interview with salvador plascencia...
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Focus the Nation

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Focus the Nation: a sweeping coordinated effort
Global Warming Conference in a rare show

Erin Cannan and Michele Dominey enjoying a "waste-free" lunch at Focus the Nation: potato soup, root vegetable stew and chili, cole slaw, and an assortment of beverages.

BY RACHEL MEADE

Despite the truckload of trash that was dumped on Bard last Friday, a good 300 people dragged their soggy selves to Bard's Global Warming Conference in a rare show of solidarity between Bard students and local residents. The Conference featured several panels of Bard and community speakers and a zero-waste lunch. Similar events were held simultaneously at colleges across the country as part of Focus the Nation, a sweeping coordinated effort designed to alert officials of the mass support for carbon-reducing measures.

Event organizer and Environmental Resources Auditor Laurie Husted pronounced the event a success, citing the influx of emails she's received from students, teachers, and community members who were inspired by the conference. But the most significant achievement of the Conference was President Botstein's signing of the American College and Universities Presidents' Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), which 489 participating institutions have also signed. "This is a huge result of the conference," said Husted. "Colleges realize they need to be leaders on [combating global warming]."

"While the President's commitment may be the most palpable result of the conference, the power of individual change was given no less credence. Event organizer and BERD member Molly King hopes that "if you're involved in the day you'll pick up some little bit of info. It's hard not to pick up even one little fact on the way." According to King, the power of Focus the Nation lies in its dual focus on both individual and institutional change. For the Bard student distrustful of politicians' commitments to the environment, panels highlighted a plethora of ways that individuals could significantly reduce their carbon footprint. It's likely that the majority of those solutions were familiar to most conference attendees, but speakers went further in depth on such topics as the carbon savings that accompany a vegan or vegetarian diet or the energy savings of buying locally produced food. Freshman Emilie Ruscoe pointed out that when it comes to global warming, repetition is not necessarily a bad thing. "Often the repetition of a point [eventually] triggers a different response," said Ruscoe.

Depending on the speaker and panel, the emphasis on individual versus institutional solutions varied throughout the day. According even organizer Chris Herrig, such contentions among panelists "really provoked thought and debate." The third panel discussion, "Growing a Solution," emphasized consumers' power to choose food based on its impact on the environment. Some panelists, such as Gidon Eshel from Simon's Rock, who spoke about the differing carbon footprint of a vegan and meat diet, completely discounted the power of government policy to make a difference.

However, other panels were entirely focused on influencing policy, such as "Motivating Change: The Politics of Change". History professor Mark Lytle tied America's poor record on global warming to our ongoing faith in consumerism to solve any and all crises that confront us. He cited historic trust in Keynesian economics which sees goods as the driving force of the economy. Some of President Bush's advice following September 11th for Americans to shop. Thus, according to Lytle, solutions may come from abroad. "The world no longer looks to us as the cause of solution, but as the cause of problems—maybe we'll learn a little humility," said Lytle.

Political Studies Professor Mark Lindeman followed up with a somewhat more upbeat take on environmental policy. "We don't have to be brilliant," said Lindeman, pointing out that we have all the resources and technologies we need to significantly reduce our energy consumption. Though disappointed that no politician has been willing to endorse a carbon tax, he rejoiced in the knowledge that our next president will come to office having said something intelligent about global warming. "We're moving on this," said Lindeman. He cited a poll in which 75 percent of Americans said they would pay more for renewable energy. Unfortunately, added Lindeman, politicians and members of Congress are scared of provoking the wrath of the American people. "We have it in our power to make political leaders more afraid not to tackle the problem than to [tackle it]," said Lindeman. "Everyone in the room—you can communicate with political leaders."

In addition to eight panels featuring Bard, Simon's Rock, and Bard Center for Environmental Policy Professors, local politicians such as assemblyman Marc Molinaro, and local environmental activists, Chartwells catered a waste-free lunch, featuring all local food. "There's no reason Hudson Valley couldn't be the Napa Valley of the East," said local juice producer Martin Bruhn, citing the abundance of fruit, vegetables, meat, and dairy to be had in the region.

A Global Warming Art Show featuring works by Bard students, teachers, and local community members followed the last panel. Trolling through Fisher were various masked tour guides, eager to talk about global warming art in a funny and informative way. "We can get [administration] to think with this in mind on every issue..." -former Chris Herring

private college welcomes public art: olafur eliasson installation to be completed this spring

BY MAE COLBURN

Early next July, Bard College will inaugurating Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson's first permanent public outdoor installation in the United States. A piece called The Parliament of Reality in a field near Fisher Arts Center, the Eliasson dollar piece is to consist of a circular pond surrounded by a ring of 24 planted trees. Nestled in the center will be an island, accessed via a stone bridge surrounded by a steel framework. While the entire installation was envisioned by the artist as "a place where students, teachers, and visitors can gather to relax, discuss ideas, or have an argument," as quoted in the press release. Eliasson continues, explaining that, in his view, "negotiation should be at the core of any educational scheme."

So I can't say it isn't a little bit unreal, but that's the design," said Vice President for Administration Jim Brady. Living of life at Bard College. "You have the ability to bracket off the rest of the world, read some great books, start developing your own views. It's a tremendous opportunity for reflection."

Perhaps this is why President Botstein writes that colleges and universities are unique in capable to support programs in which open debate and free inquiry are "— unique because of the private, insulated nature of our society—and intentionally designed to cultivate the exchange of ideas and emphasize internal debate.

In this respect, the project is a perfect fit for Bard. Bard, in its philosophy of "rigorous scrutiny and open discussion of ideas," said Brady introducing "some magnificent work as a violation of certain historical landscapes."

But the artist does not claim Parliament of Reality to be an "environmental piece" in the green sense. Rather, the installation conceived as a piece that, by combining man-made and natural materials, will incite discussion about the way we apprehend the natural world.

Eliasson is known for work that fuses natural phenomena, such as light and temperature, with constructed settings, such as city streets or galleries. In Double Sunset, a large-scale installation in Utrecht, Holland, completed in 1999, Eliasson created a bright yellow, forty-foot wide corrugated metal sun on the roof of a coffee warehouse facing towards the setting sun. To people facing east in the evening, it produced the unsettling impression of witnessing two suns set in the sky simultaneously.

Eliasson's first permanent public outdoor artwork, the Parliament of Reality, will take place at the Chapel of Holy Innocents, Thursday, February 14, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. with a reception at the President's House immediately following. An exhibit of Works by will be shown Fisher Studio at 8:00 p.m.
million \$ sculpture

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

the blurred line between natural and constructed realms

Construction will begin on the Bard installation in early March. It is to be fully funded by a restricted gift of approximately $1.2 million given by to the college by the Luma Foundation, a funding agency founded in 2004 by Maja Hoffmann, a member of the CCS Board of Governors. The money was given specifically to cover the costs of the installation, not for other campus expenses. Brudvig explained that “some people will see those [expenditures] side by side,” but the money is being drawn from an altogether different pool. CCS’s Tom Eccles, who was key in attracting the piece and the donor, saw this as part of a larger effort to extend the Center’s programming on campus, providing students and the public with the opportunity to engage both critically and enjoyably with contemporary art.

The Sculpture’s location on north campus reflects a historical shift in Bard’s public and private spaces. The Billingswood area was originally envisioned to be Bard’s public end, housing CCS Bard/The Hessel Museum of Art, the Fisher Center and the mansion. But as plans for the Fisher Center matured, the site on which it was to be built was judged a “historical landscape” too close to the Sawkill Creek. “The issue [with the land] became a historical one,” said Brudvig of the situation. The college wasn’t interested in pushing the matter, so the Fisher Center was instead built on the far end of campus, past Manor House. Consequently, he says, “Our public presentation is more spread out than originally intended.” Indeed, while some spaces, such as Tewksbury and Kline commons are regarded as private in that they’re off limits to the public, others are considerably more public. These spaces are less obviously useful to students but crucial in extending the Center’s programming on campus.

Although undeniably a boon to our public image, the sculpture has no less stems from the private liberal tradition – encouraging inquiry and discussion in a constructed space that is, to a certain degree, shut off from distraction. With relation to the private college sphere versus the larger sphere of public life, Brudvig points out that “there are two worlds going on here, but maybe it’ll be comfortable to know that it’s intentional.” In this sense, he continues, the piece is “of the insular, college world. It’s intended for students. Olafur knows this.”

bawling at the bowl: bard has football fans

BY CAROLINE FRIEDMAN

Figures are coming out to suggest that this year’s Superbowl has been the second most watched event in Television History (after the M*A*S*H series finale). How does the average Bardian celebrate, commemerate, and participate in the Superbowl? In addition to the high viewership the Superbowl has at Bard, this year, with two Northeastern teams, many of us had a personal stake in the game. With a highly weighted spread (14 points!), some even had a financial investment. There is, however, a separate faction here at Bard. Many are quick to say that the Superbowl is just another dumb American tradition (“Actually, I didn’t even know it was happening until I was in Down the Road and a girl ran in screaming.”). But of all the events that we as budding American citizens have to put up with (July 4th, Thanksgiving, the State of the Union…), the Superbowl is the one we can have the most fun with. Bear with me.

My night consisted of 60% snacking (hot wings, nachos, beverages). As I watched my dreadlocked friend add more cheese to her nachos, I realized: this is our homage to American culture. We are not even at the game for most of it, and yet we feel as if we are partaking in something larger than ourselves. My friend in flannel is checking the game. In the end, the Giants’ pass rush continued from page one

true to whatever you want it to be. If you want to paint your fat naked body an ugly shade of blue and stand in the freezing cold, go ahead. If you want to get trashed in a room of people who wouldn’t know a turpaulin from a pigskin, be my guest. If you want to wear your lucky pair of underwear for the prior 5 days, do it! But if you’re like me, and you vaguely want to root for the Giants, but you’d rather be eating munchies, that’s your prerogative.

The game was one of the greatest upsets in recent sports history. The huge spread signified just how outmatched most people thought the Giants would be in this game. The Giants opened up the game, and in their first possession, converted four third downs, and scored a field goal, bringing them ahead 3-0. However, in the following Patriots’ possession, they scored the first touchdown, a completion to Lawrence Maloney. During the fourth quarter, after an impressive completion by Manning, the Giants scored their first touchdown, bringing the score to 10-7. It had been David Tyree’s first touchdown all season. In one last attempt to win the game, the Patriots came back with another touchdown. Favorite receiver Randy Moss motioned obnoxiously as if to say “WIDE OPEN!” However, with 35 seconds left in the game, Manning hit Plaxico Burress with a 25-yard touchdown pass to win the game. In the end, the Giants’ pass rush truly happened soon.

CORRECTIONS:

In last issue’s Dave Maswick article we referred to the Bard Grad who deserves a special “turn everything off and talk to each other day” as Greg. His name was Glen. We are sorry.

Let’s plan on making Glen Day happen soon.

Meeting Wed 2/13 7pm abs office (tewks)
Deadline Thurs, 2/21
Issue comes out Tuesday 2/26
Bard students question officials on democracy roundtable

By Sarah Leon

Focus the Nation was a broad-reaching opportunity for students, professors, and academics to come together and engage on how to incorporate environmentally sound philosophies into our future. The “Green” Democracy segment opened the MPR to politicians from local to state level, who were asked to speak specifically on environmental and non-governmental policies that are embracing the nation’s environmental concerns.

Botstein opened with comments about the collegial commitment to energy conservation, citing projects dealing with heating and cooling, hybrid cars in the fleet, the Environmental Science Graduate program, and a self-described “College-wide commitment to conservation.” He then opened the floor to the politicians, to be followed by questions from student delegates representing the Democratic, Republican, and Independent parties.

Marc Molinaro, a Republican from the Troi Board of Trustees and NYS District 103 assemblymen, discussed the impact of the Bush era on the environment.

“Life in itself is not virtuous, where their mouth is for wide-scale change. The federal government to put their money where their mouth is, and Botstein suggested that rhetoric and Botstein suggested that perhaps there could be no land ownership anymore. "Green" Democracy segment opened the MPR to politicians from local to state level, who were asked to speak specifically on environmental and non-governmental policies that are embracing the nation’s environmental concerns.

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By Grace Dwyer

This winter break fifty-two Bard students traveled to New Orleans and worked for two weeks in a heavily flooded neighborhood called Broadmoor. The group was split into two teams – half conducted case management interviews and helped Broadmoor’s community-led neighborhood association (with professional social work staff) advocate for resources on behalf of impoverished and, often, homeless residents of the neighborhood. Local and national organizations (Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc.) were capable of providing food and aid to those still fighting to recover from the storm, but often cases were delayed or dismissed due to incomplete documentation – the Bard group sought to close these gaps and direct resources towards residence. Along with around twenty others, I worked daily at Andrew H. Wilson Charter School, a community-driven elementary school in the first year of operation post-Katrina.

We drove into New Orleans around seven on a Friday night – it was dark and the four of us had been driving, crammed into my car along with bedding, suitcases, and other kids in the hallway. There were fourth graders who were thirteen years old. “...failing a standardized test mandated by No Child Left Behind meant they were held back from the fifth grade as many years as it took them to pass. In a school that only went as high as fifth grade, the student could be behind the other kids in the hallway. There were fourth graders that were thirteen years old.”

By GRace dwyer

The storm Broadmoor was historical in its effects on New Orleans. Its population was over 68 percent African American and around 26 percent white. However, with a geographical location that was just 10 ft above the mean sea level of the bowl that is the city’s topography between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, the first place for the restoration of the city after the storm marked Broadmoor with a green dot. The neighborhood was to be bulldozed and restored essential community resources its residents back – a feat that required not only a strong community but also the educational crisis that forced teachers to Broadmoor community leaders to be teachers. And it wasn’t just the students who had worked in the second grade and had pizza and sat with our teachers while they cried and swear at both the government and the neighborhood. The group was split into two weeks. “The Bards,” as the principal, called them. The group was split into two weeks. “The Bards,” as the principal, called them.

In January of 2007 our group had stayed at the Salvation Army directly across the street, the last volunteer group to stay there before the walls, heavy metal cabinets full of never-used school supplies. By the time we left at the end of January, the building was empty, literally gutted – one step closer to restoration and a return to its original function.

This winter I worked again at Wilson, though not the same one. The neighborhood’s residents – remembered. This Wilson was a charter school under the direction of Edison Schools, an international for-profit public school chain. It had locate in a former elementary school about two miles away from the original site, and opened essentially through the tenacity of a neighborhood group we had worked with before. This group led the Broadmoor Improvement Association, or BIA. Wilson is currently New Orleans’ only community-based public school.

Before the storm Broadmoor was historically one of the most economically depressed neighborhoods in New Orleans. Its population was over 68 percent African American and around 26 percent white. However, with a geographical location that was just 10 ft above the mean sea level of the bowl that is the city’s topography between the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain. The/first place for the restoration of the city after the storm marked Broadmoor with a green dot. The neighborhood was to be bulldozed and

The BIA was established decades ago to combat the practice of blockbusting, a tactic that made whatever work we were able to do work in Broadmoor the year before. Miro, General Taylor, Cady. The houses were flooded, but the walls were painted in cheerful colors or boarded up with peeling paint and cracked foundations, the line where water hit the street was up to the floor still visible. At long last we reached our destination. We were staying on the corner of Napoleon and Claiborne, one of many volunteer groups housed and fed post-Katrina by the Church of the Annunciation.

In January of 2007 our group had stayed at the Salvation Army directly across the street, the last volunteer group to stay there before the walls, heavy metal cabinets full of never-used school supplies. By the time we left at the end of January, the building was empty, literally gutted – one step closer to restoration and a return to its original function.

The BIA was established decades ago to combat the practice of blockbusting, but Katrina lent its existence a new and vital role. One of the concerns of residents and organizations like the neighborhood elementary school. Without a place to educate their children, residents would be unlikely to return.

At Wilson each of us was assigned a classroom, where we performed tasks like copying and grading worksheets, supervising small-group exercises, tutoring one-on-one, and serving as a general teacher’s aide. I was in one of the ages of seven to nine, some had missed year of retirement. Construction on the new school was completed, with the promise of an opening date. The/first day of kindergarten was a revelation for teachers. It was hard for C. to sit through class. She would rock in her seat, fall on the floor, break her pencils in half she couldn’t do work or even talk. Despite the fact that there wasn’t enough food at home, or frequent tears and a point-blank refusal to do work or even talk. Despite the fact that these were second-graders, many had dealt with, and were dealing with, very adult problems. In the second grade their test results didn’t yet affect their progress in school, but once in the fourth grade – just two years later in the fourth grade – standardized tests mandated by No Child Left Behind meant they were held back from the fifth grade as many years as it took them to pass. In a school that only went as high as fifth grade, the students who couldn’t pass the test towered over the other kids in the hallway. There were fourth graders that were thirteen years old.

On the last day of school those of us who had worked in the second grade had pizza and sat with our teachers while they discussed the benchmark tests of the kids. We were looking for ways to give them a leg up, to make sure that they would be teachers to Broadmoor community leaders to be teachers. And it wasn’t just the students who had worked in the second grade and had pizza and sat with our teachers while they cried and swear at both the government and the neighborhood crisis that forced teachers to degrade themselves to discriminators cramming information in these kids’ heads. Many of them were attached instead of connecting to them on an individual level.

The last day of school Miss Deedee and we brought our kids pencils and notes we had worked in the second grade and had pizza and sat with our teachers while they cried and swear at both the government and the neighborhood crisis that forced teachers to degrade themselves to discriminators cramming information in these kids’ heads. Many of them were attached instead of connecting to them on an individual level.

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As volunteers, we were an experiment. Wilson is looking to build long-lasting relationships with area schools like Tulane and Loyola so that tutors and teachers’ aides will be around all year, not just for two weeks. “The Bards,” as the principal, called us. She called us, helped teachers to understand how college-aged volunteers could have the greatest impact on the neighborhood.

And the school itself continues to grow. We saw it in its first year, but already it was staffed with a group of dedicated and passionate teachers – many of them were a principal, came back to teaching after years of retirement. Construction on the
Hey! Bard is diverse!!

By Homer Hill

A lot of people at Bard (mainly students) have recently been debating/lamenting the lack of diversity among the student body. While this might be (is) true, we do boast another kind of diversity here at Bard. Though what I'm about to point out isn't nearly as important as the issue of socio-political-racial homogeneity at small liberal arts schools in America, it is a type of diversity our politicians bother to notice about our nations colleges. Still haven't guessed it? Architectural diversity, of course! That’s right, Mayor Bloomberg knows what’s up. During his graduation address to the class of 2007 Bloomberg pointed how Bard is home to “725 different styles of architecture in one square mile.” He’s actually wrong about this number, if you didn’t know already. In total, Bard boasts 727 different architectural styles.

Tewksbury actually counts for two international and modern collegiates, as well as the Tree Houses which can also be considered post-modern collegiate.

Ever wonder how this little gem came to be the only “typical college dorm experience” at Bard? Plans for construction of Tewksbury were officially announced in the April 1957 issue of the Bard College Bulletin as Bards first dorm to be built since 1936. Built on land donated by former Blithewood estate owner Christian Zahbriske, Tewksbury was designed by two Bard alumni: Peter Paul Muller, ’40 and Sidney M. Shlevor, ’37, who later went on to serve on the Bard board of trustees and the New York State Board of Regents for architecture. Originally intended to be an all-women’s dorm, Tewksbury’s floor plan included a second floor lounge and a faculty residence (now occupied by Res Life). Completed in 1959 after running $133,000 over its initial $416,000 budget, Tewksbury’s notoriety as a bastion of first year excess and debauchery has since been circulated among various internet journals.

One alumni described the building as a “concrete monolith” that has historically housed “unfortunate first years” and “degenerate upper classmen who annually corrupt their neighbors by implicitly suggesting to them that higher education chiefly involves degraded chemical abuse and neurotic/psychotic self-destruction.”

The author went on to note that the Tewksbury was their “preferred place of residence for three years.” Another ex-resident reminisced about living in “Holiday Inn” and hearing George Benson blaring out of a neighboring room and while trying to use the payphone. Despite its current and past reputation as a party dorm, Tewksbury’s namesake, Dr. Donald G. Tewksbury, was actually an early founder of the school’s educational philosophy.

A classroom in Old Wilson.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

original Wilson school school is scheduled for completion next summer, and the school will move back to its home in the heart of Broadmoor in time for the 2009-10 school year. And as of January, around two thirds of Broadmoor has returned, a number roughly on par with the citywide average.

Though a pressing example of a city where many age-old injustices were never fully rectified, New Orleans is not unique. As I’ve heard someone say, post-Katrina New Orleans as a city is like a body without skin. It’s not that the problems are bigger here than many other places in the country, but here, you can see them – and maybe, with the help of the influx of young, dedicated, intelligent and creative professionals now manifesting itself in the city, begin to solve them.

Every child I worked with deserves to live in a safe neighborhood and have a good education. With relationships between institutions of higher education and communities in need challenging previously held conceptions about the role of academia in society at large, we can make sure they do.

The Bard New Orleans Project continues to take groups to New Orleans – get in touch at bard.neworleans@gmail.com.

For the first time this summer, Bard’s Urban Studies in New Orleans summer program pairs rigorous coursework in urban geography and public policy with intensive internships in a range of neighborhood-based recovery organizations. Applications reviewed through the end of February. For more information visit www.bard.edu/
Five years after his graduation from Bard and with a Masters degree in urban planning from Harvard, 29 year-old Michael Haggerty found himself placed in a recovering New Orleans for what would be the most compelling six months of his life.

While at Harvard, Haggerty became interested in New Orleans through an architect named Fred Schwartz, who invited him to work on a recovery planning project for post-Katrina New Orleans called the Unified New Orleans Plan, a building program sponsored by the Rockefeller Fund which lasted from August until January 2007. "I had never been to New Orleans before," said Haggerty. "I had never known anything about it, and pretty much became obsessed with it afterwards."

Haggerty and Schwartz were assigned two of the city's 13 districts in what began as a cooperative planning process between locals, designers, and activists. "I spent about a month and a half going to community meetings," explained Haggerty, "speaking with the leaders of each neighborhood." To acquaint himself with the city, Haggerty would request tours of each neighborhood from locals, with the goal of completing a planning project to be submitted to the city hall.

"Probably the most amazing part of my experience in New Orleans was the people," said Haggerty. "The communities couldn't have been more socially, culturally, or economically diverse. In the morning I could be up at someone's nice house drinking coffee—later I'd be downtown in the housing projects."

Yet there is always a certain duality to the stories shared by people who visit post-Katrina New Orleans. Overshadowing Haggerty's awe of its cultural and historical beauty was the immense destruction and disarray still palpably felt throughout the city. "There was a sense of loss about the city," recalls Haggerty. "I felt great empathy for the people there, as well as incredible anger at the government and army." The city hall, as Haggerty related, was also extremely lacking in resources and institutional stability. When the city ultimately approved the plan, little money was available to fund it.

"I think one of the biggest challenges of the city now is addressing the needs of the poor," explains Haggerty. "The cost of housing and rent has increased incredibly since the storm. Public discourse has been moving against New Orleans as a city for the poor. Decisions are being made at state and local levels that make it difficult for them to return."
Becca Rom-Frank

The Bard Fiction Prize, which includes a monetary award and a six-week residency appointment as writer-in-residence on campus, is awarded annually to an emerging American writer under the age of 39. The winner of this year’s Prize is Salvador Plascencia, author of The People of Paper (McSweeney’s, 2005). His first novel is a magic-realistic experiment in narrative, exploring a war against sadness and the implications of omniscient narration through vivid metaphor and multiple perspectives.

BRF: The style of your book is really interesting, the layout includes multiple perspectives organized into columns, blotted out text, and drawings. What influenced you to write it that way?

SP: Part of it was that I was looking up through all these older books, like the first novels printed, and then I was looking at Lawrence Sterne’s Tristram Shandy. You open it up, and there’s just this square of black ink, and then you flip through it and there are little doodles of him making the motion of [what he’s describing] and then it goes in the book. And this book is an experiment with the playful and experimental in typography; it seems that that playfulness disappeared, so I was just kind of nostalgic for this old school typography. But everybody said it’s the new media that made me do it. I mean, I made it easier because there’s Pagemaker and there’s Photoshop and Illustrator, and I was really excited by his earlier books.

SP: Sometimes when you’re writing it’s just a matter of understanding the geography of the place, or the layout of how the characters are going to move, and sometimes I just actually draw what’s happening and try to move them through it. So, there is some sort of logistical realism – you can’t just teleport from this corner of the room to down the hall, you have to move the character. And that’s mostly so when I write, I can draw these when I think of a line. And some of it remains, like oh, that’s a drawing and it’s maybe a little sad it’s a sad drawing I should probably use it. Like the pyramid, the food pyramid, with the sad little tissue box at the top that was I was thinking of sadness and nutrition, and I drew that food pyramid. And I’m like, “I like it” mean, then I got my friend to re-draw it, because he was better at it.

SP: In addition to the interesting drawings that pepper the pages of your book, the columns that distinguish different characters’ perspectives are another unique stylistic tool. Is the use of different characters a father and daughter. What made you choose to explore that type of relationship?

SP: One of my strange childhood stories something happened to me on my first trip to the States, and it happened to me and my dad, and my dad sort of said, “It’s okay, son. I wanted to use that moment, but I didn’t want to be the directly autobiographical given the meta-textual, meta-fictional element that happened later. So I had to alienate myself somehow from that, and then … can’t be a boy, has to be a girl. That’s how it happened; it was mostly because I was trying to put resistance between my experience and the character’s.

BRF: But a little in ways, the book takes a blantly autobiographical turn. Did you always intend for it to turn out that way?

SP: I think conceptually, but maybe not in the details. I was always interested in that fiction but I was wondering how could I make it more personal and tender. That was the solution to the problem of meta-fiction for me. How can it be not just a trick but something that has emotion.

BRF: You grew up in rural Mexico until you moved to California when you were eight years old. How did the stories you heard from your grandparents influence your writing?

SP: A lot of it was just kind of the mode of the way they talked. They were such fantastic, surreal stories, but they would tell them in a very straightforward way [e.g., “We’re walking, we’re crossing the river, and all of a sudden this stampedede of horses came out under water.” – but they never try to justify it] – “and then I wept in my mother’s arms!” And I’m like, “Oh, okay.” It’s kind of deadpan, surrealistic [mode]. I think it’s more sort of of that vibe towards reality that I’ve sort of adopted.

BRF: Your novel seems to be richly influenced by your heritage. How would you say that places that inspire you, and where did you write most of the book?

SP: Part of it is that the main characters are Mexican-American or they’re Mexican, but a lot of the characters are types that exist in Mexican-American literature. Except, in my book, they’re operating in a very different time, and I think that’s how I think.

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Compare your Oscar hopefuls with our critic's picks (***) by using this un-official guide to the 80th annual Academy Awards. Also, be sure to tune in to the live broadcast on February 24 at 8pm on ABC.

Performance by an actor in a leading role
George Clooney in "Michael Clayton"
***Daniel Day Lewis in "There Will Be Blood"
Johnny Depp in "Sweeney Todd"
Tommy Lee Jones in "In The Valley of Elah"
Viggo Mortensen in "Eastern Promises"

Performance of an actress in a leading role
Cate Blanchett in "Elizabeth: The Golden Age"
***Juliette Binoche in "Away from Her"
Marion Cotillard in "La Vie en Rose"
Laura Linney in "The Savages"
Ellen Page in "Juno"

Achievement in directing
"The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" - Julian Schnabel
"Juno" - Jason Reitman
"Michael Clayton" - Tony Gilroy
"Juno" - Jason Reitman
"There Will Be Blood" - Paul Thomas Anderson

Best motion picture of the year
"Atonement"
***"Juno"
***"No Country For Old Men"
"There Will Be Blood"

By Jess Bogner
After the least entertaining Golden Globes in quite sometime, The Writers Guild Strike will not rear its ugly head on February 24th, as The Oscars will resume as usual. The only difference in the award show spectacle will presumably be the quality of the films and the enigmatic personalities nominated. And fortunately, for those expecting an upset of the magnitude of the Giants Super Bowl victory, most of the major awards seem to be up for grabs. So as the award show approaches the question on the tip of your tongue must be who will win Best Picture? And the easy answer is of course. The Coen Brother's adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's novel No Country for Old Men. However, unlike last year's winner The Departed, or the losing favorite the year before Brokeback Mountain, this year's winner does not seem to be set in stone, and has some considerable competition. While Juno and Michael Clayton both look like throwaway nominations, There Will Be Blood and Atonement are both successful epics with all the elements of a Best Picture winner.

The director race also looks particularly interesting this year, especially after Schnabel surprised everyone with his Golden Globe Win. More eccentric than every other nominee including the Coen Brothers, the bearded Art Star wore pajamas to Oscar's luncheonette, and made one of the emotionally resonant films of the year, a modern tale of memory and human suffering. Paul Thomas Anderson, in this humble critic's opinion is the best Writer/Director working today, and deserves a win in both categories. There Will Be Blood is his most accessible and ambitious film. He adapts the mediocre Upton Sinclair novel, Of, into a visceral epic about the power of greed. While No Country for Old Men will probably be remembered for years to come, There Will Be Blood is a better film than I don't hesitate to put in the same breadth as Giant and The Treasure of Sierra Madre.
Face-to-face with Ultimate Reality
Le Musique Electronique de Dan Deacon

By ENRECO PURITA

Bard students will often engage in discussions on what is real and what is reality. But what happens when the Bard student body is faced with ultimate reality?

Melting minds with his Ultimate Reality sonic experience, Dan Deacon’s hot beats and slick suspenders produced arguably the best live music performance Bard has seen all year.

The Dan Deacon Ultimate Reality tour kicked off recently to bring Deacon’s innovative video collaboration with Jimmy Joe Roche to the live stage. In combining both visual and auditory sense teases, Deacon fully utilized the technology of the Multi Purpose Room (MPR). As far as pure sound quality goes, the show was by far the most advanced as is necessary with a performer who relies so much on acoustics.

The show started off with an opening performance from (did anyone really catch her name?). Unable to anticipate the dance fever that the crowd had, she attempted a few softer numbers and asked the audience to be quiet. This, as might have been fever that the crowd had, she attempted a lukewarm reviews the Ultimate Reality movie received, the live performance was a revelation for the advance of multimedia in music. The live drumming complimented the entrancing mix of rock, soul, and dance beats to synthesize music worthy of casual listening as well as live audiences.

The videos consisted of scenes from various action movies, mostly consisting of Schwarzenegger and various weapon-manipulated images. A vast array of colors, textures, visually placed film clips, and miscellaneous images was very visually pleasing. Its actual message may be unclear, but what was made clear was that reality is pretty weird, but Ultimate Reality exceeds the boundaries of weird.

Despite the fact that the Ultimate Reality portion of the show kept the audience’s attention for its duration (a great feat in the world of DJs), Dan Deacon was ready to reveal himself to the audience and perform a healthy mix of favorites and obscure (but still danceable) pieces. Deacon’s live music not all that different in sound from his studio material, but he was able to utilize the enhanced energy of the live setting to create a much more aggressive and hard-hitting brand of beats.

Deacon’s greatest strength, much like his wham city contemporaries, is in his ability to engage the audience. Armed with an impressive arsenal of pedals, samplers, iPads attached to bananas, and other post-consumer generation souvenirs, Deacon’s table of gadgets was engulfed by the willing audience who pushed and sweated in unison to the music. Being close enough to the front, one lost the ability to do anything but dance with the seemingly endless crowd of people. In order to break any potential monotony, Deacon instructed the audience to create a constant circle of running where everyone was joined at the hand. After this, he utilized the domino effect once again to create endless tunnels of the audience and have people go through them.

Much like virtual reality, Deacon’s performance appealed to all five senses in a incredibly well-rounded and well-executed manner. Quite simply, he fucking rocked.

A NEW COLUMN BY JACK KERNS

each is, spatial in its own way

This column is the product of a certain feeling I have detected at Bard since I began studying here, a restlessness that stems from two separate issues: an as-yet unfilled desire to see more of the world while one is relatively young, unfettered, and energetic enough to appreciate it, and the unflagging notion that one is not feeling outside of class. I’m not referring to pointing out complaints about not being a car or having too much schoolwork. The feeling is wanderlust, connected with the realization that, while reading has traditionally been “fun” and homework for lazily flipping through, thanks to the nature of classes and professors here, the narrative comes about.

Leaving and returning to Bard, I have discovered, fuels these negative energies. And being away doesn’t help much – it’s easy to spend January in a sort of haze, rambling around close to home and agonizing about internships and moderation and second thoughts and all sorts of other projects and such. A solution I hit upon this past interseis is to read and enjoy good books more frequently at Bard.

I needed a book to get me on track this past intersession, and what I’m told is Marjane Satrapi’s Persepolis, is really, really, but that it does not really matter, for me, the most obviously intriguing aspect of the novel.

And these cities are beautiful. Their names are made-up exotic or women’s names, and generally end in vowels. One city, Sophronia, is composed of “two half-cities”: one with banks and shops and a city center, and one with a Ferris wheel and colorful tents. And so, “every year the day comes when the women remove the marble pediments, lower the stone walls, the cement pylons, take down the Ministry, the monument, the docks,” and so on.

The author’s is associated with Oulipo, a ragtag confederation of authors who write purposefully “constrained” works. A famous example of , Georges Perec’s lipogrammatic masterpiece La Disparition (translated as A Void in English by Gilbert Adair), contains not a single instance of the letter “e” (it must be assumed, on purpose).

Invisible Cities adopts a constrained attitude toward the nature of its own narrative structure. That I could satiate my intellectual need to roam over beautiful landscapes by reading an intentionally constrained work makes Invisible Cities a true masterpiece. And the scene of two drummers facing each other in an almost duel-like manner about to ensue.

Though Marco Polo accommodates his insightful examination of the complexities and shifting identities of American subcultures.

Two Academy Award noms.

Persepolis

(France/US 2007, dir by Marjane Satrapi & Vincent Paronnaud)
Based on Marjane Satrapi’s bestselling graphic novel about a spirited coming-of-age Muslim woman in Tehran during the rule of the Shah, the Islamic Revolution, and the grueling Iran-Iraq War. Academy Award nom for Best Animated Feature.

2/15

Honeydripper

(US 2007, dir by John Sayles)
In his new feature, John Sayles continues his insightful examination of the shifting identities of American subcultures.

2/12

The Orphanage

(Spain 2007, dir by Alejandro Amenábar)
Joining the roster of recent elegant horror films from Spanish directors (THE DEVILS BACKBONE, THE OTHERS, PAN’S LABYRINTH) is THE ORPHANAGE.
As you may or may not be aware, the Root Cellar, on-campus stronghold of coffee, serious issues, and stunningly attractive people, has within its walls a priceless library of those homemade histories often grouped together under the banner name “zine.” Whether or not it is in fact the “largest zine library on the east coast,” there are, in fact, tons of homemade publications about alternative health, radical issues, how to make cool things out of dumb things, washing dishes, punk rock records, and a handful of less-tackled subjects like Evel Knievel and rest stops. Beyond that, there is a staggering wealth of self-published poetry and comix.

So, when you are done with this article, go find these zines or some other ones that catch your attention. These zines can be found in a special marked box inside the zine library. The Root Cellar is located in the basement of H. Potter, next to Academic Resources.

### THE ABOLITION OF WORK

This one’s essentially the manifesto of one Bob Black, detailing the way in which “work” as we know it is the source of modern angst and anger. It also has a fancy collage of a baby head on the cover and some supporting information (biography, some interview questions, suggested reading) in the back. Best of all, there’s a real fine quote from Abraham Lincoln going on about how he’d rather do any of a number of fun things. Whether or not you agree with the guy’s ideas or can even identify with the somewhat narrow focus, it’s a solid read.

### MURDER CAN BE FUN No. 14

“Murder Can Be Fun” is an attempt to collect and record the history of some real brutal stuff that happened in the past. This particular issue is called “Please Mr. Postman—Don’t Shoot!” and includes a look at “the #1 intramural sport of the United States Postal Service: homicide,” providing a pretty comprehensive account of the topic. It also describes in full an early 20th-century train wreck and includes a list of some of the author’s favorite riots. It’s a solid read and has some neat lil’ comix and a great letter from somebody who was offended by an article about people dying at Disneyland.

### ADVENTURES IN THE LAND OF GREASECARS AND FIREFLIES

Sascha Scatter’s booklet about punk rock and alternative energy combines discussion of cars powered by vegetable oil with the author’s personal history in the fields of driving, anarchism, and ripping off payphones. It’s got diagram of how a greasecar works, some discussion of the politics of operating such a vehicle “in the age of corporate oil wars,” and artful descriptions of the author’s involvement, from first seeing a documentary on the subject in 1995 to his own car’s eventual conversion. Plus, a lot of it takes place in nearby New Paltz just a few years ago, only further driving the point home that these things aren’t just happening in far-off places and on special episodes of “Good Morning, America.”

### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

If you were a fan of Parts & Labor’s set at SMOG last fall, you’ll want to hear the bassist’s noisy new offshoot. Shooting Spires is the solo project of P&L’s BJ Warshaw that was born in his bedroom during the winter months of 2007. According to Warshaw, it was a chance for him to employ electronics and improvisation in order to create a more ambient, “drony” sound. The influence of Brian Eno’s droning rock songs of the 1970’s is “pretty immediate when you listen to the album,” says Warshaw. He also credits other bands such as Boredoms as muses.

Listening to the songs on Shooting Spires’ self-titled albums, Warshaw’s songwriting process reveals itself through the soaring choruses and repetitive hooks. He builds songs around loops and drumbeats, relying “on simple rhythmic and melodic structures… I try [to make music] as organically as possible, with little pre-mediation.” Warshaw’s instruments of choice include looping pedals, a Casio SK-1, and an oscillator.

Bard is the second stop on Shooting Spires’ premiere tour with a full four-piece band. While Warshaw has performed his songs solo before, he expects that adding bodies to his stage will flesh out what were previously lo-fi live performances.
Radical Materialism Suggests Rewrite for Evolutionary Theory

By Ben Blums

The anthropological and psychoanalytic foundations of Slavoj Zizek's oeuvre often lend a reorienting potency to his socio-political commentary. This is certainly the case when it comes to evolutionary theory. As last semester came to an end, and finals rolled around like the most artful of stalkers, the name Zizek was on people's lips. Whether it was the latest book that a friend recommended or an encroaching essay reading, it was a commentary on Lacan. French studies majors were contemplating a sophist strategy that the debate team was taking, or café buzz around his latest NY Times op-ed, Zizek had become ubiquitous. A fundamental re-framing of evolutionary debate could be on the horizon, and Zizek's "radical materialism" provides the key to understanding it.

Zizek calls himself a "radical materialist." "Materialist?"—You ask with surprise. "You are Kantian influence as evidence to "idealism" than to any other philosophy, to "radical materialism" upon which the German idealists: e.g. Immanuel Kant. So much for Einstein, but what about Slavoj Zizek, who identifies himself as a "Lacanian" more often than he does a "radical materialist?" Jacques Lacan's psychanalytical writing is more amenable to "idealism" than to any other philosophy, and both Zizek and Lacan rely heavily upon the German idealists: e.g. Immanuel Kant. It is the radical in "radical materialism" upon which the sense of Zizek's self-designation pivots: radicalizing materialism into its transcendental inversion.

It is the radical in "radical materialism" upon which the sense of Zizek's self-designation pivots: radicalizing materialism into its transcendental inversion. Just as one is unable to pin pi (what mathematicians call a "transcendental number") down to any single material expression—just as pi is unknowable to calculation in a finite sense, so too is Plato's transcendental truth. A material explanation can maintain that truth does change, pointing to the extremely slow rate of evolutionary change as giving the illusion of "transcendence" in the impression of static truth. In the Lockean sense of a tabula rasa mind, the world "impresses" apparent truths upon it.

Hans Reichenbach, a mid-twentieth century philosopher of science, corroborates the view that transcendental truths are not evolutionary. As Reichenbach has it, every now and then nature throws the human mind an evolutionary curveball and a novelty like Einsteinian relativity pops out. But ironically there is good reason to believe that Einstein himself would have disagreed. Historians of science intimate that Einsteinian relativity was not an evolution of knowledge so much as a baroque refinement: an elegant addition to the basket of scientific concepts.

Historians further point to Einstein's precarious study of Kantian Idealism under Max Talmud, and his later intimations of Kantian influence as evidence that Einstein himself was an idealist that he believed in transcendental truths a sense impermeable to material evolution. Furthermore, his participation in a private Viennese reading circle that studied and discussed Kant's critical works is suggestive. Another member of this reading circle was Franz Kafka. But it is the cryptic word-choice of Einstein's famous Herbert Spencer lecture, in which he describes scientific concept as "the construction of a free mind" that gets this car off the lot. These words ring of idealism, and are lifted directly from Kant. Kant describes science as the autonomous construction of a mind seated in a free and transcendent realm.

For idealists, it is the freedom inherent to the mind's transcendence that allows it to imagine new truths, to appreciate older concept, and to keep articulating endless ones like the endless project of finding new digits for pi. So much for Einstein, but what about Slavoj Zizek, who identifies himself as a "Lacanian" more often than he does a "radical materialist?" Jacques Lacan's psychanalytical writing is more amenable to "idealism" than to any other philosophy, and both Zizek and Lacan rely heavily upon the German idealists: e.g. Immanuel Kant. It is the radical in "radical materialism" upon which the sense of Zizek's self-designation pivots: radicalizing materialism into its transcendental inversion. As it turns out, Zizek's new label is largely a political move to unload the historical baggage that "idealism" carries without fundamentally disavowing it. One classic example of this move was with Ernst Cassirer, mid-20th century epistemologist. From Nazi misappropriation to poorly informed navel-gazing, these days "idealism" leaves a sour taste in people's mouths. As Professor Moynahan explains, Cassirer abandoned "idealism/Kantianism" because, "he wished to escape association with prevalent misconceptions." Zizek, as well.

As a Lacanian, psychoanalysis can only begin after having suspended disbelief in the following practical fiction: the idea that the person on the couch is knowable. Surely the psychoanalyst must understand the patient before treatment can ensue. But the catch is that understanding exists within one's subjective mind, and so the fictitious illusion of truly knowing another person ultimately only boils down to a knowledge of oneself: "I am you are me."—as the Red Hot Chili Pepper's song goes. The idea is that we can understand each other, because, essentially, we are the same. The psychoanalyst sets out stating, "I can understand you because I believe in transrational aspects of mind." These are the same transcendental aspects that allow for the understanding of universal conceptual (scientific/mathematic) truth.

As Zizek points out, today's science does not work without a belief in transcendental mind, but the fact remains that it also gives no warrant for disbelief. The strongest argument for belief one way or the other is that the "fiction" of transcendence is practical. It allows people to attempt curing through talk-therapy: to act on the faith of common understanding and, ultimately, to believe in the possibility of communication.

In a recent Times Magazine article, Stephen Pinker writes about morality as an implicitly transcendent "toggle-switch" that people can turn on and off. Yet Pinker, a non-radical materialist and perhaps one of the last in the outdated breed of...
I question the commitment of my peers to the cause of environmentalism when they can’t even do something as simple as put a few beer bottles into a recycling container or turn off a light when leaving a room. And this doesn’t just go out to you, Bardians. It’s not a good sign when the kids at a national conference focused on combating climate change (Powershift 2007 in D.C.) aren’t even taking basic steps to do something as simple as recycling or reducing waste. It certainly isn’t for lack of motivation, but rather that it is a transcendence of every sort. To many, this denotes an irony. As a popular writer, Pinker must set out with a faith that readers will understand the words as he means them. This faith is based on the idea that they are essentially similar to himself. It is a faith that certain aspects of the human mind can overcome the solipsism of individual consciousness, transcending a lonely island for something more collective. But what could this collective similarity be except for something that is in some sense transcendental?

Zizek states that if one is to speak of Homo sapiens collectively then one is forced to embrace transcendental characteristics. But Zizek’s radicality is to suggest that the mind, as transcendental, has never essentially evolved; that our ability to communicate is not a coincident homestasis resembling transcendence, but that mind always remains essentially the same. Zizek suggests that transcendence is its ability to confuse and surrealize the ordinary views gain a mystic quality once endowed with a blouse of vapor. For a forest to be truly spooky, some type of fog or mist must be present. Fog leaves you guessing. It causes people so much anxiety that you make special headlights just to penetrate its shadowy abysses.

I’m tired of sitting around listening to people talk about how awful something is but hardly ever hearing anyone ask what they can do to make it better. And why is it that the people who do seem to be asking questions and taking action are more often than not the same ones time and time again? This problem is by no means unique to Bard students, or to the environmental movement. Compassion is rarely accompanied by motivation to act. Thinking and talking about the problems of the world are great places to start, but it’s only going to take us so far. Cautious and mindful efforts made by many, many people must overcome our worry if we have any hope of ameliorating the complex, sticky web of crises that surround us.

Being green is not about performing an isolated act at your convenience such as buying an organic cotton t-shirt, or remembering a cloth bag on the trip to the supermarket. It’s about the continued, daily practice of thinking about nearly every decision you make and what the consequences of your actions will be. Stop talking so much and start doing more. Making sustainable purchases, etc. is inarguably important, but applying our ideas to everything we do will ultimately yield a greater and longer-lasting result. Don’t just tell people what you believe in; show them.

SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND ENVIRONMENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ELEVEN

evolutionary psychologists, dismisses transcendence of every sort. To many, this denotes an irony.

Zizek continues his "radical materialism" to Moby Dick when Captain Ahab asks the severed head of a sperm whale what secrets it holds—Ahab is speaking to a mind, then, identical to his own in its transcendence: only this mind is housed within the biology of a whale, that’s all.

In that the universe is a composition of minds housed by the objective world in various forms, Zizek’s vision resembles that of the Meat Puppets when they sang, "This is a big house. No body ever leaves. The whole thing just vibrates a little."
In one of the Observer’s final issues last year, the Career Development Office responded to student criticisms and concerns about professional placement, and students choose to converse with the Office instead of addressing the public. The administration has a longer history of those strange ideas intrinsic to how Barak Obama got into office, and the more work we do to push a system that is not designed to foster change, the more work we do to really nail down exactly what is wrong or what might be going to address them. Third, it requires an administration that wishes to the greatest extent possible.

As the student body and with the student group and with the office or department there might come up with something more amenable to the job rather than connecting with people and saying, ‘Hey, okay, the administration can tell you how many people there are and which one the hole that we’ve dug ourselves and why we’re dug it. But the general public, with their overzealous nationalism, refus- es to listen.

The mass media, controlled by an obvious corporate agenda, has given us note to prove that by being* meaningless and a generation that thinks freely and does nothing with a good heart have embraced Barack Obama. He is the only candidate that can attract a controversy that can reach across party lines. The thing to re- member here about Obama though is that despite his campaign slogans, he has hard-pressed to create any real change in Washington. An experienced politician will find the congressional stalagmite and the corporate-political regime currently controlling Washington a daunting administrative task. In Washington.

Hillary Clinton is in fact the stereotype- ally bad politician. It is hard to take fault at her stances on issues because, well, she doesn’t have a concrete stance on any issue. Hillary Clinton always has to be an issue with should not, and probably cannot be because if they could, then they would solve the problem simply by setting down with a single student. To solve problems it takes the leadership of a group or the collective experience associated with the problem itself.

This is where student government ideally comes in. We get together a group of students concerned about a specific issue. We broach that issue as accurately as possible with the administration. Working with the administration, we come up with a solution that is both feasible and that begins to rectify the original problem. For example: we might suggest that the CDO shifts its mission statement to that one focal area is removed and another added. Then again, we might just create a group of concerned personnel be hired. Then we present the student body at one of our most important forums and those are put to the vote. If the idea is approved, we take the proposal to the administration. It is a much better sit back and see if the changes work in the way we want them to. If not, it’s not that we take them. We try them out and then come up with something more amenable to our purposes.

This is the way student government ought to work, and this is the way campus policy ought to work. This is the way Oklahoma needs to work, and the administration is the way. This is the way that we need to work, and the administration is the way we need to work, and the administration is the way we need to work. What we want to try and do is not to mention his statement about how the Constitution needs to be made more in line with the “word of living god.” Mitt Romney is the Republicans’ answer to that. The campaign of his father, the one the hole that we’ve dug ourselves and why we’re dug it. But the general public, with their overzealous nationalism, refus- es to listen.

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ANONYMOUS

Every since I was a girl, I always wanted to study in the US. Initially, this desire was propagated by the TV series Beverly Hills 90210, which enjoyed a cult reputation in Eastern Europe during the 90s. People, regardless of age, sex or education, were drawn to stories of young, wealthy and gorgeous American teenagers as if by an invisible magnet. Everyone wanted to know what America was like. I too; devoured each new part; yet, being ten, I was barely aware of the fact that what was on the screen has been years away from reality, and the painless realization on my first trip to the U.S. was a rude awakening.

During my junior year of high school for a scholarship at a private boarding school in the South. It was a relatively traditional institution with a strict dress code and a weekly church assembly. I was the only student from Eastern Europe and among the very few in the school’s history. I loved the academics, my teachers, and the extracurriculars, but there were lots of exceptions. American people never really accepted me. It was partly because I did not wear clothes with little animals on them, like crocodiles, horses or deer. Moreover, the name of my country (God knows where the accent goes) would raise eyebrows, say Germany, which in the imagination of many people, is a land of old-fashioned chaps and hot blond girls. For these reasons my peers mostly just stared at me and very few actually decided to get to know me, an ob-scure foreigner. I do not want to sound too harsh, for during that year I also met some wonderful people who I will remember with love and thanks all my life.

A brief word on avoiding an obnamable presidency

BY JESSE MYEVRSON

How was President Clinton able to get away with such reactionary actions as removal of the Kosovo Liberation Army from the war, support for the welfare rolls, establishing anti-labor policies, and tightening the social security of the American workforce without causing uproar in the progressive community? One might ask, was it because of the political culture, in large part in the sigh of relief the Democratic Party set out on by allowing Bill Clinton to pass through eight years of policies that had endured twelve nauseating years of Republican presidencies, and Democrats were so glad to have one of their own sitting again behind the finest desk on Pennsylvania Ave. that they eased off the pressure. Was there a charismatic politician with a compelling life story, such as Clinton was, and ability to craft coalitions, a charmer who spoke of hope and unity? Why, if not, would the public seem to forget the mistakes the Clinton presidency made and be following two separate stories. First, how to change the world, and the other, how to change the United States. And although Mike Huckabee did much better in the South than many expected, the billion-term Senator had a good Super Tuesday, amassing a delegate lead which Romney or Huckabee have no chance of overpowering, but there isn’t much weight to it. Meanwhile, as is often the case, things on the Democratic side were even more heated. John McCain went into Super Tuesday with many pundits predicting that he won’t be able to retain the daylight lead he has enjoyed thus far; he’s won New Hampshire, and will continue to rail against the man he believes is the “Chicago Machine” that is following two separate stories. First, how to change the world, and the other, how to change the United States. And although Mike Huckabee did much better in the South than many expected, the billion-term Senator had a good Super Tuesday, amassing a delegate lead which Romney or Huckabee have no chance of overpowering, but there isn’t much weight to it. Meanwhile, as is often the case, things on the Democratic side were even more heated. John McCain went into Super Tuesday with many pundits predicting that he won’t be able to retain the daylight lead he has enjoyed thus far; he’s won New Hampshire, and will continue to rail against the man he believes is the “Chicago Machine” that is.
So Jimmy Carter’s the President?
I laughed and stood up fast,
Back to fill my glass and sit again.

So Gerald Ford’s the President?
I sighed and shrugged my shoulder
And went to buy some wine for dinner.

So Eugene McCarthy’s the President?
I clapped and walked upstairs
Leaving a trail of melting icecubes.

So Marcel Marceau’s the President?
I stood and walked against the wind
Leaving theatre tickets and an after dinner drink.

So Willie May’s the President?
I hurried from the spotlight
And found a seat with Johnny Walker.

So now I’m the President?
I laughed and stood up fast,
Back to fill my glass and sit again.

T or F