

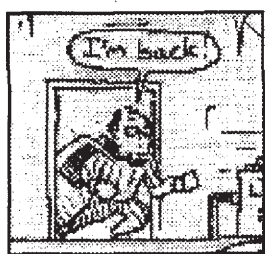
OBSERVER

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THE BARD observer

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 12504 - April 11, 1997 - Issue 6, Volume 7



A good newspaper is never really good enough, but a lousy newspaper is a joy forever.

—Garrison Keillor

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Acclaimed filmmaker Milos Forman received flowers and boisterous applause after speaking to a full-capacity audience in Olin auditorium on last Tuesday night. Introduced by Bard film professor John Pruitt, Forman entertained questions from the audience rather than lecturing. The subjects of discussion ranged from his most recent film, *The People Versus Larry Flynt*, to earlier projects such as *Amadeus* and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The Czechoslovakian-born director highly stressed the importance of making films that challenge established institutions and convention.

photo courtesy of BardOnline

Freak Storm Leaves Bard Powerless

by Abigail Rosenberg

While most students were frolicking on the beach or devouring mom's food and TLC, the ones who chose to stay on campus for Spring Break got hit by the worst snowstorm of the season. Bard, Tivoli, Rhinebeck, and Red Hook lost power on Monday night, March 31. Along with the electricity, phone service, heat, and hot water disappeared. The day after the storm, the entire area was declared a "state of emergency" and many students who weathered the storm itself found the rumors of at least 5 days of powerlessness too much to bear and left campus in search of a hot

shower and HBO. According to Bob Brock, the new Security Coordinator, only about 50 students were left on campus after the storm.

"What was it like?" was the most frequently asked question, according to Jeremy Dillahunt, in regard to his courage in deciding to wait it out. "Cold, dark, and smelly," was his answer. The remaining students stuck close together alternating complaints about body odor, boredom, the impending doom of senior projects, and the lack of contact with the administration. According to one student, "It was a toss up who was harder to get in touch with, the administration or Central Hudson."

With the loss of electricity, students who had stocked their refrigerators in advance of the annual Spring Break closure of Kline were left with rotten food. Josh Diaz, senior class president was especially upset about the loss of his three Hungry Man dinners. Thanks to the power of a small generator, deKline was able to make coffee and served bagels to the hungry students. Because they could not make hot food, free pizza was available to students on the hectic

continued on page 2

Students, Faculty Question Free Speech at Town Meeting

by Jeremy Dillahunt

(Editor's Note: Dues to the Observer's recent travails (see article on page 3) this piece and several others were unable to be printed promptly after they were written. Though outdated, these pieces have been included in this issue because of the importance of their content. We apologize for the delay.)

The Town Meeting on Sunday night, March 9, originally scheduled as an open discussion of freedom of speech, turned instead into a forum in which Bard students voiced their opinions about the anti-gay and lesbian messages appearing on campus. Approximately eighty students and ten faculty were present and they decided that the apprehension of the vandal(s) responsible for the hate material scrawled across bathroom walls and on BiGala event posters was more important than a dialogue about free speech. Many students present expressed fear and a feeling of personal violation due to the nature of the defacement. Posters have been slashed with knives and "Death to all fags," as well as other such messages, have been appearing more frequently and with more threatening connotations than before.

According to the administration this problem has been occurring on and off for about two years. The instances in which the messages and defacements happen sometimes fall into periods of inactivity and at other times resurge with a vengeance. The last couple of weeks has been one of the most promiscuous times. Shilo Burton, a BiGala member, said at the meeting that their club would put up posters announcing an event and within twelve hours they would be either defaced, slashed, or ripped down.

Hate crimes against gays and lesbians in the United States have been getting more and more press across the country. gay and lesbian activists have been pressuring lawmakers to make hate crimes felony offenses rather than simple charges of assault. Bard is indicative of an endemic problem in the United States, according to Leon Botstein, and it is not free from hate activity. While the administration does not condone the defacement of posters or the dissemination of hate ideology—it's against the rules (read the college hand book)—it does not want to act too rashly about the situation. "There are many reasons why this activity is going on," said Botstein, "we want to explore all the possibilities before making a decision on how to respond. It would be imprudent to take the situation too lightly, but it would also be foolish to give the situation too little attention."

At the meeting it was discussed whether or not this was the work of an individual or a group; also whether the messages were a sincere expression of feeling or a simple vulgarity.

Because of the anonymous nature of the messages it was difficult to make a decision on the intent of the vandal, but one thing brought up made it clear that if the perpetrator(s) were sincere or not they certainly were cowardly in their expression.

In considering how to respond to the vandalism students' and administrations' opinions ran the gamut and agreement was rarely present. One student suggested that a separate bulletin board be put up for the vandals to have their own space to deface, but several other students pointed out that while BiGala was attempting to initiate dialogue, the vandals were merely trying to shut the club up. Another student expressed reservations about the methods of discipline against the vandal(s), arguing that a precedent could not be set because it may infringe upon the rights of students' free speech. Kayla replied that the whole point of free speech at the forum was bullshit and that the vandals were suppressing free speech and threatening with physical violence, not engaging in it themselves. Botstein, in response to questions asked about the administration's course of action, stated that it was not the college's business to catch criminals and that somebody whose business it was to catch criminals would be brought in to deal with the problem. He stressed, however, that students are in a better position than the administration to apprehend the party(s) responsible. Botstein also stressed that it was best not to make assumptions about the individual(s) responsible. "It could be a student, an employee, a frequent visitor, someone from the outside community—we just don't know and shouldn't jump to conclusions."

Power Outage

continued from page 1

first night, but the freebies ended there and meals for the rest of the week consisted of lukewarm hamburgers and American cheese sandwiches selling for a hefty \$1.50.

Students deciding to stay on campus or in their off-campus apartments were left to fend for themselves. Since there was no electricity, Bard virtually shut down. The only non-students on campus were security officers and dispatchers who were for students the sole connection to the outside. The day after the freak storm hit, spring arrived with 60-degree days filled with sun. Students sat on the Olin steps talking with security officers and taking bets on when power would be restored. The loss of electricity put seniors in a difficult position. Spring Break is traditionally the time when projects are written and fine tuned. Without

Reactions to the meeting varied. Some students felt it failed or was "bullshit," while others felt positively about the exchange that occurred. Since the person(s) responsible for the crime were not available to answer questions the forum was essentially a way for the Bard community to react as a whole to the problem. It allowed for individuals to stand up and be heard in a public forum which would otherwise not be available. Many students said that all the pontificating and theorizing was moot without action and felt like the administration should have a solution ready. Not being able to do that without a guilty party, however, Botstein felt that in respect to the dialogue achieved the meeting was a success and the administration had a better feel from the students on how to proceed.

One student told of a non-analogous incident that occurred at Simon's Rock in December of '94. Apparently a student there had, over the course of more than a year, become increasingly antagonistic towards gays, lesbians, blacks, Jews, hispanics, and any other person or peoples who he felt had done wrong. The student was open about his views and increasingly become more polarized by them. The antagonism culminated with the student shooting seven other students, killing two. While it is a stretch to say that the situation at Bard has even the potential for such an outcome, the student recounting the Simon's Rock incident stressed that Bard's problem cannot be taken lightly. Botstein said that over-reaction to a situation could be just as problematic as doing too little, but it is necessary to understand that the United States is an extremely violent country and we need to be aware of that. He finished by saying that incidents such as the ones happening now serve to expand the concepts of respect towards others' individual rights and the importance of not confusing free speech with violent action.

power, computers were useless and seniors hoped that an extension would be given under the circumstances.

As the days passed, Central Hudson employees who had been working around-the-clock made their way up Route 9G to Bard. Rumors spread that Bard would be receiving power at 1 p.m. on Friday, April 4. Skeptics were proven wrong when at 1:25 p.m. word spread that Bard was back online. Stereos were turned on in celebration and seniors dispersed to begin their work.

It was a tough fight, but those courageous students who remained in Annandale throughout the "worst storm in 25 years" according to Bob Daugherty, survived and even had a pretty good time. There's nothing like 5 days of chaos, darkness, alcohol, and isolation to create a party-like atmosphere. Thanks to its ever entrepreneurial co-owner David Weiss, Tivoli's Santa Fe, running on a generator, was open the day after the storm. Between digging trucks out of the mud, visits from Ron Sonol, and Santa Fe's full bar, stranded Bard students came through the ordeal valiantly although criticism of the way the situation was handled by the administration remains.

THE BARD observer

April 11, 1997

For Your Information

by Meredith Yayanos

It will have registered in your mind by this point that an embarrassingly vast gulf of time stretches between the *Observer's* preceding issue and the one you're reading now. Many of you may know the circumstances surrounding our extended hiatus, some of you may even care, and it is under this premise that below is printed a letter I wrote about a month ago, when things were at their most bleak. The letter will update you about more recent developments, and I'll fill you in on the rest in a moment.

First, I want to explain something. When Lilian, Jason, and I first arrived at Publications last May, we were told it would be a strictly temporary arrangement and that before you could say Alowishus Devadander Abercrombie, we'd have an office and equipment of our own. Though much of Bard's faculty and community still labors under the misconception that our staff received those boons, it was bunk. Nearly a year after the fact, we were still muddling about in the octagon and undoubtedly, after perpetrating one-too-many printer malfunctions, networking failures, and complete system shutdowns, we had bestowed a chain of diminutive brain embolisms upon the splendid trenchant personages who work there. They were wonderfully tolerant. We couldn't keep putting them out. After finishing our "farewell issue," we decided that equipment or no, we'd have to leave for good.

Two hours from completion of our last layout, the Server HD gave up the ghost. With no hope of its amelioration, we lost almost everything we'd been working on. The situation intimidated strongly that there could be no immediate future for the *Observer*. That was, unless a photo scanner, laser printer, and Powermac miraculously fell to earth ("Highly unlikely," I said. "The only thing the sky has been dropping on my head lately looks suspiciously like it derived from the nethermost locale of a diarrhoeic Capuchin monkey.") Unspeakably frustrated, I wrote a reactionary statement, addressed it to the general Bard community and flung countless duplicates to the gale force Annandale post-office winds, praying that copies of it would slip through the turrets of the formidable floating castle of Ludlow, reaching and possibly motivating its resident denizens to act in our behalf.

To our happy surprise, they responded, and their involvement has been overwhelmingly positive. Meetings and conversations with administration and faculty commenced, the result being that as of next year, the *Observer* staff (along with any other students with interest in publishing their own literary or journalistic supplements!) will have an office of our own in the Seymour building, as well as access to a newly purchased computer, scanner and laser printer. Until that time, Ginger Shore assures us we will not be spurned by Publications. Most

importantly, progress has been made in opening the lines of communication with several faculty members who express extreme enthusiasm in working to introduce publications and journalism trade-skills into the Bard's academic curriculum. So there you have it.

All we want now is a catalyst from the student body. We need writers who will submit work that can transform the *Observer* into something beyond the cynical, morale-breaking, catch-all opinion board that it's constantly in danger of becoming. We are hoping for (*gasp* could it be?) positive reviews of student performances, in-depth interviews with faculty, features on books of interest, concert critics, fun photography, basically anything and everything that is thoughtful and possessing structural integrity. Frankly I'm disenchanted with the bitter, acerbic "wit" that has become so exceedingly prominent in this paper. The way I figure it, that particular vein of vernacular is near impossible to pull off unless you're a 40+ year-old curmudgeon who, being utterly alone in the world, having seen it all, done it all, and read the accompanying essays, possesses not only a sour deportment, but a highly articulate literary style. We're all young yet, and I kind of think this publication should support the environment which produces it, not divide and dismantle it with whining, derisive editorials.

Whatever. Just submit...please! I can't ask you enough. SUBMIT.

Just don't strain yourself. Above all else, take care to have a gloriously colloquial spring.

A Letter to Faculty and
Community Members
3/13/97

In recent months, a small group of students has been struggling to restore a semblance of stability and more importantly, respectability to Bard's only student-run newspaper, the *Observer*. Each new issue features manifold improvements, and our moxie seems to have surmounted much of the tremendous skepticism with which this community has regarded its previous incarnations.

Prevailing reservations concerning the publication are well founded. The past speaks for itself: it has been at least five years since the *Observer* survived more than two semesters before succumbing to dereliction. I personally find it embarrassing that a liberal arts college of Bard's stature has allowed for such dismal recurring failure, and I refuse to let the pattern continue as long as I am involved.

I am, however, a peripheral figure in all of this. A deeper issue exists which denotes the absence of any real dialogue between adminis-

tration and students. Despite our obvious enthusiasm, tangible support for the *Observer* from those on whom our success most depends has been minimal. I have tremendous thanks to give Shelley Morgan for keeping the faith, but beyond her own advocacy, we have received nothing but words from the directors of this institution.

Contrary to popular assumption, we do not have an advisor. We have no equipment of our own. We do not have an office. The generous people at Publications, to whom we are indebted for temporarily allowing us the use of their building and computers, are currently expanding and will shortly be unable to accommodate us. When that happens, I am told there can be no more *Observer*. I refuse to believe this and hope Bard's executors will change their minds, granting us the equipment we so desperately need.

But who is to say that I'm not full of hubris and the school's expenditures would prove yet again to be unsubstantiated? I can understand why cynicism persists and I sympathize with the administration's reluctance to sponsor our efforts. What truly amazes and disappoints me is their incognizance concerning a deeper issue related to this publication. So I am asking you: why hasn't Bard acknowledged the benefits of introducing journalism and publishing skills into its academic curriculum?

I recently spoke to a previous *Observer* editor about this, and his sufficiently jaded response was: "because Bard is afraid to teach anything useful."

I'd love for you to personally respond to that statement. I need to know if you disagree as vehemently as I do. Do you condone the claim that this college has deficient incentive to pursue an integration of cultural and literary reportage skills with its curriculum? What I propose is not an ethics class in which to discuss semantics, nor would I simply suggest occasional speakers or one-credit tutorials. I submit the prospective development of an extensive introductory course that would provide hands-on publications training, and essentially impart to students the knowledge and motivation to consistently conceive and create journalism.

After the upcoming issue, we will most likely lose access to Publications' equipment. This means, for all intents and purposes, that the *Observer* will die. For once, it won't be the fault of the students involved. It will happen because the community did not respond to this letter and because those in places of authority did not care enough about stabilizing the publication to extend us their trust.

Please take the time to consider the larger ramifications of living in a community that always seems to lose its voice. I am asking you to raise your own. Express your concerns to the powers that be. Help ensure that this will never happen again. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Meredith Yayanos (x4188)

The Bard Observer

SILK Saga Continues

THE BARD observer

April 11, 1997

by Chris VanDyke and John Holowach

For the past two years, S/MACES had to work under strict financial constraints, due to administrative concerns about past club activities.

Tired of the situation, Gwendolyn Norton, head of S/MACES, decided to change the club's name in an attempt to change its image in order to receive the funding she thought was well deserved. So this semester the phoenix that arose from the ashes of S/MACES went before the Budget Committee with a highly modified statement of purpose, and came away with \$800. However, this phoenix then had to contend with the juggernaut that is the Bard administration, still unable to directly access their funds, although they can transfer money into the accounts of other clubs.

S/MACES was originally refused funding two years ago due to administrative concerns of the school's liability in the event of a student being injured in a club-inspired activity.

"When one observed the activities that actually went on during the S/MACES events, any objective observer looking at these events would make the judgments that some of them might be dangerous to the students participating, and the group atmosphere was such that it encouraged participation in events that might not have been in the best interest of Bard students," said Dean Levine when asked for a comment on why funding was originally cut.

Shelley Morgan became involved when she heard about a speaker S/MACES brought to Bard who answered a student's query on how to use electricity safely. She was concerned about the safety of the students involved, as well as the school's liability. After talking to lawyers, it was determined that Bard could be held responsible if any accidents occurred resulting from activities that S/MACES might inspire. At that point the administration felt it should be allowed to protect the school's, and the students', best interests. They decided that the best course of action to take was to stop direct funding, and adopt a policy of allowing payment of speakers they screened and approved of, effectively limiting the range of activities in which the club could spend their allotted money. However, the club could still spend the cash revenue from their parties and other fundraisers without censorship.

Such has been the story for S/MACES over the past two years. Feeling that the club was suffering unjustly because of events which had happened years ago, President Gwendolyn Norton decided to change the club's name to SILK (Sexual Individuality, Lifestyles, and Knowledge). She hoped that the name change would cause the administration to view the club more favorably. "S/MACES was always about sexual education on a wide variety of topics, only with subject matter pertaining to S/M as a returning point. But over the years, with new members with new interests, S/M became an increasingly infrequent topic, until last semester when it barely received any attention at all. None of us saw why we shouldn't be able to directly access our funding...when we essentially weren't covering S/M at all. We were willing to drop it totally if it would let us more readily be able to educate on other areas of sexuality."

Did this sudden change of name really mean a change in policy? This is what the administration had to decide last month. Prior to the funding decision, Dean Morgan's attitude toward the club was one of careful optimism. She hoped that the club would present no problems and be an entity in which the administration could place trust.

"The proposal looks good to me. My concern, as I related to Gwendolyn, is that I don't want to be in the business of policing that club. . .so we need to come up with a plan so that there are some ground rules established. But the proposal looks good to me, and I think their goals are good ones."

In the end however, administration decided that trust must be earned. When explaining the choice not to lift the funding constraints, Shelley Morgan said "there is still the perception that this is S/MACES with a new name. If we can be convinced that it is otherwise this semester, we will permit funding for the Fall '97 semester. But as I said to Gwendolyn. . .I do not want to be in the job of policing or monitoring if they are really remaining true to their mission."

SILK now has this semester to prove its good intentions in the hopes that next semester the financial restraints will be lifted. "I would like to see the outline of what they are planning for this semester, compare it to what they actually do, and then see where we go from there," said Dean Morgan.

The administration had the final say in this issue, but Dean Morgan expresses hope that in the future students will become more actively involved, working hand-in-hand with administration. "Students, by the way of the Forum, really make the decisions of how they want things to run. Those issues are issues for the students to ask each other.

"Those are the things that I would like, during Forum, for students to wrestle with. 'How do we want to spend our money? Is this a good way to spend our money.' It's really up to you to work these things out, with our help if you want it. I'm not the mom. I would like one club leader to speak to another club leader. . .if there is no resolution, I may get involved in terms of mediating. As I always say, I think students need to speak to each other. When there are outstanding issues, I get involved."



"Descent into Decadence" photo by M. Yayanos

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“Thinking Locally”

by Megan Hamill

Imagine a community. Imagine vast, rolling farms with crops flourishing on nothing but water and sunlight. Imagine women and men in the fields, farmers by trade, in place of huge, electronic arms and iron brains. Imagine farmers themselves, selling their own organic vegetables to the community, instead of loading greasy trucks off to Wyoming and back. Imagine farmers earning a living, sowing their own seeds, reaping their own harvest.

The agricultural scene, up until World War II was predominately managed by human hands and horse power. Since that time, farming communities have shifted from the clean, limitless energy of solar power, to the wasteful, expensive energy of fossil fuels. With machinery came the depletion of natural fertilizers and the damaging of natural topsoils and in order to balance out this foreign destruction, chemical fertilizers were introduced. Nearly the entire farming population, and their man labor, was replaced by machinery and toxic chemicals. With this shift, neither the farmers nor the consumers have benefited at all. Those who will benefit are the corporations selling the machinery, who by buying cheap and selling high make an outrageous profit and leave farmers in poor condition. Today, farmers as a whole have become one of the country's smallest and most endangered minorities (Berry, Winter, 1997).

Consumers today are becoming more and more aware that the vegetables and fruits they are buying at such economical prices at the supermarket have a fairly disgusting history. People are beginning to boycott the cheap, mass-produced vegetables with unhappy histories, turning instead to locally-grown organic veggies, with happy memories and no toxins coating their skins. The public is beginning to realize that the “social, ecological, and even economic costs of such ‘cheap food’ are, in fact, great” (Berry, Winter, 1997).

As Berry states on page 13 of the Winter, 1997 edition of *The Food and Water Journal*, “The need to reform our ways of farming is now both obvious and imperative. We need to adapt our farming much more sensitively to the nature of the places where the farming is done. We need to make our farming practices and our food economy subject to standards set not by the industrial system, but by the health of ecosystems and human communities.”

Change, however, is radical and difficult. First of all, the farmers today have shifted their knowledge to such a great extent that pure farming would call for the learning of an entire new system. Secondly, in a time when global economy and global transportation is thriving, it is difficult to restrict the selling region to the growing region and vice versa. However, if farmers hope to have any control over their own markets, it will be necessary to minimize the transportation scale and work on growing and selling within their own communities. This calls for both consumer and producer cooperation.

By believing and working for an organic, sustainable local food economy, we must realize that we are being supported by no political party and spoken for by no public officials of any real authority. We must realize that as a whole, we are relatively weak. However, in order to accomplish what we want, we do not really need to be represented. We must begin in our communities, with our markets and our farmers and ourselves.

So, next time you head to the supermarket, think twice. Where are those veggies coming from? How far have they been traveling? What sort of chemicals have been added to ensure a “safe and healthy” journey? Seek out the alternatives. True, locally grown, organic produce is not cheap, but for those of us with a couple of bucks to spare, let's put it to good use.

Information for this article was taken from Wendell Berry's article entitled “Farming and the Global Economy,” reprinted in the Winter, 1997 issue of *The Food and Water Journal*.

Earth Coalition Prepares for Earth Day

by Megan Hamill

With every new semester comes change. Recently the members of Earth Coalition have combined forces with Erin Cannan, bringing jobs to the unemployed members of the group. There were eight work-study jobs available, dealing with issues from composting and recycling to speaker organization and the planning of Earth Day this coming month. Hopefully, this new twist to Earth Coalition will strengthen the group and its activities.

Earth Coalition has high hopes for Earth Day this Year. The celebration will be an all-day festival held on April 19th. Hopefully, all organizations have already been contacted, but if not, every group is welcome to join us with a booth. If you are interested and would like your club to be represented, please contact Amy Foster at 4574.

Earth Coalition is still going strong, always eager for new and old ideas, new and old faces. If you've got something to say, or if you just feel like listening, come to the meeting this Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. in the Kline Committee room. Come, bring a nice fat tray of Kline food. Join us for dinner.

Taking a Look at the Hudson...

by Megan Hamill

Thirty years ago, the life pumping through the veins of the Hudson was choking on our human waste. The fish were diseased. The plant life was dead. According to William Stevens (“Shaking off Man's Taint, Hudson Pulses With Life,” *New York Times*, June 9th, 1996) in the 1960's, fishermen reported a “repulsive crust resembling cottage cheese” on the skin of a once-prized striped bass. Stevens writes that there were 30-mile strips of “dead river,” such as the “Albany Pool” where fungus from sewage smothered the buoys, fish died from the absence of oxygen, and oil coated the surface like a skin of milk. Animal parts from an upstream packaging house swam by and the odor was pungent and disgusting.

Major contributors to the pollution of the Hudson, according to Stevens, were the discharge of toxic chemicals, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) from the General Electric Company in Hudson Falls, New York, and raw human sewage that was discharged all along the banks of the river.

In 1977, the state prohibited the discharge of PCB's into the river, but even 20 years later, the levels of PCB's in the water are disgusting and dredging has eliminated entire underwater populations. The runoff from urban life still reaches the Hudson and many species of animals are not flourishing. However, though the Hudson is far from healed, due to the Clean Water Act of 1972, the success on cleanup is amazing (Stevens, 1996, 14).

Many species not native to the Hudson have been found as well, some actually bringing dangerous results. An example of this is the overpopulation of the foreign zebra mussel, consuming phytoplankton at a rapid rate, causing other shellfish populations to diminish. The Hudson has been manipulated by our own hands to such a great extent, that in many ways, it is no longer considered a natural environment (Stevens, 1996, 14).

However, the Hudson is breathing once again. It has been labeled fishable and swimmable, though no one really knows whether to believe it. Stevens writes, referring to the high levels of PCB's still present in the water, “These are the chemicals that make eating more than an occasional striped bass unwise.” Not very convincing, eh? I'd watch out for those striped bass.

The point is that the road to recovery looks good. However, our carelessness is still pumping through her veins. Be kind to the Hudson. She's been through a lot of shit.

Entertainment

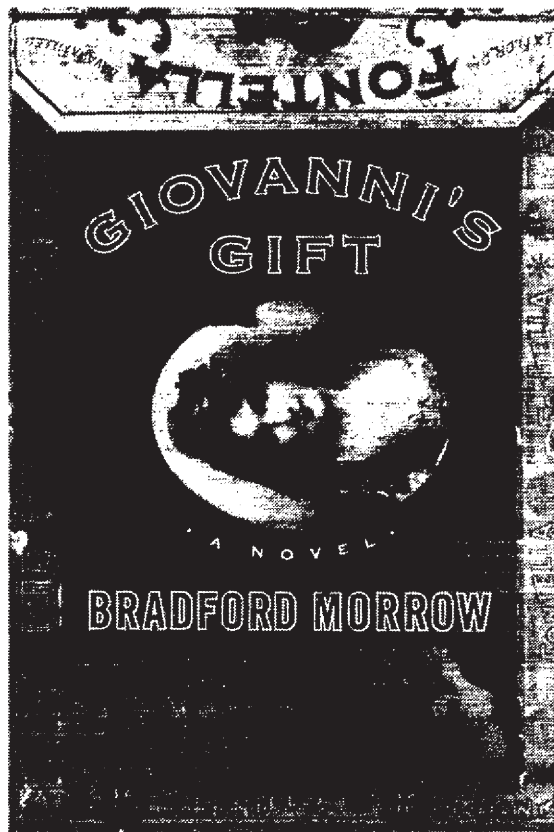
Myth and the Machine

by Meredith Yayanos

Having traversed the country on a book tour for the past month, professor Bradford Morrow seemed exhausted but cheerful upon his return to Bard last Monday, where he read excerpts from his latest novel, *Giovanni's Gift* for an installment of the *Locvs Loqvitvr* series.

Since last February, when *New York Magazine* printed a comprehensive article concerning the release of his fourth book, Morrow's phone has been ringing off the hook. The account related careful machinations by Viking publishing company to tout his literary novel onto bestseller's lists, and is the most extensive article that particular magazine has yet dedicated to any one author. It should come as no surprise that in proceeding weeks, new tour dates for *Giovanni's Gift* were added and the reviews—many praiseful, others scathing—tripled in number. So much attention should seem particularly sweet to an author whose previous works, though critically acclaimed, received limited mainstream attention. If anything, however, Morrow seems nonplussed.

"I'm much more interested in myth than in the machine, and you can quote me on that. I suppose that the publishing machine, like all machines, is necessary...but it's myth that keeps me coming back." Seated at his desk in the cramped *Conjunctions* office, Morrow was frank about his inclinations towards so much attention. "I find praise excruciating. I find criticism



excruciating. Anything that takes me away from the book is, well," he laughed, "excruciating." In seeming emphasis of his situation, Morrow was interrupted for a second or third time by the trilling telephone. Eventually, discussion turned to the book.

Giovanni's Gift is narrated by Grant Fulton, the troubled nephew of a couple whose

isolated ranch house is being besieged by violent night intrusions. While taking refuge from his broken marriage in their home, Grant's aunt gives him a Fontella cigar box originally owned by deceased family friend, Giovanni Trentas. While attempting to solve the mysterious circumstances of the man's death, he falls in love with Giovanni's daughter and is inextricably caught in a complex series of events.

The fact that many darker moments contained in the text stemmed from real-life happenings at the home of Morrow's own relatives is decidedly disturbing: "Those night visits are actually real...they're still going on." Initially finding form after Morrow was notified of terrifying nocturnal disruptions and then bequeathed an antiquated, ribbon-wrapped cigar box, *Giovanni's Gift* is immersed in myth as it manifests in everyday life, particularly those stern, universal truths contained in Pandora's Box. "Some of us have Pandora in our blood, and some of us don't. I do, for better or worse. A whole new narrative replete with demons and hope, all the stuff that make us mortal and human, was released for me when I opened that cigar box."

Recalling Morrow's opinions regarding the publishing process, it becomes clear that the lure of going mainstream is minimal when compared to epic undercurrents that seem to inspire all contemporary, literary tales. "To be the center of attention, positive or negative, is something I think all of us find uncomfortable, but I've been willing to do what I can for this book. In any case, myth will always win over the machine in the end...Myth is the greatest spiritual machine of all."

Gastr Del Sol's New Album Shines: An Interview

by Joel Hunt

David Grubbs is a musician who, as a member of Squirrel Bait, Bastro, and Gastr del Sol, has made some of the most compelling, yet occasionally subtle, music of the past decade. Recently I chatted with him about his past bands, and his current projects which include playing with the Red Krayola, releasing a new "solo" album, playing on the soundtrack for the new documentary "Dutch Harbor," and finishing up his PHD at the University of Chicago.

Hunt: How did the band Squirrel Bait come about? And once the records were recorded and the band toured, how did the success, albeit on a limited level, affect the band?

Grubbs: Squirrel Bait, in the lineup that played on the records, didn't ever seem like something that was going to last twenty years, or five years, or two years or anything. In some ways it was in accord with the rule that it really

did last a brief period of time, that was the lifespan of bands then. Because you're drawing on a small, incestuous pool of musicians. It's hard to find the right people. And the people in Squirrel Bait were, by and large, not too sympathetic to one another. These people wanted very different things of the band, as far as what the band sounded like, or whether or not the band was going to be a full-time career for people. Which would take precedence, the band or college? It was like, Husker Du just signed to Warner Brothers, and they're living quite well off this, this is what we ought to be doing. There were definitely very different perceptions of what it meant to have this little bit of success: to get good reviews in *Spin* magazine, to have quasi-major labels give you an innocent phone call. With Squirrel Bait it wasn't that the tensions within the group began with this little bit of success. It was always, it was always there. . . . Fairly early on — Squirrel Bait broke up when I was still eighteen years old — I saw that I didn't want to do music full-time if that meant touring several months of the year, and all the thumb-twiddling that went with being in a rock band,

that's always been nerve-rackingly boring to me.

Hunt: To me, at least, I find it impossible that when you were in college you had the time to write the music [with Bastro], record it, and tour. Obviously it was on a limited schedule with the summers you had off. Especially with music like Bastro's which is very dense and intense. . .

Grubbs: But not too time-intensive. I still had a lot of time in college to watch television and drink a lot. I did do a lot in college and always seemed very busy, but it never seemed that I was impossibly busy.

Hunt: With Gastr del Sol, [the music] is very much grounded in certain things that have come before — less so than your other bands Squirrel Bait and Bastro — yet is about creating something new, whereas [the other bands] were 'of-the-moment.'

Grubbs: Two things about Gastr del Sol that are probably different from Bastro and Squirrel Bait: one would be that if it seems to have less to do with what people around us are doing, on the one hand that comes from explicitly deciding to do something that we don't really have a clear idea what the outcome is going to be. Nothing was left up to chance in Squirrel Bait or Bastro. . .

Now the other thing: it would be misleading for me to just leave it at that because I'm a very avid listener of lots of music, and I

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Gastr Del Sol

continued from page 6

would say that certainly there's a lot of precedents for certain types of things that Gastr del Sol does. . . . At least the voice is given somewhat of a fighting chance in Gastr del Sol. It's kind of on the scale of an acoustic guitar or an acoustic piano.

Hunt: I wanted to know how you met up with Jim O'Rourke and started playing music with him. He was not an initial member of Gastr del Sol, but is now very much an integral member.

Grubbs: I met Jim right after Bundy [K. Brown] and I had recorded the first Gastr del Sol record. I had heard music that he had done, seen him play with Henry Kaiser, and I was a fan of his, definitely. He seemed like somebody I would want to get to know, but I was also kind of intimidated because he [is] classically trained, had already played with terrific European free-improvisers before I met him. [He] gave me a phone call out of the blue. . .

Hunt: How did you hear and get interested in Mayo Thompson and the Red Krayola?

Grubbs: I was reading fanzines in 1983 or '84 and I'd read about. . . what was called Texas Punk from the 1960s, or harder psychedelia. Robert Nedelkoff, Louisville's punk historian, . . . brought me a tape of [the 13th Floor Elevators] and a number of things from "God Bless the Red Crayola [and All Who Sail with Her]," the second Red Crayola album. . . the Red Krayola stuff I thought was really interesting. And so I taped "Corky's Debt to His Father" (the Mayo Thompson solo record) from him. It was around this time that I was listening to Sonic Youth or the Swans, which were like a huge revelation because they seemed to be coming from something other than a hardcore background. I became a big Red Krayola fan, have been one for a long time. . . . Bastro was on tour in Germany in 1990 and ran into Dieters Dietersson, a German critic who was a friend of Mayo's. . . he gave me [Mayo's] phone number and said, 'You really ought to call him.' So I did, but didn't meet him until a few years after that. I sent him the first Gastr del Sol record when it came out. I was totally surprised when I got this

phone call a week later [from Mayo] that was like, 'I'm ready to work.'

Hunt: Could you describe what it's like playing with the Red Krayola now?

Grubbs: Everything that the Red Krayola has done within the last couple of years has been undertaken with substantially different lineups. The first time I played with Mayo it was the two of us playing with Harry Wagner, the drummer from Hamburg. Then it was the two of us playing with John McEntire (from Tortoise). And then it was the two of us playing with John McEntire and Tom Watson, and then with Jim [O'Rourke], and then with George [Hurley, formerly of the Minutemen] replacing John McEntire, and then you get these group situations on the records where there are five more people brought into the fray. . . . You get pretty complex fractions, but [Mayo] gets the seal of approval.

Hunt: Your new solo record: "Banana Cabbage, Potato Lettuce, Onion Orange" — I'm not sure exactly of the process you used to make this record. Please describe it. I wasn't sure if most of the pieces were improvised.

Grubbs: Almost none of that is improvised. . . . I wanted to do a record by myself from start to finish. What was kind of a joke at first was this idea of 'solo' record, a record of solos. . . . I wanted to test my skill as a player, or as somebody who could write for single voices. . . .

Hunt: Was the "Dutch Harbor" soundtrack mostly improvised?

Grubbs: That was all improvised. It was just a morning and afternoon of people playing together. Three or four hours of music went on tape.

Hunt: How did that come about?

Grubbs: Braden King, who's one of the people who made the film — the film is premiering here in Chicago in a couple of weeks, I haven't seen the

complete version of it — he works for Atavistic (a record label who released the soundtrack). . . the weird thing is Jim [O'Rourke] did a soundtrack for a film called *Picture of Light* which is about a trip into Northern Canada to try and film the Northern Lights, and stills from that seem pretty comparable to stills I've seen from "Dutch Harbor" as far as vast, snowy fields and things like that. This guy Doug Aitken has a film in the Whitney Biennial that has music by Gastr del Sol in it, and it was shot in the desert in Namibia, and "Our Exquisite Replica of Eternity" is heard in the background while the camera is sweeping over these vast empty plains of sand, but they could be snow. In that way, I always want people to try to work the music into film or video, but I hope the next time someone sends a proposal it isn't about exploring the South Pole or something. Maybe a comedy [would be nice].

Hunt: In recording ["Dutch Harbor"] did any of the ensemble get to see the stills or any other parts of the film?

Grubbs: There was some going on, but it wasn't like doing sync sound or anything like that. This was an afternoon of eating donuts and playing.

David Grubbs will be performing with Jim O'Rourke as Gastr del Sol on Friday, April 18 in the Old Gym at 9:30 P.M. Labradford and the Red Krayola will also be playing. Attendance is free for the Bard Community. Please come see some exciting new music!

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gastr del sol

Resources of Career Services, Largely Untapped

by Nate Schwartz

Tucked into the east flank of South Hoffman, one door north of the bookstore, a slightly mysterious office is linking students with jobs and internships, facilitating "Shadow Programs," offering a rarely utilized Credential File Service, and connecting current students with alumni and parent contacts. As of two weeks ago, these and other opportunities were proffered by the new full-time Director, Maureen Forrestal. For the past four years she has been splitting her time between Career Development and Counseling, before which time she served as a full-time counselor. This change means that she will be running the office without impedimenta.

Entering the office, one encounters a lilliputian space, walled with shelves, rife with gaudy brochures, educational guides and binders; through another door, hemmed in by desks on either side of the room, a cozy niche has been built with a computer; a spattering of notes and paperwork suggest a relaxed yet tidy organization; pinched in the corner are a few file cabinets. The front space is somewhat cramped and the layout intimidating; the racks of brochures, magazines and papers can appear an impenetrable disarray. Nevertheless, Forrestal urges students to make the difficult effort of beginning research, suggesting that it becomes much easier once one enters the fold.

"The worst part is not doing anything – of course that's when the anxiety builds. Once you get started... I guarantee people will feel better. Getting started is the hardest part," she commented.

At that computer Forrestal and her work-study students are working to complete databases which will ultimately be available on the Internet containing information which may prove critical to students hunting for footholds in the internship, volunteer, and job markets. One of these will make available the Alumni Mentor File, a selection of about 200 questionnaires which were returned to the office by Alumni who are willing to at least advise, if not connect students with opportunities to observe firsthand, for instance, a video editor, a freelance writer, or a musician. These questionnaires present a brief work history, post Bard, and ask about level of willingness (e.g., would you tender student questions via telephone? Could you offer a student work?). These are currently available in binders separated by career and region. A Parent Mentor File is also available in binders and will be accessible by the Internet when the database is completed. This file, like that of the alumni, offers a starting point for investigations, with biographical data on the parent and a contact number.

"It's basically a networking program," summed Forrestal.

Another database Forrestal is hoping to offer will list scholarship offerings. At present, students can search through these profiles in the form of printed materials only.

Among the most immediate concerns of students who are visiting the office are summer internships.

"People have stuff to do and they procrastinate. The more prestigious internships that offer compensation usually have deadlines in early or mid March at the latest," remarked Forrestal. "We've had students in as early as October [seeking internships]." Despite this, she assures that "there are still internships out there."

One resource to investigate is the Jobtrak site on the Internet, of which Bard is a part. By venturing to this page (located at www.jobtrak.com) one can access info on jobs and internships by career interest and geographic region. When the page loads-up selecting the center icon "Jobs" brings the user to a listing of colleges. Scroll down and select Bard, enter the password ("leon," in lowercase), and click on

"Access Job Listings." Once in the system one can explore the listings freely.

Another potentially valuable resource, the Shadow Program, arranges for students to spend a day with a working professional in their area of interest, usually an alum, who can give the curious a taste of their career. This is arranged on an individual basis with Forrestal, though a few group endeavors have been attempted with greater and lesser success.

Volunteering is another possibility. Local community organizations come to the office with requests for interested students; the office also maintains a range of data. Incidentally, the idea for a Social Action Workshop has been proposed. It would allow students to devote a designated portion of time to volunteer work in association with their academic course work; this would then appear on the student's transcript in the form of a citation indicating that the program entailed a Social Action component.

The office also offers a number of services primarily of interest to upperclassmen including administration of the G.R.E. test for applicants to graduate schools and consultation regarding the other graduate school examinations. Moreover, a Credential File Service is in place which Forrestal reports is not often employed. Faculty and other recommendations can be added to the file, on the office's form. Once in place students can simply request these be sent to graduate schools or potential employers, removing some of the uncertainty from the process. Further, at any time after graduation, the forms will be mailed upon request. The office will fund the postage, and according to Forrestal, the authenticity of the letters have never in her tenure been questioned. Over the last four years only 30 students have made use of the service.

The office puts together an annual Career Expo (a ten-college consortium where employers and students can make contact).

Also available is training in writing and revising one's résumé, interview preparation, instruction in creating cover letters for applications. Workshops have been offered in Kline offering assistance with the résumé, though of the three this year two received no attendance, and the remaining was enjoyed by only one student. Forrestal is considering strategies to improve attendance rates. At the least, free manuals are available presenting pointers on the writing of the résumé and cover letter.

Forrestal is working towards an increased level of student involvement and, through the Internet hopes to make data accessible from any Internet-capable computer. Theoretically this will allow students to peruse the Alumni File, seek scholarship info, and learn of a range of opportunities at their leisure. Working full-time, Forrestal will be able to develop her ideas with greater concentration, producing an office which she hopes will serve its purpose will all the more effectiveness.

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.

Opinion

On Solidarity

by Jeff GiaQuinto

(Editor's Note: Like the Town Meeting article on page 2, this piece was written shortly after an event that happened weeks ago and due the Observer's travails, was denied print until now. We sincerely regret the delay and offer our sincerest apologies to its author.)

As this article goes to press, the workers at the Kline Commons cafeteria and coffee shop are celebrating their victory in voting in a union to represent them in collective bargaining. As many people know, the Student/Labor Coalition has been helping the workers in their campaign for representation by holding rallies, distributing information, and serving as mediators between the workers, the Local, and the Bard Administration. These efforts by the S.L.C. have accomplished their aim. I know I am not alone in viewing the election results as a decisive victory for not only the workers, but for the entire Bard community. Throughout this campaign, many students, faculty, and staff openly expressed their solidarity with the cafeteria workers in their struggle against their employer, Compass Group (parent company of Flik International). It is no exaggeration to state that these public displays of support were crucial in combating the atmosphere of fear and helplessness that characterized the workplace during and prior to the organizing drive.

Another socially aware club here at Bard has also recently accomplished an important goal. The Bard Earth Coalition, working with Flik and the Bard Recycling Committee, has succeeded in distributing reusable coffee mugs free of charge to all matriculated students as a way of reducing waste. Those involved have worked hard on this project, and I applaud their efforts to introduce this measure.

Unfortunately, the tone of an information leaflet included with the mugs (and printed in the last *Observer*) made a statement concerning the "generosity" of Flik's decision to purchase these mugs which was highly problematic. It suggested the possibility that the labor campaign may have prompted this action—this was subsequently vehemently denied not only by Flik, but also by the Recycling Committee and the Earth Coalition, all of which affirmed that the decision to give out coffee mugs was made at the beginning of the fall semester. However, amidst the S.L.C.'s indictments of the immoral (and in at least one instance, illegal) labor practices of Flik International, the situation was still ambiguous. The use of the word "generosity" when referring to this company, not only praises a particular policy—it is a direct affront to the claims of the S.L.C. and the demands made by employees. By any standard of labor practices, whether in objective terms of pay and benefits or subjective employee feeling, Flik can hardly be deemed a "generous" company. In conversations with members of the Earth Coalition, it became clear that a position of antagonism was not intended, yet on the other hand, the E.C. was reluctant to publicly withdraw that particularly offensive word, or even to formally express

solidarity with the struggling workers.

I find this entire affair highly distressing for two reasons: it not only shows an unwillingness on the part of some Bard students to commit to the cause of solidarity, but also represents the playing-out at Bard of a tale familiar to many activists: the opposition between labor and environmental organizations. This first problem is especially troubling because it involves even more than this union campaign. Much hand-wringing is done over the lack of cohesive community here at Bard, usually as a direct response to crises such as the defacement of public announcements by student organizations like BiGaLa and the JSO. The "town meetings" that follow such acts inevitably voice anger and frustration about both the individual perpetrators and the inability of existing institutions to facilitate an atmosphere more conducive to a feeling of community.

It would seem that one way such a feeling could be fostered would be for the various clubs and student organizations to take an open stance on such issues as gay rights, anti-Semitism, the environment, and workers' rights; in short, to express solidarity with each other. Many of us here at Bard are committed to progressive social change in various forms. Such change cannot take place without coalitions between groups seeking related goals. It can only aid the respective struggles of such groups to increase their numerical support through coalitions. Not only can specific agendas be advanced more effectively, but a feeling of brother and sisterhood is created when people organize in this way. I write this in specific response to those who would claim that, while they may as individuals support a specific action or agenda, it is inappropriate for a group to do so. I hold that the opposite is the case: it is entirely appropriate and necessary for organizations of students to come out in support of each other.

The case with the Earth Coalition is especially important for a number of reasons. To begin with, in my opinion, the importance of environmental and labor issues and the concerns they represent is obvious to any educated moral person. The fact that a historical opposition exists internationally, while by no means mitigated by the stubbornness of many of the (profit-seeking) parties involved, is one of the grim realities which every activist must face. Indeed, it has been argued by many that the two agendas cannot hope to advance so long as this conflict continues, for as long as the workers remain alienated from the environmental discussion, they will oppose legislation which fails to acknowledge their short-term realities. Yet when one reflects on the purpose of "saving the environment," the only real answer is: for people. "The Earth" will outlive all of us, but in

the meantime the deterioration of the ecology has direct negative effects on the human's quality of life. Furthermore, does the word "environment" not include the space in which we spend the majority of our adult life? To wish to improve the one without regard for the other is to settle for an elitist position: to be truly guilty of what anti-environmentalists so crudely dismiss as caring more for trees than for people.

Nevertheless, the situation here at Bard is not comparable to that of (for example) the logging communities of the Northwest; no such obvious conflict of environmental and labor interests exists for these workers. For this reason, I found it inconceivable that the E.C. would not wish to show solidarity with the struggle of these workers. It is true that Flik purchased the coffee mugs and is providing them to students free of charge—with a reduced price for coffee purchased without a disposable cup. Yet is this not purely a wise business decision made by intelligent managers who realize that the capital expended on such mugs will easily be made up for if less disposable cups are used, and who recognize that the current precarious position of Flik as a caterer for Bard College and the Jerome Levy Economics Institute makes currying favor with students an especially important endeavor. Such favor is critical to a company which is having the labor relations problems which Flik has had since the fall semester began. True, the union organizing campaign was not made public until some time later, but the workers have been (justifiably) unhappy from the day Flik stepped in. Numerous motivations exist for Flik's enthusiasm for this project, and I find generosity to be the least likely.

This is not mere nitpicking, for even though the union is now here, the struggle is not over. The members of the Earth Coalition know better than anyone that to say nothing is to support the status quo. Yet by wording their statement the way they did, by implying anti-union sentiment, they did worse than stay silent. Flik is not a generous company, even when one grants that such a thing can exist. One telling example of this relates to this issue directly: no non-student workers were allowed free mugs.

The organization effort is accomplished, but support is still needed. The fight for a contract may be met by more stonewalling, and further expressions of solidarity will likely be necessary. I must close, then, by respectfully requesting the members of the Bard community to consider what solidarity means to them and their organizations, and about what the other groups on campus can do to show support for their efforts and causes. Members of both the S.L.C. and the Students Organized for the Development of Revolutionary Thought and Action (S.O.D.R.A.T) have already expressed interest in such an idea. To my fellow members in the Earth Coalition, it is not too late to reconsider the club's "apolitical" stance and express solidarity with the victorious workers. Solidarity is a powerful thing, as the cafeteria employees have shown. This campus has nothing to lose, and everything to gain by learning from their example.

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Artists in Academia

by Nathan Carlton

My thoughts are many and time is short, so I'll be brief. Many of us have had the opportunity to study with artists while at Bard. These are some reflections on my experience with that experience and on conversations I've had with other Bard students on their experiences. This article is also in some way a follow-up to the last article I wrote, which included interviews of students in a class that was taught by a teacher with whom they were currently experiencing some . . . frustration.

We all expect that a "science" class is going to be different from an "art" class. Of course I'm beginning broadly—what is art if not science and vice versa—but think for a moment on the different expectations you have upon walking into a calculus class from those you have walking into Drawing 101. Now think about the expectations the teacher has. While the title above indicates that I could be speaking about students as artists, I'm more specifically going to talk about artists as teachers.

Recall in high school an experience when an "arts" teacher asked that you give something, in terms of product or performance, that you weren't comfortable letting out of you. Recall the feelings of shame, embarrassment, and anger you felt when the teacher had an expectation of you that you weren't willing to accommodate. Did you challenge them? Did you have a breakdown? Or did you give everything you had and impress them beyond their wildest inklings, showing everyone that you "had it in you"?

And after that, did you feel like a sellout, did you feel fucked, did you feel like you hated what you did?

By focusing on an "arts" experience I do not mean to suggest that these feelings of anger and hurt are not sometimes part of each and every minute of an education in the "sciences." We also can recall the feelings of being stupid or thick, unable to make some mental leap, unable to understand when confronted with an explanation of something in the natural world, as in chemistry, or an explanation of things more hypothetical (as in chemistry).

Teachers of these subjects have been known to tap into our emotional sewage system and dredge out the best and the worst of us. I don't mean to slight the sciences by focusing on a discussion of the arts, because I know the subjects are interrelated. My thoughts, however, have been conditioned by class after class where I felt outraged that my educational dollar was spent on an artist who should have been locked up in his or her studio instead of roaming free in the classroom.

Names. Name-calling. Insults. Invasions. Missed appointments. Contradictory instruction. Withholding the lesson plan. Poor organization. Doodling. Out-of-nowhere. Own world. Impatient. Over-committed. Pass fail. Letter

Internet Opera (Senior Project-Nathan Carlton) Performance

Free Hand, a daring experimental opera about pornographic exploits in cyberspace, makes its workshop premiere at Bard College April 17, 18 & 19 @ 8pm in Olin 102 (Art History room). In four pop-songs and a merger, *Free Hand* projects video, performs music, recites radio play dialog, sends sonic info superfast and twists a tongue-tying text into your cyber imagination betwixt love and hate of those ever evolving virtual reality pay-per-view internet strip joints. Stick around for the all-important Bardian discussions each night on media, mediums and conjuring justice at the extremes of burgeoning technology. All this in less than an hour!

grade. Judgement. Critique. Expression. Inner feelings. Page—Stage. Opening. Open. Opus. Hoping.

Someday I will know what goes on in a teacher's head, so I can fix the damages, so I can repair the loosened connexions. So I can go back to the way I was before I was violated—innocent. Passing by flowers and knowing what they were. Saying what I meant. What is poem and what, article. What is whole and part.

Drawing meaning from the abstract words an "art" teacher speaks is a difficult task. Drawing to the close of the lesson happens more quickly than it should, sometimes. An immediate conclusion: I will not work with any teacher who does not—explicitly and implicitly—acknowledge that every millisecond I teach as much as I learn.

Another conclusion: I will walk away from this place with everything, and am determined to make something of it. The best I can.

But lo! I have written nothing! Here, the end, and . . . there is no shore in sight. Only the waters' conclusion! What journey? The wrenched stomach—whose—the lost. Heart of hearts, why so pale? Who could teach me such a nothing? Who could give me such an absence? What was said that I heard, in converted speech, the word . . . washing up . . . the hurting, crying, lonely, forgotten, passive, fiery wail on this beach?

In all, four nautical years; to what they might teach.

Editorial

by Lilian Robinson

The Bard Observer has met with more obstacles this semester than it deserves (see my co-editor's remarks on page 3). One of the most conspicuous causes of our struggle was a lack of submissions. Our detractors will argue that people never knew when the deadlines were—but this is a poor excuse in a small community like ours. Surely anyone who really wanted to know could have easily found what they were looking for in the editorial policy statement of previous issues. It is all there: our names, our phone numbers, our mail box numbers, our usual deadline.

We were battling greater monsters this semester—uncooperative equipment and organizational homelessness—but long before we joined that battle, we had begun to suffer from dwindling submissions. There is no lack of opinion on this campus, so why are students reluctant to commit it to paper? We are not demanding global perspectives (though if that's your bag, naturally you're welcome to delve into it)—nothing so grand or sophisticated—only some sign of life. Yes, our community is small—but not so small that we all know what threads through the others' minds; we're not telepathic. And surely some of us are curious to know what others, without their own academic or social spheres, are thinking or doing. That's where a newspaper comes in.

If you have abstained from writing for us because you were too honestly industrious in other things (namely, your studies), then I pardon you. Academic matters take priority. But if you have abstained because you prefer to complain instead of share or contribute, I have no sympathy. We are not literary enough for your taste? Then give us stuff of that quality; we will not resist your advances—unless you are not what you claim to be. You'd like to see more reviews or interviews with students and faculty? Higher-caliber photography or comic strips? Even more thorough news coverage? Then why not write for us yourself; who better knows what is entertaining or insightful?

Of course, we must be selective and discriminating to a degree. This is a college newspaper, after all, and must primarily reflect the aims of higher education. So give us your thoughts, yes, but take care that they bespeak the breadth of your literacy and learning, if only for your own sake—your peers will amiably humor a propensity for the scatological or the raw colloquialism; but you will never earn their admiration with repeated forays into that blasé territory—no matter how clever.

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Cool Like Us: The Bard Mystique

by Anna-Rose Mathieson

This school has gained quite a mystique. Since my first week here I've heard stories of how much cooler the college used to be, from embellished tales of drug-induced exploits of the Sixties to laments about the rising admission standards. Though it may appear a little odd to complain about higher GPAs, the forgotten freedom of Bard's bygone days seems to be a staple of Annandale conversation, though not nearly as prevalent as whining about the atrocious _____ (Mad Lib: entree of your choice) that Kline serves for dinner.

I find it intriguing, however, that this discussion was popular even when the bygone days had not yet gone. Though this year's senior class has a vast array of anecdotes detailing how the school was hipper, freer, and more drug-addicted four years ago, there are an honest few who will admit that the class of '94 labeled this year's oh-so-suave senior class as a pathetic joke played upon them by the Admissions Office.

Have we gone so far into the realm of normalcy that what was once deplored as the current mundanity is now glorified as the good ol' days?

Don't expect an answer from me; I'm just a lowly sophomore.

There are, however, enough amusing anecdotes about this place to let you judge for yourself. Have we descended into the ranks of America's best colleges from a period of enlightened debauchery? Or is our odd habit of complaining about higher GPAs a mechanism to enforce the very oddity that we prize, to let each First-Year class know that they're not quite bizarre enough for our discriminating standards and that they'd better shape up or go live in Crueger Village?

Who knows? Here's a little assortment of random, yet mildly pertinent, bits of Bard history. Figure it out for yourself.

* Around 1987, students "overwhelmingly adopted" a call for the resignation of good ol' Dean Levine. The reason? The administration had the audacity to decide that smoking in class might be a bad idea. The students threw a fit, so the administration let the teachers decide. They banned it, as you've probably noticed.

* Apathy is a common complaint nowadays; some say that we're not as actively involved in social change as residents of Annandale used to be. We don't even have our own militia. Blithewood did. The guardsmen were housed in the run-down old brick barn near Levy. Until we get our own militia, it will be tough to live up to the standards of yesteryear. Or even the standards of Montana.

* Bard has actually become more liberal over the last ten years. Or at least we think we are, according to the freshman survey. It also claims that fewer of us are religious and fewer want to be lawyers. Actually, fewer want to do any of the occupations mentioned in the survey. I'm not quite sure whether this means more of us plan to break free from traditional job molds, or whether it means we have more chance of standing in unemployment lines. Perhaps both.

* It is true, however, that high school grades have significantly increased; in 1985, 8.9% of freshman had high school GPAs above 3.7. This year, 37.8% did.

* It was just four years ago that the food service ceased offering dinner meal exchange. They had good reasons for it, of course, but the students let them get away with it. No one bothered burning buildings or mailing chicken carcasses to Leon. Revolutionaries? I think not.

* Have you been hearing about the lack of high-tech facilities? Bard used to keep up with the times. Albee once came fully equipped, right down to state-of-the-art inkwells and blotters in every room. The splendidly outfitted building was the gift of one Edward E. F. Albee, an ex-stagehand of P. T. Barnum.

* The 1987 *Observer* staff's estimate for the proportion of smokers in that year in was 80%. This year's freshmen class

has 32.3% smokers, according to that survey given at the beginning of L&T. I'll bet that figure has risen since Bard has had a chance to work its magic.

* That sacred lair of film majors, Preston, used to be nothing but a refectory. Which is a fancy way of saying that they served tuna casserole there before Kline was constructed.

* The *Observer's* mascot used to be a dead goat. Decide for yourself whether that represents a time to which we ought to return. (Co-editor's note: actually, I kinda miss the goat.)

Our tendency to glorify the excesses of the past is probably rather rare; I doubt that kids at Harvard bemoan the lack of smokers in the freshman class or the rising admission standards. Though I'm not a complete fan of the theory that uniqueness is inherently cool, it's nice to have something unique about your school, I suppose. Some schools have decent basketball teams, some [military] schools are replete with sexual harassment scandals, and we have the knowledge that we used to be cool. And we have Leon.

Note (to everyone, but especially Leon): I really do have sources for all these little tidbits. Everything is documented, I swear. You can see it, if you like. Though I must admit that I was awfully tempted to reprint bits of old gossip (like rumors of photographs that depict prominent administrators with scantily clad gals), I suppose that it's wrong to stoop to that level of journalistic panhandling. Or at least to disclose the names, ranks and serial numbers of the parties involved.

The Bard Observer

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Jean Smith

Vanessa Volz

Interested in Hosting a Prospective Student?

Please contact the Bard Admissions Office
Drop in M-F 9am-5pm
or call 758-7472
or email to admissions@bard.edu

THE BARD observer

April 11, 1997

Do It for a Dime

by Abigail Rosenberg and Jeremy Dillahunt

As the snow melts and the rains slacken in an area known as the Mid-Hudson Valley a striking metamorphosis takes place. The silence of winter gives way to the sweet serenade of the Whirly-footed Twitternut as he goes about his search for sustenance. The stagnant air comes alive with the buzzing of bumble bees as they perform their seasonal rituals of pollination. The barren tree branches blossom in a pink flurry of vanity emanating the sweet smell of spring. In this pastoral setting of pristine woods and profound vistas lives one of this planet's most curious creatures, the Bard Student. After spending the frigid, icy months of winter in a hibernation-like state, living solely off their body's recycling of cheap beer and preservatives from shelf-life-defying Kline food, they emerge from their dens. Weak and unused to the light, they stumble about like newborn marsupials searching for a path to the pouch. In their confusion, they have but two needs to fulfill. The first is quenched by the lighting of the cigarette. The second requires much more preparation and skill. Like the rest of the animal kingdom, the Bard Student feels the need to PRO, but without the responsibility to CREATE. Thus, the evolution of The Dime Store.

The Dime Store was created to meet the needs of The Bard Student. Because the world isn't as pristine as it used to be, protection is needed during these times of heightened hormonal activity. The Dime Store is dedicated to the promotion of safe mating, but at the same time making condoms available at a reasonable price. Through campus mail, condoms can be ordered for 10 cents apiece. Complete anonymity is assured by only including your box number, not your

name. Three kinds of protection are available: Gold Coin and Lifestyles Unlubricated, or dry condoms, Lifestyles Lubricated with nonoxynol-9, and Lifestyles Rough Riders studded lubricated condoms. YeeHa!

Because we at The Dime Store believe in the quality of our products, we take it upon ourselves to make sure they are up to industry standards as well as our own discriminating tastes. After rigorous testing, we have concluded these results:

Non-Lubed: Although they come in assorted colors which adds festivity to an already festive occasion, they are sometimes hard to work with. Being a thicker condom, sensation is limited. They are best used if allergic to nonoxynol-9. A water based lubricant can be added if desired.

Lubed with nonoxynol-9: Two thumbs up! (Actually, four.) Smooth as silk and didn't hamper sensation all that much.

Rough Rider: It says so right on the wrapper: Studded. For her pleasure we might add. Although it is a thicker condom, she will thank you for choosing it. Half the fun is knowing that you are using a RRRough RRRider!

Order envelopes are available at the post office next to the Campus Mail slot. They are a bit-out-of-date so please write your order if you don't see what has been reviewed in this article. Limited supplies of Kiss of Mint mint-flavored condoms and Aqua Lube, God's gift to water-based lubricants, are available upon request.

The Bard mating ritual is said to be one of the most intense phenomena of the natural world. The Dime Store urges you to prepare in advance! Protect yourself from other natural occurrences such as Herpes, pregnancy, and HIV. How can you pass it up? Do it for a dime!

Lu na 61
Vegetarian Organic Cafe
brunch • lunch • dinner
Closed Mondays
914-758-0061
61 East Market Street, Red Hook

Editorial Policy

The Observer is Bard College's student-run newspaper. It is published at timely intervals during the semester. Everyone is welcome to write for it. The deadline for submissions, be they stories, cartoons, photographs, statistics, letters, classifieds or advertisements of any kind, is 3 p.m. on the Tuesday before publication. Send all submissions via campus mail to either Meredith Yayanos or Lilian Robinson. Submit all writings on a labelled disk (or else we claim them for ourselves) as a text file and in hardcopy form. Submit developed photographs if possible, preferably in the commercial 4x6 print size and shot in black-and-white.

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.

No Strings Attached

I am writing this on behalf of the Earth Coalition in response to the controversy concerning the recent distribution of the Bard travel mugs to the entire campus population. My intent is to clarify any confusion, arguments, or questions raised surrounding the tension created by Flik's endorsement of the mugs and the current situation involving Flik management and those in favor of establishing a unionized work force.

In an effort to actively promote environmental awareness and waste reduction at Bard, the Earth Coalition and the Recycling and the Environmental Education Committee organized the distribution of mugs to every student to replace the excessive use of paper cups at deKline and Samuel's. In September of last semester, Earth Coalition began their plan to reduce the amount of paper wasted on campus by posting signs in the coffee shop and above the recycling bins encouraging the individual to dispose of his/her waste properly. It was also at this time that the Earth Coalition expressed its concern to Flik and requested it be an active participant in reducing waste on campus, thus encouraging students to eliminate unnecessary waste as well. It was not until this semester that Flik received the Bard travel mugs that they purchased to help with an endeavor that would benefit the entire campus as well as the earth.

I was extremely disappointed to hear that Flik's contribution was received so poorly by a portion of the Bard population. Some of those who turned down a free mug did so on the grounds that it would go against their solidarity with the workers to initialize a union with Flik, believing it was a ploy to entice weary students with a false image. On the other hand, many Bard students were also excited about receiving something for free and gladly took their mug with them on their way out of Kline. The fact of the matter is that Flik donated 1,200 mugs to help reduce waste on campus and it was not the intent of the Earth Coalition to spark a controversy between conflicting groups, but rather to promote waste reduction. The Earth Coalition and the Recycling and Environmental Committee continue to thank Flik for their initiation of this program.

Amy Foster

The Bard Student Film Committee Presents

A Triple Feature

Beginning tonight at 7:00 p.m. in the Old Gym

Vincent

(Tim Burton's first film: an animated short)

directly followed by

Terror in Tiny Town

(the western cult classic boasting an all-midnet cast)

and last but not least

Bugsy Malone

(starring the then-prepubescent Scott Baio, Jody Foster, and Michael Jackson in a gangster/comedy/musical cabaret)

THE RED KRAYOLA

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT SINCE 1966.

Gastr del Sol LABRADFORD

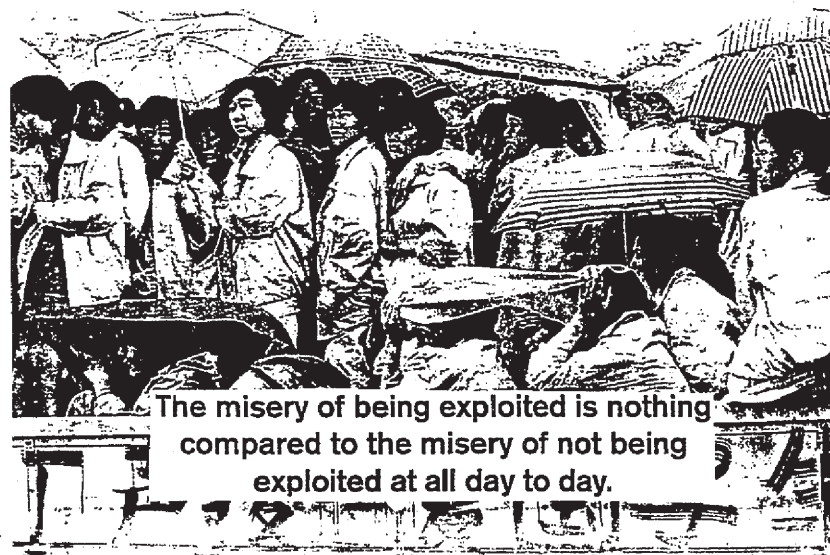
NOW!
WITH
BETTER
VOCALS!

96

FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1997: 7.30 P.M.

AT THE OLD GYM, BARD COLLEGE.

FREE FOR BARD STUDENTS.



The misery of being exploited is nothing compared to the misery of not being exploited at all day to day.

Take Back Bard

March Against Violence

Sunday, April 13

6:30 p.m.

Meet at Annandale Triangle

Walk from the Triangle to Tivoli Bays

Reception following at Manor. Cider, coffee, tea, and donuts will be served.

The campus Shuttle will be available after the reception for return trips to residence halls.

The walk is sponsored by the Safety & Security Committee, BRAVE, Bigala, the Chaplaincy, and Student Services.

Fight Violence!

THE BARD observer

April 11, 1997

Classifieds Announcements

ALTERNATIVE BOOKS, a fine used and rare bookstore in Kingston's historic Uptown District, specializes in unique 20th century Art & Literature. Come in and browse for that unusual book. Handpicked titles in photography, film, gender studies, modern first editions, small press, poetry, metaphysical, occult and political. Always interested in purchasing interesting individual books or special collections. We also provide book search services. Let us locate that long sought after classic. **SPECIAL 20% DISCOUNT** with this ad only for Bard students, staff, and faculty through April 30 only. Please note our hours: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 12-5. Located in uptown Kingston, 2 blocks north of Schneller's at 15 John Street. 914-331-5439.

Common Cause and Campaign for America have launched "Project Independence" — a historic grassroots effort to collect 1,776,000 citizen petitions urging congressional passage of comprehensive campaign finance reform by the Fourth of July. Project Independence is the largest grassroots initiative ever launched to activate citizens in the fight for passage of effective and bipartisan reform to end the campaign finance scandals and reform the current system of campaign financing. Citizens in 50 states will be asked to sign a "Declaration For Independence" urging Congress to act on real reform. Project Independence is urging Congress to act on the bipartisan reform legislation recently introduced in Congress by Senators John McCain (R-AZ), Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Fred Thompson (R-TN) and Representatives Christopher Shays (R-CT) and Marty Meehan (D-MA). President Clinton endorsed the McCain-Feingold reform legislation in his State of the Union message and urged Congress to pass the reform legislation before the Fourth of July. The bipartisan legislation would ban soft money in presidential and congressional elections, curb special-interest contributions to candidates, and provide a voluntary system of spending limits for congressional races, coupled with access to free and reduced-cost television time. In short, McCain-Feingold would end the campaign abuses that were at the heart of the 1996 election scandals. Special note to college students: Every semester and in the summer Common Cause offers internships to students from across the country at its Washington, D.C. headquarters. Working closely with staff and volunteers, interns do grassroots organizing, contribute research to policy papers and investigative studies, monitor congressional hearings, and serve as press office aides. Through training and daily work experience, interns gain a broad understanding of the workings of Congress and the Executive Branch, and learn how a nonpartisan grassroots citizens' organization lobbies elected officials. Visit the Common Cause web site at www.commoncause.org or call Common Cause toll-free at 800/926-1064 for more information on Common Cause internships or special opportunities to play an active role in Project Independence either in Washington, D.C. or in states and communities around the country. Common Cause is a nonprofit, nonpartisan citizens' lobbying organization working to make government more open and accountable and to reduce the influence of special-interest money in government. Founded in 1970, Common Cause today has 250,000 members across the country. Campaign for America is a nonprofit organization com-

mitted to achieving fundamental campaign finance reform. It was formed in 1995 by Jerome Kohlberg, Jr. and the late Mike Synar, a former member of Congress from Oklahoma.

PRINTWORK '97, Call for slides to National Printmaking Exhibition, July 18-August 16, 1997. Juror: Roberta Waddell, Curator of Prints, New York Public Library at 5th Ave. in New York City. Cash awards/exhibition opportunities. Slide deadline: May 16, 1997. Send SASE for pros. to: Barret House Galleries/DCAA, 55 Noxon Street, Poughkeepsie, NY, 12601. 914-471-2550.

Classes/Groups

A 13-week skill building group for adult women survivors of trauma and abuse will soon begin. For further information or to register, please contact Sharon Hoferer at 384-6832.

A Dual Recovery Anonymous (DRA) Group began April 4 at Benedictine Hospital Conference Room 1, at 4 p.m., and continues every Friday. DRA is for those suffering from mental illness and substance abuse. Public welcome. For more information, contact Dan at 339-9090 Ext. 113 or Heather at 339-5206.

Internships & Job Opportunities

Wilderstein, a 40-acre historic site whose focal point is a 35-room Victorian mansion, is located on the east bank of the Hudson River. Open for tours from May to October, volunteers are needed for a number of activities. Wilderstein is looking for students to welcome visitors, conduct tours, participate in special activities, assist in office scheduling, work on grounds and perennial gardens, planting and pruning of trees, and help with curatorial maintenance. Wilderstein offers training sessions, an orientation and ongoing workshops. This is an opportunity to learn more about Hudson River folklore, to become more involved with a community resource, and become a steward helping this ongoing restoration project. For further information, call Joan M. Oury at 914-876-0887 or 212-661-6073.

Unison In Need of Volunteers

Unison Arts and Learning Center is seeking enthusiastic giving people willing to participate in its new volunteer program for the spring season. The Center's wide variety of functions are aimed toward enriching the community. Volunteers are admitted free or at a reduced rate to all events they participate in and are invited to a summer celebration to acknowledge their efforts here at Unison throughout the season. There is also a work-study program that allows candidates to accumulate office hours in exchange for credit to be applied toward the tuition or admission to classes or events that are offered at the Center. Unison is seeking individuals to help us at the Center with such duties as: assisting with the box office, ushering, setting up for events and programs, office assistance, mailings, and monitoring the gallery. This is an opportunity to be involved with a plethora of exciting events. Some of the activities planned for this season are Le Clanche Du Rand who performs her play "Hysterics," and a co-sponsored concert that features the music of The Hudson Philharmonic and Richie Havens. Folk singer Dar Williams joins Unison this season as well as many others who make a valuable contribution to the cultural enrich-

ment of our community. If anyone is interested in being a part of either the volunteer program or the work-study program here at Unison, please contact Charles Witte, Volunteer Coordinator at (914) 255-1559.

\$100,000 Available for Project Vote Smart Internships

Bard students are eligible for up to \$100,000 in scholarship funds through Project Vote Smart's National Internship Program. The funds, which are made available through grants from the Hearst foundation, have been released by the Project's founding board, which includes former senators Barry Goldwater, George McGovern, Mark Hatfield and Bill Bradley, and other prominent national leaders. Work at the Project might focus on researching hot current issues, tracking campaign finance donations, gathering campaign issue positions, or compiling voting records and performance evaluations of candidates and elected officials at the federal and state levels. Students serve as researchers on the Voter's Research Hotline (1-800-622-SMART) and maintain and update the Vote Smart Web site (<http://www.vote-smart.org>). Project Vote Smart is a national, non-partisan, nonprofit organization funded entirely through foundation grants and the donations of over 50,000 members. Students wanting more information about internships and scholarship opportunities should call Ann Yoders at 541-754-2746 or e-mail at intern@vote-smart.org.

Services

Astrologer Available

I can do birth (natal) charts, relationship readings, specific question readings, etc. Full interpretations, unfailingly insightful. Fees negotiable. More info? E-mail to ND286 or campus mail 716.

Wanted

Care to sing nineteenth-century sea chanteys, music hall songs, folk songs, bel canto, lieder &c.? Limelight-cravers (especially the infrequent kind) sought for historical music event. Must be able to read musical notation or else learn speedily by ear. Undying affection for sentimental tunes not required, but talent for un-wooden renditions necessary. Drop a note in campus mail for Box 1158 or call 752-4344 and ask for L. Magill (though everyone knows her as Nancy).

Sublets Wanted

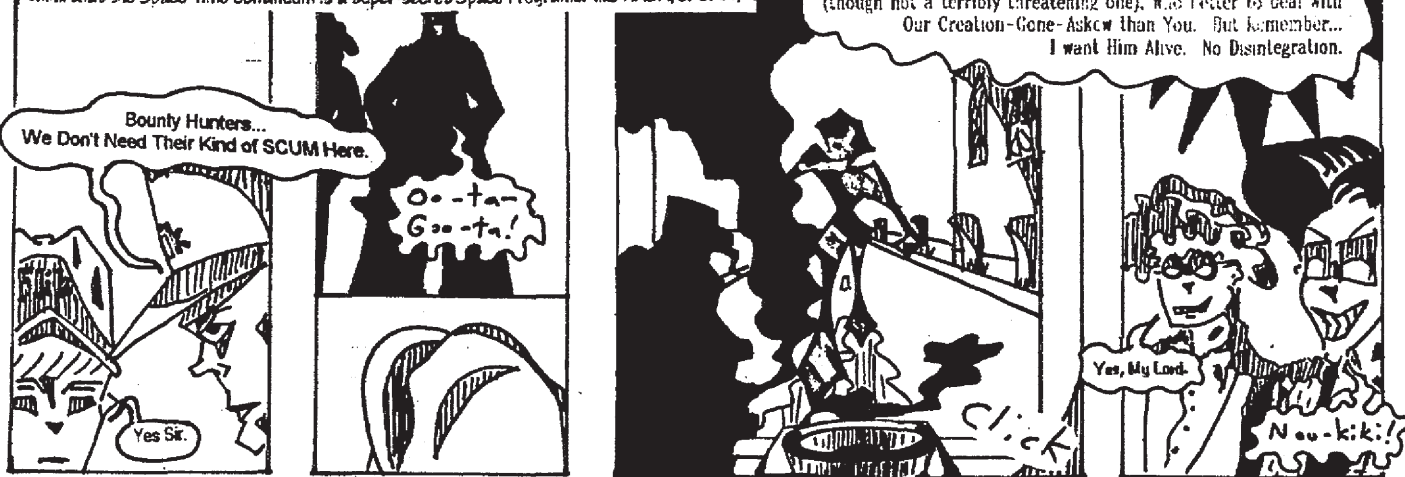
Any off-campus student residents who are interested in possibly subletting their apartments/houses for the summer months should please contact the Graduate Office (Sottery 102/ext. 7483) with a description of the space and cost. We have graduate students who are in residence for the months of June, July, August, and would be happy to try to organize a mutually beneficial sublet.

All classified ads are printed free of charge to the advertiser. The Bard Observer "reserves" the right to edit them for length and clarity, however. Please try to keep your ad to a maximum of 75 words. Students: send your ad(s) to the Bard Observer via campus mail. Others: send your ad(s) to The Bard Observer, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504. The Observer will also accept classified ads via e-mail at observer@bard.edu.

THE BARD observer

April 11, 1997

The Creation of the Living Stew has caused a massive disturbance in the stability of the Space-Time Continuum (it is interesting to note that guys like the Living Stew think that the Space-Time Continuum is a super-secret Space Program... like NASA, or Omri!)

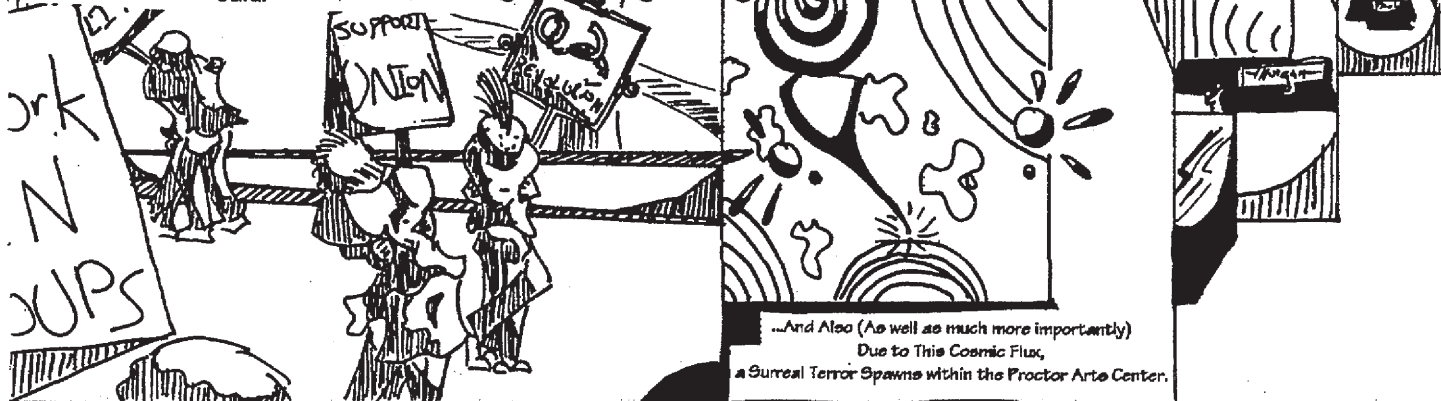


...Which is Where You Two Come in. As He is Already Your Rival (though not a terribly threatening one), Was Pester to Deal with Our Creation-Gone-Awry than You. But remember... I want Him Alive. No Disintegration.

Yes, My Lord.

Noo-kik!

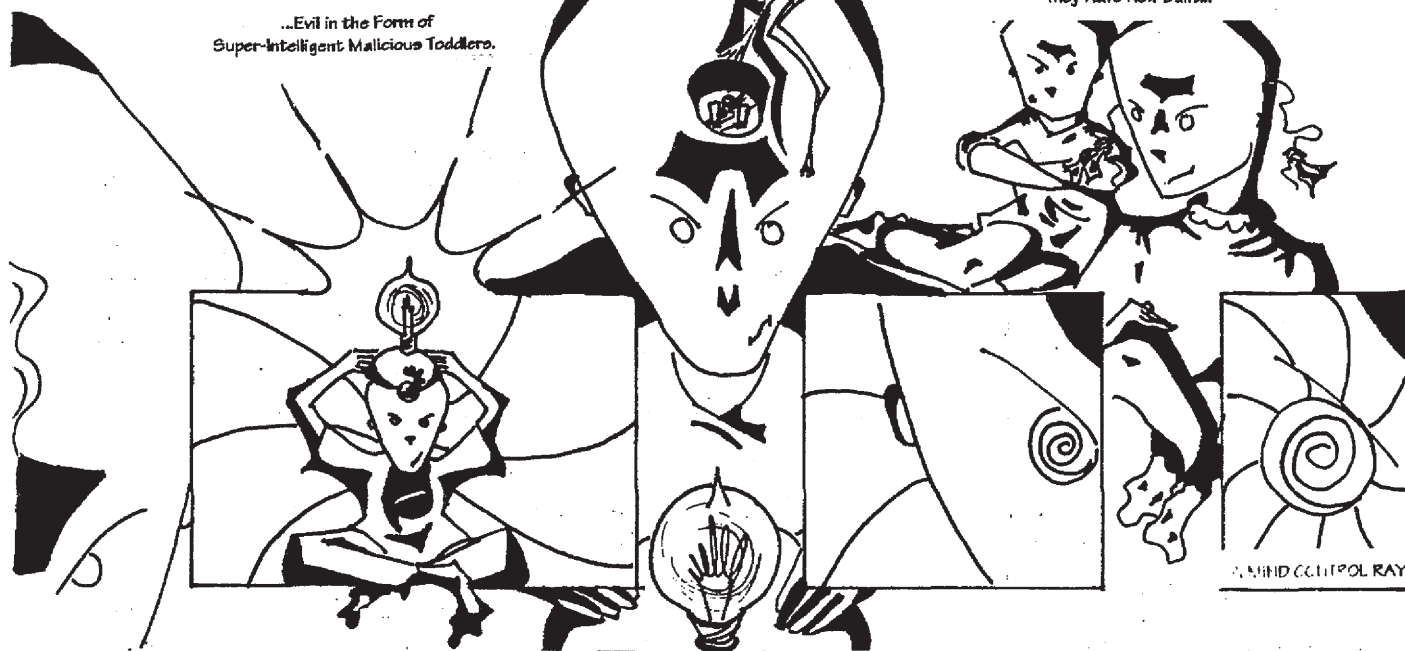
Meanwhile, the Cosmic Forces Unwittingly Unleashed in the Living Stew's Creation Have Caused the Merging of the Club Formerly Known as S/M Aces and the Pro-Union Filk Workers to Merge... Forming a Group of Rabble-Arousers Known as SLIK...



...And Also (As well as much more importantly) Due to This Cosmic Flux, a Surreal Terror Spawns within the Proctor Arts Center.

But Elsewhere... Evil Lurks at the Bard Nursery

Disgruntled for having had their Capsula Taken Away (with which they had begun to build a housing mechanism for efficient internal nuclear fission...), They Have Now Built...



...Evil in the Form of Super-Intelligent Malicious Toddlers.

MIND CONTROL RAY



Camp Sussex

Enjoy a helpful and rewarding summer at Camp Sussex which is located in the beautiful mountains of northern New Jersey and is about one hour from New York City. We need M/F counselors, Head pioneering, social worker, LPN/RN/Student Nurse, Jewish Cultural program. Salaries are attractive! Please call for more information or write to

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1-800-235-3472
euabroad@syr.edu
http://
sumweb.syr.edu/dipa

THE BARD observer

April 11, 1997

THE ADVENTURES OF BOT-MAN & LEVINE BOY: B2

LAST ISSUE:
Flog-Me Elmo sales dropped 25%. Also Bot-Man and Levine Boy found some very mysterious, nonsense-spouting creatures running about the campus. Let us join them now...

Holy nonsensical uninteresting garbage Bot-Man! What could be the cause of this?
I don't know. Let's take one back to the Bot-Cave!
Bugle Bugle No!
Frigida Frigida chasso!

They snag a creature and run it through the Crime-o-Matic! But to no avail.
Well?
Nope. The Crime-o-Matic STILL says it's a potato.

BZZT!
Ah, the Bot-Phone!
Sir, you're needed in Scotland!
Damn your timing! Tell Fred Grab he has to take my place!

Ready to go Bot-Man!
I'll be back!

This call to the Bull Pen brought to you by Kikoman Soy Sauce!
R H E
BOT-MAN 0 4 0
R.SoyBean 0 0 2

And now Moses as J. Edgar Hoover for Kikoman Soy Sauce...
Kikoman is keen!

Back to the show...
Hmm... this must be the work of Evil Soy Man!

Hey, the boss is back. I'll be in the lavatory.
I'm back!

So, did you find anything in my absence?
I found out that Evil Retna Soy Man is behind it. Um... I found it out. Yup. Me. By myself.

I'll look it up in the Bot-Campus Directory!

Ah! Threweedjits Flobblebottoms!
Garmen Neil
Flobblebottoms Threweedjits
anDyke, Chris
ielli, Morgan
Obole, Di
Stipe Mich
Holovach John
Norton, Josua A.
That MUST be his secret identity. To the Bot-Mobile! For real this time

A few moments later, at Chateau Non-Sequitur.
KNOCK KNOCK
FloogleCube
Um... Flaz-poodle delivery for a Mr. Flobblebottoms.
Waffle me slowly, my Flaz-poodle.

Wow, Mr. Bot-Man! I Greeble been expecting you! Smo.

Don't miss the next action packed adventure!
BOT-MAN and LEVINE BOY confront the Evil SOYMAN!
Tune in next time - Same Botstein, Same Botchannel!

WRITTEN BY: John Holowach & Chris VanDyke ILLUSTRATED BY: Chris "Left of the Taxi Driver" VanDyke
SPECIAL THANKS TO: Dave Gruber (for Moses & Elmo), God (for letting us use Moses) and Kikoman Soy Sauce