"Do or do not... there is no try."

-Yoda

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Bill, Election '96

Bard Students Rock the Vote

by Stephanie Schneider

"America has voted," Clinton said during his acceptance speech, which Bard students crowded into deKline to watch. All night Americans, Bard students included, witnessed the results of people across the nation casting their ballots for the 1996 Presidential elections.

When a Bard student votes, the question becomes not only which candidate to choose, but by which method to choose, whether it be to register in Dutchess County or to mail in an absentee ballot. That choice is not always so easy.

Bard student Bryan Higbie couldn't vote in this election due to confusion about where exactly he was registered. When he asked for an absentee ballot, his hometown election board told him he was registered in Dutchess County. He then proceeded to call Dutchess County, who told him he wasn't registered there, either. "I think they make it difficult for people in general [to vote]." He said that making voting so much of a local issue is ineffectual because people are mobile and "boundaries are so ill-defined these days."

This year did prove to be easier for most students who wished to register in Dutchess County, and it was also the first year voter registration was available at student registration day at the beginning of the year. Resident Director Allen Josey said this was made available to encourage more students to vote. About 230 students registered to vote at the beginning of the year, according to Josey. He said that he would like to see this registration drive continued next year and explained that for him, it is more important that students simply vote whether it be locally or by absentee ballot. He recalled that at registration, "We weren't pushing a particular issue. A lot of people chose not to register."

Bard student Julia Wolk was assisting voter registration that day and said, "We got a really good response." She estimates that many students voted this year, adding, "There's a real myth about the apathy of students at Bard." She described the political scene on campus as "pretty active." When Josey visited the polling place at St. John's

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The coalition traveled to both Hudson and Red Hook where the students and professors would ask questions concerning issues such as gun control, abortion, and budget spending, and they would then check the answers against how Solomon stands on each issue. Brogan said that she recalls only one person agreeing 60 percent with Solomon while the rest averaged 20 to 30 percent. She said many were surprised about how little they knew about Solomon.

Professor David Kettler, a member of the campaign, said that the majority of the people strongly disagreed with Solomon. "Well over 80 percent [disagreed strongly], many of whom had thought of themselves as Solomon supporters."

Kettler said he thought the campaign was definitely a worthwhile experience, both in getting professors and students to work together and also in getting students involved in local issues. The campaign, as Brogan stated, was not necessarily expecting to defeat Solomon but was more out to educate. Kettler said that this was still a rewarding campaign and succeeded in involving students with the local contingency.

Along with this, Kettler sees it as more beneficial that students get involved in local politics and register in Dutchess County. "It's really valuable even for people who aren't going to be here for very long." She cited the issue of privatizing Annadale Road as one local issue which directly affects Bard students.

Getting involved in local politics is what one Bard student, Anja Brogan, decided to do. She, along with a coalition made up of professors and students, organized the Catch-22 Challenge Solomon project. The project consisted of students traveling door-to-door administering a questionnaire to educate voters on just how well informed they were about their representative Jerry Solomon. "We weren't out to bash Solomon," Brogan said, but rather to "educate the people in the district."

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Along with this, Kettler sees it as more beneficial that students register locally. "There's something bizarre about people living in a place and having no human connection with the people they see going to Grand Union." He said that he feels there exists the myth of how Bard students see themselves as somewhat superior to the local people. "I find it peculiar that here we live and nobody has any idea about power structures in the immediate community."

Brogan said she was disappointed with the students' overall unwillingness to involve themselves in local politics and saw a good deal of disinterest. "It stems from the feeling that they don't feel they can make a difference. I did the little that I could. It's important that students get involved in local issues. If you're involved with your [home] community then be registered at home, but if you don't really know, it's easier to get informed and have an impact to be registered here."

Keeping in touch with hometown issues is just the reason why some students still choose to vote by absentee ballot. Bard student Maysoon Wazwaz said she voted by absentee ballot because she wants to still assist her hometown of Chicago while being at Bard. "I don't know as much about New York State. I know about the problems in Chicago. I think it's important to be involved, period. Politics go beyond the local region as well and it's important to not forget the broader picture."
Security Beat
by Jordan Parkerton

On Halloween night a student was carried out of the Fisher Art Center on a stretcher after drinking varnish. In response to the rumor that the student had been given the substance to drink, Shelley Morgan mentioned that a friend of the student began the rumor.

The incident occurred at an Art Club sponsored event at Fisher. During the party the student had mistaken the varnish, because it was in a juice or soda bottle. It cannot be disclosed whether or not the student had been intoxicated. However, Lisa Sadowski has confirmed that prohibited substances, including alcohol, were there.

At the arrival of the Bard Emergency Medical Service, security, and an ambulance, the student had already collapsed. Due to the fact that EMS is strictly confidential, it cannot be confirmed that the student was conscious at the time. After two days in intensive care at the Dutchess county hospital the student was released in good condition, and has returned to classes.

This event was only one of several tumultuous incidents which occurred between Oct. 25 and Nov. 5.

A car fire of unknown origin occurred Oct. 28. The car, a blue Toyota, was in the Kline parking lot at the time of the incident. Owned by a current student, the Toyota had been parked there for several months. The blazing fire was noticed by a student while driving past. The Dutchess County Fire Department arrived at the scene shortly. The car, which remains in the same spot, was severely damaged.

That same day, a large envelope on a student's door at Seymour was set on fire, scorched the door. The New York State Police are investigating.

A chimney fire occurred outside DeKline the following week.

A city fire occurred at a student's house, burned the phone lines, spread around the house, and began to burn the shingles and plastic underneath when first noticed. A Bard student and another resident put out the fire themselves.

Late Halloween night, a few students were involved in charging stolen fire extinguisher at the Old Gym. Lisa Sadowski warned that students who tamper with fire extinguishers and fire alarms will be charged with a $100 fine and further disciplinary actions. The day following Halloween, a car across from Tewksbury got egged. It was a mess.

Lock Your Doors
by Allen Jesse, Resident Director

As many of you may or may not know, there has been a disturbing amount of theft taking place on campus this semester. The vast majority of these have been in and around residence halls, and would have been preventable if only students had locked their doors. I know this can seem like a nuisance and something that is not really necessary, however it is clear that we have a problem and that the community needs to be made aware of it so that you can make educated choices on taking precaution to safeguard your belongings.

Since August 22nd, there have been 20 reported thefts that have occurred in and around the residence halls alone. Additionally, there have been 11 other thefts and various acts of vandalism other places around campus. There is no way of knowing how many of these thefts were carried out by Bard students, nevertheless, it is happening and you should be made aware of these disturbing facts.

Items like bikes, TVs, stereo, money and especially laptop computers make up the bulk of the items stolen. The estimated total value of all the items stolen from residence halls this semester amounts to $11,940!

For those of you in doubles or triples, remember that when you do not lock your door, you are putting your roommate at risk of being vandalized. If you have lost your keys and just have not gotten around to getting a new set, I urge you to go do it and protect yourself. The time and charge for getting new keys is less of a burden than coming home to find your $2,000 computer missing.

Lock your door!!
A Look at Writing on the Wall

by Meeka Bhattacharya and Jeanne Swadosh

Does this look familiar? There have been ongoing incidences of BiGaLa signs being defaced on campus over the semester. Reaction has ranged from memos sent to all students from Dean of Students Shelley Morgan and President Botstein as well as a forum to address the issue.

Julia Wolk, a co-chair of BiGaLa and facilitator of the forum, felt that this kind of defacement was demoralizing to BiGaLa and the Bard community in general. She felt threatened by the implication of violence communicated in the defacement of these signs, referring to it as a “death threat.”

“Bard is changing and becoming more conservative as the rest of the country does,” Wolk said. She also said that in the Forum participants were “going around the issue” by addressing concerns about the right to freedom of speech.

Shelley Morgan, who also attended the forum agreed that it brought up discussion pertaining to freedom of speech. However, as a student pointed out, there are ways of expressing one’s thoughts (through the Observer or open dialogues during the forums) other than threatening fellow students. Morgan also indicated that the homophobic contingency is comprised of a very small number of students, maybe even one or two. Wolk pointed out that the handwriting on the signs was all the work of one person.

According to Wolk, there was a feeling of paranoia present at the Forum that somehow these signs indicated that BiGaLa “was going to get you,” which she found incredible and hard to explain. “The idea was that if BiGaLa is going to put up signs, they are giving space to the death threats and to hate,” Wolk said, “it’s like blaming the victim.”

The feeling that Bard is growing conservative is not shared by all. President Botstein cited that twenty years ago at Bard there were only formal dance parties whereas today the Drag Race is an accepted and popular event. He continued by saying that anonymous threats and defacement of signs and artwork have always been present at Bard. He does not see the situation escalating into physical attacks. Whatever anger the defacer possessed has been expressed in this “cowardly” manner. Nevertheless, additional security measures have been expressed in this “cowardly” manner. Nevertheless, additional security measures were taken during the Drag Race, according to Lisa Sadowski, Head of Safety and Security.

Botstein believes these homophobic incidents were the work of people either visiting the campus or employed at Bard. Regardless of who the perpetrators are, Botstein takes a firm stand against such behavior and said it would not be tolerated.

“The least effective is searching out and punishing somebody,” Botstein said in regards to what measures would be taken if the suspects were found. He asserted that “one has to look at the question of teaching and changing people’s attitudes.”

“This is a learning institution and one has to understand that part of learning is unlearning” explained Botstein. More concerning than the defacement, said Shelley Morgan, were the “people who are seeing this happening and not saying anything about it.”

The overall feeling of the administration is that there are more civil and constructive means of voicing opinions and concerns over matters of sexual orientation. President Botstein said that people don’t know anything about what they hate and that hate begins with insecurity.

“People should feel free to express their prejudices,” he said, referring to the open forum in which students should have expressed their diverse views on sexual orientation without fear.

Still, there are lurking fears, as student Elizabeth Solis pointed out. “So far nothing has happened, but it can happen anytime.”

The Pros and Cons of Graffiti

THE MOVEMENT
WILL NOT BE STOPPED.
KILL ALL FAGS

WHY COME OUT?
STAY OUT OF SIGHT, LIVE!

In response to the recent appearance of violent vandalism (above) student Karen Sneider put up sheets of butcher paper in the stalls of the Old Gym women’s lavatory (right). Sneider hopes the paper will provide a more positive outlet for student opinions on sexuality, or any other concerns they wish to air.
Joanna Scott

Authors at Bard: by Meredith Yayanos

Author Joanna Scott is a literary case study if ever you saw one. Author of the highly acclaimed novel Arrogance, recipient of the MacArthur Prize at the tender age of 31 and more recently a finalist for the 95 PEN/Faulkner Award, Scott is a powerhouse. Her collection of short stories, Various Antidotes, dives undaunted into the dusty repositories of science and medicine, dredging monsters both real and imaginary from their volumes. They are extraordinary figures of palpable beauty and reallness. After reading her unflinching tale of Dorothy Dix, smitten with the criminally insane, or her account of a blind, brilliant eelgrass," this turned out to be the contrary, though after Paul West experience, I don’t think anyone was sure what to expect. Certainly not a petite and cordial woman emitting guttural yawns and cooing unnaturally as she read a recent work entitled, aptly, “YIP!” But there she stood, giggling and yawning, and adored behind bars.

“Bad is a strange place,” Scott said in the minutes prior to her reading, and “so are my stories.” She is one in a seemingly endless train of contemporary writer-friends brought here by professor Bradford Morrow, who introduced Scott as “an expanding universe unto herself.” Prior to the reading, she spoke at length to Morrow’s contemporary fiction class about her intent to make scientific biography more accessible, and her predilection for case studies from historical annals. “I am a little, a lot terrified of the contemporary world,” she laughed. "So I go to history because it’s a more malleable text ... I go to history because it’s a more malleable text ... besides, it’s fun.”

Morrow's class, Eugenides stated, “I think this is the smelliest book I've ever read.” He meant, of course, that The Virgin Suicides was full of odors (no, there really is no very polite or poetic way to say that a novel reminds the reader of his/her sense of smell). In response to this, Jeffrey Eugenides promptly quipped, “The Limburger of Literature.” In the small sampling of Eugenides' work I've read, he often writes of effluvia. In fact, he said in class, smiling: “For some reason, bodily fluid is my muse.”

At the well-attended reading, Eugenides read his currently published “Air Mail,” a semi-autobiographical story about an undergrad on a trip around the world. The main character, Mitchell, is afflicted with amoebic dysentery while on a small island. He spends weeks fasting in an attempt to starve the amoebae, and while he does so, he seems to come closer to enlightenment. While ill, his mind is more brilliant from the fast (as digestion takes so much energy). Throughout sickness/enlightenment, Mitchell writes anatomiial to his misunderstood family and friends. In the conclusion of the piece, Mitchell casts off his illness at the same time knowing that his parents will never understand how he has changed...what he has become.

Eugenides' presence, and portions of the story he chose to read, made more clear his unique sense of humor. For example, other people afflicted by dysentery are also mentioned in “Air Mail.” One man contracted dysentery, and as Eugenides put it, he was “full low by a salad.” This statement is at the same time hilarious and grim. The prospect of contracting amoebic dysentery has never been too far from my mind. However, the thought that something as simple as a salad could make one deathly ill is the brand of humor in which Eugenides excels.

In Morrow’s class, it was mentioned that Eugenides’ work had a mythic quality. The Virgin Suicides is set in Eugenides’ Michigan hometown. The novel details the suicides of five cloistered sisters, and the following reaction of the community. The experiences of puberty (discovering the opposite sex, feeling alienated, being misunderstood and victimized) are skillfully evoked by Eugenides. In effect, Eugenides has created a myth of the post WWII American teen experience. In the novel, Eugenides brought here by professor Bradford Morrow, who introduced Scott as “an expanding universe unto herself.” Prior to the reading, she spoke at length to Morrow’s contemporary fiction class about her intent to make scientific biography more accessible, and her predilection for case studies from historical annals. “I am a little, a lot terrified of the contemporary world,” she laughed. “So I go to history because it’s a more malleable text ... besides, it’s fun.”

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"Ill" Familia
by John Holowach and Chris Van Dyke

Some famous once told some less famous guy, "You can take my money, you can take my wife, you can take freedom, but you can't take my soul." This person obviously had not seen "Il Familia." I did. This play took my soul, did a little soft shoe routine on it, chewed it up, and spit it out. In other words, it was bad. Really bad. In fact, it was the worst play I have ever been unfortunate enough to see. It was worse, even, than the musical version of "Waterworld." I realized that no amount of cold showers would ever make me feel free of this utter mediocrity, nay, remove the pungent stench of this stinking theatrical suppository. So I decided to have a talk with myself, to try to probe my true feelings. The two split personalities I will dub, oh, Sachmo and Eggplant.

Sachmo: Hey, Eggplant, what did you think of "Il Familia" the other day?
Eggplant: I thought it sucked.
Sachmo: That's strange. I thought that this performance portrayed the conflicts housed within the human soul, the underlying message of emotions, struggling to escape from within a body unable to express itself. When Liam Neeson was crying at the end, saying, "I'm in pain." I thought, "Oh, you're going to be replaced before the final production."
Eggplant: You're thinking of "Schindler's List."
Sachmo: Oh, "Il Familia." Yeah, I thought it sucked too.
Eggplant: And how about the way they mispronounced all those Italian names?
Sachmo: Don Corleone never would have put up with that in the old country!
Eggplant: If I could have got that director into a toll booth in New Jersey I'd have...
Sachmo: Yeah, Marlon Brando did redeem the play.
Eggplant: You're thinking of "The Godfather."
Sachmo: Oh, "Il Familia." Yeah, it sucked.
Eggplant: What did other audience members think?
Sachmo: Yes, in fact, I do. Elle* turned to Orval* halfway through the play and said, "I think they're going to be replaced before the final production."
Eggplant: She was one line in the play which really stuck in my mind. Young Corleone is speaking to Cousin Luchianni, and he says, "I don't understand this insanity." I just wanted to leap up and say "Hallelujah, brother, hallelujah!"
Eggplant: Amen to that.

Sachmo: Hey, Eggplant, what did you think of "Il Familia" the other day?
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*Names are pseudonyms.

THE BEST REVIEWED MOVIE OF THE YEAR
"THE SUMMER'S BIGGEST BLAST!!"
"A GREAT FILM! UNFORGETTABLE!"
"TWO THUMBS UP!!"
"HIP... CLEVER... AND WILLFULLY OUTRAGEOUS!!"

The Bard Papers
art and photography to See Devres
writing to Ashley Crout

All work judged anonymously—
box # only please.

submit.
American Myths

by Sean O'Neill

On November 2nd and 3rd, the American Mythologies Conference at the Levy Institute brought together some of the top names in American History and Political Studies. At the conference, myths from American History were Justified. First on the chopping block were Jefferson's maxims that, "the government is best that governs the least," and that "the government that is closest to the people is more responsive to the people." Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., noted that the poor and minorities often have benefited most by looking to a strong national government for protection from the majority's prejudices.

Jon Kahn noted that when the Federal Government abandons certain national tasks, local governments do not take them over, but powerful corporations instead dictate how those tasks should be handled. Mark Lytle noted that Jefferson's arguments about Americans being more pure than foreigners because they are closer to nature have always been untrue. He also evoked the irony that extremists on the right who ordinarily want to dismantle the federal government were the first to run to its defense when its most famous project, building the atomic bomb, was questioned in a Smithsonian exhibition.

John Jaycobs of CUNY said that Republican and Clinton Democrats are successful today in distorting the federal government, more states like Texas and California will compete with the central government, and the country will split up into regions. Like Canada is doing. This collapse of the welfare state is linked, Ethan Kapstein claims, to the collapse of the warfare state after the Cold War, since the one expenditure had been justified to middle-class taxpayers by the other.

Mark Danner said that another contributing factor to the current political scene is the success of Barry Goldwater in the 1960s and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. Their use of rhetoric borrowed from Jefferson about the virtues of a smaller government had great effect on Americans who had been brought up on history textbooks erroneously stating such a maxim to be true, just because Jefferson had said it.

Why is it that the rhetoric of Hamilton and Jefferson is so often repeated in national conversations, even when Americans don't realize who first said what they repeat? Schlesinger thought it was because Americans have never been ethnically homogeneous and thus have needed a secular faith in common texts to define themselves. Fredrik Zacharia of Foreign Affairs argued that Americans have been frightened of foreign ideas, such as socialism, and feel they must prove how American they are by repeating cliches first uttered by the

Furthermore, the success of Barry Goldwater in the 1960s and Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, their use of rhetoric borrowed from Jefferson about the virtues of a smaller government had great effect on Americans who had been brought up on history textbooks erroneously stating such a maxim to be true, just because Jefferson had said it.

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Moreover, because the Russians were believed to be bent upon world conquest and unwilling to negotiate, many dangerous confrontations occurred. What kind of nation is America? Just another great power? But another greatly imperious state? "Sophisticated revisionism" is the search for a more accurate record of American history, which is being written more and more by persons not born in the country, who share neither the pride nor the embarrassment of American historians. The end of the Cold War has as much as anything else eased the possibilities for foreign scholarship to be accepted into the American academy. The modern delochevalles at this conference revealed that change.
The Happy Hour Review
by Jeremy Dillard and the Happy Hour Crew (John Rosenthal, Abby Rosenberg, Basel Bourb, and Josh Botting)

Same mission (gettin’ drunk), new place: the Escape Club. If you like to immerse yourself in undiluted machismo, the Escape Club is for you.

The crew arrived at Escape to catch game four of the World Series. Whereas Josh, John, and Basil were veterans of the establishment, I was a virgin ready for corruption. I most directly felt like I had arrived in someone’s basement for a game of “asshole.” The fake wood siding peeled in places and the stucco ceiling would have grazed me a raspberry if I were six inches taller. There was a foos-ball table, a pool table, and a jukebox—all one needs for some drinking.

As we siddled up to the bar I noticed only two other patrons, one wearing a massive crucifix of facial hair and a white-and-red mesh cap that sported a tractor with the clever slogan “Tractor” above it, and the other arched protectively over his grizzled face like the evasive Sutter Home logo. The game hadn’t started yet so we stared quaffing mugs of Bud Light in an attempt to get drunk enough not to feel out of place. After three dollars and fifty cents worth of quaffing, I felt easy on the bar stool and almost local. A couple came in shortly after us, the bartender, quite amiable sort, pulled out four screwtop Sutter Home mini bottles: dark red, red, pink, and off-white candy apple. Nothing fancy here.

Someone from our crew wandered over to the juke, and shortly Brooks and Dunn, Merle Haggard, Joan Jett, and Wayne Newton were careening our ears. The bartender and the two originals hummed along word for word to each song. Familiar with the selections, I think this was due mostly to the fact that, in drinking terms, we needed easy on the bar stool and almost local. A couple came in shortly after us, the bartender, quite amiable sort, pulled out four screwtop Sutter Home mini bottles: dark red, red, pink, and off-white candy apple. Nothing fancy here.

The game came on and immediately the mood changed. Before, there had been three independent camps primarily focused on drinking and misusing each other’s business. As the Yankees’ prospects dwindled, however, the more cohesive our separatist identities became. I think this was due mostly to the fact that, in drinking terms, we had been severely lapped by our fellow bar dwellers. Bottles of Sutter Home lay strewn over the bar, and where Tractor and Arch previously had only one drink, they now had several at their disposal; seemingly wherever they reached a three-quarter-full, half-full, or three-quarter-empty mug lay. Even the bartender was drinking and screaming at the television. We had been united by drink and some ridiculous sports loyalty that dominated discussion.

Up until that point I thought of the Escape Club as a dungeon of doom for Bardians. It seemed the last local bastion for townsies and unapproachable honors awaiting the fool from school who dared to lay foot on that turf. The Camaros and Chevey work trucks parked outside seemed intimidating and hostile. But that was just me being a moron. The Escape Club is a bar and the particular skill that bars have carved out over centuries of evolution is that of getting people drunk; which, the last time I checked, was a condition savored by anyone who enjoys drinking.

So when the Yankees pulled out a miraculous comeback I did not find it at all odd to be high-fiving everyone in sight, aside from my friends, all five people in the bar. The conversation was not lacking, it even blossomed more readily than at most social events, although it seemed a little redundant: “The fucking Yankees kick ass!” “Fucking Yankees, yeah—rasp—whowee, Yankees,” “I love the fucking yankees.” The night was almost complete. We were drunk, we were swearing and cheering for a sports event, but something was missing. We needed a bar fight. Lo and behold, we almost got one. It seems that some drunk besmirched the honor of a lady at the bar. Her chivalrous date, holding a glass of Sutter Home blush, set about to reclaim her lady’s purity. There was lots of testosterone, lots of empty threats, lots of belly pushing and face to face “muthafuckas you”—ing, but unfortunately, no actual grappling. The rascal left. The scene calmed. We started watching football.

For about ten bucks, I got hammered at the Escape Club. On Wednesdays, they have free chicken wings, so if you want, you can get hammered and fed cheaply. Escape is a rocking good hick joint and I think one needs for some drinking.

What do... Miles Davis Kind of Blue Stan Getz Plays Sonny Stitt Meets Brother Jack ...all have in common?

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 24TH You’ll see a performance of musicians from these legendary recordings.

Bard Jazz Heritage Club Presents
The Eddie Diehl (guitar) Bill Crow (bass) Jimmy Cobb (drums) TRIO!
8 P.M. OLIN AUDITORIUM
Confronted by Bardian Blindness
by Joan Smith

"I mean, it wasn't like a real expose or anything. I've seen all this shit before on t.v. and everything. Maybe you wouldn't see it if you were from, like, Connecticut [laughs]."

This is what attacked my ears from a neighboring table as I sat down to brunch the day after the presentation of "American Pictures," the afternoon after the meeting with the show's maker, Jacob Holtz. Nine people attended that meeting, one African-American among us (and I was grateful she was there). Guess what? "American Pictures" was an expose for me, and I even get one meal—that I don't have to eat dirt, wounded and dead and worked beyond words and hungry and naked and someone's racism comes from their internal pain. He says that if we love and then he most likely wouldn't be in college. That's the point, I tried to deal with the picture of the Napalm baby (who perhaps was wrong, but how cruel he was to deny what he had seen. But I remember Jacob's words from one hour before, his call to understand that someone's racism comes from their internal pain. He says that if we love them, we often can love their pain away and their racism right along with it. So I should love the student, right? No, I'm angry with him, and maybe we all should be. Childhood pain or not, to deny is to ignore, to ignore is to oppress, and to oppress specific people is to be racist toward those people.

Those people we stared at in the darkness, crippled and crying and wounded and dead and worked beyond words and hungry and naked and kissing and BLACK—they, he was saying to my sadness and astonishment, are shit. I hadn't denied the photographs. I had gone back to my room and half-slept until the alarm went off before the follow-up meeting, running them over and over again inside my head. I denied that the students who left after intermission would forget what they had witnessed. But I was wrong. Looking around the cafeteria, there was laughing and smiling everywhere. I turned.

If only this young man and his friends, who laughed along with him, had come that morning. They would have heard again that we should love, and love everyone. He had said to his branch companions that such healing ideas were like "lecturing" from Jacob. If he had just heard them one more time, maybe it would have healed him. And if others had awakened at such a reasonable hour of the morning and come, perhaps they too could have been affected, even if they had shut down the night before. Jacob wanted us, as viewers, to feel literally oppressed, like the blacks he had photographed. Of course, some viewers have to shut down and block out. But does the student from the cafeteria, do the people who abandoned Jacob's documentary art, know that what we as viewers felt was nowhere near the oppression felt by the people in the pictures themselves? They don't just feel guilt and numbness and unworthiness, but manipulativeness and inattentiveness and rage and more, Jacob wrote on one of the final slides. If other students had come and seen those words, maybe it could have initiated some, any, love toward oppressed, very poor, black Americans. I'm trying very hard to love the people who never showed up for "American Pictures," who left halfway through, who didn't attend the meeting, the young man in the cafeteria, and myself. One of my grandparents still calls blacks inferior and "colored" yet claims he is not a racist. He is like the Rockefeller of the last 1500 slides. Southern white racists, poor white trash among them. My grandfather on the other side is paying for much of my education at Bard. He is the conservative, wealthy businessman who lives in the white-flight suburbs of Chicago. He is like the Rockefeller of the last 1500 slides. He ignores (like the young man in the cafeteria) the people and issues of the Cabrini Green projects and the South Side. So I am in college because of figuratively racist money, right? I am stuck on both sides—my kind is racist more than I ever saw before, and there's no way for me to deny it.

I think I'll call my sister up—we got in an argument the other day—and say loving words to her. She is at the University of Southern California, which touches South Central Los Angeles. She has been warned not to walk off campus. Jacob trusts all of us. So I'll tell her to go into South Central anyway. Its residents, black and brown and yellow and white, can trust her, because she is already what Jacob calls a "saving angel." She goes weekly to L.A. County Hospital and holds crack-addicted and AIDS babies. Still, those beautiful tragic creatures are not as poor as Jacob's photograph friends, and have more hope...

Opinion

American Pictures

R&J: Two Teens Make the Headlines, Again
by Shawnee Barnes

Do Romeo and Juliet exist? I guess I mean to say, "Does such love exist?" That question might sound naive, but really, would you kill yourself in honor of love? Love is a powerful thing, a powerful feeling, an emotion that can hurt while at the same time be blissfully divine. I recently saw the new movie Romeo and Juliet, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, and it was thought-provoking, never mind that it made me speak in "thee's and thou's" all night. I'm such a romantic at heart, but I wonder how I'd react if some guy climbed up to my window to confess his undying love having only seen me once. I'm probably think he was psycho and call Security! So much for my romantic side! Romance has become jaded over the centuries, we're taught to question motives and not take anything at face value: all the Romances and Jullets of the world have gone extinct in the race for "survival of the fittest." I don't scoff at protecting oneself at all, it's just that "love at first sight" seems risky business.

When R. & J. first saw each other they knew in some pure, clairvoyant way that it was destiny and they were bound to one another. I've been attracted to people at first sight and sometimes there is more going on than meets the eye. Then I wonder if this is my R. Or J., but soon reality checks in and the person ends up being a fleeting affair. How can you know who the right person is and trust that what you're feeling is real? What is it that you are feeling or what is guiding you? My answer would be: your instincts, and as some would call it: following your heart. To me they are synonymous.

When Romeo saw Juliet, he knew he'd give up everything for her. Is that enviable love or sheer madness? As is well known to those who study love, love is madness. At age seventeen, R. & J. make such adult decisions, and are moved by a higher force. Where was I at seventeen? Oh yeah...working at a convenience store reading trashy novels where lust is a commodity and love is just another worn out pickup line. I was, however, questioning the force that drives people to each other and found myself believing in the word, "soulmates." I believe we all have souls and that we are all somehow intricately connected, be it from past lives or pure karmic luck. I also think we all have a soulmate out there. Some find it, for others it takes lifetimes. So, the word "soulmate" seemed appropriate and fitting, and it instilled hope in me that with patience, one day I too will find my soulmate.

When I asked my friends if they believe that you only have one match in a lifetime, one responded that it is a personal thing, meaning that some have many true loves in a lifetime, while others only have one. Another said that your soulmate is about kinship and compatibility, not necessarily romantic love. I asked another friend if he believes in love at first sight and she defiantly answered, "yes," and then after we talked about it for a bit she ended up changing her mind and posing the unanswerable: But what is love? I knew we couldn't go any further with that, so I left as confused as she was and returned to my article, realizing: I'm trying to understand something that is simply inexplicable, subjective, enigmatic, and in essence, rhetorical. So, when you go see this movie, don't ask questions—take it for what it is: two gorgeous teens acting out a script where, ironically, between enemies, love doth emerge. To quote Will, "All the world's a stage." So follow your heart and act on what you feel. Trust your instincts, and play out your destined role, for thou knowest what is true for thee. Comment? Shawnee B.
The Fate of the Fight of Catch-22
by Ian Greer

On Friday, November 1, a group of people from Bard, consisting of ten students and two professors, went door-to-door in Hudson, New York. Our goal: to challenge the power of Republican/Right to Life/Conservative Congressman Jerry Solomon by spreading word about his voting record. The Democratic Party and the Labor movement had allowed his power to go relatively unchecked: the Democratic Party by now fielding serious candidates, and the Labor movement for being satisfied with his votes against NAFTA and GATT and his abstentions on other labor legislation. Here, in the 22nd district, someone had to take up the slack, and we decided that it would be the Bard community.

The energy for this project initially came out of my own experience working for the Labor movement in Union Summer. I became interested in the new promises of the Labor movement to empower working class individual by individual, not just in the workplace, but also at home, in the voting booth. Professor David Kerner suggested a campaign against Solomon when I told him about my experience in a similar project against Conservative Representative Randy Tate in Seattle.

Our task was not to campaign for Democrat Steve James, nor to smear Solomon's character, but rather to subvert the tactics of big money electioneering refuse to do: go into homes and let people decide for themselves how much they agreed with the politician. We hoped that we could sway public opinion by talking to individuals, and by the media coverage that would ensue if we were successful. Our group came to be named "Catch-22" because our efforts could only raise consciousness about issues, while an awareness of the candidates revealed that neither was much good.

Red Hook Resident Recommends Religion
To Jen Schneider,

I sympathize with your outrage against the recent flyer using female genitals to advertise a Barn Party at Tivoli Bays. As a local resident of Red Hook, I sometimes glimpse Bard life through copies of the Observer I pick up, and through flyers I find tacked on various bulletin boards. I would therefore like to offer the following comment about your situation.

How can you condemn the publisher of the flyer, without also condemning the student culture at Bard which encourages him? The same issue of the Observer which ran your letter also ran on its cover the "Drag Race in Space," a story featuring male Bard students parading themselves in transvestite attire. Another inappropriate flyer I found last year advertised a "Sluts and Goddesses Video Workshop": "on how to be a sex goddess in 101 easy steps." The program promised "campy sexual empowerment" and was billed as an "S&M ACES presentation." What does S&M have to do with promoting respect for self or others? Meanwhile, other Bard students have been passing out condoms to kids in Red Hook in an attempt to accommodate sexual license.

All of the students in these above examples are seriously confused, because a licentious culture leads to confusion, blindness, social misery and ultimately, destruction. Why? Sex practiced without love is a mindless, self-centered quest for gratification that will use whoever or whatever it can to fulfill its desires. The sex junkie's partners become disposable, as he or she moves on to more destructive thrills: multiple partners, bisexuality, homosexuality, pedophilia and sado-masochism. Notice that as the quest for sexual gratification becomes more erotic, the junkie's regard for his partners (children, "slaves," animals) diminishes. Violent rapists, incest, and ads using female genitals are the logical conclusion to the self-centered, promiscuous process. Thus the sexual revolution ends in anarchy and nihilism.

Sex and love are not the same thing. Love is a spiritual energy channeled through us when we live responsibly, even sacrificially for the sake of others. When our commitment has developed (through the engagement process) to the degree that it becomes unshakable, it is formalized with marriage. Then we consummate our mutual love physically, and the desires unleashed through our sexual initiation will be balanced by our love and commitment to each other. To deviate from this formula is to use a dangerous drug without heeding the guidelines of the drug's creator. The guidelines are for our own happiness and well-being.

I applaud you for your stand against licentiousness, but suggest that you carry your accusation to its logical conclusion. To end sexploitation will require a wider criticism of the student culture that encourages it. If you can't culturally detach, I would suggest investing in a good religion. Absolute love is worth the price of investment. Good luck to you.

Mark Snell
Red Hook

A Response from No Hood Productions

To the offended student,

The fact that my flyer offends you shows that Bard is not keeping its students busy enough that you at least have too much time on your hands to analyze my facile joke. I'm surprised it did manage to offend at "decadent" Bard. I guess I should relish in my success at offending. Anyway, it kept away those who I wanted and brought out the right people and I could care less about your snotty-ass standard of taste. You know, you would really have better spent your time writing a letter to a congressman about a pothole in the road or some shit. Your "championing" for some ideal is a ridiculous pose. Lightheaded, or you're gonna go through life with a lot more people telling you what I'm saying now: Fuck off.

Jon Wetterau
No Hood Productions
Earth Coalition

The energy level on campus is dwindling away. Students are dragging themselves to Kline and sometimes to class. The trees are bare, the weather is schizophrenic, and we all have the sniffles. Not to mention my room is plastered with dishand mildew, but that’s another story altogether. Despite all of the lethargy, the Earth Coalition is still going strong.

On Sunday, October 17th, four brave Earth Coalition members set out on a mission to rid the banks of the Hudson River of trash. Not the entire river. Just where it borders Bard. Armed with gloves and trash-shafting prongs, they ventured down Cruger Road in the crisp morning air. Cruger Road itself was so littered with vintage beer cans and abandoned tennis shoes that they never quite made it to the river itself. In two hours, four bulging bags were easily filled. Two of the bags contained recyclables such as tin cans and glass, while the other two were crammed with trash. Eight tires were hauled out of the woods. The reason as to why they were there in the first place is still a mystery. A muffler was also found. Perhaps it had been in better condition, it could have been a collector’s item. One of the many beer cans we found was still full. The contents were sacrificed to the earth. A fresh Kline napkin was found at the end of Cruger Road. Which one of you dropped it and didn’t pick it up? The Earth Coalition covered one specific area. Unfortunately, there is still plenty of trash left in the campus vicinity to collect.

Waste prevention has not been faded with the passing of Waste Prevention Day. As we prepare to flock to the bookstore to buy our new books for January, there are a couple of ideas we can keep in mind to reduce trash. First of all, I find myself very annoyed with the canvas bags that are a specific area. Unfortunately, there is still plenty of trash left in the campus vicinity to collect.

Waste prevention has not been faded with the passing of Waste Prevention Day. As we prepare to flock to the bookstore to buy our new books for January, there are a couple of ideas we can keep in mind to reduce trash. First of all, I find myself very annoyed with the canvas bags that are a specific area. Unfortunately, there is still plenty of trash left in the campus vicinity to collect.

If your purchase won’t fit in your backpack, you can avoid those crummy plastic bags by renting a canvas bag for a refundable $1.50. You can bring back the bag in any condition at the end of the year, or whenever you choose, and get back your $1.50. It might be wise if the bag was still in one piece so that it could be reused. Otherwise the original purpose would be defied. I still have the seven plastic bags (from when I bought my books in August) under my bed with everything else I have acquired since I arrived. Student handbook included. Really, I just counted. If we all received about seven bags, that means seven thousand bags were given out for fall books alone. Yikes! Think of it as an investment. You spend more than $1.50 on a single pack of cigarettes. The canvas bags are difficult to track down, but if you ask an employee, they ought to turn up.

I think Bard students are feeling a little overwhelmed by the recycling bins. Perhaps I can clarify the issue. Repeat after me: white paper goes in the blue one. White paper goes in the blue one. White paper goes in the blue one. Got it? I thought so.

As the weather gets nasty, keep your chin up. Think happy thoughts and turn off the lights in the bathroom when you leave. Energy doesn’t appear out of thin air, ya know. Oh, and you can recycle your batteries at B&G. That is one less thing to throw away.

Andrea Davis

Editorial Policy

The Observer is Bard College’s student newspaper. It is published at time intervals by the faculty. Everyone is welcome to write for it. The language for submissions should be that of the campus. Editors welcome letters, essays, articles, reports, reviews, fiction, or any kind, as long as they are typed, double-spaced, and of reasonable length. If you have any ideas or suggestions for the papers, please submit them to the editors. The Observer reserves the right to edit and condense. The Observer cannot accept anonymous submissions. If you must submit anonymously, you must reveal your identity to the editor.

Meredith Yayanos

Additional Incomes for ’96

Earn $500-$1,000 weekly stuffing envelopes. For details—RUSH $1.00 with SASE to:

GROUP
6547 N. Academy Blvd., Dept. N
Colorado Springs, CO 80918

A Letter From Leon

Dear Meredith and Lilian:

The best compliment to a newspaper is that it is read. In that spirit I would like to respond to two items in the last issue of the Observer.

In Charlotte Jackson’s interesting piece on Bennington, she makes a reference to my “guarded admiration” for President Coleman. As far as I can recall, I have never expressed myself publicly on the matter of Bennington. Insofar as I have any admiration for President Coleman, it is as a result of my appreciation for the difficulty of the circumstances she faces. She inherited a college that had been poorly managed for over twenty years, abandoned by its alumni, and obsessed with the difficulty of restoring public glory. The result was that Bennington found itself in severe financial distress, and President Coleman’s strategy has more to do with finding a way to respond to desperate and near-fatal economic circumstances.

Here at Bard the circumstances are quite different. Over the last 20 years under this administration, 38 members of the faculty have received tenure and 19 have been denied tenure through a process of decision-making that includes faculty judgment and that of this office. So a denial of tenure on this campus in the past, present and future has nothing to do with Bennington. Neither do I “keep Bennington’s experiment in mind” except as an object lesson of what to avoid.

I was pleased to see the interview with Peter Maguire. I am not sure whether he was correctly quoted, and I want to assure him (but I suspect he knows) that Bard has never been and will never be on a “headlong rush to emulate Wellesley or Vassar.” I think this institution has always been pretty well unified in its desire to avoid such a misplaced imitation. I rather think they should try to emulate us.

Cordially,
Leon Botstein
You Must Submit

by Meredith Yayanos

Recent months have marked a watershed for the Observer. Bard's only student-run, bi-weekly rag is changing. This semester a tiny, hopeful handful of us have been inviting you: journalists, photographers, essayists, raging smarmballs, cartoonists and cretins alike, to submit your work. Then we take whatever we get and spend roughly thirty hours in front of a computer putting it all together, trying to concoct a credible publication. Though we've made remarkable progress, there's still a long way to go, because let's face it: the Observer spent a long and icky interim lining the bottom of that collegiate canary cage.

I'm worried.

As an editor and a flutterbudget, I feel the necessity to address this and to talk to you. First, just to say thanks for reading it, and then to squawk at you because you're much too talented not to get involved yourself. Now, I realize you're very busy. You've got that paper to write, that opening to prepare for, that trip to the city this weekend, that trip to the city this weekend, but you've also got a thousand things on your mind, which should come as no surprise, considering that this is Bard, A Place to Think, it says as much on the catalog, go ahead, think away, think think think, and when you're done, pull your finger out of your nose and pick up a pen or a crayon or a camera and extrapolate. If the tangible finished product ain't half bad, consider calling me up or dropping Lilian a note. Do so with the knowledge that we will treat you with respect and dignity.

Which leads me to one other thing, Respect and Dignity? Hello? In case you hadn't noticed, there's a lotta love lost 'round these here parts lately, and some of the submissions we get reflect that. We print them of course, because that's our policy, but it's pathetic to watch portions of the letter page descend into a terse exchange of juvenile expletives, not to mention worrisome, because whenever people are obviously reacting without thinking, nothing can improve. The Observer doesn't need that.

Please consider this paper as your round table, and not a battlefield. Bard really is a place to think. We strive for coherency, not effrontery. To achieve it, we quite literally have to see the writing on the walls, and respond. As for that violent minority of people who've yet to comprehend their cowardice, we all want to beg you to think about what you are doing. Think very hard, and grow up! Maybe then you'll consider thoughtful elocution in a public forum as an alternative to vandalism. Maybe you'll even figure out that it's not really about what you think, in the long run...but what you do, and you will do right. I really hope so.

In any case I'm going to sleep before somebody sticks me back in the canary cage.

See you in a couple of weeks.

G'night.