also verbalized a need for an honest internal dialogue that forewarned the individual when partying was becoming problematic. It was unanimously agreed that this type of self-monitoring was both difficult and sometimes nullified with certain personality types (i.e. alcoholic or addict).

Of course, illegal drugs, specifically pot, have been the focus of controversy for a variety of reasons including the very nature of its legality. Again, a majority did not believe the criminal label would inhibit use among their peers; however, they did believe that they and their peers need to own up to the possible consequences of "being caught." Likewise, other consequences were candidly explored, including sexual assault scenarios, and possible addictions.

As an aside, many of the first-year folks have an understanding of the "recovery" procedure and most if not all knew of someone who had specific drug and alcohol problems. Those who shared experiences in which they intervened for a struggling friend, stated that this was "difficult" business and often deemed it unsuccessful. Nonetheless, they felt obliged to deal directly with those who were close to them. For individuals who had more success, they suggested addressing specific behaviors (i.e. missing class, acting distant) during an "intervention" rather than utilizing labels of blame.

A questionnaire was also a part of our program, and the candid answers revealed some important aspects of peer and personal drug/alcohol use. Again, a large majority indicated that there is a strong connection between partying and destruction of property. Another strong connection was made between "using" and having a bad sexual encounter.

One of the most common assertions by first year students was a preconceived notion that Bard was a "heavy partying school" that placed a significant importance on routine alcohol and marijuana use. Simultaneously, these students expressed a majority opinion that pot and alcohol were not a preeminent part of their lives. From the vantage-point of the drug and alcohol specialist, this seems to be true for all levels of students at Bard. Abusive and/or routine users are largely outnumbered at Bard by the moderate and abstinent students. So, one may ask several questions regarding the juxtaposition of actual use/abuse and

## What Happened at Bennington College, and Why Should a Bard Student Care?

by Charlotte Jackson

Many people at Bard may have heard some rumblings about the shady goings-on at Bennington College during the last couple of years. Many students have friends who attend this erstwhile liberal arts college—now better dubbed a “conservative arts college”; others may have narrowly missed enrolling there themselves. A few brave, bored souls may even have sallied up to the Green Mountains for the infamous “Dress to Get Laid” party. Still others may recall the college’s fifteen minutes of media fame in the fall of 1994, when the *New York Times* and other publications latched onto a sensationalistic story of mass firings, “corporate downsizing,” and a megalomaniacal president. Within months, the furor had died down, and all was once more business as usual in the education world. Yet the repercussions of Bennington’s dilettantish foray into Draconian policy already can be felt, as the recent tenure dispute on this very campus illustrates. Nor is this coincidental; President Botstein has followed the Bennington saga and expressed a guarded admiration for President Elizabeth Coleman. Academic administrators, Botstein among them, have kept Bennington’s experiment in mind; given this, students and professors should not be so hasty to relax their vigilance.

To this end, I offer up the following “worm’s-eye view” of the three years during which I attended Bennington.

In the fall of ‘92 I arrived at what is now affectionately known as the “Old Bennington,” the institution familiar to readers of Bret Easton Ellis’s *Less Than Zero* and Donna Tartt’s *The Secret History*. And yes, it really was like that, more or less. It was a place where debauchery coexisted with a fervent seriousness of purpose, where the person on your right at the table might be a published author at age seventeen or an AIDS case in the making, or both rolled into one. You might drink and party with your professors afterhours; no one ever seemed to sleep; even a schizophrenic could find a social niche. Then there were the house parties, affairs hosted by students where 150 stir-crazy kids dressed in drag, disco get-ups, or nothing at all jumped up and down in a living room until 4:00 a.m. to the accompaniment of strobe lights and a behemoth stereo system. Students at the bar dispensed free booze into unmarked containers or directly into the mouths of kneeling supplicants. For those puzzled as to why I invoke vistas of debauchery in an article

nominally about tenure and educational policy, it is because the crackdown on campus life that ensued in tandem with the firings and the dissolution of the student government illustrated so clearly the link between social and political autonomy. In order to subdue the student body and ward off strike or protest, it was necessary to atomize the sense of community which the festivities had forged.

Freshmen were thrown into this melee to sink or swim. Academically, the same was true. There was no condescending first-year curriculum; the system assumed that you graduated high school knowing how to think and express yourself. Frequently, the system was wrong about this, and many people failed to rise to the expectations placed upon them. Right from the start, you could dream up your own tutorials and interdisciplinary courses. It was stimulating, self-motivated, and anarchic. In other words, it was like the progressive atmosphere at Bard taken to a higher power and stripped of ivy and cufflinks.

Over my sophomore year, a gradual process of change set in. The loudest houses had been disbanded over the summer, when no residents had been there to protest. This set an ominous precedent for the “fait accompli” method of decision-making that characterized Bennington in the coming era. The Office of Student Life put a stop to the consumption of alcohol at student-run parties, and finally banned the house parties altogether. From then on we conducted our revelry in dingy public spaces, with the ambience of a chaperoned high school dance, while dining hall workers in their uniforms fleeced us for the inadequate supply of beer. The character of the newly-admitted freshmen seemed to have altered too, even making allowances for upper-classman nostalgia: they seemed much tamer, lacking in a certain demonic energy. Unfortunately, these changes were the harbingers of a much more profound upheaval.

All my contemporaries had been aware for a long time of the tensions between two power blocs: the President and the Board of Trustees on the one

hand, and the faculty and students on the other. Events had come to an abortive head the year prior to my arrival when (in a scenario that sets off some eerie resonances) a popular professor who had received unanimous recommendations from the Educational Policies Committee, and the support of 90% of the student body on a petition, was denied tenure. She had supported students who occupied the administrative building in a protest against the President. Even after this, we naively clung to the idyll, assuming that the factionalism was a status quo like the balance of power in Europe before the wars, admitting of minor skirmishes but prohibiting any definitive victory by any totalitarian interest group, a background for our papers, concerts, plays, parties. When the Board of Trustees announced the coup-de-grace, we ignored it.

This final blow was named “The Symposium Process.” It was supposedly a community-wide forum which would convene regularly throughout the year to discuss the future of the school. The memo circulated spoke of the need to change with the times and invited everyone to brainstorm. To an outsider, it looked perfectly innocuous. The results of these deliberations were to be announced in June. A cynic might have remarked that this date fell after everyone directly affected had left for the summer. Later the Board would brag about the 600 people who supposedly contributed to the “discourse” about restructuring. However, the few Symposium meetings which did occur were anarchically run and

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## Bennington

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didn't address the real issues at stake. No one brought up mass purges, the elimination of tenure, or even the trendy piece of IBM-speak "restructuring." Instead, ideas such as starting a nice little organic farm got tossed around. People familiar with President Coleman's style suspected that she had already made up her mind about what would happen and held the Symposium only to legitimize herself. Attendance at the meetings dwindled due to this disenchantment, until the last one had to be cancelled when nobody showed up. Professors began taking bets about who among them would be fired (one of my literature professors eventually collected a pool of \$200). Yet despite the prevailing cynicism, none of us could guess that the Board had actually committed their plans to paper as early as April 5.

In the meantime, students registered for fall courses which would not be held, passed Plans (the equivalent of Moderation) in disciplines which would no longer be taught, and signed up for senior theses with mentors whose names graced the unofficial black book. The deadline for transfer applications came and went all over the country. Prospective students remitted the matriculation fees and current students their tuition.

In June, we discovered that 27 of our professors, approximately one-third of the faculty, had been fired. Not that we found out from the institution: the Dean of Studies Office refused to give out names when we called in, and ultimately it was the fired faculty themselves who sent us the list of their number—an act for which the College promptly threatened to sue. In addition, the divisional structure had been abolished. This meant departments no longer had their own budgets and policy-making organs. All this would be centrally controlled in the future. Tenure in any form was likewise abrogated. The faculty and student bodies charged with evaluating professors up for review were summarily dissolved. Economics, Political Science, and Art History, seemingly indispensable components of a reputable liberal arts program, were eliminated. Teachers of musical instruments were let go. All literary critics and scholars were fired; only "practitioners" (i.e., high-profile published poets and writers) were deemed fit to teach literary criticism and scholarship. Finally, all remaining student governance was done away with. This was the gist of a twenty-page document entitled "The Symposium Report, a dense mass of Orwellian prose which ushered in a new era of progressive education in which, among other things, all the artificial divisions between disciplines were going to be demolished and we were going to

learn physics from watching the bodies of dancers in the air.

We were witnessing two phenomena: corporate downsizing and political purging. On the one hand, these layoffs offered a quick fix for the financial woes of a small liberal arts college in debt. They represented a triumph of business considerations over humanistic or pedagogical concerns. On the other hand, almost all of those individuals who were dismissed had opposed the President at one time or another, or simply belonged to the same clique as the more vocal people who had. Almost all of the people who had testified on behalf of a former colleague in a wrongful dismissal lawsuit had been let go, while with only one exception all those testifying on the college's behalf had been retained.

Like everyone else, I tried to make the best of it. All four of my professors for the com-

### *Watching a community*

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ing term had been fired. It was too late to transfer. I scraped together a schedule from scratch, discovering new interests I never knew I had, such as the charms of modern Mandarin. I joined some students who tried to reconstitute a student council, which belatedly was recognized by the administration as the "Interim Student Panel," a puppet body so dubbed to emphasize its insubstantial nature. School officials and the school psychologist supervised our meetings with a kind of Kafkaesque surveillance, making cheery remarks to the effect of how they knew we must be "grieving," but how we must look to the future. I circulated petitions to protest some of the particularly egregious firings, petitions which were never acknowledged. Students staged a sit-down protest in the Barn (the main administrative building on campus) and were met with silence, secretaries stepping amiably over our legs, although the Director of Publications did

send out a galley admonishing us to "quit pretending" we were concerned with issues of due process, then insinuated that the former professors were manipulating us.

Not once did anyone apologize to us for the havoc wreaked upon our studies, our lives, and our relationships. Administrators, who now by far outnumbered the professors, and even began to offer courses themselves, spoke to us of the "terrible tragedy which has affected everyone at the school," as though it were some kind of natural disaster and not a self-conscious pogrom which they had condoned. The remaining instructors were too concerned with the new orthodoxies and their own job security to lend any support to us; they were too busy signing petitions denouncing their former colleagues and pretending not to see those unfortunate wraiths who had been permitted to finish a final year. The official line was that intelligent, inspirational, dedicated people with whom we had worked so closely were so much dead wood. Activists in student government were troublemakers: the adjectives pinned to us were "negative," "obstructionist," "reactionary."

The truly amazing part of all this was that students began to believe it and spout the official line themselves. Most felt that the changes were irreversible and the best we could hope for was to cooperate with the administration in the hope of garnering at least a minimal voice in the restructuring process. Moderates who wanted to cooperate disowned the militants who wanted to agitate and expose the school to alumni, parents, and the public. Most people simply became apolitical and cloistered themselves in their rooms with a large, consoling bottle. The connection between social life and ideological strength emerged ever more clearly as a series of security crackdowns began. A friend of mine who tried to hold an impromptu jazz concert in a house was taken before the judicial board for insubordination. A mantle of morgue-like silence descended upon the once-raucous campus even on weekend nights. I'm glad to be gone.

Watching a community I believed to be stable decline, and seeing how easily student opinion can be belittled and dismissed, has opened my eyes to the fact that it can happen anywhere, anytime. No, it's not the Holocaust; yet it is terrifying to see that the self-same mechanisms of propaganda, denunciation, social control, and co-optation that govern a totalitarian state can also be set in motion in the microcosm of the college campus. The speed with which people knuckled under and came to doubt their own rights and values was truly sobering. If Bennington prospers and regains its good name, the experiment could be repeated at any number of small, "progressive" colleges nationwide. Perhaps at Bard.

## New Coach Expresses Admirable Goals

by Chris Van Dyke

As I talked to one of the new soccer coaches for the last issue of the Observer, I thought that I'd catch Rob Acunts, the new men's soccer coach and athletic and recreation director, and see what he had to say about the new program, and this year's soccer season (note: this interview is a few weeks old, so any and all dates or "upcoming" games are way the heck off).

**OBS:** Okay, I'd thought I'd just start by asking, did you coach before coming here to Bard, and if so, where?

**ROB:** Yes, I was a graduate assistant coach at Springfield College in Massachusetts for the last two years.

**OBS:** Was that your first coaching job then?

**ROB:** Yes.

**OBS:** You coached soccer there as well? (Rob nods in affirmation.) Did you coach any other sports besides soccer?

**ROB:** No.

**OBS:** How well have your previous teams done?

**ROB:** At Springfield last year we made it to the EC/ACs, and were semifinalists there with a 10 - 6 and 1 record.

**OBS:** Okay. Where did you graduate from college?

**ROB:** Bryant College in Rhode Island was my undergrad, and then Springfield College for my masters.

**OBS:** Did you play soccer in college?

**ROB:** Yes.

**OBS:** How long have you been playing soccer?

**ROB:** Uh... (laughs) since third grade. I was ten years old, I think.

**OBS:** I was wondering, just in general, what are your goals this year for

Bard. What was the program like before you got here, and what are you hoping to do to it?

**ROB:** In the past they, well, I guess they've...struggled, is the word that I use. As far as I can see, they haven't had a winning record in three of four years. Uh, a winning record is important, although that shouldn't be the main focus. The main focus is that there is more that's going on then winning, but we've made strides in level of play, both as individuals and as a team. Just right now I want to raise the level of play from what it has been in the past. In the first few games, not knowing what they've had in the past, we've made strides towards that end. It's a long way to go; we have another 16 games, so we hope to improve by then. But as far as goals: to have a more successful year, individual and team-wise. I'm not going to put a number of wins on that. That will be measured at the end of the year, depending on where we stand.

**OBS:** How is it adjusting to a new school: the administration, getting started, etc?

**ROB:** It's...the first year is always difficult, but luckily it was in the summer, so I didn't have the pressure of students coming and asking for money for clubs and everything else. It's a time to learn how to manage your time and get things done the right way. There is somewhat of an adjustment, but it is no different than going anywhere else. It's a matter of finding out the way things run, and Jamie Schultz and Kris have been excellent with helping me out if I need something. They know how to get it done.

**OBS:** So exactly what do you do besides just coaching?

**ROB:** Oh, I'm the director of recreation and intramurals. What that means is that I am obviously in charge of recreational events and intramurals. In the L&T program I was in charge of all the rec events. The sports clubs, I am in charge of those; the instructional and activities classes I'm in charge of organizing those, so it's a full load.

**OBS:** I don't know if you've seen any of the league, but do you have any idea what should be your big competition this year? Any archrivals?

**ROB:** I have no idea about a lot of the teams we play. I'm new to the area. I do know some of the coaches, so to say who the strong

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## Druggies

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perceived use/abuse: Why is there such a large distortion of perception? What social significance is connected to this misconception? Is there a way of correcting the correlated problems?

This phenomenon is not unique to Bard in the least. Dr. Wes Perkins et al have observed this social distortion in over thirty small private colleges in the northeast and have spent considerable energy in qualifying their findings. The summary of their report is that it is typical for students to overestimate the degree of their peers' use of drugs and alcohol on campus. Dr Perkins suggests that the 'fantastical' nature of a drug/alcohol problem is "larger than life," hence it endures and multiplies in our recollections. While this seems a reasonable explanation, I would also assert that there is a diehard quality and pride in the folklore of traditions. Bard, once hailed as a refuge for pot use, still holds fast to the image in popular magazines and collegiate information. Students still read "Reefer madness" when perusing some current "guides to colleges." Several of the first-year students added that Bard "wins the #2 spot for Northeast pot-smoking schools." There is not any evidence offered at this time which would even remotely support the claim. Nonetheless, there is power in it. "If people define or perceive situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (William Thomas, from his book, *The Child in America*).

Does error in misrepresentation make a difference? In connection to alcohol and drug use, it has been shown to make a tremendous impact. When excessive or even frequent "partying" becomes normalized in concept, it sends a highly influential message to a peer group. "No matter what a student's attitude about use might be, he or she may adjust his or her own behavior in accordance with the perceived standard in order to feel more comfortable socially...Furthermore, even if the student is in a situation where she or he believes friends are relatively more permissive, then the student may be encouraged to use in excess of one's own attitude" (Wes Perkins, from *Confronting Misperceptions of Peer Drug Norms Among College Students*).

There is also consideration given to how misperceptions affect the students who may already be struggling with the abuse of some drug. If they perceive their peers as "accepting" of excess, they would feel uninhibited acting out their particular addiction even in an open social environment. And so the impression of peer use may continue to grow in a destructive cycle of misrepresentation.

The conclusion of this L&T orientation left us all feeling rather optimistic, despite the strong aforementioned currents of misunderstanding, misjudgment, and misperception. Bard students need only to stand protective of their strong moderate opinions, sense of community, and pride in independent thinking. These are tools that thwart destructive group thinking and the spoils of excess. Fortunately, autonomy and individuality have been two Bard traditions we can easily substantiate.

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## Rob Acunts

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competition is: I don't know. New Jersey Institute of Technology was considered one of the stronger teams in our league, people called it an upset against them. I didn't see it that way. We beat them 1-0. We play Stephen's of Mt. St. Mary's Thursday which is a non-conference game, and then we play Steven's Tech which is a conference game. So I really don't know a lot about the teams, but I don't care about them. I care about how we play, and hopefully the other teams will have to rise to that level.

**OBS:** I don't know if you have any long-term plans or anything, but do you plan to stay here at Bard for an extended period of time?

**ROB:** I can't put a number on that. I don't think anybody in any position can do that. I know they've had a major turnover in coaches here. I think I'm the fifth coach in six years, but I don't know if that's correct or not. I know I'm the third coach in three years. . . actually, the fourth coach in four years, because the seniors have had a new coach each year. I don't know. Soccer-wise, right now I'm not looking past this year, I'm not looking past tomorrow night, I'm looking at what's ahead of me in the short term. Long term has not even crossed my mind.

**OBS:** Okay. Is there anything you'd like to say at this point to the school population in general about the sports programs?

**ROB:** The biggest thing is that in the past, Bard has been looked upon as a non-athletic school. High academics...no emphasis on athletics.

And I think the students that are coming out of high-school these days are understanding that athletics is a part of education, that there are things to be learned through athletics and in athletics. I think that they stand to become more important. I've been told that there's always a fear that, oh, Bard's going to become a Jock school. I don't see that happening ever, but there needs to be a better combination of academics and athletics. The administrative people need to support that more than they do. There are a select few that do, I think there needs to be an entire aspect of supporting athletics. We do want to be successful. That means it isn't for everyone, it's for people who are committed to playing the sport, but I think maybe athletics co-curricular is something that is important, and I don't think that's been achieved here.

### Other Tidbits About Rob Acunts:

**Age:** 26

**Height:** 5'6"

**Marital Status:** Single

**Place of Birth:** Burnthills, NY

**Birthday:** 7/8/70

**Favorite Movie:** "Uh. . . (long pause) I guess the Rocky Movies."

**Favorite Food:** "My mother's Moniga. That's Manicotti for people who aren't Italian."

**Favorite Music:** (no response)

**Bands?:** (nothing)

**Any music at all?:** Just about anything

**If there was one person you could meet, who would that be:** "My wife" (laughs).

## Waste Reduction Day

continued from page 1

and Rich West, Bard's recycling and composting disposal facilitators, explained how the compost is buried with woodchips and its temperature is regularly checked to insure proper food decomposition. The next stop was the post office. Workshop participants were encouraged to brainstorm ways to reduce waste on campus, beginning with the massive amount of paper use.

This kind of thinking continued into the after-dinner discussion on what Bard can do to prevent waste and improve the current recycling and composting programs. Bard students and faculty concluded that initiating a composting program in student and faculty residences, as well as providing economic incentives for students to use cloth bags at the bookstore, would aid in reducing campus waste. Waste reduction could also be incorporated into academics through a course designed to integrate scholastics into a community-focused program centered around developing environmental alternatives for the Bard campus waste production and reduction. However, a major contributor of waste production on campus is our conglomerate attitude as a student body. Many of us are not aware and simply do not consider the repercussions of our daily acts. Waste does not disappear when Servicemaster takes out the trash.

Following the dinner discussion, the public was invited to join in on the workshop. Joanna Underwood, the president of INFORM, brought the concept of a sustainable society down to a more tangible level in her lecture on waste prevention. Recycling is not the sole aspect of the solution. As consumers, we must think before we buy. Forty percent of all plastics are only used once and then discarded in one way or another. With a little extra thought at the store, this can easily be reduced by precycling. Dick Griffiths, director of the Physical Plant, also spoke

about the waste reduction on campus and gave a summary of accomplishments by the Bard Recycling Committee, including installation of air-to-air heat pumps, ground source heat pumps and hydronic pumps in Bard buildings, with the expected energy savings of 50 percent on electric heat and hot water.

Finally, Daryl VanDyke, a Bard student and member of Earth Coalition, summarized the evening discussion on what Bard can do to continue to reduce waste.

The issue at hand is far from hopeless. There are countless opportunities just waiting to be seized. As Joanna Underwood pointed out, if each of us left all of our excess packaging at the grocery store instead of disposing of it at our various homes, the grocery store would be forced to pay for the disposal of the additional packaging. Eventually, they would get the hint and lobby for products without the unnecessary packaging. The potential to solve the problems of tomorrow are right in front of us today.

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# Entertainment

## Barker Quintet Reflects Innovation, Tradition

by Noah R. Billick

On Thursday, October 17th, the Thurman Barker Quintet (and friends) presented a tribute concert to the late Ms. Ella Fitzgerald. In two hours, the group managed to not only deliver exceptional music to the eager concert goers, but also provided the audience with a brief lesson on the importance of tradition and innovation in what is America's most outstanding contribution to the world's artistic cannon.

For the first set, the Quintet reinterpreted three well-known standards and debuted three originals composed by Thurman Barker. Consisting of Brian Smith on the double bass, Eddie Allen on trumpet, John Esposito on piano, Jim Finn on tenor saxophone, and of course, Thurman Barker on the drum kit, the group approached the six numbers with a freshness that is lacking in most modern jazz. Rather than trudging through the clichés and entertaining the stereotypes that characterize much of the corporate, watered-down jazz of the last fifteen years, the Quintet infused its music with an element of risk that enlivened the music.

"Walkin'," (a Miles Davis composition that has become a staple of the jazz musician's repertoire) featured a drums-and-sax duo section that stretched the parameters of a tune that has begun to loll in the deep sea of prosaism. The harmonics that John Esposito incorporated into his interpretation of the even more exhausted "Round Midnight" gave a firm nod to Thelonius Monk before they sailed the song into the sea of contingency. It was followed by "Tenor Tantrum," a Barker original reminiscent of mid-to-late-period Coltrane in its use of a 3/4 time signature, strumming bass accompaniment and of course, squealing tenor sax that seemed to be treading the thin line that separates agony from ecstasy. The set also featured Woody Shaw's "Beyond all Limits" and the Barker originals, "Affable Affair" and "Obsession."

In jazz music, two things are of utmost importance: attention and respect to the tradition, and constant evolution. This seeming dichotomy does not inhibit the music—rather, it forces it along. Young musicians "cut their teeth" by playing with older, established musicians. The constant influx of new blood ensures that the music will not become stale, while the apprenticeship guarantees that the tradition will not be ignored.

The second set of the concert featured Bard students Jane Parrott on trombone, Eli Marshall on trumpet, as well as the addition of Harvey Kaiser on alto, tenor and baritone saxophones and vocalist Carla Cooke. Four quick tunes (two of which had codas that segued into other tunes) comprised the set. Carla Cooke navigated the tunes with facility, scattering through the songs smoothly and with rare grace. The inadequate amplification system did an injustice to her rich voice. Nonetheless, Thurman Barker's rock-solid drumming propelled the band through the standards with ease. Although the horn section seemed a shade too relaxed, the rhythm

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## Horoscopes

by Nicole DiSalvo

**SCORPIOS** (Oct. 21 - Nov. 21) are celebrating their birthdays this month, most likely with a bang. The words "will," "power," and "magnetism" were invented to describe Scorpios. Scorps can do anything, literally anything, if they set their mind to it. These sensitive water signs have got your motives figured out five minutes after they've learned your name. And don't mess with one—if you hurt them or someone they love you can be sure they won't forget it. They never forget anything. On the same token, they remember every kindness, which will also be paid back. Scorpios have an undeserved bad rep, which is a shame because these people are intelligent, loyal, and **STRONG**. And they're attractive! This is a mysterious sign, because they rule sex, death, and religion.

**BEST MATCHES:** Save yourself a lot of trouble and marry a **PISCES**. This is truly a match made in heaven, with Scorpio lending strength and focus to Pisces, and Pisces teaching Scorpio about understanding and sympathy. **TAURUS** children have an equally ravenous sensual appetite, and they're trustworthy enough even for you. With **CANCER** there is an immediate empathy and attraction. (If you don't date one, at least have one for a best friend.)

**WORST MATCHES:** **SAGITTARIUS** and **GEMINI** aren't serious enough for your taste. **AQUARIUS** is too detached, and **LIBRA** vacillates, something a steadfast Scorpio can't stand.

**FAMOUS SCORPIOS:** Carl Sagan, Prince Charles, Art Garfunkel, Kurt Vonnegut, and Picasso.

### THIS MONTH:

**SCORPIO**, you'll be discovering new reserves of power and concentration this month, with helpful planets transiting your sign. You are unsurpassed for eloquence and charisma, at least until the 29th. Use it. Venus' entrance into Scorpio on the 26th is promising.

**ARIES** people can just break out the Prozac. Lots of planets in your polar sign mean it's time for self-analysis, and some of it surely won't be pretty. On the plus side, Mars' placement bodes well for any ongoing projects.

Oh, Sweet **TAURUS**, I told you once and I'll tell you again, go for it! It's in your nature to be cautious, but now is the perfect time to take what you've been longing for. Your chart ruler, Venus, is in Libra, a very friendly sign. So get a bottle of requila and call up that beautiful person you see in Kline every day.

**GEMINI** people are starting to recognize your talents, so this is a good time to prove them right. Your mood lightens up on the 15th when Mercury enters Sagittarius, so hold off on any major decisions until then.

**CANCER** may find love this month, probably with a Scorpio. The best time is the new moon on the 10th. You're coming out of what has been a lengthy transitory period, and the planets are advising you to capitalize on your creativity.

**LEO**, this is one of the rare times when your magnificence is going unrecognized. Don't worry, things will pick up in December. For now try to absorb the lessons Sun in Scorpio has to teach. (Don't brag about any projects until you're sure you can pull them off.)

**VIRGO** has a surplus of energy this month, due to a long visit in that sign by Mars. Your friends may be noticing a more aggressive, focused friend in you, so try not to scare them off. This is a good time for mental and emotional housecleaning. Throw out everything you don't need.

**LIBRA** is even more charming than usual this month. If that's possible. Your new solar cycle is starting off with your ruler in your sign, which means that anything you want is within easy reach. This is a good time to moderate or take the GRE. Your love life is surely going to pick up, perhaps even with another Libra.

**SAGITTARIANS** are finding themselves unusually introspective this month, as planets get ready to enter the sign of the Archer. This is a good time to implement that long-planned exercise regimen. And don't forget there's a sauna in Stevenson.

**CAPRICORN**, ruler Saturn's strong presence in Aries lends you the power to accomplish some of the eight billion things you have planned. Attached Caps should pamper and allow themselves to be pampered. Silly single Capricorns should take a nice Taurus girl out.

**AQUARIUS**, powerful planets in your house of career mean it's time to stop procrastinating and do all those papers you've been too busy living to worry about. Hug a tree. You'd be surprised how good it feels.

**PISCES**, your best days this month are the 20th and the 21st, so lay low till then. You can avoid pre-winter depression by checking out the art in Procter and using some of those classical music records in the library.



# THE BARD observer

October 28, 1996

## Strange Encounters of a Bard Kind

by Meredith Yayanos

*Bard is damn spooky. This whole area, in fact, is repeatedly cited by psychics and historians as the pith of paranormal activity in North America. There seems to have always been something old and mean and unaccountable manifesting itself in the hills, especially around this time of year, as All Hallow's Eve descends on a windblown bustle of autumn leaves and every drugstore from here to purgatory breaks out the Punkin Kutter(tm). I assume many of you, having never grown out of a penchant for plastic fangs, ouija boards and poltergeists, are regressing with the same gleeful abandon that I am. I went wandering about campus recently, munching candy corn and compiling the ghost stories in this article, and nearly everyone I asked had a tale or two. Granted, most of the accounts are obviously untrue, and some of them are really, really stupid, but a couple might just make you leave the light on tonight. In any case, Happy Halloween.*

### BLITHEWOOD SIGHTINGS

People have repeatedly seen or heard inexplicable things at Blithewood Mansion and its attached garden since the early 1900's. At the turn of

the century, a youth living there died under suspicious circumstances (apparently suicide), and although the death didn't actually occur at Blithewood, the apparition of a young girl has appeared on numerous occasions, within the building, its garden, and the surrounding woods.

Years back, the mansion was utilized by Bard as a woman's dormitory. Stories of students inexplicably going berserk and having to leave school because of "emotional distress" abound, as well as rumors that started back in the 70's, about a janitor who suffered a near-fatal heart attack upon seeing a screaming young woman fling herself down the main staircase, only to disappear before hitting the bottom.

Since becoming the Levy Economics Institute (talk about poetic injustice), Blithewood Mansion has been less accessible to Bard students, although a couple kids claim to have seen "iridescent shadows" moving back and forth behind the foyer windows and between the pillar structures.

Far more compelling are the several separate, yet identical accounts of large "moving shadowy shapes" materializing in the garden. These encounters have been happening for years, sometimes occurring in the middle of the day as well as after dark, to a wide variety of believers and skeptics. Those who describe them are consistently adamant that the shapes they saw were not to scale with anything in the garden, and traveled through space in ways that were "completely infeasible," often floating above walls or hovering over the edge of the pavilion before disappearing from view. (Other explanations for this may include low-hanging mist, insect swarms, or mass-ingestion of mescaline.)

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photo: Seze Devres

# THE BARD observer

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## Company Halt: Maguire Returns to Bard

by Anna-Rose Matheison

Twelve years ago Peter Maguire, Bard's visiting professor of Military History, was competing in surfing contests in Australia, yet now he teaches one class at Bard and a senior seminar in Military History at Columbia University. He attended Bard himself, graduating in 1988 with a senior project on the Nuremberg war crimes trials, so he proved able to shed light on the enigma of the "Old Bard."

I had heard intriguing stories about him working in Cambodia and studying gracie ju-jitsu, so I tapped on his office door one afternoon to interview him.

**Mathieson:** First, can you give me a little bit of background on yourself? How did you find Bard?

**Maguire:** I grew up in Southern California and I moved to Australia after high school and was living down there competing in surfing contests, trying to see if I could make it as a professional surfer and working for a small newspaper as well. It became clear to me that I wouldn't make it as a pro and just really by chance I wound up at Bard. I came back here two weeks before the three-week program and they accepted me on the spot.

I liked the fact that they had a straightforward admissions process. I figured that if they were willing to take a chance on me, I was willing to take a chance on Bard.

**Mathieson:** What did you do after graduation?

**Maguire:** I went to Columbia for graduate school in history, then I worked with a photo archive group in Cambodia and Vietnam. We were working out of a prison, called S-20 prison, that 14,000 people went into and six survived. We found the six survivors and interviewed them and found out that everyone who went into the prison got their picture taken. We found about 6,000 pictures in the end. Those are all being published in a book coming out in the next month or so, called Facing Death.

Last year I was working in Germany doing historical advising on documentary film and at the same time I was covering the Bosnian war crime trials in the Hague. The problems of Nuremberg are revisited again. Little has changed.

**Mathieson:** Why did military history appeal to you?

**Maguire:** I became interested in military history trying to answer questions about international law because I felt that lawyers weren't talking to the military. There was a conspicuous absence of dialogue between the two, so I went from international law to studying military affairs so that I could get a better sense of what the people actively engaged in these affairs thought of them, because the conduct of these affairs was very much taken out of their hands and put into the hands of lawyers.

**Mathieson:** What aspect of military history did you decide to focus on?

**Maguire:** My Bard senior project was the Nuremberg trials and the clemency of war criminals. My Ph.D. dissertation was basically an extension of my senior project. It was here where I learned how to write real history. I would say I did more sophisticated work here than I did at Columbia for the first two years. As I've always said to students, if you really have an idea of what you're interested in, you can do graduate-level work at this college, pretty much from your junior year on.

**Mathieson:** Do you know how long you're going to be teaching here?

**Maguire:** No, I don't. In the spring semester I'm working on my book, so I strongly doubt that I'll be here. I've enjoyed teaching here; it's changed dramatically since I was here.

**Mathieson:** What is your book about?

**Maguire:** It's War and Law: An American Story. It's about the American entrance into international politics as a major power, the

efforts of our leaders to rewrite the rules of state craft and impose an American-inspired set of norms upon the international community. The high-point of this comes at Nuremberg and the UN Charter.

**Mathieson:** Students often idealize the "Old Bard." In what ways has Bard been altered since you were a student here?

**Maguire:** The most obvious is that when I was here, the best students were as good as at any other school. Now, I don't think the best students are any better, but there are more good students, the student body is just more even. When I was here it was very good, very bad and much less in-between.

It was more of a permissive place when I was here, but I think that's just a sign of the times. When I was here, they sold rolling papers in the candy machine in the coffee shop. There were no rules, basically.

**Mathieson:** Faced with these changes, what do you see in the future for Bard?

**Maguire:** Bard is at a crossroads right now. Bard is an odd school. It always has been the place for the smart misfit and I hope it doesn't abandon that. I hope there's always room for the smart person who didn't really take much interest in their traditional high school education. If in a headlong rush to emulate places like Wellesley or Vassar those things are sacrificed, I think that would be a major mistake.

**Mathieson:** Did your interest in the martial arts spring from your interest in military history?

**Maguire:** No, just always been there. Another sport, outlet. When I was here I was the first player coach (I think) in the history of NIAA volleyball.

**Mathieson:** Do you see parallels between martial arts and military history?

**Maguire:** Oh, absolutely. I think that fighting is ultimately an intellectual exercise, about keeping your grace under fire. Carl Von Clausewitz, one of the greatest philosophers of war of the 20th century, compares it to a wrestling match. You can't really plan it since you don't know what position your opponent is going to put you in.

**Mathieson:** What's your favorite war?

**Maguire:** My favorite battle would be Hannibal at Cannai, because not only does he turn a losing situation into a major victory for the Carthaginians against the Romans, but his tactics influence military thinkers to this day.

**"TANTALIZING! DELIRIOUSLY ORIGINAL!"**  
-Kevin Thomas, LA TIMES

**"A VISUAL FEAST OF GHOULISHNESS!"**  
-Jack Matthews, NEWSDAY

RUPERT EVERETT FRANCOIS HADJI-LAZARO ANNA FALCHI



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a film by MICHELE SOAVI

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DIRECTED BY MICHELE SOAVI

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# THE BARD observer

October 28, 1996

## The President We Deserve?

by Sean O'Neill

"This is our time," said Bill Clinton in his inaugural address. If so, then Bill and the Baby Boomers, despite all their talk about addressing current problems, have failed, failed, failed. The Frank Sinatra crowd was supposedly all shook up by the Elvis Presley crowd. But just as Elvis is dead while Frank still croons, the nation is caught by the World War II generation's political consensus. The old men led America to accept new commitments to national social insurance, civil rights legislation, and the challenge to the Soviet Union. They addressed those problems, and others, while our parents have neglected their own.

Martin Walker, a Baby Boomer from England, doesn't see this truism in his political biography of Bill Clinton, entitled *The President We Deserve*.

Walker notes that Clinton's "entire campaign" was about using "the power of activist government to reconcile ordinary people to economic change by giving them the tools to meet its challenges."

When explaining Clinton's failure to meet this campaign promise, Walker repeats the conventional wisdom that Americans have tired of a large activist government, but he doesn't interview any citizens who are neither politicians nor businessmen to prove his case.

I doubt that Americans have come to any new consensus one way or another about large social programs. National health care was defeated, but so were reductions in the social security program. The formal guarantee of federal care for the poor was renounced, but in two years the poor shall still be with us, and only then will we learn whether anything new has really been agreed to about the slums.

Clinton is the after effect of the rise of the Baby Boomers, and their rise over the past two decades has led to little. The Christian Coalition has failed to change the majority opinion supporting the right to an abortion. To fight crime, the country built more prisons, hardly proof of a change of heart. Americans consume the same amount of drugs. We let in the same numbers of legal and illegal immigrants. And which party opposes free trade? The United States is "conservative" out of a reluctance to reach any new consensus about any major social question, rather than as a positive choice.

Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich were idealists who became political during the late 1960's. Each man thought he could remake the nation. Each man's ideals shifted with time, while the ambition and self-confidence of each remained constant. Nevertheless, they have accomplished little.

Walker largely ignores Newt Gingrich, but the House Leader's plan to reduce government depended on a Balanced Budget Amendment, a line-item veto, and new controls on the Social Security money expected by more and more pensioners. He lost on all three points, and the country doesn't seem too upset.

Bill Clinton believes in free trade, but he once knew about the Americans who get hurt when cheap manufacturing jobs move overseas. He once planned government programs to help retrain unemployed Americans and to give children a more equal chance for higher education in order to take the high-skill jobs.

"To an extraordinary extent," notes Walker, "Clinton's first term...resembled what might have been in George Bush's second term." How true! Clinton has had his populist mask torn off to reveal Bush II underneath. In 1992, a majority of American voters chose either Clinton or Perot (instead of Bush), with a general wish to get the government on the side of working-class people, be it through tax cuts or federal spending.

Walker excuses Clinton for his failure to make-good by blaming Alan Greenspan, chairman of the nation's central bank, for

threatening to manipulate short-term interest rates in order to disrupt business support for Clinton unless the President made deficit-reduction his number one goal. Greenspan wasn't out to get Clinton. He just wanted the deficit lowered. And lowered it was, for after all, "Greenspan may have been the single figure most responsible for George Bush's defeat" by his incompetent way of setting interest rates. Remember, Clinton wasn't elected on the issue of the deficit. That was unpopular candidate Paul Tsongas's issue. Clinton was elected on "Putting people first." Addressing the deficit, however admirable that might be, meant putting the bond market first. No more promise of a college education in return for public service, for instance.

Americans wanted an improved health care system, but they were unwilling to pay higher costs in the short-term to make it work. They wanted something for nothing, and Clinton tried to give it to them. And he failed, just as Republicans in the 1980's failed when they claimed they could cut taxes and raise military spending without increasing the budget deficit. The ballooning deficit diverted money for national investment into the hands of the Japanese bankers who lent us money. Clinton reduced the deficit, but that was not one of his main campaign goals.

Democrats and Republicans have failed to do anything new for the reason that something-for-nothing is never a lasting solution to public problems. Frank Sinatra sang to a generation that knew that. Those Americans paid for their wars and social programs. Admittedly, they had an easier time doing so because they lived in the biggest economy in the world. Still, Baby Boomers will never succeed in shaping a new consensus on any political issue if their main criterion is what they deserve without sacrifice.

The new generation, becoming political in the 1990's, may break this tradition by undermining the influence of the two major political parties that have been seized by our parents. If the Supreme Court agrees in 1997, state laws that stop candidates from running on more than one party ticket will be ruled unconstitutional, and many other parties will be able to form, advocating different platforms that emphasize different ideas, while supporting the same candidate. Mayor Rudolph Guiliani, for instance, was allowed to run on both the Republican and the Liberal party tickets, and New York voters, by their choice of party, could urge him to emphasize one platform over another. The new generation, raised in divorced homes and entering a tight job market, may be willing to approach problems in a more responsible way through the new parties, or else the nation will become Arkansas, with a few well-to-do folks on top, and a heck of a lot of problems for everyone else.

## Thurman Barker Quintet

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section compensated for it, relentlessly driving the music forward.

In the 80's, jazz turned its back on tradition and was enveloped in the blinding light of innovation. Consequently, a wealth of music was produced that was without roots, that offered little regard to precedent or etiquette, and was subsequently lacking in soul. In the 90's, jazz has emerged to embrace those forgotten precepts. Some critics contend that the "young lions" are over-compensating for the ersatz 80's by rehashing ideas that were cliché in the 60's. The objective then, is to maintain the subtle balance of tradition and evolution without tipping the scales. Barker's quintet managed not only to attain that fragile balance, but to employ it for all its worth.

## Mythifying Directions

### An Interview with Paul Sills, New Drama Faculty Member, and His Students

by Nathan Carlton  
**Butterflies**

Sitting down to talk with Paul Sills in deKline, I felt I was speaking with a(n older) man who wrenches the guts out of (younger) people to help them put stomach on the stage. It's not so much that he made me feel queasy. Maybe I just needed breakfast. I did feel somewhat underpowered, though, as I tried to prepare questions for an interview. It's not as if he directly caused my anxiety. Or did he?

If I sensed a little heightened tension, so did Paul. "I feel like I'm getting into trouble with you," he remarked around the middle of our hour, skeptical, I suppose, that my chicken scratches were of any use. Yet Sills had already stirred my butterflies by pitching, "What, are you slow, or something?" across the table, prompted by an obviously confused face I made while he tried to tell me that what he did not do was called improv.

The distinction he made didn't become clear until I answered in the affirmative and asked for more details, resolving not to drop the ball again. Games are the basis of improvisation, and this is what Sills does: improvisation in contradistinction with improv, which is just done "to get laughs."

#### Someone Knows, the Other Doesn't

Viola Spolin "wrote the book" on improvisation. *Theater Games for Rehearsal* is a collection of over 85 exercises for players to work through that encourages acting through improvisation. As Sills describes it, a "where, who, what" basis for a game helps people find intuition, and they play the game from that basis to create theater.

The director's role in these games is described in the beginning of the book, which is on open reserve at our own Stevenson library: "Each game, almost without exception, was developed for the sole purpose of getting something to happen on stage.... Each and every theater game is a magic wand, and as such taps the intuitive, producing a transformation not only in the actor/player, but in the director/side-coach as well." (page 4)

A game might work like this: two characters interact; one knows their relationship and the other works to discover it while playing out the scene. An imaginary "where, who, what" takes form between the two players as the one who knows assists the other to act as they would if they both knew. The way Paul describes it, it's not a quiz show; it's a play.

Other games? By singing lines, players find that, "extension of sound is a bridge to intuition," or "nonsense syllables shaped like a language" help a scene develop without using common words. The goal is to "deal with the invisible."

It didn't occur to me at the time to ask Sills how his technique as a director differs from that laid out in Spolin's book, partly because his references to it were matter-of-fact enough to seem as though *Theater Games*... contained any answers I could gather, so far as a book can provide answers to problems of finding intuition, the invisible. As it turns out, Spolin is Sills' biological mother.

#### deTales, Details

I asked Sills whether the improvisation eventually leads to a script. He responded as if I didn't understand, still; he works with improvisation, which means there's no script. "Story Theater," however, the show Sills is currently directing at Bard, does have a script (based on Grimm's fairy tales), and he conceded afterwards that someone will, sooner or later (I guess more 'later' than 'sooner'), write down what has been frequently said, to make a show. "Story Theater" was written in 1968 and played on Broadway in 1970.

While I can't hope to summarize his career, I can tell you what he told me, briefly. He's worked recently with Mike Nichols and George Morrisson at the New Actor's Workshop, and had a company (Sills & Co.) until about ten years ago. To deal with the invisible, he took away the scenery at the Tucson Opera, where he was invited to direct "Hansel and Gretel" and "Rigoletto." In '59 he started Second City and in '55 Compass, both small, but well-known and influential theater companies in Chicago. He's been loosely affiliated with Yale, Bennington, and NYU over the past 40-50 years, teaching classes or workshops infrequently.

Our time was nearly done as we stood in line in the deKline coffee shop, so I asked Paul what he did regularly, outside of Bard. He had already side-stepped the question with a punchline about "sitting around" and the assertion that mainly he was retired. He seemed a little reticent at first. He likes a more intense environment than a one-day-a-week class over the long semester can provide. He would prefer a week-long (or two-week) workshop, where the players work all day and have an intense, memorable, transformative experience.

Afterwards I felt like I should have been better prepared to encounter Paul Sills. This did not mean formulating better questions or being more relaxed or being more alert. In fact, all it means, probably, is that it would have felt more settling if I hadn't had a pencil in my hand.

What lingers is the sense that Sills is a man who didn't want me to write him down. What he said between the facts disrupted my attempt to concentrate on the process of transcription and prompted me to put down the pencil and listen more, speak more. Reciting his résumé did not make for interesting conversation, mainly because I think he wasn't so interested in my listening to him strictly; he was more comfortable when we started talking as two people usually talk. That is, intuitively, from the gut.

#### Vented Unrest

When I talked to students from Sills' show, it became clear that his impetus to inspire transformation is deeply a part of his character. "He's like a natural volcano, he just blows," said a cast member of "Story Theater." "Of course he's rude, but not rude intentionally... what he terms bullshit he has no patience for... what starts him getting angry in the scene is usually correct, but he handles it all wrong for the most part."

To deal with Sills' "fuck you this and asshole that," as put to me by a cast member, a meeting was informally organized after rehearsal one night to "vent" and support one another. "It's a unified cast because everyone's behind everyone else," to counteract Sills' "explosions" and "dual personality," as well as his misogyny. One said that Sills has called the women in his Bard cast "bitches" and said that all he gets from them is "bitchery."

After the meeting the possibility of inviting other faculty to rehearsal was discussed. This writing, that has not yet happened. There's a desire to separate "his [directing] style from his explosions. His style I think works. He's very direct and so it is effective... [yet] he doesn't have a lot of patience. None at all," said a member of the "Story Theater" cast.

Responses by students (and former students) in Sills' class were not so different from the cast members'. The penchant to quote Sills' outrageous remarks seemed to seize everyone who came in contact with him.

I learned that there might be "a certain etiquette...decorum" that directors usually follow when they direct Bard students and that Sills "just isn't interested" in obliging it. He is "unlike any of the directors that have been here before," and is "not used to the Bard theater game, whatever that is." Todd Grace, who stage-managed "Story Theater" for a week, described it like this: "I think Bard [Drama] students are used to being coddled and taken care of and reassured every minute, and that's not what it's about." He continues, "None of it seems a personal vengeance, a targeted vengeance... he works completely by... the moment. A person does not have to be a nice guy to be a brilliant mind. It's so different from anything we've ever done."

Other students who worked with him closely were vocally "anti-Paul," comparing him to King Lear and saying his rehearsals were like a

continued on page 14



# drag in space race





# THE BARD observer

October 28, 1996

## Sartarelli A Serious and Essential Sort of Poet

by Kristina Olson

Stephen Sartarelli, a distinguished translator of French and Italian literature who has been teaching along with Professor Maria Nicoletti in the Italian Program at Bard since last spring, read from his work on October 17 as a part of the Locus Loquitur series organized by Professor Robert Kelly. Calling it an epigraph to his own poetry, Sartarelli also read a few of his translations of the late French poet Raphael George and of the lauded Italian poet Mario Luzi.

The works of both Luzi and Sartarelli are concerned with the questions of cognition and transcendence. They represent contemporary extensions of the Italian modernist movement, the Hermetic school, with which we associate Ungaretti and Montale. Sartarelli, who shows affinities with the work of these poets, strives to research the elements of the world with attentiveness to music of the lyric.

T.S. Eliot is another apparent influence upon Sartarelli's work. In Eliot's poem "Landscapes" he writes:

Lift your eyes  
Where the roads dip and where the roads rise  
Seek only there  
Where the grey light meets the green air  
The hermit's chapel, the pilgrim's prayer (33-37.)

A joy not to be found here among the wasteland of existence is elsewhere; according to these lines, somewhere between grass and atmosphere is an intermediary place between earth and holiness. One definition of a Hermetic poet would focus on his or her desire to transcend the everyday.

According to Luzi, in the poems read by Sartarelli from the book *For the Baptism of Our Fragments*, the poet should recognize the world and not sing "a mangled song." To be as much an instrument to a greater voice, such as the Muse or the Holy Spirit, is the poet's responsibility. In his poem "Fire in the Mirror," Sartarelli writes, "This sentence, like any, admits no delay." This urgency, likened by Luzi to a shooting arrow, or inspiration, projects words onto the page in a neverending trajectory, or in other words, the poet's work over a lifetime.

Most of Sartarelli's poems have a refined vocabulary and verse condensed to the essential, suited to the force with which they are read. A poem which exemplifies this, called "Court of Light," tracks the journey of an unidentified thing from the earth:

space bodied forth,  
emplaced.

Extending  
untimely, selfwise,  
transpiring (19-23)

This is perhaps the path of transcendence, which moves outwards from matter into light, from earth to a heaven. For it to happen, time must be escaped ("finally/unhoured") as well as place ("godward in obliteration/of site").

The line between the object and the process are blurred in the last lines of the poem:

And if the turning out  
of this unfolding  
were nothing but  
(the telling) — (53-56)

Whatever may be the specifics of the thing that travels, the process becomes most important. Here, the process is equated with the "telling," or the writing of the event. If the experience distilled to make a poem is forgotten, it is the act of writing that remains. How far away is the process of writing from the attempt to arrive at a higher knowledge? Sartarelli writes:

as if to drive light  
ever inward, past reflection

penetrate the hand  
to further moment,

condensation of the thing,  
time-harvest? (58-63)

As Eugenio Montale writes in the poem "The Sunflower," "Bring me the plant that directs/where blond transparencies rise/and the life evaporates into some essence" (9-11, trans. mine), the poet desires the means to rid oneself of the material. At the end of all growth we are able to reap time, that other restriction besides the material that classifies our wordly existence. The poet may not transcend by the act of writing, but gains knowledge of the limits which prohibit the event.

How do we deal with the burden of the body, made of the earth, the source of our dead weight? How fast do we move to get back to the country of origin, or transcend the material and timely? Only the most serious and essential type of poetry bears the weight of these questions.

## Paul Sills

continued from page 10

"reign of terror...he sends us mixed signals constantly. One minute he says 'don't act, you're acting too much,' and the next minute he says, 'you people don't know how to act.'"

What's unfortunate for Paul, and the rest of the school, is that there's been a history of students (or faculty) being offended by directors' approaches in the Drama department. "He doesn't understand that he's coming into a situation that has been festering for years," said Nicolas Bodkin, a cast member of "Story Theater."

### Cinder-ama

The "situation" was most recently exacerbated by the exit of Assurbanipal Babilla from the Bard Drama Department. Last semester a number of students from the Drama/Dance department as well as the rest of the school wrote President Botstein letters in an attempt to reverse Dean Levine's "non-renewal of contract" decision regarding part-time acting coach Babilla ("Bani"). You may have seen posters for his recent staging of "Othello and the Circumcised Turk" earlier this semester, or the letters between Botstein and Babilla posted in Kline last semester. Not without irony, some of the controversy around Bani's approach to students involved asking a female student a question about circumcision.

The considerable affection shown for this professor of 8 years and the subsequent hearing Botstein arranged to evaluate the Dean's dissatisfaction with Bani's behavior made patent some of the concerns students, faculty and the Dean of Students' Office

had been having about hiring practices within the Drama department. For instance, there was also controversy when director John Psillakis no longer had a place in the department in the spring of last year.

Prior to his (delayed) announcement after Babilla's hearing, the President told me he had "never met the guy" during his 8-year teaching career at Bard before his contract non-renewal became an issue, and that the professor's evaluations were "not across-the-board good." While Botstein ultimately decided to uphold his Dean's decision, he did invite Babilla to re-apply for a teaching position after taking a year away from Bard. That will never happen, according to Bani.

### Focusing, re-focus

Botstein has met Paul Sills, however, and assures me "he's a good man." The President did a lot of work over the summer to help William Driver and Jean Churchill re-focus the D/D department, I'm told. Besides Sills, the new Drama faculty are John Hickok, who teaches a Shakespeare unit; and rotating members of Anne Bogart's Company SITI (Saratoga International Theater Institute); "Barney" O'Hanlon and James "Bondy" Bond. SITI utilizes the Suzuki Actor Training method, "[d]esigned to regain the perceptive, expressive abilities and powers of the human body...to restore the wholeness of the body in a theatrical context...to create something transcending current practice in the modern theater" (excerpt from a SITI pamphlet).

While Todd Grace wouldn't say the changes "change the structure" of the department, he does say that there are "bigger names and [the department is] getting more focused classes and the professors are definitely focused and have developed techniques. It's a breath of fresh air we haven't had in at least two or three years."

# The Bard Zine Library, Explained

# THE BARD observer

October 28, 1996



Lauren and Elissa's definition of a zine: A small, photocopied magazine, usually entirely put together by one or two people, with a distinct informal voice and no corporate affiliation or obligations (like advertisers they have to be careful not to offend). Zines contain writing on an infinite range of topics. Often they have fiction, poems, interviews, reviews, articles on music or musicians, rants about high school, travel diaries, personal crises, and essays on topics ranging from sock monkeys and relationships with parents to sexuality and class issues.

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Some of the different types of zines in the Bard Zine Library:

- \*Personal Essay: Ours are mostly girls talking about their lives, problems with school and parents, things they like, things they hate, & essays on issues important to them like personal identity, love, and political issues, (religion, feminism, etc).
- \*Literary: Fiction and poetry, duh.
- \*Music: Reviews and interviews.

Since we hate categorizing zines because they rarely fit into any nice little slots, we suffice to say that most of the Zine Library contains zines with overlapping themes including punk, grrl and queer stuff. You should know that right now, most of

the zine collection covers a fairly narrow span of themes, because they're all from our personal collections, so they're what we like. When we have a budget, we'll have more variety, but right now we just want contributions! If you can get zines, please bring them to the Root Cellar.

Okay. Between us we have produced forty issues of eleven different zines but we can't get it together to write a coherent article for the *Observer* on the zine library we've started. So here are Just the Facts:

**WHO:** Lauren Martin and Elissa Nelson, in cooperation with the Root Cellar  
**WHAT:** have started a zine library (with 143 titles and counting!)  
**WHERE:** in the Root Cellar (under the Old Gym, by the Post Office)

**WHY:** because we want to share the love! And because we know we're not the only ones here at Bard who are sometimes sad, sometimes alienated, always wanting to connect with more people and always wanting to learn things presented in new voices, in different ways.

**WHEN:** Right now! Go to the Root Cellar RIGHT NOW!  
**HOW:** With cork board & thumb tacks

& binder clips & lots of paper & staples & time & energy, because we care.

Some of these zines can be hard to get a hold of because they're usually only available from the editors, who usually work out of their bedrooms, which means you have to track down their addresses and wait for them to send their zines to you. By putting lots of zines all in one place, we've created a resource that provides a glimpse into a culture that is rarely this accessible. Also, it's free, free, free!

Although the OFFICIAL BARD ZINE LIBRARY is open now, there will be a ZINE LIBRARY GRAND OPENING in the Root Cellar on Halloween. Stay tuned for further details.

Please come and check out all our work. We welcome feedback and suggestions (and did we mention donations?), and more than anything we want as many people as possible to make use of this library. This means you. Thanks.  
 Lauren and Elissa



Zine



## Quotes

From *Slam Book* #3 (Riot Grrrl NYC), excerpt from the Riot Grrrl Manifesto:

"riot grrrl...  
 BECAUSE we are angry at a society that tells us Girl=Dumb, Girl=Bad, Girl=Weak.  
 BECAUSE we are unwilling to let our real and valid anger be diffused and/or turned against us via the internalization of sexism as witnessed in girl/girl jealousies and self-defeating girl type behaviors.

BECAUSE I believe with my holeheartmindbody that girls constitute a revolutionary soul force that can, and will, change the world for real."

From *Thrift Score* #8 (Al Hoff), excerpt from "Get 90's! Thrift and Office TODAY!":

"THRIFT SOME KNOWLEDGE: Make sure you've got reference materials! Pick up a couple of dictionaries, thesauruses and other word helpers. Sure, the older dictionary is missing new important words like "telecommute" and "phat," but all the old words still work."

From *Hot Snot Pot* #5 (Lori Fury), excerpt from "Pearls of Brilliance" (quotes from Lori's sister Lamey): "Lamey, when I confronted her about what the hell was on the towel:

"It's pieces of foot skin. Oh, okay Miss Priss, would you rather have me leave my foot-scrappings on the floor? You only notice my bad habits. You never notice when I have to pick up your underwear from the bathroom floor."

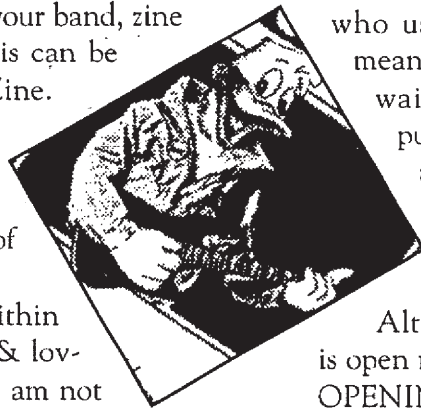
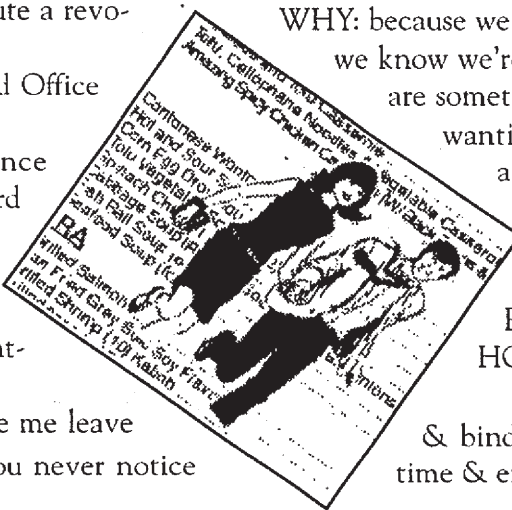
From *Who Needs A Beat When the Beat Just Goes* #2 (Jason Willoughby), excerpt from "Easy Steps on How to Be...":

"Punk: Get rid of your last name and replace it with the name of your band, zine or some other easily identifiable activity that you engage in. This can be seen by such folks as Ben Weasel, Joe Queer, and Jason BoringZine. Another cool thing to do is walk around and arbitrarily decide what is and is not punk. Such as, 'No right turns on Red signs are punk, but yield signs are not punk.'"

From *Rock Candy* #5 (Marie Koetje), excerpts from "Declaration of Reclamation":

"I have immense faith in this world us kids are creating and it is within this community that I want to be working & learning & growing & loving, always. Fuck being jaded. Fuck growing up. I am here, and I am not going away."

"Formality & academic professionalism as standards of communication take away from the focus and DILUTE & dull what connects people; they turn living our lives and talking about our lives into two different, unconnected things which remove us from our human experiences, intelligence, and understanding."





## The Happy Hour Review

by Jeremy Dillahunt and the Happy Hour Crew  
(John Rosenthal and Abby Rosenberg)

So a couple of my friends and I had this problem. How do you go to a bar and get drunk for not very much money, hopefully for free? We came up with The Happy Hour Review: a critique of our favorite bars in the Bard area to be run one bar per issue. This week is dedicated to that mogul of style and attitude in Tivoli, Santa Fe, whose happy hour is from 4:30-6:30, Tuesday through Thursday.

Upon arriving through the entrance and being assaulted by the suave decor, I found my bourgeois sensibilities under attack. I prefer the simpler things in life, opulence has always seemed to me a thing of frivolity and insignificance. Sometimes I even find myself repulsed by gross exhibitions of style. So, when upon first gazing over the scenic landscape, I was greeted by the prominence of ex-hippies-turned-yuppies-turned-retired-artists grazing over their CaliMexiEuro entrees and guzzling from bucket-sized pitchers of Margarita de Fresca, I thought, "This should be quick." No way some New York City wanna-be sissy bistro was going to out-cool this hip-cat.

I was wrong. It wasn't quick. The hour stretched to five or six times what seemed like a long pour, and the happiness spread from my head to my toes and onto the porch until I thought my feet were smiling too. This was due mostly to the bar, which held more liquid delight than three fountains of youth and, as far as I could tell, was about a mile long when the bottles were stacked back to back. The margaritas flowed more freely than the Amazon river and the waiter was more attentive to our needs than a mosquito to a fresh forearm. Beers are two dollars and fifty cents and margaritas are one dollar and seventy-five cents. After

## Martinis are Good

### A Review of the Santa Fe Martini

by John Rosenthal

I can't recall just how the martinis I drank at the Santa Fe tasted, nor their price, nor for that matter how many I drank. I was not a seasoned veteran of the martini. I had not known the pain of a martini hangover (I am well acquainted with the tattooing affect that the martini hangover has on your body now, though). I did note, however, that the slickest pleasure of the Santa Fe martini is the long-stemmed glass that "El Trendero Bistro" served it in.

"Le Glass de Martini," as those in the know refer to it, enables the drinker to assume a variety of sly and suave poses. Drawing on my keen sense of slickness, I opted for the "elbow-propped-on-table" or "arrogant pose," where the martini glass rests delicately balanced in the cup of your hand, stem slid between your fingers. Rico...Suave. Rico...Suave. From this position, I slammed back enough martinis to keep the Bond family happily loaded for generations to come.

All in all, martinis are fun. They are even more of a blast for olive-lovers, for each glass of happy juice contains a'n alcohol-soaked green olive treasure. (I know this is not much of a review of the martini, but screw it. Asking me to review any type of alcoholic beverage after the fact, is like asking an elephantine lard-ass to tell you what he thinks of the forty-six slices of "stuffed-crust, meat-lover's pizza" he just ate. The answer in both cases would be "Mmm...good!") So that's it. Santa Fe martinis are good. And, I must say that one looks a lot better hopelessly hammered and cradling a martini glass than slumped over a paper cup of Budweiser. Drunk though they may be in both cases, but drunk and lookin' fine in the former. Rico...Suave. Martinis are good.

three of them, however, you won't care if they are taking pints of blood for payment.

Eventually we got around to ordering some food (I recommend rice and beans or cheese quesadillas if you're on a tight budget. If not, get whatever the special is, twice). It was good, nice and hot and salty. It didn't stuff me though, which at the time I was glad for because it left room for more of the frosty mugs o' happiness we love so much. Rice and beans is three or four dollars and the quesadillas are about five, so if you have ten bucks you can get dinner and drinks with change for tip. Not bad for a classy joint on a college budget.

The more I settled into the marathon that became the bottom of the margarita pitcher, the less I felt threatened by the pseudo-aristocratic vibe coming from the building. As a matter of fact I began to feel downright comfortable. I even grabbed an extra chair to put my feet up. As I looked around I failed to notice a single unhappy person in the joint. Everyone appeared to be experiencing the same amiably imposed bliss that I was. All this, and it was only nine o'clock.

Eventually we got around to asking for the bill. As hands went to wallets, eyes winced at the expected deluge of cost. Seven of us had been drinking and eating steadily for almost six hours. I expected nothing less than to balance the budget in a single extravagant outing. When the bill arrived, however, it wasn't bad at all; fifteen bucks a person with tip. The momentary sadness followed by the loss of monetary wealth was quickly and completely overrun by the high I received upon standing up. None of us could walk, much less even conceive of driving, and this is where the real beauty of Santa Fe comes in—the Bard shuttle deposits you on its stoop. All in all it was one of the best times I've had so far this semester. Cheap fun completely drenched in liquor. Tasty morsels delicately arranged in a filling manner. Santa Fe gets many kudos on the fun scale.

## DJ Shadow

DJ Shadow, *Endtroducing DJ Shadow*. Mo Wax Records.

by Joel Hunt

The history of hip-hop is a shadowy one, indeed. Hip-hop's origins cannot be easily traced. However, hip-hop as a culture is linked to history: in order to create something new, hip-hoppers look to what has gone before.

DJ Shadow's new record, "Endtroducing. . ." easily fits into the vanguard of today's hip-hop. This double LP is intoxicating. While DJ Shadow assembles a new direction he certainly includes many shout-outs to the old hip-hop innovators, a move rarely seen these days among mainstream artists, as the liner notes read: "This album reflects a lifetime of vinyl culture." Shadow maintains a sense of tradition, while creating entirely new sounds with turntables, sequencers, samplers and drum machines. Indeed, England's *New Musical Express* has hailed him as "The Jimi Hendrix or Jimmy Page of the Sampler." While such adulation may be somewhat premature as this is Shadow's first full-length album, he certainly shows promise.

Shadow's approach musically is to stretch hip-hop to its limits. He samples music which does not fit within the framework of typical hip-hop. The majority of the pieces are filled with similar instrumentation and structures to Philip Glass' style of modern classical. Unlike Philip Glass, however, Shadow's music does not lull me into boredom. He keeps throwing disparate sources into the pile, varying the end product in a way that many single-instrument musicians could never achieve.

DJ Shadow's holistic approach to sampling carries over not only in the song titles, but in the overall feel of the record. "Building Steam with a Grain of Salt," "Midnight in a Perfect World," and "What Does Your Soul Look Like (Part I—Blue Sky Revisit)" are examples of this approach, both technically and expressively. One song flows into another easily, although each might be considerably different. Like the band, Tortoise, Shadow creates a sort of timeless trance broken only by the sound of the needle lifting off the groove as the record ends. Sometimes, when listening to DJ Shadow, I wish that moment never came.

# Opinion

## Students Nostalgic for George McGovern?

by Lilian Robinson

Browsing through The Princeton Review's 1997 edition of the *Student Advantage Guide to the Best 310 Colleges* (it happened to be lying around because the younger sister, a senior in high school, is entering that imbroglio called the "college application process") while home over Reading Week, I noticed that Bard had not been included in the list of "Most Politically Active" U.S. colleges and universities, but had garnered prominent positions on the "Reefer Madness" list, the "Birkenstock-wearing, Tree-hugging, and Clove-smoking Vegetarians" list, the "Students Ignore God on a Regular Basis" list, and the "Students Nostalgic for George McGovern" list.

None of these categorizations were surprising — I was mostly relieved that the Princeton Review had mercifully excluded Bard from the "Students Nostalgic for Ronald Reagan" list — and yet, I was bemused. Bard is not considered one of the most politically active schools, but doesn't the "McGovern" list indicate some political involvement — or is the list, like the others, only meant to associate us with that heady era, the liberal 60's? Such an insinuation on the part of the Princeton Review calls for a show of vehement denial, but would it be justified? How many of my fellow students even know who George McGovern is?

I had to admit, no matter how appalling it was, that really very few students at this school are politically-literate. After all, how often does the subject of politics — local or national — surface in conversations at Bard? Outside of class or the professor's office, not often enough, I'd say — judging from what I've overheard while dining in Kline or walking about campus.

For sure, there are — and there always will be — students who religiously read newspapers and political magazines, following "developments" and speculating on this or that player's situation in the game. (Politics acquires the appearance of sports sometimes.) And there are students who attend or, even better, organize rallies and other political events, like the recent commendable door-to-door campaign to elect the Democrat Steve James and oust the Republican Jerry Solomon — but these students are a minority. The majority of students could care less.

For instance, when I was heading back to Bard at the end of Reading Week (traveling in the car of a kind second-year student who lives in Newton), I made the mistake of asking the passenger in the backseat what she had thought of the vice-presidential and presidential debates that had occurred on the previous Monday and Wednesday. "When you talk about politics, you say nothing," she replied curtly and looked away. I was taken aback. Although she seemed like a person of a rather reserved nature, and I was therefore not expecting a gush, her response was mystifying. Was she simply disgusted by the mention of politics, due to the memory of a horrible experience with it in the past? Or was she just apathetic?

I wish that I were capable of sympathizing with that student, capable of attributing her sardonic comment to perhaps some underlying transcendental philosophy. I am not denying that such philosophies might exist and warrant adherence, but I am inclined to associate apathy with ignorance; I do not presume she hadn't any notion of the extent to which politics affects our lives, but that she had hardly an inkling of how stimulating it is, and for that, I am rather sorry. For who is to say that, at the very least, being a spectator of politics — watching the circus of idiots and savants — cannot be as fulfilling as being a participant?

## No Comment

### *Elegy To All Things Simple and Wonderful*

by Shawnee Barnes

Sometimes things happen and the reason for them is inexplicable and most of the time, inexcusable. Sometimes we're swept with the current, carried with it, and end up on a distant shore. We wonder how we got there and what just happened to get us there. During Reading Week, I found myself holding the hand of a dear friend who lost her mother. I had known her mother since I was a child. I played at their beautiful house on top of a mountain when I was young. The funny thing is that I am still young and I never thought I'd be holding my friend's hand at her mother's funeral. For that week, life continues, but for some reason you would think it's all going to change as if suddenly everything would turn upside-down because that's how everything feels to you now. But no, the sun still rises in the east and sets in the west every day, the traffic light in town is still ten minutes long and the guy at the gas station cards you for cigarettes every time, as usual.

I realize all these things are comforts and are taken for granted. It's an amazing feeling to, for just one minute, take nothing for granted. A surge of something, maybe life, rushes through your body. Suddenly you notice the smallest things—such as the guy at the Mobile consistently ID-ing you, the fact that your dog took a piss on the rug, and that your brother is in the next room playing his annoying music too loud—and are grateful for them. You're grateful for the fact they exist and live. Maybe these things are trivial, but I found myself being thankful for every detail, every familiar facet that has made up my life. I guess that's the luxury of being the one holding the hand of a friend who has lost something so vital as a mother.

I am a true believer that the spirit of my friend's mother is still alive. It just so happens she is not here in body, which does change things a bit. Since the death, my friend moved away and the house that I spent many a long and playful day has a different air, but it still casts the same shadow. I do not take the shadow the house makes at six o'clock in the evening for granted. Some things never change, they only alter over time. Sometimes things happen beyond our control, but are part of a greater process...maybe in other lifetimes they'll be answered.

Hey, if you thought that was heavy, don't ask me to go into my ideas on life after death! Sometimes it's just good to make a note of the simple things in life that we often pass by and take for granted. I'm an existentialist at heart and I ponder the phenomenon of how bark grows on trees, so this is right up my alley. (As for the bark on trees, I don't ponder it scientifically, but metaphysically!) Comments? Box 549-Shawnee

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## The Somnambulist

### Five Guidelines for the Bard Senior Project

by Pedro Rodriguez

As most Bard students know, from either the shiny prospectus book sent them by the Admissions Office or the praisings of orientation speaker or tour guide, the senior project is the culmination of the Bard student's undergraduate tenure. It is a pre-dissertation dissertation; it is proof that Bard is a serious institution of higher learning, proof that *Bachelor of Liberal Arts* is not an appellation to be taken lightly.

Any Bard student must write/ draw / paint/ sculpt/ shoot/ dance/ compose/ play/ act one. So be it. But how does the Bard student do it?

**First**, the Bard student compiles a list—exhaustive and to be kept handy at all times, taking into account all possible situations and matching each with an effective measure (or better yet, effective measures)—of excuses. Below, I include Principles of Exemption on which to formulate excuses.

*Death in the family* should be avoided altogether or used only once and in dire circumstances. To use it twice, the Bard student would need to be an exceptional actor. (Note: This excuse is not recommended to drama students because drama advisors will already be familiar with their techniques. I am not making the obvious joke.)

*Computer virus* excuses work best if the student introduces a real computer virus to her advisor's computer covertly, making use of the *Principle of Empathy*. The *printer malfunction* excuse rarely works. The *stolen disk* excuse is a better bet. When using this excuse, however, the student should take care to mention that her back-up disk was stolen along with her original, in accordance with the *Principle of Responsibility*.

A student who makes back-up disks belongs to the segment of the population, not 5% in size, known as *Conscientious Students*. Membership, feigned or real (the difference is here irrelevant), in this elite group greatly increases the student's chances of success with any excuse.

The *Principle of Victimization* is commonly invoked in everyday excuses, though often unconsciously. It is almost always better to say "stolen" than "lost." The student must blame others, but not too vociferously. Again, the student must rely on her ability to act. She must not whine. Very few professors respond favorably to whining.

Hand in hand with the *Principle of Victimization* must go the *Principle of Credibility*. It would seem that membership in *Conscientious Students* supplies the principles of *Responsibility and Credibility* by definition. This is a common misconception; what is true for the first is not true for the second. Someone who is careful, who plans ahead, is not necessarily trustworthy. Serial killers, for example, are not wont to tell the whole truth.

Despite popular disbelief, the *my dog ate it* excuse can work. To make it work, the student should not only own a dog, but make it known that she owns a dog. The latter is actually the most important part as, conceivably, a student could use the excuse by borrowing and not owning a dog. The best way to make ownership known is to walk the dog on campus. Eventually, (the clincher) the student should bring the dog to a project meeting. It matters less whether or not the advisor likes the dog so long as he meets it. If he likes the dog and pets it, he might accept the excuse out of love for the animal. If he doesn't like it, he might accept the excuse out of hatred for the dog or pity for the owner.

**Second**, after compiling the list, the student should consider purchasing a couple of sets of clothing, outfits if you will, that are absolutely out of character for her. These might include a hat, a coat, and some sunglasses, but they mustn't be conspicuous. She must not wear these clothes to meet her advisor, be it for a class or a project meeting or on a day when her usual path crosses with that of the advisor. She should wear these clothes on the day of a deadline or, if necessary, after it, when she should spare no effort to avoid the advisor and his haunts. To put it bluntly, these clothes are worn in case student and advisor cross paths accidentally so that she would not be recognized.

However, the student must bear in mind the *Principle of Avoidance of Conspicuous Absence*: She must not make the advi-

sor suspicious. Sometimes, the best excuse is to "run into" the advisor and exchange pleasantries. When the advisor brings up a missing portion of her senior project, she could claim not to understand why he

doesn't have it since she "put it on your door," "mailed it to you," etc. (Note: mail fraud can be effective, but is a felony in the United States.) The student should never claim to have given it to his secretary. That claim violates the *Principle of Hush*, which holds that the fewer persons involved in a student's machinations, the better. Besides, having the secretary recognize the student might require bribery. Bard is expensive enough.

**Third**, the student should pick up some good books. I was told before I began attending Bard that its library was fully stocked as far as literature is concerned. This is fairly true. Most of the classics the student might wish to read while still a student are there. Some good choices would be Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Melville's *Moby Dick*; or *The White Whale*, and Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Of course, there are always the Bible, the Koran, and other hefty religious tomes. For the student who prefers owning her books, the paperback edition of the new translation of Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* arrives in bookstores next month. I also hear the Proust is getting a new translation.

An alternative is to take up a new instrument or perhaps a first. Piano is boring in the beginning, but the student need not buy her own instrument; she could deprive music students of one instead. Violin is impossible in the beginning. Guitar is easy until the student tries to play well. Wind instruments are more tiring, some more than others. Brass instruments are known to affect kissing technique, for better or worse.

I suggest this third guideline because, through a senior project-related phenomenon not yet understood, the neophyte senior will find herself infused with much energy for outside projects. It is best to make these productive in a socially acceptable way, so that the student will feel little guilt for ignoring the senior project in favor of equally important projects. Another such outside project, although it is extremely rare, is newspaper work.

**Fourth**, the student should devise senior project ideas. For this step, the student should see her advisor.

**Fifth** and finally, in bursts spanning minutes and scattered between the work of other projects, the student should do something of direct relevance to her senior project. She could, for example, sign up for a carrel in the library or buy her senior project binders. (Note: the purchase of senior project binders may require revenue from extensive employment—another fine outside project.)

I apologize for the fact that many of the sample excuses work best for written projects. But then, artists are supposed to be more creative anyway. Such students should innovate. The Principles of Exemption and the Five Guidelines themselves are, nonetheless, universal. I have much reading to do; see you next time.

The Bard  
Papers

art and photography to Seze Devres  
writing to Ashley Crout

all work judged  
anonymously—  
box # only please.

submit.

# THE BARD observer

October 28, 1996

## Is There a Labor Problem at Bard?

by John Rosenthal and Jeremy Dillahunt

The last two issues of the *Observer* contained front-page articles concerning labor on campus. Casually, we think of labor as pertaining to Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters, the air traffic controllers' strike of the early 1980's, and Detroit auto workers on strike. Generally, we think of labor concerns as confined to factories, sweat shops, and assembly lines—things remote to college students. Most of us don't realize that labor affects even us in a small, elite, liberal college in Nowhere, New York. Looking around campus, one does not find picket lines or hear the union catch-phrase "how's it going, brother." (This is not to say that all students, faculty, and the general Bard community are ignorant of the complexity of this issue.) It is hard to carry the ideas of unions and workers' rights to a college community. The fact is that all of the college's employees are part of a wider service industry, one that the labor movement has targeted as new soil for the 90's.

At Bard, the service sector is represented by those who carry out the daily administration of the school, by those who work to feed us, by those who provide security and by those who keep the school clean and running, as well as our professors, all of which are subject to market forces and climates. Other than writing books about labor, it is hard to imagine professors being a part of it. It is in this area that we students are most affected.

Consider student relationships with the faculty, as well as that of faculty with the administration. Say a professor, like Kathleen Barker, is hired on a temporary basis. Taking this position is certainly a risky deal for her. The pay is meager and the reward, tenure, depends on criteria established by the institution. But she takes the position offered, believing that hard work and a fair hearing will provide her with a reasonable chance for tenure. This professor builds a working and solid relationship with her students. Additionally, she gains the

respect of the faculty. Feeling herself established at Bard, and most importantly, in her career path, the time for evaluation arrives. Having done the work, gained the admiration of her students, and the respect of her fellow professors, the only thing stopping tenure is approval by the administration, which does not come.

What does this mean for the professor?

Immediately, she is left with debt from the years spent in undergraduate/graduate programs. In a year, she must find another low-paying, non-tenured junior faculty position at another school. The job market for professors is competitive and extremely costly. Essentially, a professor in this position has wasted a good deal of time for a nice letter of recommendation. This is to say nothing of reputation. It is feasible that a professor denied tenure, regardless of circumstances, could find herself in a position complicated by her previous record when applying for a permanent position at another college or university. How would one phrase the explanation in an interview, "Well, I got fired, but they liked me"?

What does this mean for the student?

If the student is not graduating, then he has to start all over again: find a new advisor, establish himself as a worthy pupil, and learn the view point of the new professor. For a graduating student, it means that his mentor isn't established. Trying to get into graduate school is difficult. Doing it with an unestablished mentor, one who is possibly without work, makes it even more difficult. One of the most important aspects of starting a career is developing connections and references. How is this possible when professors are blocked?

The essence of this is one of labor's most crucial facets: job security. Concerning Bard, does the possibility of tenure provide enough job security for the junior faculty? Is the tenure process conducted fairly, or is it an arbitrary formality? Do any Bard employees have job security? The point of job security is not to be thrown to the wolves, but to have some backing when difficult situations arise, and, most importantly, to have a future. Job security is not the last word, it does not guarantee work no matter what. It does, however, provide a measure of protection and is designed to thwart exploitation, namely by the use of scab labor.

To Bard employees: If you wish to air a grievance against any aspect of this community concerning labor treatment or policy, you can do so via campus mail to John Rosenthal (box 1165) or Jeremy Dillahunt (box 719). We will be happy to include your opinions, anonymously if you choose (please indicate), in our following articles.

### Editorial Policy

The *Observer* is Bard College's student-run newspaper. It is published every other Friday during the semester. Everyone is welcome to write for it. The deadline for submissions, be they stories, cartoons, poems, photographs, statistics, letters, or advertisements of any kind, is 3 p.m. on the Tuesday before publication. Send all submissions via campus mail to either Meredith Yayanos (box 1531) or Lillian Robinson (box 1158). Submit all writings on a labelled disk (or else we claim them for ourselves) in Macintosh Word format (no PC files please!) and in hardcopy form. Submit developed photographs if possible, preferably in the commercial 4x6 print size. Shoot in black-and-white, preferably.

It is the responsibility of the writers to contact the editors before the Thursday after deadline to speak with them about their submissions. Otherwise their submissions will face editing pencils alone. The *Observer* reserves the right to edit for spelling, grammar, and length.

The *Observer* discourages anonymous submissions. If you must submit anonymously, you must reveal your identity to the editors.

### the Root Cellar!

Bard's student-run, non-profit natural food store is located in the basement of the Old Gym. We have organic coffee, great snacks, Annie's Mac & Cheese, tea, and more.

Evening Hours: 8pm-11pm, Fridays 7pm-11pm\*

\*The Root Cellar is seeking volunteers for daytime shifts. For info contact Meredith Schafer via campus mail or drop by the store.

# Rape Survivor Addresses Assault

## THE BARD observer

To the Campus and Community,

Normally, an approaching anniversary carries a certain burden of expectation. One hopes that in the course of a passing year, the pendulum of fate has provided its subjects with a better consciousness...or, at least acceptance of its late experience, in the hope of obtaining a more optimistic tomorrow. Returning in the autumn with a somewhat weighted soul, I stand once again confounded that change itself appears to be inconsistent with the ideals of the coordinators of our "place to think."

Some may recall my epistle of self-reproach last winter deliberating the rape in Tivoli Bays. At that time, my psycho-physiological condition was floundering, and condemning my asinine lack of caution seemed the only rational justification of the nightmare. That the fiscal and academic expenditure in receiving five credits for full tuition, despite returning to campus nine days after the event, was trivial compared to the anathema I deserved. No one mentioned the woman assaulted at the Triangle that April: captivating, sharp, and mere weeks from completing her senior project. Just as she was not given the opportunity to graduate, I was unable to transfer because of an erroneous transcript, and am presently ensnared in a netherworld of flashbacks. A perpetual hell where I must prevail to enable my leave, and attempt to overlook the dozens of daily anxiety attacks that have a tendency to warp one's scholastic output.

Subsequently, my rage appears to have been misdirected, and have since that interval had the opportunity to confirm the more ambiguous events of the college's past. I speak now to the campus that has perhaps not forgotten the incident of October 25, 1995, but certainly its antecedent, April 18th, 1995. We've been duped, kids, by a more subtle and hazardous offense; the sheer negligence of whoever IS actually answerable for the shortcomings of this institution. (Dr. Claw?)

A violent aggressor remains at large, who needs only a passive observation of Bard's vehement and brief periods of awareness to know when another attack would be most apt to succeed. You see, through preclusion of certain rudimentary duties, the college has had the necessary time and sagacity to establish an acute emergency reflex in the face of tragedy. Through trial-and-error, it has become frighteningly efficient, successfully comforting its incensed assembly of temporary activists with approximately two weeks of open counsel, vigil, contracted safety, empathetic leaflets and a self-defense seminar for flavor. After that, everyone sleeps soundly, feeling well provided for. So auspicious is this system, it is ingrained into the student body's very subconscious. Neophytic freshmen could hardly be shocked or dismayed at B.R.A.V.E.'s infallible organization, with its laminated brochures and assurance that a yellow plastic sword/whistle will penetrate miles of trees.

Perhaps the extensive details in the handbook on how to report an assault should foreshadow the possibility, but the so-elegantly-typofaced New York State penal definition of sodomy is not, to my rather oddball sense of reason, an adequate substitution for admitting, "OK, we don't want to scare you, but we have a problem on our hands." Take care, liberal insolence only makes for contrived asylum, although I was among the first to shove my head under the sand when told my back was guarded.

On the topic of that aforementioned assemblage of enthusiastic counsellors: I have thus far internalized their contempt for my radical notions of protecting the boundaries of campus. I stood humiliated at the meetings last Spring proposing that attention be given to the only acreage convenient to potential assailants. I was also looked in the eyes and told that I was not only ignorant and unappreciative of the administration's "efforts," but that I was a hostile imbecile who understood nothing of rape.

Heh-heh.

At that time, I felt deserving of such aggression, to the point that I accepted the former head of B.R.A.V.E.'s advice to conceal my true identification with the issue. Fine, I embrace their condescension, and will not pretend to know the ultimate course to pursue. But that breed of specialist does, in fact, exist (professionals that legal advocates seem to have no trouble obtaining for litigation) and there should not be a breathing member of this community not demanding his or her right to a truly effective investigation. Of course, it will be argued that motions have been made, such as the foot patrol, the extension of shuttle hours and what have you. So, these are just...ADDITIONAL

measures, right, because there's NO WAY this fellow would ever THINK about returning, and there probably isn't any bearing to that "criminal attempt + accomplishment + opportunity = recurrence" hypothesis, anyhow?

Annandale Road is only one of the multiple tracks that could easily facilitate fugitive X's excursion to an Eden of young and vibrant bodies who, much like sheep, in their age and maturity, no longer believes in wolves. Why are there dogs? Because sheep simply cannot avoid their natural stupidity. Something must prevent, or at least deter, a bloodthirsty hound from approaching the flock, rather than assuming that if given a knife the poor creatures will know to defend themselves.

Those choosing to denounce my convictions as "tempered by hysteria" will never be moved beyond their defensive skepticism, and I understand why, having come from a similar domain. Only from circumstance have I come to reckon the severity of this issue, and shall pursue it in the name of all those who have been and may be sacrificed to inanity. Perhaps a single episode of this magnitude can be sadistically rationalized by the supposed evil that is man, but another cannot go without recompense. And yet, if I had only managed to spill flaming hot coffee on my lap instead.... THEN the world would permit me to have a case and an excuse to be upset.

But even that would not give me the last year of my childhood back.

Anne Elizabeth Gerbi

[eds. note: Gerbi would like to clarify that she is not responsible for the flyers posted on Friday the 25.]

### The Bard Observer

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Remember  
to send  
in your  
absentee  
ballot

ART CLUB PROCTOR  
FUCKIN  
SCARY  
PARTY  
WED OCT 30 1996  
TWO DOLLARS IN COSTUME

This magnificent dog owes its name to its creator, Heinrich Essig of Leonberg in Württemberg. In appearance it has many of the characteristics of the St Bernard and the Newfoundland, from which the Leonberger was bred, with a possible contribution from the Pyrenean Mountain Dog. Its classification as a separate breed did not happen overnight, partly because it was not developed in accordance with a strict breeding programme. The definition of its official standard therefore dates from little more than thirty years ago. The Leonberger has a coat of long, thick, soft and quite oily hair, reinforced by a very dense, waterproof undercoat. Despite this abundant coat, the lines of the body are clearly distinguishable, revealing a strong and muscular but well-proportioned frame, which lends the Leonberger an air of elegance. The head is considerably smaller than that of the St Bernard,



and the skin of the skull is normal, without the characteristic wrinkles of the St Bernard. Around its neck, which is free of dewlap, there is a wide collar of very thick, long hair, quite different from that on the chest. The tail is long, very hairy, with a fine plume. The forelegs are straight, while the shape of the hind ones, with short, muscular thighs and long hocks, is a characteristic of the breed. The feet are webbed. The Leonberger has an excellent character, is very intelligent and easily trained for water rescue, good-natured, faithful, affectionate, patient with children and makes a good companion.

Weight: 40-50 kg (88-110 lb). Height: 70-80 cm (27 1/2-31 1/2 in). Colour: fawn, reddish, with or without black (wolf-like) markings.  
Country of Origin: Germany.

## Misogynistic Flyer Angers Student

To the Flyer Artist for the Barn Party in Tivoli Bays:

Vaginas are quite a hoot, aren't they? I received your flyer in Kline last week, the extent of which, for those of you fortunate enough to miss it, depicted some schmuck (is that you?) lurching, his tongue extended, over the outstretched lips of some unnamed woman's disembodied vagina. Some questions: is it possible that the woman in this picture could be a Bard student? If so, did she and the other women in attendance enjoy your party (translation: your flyer reads, "Come to our party...we have disembodied vaginas...for two dollars you could have/become one")?

What other campus/cultural events might you advertise in the future via the word bubbles which emanate from her vagina? This last fact is interesting, as it must have caused a great deal of deliberation and forethought to assert the comedic value of talking vaginas. I imagine you intended to induce shock (incidentally, your intentions arouse about as much controversy as the phenomenon of passing gas in public, or the word "poop"), anticipating that those who might point and titter at your flyer are just brazen enough to assume that you chose this image with tongue-in-cheek, while, on the other hand, those who might be offended by your tactics (let alone the image itself), are not welcomed at your party anyway.

Perhaps you justify your decision to offend by imagining yourself (as I certainly imagine you) possessed by that fierce irreverence so cleverly administered by Bard "counterculture" (now that is a feat). In any event, your confidence rested on the fact that this image is memorable, and hence, appropriate for prompting students to attend a party (a curious formula). You might have accomplished a similar response with some semblance of taste, and more effectively by refocusing your energy towards better craftsmanship and efficiency, both of which would emphasize relevant information about the event. Future flyer-making aside, you can assume with some confidence that what you've produced stands as a milestone in the annals of Bard campus idiocy, which, mundane as their details may be, seem to receive an abundance of contributions every week.

Lastly, I'm curious: does your flyer allude to the rape that occurred in Tivoli Bays last fall, or simply neglect to consider it? I am doubtful that this particular woman will see your flyer, meander into the woods, and pay you two dollars to guzzle keg beer on nearly the same day and location of the rape. Nonetheless, I'm sure that all of this aside, you're a real fun guy.

Jen Schneider

## Meet the Leonberger

## EMS Apologizes for Breach of Confidentiality

To the Bard Community:

On behalf of Bard Emergency Medical Services (BEMS) we would like to sincerely apologize for the printing of BEMS calls in the last issue of the *Observer*. BEMS is a twenty-four-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week emergency response team composed of Bard students. We respond to any medical emergency in Annandale-on-Hudson. You access us by calling security and we generally respond within two minutes. We are free, and we are absolutely confidential.

We realize that strict confidentiality is essential to maintaining trust in a small community like Bard. During a call we will ask your name for our paperwork. The only people we then give that information to are the ambulance or paramedics if we call them (we do not have emergency transport capabilities). A copy of your paperwork goes to Health Services, where it becomes part of your medical file. We do not tell anybody else anything. This includes: the police, the administration, security, your friends...anyone. The only exception to this is if we receive a court subpoena requiring us to give information to a specific group. This has never happened.

As security officers also have paperwork to complete, and as we will not give them any information, they will often ask the patient for his/her name and any pertinent details. The *Observer* received its information from the security reports. We have talked to security and hopefully this will not occur again. Again, we apologize to everyone for any information from the security reports.

If you have any questions about the workings of BEMS or anything else related to BEMS, please contact Shira, the director of BEMS, at x4523 or by e-mail at sg848.

Sincerely,

BEMS Shira Gertz, Esteban Rubens, Chris Tignor, Becca Brown, Dan Ragone, Alex Nannetti, Larry French, Grethe Kvenes, Beth Halford, Seb Salazar-Chavez, Imteaz Mannan

## Vandalism is Not Art

There is someone on campus who doesn't understand the difference between art and vandalism. This is the same person who needs to take a class in advertising. Not that everyone on Campus didn't already know that the Drag Race was on October 19th, but someone armed with a wide-tipped blue permanent marker took it upon himself to greet everyone going into the women's bathroom by the Post Office.

"Drag Race...E": Whoever it is also made it across to the South Hall bathroom to advertise in this alternative fashion. I can understand searching for a new way to spread the word, but you went too far. What you did is not art. What you did was create a mess that Fergie from ServiceMaster had to scrub off. What's the point? By defacing the wall you also gave Graffiti art a bad name. Ray Oglesby & co. have been struggling with the administration for years to recognize Graffiti as a valid art form. This year he finally got sanctioning for Raw Art in the Ol' Gym. What you did was bolster the argument against Graffiti. It looks like shit and doesn't have any creative merit to it all.

"Drag Race... 'Acid'." Is that really how S/MACES would want to promote the Drag Race? By advertising drug use? What this vandalism does is take away from the validity of S/MACES' goal of education for the advancement of sexual minorities. It advances the stereotype that all sexual minorities are constituted by drugged out freaks. I have nothing against social drug use, but is this really the way S/MACES wants to further their cause?

This isn't the first incident of advertising gone awry. Can/Norml's Hemp Fest found free publicity on the walls of the Ol' Gym thanks to Sharpie pens. But what the promoter didn't realize was that s/he was destroying murals created by sanctioned artists. I don't know how they didn't realize what they were doing since Bard doesn't have any blind students attending this semester, but art was destroyed for the glorious sacrifice of "Free da Weed."

Think about what you're doing. Think about it before you do it. Think about how your actions will affect the cause you're supposedly working for because the goal of S/MACES is education, is it not? Don't assume that anyone wielding a marker is creating art, because when you do you make an ASS out of U and ME.

Apologies (on behalf of the students) to the ServiceMaster employees who work their asses off to clean up after us. You deserve much kudos for putting up with us.

Abigail Rosenberg

## Reading for Pleasure The Ultimate Indulgence

by Heather Duffy-Stone

Two weeks ago, while on a plane to South Carolina, where I would spend the notorious Reading Week, I found myself contemplating this very phrase. Reading Week. What does it mean? I mean *really* what does it mean? A period that we have free from classes in order to prepare for mid-term exams and papers? Wouldn't it be of more use to all of us to have this week, free of classes before FINALS? And, in any case, most exams and papers are spread out over days before and after Reading Week. By the time this off week arrives, some exams have even been taken.

I think I have discovered the true meaning behind Reading Week. Just look carefully at the name that our oddly placed "vacation" goes under. And think.

How often do you walk through the library, glance at your friends' bookshelves, or even your own, and think, with some sadness and frustration, how many books you haven't read. Or long to read. If you're anything like me, you do this almost daily.

Why do we feel sad and frustrated? Because . . .

You're sitting in your room deeply immersed in reading about, say, Geometric Optics, when you look up and notice that your friend has left behind her copy of, say, Maeve Binchy's *Circle of Friends*, a book you've always wanted to read. A book that hap-

pens to be sitting, untouched on your floor. A book that just happens to be 600 pages long. You look around you, from under your eyelids, without turning your head. Just to make sure no one is watching. With a tremendous sense of guilt, you pick up the book and read the first page. You're starting to turn the page . . . you throw the book down and cover it with a sweater. You CAN'T. You have WORK to do. How dare you even contemplate reading a book you might enjoy. A book you don't *have* to read.

You see, Reading Week exists for you to read. Take a collection of books that you have heard about or seen or wanted to read for years. Bring these books to your home or to your room or to Mexico and read them. Uninterrupted. That's what the week is there for.

Okay, well, maybe not.

But I still think reading for pleasure is not something we should feel guilty about. We learn by reading, and it truly is a form of procrastination more worthwhile than sneaking into DeKline to watch ER. Reading books that have been recommended to you by other people helps you to learn about them, their background, their interests. Reading books that have been mentioned by teachers could help you to better understand books that are actually assigned. And finally picking up that one book that you have always meant to read, but never had the time . . . who knows, it could come up in a Psychology discussion in class tomorrow?

I think I've even convinced myself now. It's okay. Find a book and read it for no other reason than: you want to. Take a day off. Sit in your bed all day and read something you'll never have to write a paper on. You'll feel truly refreshed, I swear. You'll feel liberated.

# THE BARD observer

## Stereolab: Happy Feelgood Electronica



Friday, October 25, internationally acclaimed band, Stereolab, gave a rollicking performance to a full-capacity audience in the Old Gym. Concert highlights included "Faust Pop," "French Disco," "Ono," and an encore piece that was, unfortunately, prematurely ended by a power curout. Stereolab members include Mary Hanson, Tim Gane, Richard (top), and Leritia Saider (right). photos: Cameron Hickey



## Spooky

continued from page 8

### MANOR/ROBBINS HAUNTINGS

Over the years, Manor House — particularly the third floor — and Manor Field, have been the setting for a number of strange and highly unsettling occurrences. Students have awakened to see a floating face in the dark above them. One person claimed to have been in the lounge alone one night when an old man in a smoking jacket approached him from behind and loudly demanded, "What are you doing in my house?" The student, somewhat baffled but unalarmed, replied, "This is a dormitory. I live here." The man demanded to know what year it was. When the student told him, the man dissolved.

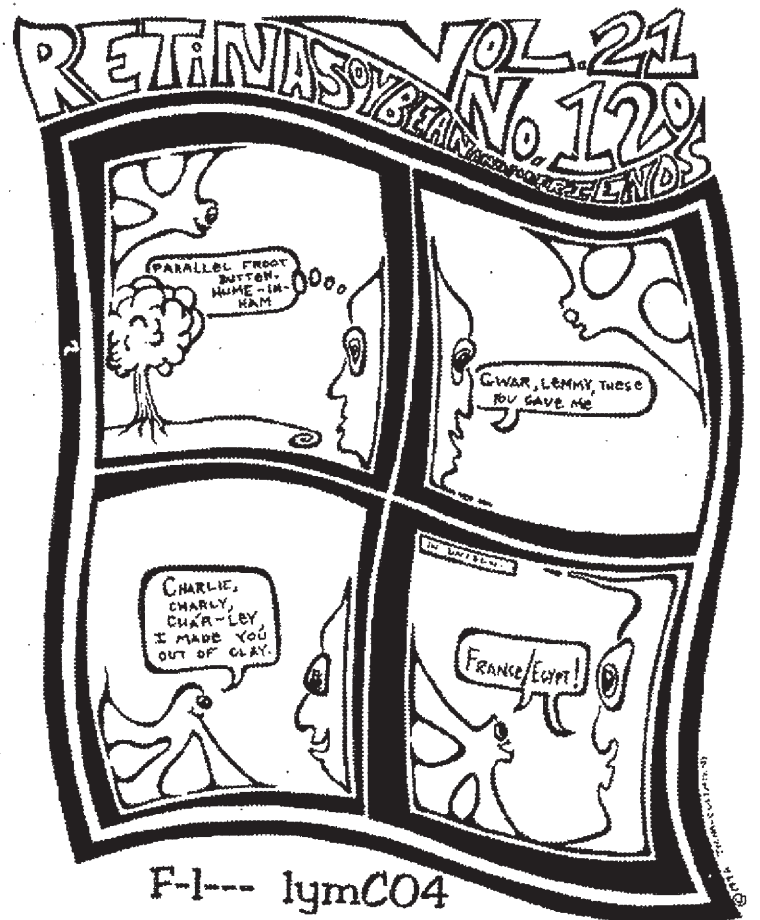
Last year two friends were sitting on the backsteps of Manor one Friday night, and had been chatting for a good hour or so when a pale, flickering figure appeared in the field. They could make out only the lower torso and legs. As it strode towards them, they began to have suspicions that the figure was nothing *but* a pair of legs and torso. Then the form vanished. Although highly disturbed by its sudden disappearance, they remained on the steps, assuming that it must have been a person wearing a dark top, and if they waited long enough, someone would emerge. When nobody did, they went home feeling very uneasy. Two days later, they ran into someone whose boyfriend had gone completely

nuts over the weekend. Apparently, he'd been on the third floor of Manor that Friday afternoon when the lower half of a woman's body appeared directly in front of him, then walked down the hallway and through a wall.

Robbins also has its share of nasties. Once used as an old folk's home (complete with morgue), it now boasts a high rate of first-floor residents who request room transfers. Apparently, a couple of the rooms suffer recurrent preternatural disturbances. Phenomena include immediate drops in temperature, a sudden, overwhelming presence of vile medicinal smells, and the inexplicable movement of furniture and small, stationary objects.

### THE FOREST

We've all heard the rumor that archaeologists have been digging up tribal burial grounds out by Kruger Island. There's the age-old Native-American legend about a being called the Wendigo, who walks the spine of the land and devours the unrighteous. What you probably haven't heard is this: the supposed existence of a Health Services file containing correlated personal records of at least two dozen students who, in the past five years, have had near-identical recurring nightmares involving a "black spirit" or "devil" of sorts, which manifests in the forest, then tears across Bard campus, bringing mass destruction. No explanation.



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# THE BARD observer



## drag in space a new hope: race

A not-so-long time ago in a building so close you can probably smell it from here, there was a rather appalling annual campus event known as the Drag Race. The music was insufferable, its MCs were incorrigible, EMS calls were inordinant, and the gratuitous film projection of bizarre bestial pornography affronted just about everybody's less-than-delicate sensibilities. Until one day...a fearless rebel band of queens, queers, steers and dears touched down on Planet Bard in their tinsel-wrapped starship to set a new standard for future committees\*.

Led by intrepid space-divas Didi7 (Nicholas deVilliers) and The Empress (Heath Cannon), what the crew brought with them was a whole lot of mylar, one seriously savvy tech crew, and a real knack for CAMP. In all respects, they went boldly where no androgyne has gone before, and because of their hard work, the 1996 Drag Race In Space was an astronomical success. (See page 12 for more.)

\*Other committee members: Cameron Hickey, Robert Shedy, Kate Travers, Shulie Arieah and Gwendolen Norton.

Photos by Paul Rich, Seze Devres, Kate Travers and Allison Fletcher.

