Dear Bard,

We hope you enjoy Olliphaunt, a special holiday edition of the Observer. Regular newspaper coverage will resume after Thanksgiving break, with one more issue coming out before intercession.

This semester we’ve begun to learn how to put together a newspaper. We’ve tried to live up to our goals of supporting student endeavors, academic and otherwise, and providing reliable coverage of news pertinent to the Bard community. Next semester we aim to put out five news issues again, as well as a special end-of-the-year issue that we will use to raise money for a non-profit organization dedicated to empowerment through journalism or literacy.

Among other things, Olliphaunt is a look back. We include here pieces reflecting on 2007 (bests in dance, music, agriculture, politics), as well as the most recent letters to the editor. There are also games and puzzles to keep you occupied on long train rides and in busy airports.

It’s been wonderful seeing the newspaper as a forum begin to take shape, and we’d like to thank you for helping to make that possible. Please continue to be active on campus, whether that means writing letters to the editor, booking (or attending) SMOG shows and other student-organized events, supporting Student Government, or joining one of many other active student groups. This campus and our time here at Bard is what we make it.

We wish you safe and happy Thanksgiving travels and a productive and enjoyable semester’s end.

Sincerely,
The Editors

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NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28TH (7 PM, OBS OFFICE)
DEADLINE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6TH
ISSUE COMES OUT: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12TH

THE OBSERVER IS LOOKING FOR FRESHMAN EDITORS.
THERE ARE THREE POSITIONS AVAILABLE - ALL REQUIRE A WEEKLY COMMITMENT OF AROUND ONE TO TWO HOURS STARTING SPRING SEMESTER. IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN GETTING MORE INVOLVED WITH THE NEWSPAPER NOW IS YOUR CHANCE.
EMAIL OBSERVER@BARD.EDU FOR MORE INFORMATION. APPLICATIONS ARE DUE DECEMBER 15TH.

Endangered Species: a mini coloring book

gorilla

grizzly bear

black-footed ferret

young burrowing owl
2007 product recalls: word search

By Rachel Meade

2007 has been a watershed year for product recalls. According to the Consumer’s Union Report, as of October of 2007 over thirty million pounds of ground beef were recalled. Concern over food safety had over twenty million toys recalled, most commonly for containing excess lead. While many cite poor standards of product control in China, whose exports to the US have skyrocketed in recent years, the blame ultimately lies with federal institutions such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Instead of expanding along with the growing import market, these institutions have repeatedly cut funding due to complaints by taxpayers, who expect these agencies to protect them from entering the market, these institutions have repeatedly cut funding due to complaints by taxpayers, who expect these agencies to protect them from the harm.

ConAgra Foods Inc. recalled 326 million pounds of Peter Pan peanut butter due to Salmonella contamination.

Ann House of Nuts Inc. recalled over 23,000 packages of trail of trail mix because they contained glass fragments.

Toys “R” Us recalled 128,000 “Elite Operations” Toy Sets due to excessive levels of lead in the paint.

Mega Brands America Inc. recalled over four million Magna Magnetic Building Sets because of magnets coming loose and causing intestinal problems in children. For a similar magnet hazard, Mattel recalled more than seven million Polly Pocket Sets.

Simplicity Inc. recalled one million cubes made in China due to design defects that pose a strangulation hazard to babies; two infant deaths have been attributed to the cubes.

Dent Fresh USA, Inc. recalled 126,000 tubes of toothpaste imported from China because they contained DEG.

Hannaford said it is recalling all ground beef products produced by the The Topps Meat Company were recalled in September 2007 due to E. coli contamination.

Stone Meats Inc. recalled 11,000 pounds of ground beef for containing pieces of metal.

Natural Balance Pet Foods and several reports of burns.

Natural Balance Pet Foods recalled 326 million pounds of Topps Meat Company Beef due to E. coli contamination.

McNeill PPC recalled its Listerine mouth wash for microbial contamination.

Quong Hop & Co. of San Francisco, California recalled their tofu products due to contamination by Listeria monocytogenes, an organism responsible of sometimes fatal infections in the young and elderly.

Marvel Toys issued a recall of its Curious George Plush Dolls due to lead content contained in the doll’s paint.

Quoting Rain Beverage Company recalled their spring water for bromate contamination.

Importers direct wholesale mineral water from Armenia was recalled due to the presence of arsenic.

McNeill PPC recalled its Listerine mouthwash for microbial contamination.

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SUDOKU

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obs

observer

 reviewers

/ Ben Wlody

top five dances seen in summer 2007

BY NATALIE GOLBUFF

1. C. to C. (Close to Chuck) performed by the American Ballet Theater -- a tribute to the artist Chuck Close choreographed by Jorma Elo, music by Phillip Glass

2. Folding performed by Shen Wei Dance Arts -- choreographed by Shen Wei, music by John Tavener and Tibetan Buddhist Chant

3. Lickety-Split performed by Hubbard Street Dance Chicago -- choreographed by Alejandro Cerrudo, music by Devendra Banhart

4. Waiting performed by the Chelyabinks Contemporary Dance Theater -- choreographed by Vladamir and Olga Pona, sound collage

BY GRACE DWYER

JANUARY Absorb Those Numbers -- Maxine Stern
FEBRUARY Blue Sands -- Colleen
MARCH Dancing with Friends -- Julianna Barwick
APRIL Cut and Run -- Electrelane
MAY Sipping on the Sweet Nectar -- Jens Lekman
JUNE Boredom -- Clear Tigers
JULY A Sunday Smile -- Beirut
AUGUST Duplexes of the Dead -- The Fiery Furnaces
SEPTEMBER Bunny Ain't No Kind of Rider -- Of Montreal
OCTOBER A Picture of Our Torn Up Praise -- Phosphorescent
NOVEMBER Elsa -- The Valerie Project
DECEMBER No More -- Dirty Projectors

a year in music: 12 songs for 12 months

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5. Skylight performed students of the American Dance Festival's Past/Forward Program -- original choreography by Laura Dean, reset by Rodger Belman, live music requested by Laura Dean

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runners//
It's not quite the end of 2007 and the 2008 presidential election is already well under way... wait, what? The '08 race started right as the '06 election ended, didn't it? In our age of 24-hour news, when the next Wacko Jacko fails to present himself for the media's cameras, starting coverage of the next election two years in advance is apparently the fall-back story. Here are my favorite events of the current election cycle, with a couple non-presidential campaign topics thrown in for good measure:

6. Stephen Colbert's attempt to run for the presidency in South Carolina. The Stephen Colbert Facebook group broke one million members so quickly that national news organizations were interviewing the kid who created it. bonus: There doesn't seem to be evidence that they were actually acting on orders from the campaign of Barack Obama, but some of his supporters are the ones that kept Colbert off the ballot. Apparently a "new kind of politics" is great until it gets in your way.

5. I'd hoped that a Democratic Congress would at least force Washington to grind to a halt while the Republicans and Democrats went at each other's throats. But apparently Bush's threats to call the Democrats weak on terror still hold sway, and apparently stirring the shit-pot with Turkey over the Armenian genocide is more important than righting our own ship. File this one under "if I didn't laugh I'd cry."

4. Mitt Romney's Osama-Obama mix-up. "Actually, just look at what Osam — uh — Barack Obama, said just yesterday. Barack Obama calling on radicals, jihadists of all different types, to come together in Iraq. That is the battlefield. That is the central place, he said. Come join us under one banner." I'm mostly just befuddled that he actually had it right, stepped, reconsidered, and then decided that he meant to say "Barack Obama."

3. Rudy Giuliani's phone call during a speech to the NRA. "America's Mayor" interrupted the speech to take a call from his "wife"—quotes, because who the hell knows who was actually on the other end of the line. But Giuliani had an ace in the hole for getting out of this blunder: referring to his wife, he proffered the excuse that, "And quite honestly, since Sept. 11, most of the time when we get on a plane, we talk to each other and just reaffirm the fact that we love each other," he said. Never forget, indeed.

2. Back in October, Bush blasted Congress as having "the worst record in 20 years." Pot, meet kettle.

1. Ron Paul. Really, there's no punch line to this one. For me, as I've previously made known, Ron Paul's campaign is probably the single most exciting aspect of the current race. He may hold a few positions that I don't quite agree with, but I don't find them to be fatal flaws. Furthermore, they're actually his positions and not the positions that a focus group suggested he take, and because he actually talks substance, I know why he holds the views he does. And I'm clearly far from the only one fired up about him; a Ron Paul supporter, acting completely independent of the campaign, organized a fundraising drive that raised $4 million in one day on November 5!

So there you have it. Those are my favorite moments in politics in 2007. My apologies that the list doesn't come out to a nice, even ten. I wanted to at least get it up to seven so I could justify the seven entries as representing the seven rings given to the dwarves by Sauron in The Lord of the Rings, but alas, no such luck.

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BY LIZZIE MUNRO

10) Top Ten Signs That Your Child Is Drinking Alcohol

9) Top Ten Physically Modified People

8) Top Ten Worst Jobs in Science

7) Top Ten Signs You're a Fundamentalist Christian (as listed on EvilBible.com)

6) Top Ten Most Fascinating Urinals

5) Top Ten Strangest Lego Creations

4) Top Ten Theological Country Songs (including Kitty Wells, "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels")

3) Top Ten Cottage Communities

2) PETA's Top Ten Vegetarian-Friendly Ballparks

1) Top 10 Most Humiliating Pet Costumes (Judging By The Expressions of the Pet Models)
I also spent the most time in southern Spain. And that was only for the summers pale in comparison. I got to do everything I love: travel, write, and read…
#1 Farm Bill up for reauthorization.

The Farm Bill was first enacted during the Great Depression as a means to ensure that both farmers and consumers would have their needs met. The bill affects everything from the way we eat to the way we trade, carving out subsidies for farmers and providing food stamps for the poor. The bill, up for reauthorization every five years, has been subject to much hype this time around as consumers have become increasingly aware of the food they choose — a rising demand for natural and organic products and a growing consciousness of the ethics of consumption. As the bill is negotiated in the senate, farm and agriculture stories continue to make headlines.

#2 January:

Extreme cold weather in central and southern California threatens to destroy most of the billion-dollar citrus crop. Schwarzenegger declares a state of emergency in ten counties, and prices rise.

#3 January:

Wal-Mart accused of misleading customers by labeling non-organic foods as with its green ‘organic’ tag.

#4 March:

Increased demand for ethanol causes the price of corn to double. America’s great Corn Rush lures farmers around the country.

#5 March:

Honeybee deaths drive up the price of honey. Three-quarters of the world’s flowering plans require pollination to produce, fruit and vegetable production threatened.

#6 June:

Farms fund robots to replace migrant fruit pickers, a controversial move challenging the very existence of organizations such as the United Farm Workers.

#7 August:

Milk prices skyrocket; regions include a drought in Australia and a higher demand for corn-based ethanol fuel. Increased demand for corn pushes up costs for cattle feed, which is then added to the price of milk.

#8 September:

21.7 millions pounds of beef recalled, one of the largest meat recalls in U.S. history.

#9 November:

Hops shortage expected to raise the price of beer. Bad weather in Europe, an increase in the price of barley and a decrease in hops production hits microbreweries.

# 10 November:

The University of Tennessee and the state government explore switchgrass as a source of ethanol, the ultimate goal being “grassoline.”

SEWING THE SEEDS OF LOVE: TOP 10 IN AGRICULTURE

By Mae Colburn

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Dear Ms. Penstein,
I just received a call from a very polite Bard student asking for money for a new student space. This touched on something I feel quite strongly about, so I’m writing in the hopes that you will pass this along.

It strikes me that asking a 2003 grad for a donation in 2007 is probably common at most colleges and universities. Coming from Bard, I find it dismaying. Here’s why.

The Bard Career services department was (and according to the student I spoke to this evening, still is) an incompetent and useless arm during my time at Bard (1999-2003). I visited its offices almost a dozen times. No one ever helped me or anyone I knew. I produced more with much less effort, with our repeated appeals to their wisdom and advice. When I got internships, it was on my own. I got a job just before graduation, it was through a former Bard professor with whom I had developed a friendship.

In hindsight, it strikes me that not only does Bard Career services lack a motivated and well connected staff. It lacks knowledge of what Bard alumni/ae are doing in the world and the ability to put current students in contact with them.

I loved my time and Bard, however I feel that an ineffective career services department is only part of a larger culture within the college that disduces career oriented ambitions. While it feels fun to curse work and money when you’re twenty years old and living in the sticks, for an undergraduate institution, regardless of how liberal, to sympathize with such juvenile is ethically and financially irresponsible.

Perhaps the culture comes from higher up, from too few professors and administrators with serious experience outside the academy. The hiring of intellectuals like Ian Buruma and Daniel Mendezohn is promising. All would be excusable, though, if this very expensive private college in turn offered fruitful networking avenues. But that is simply not the case.

Four years out of school, I’ve worked as literary editor for a Manhattan based daily newspaper, and now as a staff magazine. I’ve learned a few things about how to find jobs and freelancing opportunities in journalism, and I’ve helped both friends and acquaintances. Never has a Bard career services employee called, emailed, or put a student in touch. None of the classmates I remain in contact with, whether artists, writers, or academics, have to my knowledge received such a call, either.

As grateful as I am to Bard for the education, my professional achievements, modest as they may be, have come in spite of the college. I was a bit more than a foot in at B&G once the cap falls. Until future Bards are better prepared for the years that follow graduation, I will not be giving the college my money.

Regards,
Kolby Yarnell
Associate Editor
Culture+Travel magazine

In response: “bard’s silent majority”

To the editor,
The quantity and quality of bile and venom spewed in last week’s Observer at a select few of our prestigious institution’s formers student left my head spinning. Could this really be? Could our wonderful campus really be home to minds so severely stunt by their own exclusion from the dirty, rotten globe we inhabit, that they could stand to be so blatantly and unashamedly condescending of their peers? This is the Bard Bubble, after all, and I suppose such offensive behavior is to be seen just as often as the criminal behavior it so vitally and crudely attempts to define.

The war on drugs sustains itself thanks to the same fear of the unknown which the war on terror exploits. To assume that such “bad apples” will simply disappear if we in fact allow them to escape our reach is deeply immoral, and more often serves to refine one’s knowledge of sense to be found. One that is truly inexcusably counterproductive is the claim to have benefited from drug use is an empty one, with such virtue from this piece against the “unfit”, the rotten scoundrels who compli our misguided desire for prestige, which most severely wounds my profound respect for our student body, and perhaps more generally for the American population. How far we have traveled down the road of intolerance and paranoia, that we could speak so basely of our peers, our equals in spirit and fact, the very same people whom so many of us, it seems the authors failed to note, have learned to trust and respect? To expect such despicable behavior of Bard’s “silent majority” is to assume deep cultural ignorance of us, and I cannot allow such pretentious, petty minds to define us wholesale. Your prerogative is yours to nurture and affirm, but to stereotype our views so crudely is a moral outrage. By all means, speak out, but do not assume such widespread support unless you can substantiate it.

-Zac Weiss

Dear Observer,

Once during sophomore year I paid for Philippa Penny and Andy Knab to get in to a Nicaragua Project party for which I was working the door. Now they’re writing about themselves. They may be, have learned to trust and respect? This is the Bard Bubble, after all, and I suppose such offensive behavior is to be seen just as often as the criminal behavior it so vitally and crudely attempts to define.

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-Oliver Traldi