

design your own student space...
new column: a greener bard...
should students vote locally?

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OBSERVER

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New student space? For the most part, the barn currently houses theatre equipment for the performing arts center. If the building is converted for student use, this equipment will be moved to a storage facility off-campus.

The Observer staff wish to extend their sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Katherine Mester.

bard labor

b&g workers tired of understaffing, subcontracting

BY RACHEL MEADE

Buildings and Grounds (B&G) workers are some of the highest paid and most secure of all Bard laborers. As a result of strong union leadership and years of union activism, most, (but not all) B&G workers enjoy a living wage. Despite their comparatively decent economic situation, many workers have grave concerns about the way Buildings and Grounds operates. The resolution of the long-standing problem of understaffing has consistently been delayed by the hiring of subcontractors, a practice that causes increased disorganization, lower standards, and occasionally creates more work for B&G workers.

Carpenter and Chief Steward of B&G's union Thomas Hoilund remembers a time when Bard's student body was 700 and there were at least forty fewer buildings. According to Hoilund, in the 22 years since only a handful of new B&G workers have been hired. "I would like to see the administration...make a real effort to address the issue of understaffing," he said. "It seems like everybody from our level to the top realizes we're understaffed," added electrician and assistant chairperson of the union Glenn Whitney. Bard's solution thus far has been to work around the problem by hiring out subcontractors, which according to Whitney, is in direct violation of B&G's contract.

For B&G employees, the main problem with subcontracting is that it makes for sloppier work. "Ultimately the quality is becoming poorer," said Hoilund. "The pride in the workmanship is not there anymore." Outside workers, because of their unfamiliarity with Bard and the fact that standards aren't enforced for them, often create more work for B&G employees. Whitney said he recently wasted two days fixing some shoddy wiring done by a subcontracted worker. According to Whitney, outside workers are called in almost every day.

In addition to lowering standards, the hiring of outside workers increases the level of disorganization and lack of communication in the department. "No one knows who's supposed to be doing what," said Fire and Security alarm technician Steven Race. "It slows us down." The combined burden of issues resulting from the use of subcontracted workers and the failure to increase the staff has resulted in a loss of trust for some administrators. "The leadership- I think is heading towards failure. I hope it could be fixed soon," said Hoilund. "I don't see it getting better," he added gloomily.

Some B&G workers are concerned that the use of subcontractors is yet another way for Bard to avoid ensuring its workers receive quality compensation. In the same way that Aramark and Chartwells remove Bard's responsibility for its food and cleaning staff, subcontracting companies allow Bard to hire cheap labor without worrying about it affecting their image.

"I don't like the way this college puts out a certain perception of itself," said Whitney. "It's not really the way they are." He cited the fact that Bard is far less green than one might believe. "It is frustrating that often

administration allocates storage barn for student use

BY BECCA ROM-FRANK

If all goes according to plan, 11,000 square feet of new student space will be open to students by Fall 2008. Two weeks ago, President Botstein approved a plan to allocate one of the three B&G barns currently being used for storage to fill the void of an autonomous student space.

The idea to convert one of the storage barns for this purpose was discussed several years ago when they were first built. At the time, this was deemed impossible because of the lack of utilities. Now, however, thanks to the science center, plumbing, heat, electricity, and other necessities are more readily available in that area of campus.

According to Dean of Students Erin Cannan, the ISO Cultural Show was the turning point for Botstein. The performance, which took place the weekend before Thanksgiving, was held in Olin Auditorium. The venue proved inappropriate for such an event, as limited seating found students seated on the floor in the aisles. The overall experience persuaded Botstein to approve of the barn plan. "He was impressed with the quality of the performance and the appeal for more student space," said Dean of Students Erin Cannan.

While the administration has agreed to hand students the key to the barn, students cannot expect a blank check to go with it. According to Cannan, the student space project had originally been included in Bard's multi-million dollar capital campaign, but now the students must bear the hefty bulk of the project's fundraising efforts. The barn must be thoroughly renovated before it can be used; the space is in dire need of new walls, utilities, windows, and most critically, bathrooms.

Fortunately, the Senior Class Committee has voted to allot their senior class gift towards the necessary renovations of the barn. The Committee hopes to raise \$25,000 on their own, but additional fundraising efforts by the Classes of 1973 and 2003 have made possible an ultimate goal of \$65,000

in total. The Class of 1973 has tentatively committed to doubling money contributed by seniors and matching money donated by parents and other students, a proposal which is of course dependant on sufficiency of funds. The Class of 2003 aims to raise \$25,000 and put this amount directly towards the senior glass gift.

The Committee has already animated several fundraising plans. Letters requesting donations have already been sent out to seniors, and parents will receive such letters later next semester. At the end of this semester, parents will be able to purchase "Winter Protection" baskets to be delivered to students after intercession. Fundraising events already in the works include "Strip for Student Space," which would entail volunteers taking the stage and removing one piece of clothing at a time for a predetermined amount of money, and a senior auction to be held around the time of Spring Fling. There is also hope that seniors involved in other activities—such as improvisers, singers, dancers, and musicians—will make fundraising for student space a part of their upcoming events.

Another possible way of obtaining funds would be a raise in the student activities fee. This fee, which is included in Bard's tuition, currently stands at \$70 per semester, and goes towards the convocation fund that distributes money to student clubs. According to the student government's research, most other private colleges charge up to \$100 more than this, and often raise it every few years. If such an increase in the student activities fee were to occur, said student government head Oliver Traldi, it would be comprehensive with financial aid. If this particular raise is approved, it "would benefit not just student space efforts

but club efforts in general, and we definitely think clubs could use more money," Traldi said. Just the same, this decision could only be made with the consent of the student body. Traldi has discussed the possibility of holding a Student Space/Activities Fees Forum in March during which students would be encouraged to vote on this and other propositions concerning the student space budget. Said Traldi, "If we can't get people to show up for this, there's no hope for student engagement at Bard."

The reality of these fundraising goals is contingent on student involvement. "We're looking at a lot of money. Participation of more students is beyond crucial," said Chris McClosky, co-head of the fundraising subcommittee for the Class of 2008. The Senior Class Committee plans to work in close conjunction with the Student Life Committee and the Coalition for Student Space in order to ensure their gift is put to good use. In the spring, a committee of students and administrators will convene to develop the programmatic plan for the space, and then present the ideas to the student body, according to Cannan. This will encompass the process of deciding how to allocate the space inside of the building, including the amount of club space, multipurpose space, etc. Students can help by attending student government events and attending meetings of the Coalition for Student Space, as well as donating money.

In the meantime, it is up to students to discuss what they would like to see in a student space. Tuesday night's open Student Space Discussion/Workshop in the Old Gym intended to facilitate discussion between the student-run groups on campus about just that. Around twenty-five students from all classes contributed

"If we can't get people to show up for [the Student Space/Student Activities Fees Forum in March], there's no hope for student engagement at Bard."

TO PAGE THREE

TO PAGE TWO

free press: then and now

By GRACE DWYER

The first issue of the Free Press was published on March 14th, 2000. It was twelve pages long, put together on a student's computer in a dorm room in South Hall, and dedicated entirely to the Amadou Diallo case. The four New York City police officers who had shot and killed Diallo, a 23-year old immigrant from Guinea, had just been acquitted, and the story had received a short mention on page five of the Observer two weeks previously.

The Free Press's original mission statement read in part: "The Bard Free Press was founded by former members of the Bard Observer staff – the managing editor, section editors, and contributors both – who were dissatisfied with the quality of student journalism at Bard." The fledgling paper hoped to "better serve members of the community with a reliable, timely and reputable newspaper."

Campus lore dictates that the split was the result of a romantic relationship between two Observer editors gone awry. The reality, according to founding Free Press editor Kerry Chance, now a PhD student in anthropology at the University of Chicago, was somewhat more amicable. "It really was not so much a split as the founding of a new student organization... The Free Press emerged from a growing desire among students to have an alternative print forum for discussion and debate," Chance said in an email.

Five issues came out that first semester, covering topics like the decrease of student-run space, student autonomy from administration, student voice in tenure and hiring decisions, and poverty in Poughkeepsie, as well as international news analysis. According to Chance, funding was initially provided through a new student activities fund. Free Press headquarters eventually moved from the South Hall dorm room to a small building near Woods studio.

"Another goal [of the founding editors] was to publish timely material and thus to produce a bi-weekly student newspaper," Chance reflected. "At the time, the Observer printed an issue every semester, sometimes more and sometimes less. Two newspapers made more timely coverage and debate possible." Despite its shrunken staff, the Observer switched to a bi-weekly printing schedule as well, perhaps in

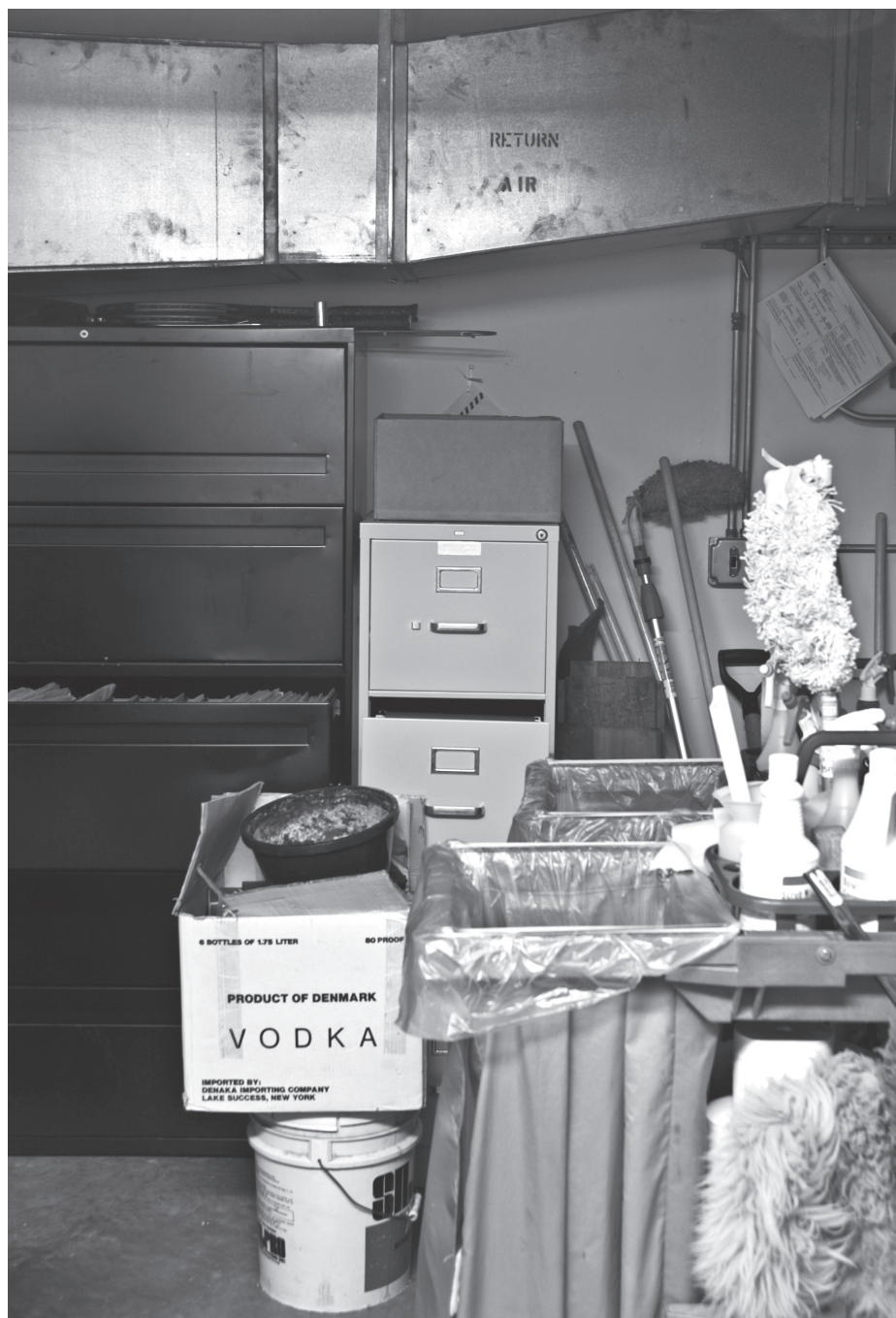
response to the commitment made by the Free Press. A new student newspaper came out every Monday that semester.

Over the course of the next several years the Free Press published interviews with the likes of Edward Said, Nadine Gordimer, California activist Julia Butterfly Hill, and Gayatri Spivak. The paper continued to cover on-campus news while maintaining a tradition of intelligent news analysis and international commentary, occasionally reviving the device of the themed issue, notably to reflect on the war in Iraq (twice.) In 2003 SPIN magazine famously voted the paper "Best Campus Publication" for their informed political coverage and "quirky zine sensibility....music coverage as lively as you'd expect from a school with a Punk Rock Prom."

Between then and now the Free Press moved office several more times, taking up residence in the basement of the Old Gym and, after its closure, in its current location in the basement of Albee. During this period the printing schedule evolved from biweekly to triweekly and the Free Press developed its current non-hierarchical staff structure, now one of the most cited differences between the two major on-campus newspapers.

The average lifespan of a Bard student newspaper is around seven years. Of course this average includes the publications that started up and became defunct within the same year – approximately ten since 1894. Once a newspaper passes the five-year mark it seems to gain some degree of stability. The five publications that have outstayed five years include The Messenger, the Lyre Tree, and The Bardian, together accounting for continuous student publishing from 1894 to 1961. The other two are the Observer – publishing fairly regularly for forty-six years – and the Free Press, now in its seventh year.

In light of the Free Press' publishing difficulties this semester, this coincidence is a little unsettling. But, according to Free Press editor Andy Kopas, there's nothing to worry about. "Honestly no one was really prepared to take the paper over this year, and so the fact that it has existed at all was reassuring to me," he said, adding, "The [organizational] difficulties were not unforeseen given that there were next to no non-seniors working on the paper last semester."



photo/Lizette Munro

The annals of student press at Bard. If you were to go to the library and ask to see a back issue of the Free Press or Observer, you would be taken to this janitor's closet, where issues dating back from the sixties (Observer) and 2000 (Free Press) are stored in two large file cabinets.

"Yeah, what's up with the Free Press? I think it's really sad," said one sophomore, referring to the Free Press' decline from last year to the present. "Having two newspapers is really important to promoting different opinions and making sure everyone who wants to be published

can be."

According to Kopas, the Free Press philosophy has always privileged communities over hierarchies. Last year a tightly knit group of editors "dedicated to making sure the paper was consistent over all else" enabled a large group of

TO PAGE FOUR

bard labor part two: b&g

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

the college only reluctantly lives up to the progressive values it publicly espouses," added BERD worker and shop steward Steven Pinchbeck.

Hoilund believes Bard should work harder to ensure all its workers, including those working through outside companies, receive a living wage. "There should not be eight or nine dollar-an-hour jobs on Bard campus," said Hoilund. "Shame on Bard."

The average wage for a B&G employee is 18 dollars an hour and their family health insurance payments are 150 dollars a month. This is in stark contrast to Chartwells employees, the highest paid of whom receives 12 dollars an hour, and who pay 400 dollars a month for family health insurance. Additionally, B&G employees enjoy the added benefits that come from being directly employed by the college, most notably the free tuition program for employees' children. Hoilund's daughter attended Leslie University- Cambridge through the tuition exchange, which allows students to choose from hundreds of schools in addition to Bard.

B&G's benefits are a result of years of hard work on the behalf of union representatives for SEIU- local 200, like Hoilund, Whitney, and Pinchbeck. Hoilund was much less satisfied with his job when he first arrived 22 years ago. Ever since the arrival of the union in 1988, conditions have steadily improved. Hoilund, as chief steward, has played an important role in gains the

union has helped workers achieve. "I take a lot of pride in that," said Hoilund. Only recently, the union managed to negotiate the current 150 dollar monthly family insurance rate. According to Pinchbeck, it took negotiations throughout the last three contracts to bring the monthly rate down from over 400 dollars.

For their next contract, union representatives plan to focus on retirement and health coverage, as well as achieving a living wage for the lowest-paid of B&G workers. Although there will always be areas in which B&G workers would wish for better treatment, the strength of their union representation and involvement in the union makes continual strides forward possible. The reduction in quality of work associated with understaffing in the department and use of subcontractors is far more frustrating as it is out of their control.

"We all come in looking to best serve the students," said Pinchbeck. "[But] we don't have the resources." For Pinchbeck, who works closely with students through his job with BERD, that interaction is one of the best parts of his job. He applauds students' enthusiasm for art, literature, politics, and especially, social concerns. "The fact that there are concerned students that care about labor speaks volumes," said Pinchbeck. Race added, "I think we all want the same thing- to take care of the Bard community."

STUDENT FORUM TONIGHT (WED.)
8 PM, KLINE

student space, student activities fee, and some elections. come!



photo/Mac Colburn

B&G Carpenter Thomas Hoilund heroically battles the elements as he puts up a wall in the campus dump.

announce:

students and staff revamp email system

By EMILY NAGIN

A full inbox can make you feel loved and popular, but it can also be a hassle. Opening your Bard account to find an inbox full of messages from Announce is closer to the hassle end of the spectrum. True, many of the emails are about interesting events, but the sheer volume of them means that they have to be constantly deleted to prevent the inbox from filling up. Fortunately, a new, more streamlined system is in the works, and may be underway by next semester.

The Announce system was created in Fall 2001 as “a favor to the students—so they could get the word out about their events or meetings” said Carol Werner, who manages and sends out all the announce emails every morning. It takes Ms. Werner about an hour each morning to read and send out announce emails, which have to be screened for appropriate content. Although the emails are technically a favor, she says she feels bad when they don’t go out in time. This sometimes happens because the emails come to her too late—the afternoon before an event or on a Saturday or Sunday morning, when she isn’t in. According to Ms. Werner, before the current system was put in place, “the Dean of Students was getting a lot of requests from students to please send an email for them...so we came up with the idea for an ‘announce’ email.”

Shay Howell, head of the Student Life Committee, is one of the many students at Bard who feels that the current announce system needs to be revised. She cites the high number of emails clogging her inbox

every day, along with the difficulties that sometimes present themselves in getting emails out on time as her main issues. She says that “my annoyance was not with the DOSO administrator who didn’t forward my emails on time, [but] with the sloppy system that puts more work on a Bard employee...who has a job outside of the demands the announce system puts on her.” The amount of emails that bombard our accounts created an even more pressing issue when she studied abroad in Mali, West Africa last year. A scarcity of internet cafes meant that she could not empty her inbox often enough to keep up with the stream of emails. As a consequence, the account froze three times, and she had to create a new one. Most Bard students will not spend a year in West Africa, but many are too busy to empty their accounts every day. Emails pile up and soon important emails aren’t able to get through.

Fortunately, a change may be on the horizon. The Student Life Committee, together with Marshall Guthrie of Student Activities are working together to develop a new system. Mr. Guthrie describes it as “something like a newspaper”. The basic idea is that, at 12:30 AM, one large email containing information about all upcoming events will be sent out to the students. The email will be organized according to what time the event is taking place. Instead of a description in the email, there will only be a tagline (i.e. MOVIE AT WEIS CINEMA 8 PM) above a link. If the tagline catches your

eye, click the link included below it. This link will take you to the calendar page on the Bard website, where more information will be posted.

When asked whether they’d prefer to keep the old system or switch to the new one, students responded that the change was welcome. “We get a lot of announce emails, and I know that’s caused problems with emails about classes because our inboxes are full. I’d prefer one email” said Sarah Lasseron, freshman. “The new system sounds really cool,” added Chloe Ravel, freshman.

This overhaul of the announce system would coincide with the reorganization of inside.bard as a whole. Some of the proposed innovations include replacing the picture on the home page of the three students in front of Stone Row with a rotating series of images advertising the events in the announce email. It is hoped that this change will cut flyer production in half, helping to make Bard even greener than it already is.

Mr. Guthrie and the SLC hope to put some of these changes in place early next semester. “The great thing about this is that the idea to revise the system came from a student,” says Mr. Guthrie. “Whether it is the announce system or anything that needs to be changed, bring it up to me or administration. Instead of complaining about things, make them the way you wish they were.”



The barn contains 11,000 square feet of usable space. Proposed plans for its renovation include a skylight and new windows for more natural lighting, new doors and walls, and a loft.

storage barn

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

to a “wish-list” of what they would like to see in an ideal student space. The general consensus was that students hope to see a space where student clubs can keep their headquarters and records, as well as performance space, and an area to sit and relax. This new student space should facilitate a safe party environment, and provide a general “place to go” on campus for a non-institutionalized social environment. It should be one to which a large number of students feel connected, thus strengthening the overall sense of student community. The ideal overall “feel” of the place was also an important discussion; issues such as lighting, furniture, and space designation were addressed.

However, some students have already voiced concerns. It will be necessary for students to manage the space, and the logistics a propos management have not yet been considered in depth. And while a student space would ideally provide a safer partying environment, Erin Cannan has still expressed anxiety over the security of the students during the events that will eventually take place here. Students are also concerned that this new building could serve, in the eyes of the administration, as a replacement for the Old Gym’s black-box theatre, pushing up the timeline for the Old Gym’s eventual - and inevitable - demolition. Finally, money is and always will be an issue. “Money talks here,” said Traldi. “It’s sort of a sobering reality at a very liberal institution and with an administration that has a very liberal rhetoric.”

Despite these issues, the student space project is a unique opportunity for Bard students to affect first-hand their college experience. According to Botstein, if students put this space to good use and demonstrate the need for more, this could set a precedent. All students are strongly encouraged to take part in what promises to be a truly gratifying effort.

For more on student space, see pages eight and fourteen.

The Senior Class Committee wishes to thank the administration for their collaboration and support of the new student space.



bard professors grapple with poverty

By CAROLINE FRIEDMAN

800 million people worldwide are malnourished. 1.2 billion do not have a clean water source. 2.4 billion do not even have toilets. These were just some of the gruesome statistics shared at the Seminar on Global Poverty, hosted by the ISO on December 4th. The discussion was meant to fuel awareness of what is arguably the international community's most pressing problem.

The seminar was a panel discussion which invited several Bard professors from different backgrounds to express their views on poverty. The speakers were Sanjib Baruah of the Political Studies Department, Jesse Shipley from the Anthropology and Africana Studies Departments, and Sanjay DeSilva and Rania Antonopoulos from the Economics Department. This diverse group of professors presented an varying array of viewpoints on the causes and possible solutions to poverty.

Head of the ISO Ashfaque Kabir opened the seminar by introducing ISO's new approach: "We've been known as the club with the flamboyant parties and cultural shows, but today we present you with the first of a series of seminars to explore our world's problems." In fact, this seminar grew out of Kabir's TLS project, which seeks to examine the international community's response to these widespread issues. However, perhaps because this was the ISO's first such event, it attempted to cover too many issues and wound up identifying few of them.

The seminar began with the Sarah McLaughlan music video "World on Fire", which compares the amount of money it takes to produce a video to what that amount could purchase for people's aid in an under-developed country. Then the speakers began. The first was Sanjib Baruah, who specializes in issues of globalization, development, and Northeast India. Baruah's speech encouraged listeners to try to understand the complexities of the lives of the poor, instead of understanding them in a two-dimensional way. He gave an example of a rural community that subsists on fish. The community then tries to enter the global market, and has to sell the fish to compete. Suddenly, they have lost their main source of food, and all they have left in their pockets is a meager living at best.



From left to right: Professors Sanjay DeSilva, Rania Antonopoulos, Sanjib Baruah, and Jesse Shipley speak at the ISO-sponsored Global Poverty lecture December 4th.

photo/Ashfaque Kabir

As Baruah teaches the course "Politics of Globalization," this approach was both appropriate and different from the ordinary ways that poverty is conceived.

Speaking next was Rania Antonopoulos from the Levy Institute, whose specialties include Feminist Economics, the economics of Globalization, and International Trade. Presenting the viewers with plenty of distressing statistics, she certainly painted a very bleak picture of the situation. As a research scholar from the Gender Equality program and the Economy program, Antonopoulos also shed light on the particularly disturbing facts of life for poor women. For example, in some countries with no toilets or running water, women can only use the bathroom before dawn and after sunset, because it is against the law for a woman to be seen relieving herself. Antonopoulos will be teaching a course next semester on Feminist Economics, which will focus on the particular problems facing women, and flaws in economic theory based on gender.

The third speaker was Professor Jesse Shipley, whose main focuses are Ghana and the African Diaspora, global racial politics, and mass media. Shipley's talk

was unique in its focus on the flaws in our conceptions of poverty. He criticized the Western framework from which we judge development, from investment to aid. As an example, he used the Sarah McLaughlan video to highlight the stereotypical ways that we think about poverty. For instance, he pointed out how the video's images reinforce the hackneyed idea that the poor are tied to culture and tradition, while the industrialized are tied to civilization. The same images of African women and children appear on every page appealing for charity, utilizing racial and gender stereotypes to pull at our heartstrings. The solution, he claimed, could not be found in our narrow-minded approaches to these deeply complex issues, based entirely on our Western conception of development. New ideas must be hashed out based on the local, perhaps outside of the democratic and capitalist systems of our lives.

The last speaker was Economics Professor Sanjay DeSilva. Since time was running out, he opted to give a summary of some of the main points of the lecturers. But, as a progressive economist, he also did not fail to give the necessary speech on microloans. While microloans can be

promising in encouraging entrepreneurs to develop domestic business, he also criticized them because they can only really help those slightly above the poverty line who are also educated, and just lacking funds. This is not the case with most of the world's impoverished.

Overall, the seminar was useful and informative. At the same time, however, it attempted to tackle a huge subject, which spans over every country and continent in the world, and compact it into two hours. After the event, Baruah himself said, "We needed more time. There was so much to cover, we could barely delve into any real issues." And this is true. The discourse on poverty tends to be all fluff. But this is something the ISO, and Ashfaque Kabir want to avoid. "Perhaps next time, we can focus on potential solutions instead of the problems," said Kabir. "This will not be a one-time thing. The ISO plans to host a series of seminars on hard-hitting issues every semester." This would be a great development and niche for the ISO to fill. In the meantime, in our private discourses, the temptation to generalize and oversimplify remains strong, particularly in light of the way information can be presented.

free press: then and now

CONTINUED FROM PAGE TWO

students to contribute in many ways, whether that meant helping with layout, writing an article, or taking and editing photographs.

"Diversity of opinion is important theoretically, but the Free Press has recently sucked," one senior commented. "If it's an issue of a good paper and a bad paper, then I'd rather just have one. The Free Press has historically been great; it's covered different things than the Observer... But it was shit this year. They were covering the same things [the Observer] was, but not as well."

According to the editors, there will be another issue of the Free Press out this semester, making three in total. There have been problems this semester getting enough submissions together to print. But when I asked Kopas if the Free Press would be around next semester, he was emphatic: "Yeah. How could it not?"

In fact, despite its dwindling staff size, the Free Press is still looking optimistically towards the future. The editors have discussed the possibility of a Free Press blog, eliminating the obstacle of temporal relevancy always problematic with small-staff newspapers and following a trend that Kopas sees developing in academia at Bard in general.

He explained, "[Do I think the continued existence of campus newspapers is important?] Of course. They are one of the few easily available ways for the student body to wrestle with transforming the immense amount of information they acquire here into something that exists outside of Bard, in the real world. However, do I think they need to continue to exist in print? Not really." Kopas alluded to the huge wastes of money and paper stemming from the printing of ReserveWeb documents, on campus and

off, suggesting the issue of personal e-readers as a relatively inexpensive solution. E-readers would both save paper and make Bard students more wired - a scenario in which a campus newspaper-turned-blog could survive and even flourish.

The shared history of the Free Press and Observer has sometimes been characterized by feuds, more often by confusion. (Why do we have two newspapers? What's the difference?)

It has been noted that every four years or so Bard papers get a makeover - a new group of students comes along and takes a turn at transforming campus journalism into what they think it should be. While we may think we are innovators, this process is cyclical. History is important, but the real reasons behind the creation of the Free Press have long been forgotten.

I asked Kopas what he saw as the difference between the Free Press and the Observer. This is what he had to say. "I've answered this question a lot of times and I don't know if I have ever given the same answer twice. In my mind, the two are dynamically connected and, while I don't want to say opposed (though that has been the case at times), definitely antipodal."


I've asked a lot of people what they think the difference is between the Free Press and the Observer. I haven't gotten many good answers. Perhaps there are no fundamental differences between the two papers that you can trace back through their separate histories. There is no continuity or drawing of enemy lines - in fact, the two need each other. I think Andy is right - their difference each year is in how they define themselves against the other. What was once a campus with one voice now has two. With a grateful nod to the founders of student institutions, let's safeguard and perpetuate this gift for as

long as we can.

To read back issues of the Free Press, check out their website at <http://freepress.bard.edu/>

To get involved, email freepress@bard.edu.

For more on the founding of the Free Press, see the last page for a seven-year old opinion piece by Michael Haggerty, former Observer EIC.



**10% off
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**on vacation: December
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**dinner tues-sun
sunday brunch 9:30-3**

This semester
the Student Life
Committee has...

-compiled and distributed
shuttle schedules

-along with other dedicated
student groups, worked to
make autonomous student
space an achievable goal

-held a successful Food
Forum

-collected more surveys
than ever recorded

-met regularly with
administrators and staff,
including Chas Cerulli,
Mike Ginsburg, Erin Cannan,
Ed Schmidt, Marshall
Guthrie, Juliet Meyers,
Martha Davis, and President
Botstein, and others

-held open meetings every
Monday.

Thoughts? Questions? Go to
a meeting next semester or
email slc@bard.edu.

blithewood through the ages

BY EMILY VERTOSICK

Blithewood. For some students, this word conjures up the image of pot-smoking hippies lying in the grass; for others, the beautiful rose garden and the views from trails leading down to the Hudson. However, the magnificent white mansion that sits atop a hill at the south end of Bard's campus has not always been the fixture it is today.

The name Blithewood can be traced back to Robert Donaldson of North Carolina, who lived on the land until 1852. That year, John Bard bought the 130-acre Donaldson Blithewood estate for \$60,000 (a staggering amount of money at the time—worth approximately \$1.4 million today). John Bard changed the name from Blithewood to Annandale in honor of the Scottish hometown of his wife's ancestors. John Bard retained the Annandale estate until 1897, when financial problems forced him to sell it to the College.

The College kept the land until 1899, when they sold it to Captain Andrew C. Zabriskie for only \$38,444 (about \$900,000 in today's dollars—much less than John Bard had originally paid for it). Zabriskie changed the estate's name back to Donaldson's original—Blithewood, but the surrounding town kept the name Annandale. This was also the year that the white Blithewood Mansion that stands today was built on the site of the old Annandale house, which had been destroyed by fire.

At this time, Captain Zabriskie also formed the "Blithewood light infantry", which consisted of a group of men from Red Hook and Rhinebeck who gathered in the meadows around Blithewood to practice drilling and marching. Zabriskie housed the members of his infantry in an old brick building on the edge of Blithewood's lawn. Relations between the Zabriskie family and the college community were rocky during the fifty-two years that the Zabriskies owned the estate. Sometimes, acts of vandalism or trespassing would cause it to be decreed that members of the college were not permitted on the property; however, when things took a good turn, students were allowed to walk through the property, use the meadows as playing fields for sports and swim in the Zabriskie's pool.

In September 1951, the Blithewood Estate changed hands for the last time, and became the permanent property of Bard College. The estate was a gift to the college from Christian Zabriskie (descendent of Andrew Zabriskie, who purchased it in 1899) after his mother's death. Purportedly,



The Twilights play Spring Formal 1978 on the steps of Blithewood Dorm.

photo/s: fizzsphears-2006 on Flickr

Zabriskie didn't like the isolated upstate estate, and gave it to Bard as a gift to avoid paying the high property taxes while he spent his time in the city. As part of the Zabriskie gift, the college also received the 825-acre estate surrounding Blithewood (which included the Sands and Bartlett estates), three large barns, two garages, seven tenant houses, a tennis court and a swimming pool which still stands today, although it is now cracked and covered in graffiti. At the time, this gift was worth a third of a million dollars.

In honor of his gift, the College renamed the Blithewood Mansion Zabriskie Hall, and a committee was formed to decide how to best use the buildings and lands given in the gift. The main house held several different functions throughout these years; namely, it was used for summer and special programs, a nursery school, and a dorm housing sixty students during various years. Three years after the acquisition of

the property, in 1954, a largely student-labor run project succeeded in turning the Blithewood estate carriage house into a theatre and dance studio. The next year, the College decided to sell the 400 acres of land that lay east of route 9G, keeping the west side remainder. In 1956, five years after having changed the name to Zabriskie Hall, the main house was again renamed Blithewood, its original name and the name it still holds today. At this time, it was also converted into a women's dormitory, a function it served for several years.

In 1958, a new dormitory was built on the Zabriskie meadows land. This state-of-the-art dormitory, built to house ninety students, is the now-notorious Tewksbury. Since the building of Tewksbury on the Blithewood estate land, the college has added eight more dorms, along with five studio buildings, tennis courts, and water and sewage plants. After serving as a

theatre and dance studio for students for nearly twenty years, the Blithewood estate carriage house was destroyed by a fire in 1973. This loss of theatre and dance space eventually led the College to build the Fisher Arts Center on North Campus. In 1987, the Blithewood Mansion was renovated with a grant from the Jerome Levy family, and now houses the Jerome Levy Economics Institute.

The Blithewood estate, through all its name changes and various owners, has always been an important fixture in the Hudson Valley. Now that it is a part of Bard College, and home to a renowned economics institute, its influence and importance are even greater. Besides its financial and educational contributions to Bard, this wonderful piece of history is also a place where students can spend time experiencing the best of Bard College and the Hudson Valley.

observer interviews: dave maswick

BY MAE COLBURN

MC: This is an interview with Dave Maswick, Bard College's info chief...

DM: Chief Technology Director, I actually have the longest title of anyone at Bard. [rewind].darBtaenoynefoeltittsegnoleh eevahyllau tcal,rot ceridygolo nhceTfeihC [play] ChiefTechnolo gyDirector,Iactu.....helongsttielofan yoneatBard.

A beast of a tape recorder and the playback is hardly audible. Crud.

Dave is the Associate Dean of Information Services. The role of his department is to provide campus with a basic technology infrastructure that will "enhance educational, administrative, and research missions of the institution." When Dave came to Bard ten years ago, the campus had one computer lab. Now, nearly every student has both a high-speed connection and a cell phone, is downloading MP3s, purchasing textbooks online, and printing articles from Reserveweb. Dave predicts the next step: WiMax.

DM: The battle is for this screen, [pointing to his cell phone screen] not for that screen [pointing to his laptop]. The next generation of network services is going to solve the last great problem. Right now in order to take advantage of wireless networks you've got to be wherever they are, right? With WiMax, which roams

between wireless networks and cellular networks, all of a sudden, instead of you having to go where the network is, the network is wherever you are. You can be sitting in the back seat of your best friend's car going seventy miles an hour and check your e-mail, or do your schoolwork, or read an article from Reserveweb.

I can see voice mail and email becoming exactly the same thing, that's [step] number one, and thing number two is that rather than downloading and reading an article you can have it read to you. These are old processes but they're going to come into play in a very different way. Now everybody has a computer of some kind, everybody has high-speed connections, and most everybody has a cell phone, and the [consolidation] of these things is mere moments away.

The question concerning new technology is] just because you can, do you have to? Should you, just because it's possible? I was just in Wisconsin and there must have been thirty guys, thirty middle-aged salespeople, standing around jammering. Nobody was talking to each other, they were all just talking on their [Bluetooths].

I asked Dave whether he saw the rise of network technology as having had an impact on the social habits of students, and if so, whether he sees that impact as positive or negative.

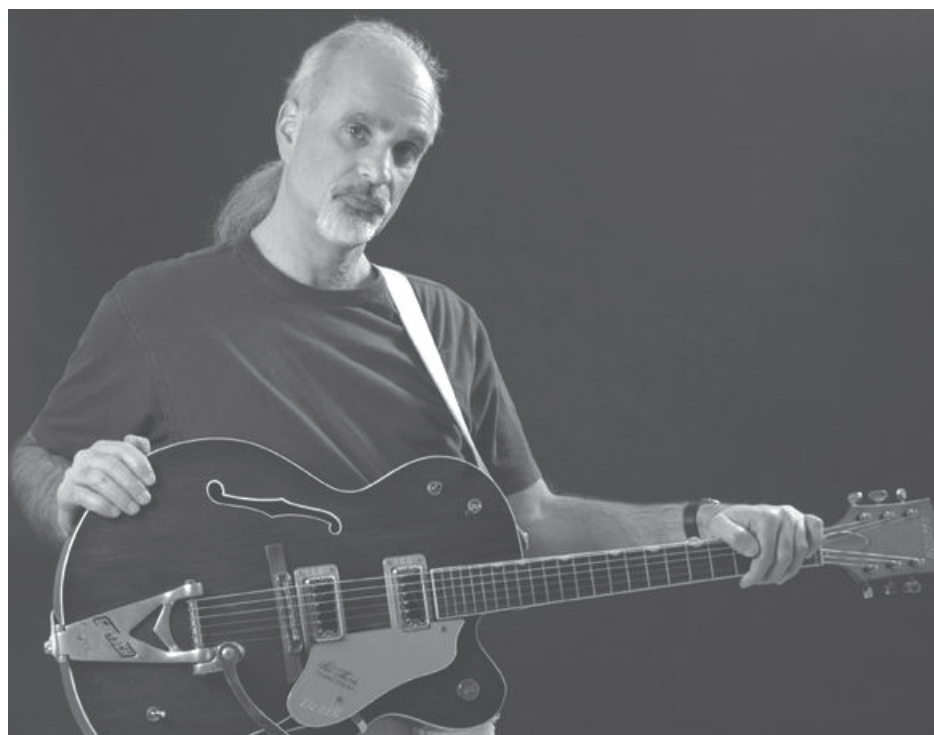


photo courtesy of Dave Maswick

DM: I see it as a real problem. I see people IMing each other when they're sitting right next to each other, and it disturbs me, because why aren't they talking to each other? It's working to marginalize human interaction. You've got to look at the nature of those kinds of communications. Ninety-five percent [of those communications] are one or two sentences.

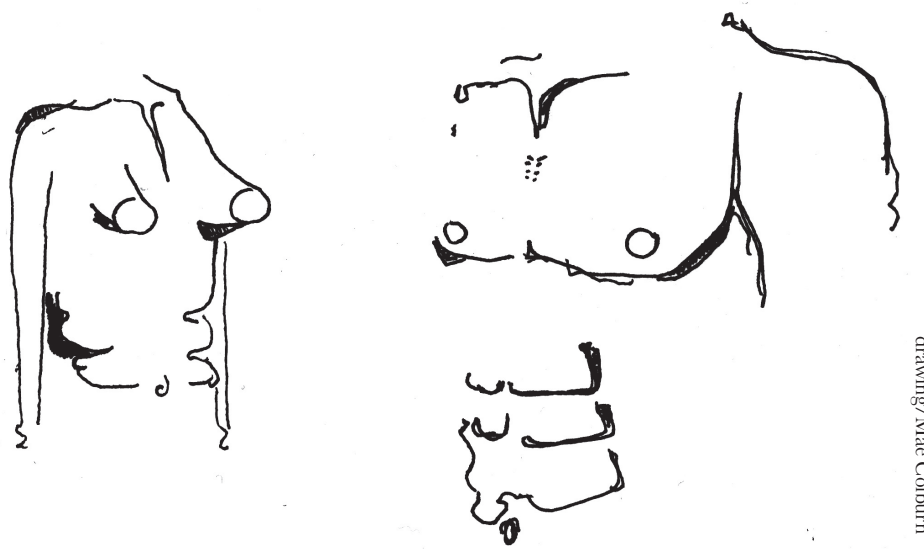
We used to have a guy who worked here, a Bard Graduate who would wear a t-shirt all the time that said "Computers suck," and his point was very much about this. [He would say] "Why don't you just call

someone if they're in the office next door, get up and talk to them!" Greg contracted colon cancer, (which is very unusual for a young person,) and it was a horrible thing. He really had an impact when he was here and we wanted to have a day when we just turned everything off for twenty-four hours – that would encourage people to talk to each other. I've been battling to do it, to do Greg Day, just for that reason. I'm dying to do Greg Day, and if you can make that happen, I'd be happy to make a guest appearance.

TO PAGE SIX

1 <http://inside.bard.edu/~dmaswick/>

sex column



drawing/Mae Colburn

porn, or i like lesbians who take it up the butt

By SUSAN B.

Talking about porn, especially your favorite, is completely subjective to personal likes, dislikes, upbringing, sexual orientation, fantasies, or any of these things in a multitude of combinations that rarely make sense. I know lesbians who swear straight porn is the only porn that will get them off. They will only watch it if there's a dick involved. Weird? Maybe. But whatever gets you off, I won't judge. Unless you're into watching milf/mature housewife videos. Wrinkly, flappy skin + kitchen scenes = not cool. My personal porn favorite is watching lesbians take it up the ass. I'm not really particular about how it gets done. As long as it gets done and it looks like it feels good, I'm a happy camper.

I scour the internet looking for free sites that contain my niche interest (I'm personally surprised that there aren't whole sites dedicated to the beautiful act of women fucking women in the ass. Sometimes there is no accounting for taste. I did find one, once, but it was really mediocre and the videos were generously sprinkled with misogynistic overtones, [What porn isn't you ask. I have my standards. But that's a whole other discussion.] so needless to say I don't remember the name. I think it was something silly like, www.fuckherupthebuttcuzshesalezbean.com.)

My favorite free site right now is www.youporn.com. It's pretty much piggybacking off the youtube.com + "please don't make me pay to masturbate" phenomenon that have given us such memorable sites as xtube.com and pornotube.com (This is not to mention the countless free sites that offer free short movie clips like 89.com, penisbot.com, or tommys-bookmarks.com but aren't based on an internet community of users.) However, I think those other sites pale in comparison to youporn.com. And here's why:

It doesn't believe in stereotypes. I actually don't know if this is true or not but it does not categorize its videos by type. I was really insulted when I went onto xtube.com and found that one of the ways they help you navigate through the site was through "straight porn," "gay porn," or "I like both!" (Note: this option was accompanied by an emoticon that was viciously smiling with a cocked eyebrow.) Not cool. Especially since when they said "gay porn" they really meant man on man. I'm guessing the lesbian videos were thrown in the straight section because well, women only fuck women to get men off. This also assumes that the users of xtube.com are all men: straight or gay or surfing the waves of sexual orientation purgatory - otherwise known as bisexual. [Pornotube.com](http://pornotube.com) let's you type in any combination of words that excite your fingertips and offers you a variety of options that are denoted by the name of the video and a thumbnail of its contents. If you hold your mouse over

the thumbnail, it comes to life, showing brief slides of the video that, when viewed all together, look like mini-porn, which is nice because it's a summary that actually delivers the goods as opposed to the actual written summary which usually looks like someone splooged words all over your computer screen.

It's got a really good favorites section. Because of the favorites section, I learned that Turkish people make really great porn. For real. I spent an afternoon watching two clips from a feature-length called *Rus Koleji*. Great plot. Great actors. Great great great. It's actually narrated in English and is about a private sleep-away girls school. What's not to like? Right? If you type in "Turkish" in the search bar, you will be confronted with so many videos you won't know what to do with yourself.

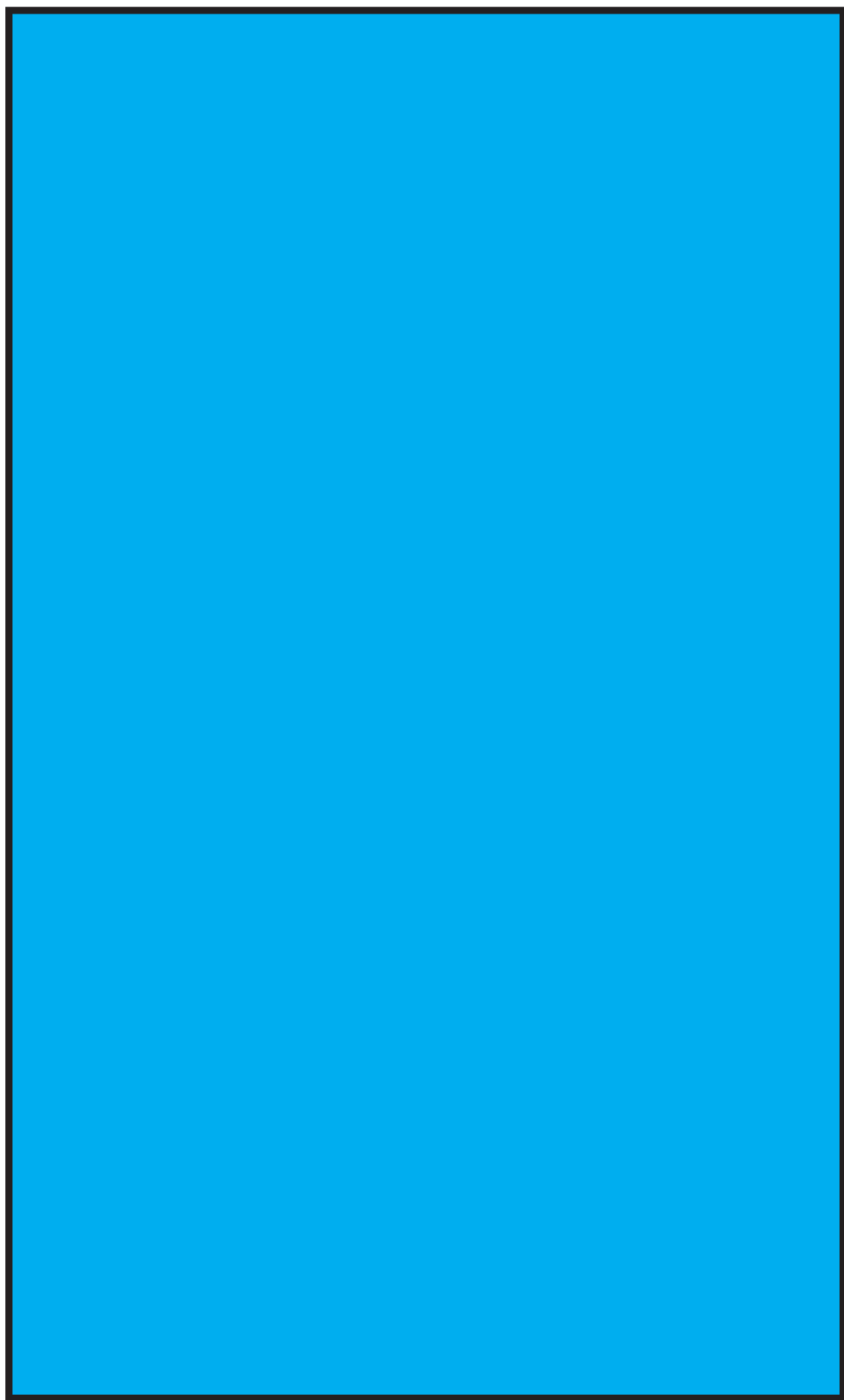
It's simple. I know what I want to watch. The only thing I should have to do to get what I want is type in the words and have it magically appear as if from a dream because the internet should always give me what I want when I want it because it's the internet. There shouldn't be obstacles that get in the way of my porn, like price (Pornotube.com makes you pay. It's stupid.) or weird navigational pages (ahem, xtube.com) or virtual sorcery (pornotube.com sometimes exists, sometimes doesn't. I don't know why). Porn should be simple, easy, straightforward. If porn is difficult then we should all just fuck each other (Porn should be simple because sex is so goddamn difficult all the goddamn time that you should sometimes be able to relax.).

There are a lot of videos of girls licking ass. 'nuff said.

Favorite Free Porn Clips:

Pterodactyl porn. Not a [youporn](http://youporn.com) clip and I don't know if this one will actually turn you on but it's worth watching because it's one of the most amazing porn clips on the internet. I won't spoil the plot, but I'll let you know that the video involves, one girl, three hard pterodactyls, and a hand puppet. Watch it with a group of friends. It's a nice way to start your evening. <http://www.pornotube.com/media.php?m=226592>

Janine Lindemulder gets her fight on. I have followed Janine Lindemulder's lesbian porn career on and off since my family bought our first computer. In this video clip, Janine valiantly takes on two women and their probing fingers/sex toys. She fights hard, she fights rough. She takes it like a champ. And she likes it. The passive/violent/life/death dichotomy is sexy a la the writings of an older Jean Genet, if he weren't gay or French but American and Janine Lindemulder. <http://www.youporn.com/watch/48655>



interview

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE

I agree that Greg Day is a noble cause, and Dave's offer to make a guest appearance is an offer that shouldn't be taken lightly. Dave gave me a rundown of his music career, and it was a bit of a bolt from the blue. 'Wow' and 'crazy' and 'you're kidding' - this is what peppered the conversation from my end.

DM: I was on MTV on the first day that MTV was on the air. I was already on and off MTV before you were born, and I'm still active although I'm not touring. I still spend a lot of time writing songs and I write songs for a lot of other artists. I actually wrote one that's charting now in Switzerland - this twenty-five year old Swiss country singer/songwriter came to the states last spring to write songs with me and he recorded two of the songs I wrote.

The MTV band was a band called Blotto and we actually had two hits, they were kind of far apart though. The big hit was a song called I wanna be a Lifeguard, and you can go on YouTube and see it (which we did, and saw Dave play the keyboard - young, sprightly, and nimble-fingered). Blotto's thing was always about parody and the leader of Blotto was a very, very funny guy. I just happened to take off. It was one of those things. We made a record and didn't know what to do with it so we sent it to a bunch of DJs and a DJ in New York started playing it, and started playing it hard, and when you get heavy rotation

in a major market like New York, things happen.

The other hit was a song called Metalhead, which was a parody of Heavy Metal, and we got the guitar player from Blue Oyster Cult, Buck Dharma, to appear in the video. MTV at the time played music videos - there was no reality shows, no fashion, no awards and they had people, their VJs (instead of DJs, they had Video-Jockeys,) and so we became very friendly with the VJs at MTV. They were constantly playing us. Cindy Lauper came on and said "oh, I love those guys," and she would play us. Weird Al Yankovic [was] the same way.

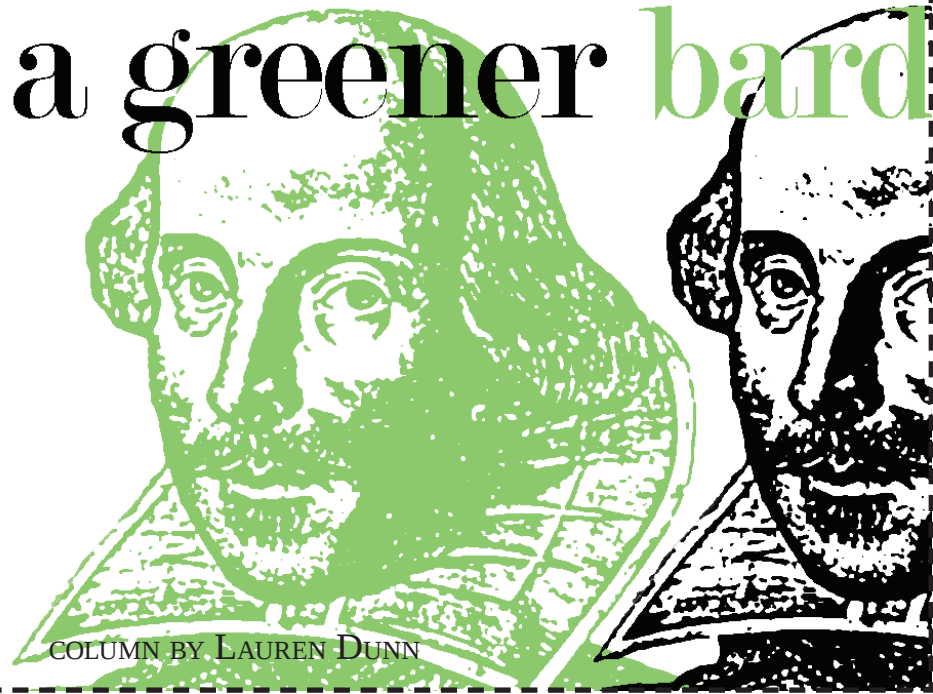
It was another lifetime. I started producing records for other people and at that time computers were just beginning to become functional tools and the more interested I got the more I learned, and then I went to graduate school - and it was a normal path from there.

Dave is retiring from his position as Bard's Chief Technology Director at the close of this semester. I get the feeling that we should look for him on tour - that his musical career has not yet come to a close. He will surely be missed, but hopefully we'll be able to lure him back now and again.

DM: I might do a little teaching. President Botstein wants me to teach a songwriting workshop here. Greg Day would make everybody in that department very happy.

spend your money. *f op w w p v c o z*
CLUB HEADS:
 if you can't spend it, give it to the senior class gift (student space.)
 last day to make a check request is friday.

a greener bard



COLUMN BY LAUREN DUNN

Bard is often perceived as a progressive institution paving the way with what other schools might deem risky endeavors: the Bard Prison Initiative, Bard Early High School, the Trustee Leader Scholar Program (TLS); the list could go on indefinitely. But while the college may be ahead of the curve when it comes to investments in progressive educational projects, it appears we've fallen slightly behind when it comes to being a model for progressive efforts to curb climate change. There's no doubt that Bard surpasses many institutions in decreasing its energy use and expanding its efforts towards a more sustainable campus, but countless steps still can and need to be taken in order to reduce the college's environmental impact. Historically, when student pressure reaches a certain threshold, the administration begins to take notice and then acts accordingly. It appears that the issue of climate change will continue this legacy as an increasing number of changes have recently been seen at Bard as a direct result of a visibly active student body. I attempt to answer the question here: what has been done, and what still needs to change?

One of the most far-reaching and influential steps that could be taken is campus-wide standards and policy modifications. From a student perspective, taking this approach surely seems a little dry. The bureaucratic route isn't as exciting and personal as hosting teach-ins or attending energy-charged conferences, but it has the potential to be more long-lasting and effective at implementing actual changes in the community (beyond educating people on the issues). Education is undeniably a crucial part of making the campus more receptive to and encouraging of a greener Bard. One of the first things people can do is learn about a problem. But once they're informed, action is imperative if real change is to occur.

So how do Bard students make their way into the administrative processes in order to enact more stringent campus-wide standards? Well, Bard students are pretty crafty. They're aware that the people in charge will respond to student pressure if there's enough of it. One of the most recent creations of environmentally conscious Bardians still in its early stages

of development is a standing committee consisting of staff, faculty, and students from all four class years. They'll be looking at different policies on campus and ways to change them, and probably advising President Botstein on what's best for the college in climate change matters. This new committee will hopefully come to fruition next semester in conjunction with Botstein signing the President's Climate Commitment (PCC).

"We weren't sure what had kept Botstein from signing the Commitment until now, but he's made it clear that he wants to see more of a commitment from the students before he agrees to follow the requirements of the PCC," explained first-year Natalie Narotzky, who has played a large role in the formation of the new standing committee. Although over 440 colleges and universities have already signed on to the PCC, it's not entirely surprising that Botstein hasn't joined the ranks yet. With Bard's undersized endowment, the college is already struggling to find creative ways to use the money it has for all the demands the students create. Committing to an ultimately climate neutral campus would require a significant chunk of money which some feel the college can't spare at the moment. Of course, the benefits of going green outweigh the costs after several years. While initially it may be more expensive, it pays for itself more quickly than other options. The 23 geo-thermally heated buildings on campus are clear evidence of smart investing done on part of the college. Additionally, approaching climate neutrality is definitely more in line with the generally progressive and liberal philosophy of the college.

If we want to see changes being made, we need to make them happen. The administration needs to see student interest and action in order to defend their use of money towards these rather expensive purchases. The uproar surrounding the issue of student space could be viewed as evidence of what can be accomplished in a short amount of time by a group of dedicated student activists. As more action continues to be taken by students concerned with Bard's environmental impact, the administration will almost certainly feel obligated to act.

WXBC BARD COLLEGE RADIO, BARD'S STUDENT-RUN, FREE-FORM, UNCENSORED RADIO STATION IS RECRUITING DJS FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER! WE KNOW YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS!!! IT'S TIME TO APPLY [OR REAPPLY]! ANYONE CAN BE A DJ!

SHOWS ARE 2 HRS LONG, 1X / WEEK. WE ENCOURAGE SHOWS WITH SPECIFIC GENRES, FORMATS, AND THEMES/ CREATIVE IDEAS, BUT HAPPILY WELCOME SHOWS WITH NEW AND/OR OLD MUSIC, OR NON-MUSIC/TALKING, OF ANY SORT. BOTH STUDENTS AND NON-STUDENTS [STAFF] AT BARD CAN APPLY FOR SHOWS.

DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1ST, NO EXCEPTIONS.

APPLY AT WXBC.BARD.EDU/APPLY. FOR MORE INFO, EMAIL WXBCPROGRAM@BARD.EDU.

SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND ENVIRONMENT



bard buys new prius

BY JACKIE STONE

As part of a plan to make Bard vehicles more environmentally friendly, transportation director Ed Schmidt has recently added a Toyota Prius to the passenger fleet. In addition, Schmidt plans to add one or two more to replace old security vans next year. However, what Bardians may not be as aware of are some of the specifics of hybrid vehicles such as what "hybrid" actually means, how they work, and what the benefits are.

The term "hybrid vehicle" refers to any type of vehicle that uses more than one source of power. However, when people talk about hybrids they most commonly refer to hybrid electric vehicles (HEV), which combine an internal combustion engine with an electrical motor. The Toyota Prius in particular can run solely on one engine or the other, or it can use both at once. The Prius has a combined city/highway rating of 46 miles per gallon, which is much higher than that of a comparably sized non-hybrid car, the Toyota Corolla, which has a city/highway rating of 26/35 mpg. Hybrids achieve better gas mileage mostly because internal combustion engines are extremely inefficient.

On average only 20 percent of the energy released by burning gasoline is actually used to move the car. Most of the power of the engine is used to accelerate the car, and when the car is not accelerating, the rest of the energy goes to waste. For instance, a 200 horsepower (hp) engine would only need to be 20 hp if it had another way to accelerate. In hybrids, the highly efficient electric motor helps to accelerate the car, so that a much less wasteful combustion engine can be used. Most HEVs can recharge some of their battery life by regenerative braking, which captures the kinetic energy that the car is losing while breaking and converts that energy into battery power. Additionally, some HEVs can use the internal combustion engine as a generator to recharge the electric motor. This is useful

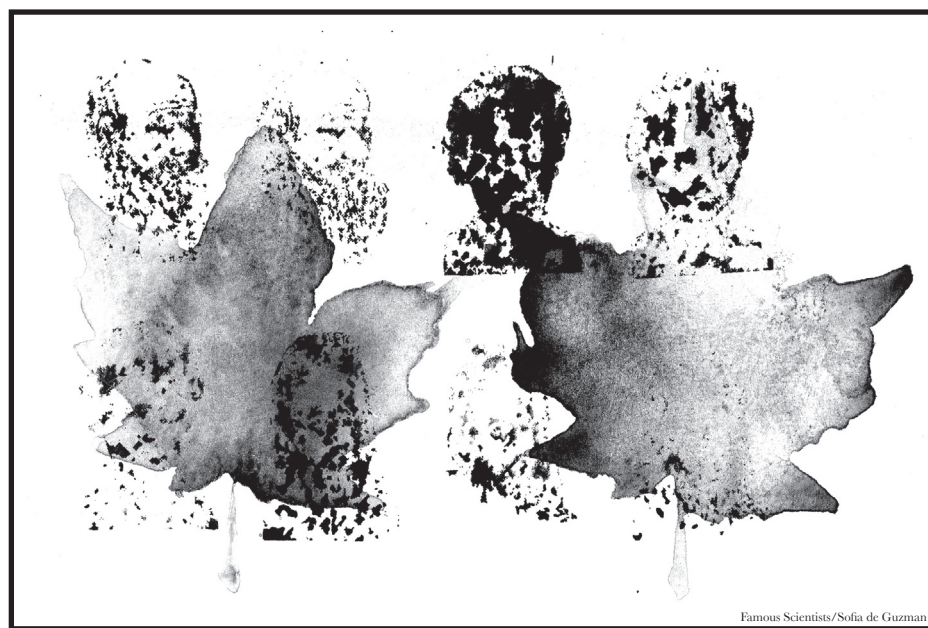
because currently most hybrids, including the Prius, cannot charge the electrical motor using an outside source of electricity.

The US government started giving a tax incentive for purchasing hybrid vehicles in 2005. By purchasing a hybrid, you qualify for a federal income tax credit of up to \$3,400. However, the tax credits will be phased out after the manufacturer has sold 60,000 hybrid vehicles. Some individual states have their own tax incentives for purchasing a hybrid car, such as allowing single occupied HEVs to drive in the HOV lanes, and discounting the cost of vehicle registration.

Additionally, Congress has proposed legislation that would require automakers to raise the mileage of cars and lightweight trucks to 35 miles per gallon by 2020. Currently, 27.5 miles per gallon is required for cars, but automakers have found a loophole in this law by classifying gas-guzzlers, like SUVs, as light trucks. In 2006, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration finally subjected these light trucks to some of the fuel economy laws.

So how do these vehicles help the environment? One obvious pro is that hybrid vehicles emit less carbon dioxide than cars that use only an internal combustion engine, furthering efforts to curtail global warming. In addition to using hybrid cars, each of us can personally take steps to limit our use of gasoline by doing simple things, such as carpooling, walking, or biking when possible, and following some of the tips on improving your gas mileage found at fuelconomy.gov, for instance, avoiding excessive idling.

The world oil supply is running out, so hybrid vehicles are an essential intermediate in our efforts to eliminate our dependence on oil. Hopefully, vehicles that will no longer use internal combustion engines, such as the Tesla Roadster, will soon be more affordable and widely available. Until then hybrids are a good start.

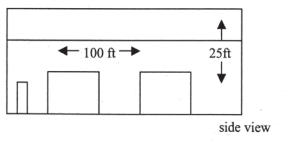
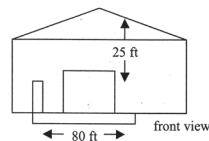


Famous Scientists/Sofia de Guzman

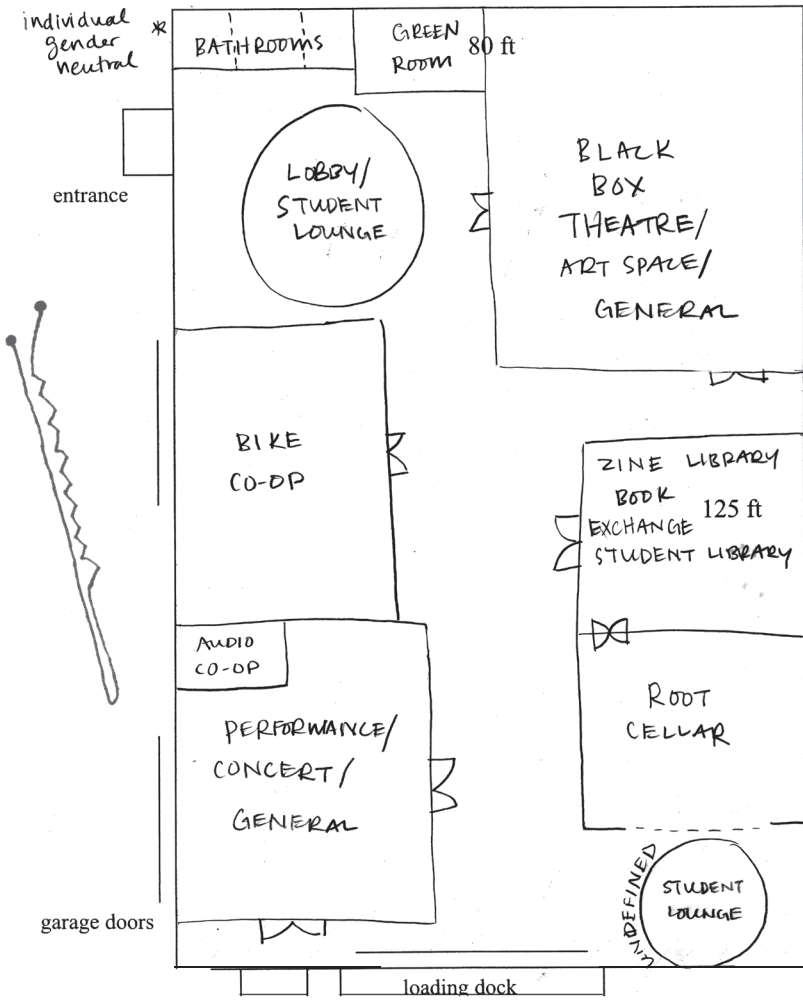
next issue = next semester. observer@bard.edu

DESIGNING STUDENT SPACE

COMPILED BY ANNEKA OLSON AND KAYE CAIN-NIELSON



1ST FLOOR



This semester in particular, there has been significant progress made by various student groups in improving current student space, and taking steps towards creating new space that better supports social and academic life at Bard. In order to contribute to these developments, our goal is to facilitate productive communication between existing groups and other interested students. Through a set of open discussions and workshops, a group of 25-30 students worked together to produce written and visual recommendations, which will be available as reference points to any student groups, administrators, architects, etc. that are working to improve student space. We hope that this process will help to pave the way for optimal student involvement in design, decision-making, building, and occupation of new space. Included here is the set of recommendations that was generated by the workshop, and some sample floor plans for the new space. The dimensions of the blueprint are those of a storage barn (about 10,000 square feet) that is currently under consideration for the housing of student space. The Student Government is in the process of forming a committee to discuss the design and programming of this new space, and floor plans drafted in the workshop are intended to help inform the barn's renovation.

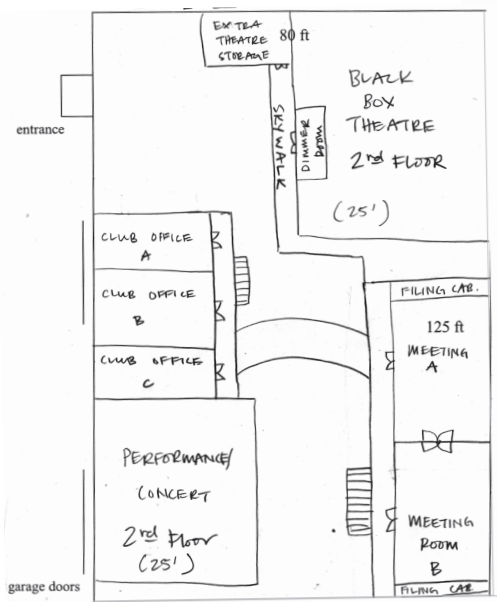
Since these documents are intended to represent the student body, feel free to respond with criticism and suggestions for changes or additions. Contact us at: kn774@bard.edu; or ao217@bard.edu. We also hope that student involvement in the design process will continue, so please keep your eyes out for opportunities next semester.

Student space should...

- *Be designed and programmed to encourage communication and a sense of community
- *Position furniture and design to foster community interaction
- *Unify student spaces that serve diverse student groups
- *Include multiple spaces in close proximity; many rooms surrounding larger area
- *Include undefined, multi-use spaces (ie moveable furniture or walls)
- *Provide both community spaces and private meeting spaces, and be comfortable and inviting to the whole student body
- *Have a performance space for a variety of events
- *Give equal spatial, booking, and storage facilities to a diverse group of clubs
- *Be distinguished from other spaces on campus in that it fosters autonomy and responsibility, is easy to book, and free of administrative restrictions
- *Provide something that is lacking in other social spaces on campus
- *Be Independently financed (potentially from vending in space)
- *Support student educational and/or program endeavors
- *Be available 24 hours
- *Provide institutional memory, in the form of a record room
- *Include club offices, particularly for identity clubs
- *Include a book exchange, lending library
- *Provide resources to clubs (ie storage space, photocopier, art supplies)
- *Be designed with environmental sustainability in mind
- *Include student involvement in the design, building, and maintenance of the space

New space could contain:

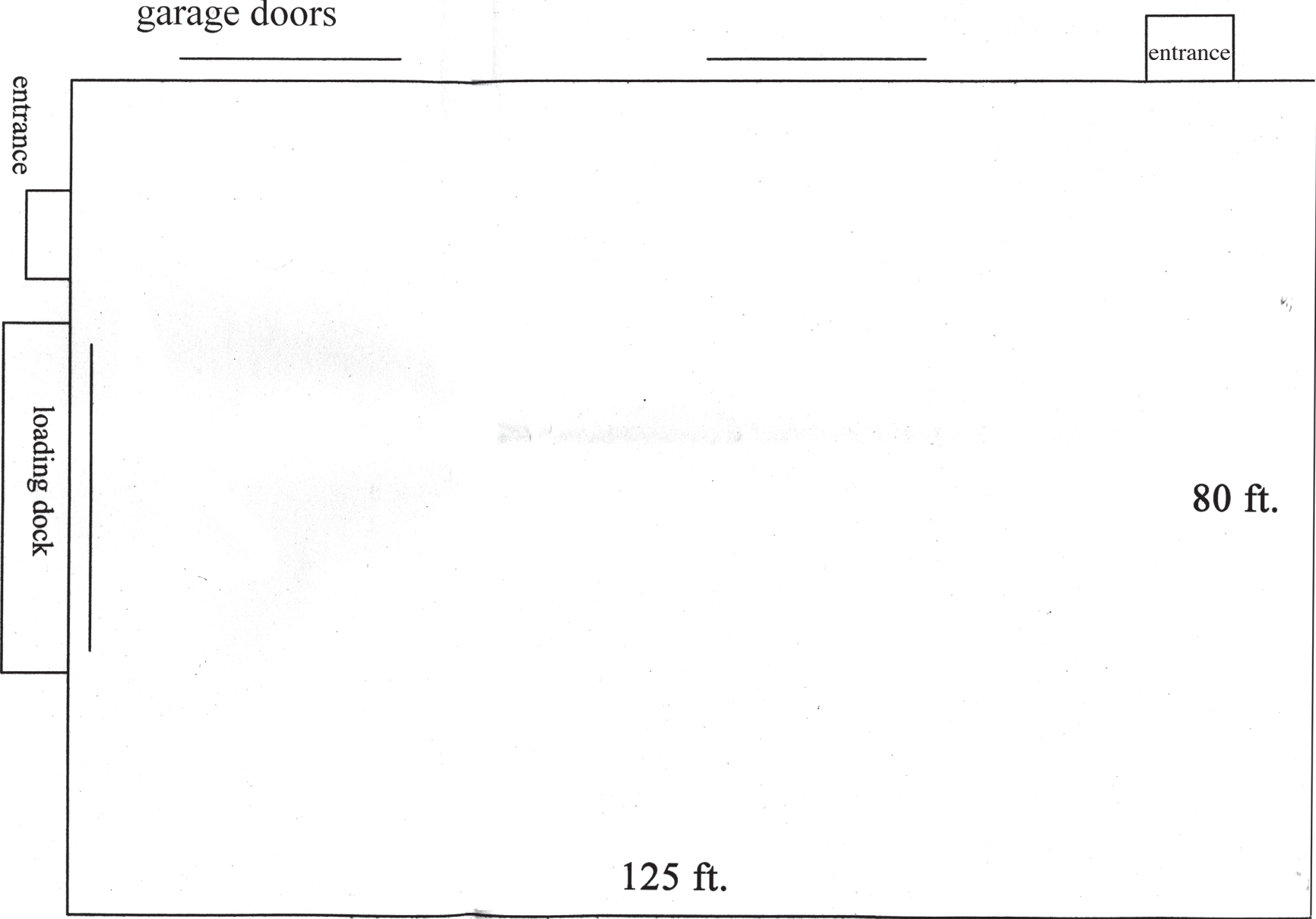
- Black box theatre
- Lending library/book exchange
- Room of records
- Club offices
- Multi-use space
- Gallery space
- Loft, with space to sit
- Student-run café/kitchen
- Book exchange
- Bathrooms (gender neutral?)
- Folding walls
- Some walls made of whiteboard/blackboard
- Windows
- Skylights and good sources of light
- Solar panels
- Integration of student designs



2nd Floor (loft addition). This is a sample of the plans drawn during the workshop.



How do you envision student space? The more visual representations of "optimal" student space we produce, the better we can inform the production of a space that best serves the needs of our student body. GET YOUR PENZ OUT! And send to Kaye Cain-Nielsen in campus mail.





photo/Charlotte Benbeniste

BY CHARLOTTE BENBENISTE

JASON WEBLEY PLAYS SMOG

Twas three weeks before Christmas and all through our school, the snowflakes were falling, chilling evening quite cool. If wander you did, to SMOG that fine night, upon Jason Webley you stumbled, singing under dim lights.

Escaping the evening frost on December 3, I thought to take refuge under the brightly graffiti-ed walls that enclose SMOG. As I approached the seemingly empty shed, I saw and heard nothing coming from within: no singing, no setup, not even any smoke. I inched in vigilantly, leaning my head forward slowly into the main chamber of the venue. All at once, my curious eyes were met with about 30 other pairs of eyes all staring affectionately at me atop of 30 cross-legged fans sitting in what looked like a kindergarten show and tell.

"Welcome!" the cult chanted in unison before turning back to a wispy brown haired, bearded man in his early 30s, wearing a crushed, dark green porkpie felt hat, and adorned in a shiny white and black accordion standing in the center of the stage. He blinked his droopy eyes, "Welcome!" he shouted.

After a brief introduction, Seattle native Webley placed his fingers on the appropriate accordion keys and, stretching

out the center windbag, gave new life to the instrument as it gasped its first note. The cult rose to their feet per his suggestion as he uttered "I know that you've been feeling tired, I hear your voice is wearing thin," the first two lines of Train Tracks off 2004's "Counterpoint." Much unlike the character of which he sings, Webley's voice is thunderous and clear, progressively loudening as the pulls of the accordion become more forceful. A real one-man show, Webley added percussion to his act by stomping spiritedly on the floors of the wooden stage enticing the audience to clap along to the same beat.

Once finished, Webley simply stopped and smiled as the audience applauded the song. "SMOG needs to invest in like... a mop," he joked, noticing the dust rings that his stomping had created.

"What should I play," he mused to himself. Finally he reached a conclusion, "I'll do a new one... but it may not be good," he hesitated. "All my new songs have a problem," he explained, "they don't sound good without my band." Webley had a proposal: "Would you guys be interested in being a massive orchestra?"

The crowd was smitten. Of course! They'd love to. Webley divided the group into two

sections: the right side violas and the left, trombones. After teaching each group their respective instructions, he counted off the song, "1...2...3...4," he sang softly in the most Devendra Banhart-like way.

Playing the opening notes calmly, he suddenly opened his eyes, pointed to the "violas" and cued them to croon "Oooh, Oooh, Eeeyouu." He sang a few words, encouraging the violas to continue. Once they'd gotten the hang of it, he turned to the "trombones" and prompted them to roar "Bah!Bah!Bah!Bah!" alternating with the violas' "Eehs" and "Oohs." Soon enough the crowd was swaying together, closing their eyes, some even throwing their palms into the air... oh, how quickly we become rock stars.

Webley's third song was reminiscent of the Fiddler on the Roof soundtrack, a tune that elicits Yiddish words: Shmutz, Mench, Ay Gavalt, and for some reason, sparked a craving for Kreplach and Gefilte Fish. I imagine Russian dancers in fur hats, shoulder to shoulder in a straight line with linked arms, bobbing up and down and kicking their legs into the air with their elbows crossed against their chests, or a Bar Mitzvah swinging a napkin around as he's being thrown into the air on a wooden

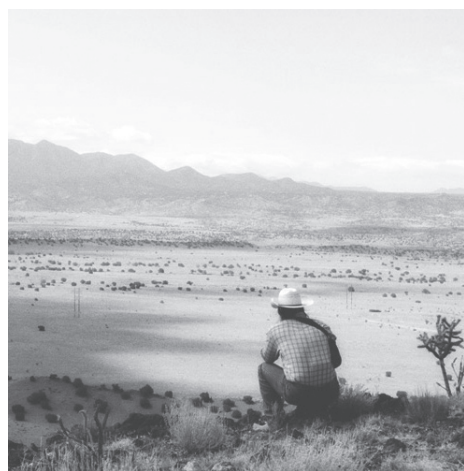
chair on the night of his celebration. The evocation of these feelings and thoughts is something quite exclusive to the accordion, and the empty vodka bottle full of coins that Webley shook around as another form of percussion.

After a brief segment about vegetable songs, and a drawn out story about a Russian drummer with infidelity problems, Webley concluded with a crowd favorite, the ever-popular "The Drinking Song", also from "Counterpoint." The audience formed a semi-circle facing the stage, arm in arm, swaying back and forth as Webley hollered, "if the glass is full drink up, drink up, this may be the last time we see this cup. If God wanted us sober he'd knock the glass over, so while it is full we drink up." Unsatisfied with the audience's level of intoxication, Webley suggested a way for them to feel more drunk: "point your right index finger up into the air and raise your arm, stare at your finger and spin around with me 12 times."

Needless to say, his tactics were a success, and while spinning in circles and "drinking up," the warmth peculiar to Jason Webley's music overcame us. With Webley, you sort of forget that it's 12° and snowing outside.

AN OLDE TIME THRILLER

BY ELIAS ISQUITH



Anton Chigurh (Javier Bardem) is garnering a lot of buzz for the Coen brothers' new adaptation of the Cormac McCarthy novel "No Country For Old Men." But, while I find the character to be a fascinating incarnation of depthless evil, I can't say that he interests me most. Rather, sheriff Ed Tom Bell (Tommy Lee Jones) is the character I've been mulling over in the days following my viewing. Whereas Chigurh is essentially an embodiment of death itself, Sheriff Bell is both more perplexing and harder to define. But I think that the secret to the movie—which is easily one of the year's best—lies within the old man.

The film opens with a series of stunningly desolate shots of what is supposed to be the West Texas desert. Narrating atop is Jones, who, in a voice that wonderfully mixes sorrow, bewilderment, and weariness, muses on what he believes to be the changing times. His father was a sheriff, too, but he didn't even carry a gun. It wasn't necessary back then. Not much later in the

film, we see the aforementioned Chigurh murder a man with a compressed-air gun, the kind used to slaughter cattle. Times have changed.

On its surface, the movie is just an expertly made thriller — no small achievement in itself. It's 1980, and a Vietnam vet named Llewellyn Moss (Josh Brolin) hunting in the West Texas desert stumbles upon the remnants of a drug deal that went awry. Along with narcotics and carcasses, Moss finds a bag full of money. A lot of money. Around two million dollars. He takes the cash and becomes the target of not just the Mexican cartel, but—for reasons never fully made clear to the viewer—the ghoulish Chigurh as well. The scenes between Moss and Chigurh are utterly captivating; a motel encounter is a masterfully executed piece of suspense. Like Hitchcock, viewers are most tortured not by what they see, but by all that they can't.

Always lagging considerably behind the trio is the sheriff, simultaneously trying

to save Moss and apprehend Chigurh, who leaves a trail of bodies wherever he goes. Jones is remarkable in the role, playing a much sadder and weightier version of the gruff old-timer he's perfected. Although he displays a sardonic wit throughout the film—and gets the script's best one-liners—he is increasingly and visibly deadened by the chaos. He knows he can't stop Chigurh; he's just trying to understand the new evil he represents. The evil that, he believes, didn't exist in his father's America. The sheriff's attempt to grasp this evil, and to understand its source, makes up the real soul of the film. Beyond the film's craft, which is nearly peerless, the sheriff's questions will be what lingers with the viewer.

"No Country For Old Men" has a controversially anticlimactic finish, but it is not a movie about easy answers or the tying up of loose ends. Maybe that would've been the case in a thriller of your father's day. But times have changed.

24-THEATER FESTIVAL A RIOTOUS GOOD TIME

By MIKE SCHOCH

The annual twenty-four hour theatre festival took place last Saturday December 1st, featuring seven original plays written, directed and acted by Bard students. Each piece was devised and executed in a single day, requiring that its various participants to labor through the night in order to deliver a script that was then painstakingly staged for performance in a matter of hours. Despite sleep deprivation and perhaps even a degree of emotional turmoil, the festival represents a night, not based on the analysis and criticism of art so prevalent at Bard, but instead one focused on base comedy and sheer entertainment—on fun.

Though the festival opened at eight pm on Saturday, it began twenty four hours earlier on the previous night, when the writers (selected via lottery) and other participants voted on a theme for the night's pieces. The winning theme this year was "blood 'n boots," chosen from a bevy of entries in what playwright Adrian Vazquez described as a "bizarre and not quite random process." Along with a theme, organizers of the festival gave the writers arbitrary character requirements, allotting each play a specific quota of male and female roles to be distributed among the five total actors and actresses.

These limits, while challenging for the writers, seemed to spark spontaneity and creative impulse in the eleventh hour rather than inhibit it. Vazquez in particular, did not find the demands of the theme or character requirements as impeding as those general distractions so common to a night at Bard College. Campus events,

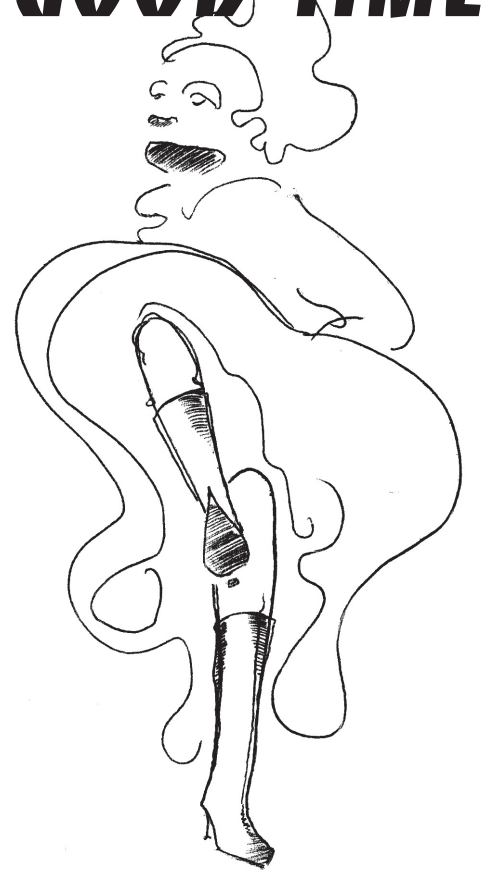
friends, and socializing all chipped away at his precious time and distracted him from the task at hand, so that by two in the morning he stared at a screen with only two pages, wondering how he would devise a coherent play while subsisting solely on "caffeine, salami sandwiches and alcohol." By the wee hours of the morning, Vasquez found himself with a completed if (in his own opinion) bloated script and a hearty case of sleep deprivation, saying by the end of the night "we [he and co-writer Jeremy Novak] were so fried that it was challenging to communicate in words."

For this reason Jesse Myerson, a veteran of the twenty-four hour theatre festival and director of this year's "Badge 'n Sneaks and the Case of the Bloody Boots" deems "the changing of the guards" from writer to director necessary. Equipped with a little more sleep than their literary counterparts, the directors, according to Myerson, have to stage the play based largely on "personal taste" and "whatever the playwright and director work out in the forty minutes beforehand." Not surprisingly then, actors are relied upon by both writer and director to "fully realize the words of the text," a property of theatre that Myerson stresses is not at all unique to this festival. Indeed, Myerson's approach is one that embraces such spontaneity, allowing the actors to discover the comedy lying below the surface in these pieces. And comedy is largely what this night is about: "The audience demands comedy—not even witty comedy so much as broad clownish comedy," said Myerson. He added that the most successful plays

gained their vivacity and humor by "striking a delightful balance" between the original vision and the comedic reality of the piece. "This is not high art—no one's doing Beckett," Myerson asserted, which is precisely the attitude that allows the festival to be so entertaining and engaging.

Each play ultimately took its own unique approach to the theme of blood 'n boots, though, to generalize, comedic strategy seemed to come in two basic forms. Pieces like "In This Big Blue House" forged, plot-wise, into their own bizarre frontiers, constructing a loose yet funny story from a cast of poignantly awkward characters. The "blood 'n boots" theme played a minor role here, but allowed the actors to drop on their knees and slurp fake blood from a cowboy boot—a ploy, that while "clownish" in some respects, took full advantage of the night's light hearted air and fairly intimate atmosphere. Other works, particularly "The Last Debutante" incorporated the theme more fully into the plot and dialogue with a "bloodier" premise that lent itself to clever lines like, "you know a girl's roots by the blood on her boots". Regardless of technique, Myerson stressed that the "actual interpretation of the theme is irrelevant to the ultimate quality of the piece" and that in many instances, the theme served, not as a limit, but a point of inspiration.

Inspiration and creativity are the twenty-four-hour theatre festival's final goal. The plays were short, off-the-cuff moments of restless delirium, transcribed by students onto the stage for a one-night-only performance. None of them were perfect,



nor did they aim for perfection, as lasting importance and universal themes took a backseat to the energy and fun produced by the event as a whole—the collective collaboration between participants and audience that reaffirms art as a thing to do and enjoy, not just to study.

A SHORT NIGHT, REVIEWED

By GWYNNE HOGAN

A Short Night, a series of three short plays both starring and directed by Sarah Paden, Amaia Skerritt-Perta, and Amanda Warman, took place last Thursday and Friday evening at around 7:05 in an intimate flamenco studio in the bowels of the Performing Arts Center. The shows included "Women on a Playground" by the perverse Christopher Durang, "The Hat" by the controversial David Mamet, and "Come and Go" by the notorious Samuel Beckett. The first scene began with Skerritt-Perta and Paden on a park bench across from an imaginary playground, timidly conversing about their respective children. I say timidly because while one mother was certainly eager to socialize, the other was decidedly less willing. Antagonism between the self-declared optimist Skerritt-Perta and the evident pessimist Paden had the audience in subdued laughter. The eerily radiant smile plastered across Paden's glowing face reminds the viewer that Valium is still in use. Oh the joy in raising children!

An equally bizarre presentation of "The Hat" ensued. Not only did Skerritt-Perta's creepy smile haunt the viewers, but Paden's matched and doubled hers. Oh dear readers, this was a frightening scene of an image-obsessed buyer, bent on looking perfect for an upcoming interview. Paden, the ideal saleswoman, while largely speechless, manages with her freakish grin to coerce her buyer into certain debt. This hat, those boots, this hat, yes, with this jacket. Everything is bought; the audience cringes.

A final unsettling performance of Beckett's "Come and Go" begins in dim light. The audience sinks into their seats as the three heavily clad women synchronize their breath. My stomach growls audibly. This always happens to me where silence is imperative. The person sitting next to me flashes me a dirty look. Silence and unexplainable words are passed occasionally between women, only alienating the audience. A cycle soon emerges. When the woman in the center rises and temporarily exits to the side, the remaining two mechanically move closer to each other and whisper cryptic remarks. Woman number one will allude to something about the absent woman number three; woman number two will gasp and say, "Does she not know?" or "Has she not been told?"; then woman number three returns to her new seat no longer in the center of the bench. This process repeats itself three times, constantly alluding to the mysterious series of secrets that cannot be revealed to the audience.

I was at first uneasy about the inclusion of "Come and Go" as the last act of A Short

Night. The first two scenes seemed to mesh well enough, both lined with sarcasm and a certain degree of humor. "Come and Go" was entirely devoid of either of these elements; and appears like that awkward cousin reluctantly invited to this family reunion.

"Come and Go" seems to embody the idea that both other plays just point to rather indirectly. The first scene recounting a strained conversation at a park, the second depicting a woman so consumed by what she'll look like at her upcoming interview that she neglects completely what she'll say, both seem to allude to an inability to communicate with others. Both highlight a world in which appearances are everything, and achieving true contact with another individual is rare, maybe non-existent. I begin to comprehend my uneasiness throughout these scenes. While we are witnessing conversations between people, nothing is being said; nothing is being exchanged. And moreover, both parties in each conversation exist in separate worlds, where interactions like this are formalities at best. Beckett's "Come and Go" emerges at the end, as a finale and glaring synthesis to all of this. These women are absolutely and utterly unable to communicate. They try to recall the old days when they were capable of such; but attempts are feeble and hindered paradoxically by their current inability to speak and understand. The three scenes in chorus, begin first by alienating the viewer from the scene, then from other audience members, and finally culminate in the alienation of the viewer from herself.

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By FIONA COOK

On Wednesday, November 28, over 100 students, faculty, and community members gathered in the Reem Kayden Center for Science and Computation to celebrate the opening of the student print show, a new semesterly tradition hosted by the Studio Art Department's four printmaking classes. Present were Arthur Gibbons, director of the Studio Art Department; Melody Goodwin, revered Studio Art Administrative Assistant; Mark Halsey, the administrator in charge of the new science building; and Lothar Osterburg, Ken Buhler, and Nicola Lopez, the three professors who form the printmaking division.

For many students it was the first time they had been in the new building since it opened its unwieldy glass doors at the beginning of the semester, and they took this opportunity to peek into the lecture pods, classrooms, and labs, wanting to see the synthesis of generous donations, internationally renowned design, and state of the art technology.

Despite being hosted in the science building, there was initially nothing unusual about the art opening. The behavior was appropriate for an academic social event, including discussions about the pieces on display, small group

conversations, and mingling around the food and refreshments table. On a night when science and art should have gotten a little buzzed and made sweet sweet love, the students and faculty present received a rude interruption: a student working in the science building had called the Red Hook police, listing underage drinking as their chief complaint. When the Red Hook police arrived, campus security handled their concerns outside of the RKC, unbeknownst to most of the students, and the Red Hook police left as quietly as they arrived. Yet the damage was already done. Afraid of an interaction with the police, many students quickly left the show two hours before it was supposed to finish and much of what was left of the event was cleaned out. Few students remained along with the three printmaking professors who helped host the event, but the celebratory, relaxed atmosphere was gone.

The information I have gathered for this article is based on my conversations with security, the area coordinator on call, my professors, and classmates. It may not be a complete description of the events that occurred, but to my knowledge what was said to me and what I observed are small factual fragments that I've pieced together. I was present at the event and I was the person

TO PAGE TWELVE

For some, May 15th is a day of celebration. On this date fifty-nine years ago Israel was declared an independent country. For others, May 15th is a day of mourning and remembrance – hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were made refugees as Israel was born. To Palestinians and their supporters across the globe, this day is commemorated as Nakba, the catastrophe. 2008 will mark the sixtieth anniversary of Nakba. The Palestine Solidarity Coalition will be hosting a weekend of events to recognize the decades of Palestinian struggle and suffering.

Thursday, December 13th 6:00 pm, Olin 102

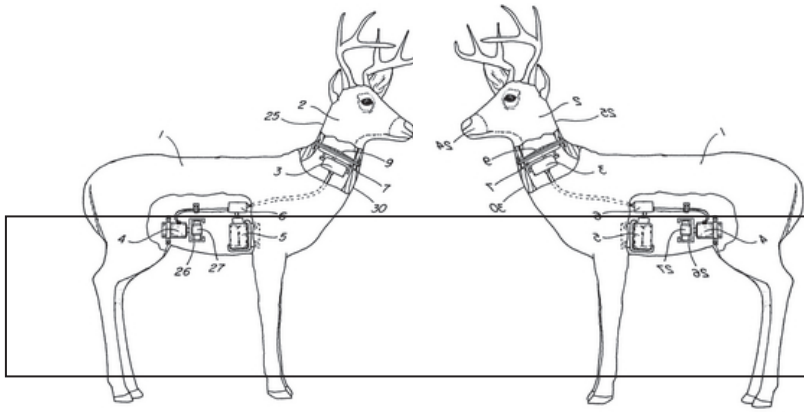
Film screening and discussion led by the filmmaker Andrew Courtney "African Palestinian: Ali Jiddah" (30 min) and "A Palestinian Woman" (30 min) These films are meant to address the conditions Palestinians live under, and the psychological, economic, and political damage caused by continued Israeli occupation.

Friday, December 14th 6:00 pm, Olin 102

Lecture and testimony by Dawud Assad, a Nakba survivor. Mr. Assad's will discuss Nakba in particular to what it means within Palestinian history. He will also reflect on the way Nakba premises the Palestinian/Israeli conflict from the perspective of the Palestinians.

Saturday, December 15th, 11:30 am, MPR (brunch will be served.)

Workshop led by activists from Al-Awad, Palestine Right of Return Coalition and the New Jersey solidarity group. This workshop will maintain a legal/historical approach to the nature of the conflict and will ultimately provide students with a look at what human rights mean in Palestine now, after sixty years of occupation.



Observer Forum

FOR THIS ISSUE'S FORUM TWO STUDENTS WERE GIVEN 12 MINUTES TO DEBATE THE QUESTION:

should bard students vote locally?

The format of the debate was as follows:

Affirmative statement of position: 3 minutes
 Negative response: 2 minutes
 Affirmative conclusion: 1 minute

Negative statement of position: 3 minutes
 Affirmative response: 2 minutes
 Negative conclusion: 1 minute

Part 1

Jesse Myerson: American polity is based, at least ostensibly, on a specific notion of constituency, namely that the citizens of an area form a cohesive unit bound by certain institutions and concerns. Those citizens are taxed to finance the workings of the state and by consolation, let us not forget this part came second historically, they in return are represented by the people they vote for, people who, at a variety of levels, set policies in the best interest of those constituents. It's essentially an economic system: the people pay the state money, the state grants the people representation. The people give representatives votes, the representatives grant the people favorable policies. At least ideally, that's how it works. The crucial one there, to be sure, is the taxation step. Citizens of Hoboken, New Jersey, are so largely because it's extremely close to New York City. Very often, Hoboken citizens work in New York City and so are affected on a daily basis by the conditions of New York City's roads, by New York City's policies in regards to smoking publicly, by the behavior of New York City's police force and so forth. One can easily imagine a citizen of Hoboken being more integrally affected by the policies of NYC government than say a citizen of Riverdale, who works in Yonkers. Why does the citizen of Hoboken not get to vote for the government of New York? Quite simply, because she has not paid the price that entitles her to. She is a resident of Hoboken, she pays her taxes there. This permits her say in the political landscape of Hoboken. In this way, American democracy is not unlike American capitalism. You pay your money, you get your product. There's no denying that the students of Bard College, on campus and off, create, in a major way, the economy of the town of Red Hook, including its villages, to which Tivoli, Red Hook, Barrytown etc. There is no denying that the police force of the town of Red Hook is concerned with, and in a major way, affects the Bard student population. Indeed, even without venturing off campus for beer runs and the like, the town of Red Hook, by the simple fact of geography, holds jurisdiction over Bard College, an area where its policies prevail, its police and courts are the arbiters of the law, and so forth. By far the more controversial claim would be that Bard is somehow separate from Red Hook. The crucial step though, as I made clear earlier, is taxation, and this is the murky one, because obviously Bard students do not directly pay taxes to the town. This is where the easiest claim of the negative side rests. However, it is a claim that does not withstand investigation. Bard College acts as the agent in the transaction.

The college as an institution pays a large tax burden to the town of Red Hook, the bill for which is footed by Bard students. In this way Bard is just another division of government, under whose jurisdiction Bard students abide, and whose authority is economically supported by the same. The entire institution of American polity, trends toward allowing and encouraging Bard students to exercise political efficacy in the town of Red Hook.

Jason Mastbaum: Mr. Myerson tries to defend Bard students being allowed to vote on campus or, I should say, locally, by the basis of our integration into the community, for instance economically. However when trying to predict what Mr. Myerson would say I came up with the example of corporations that open offices out of state or out of country. These offices will oftentimes become very important institutions in their local economy. They offer many jobs for instance. However if Bill gates opened up an office in New Jersey, nobody would say that Bill Gates is allowed to vote in New Jersey, and I think that's important. We are passing through, we are sending our money but we are essentially tourists, we're only here for a certain amount of time. Very few people at Bard are going to really set down roots after they're done here. They're going to move somewhere else, for instance Brooklyn, as many of our compatriots do. And, basically I think that I can address everything Jesse said by just considering the fact that we do ultimately have to draw the line of where somebody can vote somewhere. It's unfortunate, it's going to leave some people out in the cold in some regard. But unfortunately there do need to be standards or everything becomes chaos.

Jesse: The example of corporations is obviously legally irrelevant when corporations are not insofar as they have voting rights. Citizens. If Bill Gates himself moved to New Jersey indeed he would have the right to vote there. Because he has an office there and owns it does not give him the right to vote there because it's not his citizenship that's at stake. Setting down roots is obviously not a prerequisite for citizenship because most people when they move to Brooklyn for instance after Bard will only be there for two years. I'm sure that we will get into this argument much more later because it's the major one. And I think you're absolutely right that we do need to have standards and that we do need to draw the line somewhere and luckily we have those standards and the standard is if you hold residence in a place and you pay the taxes to that place you are allowed to vote for representation. Luckily Bard students do hold residence in this place, do pay taxes in the place, and therefore, conform to the standard.

Part 2

Jason: It's my position that Bard students should not be able to vote locally in Red Hook. My position is centered on the fact

that the majority of Bard Students are only here transiently. After their four years are up, most students are going to move elsewhere. It strikes me as unreasonable that we can pass through, vote on major issues such as taxes, and then move on. Worse, most of us are not particularly keyed into local issues. The local Democratic operation pumping you with literature and pressuring you to vote does not add up to being knowledgeable about local politics. A good example of this is the recent vote to Save Open Spaces in Red Hook. I'm going to treat this topic at length because it is a case study of why many of the local residents do not like us voting here. The campaign that was conducted in favor of this legislation on Bard Campus was a farce. We were offered some feel good platitudes about clean drinking water and farms. However, reading some of the literature, I had a funny feeling that something about this plan stank, but because I wasn't going to be voting for or against it, I didn't pursue this lead. In preparation for this debate, I began digging around on the internet, and talking to an alumnus who is also a local, about the Open Space legislation. I found out that my hunch about this legislation was right. The basic financial basis of this plan is to tax homeowners in the area in order to raise money to buy development rights from wealthy farmers who already receive large amounts of tax breaks from the town. So basically, the local homeowners are being charged to make some liberals feel good about themselves. Not surprisingly, this vote did not endear the Bard Community to the local population. I feel confident in asserting that it is no surprise that this aspect of the plan was not explained in the on-campus campaign. I was talking to one student who admitted that he voted for this measure not really knowing what it was about. Some of the college Democrats pressured him to get in the car to exercise his right to vote. The student felt that in hindsight, he voted totally irresponsibly and would not have voted at all if he could do it again. The fact that nobody seems particularly worried about whether or not we know the issues as long as we seem likely to fall into the Democratic column at the voting booth only underlines the fact that we have no idea what local politics in Red Hook are about. I want to emphasize the point that it is irresponsible and most likely immoral for us to be voting on local issues given that we have no long term stake here nor any real familiarity with local concerns.

Jesse: The issue of transient living is always

brought up and the last time that this was a controversial issue in November of 2006 this was the major thing that people brought up. The idea is that Bard students are just passing through, we haven't got a right to vote on permanent things, but at the time in 2006 when I did the research on this it turns out that the majority, or the average person lives in a place for only two years. So the question really then becomes if this is a matter of standards as you proposed earlier, how long must one plan to live in a place before he is considered a citizen, and the answer is, there is no time limit. A person must only hold residence. A person who leaves Bard after their four years will move likely to Brooklyn and that will only be for a year or two. The second contention that we are not knowledgeable about the issues does not make us unique in any way to anyone else in the country. The vast majority of the citizenship in the United States is not aware of the budgetary process in Congress or the issues under scrutiny in Congressional Committees, the substance of litigation, the substance of legislation. People are woefully ill-informed and in fact, campaigning everywhere is filled with feel-good platitudes including Mr. Mastbaum's beloved, Dr. Paul from Texas. That does not separate Red Hook Democrats from anywhere else. He has, Mr. Mastbaum that is, provided an argument against a specific initiative that passed through the ballots here and he has also thrust around words like "liberal" in a perfectly obnoxious fashion. Luckily for me, that is not at all inherent to the prompt. It doesn't adhere to anything at all except for his own political agenda. Ultimately, Mr. Mastbaum has provided no reasoning for why Bard students ought not to be allowed to vote, except for reasons that can be applied to the argument that no one anywhere should be allowed to vote. Ever.

Jason: I'd like to assert that Myerson is joking if he thinks that he has no political agenda and other people in the room do. Attacking me for supporting Ron Paul clearly points this out. Ron Paul is completely irrelevant to this conversation, and it is a clear attempt to smear me and my views, given that I know that Myerson considers Paul's views, in a word, insane. But to try to bring things back on topic, we're voting for taxes we don't feel the pain of. In a very real way I would say that people know, if they don't know what's going on in Washington then they certainly know what's going on in their town. They know what taxes they're paying to their local government.

Career Non-Development: An Illustration of Bard's Most Stagnant Student Service

BY MISCHA NACHTIGAL

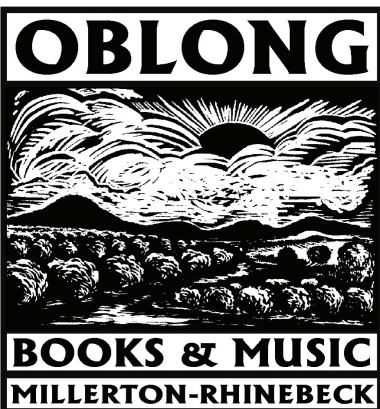
In the last issue of the Observer/Olliphant, Bard Alumnus Kolby Yarnell pointed out something that's been going unnoticed for too long—the incompetence of Bard's Career Development Office. Yarnell said that he would not be giving any money to the college "until future Bardians are better prepared for the years that follow graduation." This is most likely a sentiment that many graduating seniors will feel after those first couple months in the real world.

But let me start with a personal story. Last year in November, I went to the Career Development Office trying to find an internship for the summer knowing that most deadlines were coming up in December. My interest lay in the field of publishing, and for some reason I was paired with April Kinser, Director of the CDO,

despite Associate Director Nicole Burman's ten years of experience in the New York publishing world. Children's publishing was my specific interest and I had no idea where to start. I expected that the informed opinion of members of the CDO would be helpful. During my first meeting, I was told to sign up for Bard's collegecentral.com website, a resource where alumni and employers can supposedly list job opportunities. Once I signed up though, I couldn't help but notice the opportunities listed were the exact same ones I could find in their handout about scholarships and prizes. The website had nothing new.

That weekend, I dragged myself to a bookstore and wrote down names of all the children publishing houses on the books that interested me. When I got back to campus, I looked up every single one and

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



get five dollars off your purchase of 25 dollars or more with a bard id



This print by Logan Gaisford was one of many displayed at the student show.

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responsible for the registration form. On the form, I indicated that alcohol would be present and I received signatures from the Studio Art Department and the Science Department plus the approval of the Student Activities Office. From the time that I helped set up to the time that I left (which was after the situation with the police was extinguished) I did not see anyone acting inappropriately or disrespectfully. People were curious about the building and they looked around, and maybe this is when an altercation that I am unaware of occurred; however, to call the Red Hook police to break up an academic student function on the grounds that there was underage drinking without first seeking one of the several faculty members or administrators present or without initially calling campus security is vindictive and insulting to the students whose work was on display and to the Bard community. The student did not try to alleviate their concerns in a manner that was productive, instead they chose the most extreme recourse and abused their privilege as a member of the Bard community. To clarify, I do not believe that Bard deserves to be held above the law. We are not an isolated entity set apart from the surrounding communities, and despite personal prejudices on the part of Bard students and people from the surrounding area or vice versa, Bard depends upon the people from the communities that encompass us as much as they rely on us. That said, I do believe that the student who called the police in this particular circumstance has created an atmosphere of fear and distrust among their peers that they may again call the police, not prompted by reason but by fancy, and that they believe they can justify the use of this valuable, protective resource with an act that did not constructively remedy the situation, whatever their grievances.

The student who phoned the police should be ashamed that they initiated such a deceitful act against other students without provocation.

Career Development

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ELEVEN

found out about any available editorial internship. Eventually, I settled on a group of publishers to apply to, including Simon & Schuster and Scholastic Press.

After deciding which firms I'd apply to, I quickly scheduled another meeting with April. In doing research and talking to fellow students about this article (all of whom requested anonymity), many mentioned that they couldn't help but feel that the directors of the Career Office were discouraging and unenthusiastic about their ideas. When I brought up Simon & Schuster, the notion was immediately shot down because it was far too prestigious and out-of-my-league. Both directors advised me to try for something more reasonable, and though they might have been right they offered no better suggestions.

When I brought up Scholastic, both of them seemed to brighten up. There were lots of opportunities available in all fields, from marketing to editing to art design and I was eager to get my resume ready. Now, I will gladly admit that April did help me set up my resume and cover letter in the proper format. However, after doing the research and coming to them with the opportunity that I had found, Nicole saw fit to send out an announce e-mail to the whole campus encouraging students to apply to Scholastic. I've told this story more than a few times, and I can see the many sides of it. Yes, they were doing their jobs and letting students know about the internship but this was also about a week before the application was due. When I walked in the next day I saw four students, all of them there seeking help with the Scholastic application. I was not angry they had increased my competition (which was already astronomical to begin with), rather I was more upset with the fact that I was basically doing their job for them. I would have thought that with their expertise, they could have easily taken the time to google 'Scholastic Internship' as I did. Instead, they abused the information I had brought

“While this enlightened education is all fun and games, there is still the fact that once in the workforce, the Bard student seems to be at a disadvantage”

them.

Now I did point this out to April, who sort-of apologized in an email. She thought that because I had taken more time with my application, the announcement really wouldn't affect me. Whether it did or not can't really be judged, but needless to say I did not get the job. To be honest, I wasn't really bitter about all this until I started hearing about similar cases of students being slighted or ignored by the Career Office and the Bard Administration.

When a recently graduated senior went to David Shein with the goal of trying to find a fellowship or grant that would allow her to investigate a specific genre of music, she was greeted with skepticism. Shein suggested she go to a website called delayingtherealworld.com, a redundant self-help site that is based on an equally redundant book by Colleen Kinder. This suggestion, largely due to the insensitive name of the website and its unrelated content, was “disrespectful and insulting,” according to the senior.

Another recent graduate, now teaching at a New York Public School, mentioned how April Kinser “looked at my resume for five seconds, and then referred me to the career office's website to look at the format.” This senior found her position through her own online research about the New York City Teaching Fellows. The CDO did set this senior up for an interview with Carney, Sandoe & Associates (a teacher recruitment firm) but it was not what she was looking for.

Now it's not like the Career Office doesn't seem busy, because they are always holding job fairs and information sessions. It seems though, that these sessions don't really change year-to-year, and the same opportunities get recycled over and over. My brother, a senior at Claremont-McKenna College in California, has already interviewed for several jobs with real companies, think tanks and firms, all of which have been set up through the network created through the college's career office. Granted, his school is very different from Bard but still, other than the case above, I have never heard of a Bard student getting an interview through the career office.

Networking is really the name of the game, and the Bard Career Office freely admits to this. On the CDO website, they state the obvious: “Networking is about being friendly and connecting with people... It can be as simple as picking up the phone and calling family friends who have been working in a field related to your interests.” Oh boy, as if we all didn't know that already! Networking is encouraged but there's little relevant thought given to those who have no place to start. The CDO lists upwards of twenty classified-searching websites even though their own site states that only 12% of jobs are found online. It seems that more concern is placed in this less-successful form of finding jobs than the better method of networking. The job

I got this last summer was through my own research and contacts, which is precisely the way the Career Office suggests you should find a job. But this attitude suggests a disregard for student needs, as if you're only supposed to go to them as a last resort.

Kolby Yarnell pointed out in his letter that the CDO has never once written to him about providing students with help or advice in finding jobs. The CDO claims to have a mentoring program though I've yet to meet anyone currently talking to such a mentor. I remember Nicole giving me the e-mail of a woman who supposedly worked in publishing but I never got a reply to the letter I wrote her. Yarnell makes his best point when he says, “an ineffective career services department is only part of a larger culture within the college that disdains career oriented ambitions.” Bard's attitude towards the job-market-motivated is perhaps the larger problem here. While this enlightened education is all fun and games, there is still the fact that once in the workforce, the Bard student seems to be at a disadvantage than those graduating from other institutions.

Look, students don't want someone to hold our hand through the process of finding a job. The preference is for self-sufficiency. But right now the college does a mediocre job at preparing its graduates.

The administration can reach out into the modern market and its dearth of alumni to burst the bubble and help usher in reality. As of now, it seems the college is satisfied to throw its students into the water with no real acknowledgement, at least until it comes asking for money four years later. C'mon Bard, give us the chance to start climbing our way into significance.

A Response from the Career Development Office

BY APRIL KINSER, DIRECTOR

I want to take this opportunity to respond to Mischa Nachtigal's article with a positive focus on what Career Development does and our goals for the future. To point by point refute his complaints, or defend my office in print without talking with him in person, is, in my opinion, an uncivil way of engaging that can actually cause more harm than good and ultimately is unproductive. I invited Miska last spring to talk with me, but he chose not to. My door is always open to him and any student that wants to talk with me about career services.

Since I arrived in 2003 I have been a strong advocate for the Career Development Office (CDO) and the expansion of its staffing and services. This has included moving the office out of the basement of Stone Row to a more professional and central location, expanding its resources and career events, and increasing staffing hours. I have a vision for CDO and I will continue to advance these goals to support and improve career services for all Bard students. My on-going conversations about CDO's expansion with the administration are positive and encouraging. I welcome suggestions and invite students to meet with me to talk about concerns or needs related to the Career Development Office. Please e-mail me at kinser@bard.edu or telephone me at 758-7177 if you would like to schedule an appointment. Your thoughts and ideas about CDO are of great interest to me and I am eager to engage in a one-on-one discourse with anyone about our office and the services we provide.

Although it was disappointing that two vocal dissenters chose to go to press without discussing their concerns with me directly, I can say that the vast majority of Bard students, alumni/ae and faculty, thank us on a daily basis for our 30-40 annual career events and for all the services we provide. For their support we are very grateful. Delivering both new and diverse career services are foremost on my mind and will continue to be.

One of our jobs is to work with you, point you in the right direction and coach you through the search. Finding a job or internship takes a tremendous amount of research, energy and work on your part and we will help you in this effort. We are working on the spring 2008 calendar of career events and invite you to visit our website at www.collegecentral.com/bard to review it and access leads to employers and mentors. Keep in mind that we also offer advising for graduate and professional schools and fellowships and scholarships.

In conclusion I would like to remind us all of the importance of engaging in civil discourse. If the issue is to implement positive change let us show respect for each other by discussing policies and ideas and not people. Let us use a civil tone in voice and written word. If we have a personal gripe with someone let us have the courage to approach the person first before going to print. Civility should be a foundation for each of us as we live our lives, advocate for change, and manage our careers.

We encourage you to work with us and to come by our office in Campus Center 201. Be well, stay positive, and let us help you navigate the challenging job of finding a job.

how very 2007:

Why We are Just About Ready for a Two-State Solution

BY SARAH LEON

I understand the view of the state of Israel today as the big bad international criminal armed with all the weapons and money the US has to offer, while the Palestinian people remain the freedom-starved underdogs awaiting physical and political redemption. The oppressors oppress with violent military action; the oppressed retaliate with guerilla warfare. But as Edward Said has duly noted, the Palestinians have become victims of the victims, lest we forget that the Jews were once victims as well. The state of Israel was born in a coalescence of the Zionism that saved so many of them, as well as political motivations by various international superpowers.

And no one would argue that the Palestinians have not turned out the victims of that coalescence. But the Palestinians are not just innumerable casualties at the hands of Zionists militants; they were forsaken by a series of international political systems that implicates the world at large, including their Arab Nationalist brethren. Unfortunately, political agendas wage infamously bloody battles and the Palestinians came out the losers. The Palestinians naturally do not deserve to be oppressed, policed, given second-class citizenship Apartheid-style or any other such violated human right as Israel might offer to them; they need a state of their own. But for Palestinians or any of us to argue that Israel needs to "give Palestinians back their land" is not a legitimate claim in any political sense. In a metaphysical sense, yes; no one can deny that many people lost their individual homes and what they considered to be their generational homeland – this was their tragedy, Al-Nakba. But their plight becomes the more pathetic when we acknowledge that the Palestinians have not exercised self-determination or political autonomy over the land of Palestine at any time in modern history.

In 1516, the area was wrested by the Turks of the Ottoman Empire from its century-old Mamluk rule. 300 years later, Palestine was then taken over by the British-commanded Egyptian Expeditionary Force upon the empires' dissolution in 1917. The land existed in anarchic limbo for a couple of years, a haphazardly policed military state, before The British Mandate of Palestine was enacted under the legitimization

of the Allied Supreme Council (USA, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) in 1920. Palestine remained under a tenuous British grip which began to deteriorate over the next 28 years because of a host of problems, summed up as economic/military drainage and worldwide disfavor of the British policy which prevented Holocaust survivors from taking refuge in Palestine (many were turned away to internment camps in Cyprus or even back to Germany in one particularly tragic exodus in 1947).

Here I will pause to introduce the role of Zionism is about to play in the construction of the state of Israel. The historical movement of Zionism was fathered by the Hungarian Theodore Herzl in the late 1800's. He concluded that anti-Semitism was so prevalent that Jews would never fully be assimilated with socio-political acceptance into their countries. He published *Der Judenstaat*, which argued for a Jewish state with Jewish sovereignty. For Herzl, the necessity of a Jewish state had nothing to do with the tenants of Judaism as a religion, but with the problematic persecution of Jews as a cultural group the world over. The necessity of a Jewish state thus lay in protection for individual Jews from anti-Semitism. He did not specify where the state should be or demand Palestine as a homeland, but rather speculated theoretically. *Der Judenstaat* was published in 1896, and Herzl died in 1904.

While Herzl had waxed philosophic about the necessity of the Jewish state, it was the British government which posited that such a state should come to exist in the space that was their Palestine at the time. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, a classified statement by the British government, prospected Zionist plans for a national home for Jewish people in Palestine under the conditions that nothing should be done to harm the rights of those already living in the area. Interestingly enough, most of its proponents, including Arthur Balfour, were not Jewish. Zionism apparently "made sense" to a host of political leaders, be it for anti-Semitic, politically strategic, or humanitarian reasons. Meanwhile Zionism was acting as a sort of savior throughout the Middle East already, as Mizrahi Jews continued to be politically persecuted and violently revolted against in a series of pogroms in their home countries, such as the

Farhud in Iraq in 1941. Thus the Palestine territory saw a slow but steady trickle of Jewish immigrants in the early twentieth century.

Mounting tensions among original Arab inhabitants, predominately Muslim, and the influx of Jewish Zionists in the British-abandoned region became too much for the UN to ignore, and they decided to take action in the form of the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine. This plan partitioned roughly equal-sized "Jewish" and "Arab" states, with the greater Jerusalem area to be under international control. The plan passed in the UN in November 1947 with a two-thirds majority. Jewish leaders naturally agreed; Palestinian Arab leaders, feeling robbed of their land, rejected their first chance at sovereignty in history and refused negotiations. When the British Mandate officially expired on May 14, 1948, Zionist politicians declared their independence as a Jewish state under a Declaration of Independence for the State of Israel. The Declaration was recognized within minutes by the United States, and days after by several other European and African countries, as well as Iran.

A certain four Middle Eastern countries were extremely unhappy with the birth of the new state. Neighboring Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria attacked young Israel in the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. In the 1949 Armistice Agreements, Israel angled military prowess and political positioning to cow these four countries into agreeing to borders and cease-fires. This is the point that has historically marked the birth of Israel.

It is important to note that although the Armistice Agreement partitioned territory specifically for Arab Palestinians, no one asked the Palestinians what they thought about the new agreements pertaining to their land parcels in the new Gaza and the West Bank. It's a shame that, in the wake of the same Arab Nationalism that preached about pan-Arabism as a counter-force to Western persecution, Arab neighbors let their Palestinian brethren down. The Palestinians were victimized first at the hands of their own people, who didn't fight for a space for those without sovereignty. Just goes to show that people are out to fight for their individual interests.

So in reality Palestinians, not the Arab

world, are the historical victims, the perpetual underdogs, and just one of many groups of persecuted peoples worldwide without a physical nation-state to call their homeland. The time has certainly come for Israel to re-visit the original Zionist declaration, the Balfour agreement, which speculated for a Jewish state that left original settlers alone and didn't treat them as second-class citizens. Israel and Zionism are a self-sustaining nation-state and an ideology, respectively, and need to be disentangled as such. Jews have historically suffered persecution, as have Palestinians. Jews clung to their Zionism, Palestinians to their selfhood and even Arab nationalism (inexplicitly). One of these groups was fortunate enough to finagle a nation-state based on their ideological construct, and a host of mistrust and misunderstanding ensued.

But in the year 2007, over 60 years since Israel's self-admittedly misguided Zionist declaration and violence toward the Palestinians, who's to say it's too late to close the chapters on past injustices and work toward moving on? Who really wants to hold onto a self-righteous history of persecution and negativity, especially when a compromise is desired on both ends? While Israel was the cause of the Palestinian Question, they can ultimately be an even more productive solution when they allow them their long-overdue sovereignty. According to a Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 25 conducted in September 2007 (www.pcpsr.org), 57% of Palestinians agree with a two state solution in which Palestine and Israel will mutually recognize and respect each other as sovereign nations.

The Annapolis talks recently are the most obvious blinking signs in the direction of this popular opinion, and both Abbas and Olmert have publicly professed their willingness to work toward this goal. The territory where Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank exist today has historically been a political and physical battle ground, marred by the blood and tears of exile. But new generations distance old hurts, and heated intentions from 60 years ago have understandably simmered down: time is the universal healer. To be cynical now would be to rip the scab off a wound that has just finally begun to heal. Perhaps maybe now the sides are ready for something like the UN Partition that was speculated in the past. Nothing can make up for the humanitarian losses that both Jews and Palestinians have experienced over the years at the hands out outside forces and each other, but I for one can only be happy that people are considering laying weapons to rest in favor of thinking about productive compromises for the future.

letters to the editor

Dear Bard Observer,

I would like to thank the Bard Community for its attention to the first real steps that the Bard Biodiesel Co-op has made towards the production of biodiesel during the work party on Sunday the 4th. Since then, we have made more progress and may be producing before spring. I have just a few things to add in response to the last article that was featured in the Observer's Science section about the new Co-op.

The co-op has strong community support; the aforementioned article suggested otherwise. A good twelve people came to donate their Sunday afternoon to the cause, while many more who were desirous to help out were at the Power Shift conference on climate change in Washington D.C.

As to the significance of the co-op to the community, it is true that there are only a handful of diesel vehicles on campus that can take advantage of the co-op, but its construction has already inspired many students to think about making their next automobile a diesel. Furthermore, the co-op is also going to open up to local community members after a short Bard-only trial run.

Beyond the availability of cheap and 'greener' fuel, the co-op has a larger purpose. Systemic energy problems require systemic solutions, and while our single biodiesel processor is not a systematic solution in itself, it establishes the foundation for one: a network of home-brewers across the country, turning every city's waste oil into

cleaner-burning, recycled fuel. The spread of this movement does approach systemic impact. It is this vision that the Bard Biodiesel Co-op is working towards—an especially important task at this time when biodiesel seems poised to be highjacked by big business, government, and mega-farmers into another wasteful farm subsidy following the model of ethanol.

It is my hope that Bard and local community members will be inspired by the Bard Biodiesel Co-op to start their own homebrewing operations and publicly advocate for this energy alternative. The enthusiastic response that I've received so far is encouraging. Two grand might seem like a lot for the biodiesel experiment, but this one-time price tag can be put into perspective by our energy woes and Bard's high yearly outlays in infrastructure investment and maintenance. Given the co-op's service to the generations of Bard graduates to come, it is my firm opinion that this is money well spent.

I encourage everyone interested to contact me or attend future work parties.

Jack Woodruff

Dear Editor,

I have recently noticed a new and exciting form of public discourse emerging on Bard campus. I of course refer to the recent string of emails headed "inquiry." These emails were sent out to every club head on campus. I am glad to see that such discourse survives in some form

despite the ruthlessly censored Announce emails. They have yet to send out any of the invitations to my club: the Bard chapter of the American Front to Colonize Savage Lands. The email string was a veritable showdown between one Noah Odebusiam and the Treasurer Ashfak Kabeer over the alleged cutting of late checks by Kabeer. Don't try to get added to the Club head listserve now, though. Even this bastion of free advertisement has recently withered. Those shady and tyrannical sheriffs Andrea Conner and Marshall Guthrie have quashed this discourse just before its delightfully violent zenith. A pity.

But whether these two really had the guts to carry on is rather in question. In one of the later emails Mr. Kaveer began to resemble some politically correct liberal model of civility that in the wake of his earlier, more powerful prose was frankly disgusting: "I sincerely hope we can work together in [the] future and figure out ways to communicate with each other in a congenial way." Clearly at this point, he was already being molested by those anti-American despots Conner and Guthrie! Just look at some of the earlier discourse by Odebusiam describing Kaveer's rhetorical prowess: "I do not want you to...come down [on other clubs] like the hammer of God." or this by Kaveer about "Odebusiam's position: "It is extremely hard for me to write you a reply when you are arguing from such a horrific point of view." Zing! These men are part of a grand tradition: They report on each other so that you can decide. Now that's a system of

checks and balances!

The healthy competition that is herein evidenced is the lifeblood of capitalism! And I think these men know just how lucky they are to be locked in discursive combat. Mr. Odebusiam admitted in one of his addresses, "I admire you for your unceasing arrogance," and I think we can all agree that this is something for which both men deserve our enduring admiration. If not for their courage in sending each part of their verbal combat to every clubhead, no one would know anything of these men's true nature as warrior-poets. I have taken a leaf out of their book and ensured the publication of my own humble piece by filling the Observer email box. I have sent the newspaper nine hundred copies of this letter, so other, less worthy, letters and articles would be bounced back. If your letter to the editor was not published, it is either for this reason or because you lack the style and sophistication of Mr. Odebusiam, Mr. Kaveer, and myself.

If there is one thing we should learn from the art of advertising and reality television (surely the intended field of the myriad arts majors at Bard) it is that strong language and ad hominum attacks are the way to sway an audience. I'd personally like to see more powerful rhetoric in my inbox. Thank you Mist'ers Kaveer and Odebusiam for trying to set such a high standard for public discourse at Bard! Sirs, I haven't heard such delightfully vigorous speech since the Nixon tapes were made public. God Bless you!

Adam Narque

what is student space and why do we need it?

BY BASHA SMOLEN

The need for student space is one of the most poorly defined on-campus issues at Bard. Perhaps this is because students never convene as a cohesive body, and perhaps because they have no place of their own to do so, there is little consensus as to what a student space would mean to Bard's campus, how it should take shape, or even whether or not students actually need it. The history of student space at Bard is riddled with rumors and the personal agendas of many students and administrators. The voices of many student groups are also conspicuously absent from the debate. In this editorial, I will lay out my own version of the student space chronicles, not as a spokesperson for any particular group on campus, but as they are most pertinent to the situation in which we find ourselves today.

Many people have expressed confusion at the idea of student space as a basic need, or question how a student-run space is different from the spaces designated for shared student and faculty use. Dorms are the buildings intended most exclusively for student use, followed by Kline, the Bertelsmann Campus Center, the various art and music studios on campus, and the academic buildings. Because it is the college's responsibility to see to the health and safety of its students, these facilities, along with places such as Health Services and Student Accounts are the first priority of the administration. Beyond that the college concerns itself, and rightly so, with academics, and students and teachers alike use the various academic buildings on campus for seminars and lectures.

All of the aforementioned buildings are college-run spaces to which students have partial access. However, students are guests in these spaces. They are borrowing these parts of campus. Even on-campus housing is run by the Office of Residence Life, and is experienced by students as a space with which they should, and must, create temporary and transient relationships. Dorm spaces are impersonal and located in geographically separate spheres of the campus. Students feel little personal ownership of the places they inhabit, and therefore little responsibility toward them.

The argument is sometimes made that students have a Campus Center, and that this should satisfy the need for student space. There are multiple reasons why this is an illogical response. The first is that the Campus Center is physically cold and impersonal. The rooms are empty and generic, the lighting is harsh and the sitting space designed to encourage temporary seating. The physical layout discourages this building from being a social space or meeting space – the Campus is virtually a long hallway, ushering students along past the facilities designated for their use.

Furthermore, the Campus Center is home to an international bookstore chain, a federal post office, an externally managed café, and multiple administrative offices. The Campus Center is in fact the only building on campus that houses both government (post office) workers, and multiple international corporations, as well as student services. And as the MPR is not a student-run space, it is often reserved for events run by the college's administrators, monopolizing a performance and event space that students might otherwise use. This is not to say that the students do not appreciate the resources the Campus Center provides – it is to say that the Campus Center does not satisfy the need for an autonomous student space on campus.

A student-run space is a building which all students have equal ownership over and equal access to. The ideal building would be one that housed both social and work space, so that student groups of all natures would benefit. Club offices, student press, student government, and communal meeting rooms would all inhabit the same sphere of campus, bringing club heads and active club members in close contact with each other, and giving even students who do not participate in social clubs a social space which these clubs share. A library or record room would provide students with a permanent and safe location to store old publications, club files, and films and books, so that even as club members change there is a physical space tied to the intellectual and social legacy of individual student groups, and the student population as a whole.

This space would ideally be a safe and comfortable place for students of minority demographics to spend time, without alienating these groups from each other and the student body as a whole by designating disparate parts of the college for their use. It is known that the current student spaces on campus such as SMOG and the Root Cellar are utilized by a self-selecting group of students. This group of students generally does not include students of color or international students, despite at least moderate efforts among the club heads of these spaces to diversify student use. I do not think the problem is one of exclusion. It comes rather from a lack of interest or investment in the current spaces on campus. This imagined new student space is a building in which all students would be connected, despite their differences, through shared resources and physical location.

This abstract building is a very unlikely prospect, for more than just financial reasons. Administrators frequently challenge the fact that students lack spaces to book events, or fail to recognize that current facilities like SMOG and the Root Cellar are embarrassingly inadequate for accommodating many of the creative and even prestigious events students organize for their peers. It is often stated by administrators, Paul Marianthal and Leon Botstein most notably, that requests for autonomous student space comes from a place of entitlement and spoiled self-importance. Other administrators, such as Erin Cannan, add that students have not illustrated that there is a need for more space on campus.

I have many responses to this statement. Even though the students of Bard consistently illustrate that they can do fantastic things even without an autonomous space in which to plan and execute events, their request for a much-needed student-run student center should still be given consideration. Students are not demanding a building to hold unregistered parties. They are not looking for a way to spend the Convocation Fund irresponsibly, and they are not ignorant of the difficulty of fundraising for a building designated solely for extracurricular activities. I feel that we have proved our real and basic need for a new building by adopting and transforming many inadequate spaces (SMOG, the Root Cellar, the Old Gym black box theater), into much-needed even space. Even these facilities are over-booked.

I would like to encourage those who see the request for student space as frivolous to think about new ways to examine student life at Bard. In the meeting President Botstein recently held with the Student Life Committee, he vehemently contested the fact that Bard students feel a lack of community at the college. He cited the reports of multiple satisfied parents as the basis for his conviction. While the Student Life Committee was very appreciative of Botstein having taken the time to meet with them, I can attest to my own frustration at hearing the president of my college tell me how my peers and I feel about our own daily social experience.

It is easy for an administrator to compartmentalize sections of this institution and evaluate how each department is serving the student body – to look at the state of dormitories, the success of the counseling center, the upkeep of the grounds, or the adequacy of any particular academic department. But the daily lived experience of a Bard student is a hard viewpoint to adopt from an administrative level. The administrative perspective on this issue is very distant and removed – but the perspective of the student is a peripatetic one, an experiential one, and, often, it involves extracurricular dissatisfaction. When students are alienated from their lived landscape they become alienated from the college itself.

The social and intellectual geography of this campus has the potential to be transformed by a new building. The realization of this building would allow students to feel the responsibilities of ownership over part of their campus and a connection with their peers. It would mark the beginnings of the legacy of institutional memory so absent in my personal experience here – connecting students not only to their classmates, but also to generations of Bard students to come. A new student building is not



Religion, Skepticism, and Science in 2007

BY MIKE LEVINE

Lakshmi Tatma was born to a Hindu couple in a small village in Bihar, India. Praised as the reincarnation of the four-armed god of wealth because of her four arms and four legs, Lakshmi Tatma was believed to be a miracle. Hundreds of the Hindu inhabitants of India sought out this child, hoping to pray to Lakshmi and receive blessings. Believers were planning to build a temple in her honor.

However, not everyone saw Lakshmi as a divine being. Her extraneous limbs were actually attributed to a parasitical twin who had stopped development while in the womb, leaving Lakshmi with extra arms, legs, and a second torso. Because of this rare medical condition, many believed that she was a freak; multiple circuses tried to convince her parents to sell her, and eventually Lakshmi and her family went into hiding. After searching for a surgeon for several months, the family found a doctor who was willing to both perform and fund the surgery. The removal of the parasitical twin was highly criticized and deemed sacrilegious by those who believed that Lakshmi was divine.

The events that have unfolded in India depict a greater issue that is present in religions worldwide. The population, as a whole, has been moving away from religion and towards secularism. Hundreds of years ago, Lakshmi would have been praised across India as a goddess, and her status as divine would not have been questioned. It would seem that as civilization advances in science, it has become increasingly skeptical about religion. People search for answers in numbers, and no longer trust religion to explain even the most miraculous of events. Creation, the most mysterious of subjects, is often attributed to the Big Bang Theory. People accept a theory, which is as equally unexplainable as any other theory, because they put an ignorant stock in science. Yes, it could be argued that science has begun to explain the aspects of the world that religion inadequately and incorrectly attempts to explain. However, that does not mean that science should replace religion. The current laws of physics do not facilitate the idea of creation; ideas such as eternity and creation defy the most fundamental laws. Thus, it is apparent that as a society, we should look at not only religion, but also at science with a hint of skepticism.

The general move towards secularism poses a huge threat to the survival of religion in the ever-advancing technological world. As the population becomes more skeptical of the truths presented by religion, the population also becomes increasingly unlikely to be responsive to events that may have been described as divine or miraculous. Things that cannot be explained by science are now often perceived as deceptions, exaggerations, or sometimes have even claimed to simply have never happened. This is obviously extremely damaging to religion. There is no way for religion to convince our skeptic society to believe

when we are completely blind to the only events that may still be described through the divine. It can be said with confidence that if Jesus Christ was to be reincarnated in 2007, not only would he be imprisoned for some kind of treason, but would most likely be rejected by most Christians. In the year 2007, gods are rendered mortal through medicine, silenced by science, and belittled as blasphemous.

The direction that religion has taken is slightly ironic, however. Pascal's Wager, an extremely controversial argument for the belief in God, seems to have persuaded many to become pseudo-religious. Pascal's Wager states that a person who believes in God gains infinitely if God does exist and loses nothing if He does not exist, and a person that does not believe in God loses infinitely if God does exist and loses nothing if He does not exist.

People accept a theory, which is as equally unexplainable as any other theory, because they put an ignorant stock in science.

Therefore, it is only logical to take the better bet, and believe in God. Pascal's Wager was largely criticized because to believe in God for the sake of a bet is not true belief, and thus, is not ultimately rewarding. However, it would seem that many people today go through the

motions of attending religious services and receiving religious sacraments without a true belief in their religion and religion's scriptures. It would seem that the reason society is moving towards secularism and not atheism is because people are beginning to accept the better bet that Pascal described. Murderers and drug dealers are seen tattooed with crosses and rosary beads. Terrorists misrepresent the Islamic texts to convince followers to perform suicidal attacks on innocent people, yet still pray daily. People are beginning to become increasingly skeptical of religion, but still want cover on the off-chance that they are wrong.


Is there an introverted feeling of guilt for ignoring the Higher Power? More importantly, why isn't the belief in science being seen as a wager in the same light atheism is? What about the off-chance that science is wrong? By taking the bet that science is right, not religion, are we sentencing our souls to eternal damnation? Perhaps, before we make the wrong wager, we should reassess our views on the real values of science and religion in our world; after all...it's just our souls that are on the line.

student labor dialogue 

POTLUCK DINNER

DINNER

 Thursday, Dec. 13th

 5pm Faculty Dining Room

bring food to share!

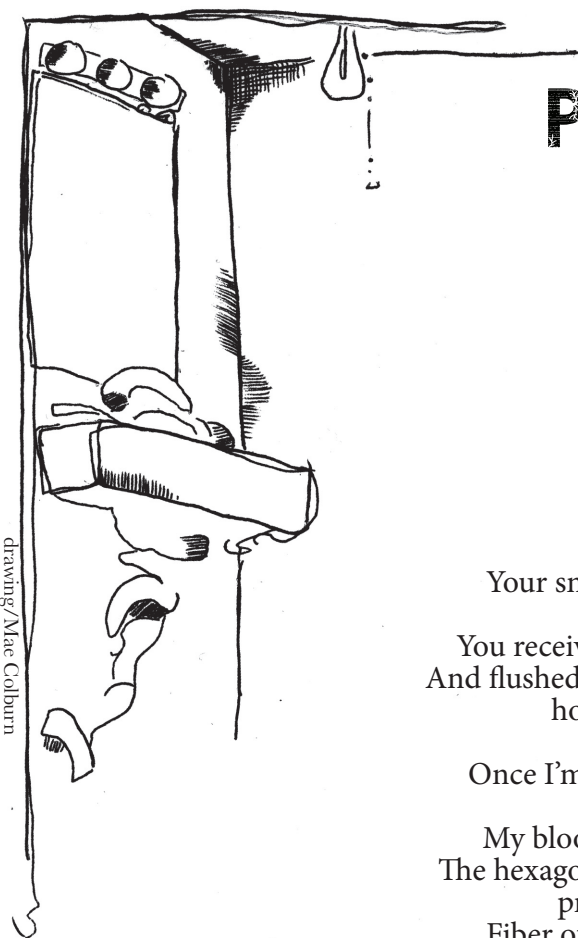
 all members of the bard community are welcome

 questions? email sld@bard.edu

a health or safety necessity; it is in no way a mandatory asset for a student to successfully graduate this college, but I have begun to think that having club offices, student government offices, and safer social spaces for a diverse student body is in intellectual necessity for a student's campus experience. Bard is a school which prides itself on intellectual engagement, and which claims to be sensitive to the needs of its diverse student body. Students need a space where they feel communal ownership, not out of selfishness, frivolity, or self-entitlement, but as a basic requirement for true social and intellectual maturity.

PLEASE RECYCLE. SUPPORT STUDENT SPACE.

drawing/Mae Colburn



eau de toilette

Anonymous

Your smooth porcelain skin,
hypnotizing eye,
You receive me pale and ready.
And flushed, whisper soft when I
hold to your shoulders.
Knees buckled.
Once I'm quivering and spent
I stagger from you,
My blood electric with wine.
The hexagonal tiles of your skirt
pressed into my cheek.
Fiber of my fortitude frayed,
I retire from the sanctuary
of your clandestine
stall.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

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newspapers, objectivity, and other inaccuracies

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[THE OPINIONS VOICED HERE DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE CURRENT OBSERVER STAFF.]

AN EDITORIAL BY MICHAEL HAGGERTY

ABRIDGED VERSION

A former editor once said to me, "I don't think there's ever been a real newspaper at Bard." To some extent, I think he was right. The Observer, over its 38-year existence, has never really qualified as a newspaper. Partially this is because it has never come out regularly - except for brief stints in the late 60s and mid 80s-for it to be a truly up-to-date publication. Nor have its contents been consistent. There's always that illogical rant of a column or bizarre, make-no-sense art review that disqualifies the Observer as a 'traditional newspaper.'

And if there ever did come a time when the Observer looked and felt like, say for example, the New York Times, it probably wouldn't matter. Just like Bard's curriculum and architecture, the Observer gets a make-over every four years. Out with the old, in with the new-but no one really seems to notice.

For a school whose students and faculty aren't all that interested in journalism, I find it a bit ironic that 'newspapers' have recently become the hot topic for Kline conversations. If there 'never was a newspaper at Bard,' then there certainly is now. In fact, there's six of them. Now the New York Times, USA Today and the Poughkeepsie Journal are all distributed for free in Bard dorms. If that's not enough, you've got the Bard Observer, the Outside World or Bard's most recent start-up, the Free Press. And if you're still hungry for more...there's always on reserve that mainstay of Bard College, the Gossip Mill, whose editors have of late been cranking out all sorts of exaggerated misinformation and muckraking, particularly with regards to the Observer and the Free Press.

So, you're probably wondering what really happened among the staff of the Observer and why several of them decided to leave and start their own paper. And you probably want me to tell you. Well... There's probably a thousand different versions of 'what happened' floating around out there and any attempt I might make to tell the 'true story' would only add to that mess. And I think it would be inappropriate to reveal the details. I don't think this conflict between individual students has any business being reported on in a school publication. But I do think the community deserves to know at least the nature of the disagreement and what this all means for the Observer's future.

For some time, there was discussion among the staff about what 'direction' the paper should go in. Some students felt the Observer should strive for hard-edged, 'objective' journalism and a professional veneer. Others felt that the paper might work toward a more critical, 'features' oriented type of writing. The debate really centered around the question, "Is the Observer a magazine or a newspaper?" and we spent a considerable amount of time dwelling on trivial matters such as whether the cover of the paper should remain as is or mimic traditional layout and whether we should stay in the basement of Tewksbury or move to the Campus Center, where we could have a more 'public presence.'

Now, this portrayal of the conflict is horribly inadequate and relies on completely reductive terms that don't fully reveal the complexity of our conversations. But, in a way, this is exactly the point: the debate evolved into a set of binary oppositions - newspaper/magazine, professional/amateur-that eventually appeared irreconcilable with each other. The Observer became an 'either/or' patient whose treatment couldn't be agreed upon by the doctors.

'Either or' is a dangerous perspective to take into the world that ultimately leads to factions. This is what happened with the Observer. My teachers tell me this sort of dualistic thought was abandoned when we left behind those dark ages known as 'modernism.' Apparently not though, for we now have either the Observer or the Free Press.

While it seemed like we had reached a point where all of the divergent 'visions' of the paper were being equally accepted and expressed in the finished product, some students felt like one 'vision' was given precedent over another. Although it appeared as though we had crossed an enormous barrier--that of accepting difference--, we had in fact not. I honestly did not expect those editors to leave the Observer and I'm saddened by the fact that they felt like they could no longer work with the rest of the staff. At the same time, the need or desire for such a break was never expressed by those who left.

While the question of the Observer's 'direction' is a very important one, I think that all of us approached it incorrectly, starting with the dichotomy

that was established surrounding the terms 'newspaper' and 'magazine.' In my opinion, this distinction is a completely arbitrary one that doesn't even have that much relevance today-or at least it shouldn't to intelligent people like ourselves. The Observer is not going to exclude a 'news' article just because it's not in 'pyramid form', at the same time, the Observer will encourage a writer to follow the rules of traditional journalism when it is appropriate (Don't think we don't know them!)

The Observer's goal is to publish well-written pieces, not to bludgeon everything we get with a copy-editing cookie-cutter. There is an art to the rant, just as there is a methodological skill to writing a well-balanced culture piece. It is the job of the Observer's editors to work with the writers to produce the best publication we can; but it is also the job of students to realize that a 'first draft' is not enough and that sometimes you really have to struggle with a piece to make it good.

Now this all may sound like a lot of boring journalism speak. This whole 'controversy' might be entirely of no interest to you. "Observer? Free Press? Who cares." Well, if you really don't care, I wish you would for a couple of reasons.

Journalism is a tricky business and it tends to fail a lot of the time; people are misrepresented in the press again and again. In a perfect world, 'objectivity' would serve its purpose and the truth would be told every time. But that never happens. The media tends to skew, distort and blow out of proportion all sorts of things, often to the detriment of peoples' lives. While I don't think this sort of thing would ever happen at Bard, it's always a possibility when journalism is involved.

I'm not saying that we need to suddenly scrutinize every student publication for inaccuracies and misrepresentations. What I am saying is that students who are thinking about writing for a student publication and those who already do need to be conscious of the problems involved with reporting and representation and realize that journalism is not simply a matter of either 'objectivity' or fiction, but a complex practice that needs to be taken very seriously. These issues don't just concern the editors of Bard's various publications, but really affect everyone.

No one on the Observer's staff has the

right or authority to report on another student; there's no possible way we can correctly represent each other's lives and projects. What the Observer can and will do is listen to students, understand what they're saying and work together with them so they can represent themselves.

Also, I'd like it to be very clear that the Observer is in no way opposed to two or three or a hundred different publications at Bard. The presence of two 'major' student newspapers can only serve to drive the quality of the publications upwards. The Observer will not enter into a competition with the Free Press (particularly in terms of advertising). The Observer will neither object to students writing for both papers (in fact, this might lead to some interesting writing), nor will we try to 'scoop' the Free Press. If there ever was a binary opposition between the Observer and the Free Press, we're annulling it right now.

Still, some of you may be wondering what direction the Observer is going in. I honestly cannot say. This semester the Observer will strive to come out regularly and to publish interesting and well-written pieces. How vague is that?

If you ever have the time, have a look at the student publication online archive. It will be very evident that the Observer's identity really does change every four or so years. The Observer's form and content isn't determined by some master plan, but by the ideas of the individuals who commit their time to it, and right now there is a group of very dedicated, very intelligent and very diverse people working on the paper. So the Observer is really going in about twelve different directions which all converge at the same point every other Monday.

Newspaper? Magazine? I really don't care so long as it's good. The Observer is not going to limit its options, but will accept the challenge that difference presents. Objective journalism, serious news analysis, critical reviews and controversial opinions all have their place in the Observer, but so does the bizarre, the artsy, the cynical, the et cetera-if you know what I mean. If someone can read an issue of the Observer from cover to cover without laughing at least once, then we have truly failed.

So, what really happened?

I don't know. This is just one version of that story.