

Observer

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CHRISTMAS EVE WILL FIND ME

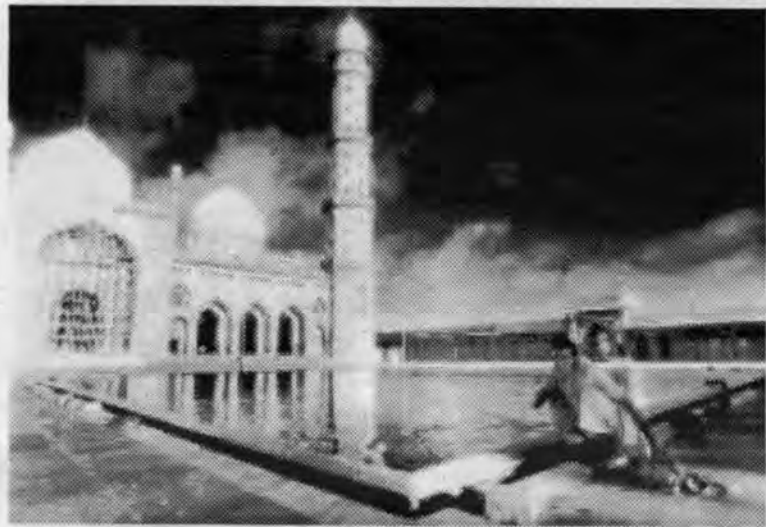
Bhopal: Chemicals Kill Thousands

Disaster in India goes unrecognized by most Americans

by **Bridget Hanna**

Last Wednesday, December 3rd, was the 19th anniversary of the Bhopal gas disaster. If you've never heard of Bhopal, unfortunately, you're not alone.

Union Carbide Corporation, one of the American chemical giants built a pesticide factory in the heart of India's middle state Madhya Pradesh. Created to produce the pesticide Sevin, the factory was sited in the center of the densest and poorest of slums of the capital Bhopal. At midnight, on December 3rd, 1984, in what was arguably the worst chemical disaster in history, 40 tons of deadly methyl isocyanate



(MIC) exploded from the factory's storage tank 610. MIC, which breaks down under pressure into gases like cyanide and phosgene drifted at ground level like a slow-moving gas chamber, across the densely populated city. There was no alarm sounded because the management of the factory, (which was up for sale at the time), had shut off all of safety and warning systems weeks before.

Bhopal was a scene of utter carnage - approximately 8,000 people dropped dead in the streets; about 500,000 survived only to suffer secondary symptoms, or to pass on genetic damage to their children. 40% of women who were pregnant in the gas affected areas on December 3rd spontaneously aborted in the streets.

That night was the first tragedy of Bhopal.

But there is a second tragedy of Bhopal.

Union Carbide has never taken responsibility for the accident, or even divulged the exact contents of the gas that leaked, and America has all but forgotten about the unfortunate cloud. And so we must learn about Bhopal not as a closed accident, but as a crime without a punishment. We must understand it as a release of a plague without a cure. We must perceive the systematic campaign of erasure and neutralization by the Union Carbide Corporation, as well as the complicity of the Indian and the American governments, as a flagrant international violation. We must - (perhaps this is not so hard) - know that our dear U.S. of A. harbors Warren

Anderson, the primary suspect accused in the case, who jumped bail in India in 1984 and today lives a life of luxury in the Hamptons with his wife Lillian.

The Indian government, without input from the victims, settled a civil case with Union Carbide out of court in 1987 for \$470 million - an amount that gave the survivors (many of whom lost their entire families), an average of \$940 each (this amount is often compared to the Exxon Valdeis oil spill settlement which offered an immediate allowance of \$40,000 per sea otter). After the leak, the factory site in Bhopal was abandoned, causing the eventual and continuing contamination of the local water supply.

No actor or corporate officer in this tragedy has ever been brought to trial or punished in the pending criminal suits. Every surviving person of authority liable the night of December 3 lives a free life. Little to nothing has been done to assuage the suffering of the survivors, who still cannot get medical care, basic necessities, or jobs that their gas handicaps will allow them to work.

Bhopal has become a train-wreck of tragedies, and the silence about it that has followed the spectacle of the disaster contributes to its frustrating defiance of categorization. It is not simply a collision of poverty, humanitarian catastrophe and corporate accountability: it is a compounded and festering war against international apathy and local bureaucracy, caught below and in between the nets of environmentalism, human rights, medicine and legality.

Bhopal is everything but a natural disaster: it is firstly and primarily, a very human one.

Last week, I took a research trip with filmmaker Ilan Ziv (who recently premiered his film *Junction* at Bard), I met with survivors, activists, journalists, photographers, engineers, technicians and doctors. In summation, I can only say that there has been no justice in Bhopal, but that there has been, and continues to be, much suffering.

I did not only go to Bhopal to help Mr. Ziv. I was also there because I (and the Human Rights Project) strongly believe two things. Firstly, Bard students and the Bard community need, on the eve of the 20th anniversary, to be educated about Bhopal. And secondly, that Bard students and the Bard community have something crucial to contribute to the struggle for and the comprehension of what Bhopal means today. In India I was making connections and bringing back ideas for the Bhopal Project, which will happen at Bard over the next year.

For you, the Bard student, this venture pivots primarily on the Human Rights Project's spring course called "Bhopal". Based partly on the model of the Witness human rights video workshop that was run a few semesters ago, the filmmaker Ilan Ziv will be attending some classes. Students will be working with him to help produce his documentary film, which will come out for the 20th anniversary of the disaster. Students will correspond with Satinath Sarangi of the Bhopal Group for Information and Action (BGIA) in Bhopal, working on research questions he generates that are necessary and relevant to legal, social or medical work on the

ground, the results of which will be sent back to Sarangi for use in Bhopal by activist networks and free medical clinics. Students will also correspond with other college students interested in Bhopal, both in the US and in India.

The curriculum of the course will include histories and interpretations of the Bhopal disaster combined with theory on the nature of multi-national corporate responsibility, international law, and the rehabilitation or reconciliation of other types of disasters and genocide. There will also be frequent films, guest presentations and talks by activists, lawyers and academics. It will be a challenging course with serious responsibilities, and the opportunity to have an impact on a serious issue.

Even if you can't take the class or you aren't a Bard student, you can still get involved. Film screenings and talks will be open to the public, and there will be a large conference next spring which will bring together activists, academics and survivors to rethink not only what Bhopal has been but also what Bhopal can become and how it must change the rest of the world along the way. In the fall, Ilan Ziv's new film, this time on Bhopal, will again premiere at Bard.

Bhopal is not fading away; it is becoming more vivid daily. International support for the survivors is increasing. In 1999 Dow Chemical bought Union Carbide, and they have grown to regret the acquisition. In spring of 2003, the Indian government finally delivered Warren Anderson's extradition papers to the Supreme Court of the United States. The time for education, action and change is now.

If you're sick of American apathy towards far-away disasters caused by nearby criminals, and you're frustrated



with coursework that is disengaged with the real world issues, then sit up and pay attention. This is an issue that breaks all borders and needs all disciplines. Get involved.

For information on the Bhopal project, contact Bridget Hanna, bh266@bard.edu. For inquiries about the course Bhopal, contact Thomas Keenan, keenan@bard.edu. For information on Bhopal, go to www.bhopal.net.

New Global Studies Program

Same classes, different concentration...

by **Kelly Burdick**

After approval by the faculty senate earlier this semester, Bard is now offering a new academic concentration in the form of the Global and International Studies Program. The program is abbreviated - all Bard programs can - as GISP. Jonathan Becker, Dean of International Studies and Assistant Professor of Political Studies will direct the new program.

Different versions of the program have been discussed for the past ten years, but the current program was officially presented to the Division of Social Studies early this semester and approved by a full vote in the faculty senate in September. James Chace, Omar Encarnación, and Jonathan Becker sponsored the proposal. The program is termed 'global' in order to heighten focus on issues traditionally outside theories of international relations, including non-state actors. Explicitly, the program intends to foster an analysis of international institutions and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in addition to the traditional focus of International Affairs.

The program is not stand-alone. A student wishing to moderate into the program must first meet the requirements for moderation into a stand-alone major or concentration, such as Political Studies, Anthropology, Economics, or Literature. Moderation, however, can be combined with GISP. For moderation into GISP, though, an additional moderation paper - "a plan of study" - is required.

Compared with other concentrations that have been debated in recent years, including Bard's new Human Rights major, this proposal was framed as a matter of catching-up. In the document submitted to the faculty senate, the sponsors argued that "Bard currently lacks a formal and coherent approach to the study of international affairs and globalization."

The faculty senate is asked to consider proposals on several levels. A new concentration must be present a coherent plan of study, capture the interest of the student body, and interact with other academic programs. Another traditional consideration of the faculty senate is whether or not a new program will require new resources, or tax the resources of other academic departments. Since Bard's political studies program is already focused on global

and international topics - Jonathan Becker noted that only one faculty member focuses on domestic politics - such criteria are met with relative ease. The program will require almost no new course offerings, since the foundations of the program are already present in the Bard curriculum.

The program is, however, especially rigorous. Becker noted that one of the main concerns in creating the program was making sure that it was 'possible' to complete all of its requirements, which include ten courses, including the senior project and a one-credit senior seminar. The other seven courses must necessarily come from a curriculum outlined for the program. This includes one course in international relations, one course in the theory and practice of globalization, one course in U.S. foreign policy, two courses in economics, and two courses in what is termed "area-studies," that is, courses on specific geographic areas. Additionally, all students are required demonstrate basic proficiency in a foreign language.

Considering that GISP participants are also encouraged to study-abroad, or at Bard in New York, the program is additionally demanding.

In anticipation of the program's approval, the faculty who conceived the program have been advising students for some time about what kinds of courses constitute a "global affairs" concentration. Because of this advice, many of these students, some current seniors among them, will be able to graduate with the diploma. Any student, however, that meets the requirement is eligible to graduate in the concentration.

Jonathan Becker noted that it is "more unusual not have such a program than to have it." Perhaps best understood as a recruitment tool, the program offers a concentration that has been available at many of Bard's competitors, including Wesleyan, Vassar, and Oberlin, for some time. The program will also allow for what Becker calls "transcriptual recognition," that is, a formal credential to help Bard graduates applying for graduate programs in International Affairs or work with NGOs.

What Are They Building?

New housing for tools and hose

by **Chris Konker**

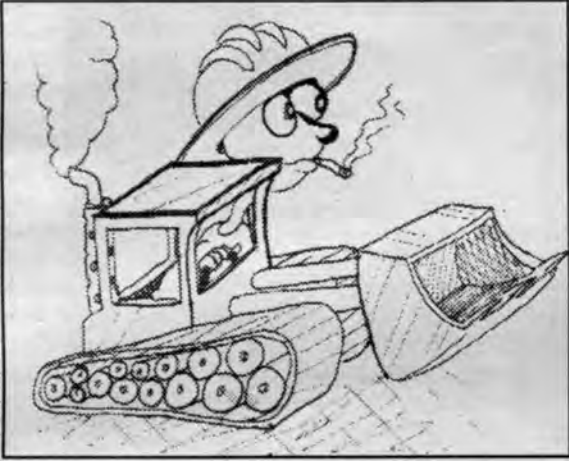
If you've been out to B&G recently, you've probably noticed the enormous gaping space of mud sitting pretty with all of the construction equipment. What's going on? What are they building? In an interview on the 25th, Director of Planning and Construction Chuck Simmons answered questions about the two 80x125 ft. storage buildings to be built there, and also about the progress on the new Avery Arts Center.

Storm King, a contractor and construction company from Stormbill, NY, is behind both projects and also completed the Robbins house remodeling and the Village Dorm construction two years ago. In order to cut the cost of renting storage space to accommodate the dead storage and paper quantity from the Ludlow Administration building, the buildings will be built on a little over an acre of land on the stretch of campus that makes up the southeastern tip.

"We've grown so much that we need the space for air filters, plumbing parts, paper goods, and maintenance material," Simmons noted. The project is costing a little over \$1 million, (which also includes rerouting the thoroughfare to B&G to farther north than where it is now). When asked why he wouldn't reroute in the southern direction to connect Annandale Road directly to the area under construction, he replied that it was a town board decision to respect the historic road south of where Bard campus is concentrated. The construction of the storage buildings is scheduled to end in January, although the

snow season may hinder that schedule.

Since the theatre department has moved to the Fisher Center, Avery has been under remodeling construction that will connect the building to Blum. Adding Avery to Blum will provide the music department with more practice rooms, recital halls, and significantly, an Amphitheatre and outside commons area with a screen "for showing films and for any concerts." This construction is costing \$7.5 million. Simmons added that, if everything goes to schedule, the timetable for the Avery center is to finish



it by the summer of 2004 so that it will be open for the fall term and coincide with the opening of the Masters in Fine Arts program.

Bard is also developing projects to build a new science building, dormitory complex, and student activities building. When asked when construction on any of these projects might begin, Simmons replied that plans hadn't been given to him as of yet.

Articles I Never Got to Write

A Farewell Editorial

by **Elizabeth Daley**

This is neither art, nor entertainment. This may be an editorial, and although we shy away from that at the Observer, every article is an editorial or sorts. First of all, that article in the Free Press, about the German Cannibal who met his victim through a personal ad placed on the internet that said: "looking for someone to eat: if that's you, contact me" - I wanted to write that article. It is not every day that someone willingly subjects himself to being killed and eaten, unless I just hang with the wrong crowd? I was going to call my gem of an article: "Fine Young Cannibal!" It was going to be great. I also wanted to write an article about the Dr. Exhibit, which was curated by two Bard students and is the first ever exhibition by a secret artist known only as "The Doctor." I assigned someone an article about the tenure process at Bard but it fell through. I would have liked to write about the tenure process, as I see some of the best professors at Bard fearing for their jobs based upon how often they eat in the faculty dining room. I was supposed to write an article about internet theater, including Craigs List Anonymous (a play by Christian Kiley), but I never got to write that either. I wanted to write an article about www.speechcodes.org, a website that has rated Bard as an institution that does not have free speech due to overly politically correct policies as stated in our student handbook. However, I lost my student handbook freshman year, and the court case against Shippensburg University, where they were sued for a free speech violation, occurred in October. For anyone who cares, Shippensburg lost, and the boy who posted the "fuck Osama" poster on his dorm room door, shortly after September 11, won.

However, the article that I most want to write is this one: an expose on the life of an Observer. It is 3:40 am and I am sitting in the Observer office in the basement of Tewksbury all alone. The Outkast Cd that I was playing has long since silenced itself and security has already come in once, curious as to what I am doing awake at this hour. There is a creepy voice that periodically emanates from our broken computer that says "it's not my fault, Norton fileshare has detected an error in the volume bit map." Imagine how scary it is to hear a robotic voice out of no where at 5 am in the morning. Now imagine how scary it is to not know what the hell a volume bit-map is or does. Come to the Observer office and you too can turn imagination in to reality.

Today in my Doctors and Writers class, we spoke of the apathy that permeates the Bard student body. We spoke of how unhappy many Bard students are and how many of the best and the brightest leave due to inhumane living conditions and/or lack of student life. I am a student who is leaving. Maybe I'm not the best but perhaps one of the brighter? I am only leaving for a semester, yet I feel as though I have broken up with Bard. I am not leaving due to inhumane living conditions, although my space-heated matchbox of a smokers dorm is not my dream come true (shout-out to So-Ho first floor! Wesley, Katherine, Sam, Cricket, Ariel, I love you!) I am leaving because my friends are the rats abandoning the sinking ship of the Bard community, and I too would like to swim, rather than steer the ship alone. For those of you not dense, for those of you who are actually reading this, the reason I could not write all the aforementioned articles, and one of the reasons I am leaving, is that I cannot run the Observer with only two other students. I cannot be involved in anything else on campus or off as long as I work for the Observer. Three or four full time students cannot run a campus newspaper for one thousand-two hundred and fifty of you. I admit, it has been fun and it was my choice to get involved, I do not regret it, I rather wish that more of you had made the choice to get involved. It is amazing to have the power to write and lay-out a newspaper that could potentially contain ANYTHING you wanted to put in it. It is great to look back at old issues that date back as far as 1923 and know that when I am gone, some future Bard student will look back with the same fondness at my work.

However corny this sounds, I would like to say to all of you: get involved in whatever it is that you care about. Don't put things off. If you want change, the best place to start is in your community because you will really be able to see results. Put your whole heart in to your work and help your friends out so that they may put their whole heart into theirs. Your life is like a child up for adoption and your home is already child-proof. To quote the notorious Hillary Clinton, "It takes a village to raise a village and if you don't raise a village you will die alone and your body will never be buried." On that note, I am off to edit.

I will miss you all,
Lovelizabeth

P.S. Should you want to join the Observer Next Semester, contact James Newman or Tom Mattos. If you are a girl, or not white, or not straight, or not American, or anyone else, we would love to have you. We want to represent the Bard community in all its glory.

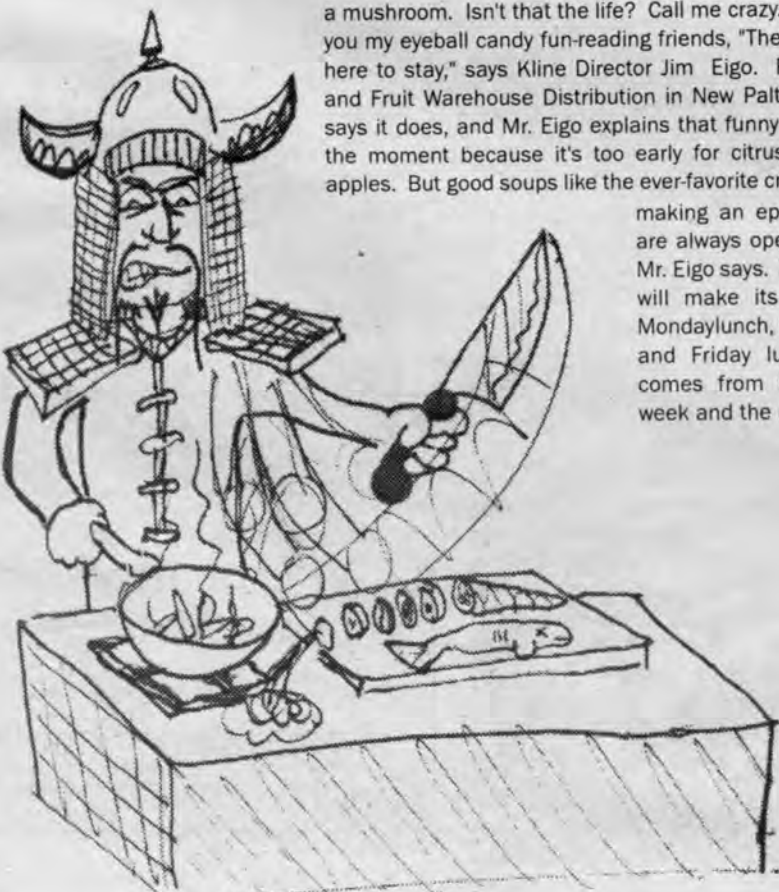
Reporting from the Trenches...

From the savage depths of the Mongol Grill

by **Kate "The Great" Waters**

The Mongolian Grill. Could be the best thing that has happened this semester except for no snow yet, too bad there was a blizzard. Uh ha-uh-uh. I have nothing to say about the grill, it's your experience completely. Sometimes, you have to feel the magic. This is one of them. Instead, I'll rely on the magic of truth and lies, like Mao or Jeb Bush. The Mongolian Grill replaced the stir fry wok bar that's hard to remember because the sheer economics of it gave birth to the new and improved; you, me, and the Mongolian grill. I'm inviting the Bard Mongolians to correct me when I say that next to the Somalian chicken, this Kline exoticism is the best yet. The grill revolves around combinations of vegan peanut sauce, ginger, garlic, mushrooms, bamboo shoots, corn, beef, chicken, seafood, peppers and onions. Everything is made with soybean oil. The udon noodles are a subtle tinge of purple, like everything after your 75th cigarette that day, a Hudson sunset, and /or beets.

I don't need Thanksgiving, all I need is to be that pea in the pod which I crunch between my jaws over peanut sauce and a mushroom. Isn't that the life? Call me crazy. So this one is for you my eyeball candy fun-reading friends, "The Mongolian Grill is here to stay," says Kline Director Jim Eigo. Robbins Vegetable and Fruit Warehouse Distribution in New Paltz provides what it says it does, and Mr. Eigo explains that funny fruit is in Kline at the moment because it's too early for citrus and too late for apples. But good soups like the ever-favorite cream of tomato are making an epic comeback. "We are always open to suggestions," Mr. Eigo says. The Mongolian grill will make its appearances for Mondaylunch, Wednesday dinner, and Friday lunch. Inspiration comes from both ends of the week and the middle.



*Don't Hit a Deer
On the Way Home.*

*A Public Service Message
Courtesy of the Observer.*

A State of Knowing: Why Science is Worth a Damn

Artificial Intelligence, Global Warming, Nuclear Weapons, and Coffee

by **Ran Tao**

Imagine a group of people whose principal concern is reading. They are engrossed by a recent manuscript in the comfort of their laboratory. They are well versed in a timeworn and cryptic language, both versatile and intricate in its expression, though simplistic in its appearance. The alphabet of this language is composed of a mere four letters: A, C, T, and G, and the words are constructed from the triplet combinations of these letters.

The sentences of this particular narrative are long, sinuous, and epic in proportion. The paragraphs they begin to read are various descriptions of a single person, a female that is yet to be born. Through the sporadic mosaic of their images they begin to discern a face; the text begins to shape the silhouette of a young woman. It reads, 'she has light brown eyes, always soft and reflective under an excess cover of salt water. She has a prominent widow's peak, and a sharp nose reminiscent of a beak. She is tall and lanky, with a head full of chestnut hair. She's smart but must take her time to integrate new knowledge . . .'

They discuss the authorship of this biography, written by her mother and coauthored by her father. They are

"The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious – the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science"

Albert Einstein, *Living Philosophies*, 1931

stream. It's difficult to leaf through all those impassive letters and make out the patterns of an honest face. For now, though we exclude the eloquent process of genetic expression, from DNA to RNA translation, to the synthesis of protein, to the constitution of the organelles within a cell, to the fabric of tissue, to the organs and respiration, and into the eventual symmetry of the human body, or the dive of a fish, or the leap of a hare, or the stretch of an albatross's wings, though we choose momentarily only to focus on the syntax behind these things, the language itself is not without its simplistic charm and beauty.

The artistic merit of science, however, seems counterintuitive and is often questionable. The empirical tyranny of science often reduces the intuitive beauty of an experience into a color scheme, an illusion, or a system of well orchestrated chemical exchanges. Dreams fair poorly in a world of fact. Science has a reputation to over simplify the state of affairs, dismissing the even features of a patient as genetics, reducing the social frustration of a blue-collar worker as a system of behavior, or attributing our well meditated actions to the circumstances of the environment.

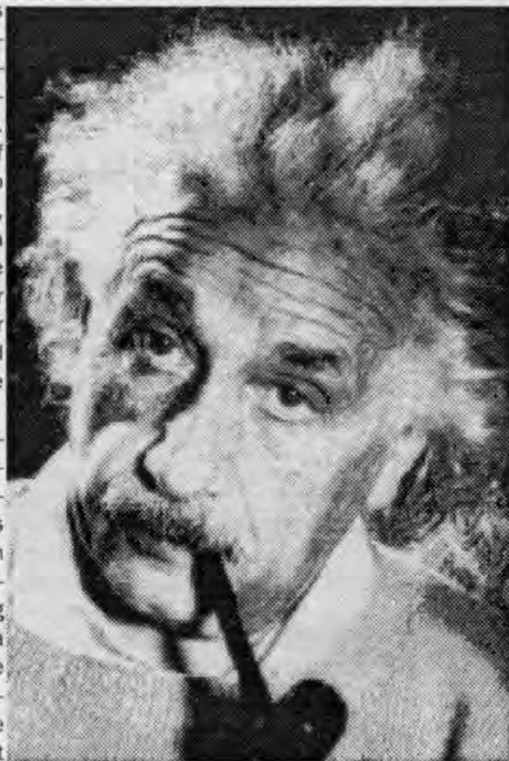
In truth, the spirit of science does not seek to peg the natural world into a narrow set of predetermined shapes, but endeavors to illuminate another dimension behind the craftsmanship of a natural form. Richard Feynman, using his science savvy to examine a flower contrasts his experience with that of a poet's, "I can appreciate the beauty of a flower. At the same time I see much more about the flower than he sees. I can imagine the cells in there, the complicated actions inside which also have a beauty. I mean it's not just beauty at the dimension of one centimeter, there is also beauty at a smaller dimension, the inner structure . . . science knowledge only adds to the excitement and mystery and the awe of a flower. It only adds; I don't understand how it subtracts."

It's true that science brings the quintessential element of doubt and skepticism into every occurrence it encounters, and it is precisely in this way that it keeps us honest to what observe. The intention of science is to understand the essential mechanics of the natural world, though this may force us to abandon long cherished ideals of how things should be, in the same way that literature brings us to bear with uncomfortable insights to our own nature.

A last consideration. Let's return to our group of metaphorical readers. They arrive at a difficult passage in their manuscript. They have discovered a syntactical error, a flaw in the grammatical structure that prevents a coherency in the text. The expression of one of the genes is stunted. They discover that the protagonist is fated to receive two

recessive alleles that are responsible for the genetic disorder cystic fibrosis. It becomes clear to the readers the trauma and hardship that must inevitably follow, a tragedy that inflicts one of every 2,500 caucasians of European descent. However, it is too late to ramify this error? Can our readers edit the text before it's publication?

When we reap a book from the shelves of a store we are fully aware of the finality of the printed text. We are afforded the comfort of knowing that the story has already been written, that our actions carry no weight as readers, and therefore we can never be held responsible for the events of that story. But what if we were suddenly granted the power of authorship? What if we were given a command



of determination, not only for the story of our own lives, but for those of the others around us? What would we do with such daunting responsibility? We could no longer afford the luxury of spectatorship, of passive observation in the light of suffering without a guilty conscience. Would we or should we change all tragedy and hardship into ease and happy endings? Isn't that what we want? What is a story without trauma, struggle, development, and eventual growth? Though the manipulation of genetic information on the order of the prevention against genetic diseases is not yet firm within our grasp, it is not beyond the realm of possibility in the near future. We already hear of much debate over the ethical integrity of cloning, or the lasting effects and implications of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). When the influence of genetics is fully realized who will have the foresight and responsibility

to manage it? The biologist without an effective insight into such issues as distribution and trade? The economist that has little understanding of social anthropology? The philosopher who refuses to glance at the administrative and legal channels of human rights? The lawyer without any conception of biodiversity and the implications of ecology?

We are Bard's premiere science coffeehouse, a student lead organization that encourages the awareness of contemporary issues in science that have consequences, both globally and locally. We understand that addressing these issues requires the cooperation of multiple disciplines. Only in concert can we begin to understand the scope of the difficulties facing our world. Monthly, we host casual discussions of such issues, and encourage you to attend no matter what your interests are, especially if they're far fetched and seemingly out of context. We'll be in touch. Look for our scattered posters, especially next semester. Some of the subjects include: Alternative Energy, Artificial Intelligence, Global Warming, Endangered species, and Nuclear Weapons. Naturally, coffee and cookies are served. So come.

quite impressed by how meticulous and veritable the text is. They think it deserves the Pulitzer for such marksmanship, for such precise and succinct characterization.

At this point, however, I must be cautious with my words, for though metaphors may be insightful they are seldom invulnerable. Our avid readers are a team of biologists, and their manuscript is a string of nucleotides that make up DNA. Three of these nucleotide-letters constitute one word, or a code that will later translate into an amino acid, the essential element of a protein. Those imaginative paragraphs that so fluidly describe her features are genes, or a sequence of nucleotides that encodes for specific characteristic in a given organism. The spine of this novel is a chromosome, the DNA molecule in its entirety, fashioned with genes and all.

In discarding the poetic ornamentation of the metaphor we are left with the stark and elusive murmur of the DNA itself, as mystifying as the natural rustle of a

The Science Coffeehouse

by **Kate "The Great" Waters**

The Science Coffeehouse debuts as Bard's new student-run science group amidst discussion of campus alternative energy plans and new science building. The Immediate Science Research Opportunity Program's recent popularity has expanded the six-year-old program to create the Science Coffeehouse, whose informal discussions have attested to newsletters and upcoming meetings to focus on global science concerns and recent local alternative energy opportunities. Amongst pressing enthusiasm for local and global science issues, the Science Coffeehouse found a home at Bard when ISROP's program reached maximum capacity. Second and first year students unable to join the research program came together to continue their passions in another indication of Bard's expanding science venue. Valerie Thomson, Director of Immediate Science Research Opportunity Program, affirmed that amidst political fervor on issues such as abortion and cloning, "Politics and the language of science become very important," she said, introducing the integrative Coffeehouse to foster "a level of scientific literacy at Bard."

The Coffeehouse is welcoming students of all disciplines to join into the discussions, mirroring the integrative approach of ISROP's program open to students of all majors. "Bard campus and college has an interest in science and an integrative approach to bringing someone from Political science, Economics, and other fields to talk about hot topics of science from these perspectives," Ms. Thomson said.

Discussion introductions are open to faculty by permission, an approach geared specifically to the group's emphasis on student participation. Informed dialogues are begun with two to three faculty members from different disciplines introducing a five to twenty minute series of opening remarks on the night's topic, followed by student led discourses which return to a larger forum for total debate. Visiting scientist from Albany, New York City, and the Hudson Valley are expected to join talks in the future. Meeting places range from the Campus Center to library spaces to integrate journal readings into the program. Campus-wide posters will be coming up for the Science Coffeehouse's meeting before the end of this semester. All are invited, faculty and students alike.



Come on down and write for the Observer! I did it and look what I got, a giant pencil and a new haircut.

Bring It On: Change is Good

What Kind of Education Did Your Mother Get?

by **Ethan Porter**

Leon has a plan," a fellow student whispered to me recently outside of Henderson. "He wants to make Bard a top ten liberal arts college in five years."

I found the idea ridiculous; the image of Mr. Botstein staying up until the wee hours of morning hatching a plan to catapult Bard to a position of greater respect and recognition is tempting to believe, but absolutely implausible. Yet I was forced to admit to myself- something is definitely going on here. Or at least, some people believe there is.

I've wrestled with Bard since I got here four months ago. My parents both graduated from here in the late seventies, so understandably I am attached to the school on some sort of fundamental level. After all, if this place didn't exist, most likely neither would I. Through the years, my parents expressed a fondness for the school, albeit with a few reservations.

They doubtlessly received a world-class education, which they have been quite appreciative of. My father's bookshelf is still stocked with the books he read here. On the other hand, they always were always frustrated by its absence on the radar of most Americans. They have often attributed this to be the byproduct of Bard's reputation as a debauchorous, pseudo-artists' colony, overflowing with intellectual energy but lacking in the rigorous discipline of a serious institution. No matter what anyone may say, when no one knows about the place you devoted four years of your life to, a place you know to be worthy of the highest esteem, it can be quite deflating.

That all changed last spring, when the Fischer Center was completed and the school received an enormous amount of positive press and praise from the commonfolk. Suddenly, everyone knew all about the place my parents had gone to school, and where I was set to head off to.

The completion of the Fischer Center and its overwhelmingly positive reception was the culmination of years of effort to improve the school, a crown jewel of sorts, but it is also just the beginning of a number of larger changes. As we all know, the next major project is the construction of a new science building, as part of the school's pronounced effort to attract more science-minded students. During Parents' Weekend, my parents noted several broader changes as well, the sort that are invisible to the naked eye but unmistakable to past graduates. They say that there is an attitude of academic seriousness among the student body and on the campus that, quite simply, was not here two decades ago.

After considering these changes, two interrelated questions arose in my head- what Bard means today, and what it's going to mean in the future. Bard is, without a doubt, a far more respected institution than it once was. We've always had superior faculty, but now the students and the facilities have finally caught up.

Yet to merely say that Bard is changing is really to say nothing at all. Of course the school is changing- institutions naturally evolve over time, perhaps for the better, perhaps for the worse. What really matters is who is talking about these changes.

Alumni, by and large, seem to view the changes positively, although with some concerns. On one hand, the school has attained a higher level of respect and recognition. And yet, there is a common fear among graduates that if they were to apply to the school today, they would be rejected. This may be viewed simply as a sign of the insecurities that Bard is so proficient at cultivating, but there is also some truth to the notion.

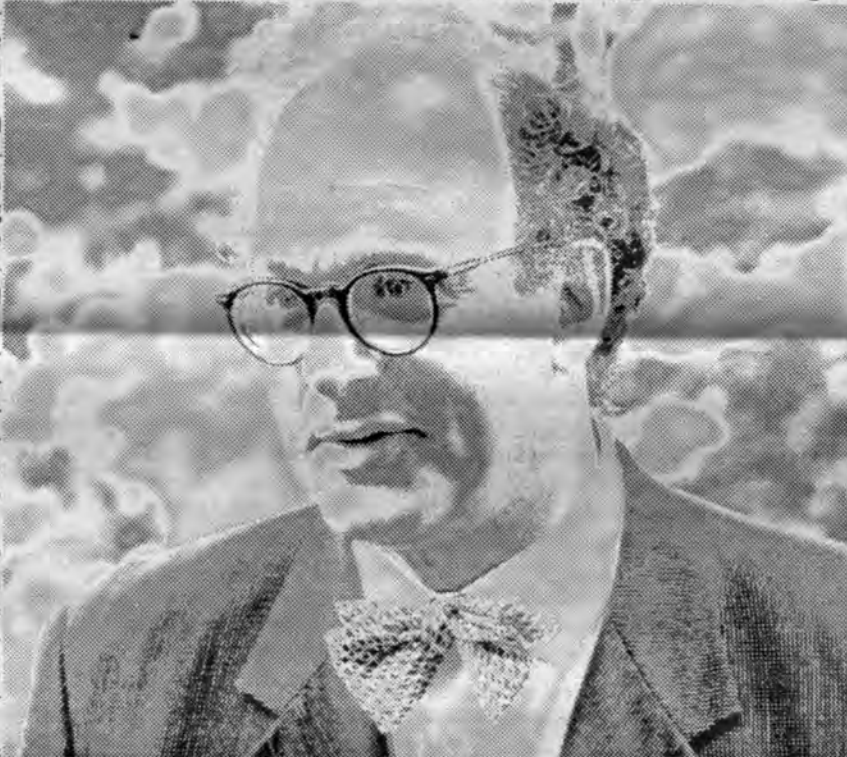
As is often said, the numbers don't lie. The campus was abuzz at the beginning of the semester when Bard rose six spots in the latest magazine college rankings. In 1970, the school admitted 69% of 1,014 freshman applicants. By

2003, the percent admitted was far lower- 39%- while the number of applicants- 3,367- had shot up substantially.

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Unfortunately, because a place like Bard encourages diversity and creative thinking, it is difficult to find more than a handful of students who share the same reading or learning interests and styles. While the texts may all be of great literary and philosophic importance, a course that is designed to cover such a broad range of topics is no doubt likely to cause students frustration. The problem later results in a biased attitude towards many of the texts based on a preliminary exposure and unfounded opinions leftover from their FYS course. Many of the texts are started and finished in just 2 classes, over the span of one week. There is no way all of these texts can be given the justice they deserve without limiting the number

of texts and/or collecting similar works and dividing the courses between interests.

This would help improve the level of instruction. Bard is full of varied interests and levels of expertise; most of the teachers here are skilled and trained in specific areas. When these teachers are forced, as many of the younger professors without tenure are, to teach a course so broad and varied, there is an almost guaranteed chance they will be required to teach at least one text outside of their field or that they personally have never read. This creates an environment in which teachers and students are reading and experiencing something simultaneously, which arguably can be beneficial. However, because FYSEM teachers are getting paid more just to teach this class, one would assume they would or should bring more to the discussion than a personal opinion.

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Bring It On: Change is Good

What Kind of Education Did Your Mother Get?

by **Ethan Porter**

Leon has a plan," a fellow student whispered to me recently outside of Henderson. "He wants to make Bard a top ten liberal arts college in five years."

I found the idea ridiculous; the image of Mr. Botstein staying up until the wee hours of morning hatching a plan to catapult Bard to a position of greater respect and recognition is tempting to believe, but absolutely implausible. Yet I was forced to admit to myself- something is definitely going on here. Or at least, some people believe there is.

I've wrestled with Bard since I got here four months ago. My parents both graduated from here in the late seventies, so understandably I am attached to the school on some sort of fundamental level. After all, if this place didn't exist, most likely neither would I. Through the years, my parents expressed a fondness for the school, albeit with a few reservations.

They doubtlessly received a world-class education, which they have been quite appreciative of. My father's bookshelf is still stocked with the books he read here. On the other hand, they always were always frustrated by its absence on the radar of most Americans. They have often attributed this to be the byproduct of Bard's reputation as a debauchorous, pseudo-artists' colony, overflowing with intellectual energy but lacking in the rigorous discipline of a serious institution. No matter what anyone may say, when no one knows about the place you devoted four years of your life to, a place you know to be worthy of the highest esteem, it can be quite deflating.

That all changed last spring, when the Fischer Center was completed and the school received an enormous amount of positive press and praise from the commonfolk. Suddenly, everyone knew all about the place my parents had gone to school, and where I was set to head off to.

The completion of the Fischer Center and its overwhelmingly positive reception was the culmination of years of effort to improve the school, a crown jewel of sorts, but it is also just the beginning of a number of larger changes. As we all know, the next major project is the construction of a new science building, as part of the school's pronounced effort to attract more science-minded students. During Parents' Weekend, my parents noted several broader changes as well, the sort that are invisible to the naked eye but unmistakable to past graduates. They say that there is an attitude of academic seriousness among the student body and on the campus that, quite simply, was not here two decades ago.

After considering these changes, two interrelated questions arose in my head- what Bard means today, and what it's going to mean in the future. Bard is, without a doubt, a far more respected institution than it once was. We've always had superior faculty, but now the students and the facilities have finally caught up.

Yet to merely say that Bard is changing is really to say nothing at all. Of course the school is changing- institutions naturally evolve over time, perhaps for the better, perhaps for the worse. What really matters is who is talking about these changes.

Alumni, by and large, seem to view the changes positively, although with some concerns. On one hand, the school has attained a higher level of respect and recognition. And yet, there is a common fear among graduates that if they were to apply to the school today, they would be rejected. This may be viewed simply as a sign of the insecurities that Bard is so proficient at cultivating, but there is also some truth to the notion.

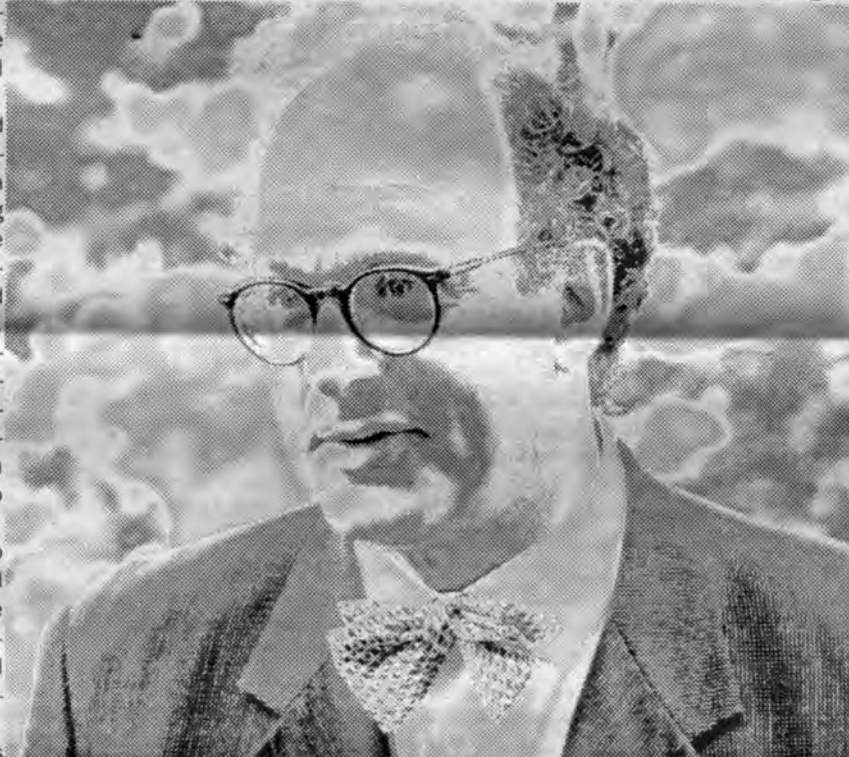
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Bigger, Better: Biotechnology

Why You're Fed and Others Go Hungry...

by **Ran Tao**

"Genetic engineering will not be a new endeavor. Evolution is and always has been a genetic engineer"
- Kary Mullis

This is one of the arguments we must take into consideration when discussing the integrity and resourcefulness of GMOs (genetically modified organisms). A fundamental contention against the proliferation of genetically modified foods is that they are inherently unnatural, merely synthesized substitutes for superior organic products. However, nature is readily responsible for the alteration of genetic information, inducing mutations without fail in the DNA of all organisms. Our recent abilities to shuffle genes do not transgress the limits of nature but rather reflect what it already does. Furthermore, such agricultural practices as selection and breeding, which extend to the dawn of many civilizations, and is continuously practiced in the present without criticism, have always been the manipulation of genetic information, though perhaps less directly. There is no shame in the farmer who makes it his business to breed animals for desired traits, whether it's strength for work, or flesh for consumption. With the genetic revolution we merely gain a stronger grasp over something we already advocate and practice. However, as we begin to gain an 'upper hand' over genetics we must examine how this changes our relationship to nature, for the ever-increasing risk is to reduce nature into another commodity for our convenience.

What are some of the benefits and consequence of GMOs? During the recent discussion on GMOs, hosted by the Science Coffeehouse this past month, arguments such as the one above along with other insights were presented.

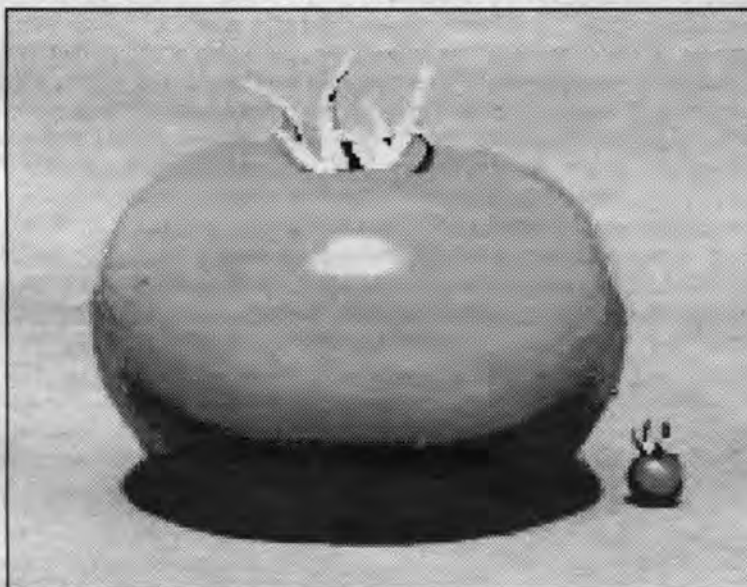
Bacillus Thuringiensis (BT) is a natural bacterium common to the soil worldwide. Its unique ability to produce crystalline proteins that selectively poison specific groups of insects has made it especially valuable to the agricultural industry. The extensive spraying of BT over cultivated fields has become the conventional method of insect prevention preferred by corn producers. However, genetic modification has made it possible to incorporate the gene that is responsible for the insect poison into the genome of the corn. Presently 2/3 of the US corn is genetically modified to carry this gene, and in consequence can 'naturally' produce this insect poison.

General herbicides such as Roundup are now universally and generously applied to crops for the elimination of unwanted weeds. Genetic modifications have led for example soy to become Roundup immune, thereby preserving the crop at the expense of the weed. This removes the risk of treating the crop with immoderate amounts of Roundup, and in consequence a debate as ensued on whether the excessive application of Roundup is warranted or even necessary.

Biologists express a special concern over the poten-

tial risks of such engineering to ecological systems. Lateral hybridization of genetic information, a documented phenomenon in nature, can lead to the transmission of the Roundup resilient gene from the crops to other plants, and thus a proliferation of weeds that are also resistant to roundup is a potential problem. Another concern of biologists is the necessary reduction in biodiversity due to GMOs. By genetically modifying organisms to precisely simulate our genetic standards we sacrifice the organism's advantage of biodiversity and risk the creation of a homogenous crop. In light of a natural disaster, without diversity, the entire crop could be lost, and evolution, as expressed through natural selection, would be stunted.

Regardless, such agricultural innovations can increase the production of produce globally, and especially for developing nations, reduce the space required for cultivation, and prevent additional clearing for agricultural pastures. This



in turn would assuage the growing environmental concerns over soil degradation and erosion, the expansion of barren and arid lands, and the loss of whole ecosystems and their species.

Developing nations are especially sensitive to agricultural yields, where an annual harvest ruined by precarious weather could severely cripple a nation. By introducing crops that are more resilient to the whims of the environment, such developing nations could show immense progress. However we should be cautious of the introduction of such biotechnology to developing nations, each with unique ecological conditions and climates that may respond to such dramatic changes in a multitude of ways. Also, we should be wary that there are no administrative bodies in the United Nations, or in any other international organization, that have the means or

the savvy to undertake such an immense responsibility.

Without such an executive international organization to administer and assess these measures, international conglomerates and corporations are potentially free to exploit biotechnology for their immoral and narrow self-interests. Consider the sick operations of one prominent biotechnology company called Monsanto. Employing a lucrative technique called 'terminator technology,' Monsanto was shamelessly manufacturing crops that upon maturation would not yield seeds. In turn the farmer is forced to purchase more of these vile, infertile seeds from the company in order to continue growth, thus becoming financially dependant on Monsanto. One can image the monstrous consequences if such a company were able to successfully manipulate and monopolize the production of an unconditional necessity. Fortunately Monsanto was convicted under court and no longer endorses such deceitful procedures. We must be careful to prevent such precarious ventures from ever taking place.

One of the strongest arguments against the proliferation of GMOs is that more than enough food exists to supply the world. However, issues of distribution, such as the enormous costs of transportation, and the question of incentives must be considered. Before GMOs can become advantageous and beneficial to dire economic situations in our world, such international organizations as the IMF, the World Bank, and such trade agreements as NAFTA must be redefined, reorganized, and most importantly reformed to absorb such responsibilities.

On a more hopeful tone, some prospective uses of genetically modified crops include the production of 'Golden Rice.' Individuals whose diet is heavily dependent on rice often experience iron deficiencies. One possible solution is the insertion of a gene that encodes for beta-carotene (vitamin A) into the genome of rice, enhancing its nutritional value. The vitamin A is

also responsible for the golden color, and hence the name.

Imagine if vaccinations no longer needed to be administered through upsetting needles. Why not insert a gene that encodes for a single protein of say hepatitis B virus into the genome of a potato. Though the protein alone is not enough to harm the body, after eating the potato, upon introduction to the foreign protein, the body will naturally produce antibodies against hepatitis B, and would thus be equipped to stave off a future infection.

Without question the development of biotechnology can bring about extraordinary advancement and relief to our world, however, if not managed responsibly, it can create devastating hardship and complication.

TO THE STUDENTS OF BARD COLLEGE FROM THE STUDENT SERVICES REGARDING events which occurred around THE DRAG RACE.

This may or may not apply directly to you, but we're all in it together and the conversation effects everyone in this community.

Personal Obligation: No one's responsibilities at Bard include pulling you out of the bushes when you are falling down drunk or wiping vomit off your face. Not the faculty's. Not ServiceMaster's. Not Security's. Not our's.

Responsibility to the Community: Many members of this College community work continuously to foster and build relationships with our area towns of Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Kingston and beyond. Many of us also live in these communities. The Drag Race impact on the local emergency services alone has destroyed years of good relations. Many of us will make phone calls and write letters that begin to reestablish our relationships with local hospitals, police, volunteer firefighters, etc. Over the next few months every one of us, in some way, will apologize to our friends and neighbors for the behavior of our students. We care for you, for the College, and for the region in which we live and being put in this position is embarrassing, sad, and, fundamentally a real drag.

The College Mission: A student commented after last week's community meeting, "I could have gone to a school with a more mainstream reputation, but I came here for things like the Drag Race because we like the sense of nihilism here." Those of us who work at Bard assume, in the course of your development as human beings, that you will consider and experience alienation, anger, despair, etc. You will encounter dark, inhuman moments in your study of history, anthropology, and literature. You may explore existential alienation as an actor, dancer, writer, or painter. But in no way is the mission of this college the practice of nihilistic, cynical self-destruction. This college promotes critical thinking and acting that lead to brilliant and positive participation in the world. If you believe that Bard's campus climate includes the perceived acceptance of nihilism then it is time to change that impression right now. Yes we may do things a little differently here, but be clear that fostering academic, aesthetic, political and social excellence is our mission.

What we want to do as a staff: We support and fund film festivals and Clothesline Projects, political conferences and poetry readings, Spring Fling, coffee houses and concerts, Space Programs and Circuses, Contra Dances and Zen meditation. We encourage all groups such as our newspapers and radio station, the Queer Alliance, Student Government, ISO, the Outdoor Club, BSO, TLS, MSO, the Student Action Collective, LASO...to be a positive part of the community. With our help students organize and make a difference in Africa, Thailand and Guatemala. With our assistance students run serious programs all over Dutchess and Ulster

Counties. We think daily about your academic growth and performance, and both your physical and emotional well being. We are concerned for your futures. We say "yes" every chance we get.

We have great faith in you: We are often in awe of your brilliance, humor, creativity and commitment to social change. We expect a lot, because you are often magnificent.

We're behind Grand Spectacle: We have in the past fully supported the underlying intention of the Drag Race, which originated as an event to support gay and lesbian students as they took a stand for themselves. We would be delighted to see a thousand Bard students reveling in an extravaganza of celebratory energy for each other. You are excellent people and you have the potential to create an extraordinary community. You have all the talent and imaginative power to do something grand and good. Something with teeth, something explosive even, but not essentially self-destructive. It will take planning and follow through, and that is actually part of the fun of it.

Everyone is supposed to be doing it: There is both real and perceived sexual pressure on a college campus. You're supposed, somehow, to be sexually sophisticated. Get over it. It's a lifetime's project. Use of alcohol or drugs might make it seem easier to touch and be touched, but it doesn't begin to address or foster real intimacy and it most certainly doesn't enhance the quality of the interactions.

We are not police, but we will protect the college: We are not unsophisticated in the ways of self-discovery. We are sympathetic to the challenges of maturing in a forbidding world. We see the appeal of a grand, uninhibited, boundary-shattering spectacle, and the appetite for tribal Oom Pah Pah. But the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol is not what college is about, this is neither why we exist nor why you chose to come here. Bard is our community and we will protect it. The laws of this country and state are applicable on this campus. There are simply lines that cannot be crossed, and as a group you crossed some of them the night of the Drag Race.

We are still here: As a staff we are disturbed by last week's happenings, but we are committed to making this campus alive and fulfilling. We continue to support you individually and collectively. Our hope is that the energy stirred up by this event will fuel innumerable positive conversations and result in vibrant, conscious action. There is a wonderful moment here for all of us to consider and enhance the social fabric that makes Bard such an extraordinary learning environment.

Let's Flood Mystic River

By Chris Konker

I saw *Mystic River* several weeks ago and I could not believe how much it moved me. Even if you never really considered yourself a fan of director Clint Eastwood, this film has an extraordinarily high quality of acting. Marcia Gay Harden, Sean Penn, and Tim Robbins are particularly good. Eastwood brings characters to life by restricting his cinematic focus to only their most basic emotional qualities, dreams, or fears. *Mystic River* is an extremely rewarding tragic film in which the audience member has a greater emotional connection with a character when the less of that character's traits are revealed.

I found it useful to know the plot of the film before I saw it. The film begins as pre-teens Dave, Jimmy, and Sean play hockey on a suburban street. Two men pretending to be policemen abduct Dave while Jimmy and Sean (not realizing what is happening) wave helplessly. Dave is sexually abused by the men. He escapes physically and but in a different sense, he never escapes.

We then jump 30-something years. Dave and Jimmy are both fathers, husbands, (with Jimmy having spent some time behind bars). Sean is a homicide detective. Sean gets the case when Jimmy's daughter is found murdered in a ditch; and since the murder's behavior run parallel Dave's everyday behavior, he becomes the principal suspect.

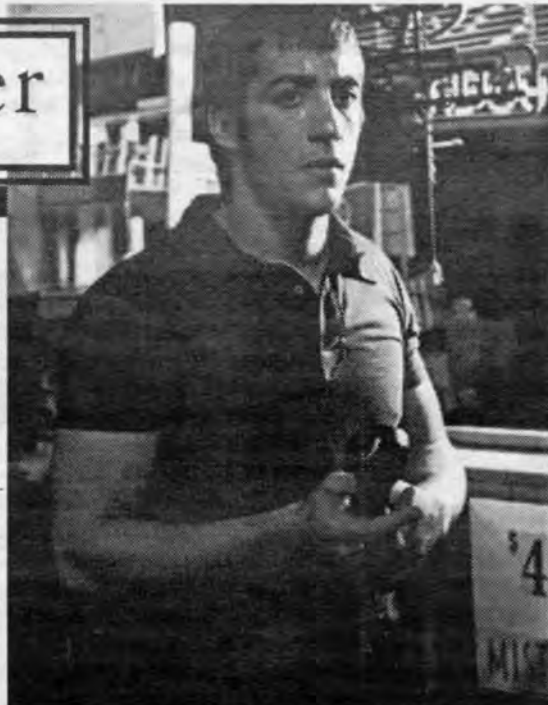
While this brief summary highlights the film's who-done-it nature, the mystery is really only the setting by which very complex relationships become even more complex as the mundane is shattered by murder and the grief, confusion, and obsession for justice which ensues. The true purpose of this film is not to solve the murder, because the activity that occurs as a result of the murder completely overwhelms it. Neither is the purpose to show whether justice is fulfilled for Jimmy, because there is no real justice for a man who can't stop reeling from his own sense of guilt.

What is this film's purpose? Well, there's no moral or lesson, if I can say that much.

Basically, this film exists to tell a story through its characters. I love it so much because I feel that the characters

exist beyond the confines of this particular story. This is shown clearly in the last scene in which a parade goes through town and the characters watch it. Nothing concrete happens - the plot has already gone where it needed to go - but the scene reinforces that while the murder and ensuing chaos may define these characters to the audience, to themselves and to the other characters, it is still just a brief segment of their entire lives. Jimmy walks out onto his porch wearily to watch the parade. We the audience have just endured a world of pain with this guy for 2 hrs. and 15 minutes and we know it's not over for him, but he just shrugs his shoulders, grins kind of goofily, pats a friend on the back. It's kind of fitting. These characters are real because they are haunted by unresolved issues. The film ends, but it doesn't really, because there is so much more to imagine.

I'm not saying I want a sequel. It's just nice to leave a theater, acknowledge that I was really moved, and not regret it. I really recommend this film to anybody who likes good character development, a seamless combination of drama and music (Eastwood wrote the score), or to anyone who likes any of the actors - there's no weak link. If anybody has strong feelings about the film, and wants to chat, my email is ck737@bard.edu. I'm just interested in what people think.



FFXI Review

By Chelsea Doyle

I must ask all RPG gamers to hold onto their computer chairs, or tie themselves down at this moment. When discussing the newest Final Fantasy game to come out, one that mixes the beautiful graphics of Squaresoft with the popular online gaming styles of Everquest, it is very easy to get out of hand and start frothing at the mouth. Believe me, I've been there, done that, had embarrassing pictures taken. It has been out for about two weeks now, and already has one of the largest gaming populations, giving the players a chance to play the black mages and ninjas that they loved so well in Final Fantasy. Is there a storyline? You betcha. One that involves the termination of a beautiful world with the survivors picking up the pieces, and the game involves each player as a protector of the universe against the evil attackers. You can go your normal way of leveling and doing little side quests, or join into the main storyline on epic adventures against orcs and monsters alike!

Calm down. Keep a hold of those chains. It is not perfect. You have to get to a certain level in one universe in order to transport yourself into the one that your friends are in, which is a terrible idea that forces the player not to be lazy and get help. Instead, you have to work at gaining the right amount of levels to gain money and this "world pass." Many critics have found it to be the worst part, but if you are willing to do the work, it is worth it! It is also semi-expensive, since after paying sixty dollars for the game it seems ludicrous to pay fifteen dollars a month after that just to play online, and believe me, it is ridiculous. Damn those intelligent merchants that know the fans will shell out as many dollars as it takes to spend hours in their anti-social worlds of fantasy! If this was the Matrix I would so Kung-Fu them! As it is, if you have the money to spend, and if you don't mind losing years of your life in this exciting, addicting new online game, then I would suggest joining me in the world of magic and warriors in Final Fantasy XI.

"IN THE ZONE"

By Lacy Post

Like OMG Britney's back!!! After a terrible year of exposure ranging from her messy breakup with Mr. J Tim, to the alarming discovery of her cigarette smoking habits, Miss Brit has had a lot more than a career to be worried about. Only weeks ago did we hear of her back-up dancer-turned-boyfriend Columbus Short dumping her to go back to his pregnant wife. But all bad press aside, Britney is growing up and her new album is here to prove it.

With collaborators such as Madonna, this album may even appeal to people like you. If you're like me, you pretended you never bought her first album and learned the dances to the first 5 videos on TRL and thought the lyrics to "Sometimes" only your life only...if that doesn't sound familiar than it's all for the better because a latecoming fan is still better than a fair-weather fan. We should all pay Britney a little respect for taking control of her dwindling pop career, (she apparently co-wrote 8 of the 13 songs), and heading in a more adult direction. If anything, we can admit we like the girl for purely superficial reasons. She's pretty damn hot no matter what your gender and/or preference is.

"In The Zone" is a milestone in Spears' career. If this CD does not put a smile on your face, you have no soul. Tracks such as "Brave New Girl" and "Toxic" both offer a refreshing sound similar to a mix of Yo La Tengo, Rage Against The Machine, Bob Dylan, The Donnas and um...Interpol. Yeah. Also "Outrageous," penned by none other than the most famous statutory rapist of the year, R. Kelly, is totally worth checking out. Or perhaps if you enjoy songs about masturbation you'd like "Touch Of My Hand." My own personal favorite though, is the Moby track that deals with hangovers, titled "Early Mornin'" which Spears admits is about "going out and feeling bad the next day."

There is something for everybody "In The Zone", trust me. (If anything, there's some pretty sexy pics in the liner notes.)

oops!...
I did it
again

Britney Spears
Queen
of the
Camel Toes

Jay Z Fades To Black

By Henry Casey

JAY-Z THE BLACK ALBUM



When it came to writing a review of Jay-Z's supposed swan song album, I had trouble getting my thoughts cleaned up and forming a clear opinion of the album. After listening to the album in the tens of times, I've come to a conclusion: it's quite good. After his last effort, "The Blueprint 2: The Gift and The Curse," his terrible verse on "Beware of the Boys" by Punjabi MC, his appearance on a Beyoncé record and the release of his own shoes (Reebok's S. Carter collection), I really was ready to find another sub-par album overloaded with R&B beats and empty when it came to the lyrics.

But this is a well done record, fitting for a temporary retirement of the self-proclaimed God MC, who brought hip-hop to MTV, took down the Queen's Bridge MC and went from the projects to the CEO's office in under a decade. It's fitting because it seems to me that Jay's conscience is finally catching up with him, take for example this rhyme from

the track "Moment of Clarity", "I dumbed down for my audience to double my dollars, they criticized me for it yet they all yell 'HOLLA!'" Yeah, the sample of "Hard Knock Life" mighta sold out a little, but it wasn't like anyone Hov' was with at the time told him not to make such a money making record.

Jay-Z's a businessman, he knows where the sure money is. Hell I hear he's trying to bring the NJ Nets to Brooklyn, NY. The lyrics quoted above coincidentally mirror the battle that the song's producer, Eminem, has himself had with the public. Eminem does a good job on this song, providing a simple minor-chord piano sample to support the contemplative track.

I read in the *Village Voice* that supposedly this album marks the first time Jay has recorded with words actually written down. Usually Jay-Z has gone into the booth and shot his mouth off from memory, but in order to be able to compile a career's worth of memories and hits he used a pad and pen. This "premeditation" works well at some points, but falls on it's face at others. In the Rick Rubin (who is also currently working with Green Day) produced track "99 Problems," Jay-Z raps alongside a hammering guitar sample, giving this song the victorious arrogance Jay has earned at this point. My favorite lyrics in the song go, "Rap

critics that say he's 'Money, Cash, Hoes' / I'm from the hood stupid, what type of facts are those? / If you grew up with holes in your zapatos / You'd celebrate the minute you was havin dough / I'm like, 'fuck critics, you can kiss my whole asshole.'" Not only has Jay finished the victory lap, he's now doing sprints to prove he can still smack his media around and show hypocrisy outside the rap game. To be honest, Jay has decided to attack the world, not other rappers due to his supremacy in the game. As he says on "What More Can I Say?": "I'm supposed to be number one on everybody list / We'll see what happens when I no longer exist."

The unsuccessful premeditated parts show up as the album's failures. The lead single, the Neptunes over-produced track "Change Clothes," which is not only a metaphor about how people's likes are always changing (I think), but also is just more over exposure for glory hog Pharrell, really could have been dropped. And I don't want to piss Jay-Z off but when his mother Gloria Carter (is he the only rapper who still likes his Mother?) comes on during "December 4th," she just seems too scripted and too phony, ruining a perfectly good song. Those tracks aside, I recommend this album, but hope there is a "come back" record because I want Jay-Z to make a perfect album, now that he's proven he still has the game left in him.

Start here

When Christian Marclay's exhibition came to Bard, I was overjoyed and when I heard he would be playing music at Bard, I flipped. I saw Christian Marclay and Leo Ranaldo of Sonic Youth play at the UCLA Hammer Museum this past summer and was totally into it. I found myself with a newfound interest in Marclay's work. What makes Marclay's visual art appealing is the multimedia he incorporates.

In his show, which is up until December 19 at CCS (if you haven't seen it yet you should), Marclay targets sound through art. He has 2 video works, altered instruments, and record collages to name a few, but the art object that is seen consistently through his show is that of the record, particularly the altered or broken record. Such records are a major component to Marclay's show because when played, a completely different sound is experienced than what one expects to hear. This notion of experiencing something completely new and unexpected is central to Marclay's work, whether it be seeing a 20 foot long accordion and imagining the sound produced or hearing six records being played at once. This desire to explore the unexpected has provided Marclay with the motivation to collaborate with many musicians/groups such as Sonic Youth, John Zorn, and Zeena Perkins as well as forming his current experimental turntabling group DJ Trio.

Marclay originally started out as a DJ and began experimenting with turntables in the early 1980s. He started a band called The Bachelors in which he played percussion and sang alongside his friend Kurt Henry who played guitar. Marclay created his own rhythm section by making backing cassette tapes that he played on a boom box while The Bachelors performed. Marclay then discovered the treasure of the broken record. He became fascinated with the way records would skip and with the sound created when even the slightest bump or scratch occurred. At this point, Marclay began using turntables in his performances. He currently uses the inconsistencies and unexpected jolts and bumps on records as a theme

through-out his work as a musician and an artist, reminding us of the countless the unwanted sounds that can be produced.

On Wednesday, the 19th of November, DJ Trio played at the PAC. DJ Trio is a made up of Christian Marclay and two other DJs that he selects to perform with him. The result is a hyper meshing of six records being played at once producing sounds. At this show, Marina Rosenfeld, (who taught an experimental music course last year at Bard) and Toshio Kujwara alongside Christian Marclay were chosen to be DJ Trio.

The stage was set up with three tables, each with two turntables. There were three screens set up next to each other (reminiscent of Marclay's "Video Quartet"), projecting live videos of each DJ "playing" their turntables. The audience saw hands reaching out from different directions all while they were producing their music. One didn't know where to look or what to listen for, as so many movements were seen and so many sounds produced. The first piece started out with some unassuming sounds, some

ed out with some unassuming sounds, some such experimentation because they are not obvious instruments. The collaborative nature of DJ Trio allows for much improvisation between the DJs as they work off of what each other plays. "The meshing of everything becomes a completely different activity than just spinning records," says Marclay. We tend to associate or think about records with a certain, expected, coherent outcome, but DJ Trio re-introduces the record and the turntable as a new source of music. While it's refreshing to have experienced this collaborative experimental music, I was disappointed with the DJ Trio show and I know others were as well. I am not too familiar with Marclay's music, but a favorite of mine is Marclay's "Strauss" which starts off with Strauss' River Danube and dramatically becomes more and more distorted and heavy. I think many people were expecting more of a hiphop /beats-esque type performance of which DJ Trio is not even remotely close to sounding like. There seemed to be a lacking of energy or oomph in the performance, a groove that just couldn't be found. Yet, I think the overall goals of the performance were met. I like the ideas and motives which DJ Trio is founded as a result of Marclay's endeavor anything, I'd like to see more collaborative work among musicians and artists surface. What I did take away from DJ Trio's performance was the need to experiment. I totally wanted to go home after the show and mess around with my turntable; it seems like this is just what Marclay wants. Marclay strives to break away from the known, to play what is not written on the page and to discover a new connection with a medium. Much of Marclay's work results with one thinking, "Woah, I never thought of that before." Whether standing under his 10-foot tall drumset or looking at his record cover collage of Michael Jackson connected to a woman's hot body; Marclay strives for his audience to experience something foreign through a familiar medium. In this sense, Marclay's work and DJ Trio succeed in bringing forth a new perspective through the use of something familiar.

Before the show, I was able to speak with Marclay about his work and his motivations behind it. For Marclay, art in every sense is collaborative and he has realized that his music and art have become more technical than artistic for him. Performing with a group like DJ Trio is a challenge for Marclay because it is a process in which he has flexibility as a musician, yet must still maintain a balance between the tension of controlling the music and staying open to the other DJs. The record, as a medium, is very unpredictable in itself and that's why each performance is different. Records are the mode of



such experimentation because they are not obvious instruments. The collaborative nature of DJ Trio allows for much improvisation between the DJs as they work off of what each other plays. "The meshing of everything becomes a completely different activity than just spinning records," says Marclay. We tend to associate or think about records with a certain, expected, coherent outcome, but DJ Trio re-introduces the record and the turntable as a new source of music. While it's refreshing to have experienced this collaborative experimental music, I was disappointed with the DJ Trio show and I know others were as well. I am not too familiar with Marclay's music, but a favorite of mine is Marclay's "Strauss" which starts off with Strauss' River Danube and dramatically becomes more and more distorted and heavy. I think many people were expecting more of a hiphop /beats-esque type performance of which DJ Trio is not even remotely close to sounding like. There seemed to be a lacking of energy or oomph in the performance, a groove that just couldn't be found. Yet, I think the overall goals of the performance were met. I like the ideas and motives which DJ Trio is founded as a result of Marclay's endeavor anything, I'd like to see more collaborative work among musicians and artists surface. What I did take away from DJ Trio's performance was the need to experiment. I totally wanted to go home after the show and mess around with my turntable; it seems like this is just what Marclay wants. Marclay strives to break away from the known, to play what is not written on the page and to discover a new connection with a medium. Much of Marclay's work results with one thinking, "Woah, I never thought of that before." Whether standing under his 10-foot tall drumset or looking at his record cover collage of Michael Jackson connected to a woman's hot body; Marclay strives for his audience to experience something foreign through a familiar medium. In this sense, Marclay's work and DJ Trio succeed in bringing forth a new perspective through the use of something familiar.

The Bard Observer

Bombs? We Have Many Bombs!!

Well, fuck that. I've had it.

By **Jacqueline Moss**

Recently, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld toured Iraq and overlooked the incredible progress that the Coalition Forces are making in reducing attacks on soldiers and stabilizing the country. Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commander of the allied forces in Iraq, commented on the army's progress in stabilizing the country: "We've considerably pushed back the numbers of engagements against coalition forces...We've been hitting back pretty hard. We've forced them to slow down the pace of their operations." Rumsfeld then continued to gush over the progress our troops have made in Iraq in reducing the number of attacks against the troops and how much more intelligence has been gathered.

But on December 9th at a military base out side Mosul a car bomb exploded, blowing out windows, causing mayhem, and the military reported that the attack injured thirty-one soldiers, but more recent reports say as many as fifty-eight, though it was reported that most injuries were minor. This is extremely disturbing because it seems like we're in a dead heat with the terrorists and the remnant supporters of Saddam Hussein's regime, and it increasingly appears that U.S. troops are sitting ducks for suicide bombers. The situation in Iraq seems to sink increasingly into quagmire, with more and more troops being sent there, and no decrease in attacks or any strong evidence of the stabilization of the country. Not to mention Afghanistan. What the hell happened to Afghanistan? Afghanistan has dis-

appeared from the news almost altogether, while the current Karzai government can barely keep itself on its feet, is extremely increasingly unpopular, and only has effective control over the capital of Kabul.

And here in the U.S. we see photos of President Bush serving turkey to the elated troops when he went on a surprise visit to a Baghdad military base. And Bush celebrating the signing of the Medicare bill that reduces the quality of coverage given by the government to seniors. And we all wave the flags little more. Great. So, what happens next? No one seems all that eager to help us out in Iraq, and there aren't enough troops in Afghanistan keep any other place other than Kabul and few other large cities in food and water; war lords and tribal leaders are running amok in the rest of the country. Want to check my sources? Go read National Geographic.

We-well, at least most of us at Bard, know that it wasn't Bush's brightest idea to roll into Iraq with tanks plastered with American flags, and bands playing while the talking Bush insisted that U.N. agree to invade Iraq on his terms, or else he would just go ahead and his own little hissy fit and go it alone. Basically, Bush gave the world the proverbial finger. Now U.S. seems to be floundering. U.S. troops are spread all over the Middle East like so many bull's eye's, the economy is waffling between recovery and further regression, and scary social reforms backed by Bush and other arch-conservatives are being pushed through Congress while everyone oooos and ahhhs over how cute

Bush looks in fatigues. Red Herring anyone? No thanks; I'd rather have the blue one.

All this and an election to get ready for, with the numerous Democratic candidates occasionally appearing with their head's above water to lodge a few derogatory comments against Bush, the war, and weak murmurs about the state of the economy before they disappear in the sea of brainless bullshit that masquerades as "news". Fuck the sentence fragments, I know they're there, and I don't give a damn.

I know you all know this, and I know I am preaching to the converted, but I don't know what else to do. Those who are deaf will always be blind too, so I'll keep telling it like it is to me. I hope that even if I am preaching to converted and y'all are screaming amen, that I might make someone think about what's going on in the world outside our obsessive work on existential-revisionism or whatever, and that maybe someone who disagrees with me will at least be provoked to think some more about what I've said, even if they still don't agree with me. Well, I know this is lame, a weak ending to an article that didn't have much structure in the first place, but I hope you guys have a good break, eat some food that won't actually make you ill, and forget about the angst for a bit. I'm going to Australia to live in the rainforest next semester, and am thoroughly grateful for the opportunity to stick my head in the sand and look at some pretty plants and view some pretty scenery. Maybe I'll write from the field and complain some more, because I'm sure you guys are sick of it. WTF mate.

the drab report

by Tom Mattos

If there is one experience I definitely love at Bard, it is registration day. I am totally alone in this. Everyone else hates it. Why do I love registration day? To me it is the same thing that I love about playing Tetris in the campus center, Elastomania on my home computer, or football in high school: competition. I hear some students complain, "so and so at such and such a state school registers ONLINE! Can you BELIEVE IT? ONLINE! Bard is so OLD FASHIONED!" Maybe I have a brain of sawdust, but the one beautiful thing about our system is that it is not arbitrarily done over the internet. You don't receive a lottery number and then have to log on between 10:23 and 10:26 to be locked out of a class simply by luck. No, here it is different. You get to actually go in and FACE the teacher. You stand before this professor, and you say "look dude, let me into your class, I'm good I swear I am." And he or she will say "Yes my child, you are hereby registered into my class," or the professor will say "this is an upper-level semester for MODERATED THEOLOGY-ECONOMICS DOUBLE MAJORS ONLY!" You are shut out.

The beauty of this system lies in the fact that you don't get to sit in your fucking dorm room in your pajamas and hide behind your lottery number. You have to get out there and state your case. This always causes downtrodden, sulky faces. You wait on line to find out that the teacher pre-registered one thousand students before you and now you can't take your intro to glassblowing workshop. If it was done online you might have gotten in. Or how about this: GET OFF YOUR ASS AND GO TALK TO THE TEACHER BEFORE REGISTRATION DAY AND TRY TO PRE REGISTER. IF THEY DON'T PRE REGISTER, SHOW UP AND WAIT ON LINE. Oh, and if you still don't get into the class, GO TO THE CLASS ANYWAY, PEOPLE WILL DROP. This is not a complicated process.

Personally, I think the idea of pre-registration is wonderful. Why wouldn't a teacher want to choose people who have a definite interest in a class and maintain some sort of academic standing here at Bard. Or, at least, choose people who PRETEND to have these qualities.

Another, more roundabout way of saying that the Internet registration idea blows is this: Remember back before the advent of the Internet? I mean, when it existed but you didn't really use it? Like in 5th grade? I know it's hard to think back that far but stay with me on this one. This argument will probably be only understood by guys, and hopefully girls too, but here goes. My friends and I used to hang out in Hewett Square in front of D&D stationary. D&D sold three things: lighters, smoke bombs and PORNO MAGAZINES! Where is this going? I'll tell you where: When I was in fifth grade, my friends and I were about ten or eleven, and we'd dare each other to go in and buy porn. To an eleven-year old, that is a nerve-wracking experience. Sure, your hand is shaking when you reach across the counter, but that's the beauty of it. Now, with the advent of the Internet, those eleven-year olds are sitting in their basements whacking off to thumbnails of horses banging she-hes in the ass. And that's EXACTLY what registration will turn into if it goes the same way of pornography. At least this way, you get out into the sun where you can relate to other people and look a professor in the eye and say: "Sir, I'd like to take your class," instead of lounging around your dorm room jerking off to your mental image of wannabe intellectualism, as you stare at number 134 on your lottery card.

Before I finish this ridiculous installment of the DRAB REPORT I want to add one more layer to my argument. There are some of you out there who claim to be pacifists, who hate 'the competition' of registration day. Yeah yeah yeah, that lamo bullshit. I have not seen one person on registration day that does not in some way become an academic highwayman, cheating and cutting lines to get into the Poetics of Basket-weaving class you know that you are an expert in. It's either you get anglo-saxon on this shit, or you lounge around in some whack class with others who refuse to lie cheat and steal their way to academic success. And if you do that, FINE. Just stop whining about it, and have a sucky semester.

Love,
Tom

10 Magnetic Pac

Geriatric magnetic pull of the PAC

By **Silence NoGood**

I've got a theory, and you're all going to listen to it. When I'm driving in my car over to the PAC sometimes, and do you know what I see? I don't see stupid dancing kids, or Botstein making sweet love to it...I see something I hadn't seen on campus until that tin foil creature became functional (and I use the term loosely, that building is only used so Botstein can have a fancy place to whirl his baton and that's about it...the New York Times was right when it claimed it was a shame that a building of this musical prowess would just sit empty in the field until someone (Botstein) would get to use it). Isn't it supposed to bring us cool shit? I mean, I guess last semester was just a cock tease then. I mean, Elvis Fucking Costello and this semes-

ter...hmmm...yeah I can't think of anything because NOTHING HAS BEEN THERE. Except there is one thing that has been there, EVERYDAY, that's right...I'm talking about old people. Old people seem to be attracted to this building just like a priest to an alter boy. I watch them everyday, walking around the building IN AWE of it. Give me some tin foil and Popsicle sticks and I'll give you something to be in awe of too, okay? So I got to thinking about why busloads of the over sixty crowd are coming to Bard. I stayed up all night and all day and finally came up with my solution: magnets. That's right...see back when Russia became the Soviet Union and Americans shat themselves, a secret lab in the United States was developing a way to


track our good honest American citizens to make sure they wouldn't become "dirty reds." Every baby until 1970 (see, Nixon wasn't such an asshole after all) was installed with a secret chip that would track their every move. You can thank Coolidge for this, Silent Cal my fat red ass. And now, the chips are acting up and have become magnetized. That's why all the old people are coming, not because they have to (who would want to visit that hellhole of a college anyway?), but because they are magnetized and need to connect with the metal of the PAC. So if you're pissed of all those cute old faces asking you where "that nice Gehry building is" just blame the good old US of A because we seem to blame them for everything around here.

the Guy@


KAREN

SPECIAL MIDNIGHT BREAKFAST EDITION


-Q: What song would you like to hear Leon Botstien sing Karaoke style?




Hit Me Baby One More Time!




Baby Boy by Beyonce




Bohemian Rhapsody



Dipset



When I Think About you I Touch Myself



Closer by Nine Inch Nails or Hoochie Mamma by 2Live Crew

H o r r o s c o p e s

by Mike "the winner" Walters

Sagittarius: November 22-December 21: Happy 21st birthday. Sailor John, Rat-dog, and the Polish Crazy Vodkabrain. This is your month, rock out.

Capricorn: December 22-January 19: Good luck passing that kidney stone. There's something about pissing out a jagged diamond that makes my flesh crawl. Right after you pass your stone you can get drunk as shit with Elizabeth Daley, Jesus Christ and Christian Kiley at their birthday party!

AquariASS: January 20-February 17: There is a gothic-influenced, self-deprecating, melodramatic, multiple-personality-disordered nutjob of a lover coming your way. Make sure you use birth control. We don't want winged weirdoes roaming the planet any more than we want to think about the ugly faces you make when you fuck.

Pisces: February 18-March 19: Sometime in your life you will be showered with literary and sexual stardom, becoming both the youngest Nobel Prize winner and also the head advertising model for Trojan condoms.

Aries: March 20-April 19: After giving Scorpio a fortune out of my wallet, I examined the money fold closer and found this prophetic note: OBIE HB2FzLFZF 516-807-0741 Friends w/ Ken Casey and Bill Bootz. Dad's chief of ENFD. Ask when to look @ vehicle, where to look @ veh. 99 Saturn SL2 Pass front door. All manual. Call on Wednesday. Remind its out of pocket so no tax. Arrg. Mtg. ASAP.

Taurus: April 20-May 19: In case you didn't realize, you, Taurus, are named after an abomination of a motor vehicle. The Ford Taurus, possibly the worst car ever created, breaks down almost as often as you do. That's right, this winter is going to be no different. With the new fallen snow, both your self-esteem and your luck will fall as well, this time to record breaking lows. But don't worry, you're going to be able to sputter through the depression with all of the gusto that is attributed to the Ford Taurus. You're going to have a lot of problems, but, if you get a good mechanic, you can probably last another year.

Gemini: May 20-June 20: Oh! The horror! All that TOOTH DECAY, I present... CAVITY HELL! Endless toothaches! Profit-driven dentists! Novocaine-mad dental assistants! Possessed certificates of the satisfactory completion of dental school!

Cancer: June 21-July 21: As most of you have pointed out, especially in heated conversations in the campus center about the authenticity of these planetary predictions, you, or your boyfriend, did not come down with a tumor on your testicles as the fates had so predicted. They wish to apologize to you, oh wise over-reader of joke horrorscopes. As a sign of their sincerity, they wish to make a prediction that will definitely hit the mark. They predict that you're going to spend your lives wrought with anger, having lame, pointless conversations about non-existing black magic, describe people sarcastically, and ultimately die an empty death, sucking the creative energy of the world into your black hole of an existence. This the fates guarantee. They also guarantee that you won't agree to your fate, and live your life in denial.

Leo: July 22-August 22: The heavenly forces have contacted me, and they say there is a ham sandwich on rye bread. No wait, 12 grain.

Virgo: August 23-September 21: The heavenly forces have made a decree. As they now realize that the image of "A Woman Harvesting Wheat" was not only ridiculous, but arbitrary, they have now updated your astrological sign to "A Woman Going Bowling"

Libra: September 22-October 22: The Bard College Workshop in Language and Thinking is an intensive, three-week writing program for first-year students. Students read extensively in several genres, work on many different kinds of writing projects, and meet in small groups to discuss the texts they have read and their own writing. Through these activities, they learn to read and listen more thoughtfully, to articulate ideas, to review their own work critically, and, most basically, to recognize the link between thought and expression.

Scorpio: October 23-November 21: This is kind of a choose-your-own-adventure horrorscope. Choose your fate from the two fortune cookie fortunes that I found in my wallet. 1. Your family is one of nature's masterpieces. 2. You have a reputation for being straightforward and honest. And remember, the phonetic pronunciation for the word "Good" is "Hao," and the word "October" is "Shi-yue." Your lucky numbers are 2,7,10,31,33,38,17,28,32,34,38 and 43. Lucky you.

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from the mind of a madman

by Laurence Laufer ESQ.



WHAT'S A MATTER? YOU DON'T LOVE ME TO DEATH ANY MORE?



Oh great! now who is going to fix this?

by Gabe Shalom

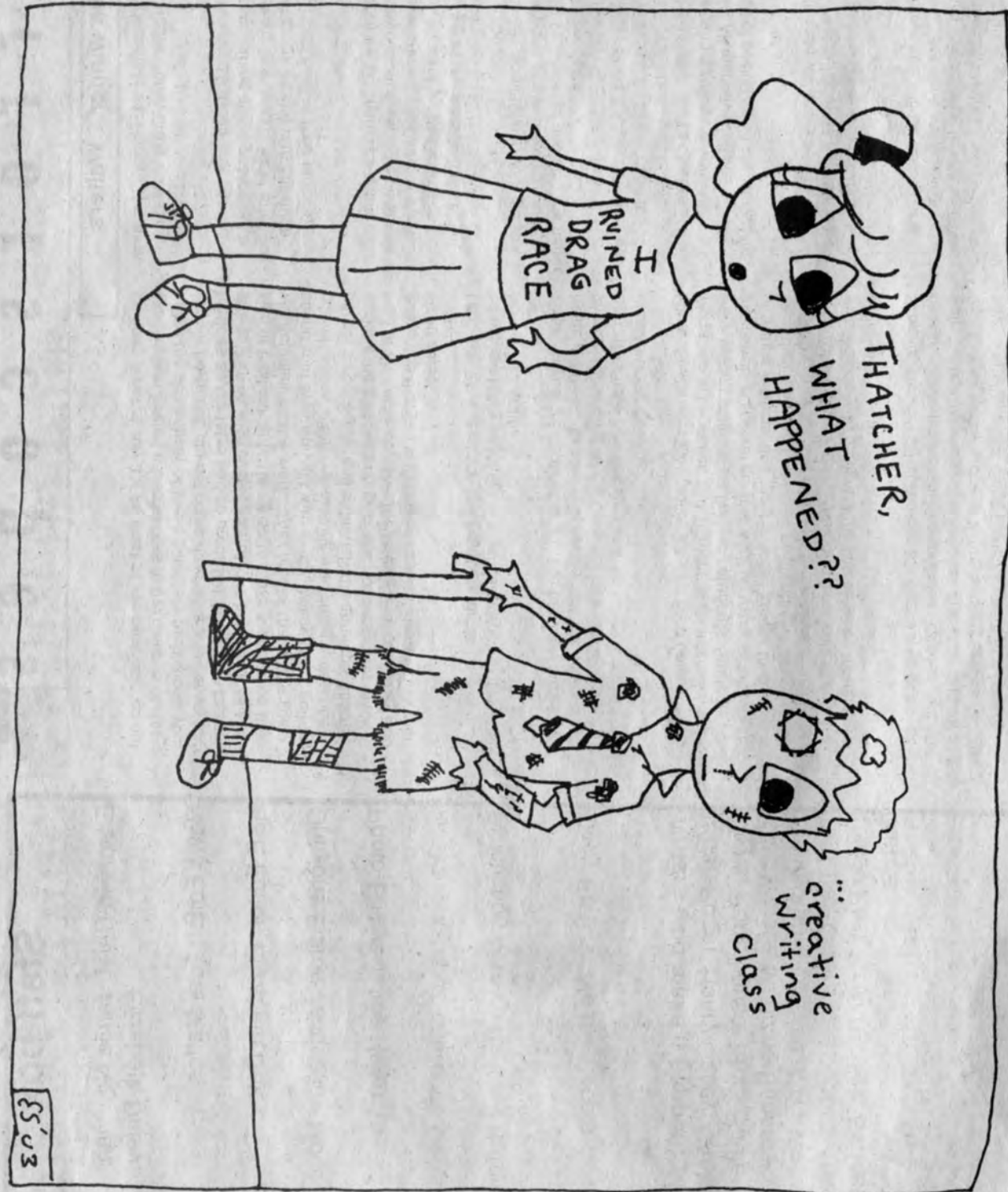
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What's the Flute



From The Editors A Lesson in Bad Taste

Last issue, in a fit of boredom, The Observer staff decided to play a little joke and switch the question for the Guy at Kline. We originally asked "who is your least favorite professor at Bard and why?" Then, we changed the question we printed to "Which professor would you like to have sex with and why?" This was only an attempt to stir the pot and make people laugh. While some of the answers were infinitely more amusing with the second question imposed, we managed to make a little faux pa. The third answer we received was "Lindsey Watton because he died," already a bit strange, but what the girl meant to imply was that Professor Watton was her favorite teacher before he died. Unfortunately, in the Observer office, we could often use some extra help and a few of us are deprived of suitable amounts of sleep the nights leading up to an issue's release. That being said, we understand that the sexually oriented question made "Lindsey Watton," a disturbing response and for that the Observer Staff would like to express sincere apologies. Although our mistake was not done with malicious intent, the end result was horribly tasteless and insensitive. Lindsey Watton was a valued member of the Bard community and his life should be respected. Again, we would like to acknowledge our mistake and extend our heartfelt condolences to any one we may have offended.



Adventures in Bardland
By Emily Sauter

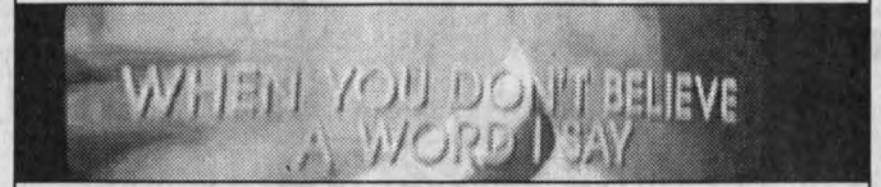
interested in submitting anything to the Observer?
articles, reviews, cartoons, photographs, are all needed.
email observer@bard.edu
or call x7131

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

• NEWS & FEATURES •

Bigger Better Biotechnology
by Ran Tao, p. 6
Why are our tomatoes so juicy?

Articles I Never Got to Write
by Elizabeth Daley
A farewell address much like Lincolns.



• ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT •

In the Zone
by Lacey Post, p. 7
A critical look at Britney.

Fade to Black
by Henry Casey, p. 9
Mourning the departure of Jay-X,Y,Z.



• OPINIONS/EDITORIAL •

The Drab Report
by Tom Mattos p. 10
If you don't read it, you should.

The Guy at Kline, p. 10
See your fellow Bard students respond on the spot to a random question. Courtesy of Elizabeth and Jamie

<COVER> Elizabeth Daley & that boy who sang the Christmas song